HISTORY

of

MANCHESTER, FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
The First Methodist Church at Manchester is one of the leading church organizations in this section of Georgia.

The present church building was erected in 1927-28, and is valued at $100,000.00. The plans for the church were drawn by Rev. C. W. Lipham, one of the foremost church architects in the South, and is considered to be one of the most attractive church buildings, not only for its dignified simplicity and beauty, but also for its efficient planning and design. The church building includes a main auditorium; a basement which provides a social center, with large hall for dining room and social affairs, kitchen, and recreation rooms; and ten Church School rooms are included in the general plan of the building.

The Church Parsonage was erected in 1937, while Rev. G. F. Venable was Pastor, and is located on two large lots in a desirable residence section. The Parsonage is valued at $25,000.00, and provides a most attractive and comfortable home for the Pastors. It is of brick construction, with furnace heat, and all modern conveniences.

The First Methodist Church was organized in 1911, just two years after Manchester had received its charter. Prior to that time, the nearest church was at Warm Springs, Georgia. During the year 1911, Mr. I. N. Johnson, who was at that time Editor of the Manchester Mercury, and who had been a life long Methodist, advertised a meeting of all Methodists in the town, to be held in the Masonic Hall. About fifteen Methodists attended the organization meeting, and a building fund was started. By the assistance of the Board of Church Extension, which contributed $500.00 to the church, the building fund was increased. On November 1, 1911, Rev. G. L. Chastain, who was pastor of the Warm Springs Circuit (then Bullochville Circuit), organized the church congregation. Rev. I. W. Keithly was the first regularly assigned pastor, and was sent here in 1912. He at first preached in the Masonic Hall, and later the church was given the use of the Baptist Church, which had been erected, for two Sundays a month.

In 1912, the Manchester Development Company donated a lot for a church building at the corner of Second Street and Third Avenue, and plans for the new church were drawn by Mr. George Land, a contractor of Manchester. The building program lagged for several months, and in 1913 the late Rev. W. A. Harris was sent to serve the church. He surveyed the situation, and revived the building program, and the congregation rallied to his efforts, and the first church building was erected at a cost of $2400.00.
Rev. W. A. Harris was returned to Manchester for his second year in 1914 and died while serving the church that year. Rev. W. J. Culpepper was sent to Manchester to serve the church for the balance of the year.

Rev. J. C. Atkinson served the church in 1915, and Rev. J. F. Roberts served during the years 1916 and 1917. He was followed by Rev. L. W. Collins in 1918, Rev. V. E. Lanford in 1919 and 1920, and Rev. R. M. Dixon in 1921.

Rev. W. H. Barnett served as pastor for six years, from 1922 to 1927, inclusive. During his long and useful ministry, the spiritual life of the church was stimulated, and much progress was made in all fields of work. Plans were made for a new church building and parsonage, and the lot where the present church now stands was purchased.

Rev. C. L. Middlebrooks served during five years, from 1928 to 1932 inclusive, and during his ministry, and under his fine leadership, the present edifice was erected. It is located on Broad Street, near the center of town, and convenient both to residents and transients.


Rev. S. D. Cherry has served since July 1949.

The following have served this church as Presiding Elders or District Superintendents:

- Rev. W. L. Pierce
- Rev. B. F. Allen
- Rev. R. C. Cleckler
- Rev. Wallace Rogers
- Rev. W. H. LaPrade Jr.
- Rev. W. M. Barnett
- Rev. C. G. Ernest
- Rev. Erby Henderson
- Rev. Geo. L. King
- Rev. W. M. Twigg
- Rev. J. S. Thrailkill, who is the present District Superintendent.

When the present church building was erected it was located on a lot facing 90 ft. on Broad Street. In 1950, the church acquired an additional frontage of 100 ft. on Broad Street, and now has a tract which should take care of future expansion.
First United Methodist Church
P. O. Box 449 - 206 Broad St.
Manchester, Ga. 31816

Pastor - Dr. Harry Lee Smith

Former Pastors with Dates:

I. W. Keithley - Nov., 1911-Nov., 1912
W. A. Harris - Nov., 1912-May, 1914
W. J. Culpepper- May, 1914-Nov., 1914
J. C. Atkinson - Nov., 1914-Nov., 1915
J. F. Roberts - Nov., 1915-Nov., 1917
L. W. Collins - Nov., 1917-Nov., 1918
V. E. Lanford - Nov., 1918-Nov., 1920
R. M. Dixon - Nov., 1920-Nov., 1921
W. M. Barnett - Nov., 1921-Nov., 1927
C. L. Middlebrooks, Sr.- Nov., 1927-Nov., 1932
H. L. Edmondson-Nov., 1932-Nov., 1934

H. C. Holland - Nov., 1934-Nov., 1936
C. F. Venable - Nov., 1936-Nov., 1939
J. W. Segars - Nov., 1939-Nov., 1943
B. F. Mize - Nov., 1943-Nov., 1945
E. M. Wise - Nov., 1945-June, 1948
S. D. Cherry - June, 1948-June, 1953
Carl McGrady - June, 1953-June, 1955
Allen T. Newby - June, 1955-June, 1959
Chas. T. Gray - June, 1959-June, 1963
Clyde E. Smith - June, 1963-June, 1965
Boyd C. Winn - June, 1966-June, 1970
Harry L. Smith - June, 1970 - Present