Trinity United Methodist Church began with the consolidation of two area Methodist churches. Hamilton Street Methodist Church and Morris Street Church were both small congregations who felt led to unite into one fellowship.

On December 11, 1963, a joint quarterly conference was held to consider a resolution that would effect the merger of the Hamilton Street and Morris Street congregations. On January 6, 1964, the vote was taken to merge. The vote was: Hamilton Street - 35 Yes; 6 No; 1 neutral. Morris Street - 54 Yes; 29 No; 5 neutral. Pastors at the time of the merger were Rev. Landon T. Carey of Hamilton Street, and Rev. James H. Snell, Jr. of Morris Street. Both church properties were sold and the new church met in Morris Street facility until July 1965. On July 1, 1965, the new church met in the North Dalton School until completion of the new building at its present site at Fields Avenue and Mitchell Street.

Trinity Church was born officially on July 1, 1964. The first pastor appointed to Trinity at the 1964 Conference was Rev. Jim W. Winn.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on March 28, 1965, at 3:00 p.m. and the church containing 14,500 sq. ft. of floor space and a normal seating capacity of 375, was erected at the cost of approximately $218,000. Trinity Church was formally opened for services on Sunday, May 29, 1965 at an open house where approximately a thousand members and guests attended. Consecration services for the new building were held on June 5, 1966.

The congregation realized almost immediately that a second phase of construction would be needed for church school classes were meeting in offices and hallways. On August 19, 1976, under the leadership of Hoyt Jenkins, Trinity voted to approve the construction of new facilities. These contained approximately 44,000 sq. ft. of educational space, additional parking and a drive-through carport at a cost of $113,600. Groundbreaking for the new construction was held on April 13, 1977 and the consecration on December 18, 1977.

Some additions to Trinity to enhance outreach to its members and the community were: An older adult ministry, the Jolly Elders, begun in 1975 to meet the needs of older adults, a one-half day Kindergarten program began in 1967 which has expanded into the Early Childhood Education Center, and both Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs.
Music Ministry is a very important aspect of Trinity. Besides the Adult Chancel Choir, there are both youth and children's choirs. A handbell ministry began in 1987. Choir directors have included; Darry Pilkington, Melvin Morgan, Larry Floyd, Jim Kirkpatrick and currently Jackie Weaver. Church musicians are Virginia Day, Elizabeth Rowland and Janice Patterson.

In 1973, a student associate was added to work with youth. Paid youth workers have been Bill Bidle, Avery Daniels, Jim Sanders and currently Darren Thornton.

Those who have served as secretaries at Trinity are Margaret Dantzler, Virginia Day, Barbara McClain, Marla Brackett Randolph, Joran Roy Clements, Starr Whaley, Brenda Jones, and currently Joyce Strickland and Ethelyn Greeson.


In June of 1988, Trinity had a "note burning" ceremony. This year of 1994 brings a celebration of 30 years of ministry at Trinity and we look forward to what God has in store for us in the future.

Homecoming, April 24, 1994
1989 History Update

The ministry in 1989 continued under the leadership of co-pastors Linda Hessel and Darryl Hessel, choir director Jackie Weaver, church secretaries Joyce Strickland and Ethelyn Greeson. Ralph Wall was employed as youth director from August 24 to December 1. Hazel Nix continued as director of Early Childhood Education Center.

A cherub choir, ages four years to first grade, and a youth hand bell choir was begun during the year. The adult bell choir which began in 1988 was continued. An adequate supply of the new United Methodist Hymnal was purchased for choir and congregation.

An additional worship service at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday was added in the spring to attempt to meet the various needs of people in the church membership. Heritage Sunday, sponsored by COSROW, celebrated the contributions of women in the history of Trinity Church. A Children's Church is being conducted at the 11:00 a.m. service.

The celebration of our twenty-fifth anniversary on June 25, 1989, was a meaningful and pleasant occasion when all former pastors and employees were invited back. The first pastor at Trinity, Rev. Jim Winn, delivered the message at the 11:00 a.m. service. Others attending were Rev. Claude Singleton, Rev. Al Turnell, District Superintendent Rev. W. A. Tyson, Jr., and Darlene Nichelson, Director of Christian Education.

