A HISTORY
OF
UNDERWOOD MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH
1671 Howell Mill Road, N. W.
Atlanta 18, Georgia

ORGANIZATION OF CHURCH AND CHURCH HISTORY THROUGH 1951--------BY
FRED SPRINGER, JR.

A DECADE OF YEARS (A HISTORY OF YEARS 1951-1961)----------BY
MRS. R. H. HARPER, JR.

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HISTORY OF UNDERWOOD MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH  
Atlanta, Georgia

In the fall of the year 1914, the community stretching along the length of Howell Mill Road was growing out of the infant stage. New settlers were moving in and building homes for themselves so that next door neighbors were no longer a mile apart, but in many cases only a block away.

In this migration a few Methodists moved into the community and found themselves forced to return to their old churches or visit one of another denomination to worship. Therefore, a few of the Methodist settlers felt the need of organizing a Methodist Sunday School so that, as the Puritans had once desired, their children might be educated in the way of their forefathers. Therefore, under the leadership of Mrs. Byron Bettis, Sr., Mrs. M. J. Brown, better known as "Grandma" Brown, and Purvis Cranshaw and Claude Bennett, two earnest young churchmen from Center Street Methodist Church, the nearest Methodist Church to the Howell Mill Road community, a Methodist Sunday School was planned. The first meeting was held in the home of "Grandma" Brown with about ten people present. Subsequent meetings during the following year were held in the homes of Mrs. Byron Bettis and other of the members; a vacant, run-down, windowless house on Bellemeade Avenue, from which the group was evicted; an old storehouse at the corner of Holly Street and Howell Mill Road, which was rented out from under them; and the Northside Park Baptist Church, which graciously loaned the use of its building. These meetings were held on Sunday afternoons, and the attendance steadily rose until several classes were necessary.

During the summer of 1915, the Rev. J. W. Cranshaw was requested to hold a tent revival in the community. The tent was pitched at the corner of Howell Mill Road and Ridgeway Avenue and improvised benches installed. The ladies of the Sunday School bought an old organ for almost a song, and services began with great enthusiasm. In this tent many people professed Christ as their personal Savior, causing the idea of organizing a church with regular church services to spark.

With the aid of the Rev. George L. Castain, the Pastor of Center Street Methodist Church, later Warren Candler Memorial Methodist Church, the spark blazed into flame. The members organized. Among the charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Byron Bettis, Sr., Mr. Byron Bettis, Jr., Miss Fannie Bettis (later Mrs. Barney Nichols), Mrs. John H. Brown, Mrs. M. J. "Grandma" Brown, Miss Maude Brown (later Mrs. Charles S. Morris), Mrs. C. P. Gilleland, Mrs. E. E. Gilleland, Mrs. Sarah Margaret Gilleland, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Gilleland, Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Groover, Mrs. R. H. Harper and family, Mrs. "Bud" Lamb, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Rolader, Mrs. B. L. Sewell, Mr. and Mrs. Street, Miss Carrie Street, Mr. Jim Street, Mrs. Fred Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Trotter, and Mrs. Calvin Wright.

Because cold weather was approaching they needed a more permanent meeting place. Mr. Bettis offered the use of a vacant lot on DeFoor Avenue opposite Springer Street, and a workday was called to erect the church. At the close of the day, a floorless, tabernacle type structure was completed. Sawdust was spread on the ground, rough benches provided, kerosene-oil lamps hung, and a platform built for the choir. Mr. Street constructed a pulpit, and his daughter Carrie Street presented the Church its first Bible.
Later, Mrs. Bettis and another faithful member, Mrs. Gulledge, locked themselves in the building, donned overalls—an act which was unspeakable in that day—and whitewashed the interior of the Church. The Church worked in conjunction with the Center Street Methodist Church, sharing pastors with them on alternate Sundays, causing the organization to be called the Center Street Mission. On the Sundays when the pastor preached at Center Street, many distinguished ministers, including Bishop Warren Akin Candler and Dr. W. F. Glenn, led the pioneer mission in its worship services. Prayer Meeting was held every Wednesday night.

The Mission grew through the ministry of the Rev. C. A. Jameson, who succeeded the Rev. Chaistain to the charge in the conference year 1916, until the membership numbered between seventy-five and one hundred brethren.

When the North Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, convened in November, 1917, it appointed the Rev. M. L. Underwood pastor of the Center Street-Howell Mill Road Charge. Under the care of this agreeable and much loved and reverend leader the activities of the little church flourished. Besides the regular Sunday Morning Services, Sunday School, and Wednesday night Prayer Meeting; a monthly meeting Ladies Aid was organized to aid the church in any way possible. The membership of this group was not limited to the Mission members, but included ladies living in the community but belonging to other churches.

The Rev. Underwood made a proposition to the Mission, that if it would secure a lot at an eligible place, he would undertake to raise sufficient funds to build an elegant Church. Soon thereafter, the Ladies Aid invited the Church Extension Board to meet with them. At the meeting the Presiding Elder, J. H. Eakes, asked if the ladies had the money to purchase a lot. They replied that they did not, but would attempt to get it. They went to work and in thirty days of toil had the $1,000.00 necessary, purchased the lot on the corner of Howell Mill Road and Holmes Street, and placed the deed on record.

