

THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF THOMSON IN THE MID-CENTURY YEAR, 1951

The information given heretofore in this history is copied from "A History Of McDuffie County Georgia" and was written by Miss Clara Stovall, a member of the Thomson Church. This History was published in 1935.

Since 1935 the town of Thomson has grown considerably. ~~New~~ New industries have been established and many new residents have become permanent citizens. The Church has grown at an even greater speed than the town. The membership saw many of its young men members go off to the second World War. Some in the National Guard Unit which makes Thomson its home. In the years since the War a number of notable things have happened. Under the leadership of ev. C.A. Hall and Rev. R.L. Gilmore the members saw that a new educational plant was needed. Some money, about \$8000. was raised while Brother Gilmore was Pastor and while Rev. W.H. Gardner lead.

In 1944, the Rev. Charles L. Allen came as Pastor. Under his dynamic leadership and because of the rising tide of interest and prosperity with the close of the war the Church made real its long cherished dream of a new educational plant. Construction started in 1946 and the new Sunday School Annex was completed in the spring of 1947. The old Sunday School Annex was remodeled and there was added new departments all the way back though the block to Church Street. The Church has sufficient room for a Church School with attendance of 600. Thoroughly departmentalized. There are several interesting features to this addition. The New Giliad Methodist Church building was torn down and moved to become a part of the Thomson Methodist Sunday School. The old Pews, ceilings and floors were made an integral part of the second floor. A beautiful, "Country Church Chapel" preserves all the atmosphere of the Church and is used for a ladies classroom, small weddings and youth worship services. There is also on the second story a roof garden or play deck. The Primary department wing was furnished by Mr George Downing as a memorial to his wife and two small children who perished in an air accident.

The crowning addition was opened in the spring of 1948. It is the Knox Memorial Chapel which opens to the side of the Church Street Entrance. This Chapel seats about 120 persons. It is of the pure simple colonial style with white pews trimmed in Mahogany. The classic lines are inspiring. A wurlitzer organ furnishes the music for weddings for which this beautiful chapel is often used by couples from Thomson and as far away as Augusta. It is also used as a place for the mid-week service, christenings etc. This chapel was a gift of the family of Mr and Mrs P.S. Knox Sr. who were lost in the disastrous Winehoff fire of 1947.

The new Church School Annex and Chapel were valued at \$84000 when constructed and are worth much more now.

The Church Sanctuary proper was in great need of repair when the Rev. Y.A. Oliver came as Pastor in the summer of 1948. So was the Parsonage. Under the leadership of the present Pastor the Sanctuary has been completely renovated. The old pulpit was refinished and some remodeling was done around the pulpit area. Beautiful new carpets were spread after all the old plastering was torn out and new put up. The floors were refinished.

Memorial windows were installed in the ten opening that did not contain these windows. An Unique contribution was the construction of a solid walnut communion table by a local craftsman, Mr Henry Hogan who gave the table as a memorial to his wife.

The Parsonage has ~~also~~ also been completely renovated. Repair and construction work during the term of the present Pastor are valued at \$25000. The entire plant is free of debt.

The Church employs a full-time Secretary who also serves as director of children's work. For three years there was a part-time Youth Director employed. Mission specials are contributed and a wide range of other Benevolences. The present budget is about \$18000, exclusive of Women's work and the Sunday School. For the Conference Year 1950-51 almost \$35000 was spent including building. The resident retired minister is also the Associate Pastor. There are 865 members of the Thomson Church and 38 of the Salem Church which is served as an afternoon appointment. The Pastor's Salary is \$5000.

Prospects are for continued growth and in the near future the church will probably be the mother to a new church in North Thomson.

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