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HISTORY

of

NORTH DECATUR METHODIST CHURCH
In the Fall of 1947, the Reverend H. C. Holland and the Reverend C. L. Middlebrooks recognized the need for a new church in the North Decatur area. Mr. Holland was pastor of the First Methodist Church of Decatur, and was responsible for people in the new area. Mr. Middlebrooks was District Superintendent of the Decatur-Oxford district, and thus had the larger responsibility.

These men prevailed upon three laymen of First Methodist Church to borrow sufficient money to purchase a lot 1.67 acres in size from the old Scott estate. The laymen were Frank G. Thomas, Leon O'Neal, and J. W. Weekes. The new lot was located at the junction of the Lawrenceville Highway and North Decatur Road. Its purchase price was $3750.

In January of 1948, Reese E. Griffin, Jr., a student in the Candler School of Theology was appointed to make a survey of the area in preparation for organizing the new church. He was employed by the Board of City Work of the Division of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church. In the months following Mr. Griffin made a complete canvass of the area and found a number of persons interested in the formation of a church.

The problem of a place of meeting remained. There was no school, theatre, or other large auditorium nearby that could be utilized. This question was settled, though, by the gift of a temporary chapel from Mr. Milton F. Allen of Decatur.
This chapel was a frame building, having a cement floor. The exterior was covered with sheet metal. Construction cost and materials amounted to approximately $3500. (Actual cost did not run this much, as some material was second-hand, and some labor contributed. This is a fair estimate of the value of the structure, however.)

Shortly after Easter the first service was held in the new building. Then on May 23 Charter Day was held, and the formal organization of the church was completed. The Reverend C. L. Middlebrooks, District Superintendent, was in charge of the organizing conference. On this Charter Day 74 persons were recognized as charter members.

The Board of Stewards was composed of the following:
G. I. Chafin (chairman), Ray M. Cole, Homer Moore, Jr., W. R. Rockett, Jr., J. L. Weisiger, and E. M. Brown, Jr. The Trustees consisted of the three laymen from First Methodist Church (whose names were still on the unpaid note for the lot) and Ray M. Cole, E. M. Brown, Jr., and Homer Moore, Jr. The treasurer was G. J. Atkinson. The president of the WSCS was Mrs. G. I. Chafin.

Responsibility for payment of the note for the church lot was assumed by First Methodist Church, and thus the new organization was relieved of this burden.

At the organizing conference the name of the church was settled as being North Decatur Methodist Church.

Mr. Griffin graduated from seminary the first week in June. As he was a member of the South Georgia Conference, he felt it advisable to give up his work at the church and to return to his
home conference. Thus the problem arose immediately of a pastor for the church. It was complicated by the fact that there was no parsonage for the pastor.

This was solved by the appointment of the Reverend Harvey C. Holland, Jr., who had graduated May 15 from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and who was planning to join the North Georgia Conference. As his father lived in Decatur, being pastor of the First Methodist Church, it was agreed that the new pastor should live with his father and serve the new church. Accordingly, with the departure of Mr. Griffin, Mr. Holland became pastor of the church.

Two problems confronted the new organization immediately. The one was to secure more members. The other was to provide church school space. The two were closely related. With the cooperation of Mr. S. Walton Peabody, an architect in Decatur, plans were worked out for the erection of a small church school unit which might be incorporated in the total permanent structure. The new building would be only 30' by 40'. This limitation was forced by lack of money. A small sum was raised and during the summer some of the members began work on the building. A crew of masons from Marietta, Georgia agreed to work for a fraction of their regular wage on each Saturday, provided assistance be given by the church members. Thus the work progressed. Plumbing was donated by Mr. Henry Thompson of Decatur. Finally in October the building was partially complete and could be occupied. It consisted of three class rooms, a small assembly space, a kitchen, and toilet facilities.
As the building was constructed, and as the community continued to grow, new members came into the church. At the annual conference of 1949, there were 140 members. The church school had grown to have more than 120 members. The WSCS now had 2 circles. More stewards had been added.

In the summer of 1949, the need began to be felt acutely for more space. Accordingly with the services of Mr. Peabody (which were donated) plans were drawn for erecting the first large unit of the permanent structure. A building committee was appointed to direct this work. It consisted of Mr. V. C. Marriott (chairman), Mr. G. I. Chaifin, Mr. G. E. Steck, Mr. D. D. Elliott, Mr. L. B. Broome, Mr. D. E. Brown, Mr. Harry Grissett.

After considerable delay in the completion of all plans, bids were finally taken, and the contract was awarded to Preston-Chambers Company of Decatur for $14,700. Work was begun on the new structure in January 1950, and was completed early in April. This consisted of an 80' addition to the existing building (which was completed). The total building then was 110' in length. The new portion was 38' in width. It was of red brick construction, and was designed to be the daylight basement of the permanent church. This consisted of a large room 60' by 36', of a furnace room, storage space, and one classroom. The furnace and several other items were not included within the initial contract. The estimated value of the finished building (including the existing small structure) is $21,000. The temporary chapel was divided into class rooms.

Continued growth has been experienced. At present (June
1950) the church has 215 members. There are 192 in church school. The WSCS has grown to have 5 circles with a total membership of 75. Continued growth is anticipated.