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HISTORY

of

LOGANVILLE-WALNUT GROVE CHARGE

Loganville 1951
The history of the Loganville Methodist church antedates the history of the town and goes back to the days of the faithful circuit-riders and fervent, shouting Methodists.

There are no records available from which might be ascertained the date of the church's institution when it was known as Old Chapel and was situated on the old Myers place. Meager information as to the existence of the regularly organized church and its activities are furnished by citizens now past 80 years of age and to whom the facts as respects this early church were imparted by their parents.

It is a space of time far exceeding the allotted span of life from this early plant of Methodism to the Loganville Methodist church's Ebenezer, but musty records and the testimony of citizens whose lives have been lengthened beyond the allotted years, establish the fact that the church was, during the intervening years, carrying the gospel to the citizens of a then sparsely settled section of the country. For many years preceding the Civil War, through the heart-rending period of the Civil War, and through the ordeal and tragedy of the Reconstruction, this church bore aloft the banner of the Lord.

In 1854 Mr. Dennis Baker deeded to Mr. J.D. Baker, Mr. A.W. Clay, Mr. Joseph Forrester, Mr. J.C. Hammett, and Mr. James Hammett, as officials of the church, a tract of land lying opposite the intersection of the Monroe highway and the Covington highway, on the knoll. A church building was erected here...
and the Old Chapel was moved to it and renamed New Chapel. The cemetery adjoining this church was in the fork of two highways and has been within the last ten years that the graves were obliterated and the land put in cultivation.

The writer is indebted to Mr. J.P. Cown, who is now 81 years old, for much of the church's history while located at this point. His mother was a member of New Chapel and he often attended services there. He recalls that among the preachers he heard there were the Rev. Santell, Rev. Billy Evans, Rev. E. W. Reynolds and the Rev. Billy Florence. The latter was the father of Prof. A. S. Florence, who taught the Loganville school several years and whose name appears often in the minutes, attesting his devotion to the church. The writer has heard some of the old citizens speak of the stirring revivals held at New Chapel under the preaching of those consecrated old warriors of the Cross whose theology embraced everlasting fire and brimstone and permitted no compromise or softening of the penalty of sin.

In 1868 New Chapel was sold for the purpose of constructing a new church on a site on the East side of what is now known as Pear Street, then known as the Lawrenceville Road. However, the decision to sell the building, change the location and erect a new church building was not without some stubborn opposition. Mr. Robert Rogers was so bitterly opposed to the change that he locked the church building after the sale, boarded up the windows, and defied the purchasers to molest it. By force, or legal pro-
cess the purchaser, Mr. J.A. Booth and others, dismantled the building and erected a gin house at another site. Brother Roger's obstinate resistance to the removal of the church might have hinged on sentimental associations, and if so, that fact would palliate his offense. On the other hand he might have had an overwhelming desire to run the shebang his way or not at all, a sweet disposition sometimes encountered in churches of all denominations to this day.

On January 26, 1875 Messrs. T.M. Brand, S.L. Moon and T.J. Robertson, officials of Fergus Lodge No. #135 F.& A.M. executed a deed to Messrs. J.D. Baker, J.V.R. Hood, F.M. Beaver, D.B. Oliver, and J.D. Wyley, trustees for the Methodist church, conveying to the said officials a tract of land situated in the village of Loganville on which has been built a house for public worship and which is known as the Methodist church. Said tract of land known as part of the Masonic Hall lot. The Eastern boundary of the lot was to be twenty feet from the Lodge Room. This land had been previously sold to the Masonic fraternity by Mr. E.M. Brand as attorney in Fact for Mr. W.W. Cooksey, April 24, 1869. May 22, 1880, Messrs. J.T. Mc Elvaney, J.A. Booth, T.J. Robertson and W.W. Coffee executed a deed as officials of the Masonic Lodge conveying to F.M. Beaver, Crawford Brand, Joseph D. Baker and J.P. Rockmore, trustees of the Methodist church, the tract of land on which stood the Lodge Room. The records indicate that this lodge room was a two story structure and the upper story was used for Lodge purposes and the lower floor as a school room. This
conveyance put the Methodist church in possession of the entire original area of the old cemetery which it still owns.

An interesting period of the church's history centers around the old frame building that stood on the cemetery lot. The Minutes of the Quarterly Conferences during those days bear mute testimony to the earnestness of purpose and the religious zeal of the leaders of those days. The officials of the church were men of piety and deep religious convictions and embraced a religion in which guile and dissimulation had no part. They insisted that the private lives of the members be in accordance with the high standards which they considered absolutely necessary to render one worthy of membership. As a result of this strict conception of proper behavior on the part of church members, there were frequent expulsions from membership.