The church continues to march forward with love and enthusiasm for the future as we attempt to meet the needs of the people as they unfold.
1990 History Update

The ministry has continued this year under the leadership of pastors, Linda and Darryl Hessel, choir director, Jackie Weaver, church secretary Joyce Strickland and Ethelyn Greeson administrative assistant. Hazel Nix continued as director of the Early Childhood Education Center and Shirley Hopkins assistant director. In December, Darren Thornton was employed as youth director. The congregation had the rare privilege of witnessing the ordination of one of its pastors as Linda Hessel received her Elders Orders at Annual Conference.

All previous ministries and activities have continued as the previous year. The youth choir made a tour during June to several churches out of state and it was a very growing experience for the youth as they shared a ministry in music.

An older adult group was reorganized known as the "Keen Agers". The monthly meetings and trips to points of interests meets a need for many participating in this group.

A new missionary outreach has begun by several Sunday School Classes with involvement in the Shalom Soup Kitchen. This is a kitchen in town that feeds the homeless and poor.

Some additions and improvements have been made to our facilities to provide needed services, storage and enhance our ministry. A fifteen passenger van was purchased, a baby grand piano was purchased for the sanctuary as a memorial for some deceased members and a desk for sound equipment was added to the sanctuary. A wall of cabinets was built in the parlor to provide additional storage, space for historical records, memorabilia, and kitchen serving items. The sanctuary and the parsonage have been redecorated during the past year.

With God's help we go into the next year with an anticipation to continue to grow in Christ as we attempt to serve him with the blessings of the past.

The congregation had the rare privilege of witnessing the ordination of one of its pastors as Linda Hessel received her Elder Orders at Annual Conference.
1991 History Update

The ministry at Trinity has continued with the same pastors as in 1990. The entire staff has remained the same. They are listed below.

Pastor, The Rev. Darryl Hessel
Co-Pastor, The Rev. Linda Hessel
Administrative Assistant, Ethelyn Greeson
Secretary, Joyce Strickland
Choir Director, Jackie Weaver
Youth Director, Darren Thornton
ECEC Director, Hazel Nix
ECEC Assistant Director, Shirley Hopkins

Most ministries have continued and we have been involved in a variety of outreach ministries. Some of them are Meals on Wheels, Wednesday morning visitation, DOC-UP, Softball, Providence Ministries, Shalom Soup Kitchen, Scouting Programs, UMCOR, and our own food pantry.

A new adult Sunday School Class has begun. Seventeen new members were received into the church. The Barnabas Program for nurture and encouragement was adopted and initiated in the Sunday School and Sunday morning worship to express our caring for absentees.

The Last Supper Drama was added to our Holy Week events. Home-coming was held on a Sunday in June. The "Hanging of the Greens" service was conducted in Advent. The early Sunday morning worship service was discontinued in the fall and pre-Sunday-School Praise Gathering was added.

The youth choir went on tour to Midwest and Chicago. Their musical, Surrender, was well received. The youth also, attended a summer retreat at Panama City focusing on "The Armour of God", planned by leadership of Darren Thornton. A youth advisory committee of adults and youth was organized to assist in planning programs and expand volunteer participation.

Stewardship was emphasized at the beginning of the calendar year with focus on commitment in service and tithing. Many people began tithing for the first time and some continued greater than the tithe. Giving has been greater than in past years in spite of economic hard times in the community.

The parsonage was renovated inside and out. The sanctuary carpet and seat covers were replaced and all walls painted. New Port-A-Cribs replaced built-in beds in the nursery and the walls painted.
The Boy Scouts Troop #62 has had three Eagle Scouts and one Bronze Palm awards earned this year. The scouts attended summer camp for the 33rd consecutive year and received fifty-five merit badges and progress awards. One Eagle project replaced the sidewalk on the south side of the church building.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit we look forward to next year for greater growth in spirit and in service which will produce overall growth in Thy Church.
1992 History Update

The staff at Trinity has been the same this year as the previous year. Our ministry has sought to be active in some local missions reflecting our concern for people in our community as well as being a part of a connectional ministry. In our efforts we attempted to make prayer and commitment in faith be our emphasis.

Our newly formed "Outreach Ministry" initiated a variety of programs in an effort to touch the lives of people in our surrounding area who are unchurched. Two bicycle clinics, two movie nights, and a neighborhood cookout when several bicycles and a tricycle were given away, were held during the summer.

