

South Bend Methodist church was organized in 1886 from Oakland Church situated on the corner of Jonesboro Road and Lakewood Terrace in what is now known as Lakewood Heights. Oakland was organized in 1868 from Trinity Church.

The property for Oakland was donated by Col. John Miller Clark Reid, a Colonel in the Confederate Army in the Civil War. His home was Hexagon Hall, the scene of much Southern hospitality. Col. Reid realized the necessity of a church in this community and did much toward its organization.

Among the charter members were Col. and Mrs. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Thurman, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Todd, Sr., Mr. Robert Todd, Jr., and Mr. George Todd.

The church grew and was the scene of many wonderful revivals and meetings. On one special occasion Gov. Alfred Colquett and General Clement Evans were guest speakers.

The church cemetery, which was located across the road from the church, was being threatened with extinction because the Atlanta Water Works was to be located in that section. So the cemetery and church was removed from that location and established on its present site. Since that time the name of the church has been the South Bend Methodist Church.

The first pastor to serve South Bend was the Rev. Brooks. Others who have served this charge are: The Rev. M.M. Marks, O.B. Quillian, W.E. Tarpley, R.A. Seals, W.O. Butler, M.L. Underwood, Dock Dodson, W.F. Robinson, I.P. Neese, E.K. Akin, and Bob Eakes. The pastor now serving the charge is Rev. Jesse Hill Warwick.

Easter morning, April 9, 1939, tragedy struck the church.

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Rev. Fred Gwin had just finished reading the text for the sermon when the roof of the church burst into flames. A defective flue was later found to be the source of the fire. The members of the congregation managed to save the piano, 21 pews, and a few hymn books. The church building, however, was a total loss. But this was not all of the tragedy. The church carried no insurance and adding more darkness to the shadow which darkened the scene was the fact that many of the members were out of work at that time.

The 61 members banded themselves together to replace their church. Sunday school and preaching services were conducted in the homes of the members until a small tabernacle could be erected on the north-west corner of the church lot. The first service in this little tabernacle was held Sunday May 21, 1939. Seventy-three people attended Sunday School and 62 worshiped at the regular morning hour. At this meeting plans were drawn up for the rebuilding of the church.

The Quarterly Conference elected the following men to compose the Building Committee: Chairman: R.E. Tarleton, W.L. Duncan, Homer Pair, M.J. Sullivan, and Lavata Jordan, secretary and treas.

The splendid response of the members and generous donations from their friends and the public in money, material and labor, made it possible to start the new church late in August, 1939.

The new church was a modern frame structure. The length was 50 ft., width 30ft., the choir loft 12X 14. Two Sunday School rooms at the back of the church were 17 X 14 ft. When the church was completed the building committee discovered there were enough funds remaining to install a furnace.

The official opening of the church was on November 12, 1939.

This was in the nature of a home-coming day. The Rev. D.C. Starnes preached at the morning hour. Dinner was served in the church yard after the service. After dinner Perry Bloodworth and Earnest Bell made short talks.

The church was taken from the Atlanta District and transferred to the Griffin District.

The Rev. Jesse Hill Warwick, the present pastor, has stimulated the membership of the church into building a new parsonage which is now complete. This modern, six-room brick parsonage, fully furnished is a credit to the members of South Bend Methodist church.

The church at the 1952 Annual Conference was transferred back to the Atlanta-East District.