The writer was surprised, mildly so, however, that a brother-in-law was arraigned before the bar of the church on charges of intoxication. As he was a lawyer he filed a written answer to the charges wherein he confessed his guilt, professed deep penitence and abject humiliation and offered as a mitigating circumstance the fact that he had been greatly "debilitated", had purchased the liquor solely for medicinal purposes and had miscalculated the amount that should constitute a proper dose.

It is interesting to note with what regularity a group of names appear in the minutes covering a period of thirty to fifty years. Answering the roll call at the First Quarterly Conference February 6, 1885, from the Loganville church were Messrs. S.A. Starr, J.S. Oliver, M.W. Coffee, R.A. Hammond.
at the Fourth Quarterly Conference October 12, 1889 were Messrs. J.S. Oliver, R.F. Cox, J.P. Rockmore, and M.W. Coffee. The names of S.A. Starr, J.P. Rockmore, R.F. Cox, R.A. Hammond, J.S. Oliver, M.W. Coffee, D.B. Oliver and in later years Dr. A.M. Brooks, W.T. Brooks and others occur constantly over a period of from 30 to 50 years.

An excerpt from the Pastors report to the Quarterly Conference May 25, 1889 reads: "The spiritual state of the church is in some respects good. We have quite an increase in attendance of the members at Saturday meetings." It seems that in those days attendance at the Saturday meetings was the mark of the faithful.

At this point there is another entry which is significant and is similar to hundreds of others throughout the records. The ladies of Loganville had raised $30.05 cents towards furnishing the Parsonage. That was in February 1889. It is a happy thought that in the mansions of Heaven there will be no lack of furnishings and the good women of all churches who have labored so faithfully to make comfortable the preachers homes, will have rest from their labors.

The Methodist church has ever emphasized the work of the Sunday School as an integral part of its worship and the Loganville church has been no exception to this church policy. We are unable to fix the date at which the Loganville Methodist Sunday School was organized, but we find Sunday School reports as far back as 1884. It is reasonable to presume that the Sunday School was in operation at New Chapel, if not it probably was at Old Chapel.
One can hardly conceive of a Methodist church functioning many years without a Sunday School.

An idea of the rigid conception of a well prepared Sunday School lesson in the opinion of the leaders of those days may be gained from the report of the Rev. John F. Balis to the Quarterly Conference, July 6, 1891. He said, "The lessons are not learned, that is they are not committed to memory. The scholars are permitted to refer to the helps too much in the recitation of the lesson. I suspect the teachers allow this in order to hold their class attendance."

The limited time allowed for this history will not permit a comprehensive review of the churches activities during the time it worshiped in the old building. The chronicles of those days are rich in evidence of sincere devotion to the services of God and an unaltering faith in His love and goodness.

In the year 1905 the late Rev. Sam P. Jones came to Loganville to visit his daughter, Mrs. Rhous Pyrom, who had recently moved to Loganville. Mr. Jones became interested in the Loganville church and returned later in the year and conducted a meeting in the W.L. Floyd warehouse. At this meeting a movement was launched to build a new church and a subscription was started. Mr. Jones (Sam), and his family contributed $500.00 to the fund. Other contributors of generous amounts included Dr. A.M. Brooks, W.T. Brooks, W.L. Floyd, J.P. Rockmore, W.A. Bennett and others.

Work on this building was begun in 1907 and it was dedicated in June 1908, by the Rev. Sam Jones.

The same spirit of consecrated service which characterized the church's early history is present congregations ideal and it
is hoped that the church historian 50 years hence may be able to trace some enduring influence for good back to the present time.

The pastors who have served the Loganville church from one to four years since 1874 are as follows: J.H. Bentley, 1875-76; J.S. Embry, 1877-78; C.H. Patillo, 1880; J.B. Allen, 1879; J.W. Yarbrough, 1881; J.S. Worley, 1882; Aaron Myers, about 1886; J.L. Perryman, 1884; W.H. Eakes, 1886; W.A. Farris, 1887-88; Thomas Edwards, 1889; W.A. Farris, 1891; J.F. Balis, 1892; H.R. Davies, 1893; W.C. Fox, 1897; T.W. Rogers, 1898; John A. Thurmand, 1899; W.E. Arnold, 1901-02; L.P. Winter, 1903; Olin King, 1904; W.W. Gaines, 1905-07; W.O. Butler, 1908-09; S.H. Dimon, 1910-11; J.F. Davis, 1911-12; J.B. Kendall, 1913-14; G.W. Tumlin, 1914-15; E.W. Darnell, 1915-16; E.S. Askew, 1916-18; M.M. Millican, 1918-19; R.J. Broyles, 1921-22; R.A. Voleman, 1922-23; T.E. Sherwood, 1923-24; G.W. Fruit, 1925-26; S.A. Dailey, 1927-28; W.H. Venable, 1928-29; J.B. Smith, 1929-30; and the present Pastor F. Q. Echols.

