

## HISTORY OF MARTINEZ UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

In the spring of 1956, the Rev. James Budd from St. Marks Methodist and the Rev. T. M. Sullivan from Woodlawn Methodist saw the need of a Methodist Church in the Martinez area. Up until this time the community had been solid Baptist. On June 10th a meeting was held in the Martinez Community Club with the Rev. James Budd preaching. At the end of the service, he asked that all interested in organizing a Methodist Church to come forward. 19 stepped out. Each Sunday morning in the Martinez Community Club a service was held with the different Methodist Ministers in the area preaching. The Rev. James Budd from St. Marks, the Rev. T. M. Sullivan from Woodlawn, the Rev. Wesley Thomas from Marvin and the Rev. Bill Byington from Pierce Memorial.

After meeting in the community club for about four weeks, plans were made to purchase four acres of land on Washington Road with an abandoned clubhouse on it. The property was owned by the family of Dr. Will Jennings. The clubhouse had been used as a summer home and a clinic by the Jennings family but the last thing it had been used for was a gambling hall. Members of the congregation pitched in to assist with renovations. Martinez Methodist was selected for the name of the church. The Rev. James Sneed, Augusta District Superintendent, appointed the Rev. Elvyn McDonald as first pastor of the church. Four years later the church property including a remodeled building and the four acres on which it stands were all free of debt. A parsonage on Maywood Drive was purchased. The Rev. Carlos Gardner held the mortgage burning service. The interesting feature was the Rev. Budd was invited back to preach the dedication service and he preached the same sermon he preached when the new church was organized. The highlight of the day was when J. T. Nix, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, presented the deed to the church property to the pastor, the Rev. Carlos Gardner.

The Rev. James E. Hemann followed the Rev. Carlos Gardner. Though a soldier on active duty at Fort Gordon, he served the church well.

Under the Rev. Albert Beatty plans were drawn to build a large meeting hall and several Church School rooms. This was to be done in two units.

The Rev. Gus Cole was sent to Martinez Methodist in 1962 coming at the time when plans were almost completed for building the first unit. April 1, 1963, Bishop Owen Smith led ground breaking services. "There's nothing like fresh mortar in a hymn book," the Bishop said. The material labor and the spiritual worship must go hand in hand. Bishop Smith turned the first shovel of dirt. Dr. Cochran, the District Superintendent, turned a second, then Roy Landrum, Chairman of the Building Committee and J. T. Nix, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Actual construction began in earnest the middle of April with the possibility of being in the new unit in early June. On June 23, 1963 Dr. Cochran, District Superintendent, led the service of consecration for the meeting hall and the church school rooms were added in 1965.

The Rev. Pleman Folds, the Rev. Rev. Jim Ransom, and the Rev. Harold Vaughn served the Martinez Methodist Church and each served well.

In 1975, the Rev. Jerry Newsome was sent to Martinez United Methodist.

June 10, 1977 ground was broken for the new sanctuary. Participants in the ground breaking service were Tommy Starnes, Mrs. Jack Ayers, Mr. C. H. Clark, Mr. Paul Hodge, Mr. Clarence Finch, Shawna Finch, Mr. J. T. Nix and the Rev. Jerry Newsome.

In the summer of 1977 a new parsonage located at 133 Morehead Drive in the Sedgefield Subdivision was purchased.

Bishop William R. Cannon, Resident Bishop of the United Methodist Church, consecrated and officially opened the new sanctuary and parsonage for Martinez United Methodist Church Sunday, March 19, 1978. Dr. Robert L. Taylor, District Superintendent, participated in the service and Bishop Cannon preached. The new sanctuary was built by the Kuhlke Construction Company. It is designed to seat 350. It is connected to the older building by a connecting administrative wing. This section contains a new church office, pastor's study, and choir room. The Rev. Jerry Newsome said, "this is a joyous and momentous occasion within the life of Martinez."

On Sunday, June 14th, 1981 the church celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The Rev. James Budd was the guest preacher and the Rev. Jerry Newsome pastor. Dinner-on-the grounds was served after the service of worship.

The Rev. Jerry Newsome was assigned to the Greensboro United Methodist Church in July 1981. He served Martinez United Methodist Church for six years and many good things happened during his ministry.

The Good News Fellowship Class recently undertook the job of renovating the original building on the inside. Four large church school rooms were added downstairs and later on the upstairs will be made into church school rooms.

The Rev. Thorsen Colberg is pastor of the church. He and his lovely wife, Bonnie, and adorable children, Erica, Thor, and Brandon came to us in July of 1981.

The church is growing at a fast rate with 68 new members added since October. The budget in the past year has grown by 20%! We're excited about the big dreams that God has given us such as a video-tape ministry, future building programs, our stimulating worship services, the greatly expanded choir and youth program and much more.

Mrs. Jack Ayers  
Church Historian