HISTORY

of

ST. MARK METHODIST CHURCH
SAINT MARK METHODIST CHURCH

Product of the effort of Business-like Religious Consecration

By

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(Member of St. Mark Board of Stewards)

Thousands of Atlantians come and go down the artery of traffic that is Peachtree street, psychologically if not physically, pausing a moment at Fifth street to admire Saint Mark Methodist Church.

Saint Mark stands as a sort of symbol of efficient business-management in the service of the Lord. According to one of its historians, Mr. W.F. Cruselle, Saint Mark was established at the fork of Peachtree and Plaster roads at a point called "Tight Squeeze". It has always served where there was a "tight squeeze" toward accomplishment; yet the challenges which the church has faced have always been met by a "pay-as-you-go" policy. It has lately met one of its typical challenges when building has been extremely hard in any field, of extending its church plant.

Combined with the need for more room for a growing congregation and its activities in its latest challenge, was the desire of Saint Mark's congregation for church beauty in the heart of Atlanta. And so today St. Mark stands on Atlanta's artery of traffic in all its pristine beauty, a greater asset than ever to an everlasting quality of city-beauty and community-beauty, and without debt or financial encumbrance for its future congregations to shoulder without themselves deciding church-policy, so that they, as future congregations, may better meet current challenges.

Saint Mark's policy of pay-as-you-go allows a current congregation the inspiration that a democratic approach to any problem always brings. The current congregation of a church can always run the church in the most modern manner, and best meet its
current challenges. Interest charges are often a financial drag upon a church which deeply touches spiritual attitudes and ideals.

Though Saint Mark is known for its many wealthy members who know each other in downtown business as well as they do in the church, and though this type of membership contributes to the church in a notably generous manner, realizing that they will get the full money's-worth of any spiritual investment of their money, there is more than one school-teacher on the Saint Mark Board of Trustees; and that most important chairman of its building operations, though an owner in one of Atlanta's best and oldest businesses, is a man who still works on the floor of his business. Activity of mind toward his ideal and faith in religion as a great and constructive force in the city of Atlanta, rather than wealth, characterizes a very effective segment of Saint Mark membership, and its contribution is often far more effective in service than in money. Brotherhood in the church extends itself into better brotherhood in business as well as in religion, and in community as well as in church.

The rotating quality of Saint Mark's Board of Stewards makes of it a large and constantly mobile group; a different group of men "pass the plate" every Sunday. Saint Mark has both the large and the small contributor, equally valuable, the one for special bequests, the other for great, constant, and broad support of its program.

The beautiful Winship-Walters chapel was given this year by Mrs. Frances Winship Walters. And the late Mr. Lee Walker left a munificent gift which was to challenge the congregation of Saint Mark to match it for funds for a re-decoration of the church and for building our beautiful new "Educational Building", the congregation several times augmenting the original gift with extra quotas as zeal for better buildings and equipment mounted.

Saint Mark moved from "Tight Squeeze" to Merritts Avenue about 1874, as its congregation built homes in that section of the city. One of the first Merritts Avenue pastors was a "junior preacher", because of his powerful sermons called by the congregation, "The Boy Bishop", Warren Aiken Candler. Like business, Saint Mark has always been a mobile and flexible church, adjusting itself to its congregation in that democratic approach to its problems of building and location and expansion.
which too often tear churches apart, making major changes a matter of closer cohesion and re-dedication. No whimsy can develop when every member is consulted at length and in some detail before new enterprises, considered from the angle of the many business-men and business-women who make up its congregation, is undertaken. But cooperation, and consideration, make impersonal decisions challenges to the average member who feels that his opinion has been weighed. Businesslike action soon follows democratically arrived-at decisions. And Saint Mark's finances have always been managed by business folk attracted to the church largely by such methods of church-management as parallel what they know to be good-business; here they get to know other religious-minded business-folk; and church-friendship often leads to business relationships founded on religious brotherhood and faith in it as an important factor in Atlanta's business as well as in Atlanta's religious life. It would be an interesting study to find out something of the vast influence of this church on Atlanta's success as a great business-center of the South. The roster of her Board of Stewards includes so many of Atlanta's prominent business-folk that to mention any name would mean neglect of hundreds which space would not permit mentioning.

Saint Mark's beautiful stained-glass windows, particularly the great rose window over the pulpit, and the new windows in the Walters chapel, testify to the devotion of some of the membership able to invest in beauty as an aid to worship in a great church congregation. The late Mr. Robert Peel worked tirelessly to put the finest organ that could be bought into the great nave of the church.

