A SHORT HISTORY OF ST. JAMES METHODIST CHURCH, Athens, Ga.

In 1955 a study of Athens Methodism was made by a group of experts from Emory University. This study indicated that a Methodist Church was needed in the Five Points area of the city.

At the closing session of the North Georgia Conference, June 1956, The Reverend Hubert L. Flanagan, Jr. was appointed pastor of the Five Points area in Athens. There was no lot, no parsonage, no membership. Upon his arrival in Athens, Mr. Flanagan was given several hundred prospect cards listing those who had expressed an interest in a church in the Five Points section. Intense visitation of these prospects was begun and continued for a period of three months.

On October 7, 1956 at 4:00 P.M. the new church was officially organized at First Methodist Church, Athens. Sixty-seven people joined the church on that day.

A basement room was secured in the Henrietta Apartments for the first meeting place. On October 14 the first services were held in the basement apartment. There were approximately fifty-six people at church school and seventy-eight at the morning worship service.

During the month of October all the members of the Official Board, Committees, and Building Committee were appointed. Also during this first month a Quarterly Conference voted to purchase 2.9 acres of land at the corner of West Lake and Lumpkin for the future church site. This property was purchased for $30,000.

In November and December the men of the congregation worked hard, cleaning the lot and renovating the buildings, hoping that the church could move to its own property on Christmas Sunday. Through the work of these men and the blessings of God this almost impossible task was accomplished. Services were held on our own property December 23, 1956. Charter membership closed on December 30. At that time the church had 125 members.

At the beginning of the 1957 Conference Year, plans were begun for a new building. Dennis & Dennis, Architects from Macon, Georgia, were secured to draw plans. After months of study and discussion, the plans were adopted. A successful financial campaign was conducted and the plans were let for bids. The C. C. Robertson Construction Company received the contract. Enthusiasm was high on Sunday, April 10, 1960, when Mr. Doyle Terry, Chairman of the Building Committee broke ground for the new structure. The first service in the new building was held on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1961.

Having given six years of faithful, energetic, and inspired leadership, The Reverend Mr. Flanagan was transferred in June of 1962. During his pastorate the church was launched and grew to a membership of 361 members.

The Reverend Walter Y. Murphy came to St. James in July 1962. A new parsonage was purchased in January 1965.

Ground was broken for a new church school addition on November 15, 1964. The $130,000 facility, designed by the original architects and built by the Terry Development Corporation, was completed and consecrated August 29, 1965.

On June 7, 1966 Reverend Walter Y. Murphy became assistant to the President of Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida. He served St. James faithfully and well for four years.

The Reverend John M. Minter began his ministry at St. James in early July 1966. At the Annual Conference June 1968, 671 members were reported.