Several sessions were held on Wednesday nights dealing with current issues such as, the lottery, abortion, euthanasia, and pornography. We discontinued aid to the Shalon Soup Kitchen which feeds the homeless and poor since the kitchen ceased operation. The education work area made a new approach for Vacation Bible School with a weekend experimental event. Its focus was the story of Noah's Ark which was carried over to Rally Day. The first Disciple Class was held this year.

We hosted a Lay Witness Mission in November and six small groups are continuing to meet regularly for spiritual growth, Christian disciplines and prayer. The "Barnabas" program has continued with visitation training and visitation days.

In the area of stewardship we used a "90-Day Money Rack Guarantee" to again encourage trial attempts at tithing. Not all have followed through due to economic circumstances. We have encountered some difficulty with finances due to the economy, however, by the grace of God we have accomplished much that reflects the Glory of God.

The dedication of one Sunday per month designed to encourage children participation has begun. On other Sundays children go to children's church for the time during the sermon. On Good Friday we held a "Service of Nails" which was a new and inspirational experience. Another special service was the All Saints Day memorializing of members who have died since June 1, 1988.

The youth participated in a Florida Summer Retreat. Also, several youth joined in a six-week program on peer counseling to develop a youth leadership corp. The youth choir toured to New Orleans. Their musical, "Revival in the Land", was also, well received.

Darren Thornton, our youth director, attended Youth Ministries University, a week long training event for youth counselors.
Two Boy Scouts received Eagle rank this year and several Scouts attended the Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimmaron, New Mexico. One Eagle project was to dig the foundation and pour the concrete for a sidewalk around the playground. The Cub Scout Pack and Girl Scout units have been active this year.

The men in United Methodist Men, including some women and youth, participated in the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon Labor Day weekend. The Conference Rock Eagle Spiritual Retreat was meaningful for twelve men attending.

The United Methodist Women received the "Five Star" certificate by following a program of studies, meetings and givings. We had two missionaries from Spain and Russia for a program which was a very enlightening experience. We had twenty-two people to attend the Dalton District Spiritual Growth Retreat which was held at Simpsonwood. Linda Hessel and Jackie Weaver were the leaders.

The ECEC has aided in making improvements to the physical facilities. Some of them are the building of cabinets, and assisted in tiling the floor and painting the walls of restrooms.

The Chancel Choir members attended training at Junaluska, NC in the fall. An orchestra involving several youth during the morning worship service has begun. Jackie Weaver, choir director, attended a training event in Florida to improve the music program.

The house and surrounding land of the late Roy and Gussie Evans, directly across Mitchell Street from the church was given to the church by the Evans family. The trustees have made some repairs to the property and rented to secure funds to maintain. Among the major improvements to the church building have been a new roof on the south wing, tile floors in the restrooms, and refurbished the east exterior entrance to the sanctuary. The Faithful Inquirers Class has undertaken the refurbishing of the parlor.

As we end another year of ministry at Trinity, we pray for guidance as we go into a new calendar year. May the numbers and Spirit grow in all areas of service we undertake.
1993 History Update

In June, Trinity welcomed Fred Johnson to serve as pastor. In January, 1993, Ethelyn Greeson retired and is now Financial Secretary and Joyce Strickland, Administrative Assistant. The rest of the staff remained the same.

The 1993 goal of the Commission on Education was to have a Sunday School program that produced increased attendance and Christian growth. Both of these goals were accomplished. A new approach was tried for VBS with a weekend Bible School. Classes were held Friday thru Sunday concluding with a churchwide picnic on Sunday afternoon.

Audrey Burgess was our nominee for Excellence in Christian Education.

Mrs. Frances Burchfield was honored by our preschool and children's division for her many years of service. Also, the nursery was decorated.

Darren Thornton, our youth director, attended the Youth Ministries University for a week of training (2nd year). Eighteen youth and adults went to Murphy-Harpst-Vashti Children's Home on a work mission.

The Adult and Family division sent representatives to the Bishop's Convocation on the Family and other conferences. Family Acolytes have become a part of morning worship.

The Music program which is such a vital part of our worship continues to grow. Our Chancel Choir has increased by 25%. They presented an Easter Drama, a Christmas concert and represented the church in Helen, GA, at Thanksgiving. They hosted the Continental Singers. Twenty-Three youth and adults went on tour in June. The ongoing program involves children, youth, adults and a handbell choir.

