HISTORY

of

OUSLEY CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH
In the year 1857, just four years before the Civil War, a young minister, 33 years of age, was appointed to the DeKalb Circuit. His name was Newdaygate B. Ousley. His passion for Christ and the furtherance of His Kingdom sent this young minister throughout the section exhorting to small groups and forming new churches.

It was during this, his first appointment, that he founded Ousley Chapel Methodist Church. The first meeting of this new church was held at a brush arbor four miles from Decatur at the location of what is now Candler Road and McFee Road. The meeting was held in the year 1858 and some of the "Old Timers" tell us the church was first called "Brierwood". It is thought that services were held in the arbor in the summer and in homes during the winter for several years until a church building was erected.

Soon after the founding of the church, young Newdagate Ousley was sent on to new fields by the annual conference. During his ministry, he served as Presiding Elder, and in some of the larger pulpits in the South Georgia Conference.

Rev. Ousley's ministry was evangelistic and he wanted the world for a parish, so in later life he left the conference to do evangelistic preaching and was instrumental in furthering camp meetings as well as new church groups.

Rev. Ousley was the father of eight girls and one set of identical twin boys, and it was during the boys 19th year that Brother Ousley was on one of his numerous trips when he came to a frozen unbridged stream. He attempted to break the ice for his horses to pass and in so doing, fell and injured himself. A few days later, in 1894, he died and is buried at Moulon, Georgia.

During the Civil War, in the years 1861-1865, the area served by Ousley Chapel, as well as all the surrounding territory, was occupied by the Federal Troops. While the territory was taken over by the Federal Troops, and the South in general was in such a state of unrest, the church membership dropped off considerably, but in spite of all the grief and turmoil of the war years, there were a faithful few who held the mission together and it was during this time that the name was changed from Brierwood to Ousley Chapel in honor of its founder.

At the close of the war, the Chapel again started its uphill climb to form a church, and it was not until approximately 1880 that the present site was purchased from the Crowley family, paying $15.00 for 15 acres, and a building was erected on the site. It was a small frame building, but in 1924 Brother George T. Webb left in his will $1,000 to be used only for the erection of a new building. Therefore a committee consisting of C. C. Childress, T. C. Jackson, J. O. Carpenter, J. W. Toney, J. B. Loyd, L. A. Johnson, and W. D. Doby, with the assistance of Rev. W. J. Culpepper, gathered together and laid plans for the new brick building.

The conference has no record where any money was donated or loaned from the mission board for the construction of this new building. However, all necessary funds were not available and several of the men signed as collateral. In 1928 these men divided the indebtedness, paid it and dedicated the building.

Some of the pioneering families of Ousley Chapel are: Crowleys, Johnsons, Webbs, Clays, Tones, Carpenters, Scotts, Morgans, Barfields, Gladdens, Jacksons, Loyds, and the Dobys. Our oldest living member is Mrs. Sally Hughes, 82 years of age, and has been a member for 60 years.

Ousley Chapel remained a part of a circuit until 1944 and services were held once a month.
Being near Candler School of Theology, Ousley Chapel has always been an incubator where young preachers were stationed until they finished their theological course. This has been both helpful and harmful. Helpful in that the young ministers had inspiration and enthusiasm, but harmful due to short tenures. Over the last ten years, records reveal ten different ministers. These short term ministers were unable to build a program which had permanency. Some prominent ministers serving the church as students are: C. L. Middlebrooks and H. H. Jones, both now District Superintendents in the North Georgia Conference, W. E. McTier, District Superintendent of the South Georgia Conference, and former District Superintendents J. H. McKibben and Marvin Maxwell. The church was served by students from Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D. C.

In 1937 the Parsonage was built. The plans were laid and a day was set. The women prepared lunch and served it to the free laborers. At the end of the day, the parsonage was ready for occupancy.

Ousley Chapel in an "orphan" being independent as to help from a mother church or from any church.

At the close of World War II, a new sub-division of homes were built in our vicinity and the church began to grow. Realizing this, and knowing that if the church was to survive and keep pace with the growing need for a progressive Methodist Church in the community, the Conference, in July 1949, sent a young minister to Ousley Chapel. This young minister is Rev. William H. Ruff and he is the first full time pastor that Ousley Chapel has had in its 91 years of existence.

We are proud of our past, we are challenged by the present, and are hopeful of our future.