The Loganville Methodist church is proud of its history and its heritage of examples of devotion to God and His Kingdom as exemplified in the lives of its pioneers. The church feels assured that within its sanctuary have been inculcated religious principles which have borne fruit of righteousness in the religious, educational and civic activities of the town and community.

G.P. Cantrell - 1935-36.
L.G. Cowart - 1941-42; 1942-43.
W.A. Hughes - 1943-44; 1944-45.
J.Ray Stewart - 1945-46.
T.W. Jennings - 1946-47.
J.R. Matthews - 1948-49.
Thomas Ryan - 1951-52.
NOTE: Here is a statement which will help somewhat to bring the news of the church up to date. We have requested additional information from older members but have not been able to receive it in time to send you. We hope this will help some.

Following is a list of the pastors put into the length of their appointments from the year 1933 to the present:

- F.Q. ECHOLS 1933-35
- T.W. JENNINGS 1946-47
- G.P. CANTRELL 1935-36
- W.A. HORN 1947-48
- J.M. GUEST 1936-40
- J.D. MATTHEWS 1948-49
- L.G. COWART 1940-43
- B.H. BLACKBURN 1949-51
- W.B. HUGHES 1943-45
- T. RYAN 1951
- J.R. STEWART 1945-46
- R.W. STRINGER 1951-53

In August, 1952, the Reverend Robert W. Stringer, Pastor, initiated a remodeling program. In the first week of November a project was launched to remodel the entire interior of the church. The Sanctuary was very large and had three major needs, better heating, better acoustics, and classrooms. Plans were drawn up and the Nunally Lumber Company, of Monroe, Ga., was engaged to do the work (construction). The two wings were partitioned off to create five classrooms. Three on one side were constructed of equal size. On the south side two were created, one small one and one large one to be used for M.Y.F. programs. A small room just off the platform was refloored and refinished. Consequently, six new classrooms were provided. The Sanctuary was completely remodeled and remained 32 feet wide and 74 feet long after rebuilding. This seats comfortably 200 persons. An elevated choir loft was constructed and the chancel rebuilt. The pews were refinished mahogany and white, and a new heating system was installed and natural gas piped into the entire building. New Dearborn heaters were placed in each classroom.
The entire church (Sanctuary and all classrooms) received an inlaid linoleum floor, colored dark red to match the woodwork. The walls were painted a light shade of green. The Wesley Helpers Class donated an illuminated cross which hangs between the stained glass windows at the front of the church. On each side of the Sanctuary four columns were erected approximately 14 feet high which reach an overhang. This was done to take away the appearance of such height as a straight wall would give. In the overhang between each of the sets of columns on both sides are flush type lights which can be used to an advantage for Vesper Services. The entire lighting system of the church was changed and rewired. The new lights are wired in relay and operated from one main panel at the vestibule of the church. There are ten 18 inch glass fixtures which are suspended from the overhead on 12 feet bronze chains. In the overhead at the rear of the church are three focused spotlights which are operated from an automatic timer, electrically. These light up the stained glass windows every night. An electric sign was also constructed with removable letters for the exterior and it lights up nightly with the other spots. Also, in the vestibule of the church there was constructed a cabinet which holds a recording machine equipped to play any type record. The speakers for this machine are mounted in the church tower for purposes of amplification. The stained glass windows of the chancel are illuminated at night from the outside for the benefit of those persons worshipping inside the sanctuary. All of this work was completed in January, 1953 at an approximate cost of $5,000.00

There are 89 active members at present, seven were received on Sunday, April 26, 1953. It is our hope that the Loganville Church will see its way clear this year to assume weekly services.
instead of services only twice a month. That is our next objective. The people are responding nicely to the regular Methodist Church Weekly Envelope System of giving, and the support of the church has increased. At present, however, only one-third are systematically contributing. We pray that the rest of the members will assume their rightful responsibilities of serving the church. Then, the church will grow and prosper. Since the new financial system was instituted (November 1953) until May, 1953 the finances of the church have increased threefold. May God bless this church and inspire some of the older members to realize the need for a full-time preacher and ministry, so that they will support such, is our prayer. There is a great future possible for the Loganville Methodist Church.