With this sensational beginning an all out drive with "Pay As You Go" as its slogan was launched to raise funds to construct the new building. Every type of activity imaginable, such as, barbecues, chicken suppers, ice cream parties, plays, fish frys, country fairs, quiltings, oyster suppers, and just plain banquets were held. An unusual example was a "Dinner Through The Ages." It was planned in a week by Mrs. W. A. Addy, a faithful assistant from another church, and proved a great success. There was a table representing each of the ages of man—kindergarten, school days, sweet sixteen, marriage, and old age. At each table appropriate food was served by appropriately dressed waiters. Later, a single barbecue supplied $705.00, but many of the projects netted only a few dollars. Financial support was also provided by friendly churches of the city; notably, First Methodist, Saint Mark, Druid Hills, and Inman Park.

The main church structure was erected in the year 1920 of granite which was hauled from the nearby Harper's Quarry on DeFoor Avenue by Mr. "Bud" Lamb. The total cost of the building was about $10,000.00, and nearly all of it was paid when the building was completed. The furnishings of the Mission, including the pulpit, were moved into the new building.
Bishop Warren Akin Candler preached the dedicatory sermon to a large and proud congregation. At this time and without the knowledge of the pastor, Mr. Byron Bettis, Sr., who had been the inspiring leader in the building of the Church in his whole-hearted donations of time, money, labor, and personal property, and who had pulled the Church through many a hard and trying season, announced the name of the new Church to be Underwood Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in honor of the pastor who had also devoted everything at his disposal to the building of a beautiful and magnificent church for the Howell Mill Road community.

The Rev. Underwood was the first pastor appointed to Underwood as an independent station. The first marriage performed in the new building united Edna Springer and Lewis Frank Bettis in holy wedlock. The Rev. Underwood was followed by the Rev. A. F. Nunn in 1922 and the Rev. H. J. Penn in 1923. Under the wide-awake Rev. Penn, who was a well-liked visitor of his flock, the Church enjoyed many overflowing revivals. In 1924, the last year of his ministry, the last financial note on the building was paid.

At this time the Ladies Aid had refurnished the Church, and its mission accomplished, became the Ladies Missionary Society to help other people as Underwood had been helped.

The Rev. L. B. Harrell, a bustling young Emory University student and fine orator was appointed to Underwood in 1925. He was followed by the elderly, agreeable, and friendly Rev. H. M. Quillian in 1926.

Youth returned to Underwood in 1929, with the appointment of the Rev. Zack C. Hayes, Jr., another Emory student. His ministry was marked by two unusual happenings: he got married and the Church built the annex. The pastor's grandfather in Elberton donated the granite for this structure, and Mr. John Brown donated his services as building superintendent. The members of the congregation furnished much of the labor.

The Rev. J. K. Kelley came to Underwood Church in 1930 for a two-year stay, to be followed by the Rev. J. W. King in 1932. The great financial depression descended in that year, and the Church already had a heavy debt to pay on the annex. Therefore, the Rev. King moved into the annex in an attempt to cut the expenses of the Church. Thus began the "Pastor's Apartment."

The Rev. W. M. Driggers was appointed in 1933 and the Rev. Hubert Dodd in 1934. Both were rather young men with big families. While the Rev. J. D. Swagerty was at the Church in 1936 and 1937, the Underwood Epworth League grew to be one of the largest in the District.

In 1938, the North Georgia Annual Conference appointed the kind, friendly, scholarly, long-suffering, Godly Rev. George W. Barrett to Underwood Church. In the eight years that followed—the longest time that a pastor has dwelt at this station—much was accomplished. Most notably, the debt on the annex was paid. With the assistance of Leo Bailey, the Methodist Youth Fellowship was organized and flourished, and the much-loved wife of the pastor painted a portrait of the Rev. Underwood.
In 1945, the Rev. H. T. Candler, an Emory student from Kentucky, brought his family to Underwood. He was followed in 1947 by the former United States Army Chaplain, the Rev. J. Kenneth Brown. It was during Rev. Brown's pastorate that the parsonage located at 785 Holmes Street, N. W., was completed. The pastor and his family then moved from the apartment in the church to the new parsonage. Rev. Brown served the church until March, 1951. At that time he was recalled to active duty in the chaplaincy. During the remainder of the Conference Year the pastor of Underwood was the Rev. Douglas E. Jackson, Professor at the Emory University School of Theology.

A DECADE OF YEARS
(1951-1961)

WHO can form the words to describe HOMECOMING DAY?
WHO can bring back that loved one here yesterday?

WHAT happened to UNDERWOOD during a DECADE of years?
WHAT caused all the laughter and all the tears?

WHERE are all the hours spent to beautify this place?
WHERE is the pattern for the unselfish love here laced?

WHEN did the old Sanctuary merge with the new?
WHEN did this place really become a part of you?

HOW can a rhyme describe a church pew?
HOW can words describe our feelings true?

HOW can words hold the warmth of a new born child?
HOW can words capture a serene aged smile?