Through Outreach and special offerings, the church supported Wesley Homes, our own youth's mission trip and the Decatur Children's Home. We also have our Angel Tree and White Christmas program as well as our ongoing food pantry and support of DOC-UP. Through the efforts of the United Methodist Men Outreach raised money for supplies and sent 8 people to Mexico to help build a church and reach out to people there. Our own members were reached through a Sunday morning visitation program, visiting 23 families during morning worship time.

In August and old fashion brush arbor revival was held with an average attendance of 127.

The United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men both participate annually in Spiritual Growth Retreats. In addition, UMW sent representatives to conferences, mini missions and new officers training in Chicago. They continue to present Baby memberships and send gifts to mission in each baby's name.

In our efforts to be good stewards of our facilities the following things were accomplished:

1. The west end of the building was roofed and gutters were repaired.
2. Necessary improvements were made to the Evans property.
3. New software and a folding machine was purchased.
4. The nursery was refurbished.
5. Church policies were brought up to date and into compliance with the Discipline.
6. On November 7, we dedicated the renovations and new furnishings in the Church parlor in honor and memory of the members of the Faith Sunday School class which meets and has met in the Parlor for approximately 25 years.

7. The church continues to work diligently at the Fair Booth, which allows us to be good stewards of our time, our energy and our church facilities.

On October 23, the Council of Ministries held a planning retreat at Cohutta Springs. Past accomplishments and programs were reviewed and plans made for 1994. The theme "EACH ONE REACH ONE" was adopted.

The church continues to march forward with love and enthusiasm as every person will be challenged to win at least one person to the church during the coming year. Every Sunday School Class, every committee or group should begin and end by asking God's guidance in reaching out to each other, not just the active, but to the inactive as well as beyond the walls of our church.
1995-1998 History Update

In August of 1995, a church conference was called to consider building a Family Life Center. District Superintendent D. McArthur Brantley presided. Plans for the center were presented. After much discussion, the proposal to build was presented. Members approved the building.

Proceeds from the sale of a house and lot donated by the Roy Evans family began the fund-raising drive. A recommendation was made that the center be named Evans Family Life Center in recognition of this gift. All classes and organizations in the church were asked to work toward raising money for the building fund.

The Commission on Education nominated Max Caylor, Trinity Sunday School Superintendent, for the district level Excellence in Christian Education Award. He became the District Christian Educator of the Year for the Dalton District.

A new class for children’s mission studies began on Sunday evenings. The class raised money to purchase a goat to be presented to Heifer International.

Liz Keith began a puppet ministry involving children and youth.

The pastor taught a newly organized class on Methodists Beliefs for adults.

Each of the years included in this period include on-going ministries: Vacation Bible School, Wednesday night dinner with Bible study for adults and children’s and youth classes; youth fund-raisers and couples retreats; revivals, and special calendar events centered around Easter, Christmas, etc.

In 1996 the Commission on Education re-structured the Children’s and Youth Division by moving 6th graders into the Youth Department. Fire-on-the-Mountain, an area-wide interdenominational revival designed especially for youth was organized. (This revival has become an annual event.)

Fund raising for the Family Life Center remained a central focus.

The Early Childhood Education Center closed after thirty years of sponsoring a program for children. State funded Pre-K programs in public schools took away so many students that the center became financially impossible.

In 1997 Lori Munn, a Trinity college student selected by Summer of Sharing China Program and National Council of Churches of Christ, was spiritually and financially supported on a mission trip to China. She was one of only ten in the United States to be selected.
Also in 1997, a history of Trinity's Beginning was published. The story highlighted events from 1963-1966. (A copy of this history is included in this report.)

In 1998 Trinity hosted a Bible School of Hispanic children who live in the neighborhood. This program has grown into other mission projects. In August school supplies were collected and distributed to needy Hispanic children. The district Hispanic mission worker provided by the North Georgia Conference began a Sunday worship service at Trinity for Hispanic families. A Thanksgiving dinner for Hispanic families was held at the church. Local churches donated turkeys. Trinity members helped with cooking and serving. A Christmas dinner for families was also held at the church, along with a party for the children.

With continued support from the church, this ministry will grow and become a major outreach of Trinity United Methodist Church.