

THE SEARCY MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY

The Searcy Memorial Methodist Church of Griffin was established as the Third Methodist Church in September of 1903, Rev. W. A. J. Knowles and Col. W. E. H. Searcy were the founders. It grew out of a Sunday School which was held in the home of Mrs. Morrison during 1901 and 1902.

In the Fall of 1903, Mrs. H. R. Kilgore and her children picked the cotton off the plot of ground on which the church was hurriedly built. The session of the North Georgia Conference appointed Rev. W.A.J. Knowles as Pastor and he served the new church for four years.

Col W. E. H. Searcy, J. J. George, G. W. Harwell, Mrs. J. M. Jones and Mrs. H. R. Kilgore were some of the charter members of the church.

From 1903 until his Death in March 1928, Col. W. E. H. Searcy was Superintendent of the Sunday School and Chairman of the Board of Stewards. Col. Searcy rendered twenty-eight years of faithful service to the church and especially to the young people.

After the Death of Col. Searcy, the church elected his son, Judge W. E. H. Searcy, Jr. to succeed his father as Superintendent of the Sunday School and as Chairman of the Board of Stewards. He gave the church eleven years of faithful service, being active in his work up to his Death.

The Church Conference of September 30, 1934 adopted a resolution to change the name of the church from Third Methodist Church to Searcy Memorial Methodist Church. This action of the church conference was confirmed by the Fourth Quarterly Conference which was held at the Church October 14, 1934. The original church was torn down in 1947 and a two story educational plant was constructed while the Rev. Bill Sleamaker was Pastor. With many ups and downs the membership struggled toward organizing a building committee and adopted a program to raise the much needed money.

The Reverend Clyde Callaway, District Superintendent, presided over a called church conference on October 20, 1959, which adopted resolutions to enter a sanctuary building program and a bond program

to finance the building program. Within two weeks the bonds were sold and the plans released for construction bids. Mr. Lee Gogg, Architect and Contractor, Athens, Georgia, donated the awarded the contract. The ground-breaking service was presided over by Rev. J. C. Callaway, on November 10, The first service was held in the new Sanctuary on March, 20, 1960, with Rev. J. Clyde, Superintendent of the Griffin, District, preaching. The Homecoming is to be the Sunday that is the closest to March 20th.

The Altar Ware was given in Memory of Mrs. Flara Moss Jones, by the Jones Family. The Grand Piano was given in memory of Col. W.E.H. Searcy, Sr. and Judge W. E. H. Searcy, Jr., by Mr. and Mrs. W.E.H. Searcy, III. The Hanging Illuminated Cross was give in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Butler by their children. The Offering Plates were given by the Marcus Purmonts and the C.W. Conners.

Ministers who pastored at Searcy: Rev W.A.J. Knowles, Rev. Bill Sleamaker, Rev. John H. Lane, Rev. Sidney Lanier, Rev. Frank Moorehead, Rev. J.S. Hill, Rev. W.P. Rowe, Rev. A.W. Conway, Rev. W.E. Dennedy, Rev. B.W. Kilpatrick, Rev. Kenny Verran, Rev. P.H. Stokes, Rev. Alton Davis, Rev. A.S. Ulm, Rev. A.D. Echols, Rev. W.R. Williams, Rev. J.C. Adams, Rev. H.D. Pace, Rev. J.D. Foster, Rev. W.P. Carmichael, Rev. Clyde Blackstock, Rev. Ray Dunahoo, Rev. C.H. Naish, Rev. Emmett L. Rape:

1964: Rev. C.H. Wheelis; 1965: Rev. J. Felton Harden; 1967: Rev. W.L. Gooch; 1968: Rev. R. Steven Lisenby; 1971: Rev. Robert W. Smith; 1973: Rev. Charles E. Hassell; 1976: Rev. Maurice M. Moore. Rev. Richard Taylor; 1979: Rev. Bernie Harris; 1979: Rev. Kenneth Godfrey.