It is interesting to note that the Saint Mark congregation worshipped with the North Avenue Presbyterians while the present church was being built; the presbyterians in turn, used the old Merritts Avenue church while they were building their present church. Religious cooperation typifying that business cooperation which has made Atlanta a great city, extends itself today particularly in Saint Mark's great Bible Class, the Judge Warner Hill Class. Here Atlanta's businessmen notably meet, as "The Boys", enjoying a fine religious fellowship largely out of business acquaintance without too much regard as to church creed, but with great appreciation of church brotherhood. Dr. Joseph Owen, under whose ministry the Winship Walters chapel was built was evangelical, and understood the spirit
of this great Atlanta church, and combined his Christian preaching with keen and practical sense, with humor, and with many an appeal out of his understanding, rich in its reward of a more spiritual economic vision. He moved among the people who lately rehabilitated the Saint Mark Church at a time when labor of the type that was necessary was so hard to command, as though the workers were a new congregation as definite in their need as those who listened to him on Sunday. And labor responded, accomplishing one of the finest pieces of work in the shortest time ever recorded in Atlanta, true to the spirit of Saint Mark which has made business efficiency a tool toward Christianity.

The new pastor of St. Mark, Dr. John W. Horton, comes from a sister city of business, Birmingham, where he has highly successful in making the church an integral part of the lives of men and women keenly alive to the importance of economics in Christianity, and of the responsibility if business men to any Christianity capable of the sort of world-brotherhood about which the United Nations is built. Thus St. Mark Methodist Church unites that energy and initiative and creative Christianity with everyday living which makes the world go round, not only in Atlanta, but in China and India, and which calls to herself preachers beyond the orbit of the narrow state "Conference", and send to the call of other churches and other mission fields, her pastors who catch the vision of making "The American Way" of productive efficiency, an ally of Christianity.

It was under the pastorate of Dr. Lester Rumble that the idea of the Walters-Winship chapel and the new church-school rooms were begun. Dr. Rumble was pastor of St Mark longer than any other pastor has ever served, ten years.

Little Annie Bates, now Mrs. Leach, niece of Mrs. George Walters, donor of our beautiful chapel, with her little play-shovel, threw the first shovel of dirt when the present main-building was begun in 1901.

General Clement A. Evans, of War Between the States fame, was at one time pastor of St. Mark.
5. St. Mark

Rev. I.S. Hopkins, President of Emory University at another period, was also one of St. Mark's pastors. His daughter, long the administrator of the Atlanta Carnegie Library, was Miss Jessie Hopkins.

It would be unfair to speak of St. Mark without mentioning the McCord brothers, H.Y. and Joe. They were responsible for the roomy lot upon which the church could expand, adding to its original lot the Woodward lot and home, which, for a number of years, was used for classrooms.

The Woolleys and Seydells, adding to Atlanta's initiative and individuality, were long members of St. Mark.

Mrs. B.K. Clapp remembers Dr. Alonzo Monk as being the great church-builder at the turn of the century when the main building was erected. She mentions Dr. R.J. Bigham as being one of the church's outstanding intellectuals of this early day.

There is a window memorializing the Reverend P.A. Heard, pastor from 1894-1897.

The roster of St. Mark pastors is:

W.C. Dunlap, 1876
W.L. Anderson, 1877
W.A. Candler, 1878-1880
W.F. Roberson, 1881
H.L. Crumley, 1882-1883
R.J. Bigham, 1884-1885
M.H. Dillard, 1886-1887
E.J. Christian, 1888-1889
C.A. Evans, 1890
T.S. Hopkins, 1890-1893
J.M. Lowry, 1893
P.A. Heard, 1894-1897
R.W. Bigham, 1898
R.R. Eakes, 1899-1900
Dr. Alonzo Monk, 1901-1903
Dr. C.O. Jones, 1903-1907
Dr. S.R. Belk, 1907-1910
A.M. Hughlett, 1910-1914
W.R. Hendrix, 1914-1918
Walter Anthony, 1918-1920
S.R. Wasson, 1920-1922
J.B. Mitchell, 1922-1926
W.L. Duren, 1926-1930
H.C. Burgen, 1930-1934
J.W. Johnson, 1934-1937
Lester Rumble, 1937-1947
Joseph Owen, 1947-1949
John Horton, 1949-

Presiding Elders

J.R. Evans, 1876
W.F. Cook, 1877-1880
Jesse Boring, 1881-1883
H.H. Parker, 1883-1885
W.F. Glenn, 1885-1890
J.W. Heidt, 1890-1894
W.F. Cook, 1895-1897
W.B. Stradley, 1898-1904
C.E. Drummond, 1904
J.H. Eakes, 1905-1907
J.L. Davis, 1907-1910
W.F. Lovejoy, 1911-1914
A.M. Hughlett and J.H. Eakes, 1915-1918
J.H. Eakes, 1919-1920
W.H. LaPrade Jr., 1920-1922