HISTORY

OGLETHORPE ESTATES METHODIST CHURCH

ATLANTA-EAST DISTRICT

1975 Att. Every Dist.

#44
The Oglethorpe Estates Church opened its first Sunday School in the Oglethorpe Apartments, Chamblee, Georgia in July, 1949. Five Children attended that first session. The church school began to grow steadily. A regular church service was soon started, and interest in and attendance at church increased. The Reverend Stephen F. Dill, a theology student at Emory University, was the first pastor.

The Brookhaven Methodist Church, the Reverend Cecil Myers, pastor at that time, sponsored the organization of the Oglethorpe Estates Church. Letters were sent out to prospective members and a religious census was made. The Brookhaven Church contributed some furnishings, as did the Peachtree Road Church.

Following the Sunday morning worship service at which the Reverend C. L. Middlebrooks, District Superintendent, preached, the first quarterly conference of the new church was held September 11, 1949, the district superintendent presiding. The church was organized and stewards and trustees were elected on that date. The first trustees were: A. H. Bousman, J. E. Pittman, and N. L. Mason, each of whom was also elected a steward. Two other stewards, F. M. Alder and C. E. Miller were
The first report of the church to the Annual Conference was made in 1950, which showed a total membership of 44 with 80 enrolled in the church school. This progress had been made during the first conference year after organization of the church, from July 1949 to June, 1950. The Conference Board of Missions has each year, since the church was organized, either paid the pastor's salary or assisted materially in paying it. Students from the Emory theology school have served as the pastors of the church from the beginning. Other theology students have assisted in the work of the church and church school.

The pastors of the church have been: The Reverend Stephen F. Dill, 1949, 1950, and 1951; the Reverend Robert E. Bridges, 1952; The Reverend Jack P. Speer, 1953.

Soon after the organization of the church efforts were made by the stewards, trustees, the Reverend C. L. Middlebrooks, District Superintendent, the Reverend Stephen F. Dill, Pastor, and the Reverend Cecil Myers, Pastor Brookhaven Church, to find and purchase a lot on which to erect a church building. Mr. Fred B. Wilson, owner of the Oglethorpe Apartments, deeded a lot on Sexton Drive at Blair Circle to the church as a gift. In addition, Mr. Wilson has given to the church, since its inception,
the use of an apartment unit, rent free. Later an adjoining unit was rented. These units of the Oglethorpe Apartments are located at 2000 Johnson Ferry Road, apartments 1 and 2, Chamblee, Georgia. This has been the church home of the Oglethorpe Estates Church since July, 1949.

The church early became active in community affairs. It has sponsored Cub Scout and Boy Scout units, as well as a Brownie Girl Scout group. The Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Methodist Youth Fellowship were organized early in the life of the church and have been active in the church and community programs. The official Board has assumed more and more of the financial responsibility of the church until today the church pays four-fifths of the pastor's salary and the Conference Board of Missions pays one-fifth. A Methodist Men's Club was also begun under the leadership of the first pastor.

At the Annual Conference of 1950 the Oglethorpe Estates Church was transferred from the Decatur-Oxford District to the Atlanta-East District. On August 13, 1950 the Reverend Rembert Sisson, District Superintendent, held the first quarterly conference for 1950-51. The church had a total membership of 40 at that time. Oglethorpe Estates Church has remained in the Atlanta-East District
since the transfer. More space was needed for the church school, consequently, in October, 1951 the adjoining apartment unit was rented, giving the church two units.

At the Annual Conference in 1952 the Reverend Robert E. Bridges was assigned as the new pastor of the Oglethorpe Estates Church. He, like his predecessor, was a student in Emory's Candler School of Theology.

During the Conference year, 1952-53 the church made considerable progress. The membership grew from 65 in 1952 to 84 in 1953; the church school increased from 123 to 146, on roll. The Youth Fellowship was re-activated during the year and enlisted a large group of interested intermediate boys and girls.

At the Annual Conference of 1953, the Reverend Jack P. Speer, student Candler School of Theology, was assigned as pastor. The first quarterly conference was held August 19, 1953 by Dr. Nat G. Long, District Superintendent, who succeeded the Reverend W. M. Barnett.

Efforts were continued to find a lot on which to build. The church still owned the lot on Sexton Drive, but the Conference Board of Church Extension believed another site would be more advantageous. Finally, an available lot was located at the intersection of Ashford-Dunwoody and Johnson Ferry Roads. Dr. Pierce Harris, Pastor First Methodist Church, Atlanta, helped the church
to find the lot. Mr. T. R. Carlington sold the lot to our church at a reduced figure from the original price.

During 1952 the Annual Conference set aside funds for our church from Expansion Day offerings; and a grant from the General Board of Missions, Louisville, Kentucky, was secured under the direction of the two District Superintendents, the Reverend Rembert Sisson and the Reverend W. M. Barnett. With additional funds that Dr. Nat G. Long secured, and with money from the church's own building fund, the new lot was paid for in full and deeded to the trustees of the Oglethorpe Estates Church in March, 1954.

The membership of the church had worked long and faithfully in raising money for the building fund. Subscriptions had been secured and paid by the members. The Woman's Society of Christian Service and other organizations of the church engaged in various work projects to raise additional money for the building fund. The financial status of the church was on a sound basis, with the church meeting all of its obligations on time.

The Building Committee for 1954 was as follows:
E. P. Savage, chairman; Mrs. Jack Boyt, secretary;
R. N. Jones, treasurer; Mrs. J. G. Stephens, J. Platas, and Lawrence Mattox.
The Trustees for 1954 were as follows: E. P. Savage, R. N. Jones, Jack Boyt, A. E. Bowen, and W. L. Harrison.

(This history was compiled from the records of the quarterly conference, Oglethorpe Estates Church, from the Journals of the North Georgia Conference, and from interviews with members of the church, former district superintendents, and pastors.)