OH that words could describe the blessed anthems raised,
OH that our flower arrangements could be duly praised!

OH that every event were possible to recall,
OH that page and pen could record it all!

WHO, WHAT, WHEN AND HOW are the lead words this day,
For they are the essence of any life along the way.

OH then that history in another decade of years will say,
UNDERWOOD is still in and with CHRIST every single day.

...Mrs. R. H. Harper, Jr.

The Rev. Clyde Smith was pastor of Underwood July, 1951 to July, 1956. He came from Bethel Methodist Church with his lovely wife and three daughters. Rev. Smith was a very handsome young man and made a fine appearance. He was a very quiet man but had a very good sense of humor. His wife, Virginia, was a very attractive redhead and helped out in the Sunday School and women's groups, and her lovely voice was a decided asset to the choir. The Smith's had another daughter to be born into their good family while at Underwood, and their oldest daughter was married while he served as pastor of Underwood.
Some of the highlights of the church during Rev. Smith's ministry at Underwood are as follows:

A goodly portion of his sermons were from the New Testament, especially the Books of Timothy, his favorite being II Timothy 4.

The floors of the sanctuary were sanded and refinished.

A carpet was bought for the sanctuary.

A power mower was purchased.

An attic fan was purchased.

The "Stained Glass Windows Program" was initiated. Families could purchase windows "in honor" or "in memory" of a member of their family.

A program was started whereby the church bulletin was mailed to the members each week and to any other person interested in same.

An addressograph machine was purchased.

A wooden partition was built for the choir in lieu of curtains used previously.

A telephone was installed in the church.

A church survey was made in January and February, 1953.

On January 4, 1953, a committee was appointed to draw up details for the rebuilding of the church altar.

A Men's Club was organized January 30, 1953, with fifteen present at the first meeting.

Rev. Smith planned and held an Easter Sunrise Service at Crestlawn Cemetery in 1953.

The Morning Worship Service was televised on May 24, 1953.

The many vast changes in the sanctuary were completed in May, 1953--new altar built, new pews, new recessed choir loft behind altar and all new altar fixtures. (The plans were drawn up by Rev. Smith.)

Rev. Smith reported at the July 6, 1954, Official Board Meeting that $14,000.00 had been spent during Conference Year 1953-1954.

The format of the church bulletin was changed. A picture of the church was printed on same.

New cabinets were built in the church kitchen.

An Official Board Meeting was held on Monday evening November 7, 1955, preceded by a delicious turkey dinner given by Rev. and Mrs. Smith. The Board members and their husbands and wives long remember this night and a special highlight was a humorous and uplifting talk by the Rev. Foster Young, Pastor of Kirkwood Methodist Church.

In the fall of 1955, altar prayers at the close of Evening Worship Services were started, and everyone was invited to take part. This quickly became "special" to many.

The last payment on the church organ was made in April, 1956.

A beautiful Semi-Concert Grande Piano was purchased for the sanctuary in March, 1956, at a cost of $1,300.00--this being a reconditioned piano.

The Smiths left many warm memories with Underwood and they were a family well loved. Rev. Smith preached many good sermons and one he preached every winter "Signs of Spring In The Midst Of Winter" presents a good picture of the man he was. He brought kindness when it was needed and he will be remembered as a fine gentle Christian who led his flock ably.
The Rev. H. A. McNeil ministered to the people of Underwood from July, 1956, to July, 1957. He, his wife, and one daughter moved into the parsonage July, 1956. He came from Mt. Zion Methodist Church on Stewart Avenue. The McNeils were welcomed with a reception July 1 and a gift of money. The McNeils had eight children and two of their sons are preachers in the North Georgia Conference.

Rev. McNeil had a laugh and smile that one could never forget. He had a quick wit and never failed to draw a laugh somewhere during his sermons. Mrs. McNeil was a dear, sweet soul and was a tremendous help with the little children in the church and Sunday School and she was a good helpmate to Rev. McNeil in all phases of church work. His first sermon was a meditation on the Lord's Supper July 1, 1956, and that evening he brought a message entitled "What Is Religion?" This was a most forceful sermon and it set the pace for his year at Underwood. He had a booming and resounding voice and those who were fortunate enough to hear him often felt as St. Paul must have felt at the feet of Gamaliel. He led the thoughts and minds of his people to depths they had never dreamed possible. His spiritual insight and knowledge was such that one stood in awe of his messages. His first sermon intoned these words "I believe in heaven and I believe in hell," and he never strayed from this. One so often felt how very close this man was to God. To miss one of his sermons was like having to miss a meal when one was hungry. He was a man who had studied and continued studying and was never afraid to enter present world conditions with that of his Bible sermons.

Among the achievements at Underwood under the leadership of Rev. McNeil the following are noteworthy:

The church office with telephone was set up.
Church stationery was bought with letterhead bearing church name.
World Service Offering increased from $480.00 to $625.00 per year.
Rev. McNeil led a loud protest to the building of a liquor store on Chattahoochee Avenue and he fought this as much as possible.
Fans were bought for Sunday School Departments.
In December, 1956, Rev. McNeil helped lay the concrete plans for the rebuilding of the front of the church. He helped set forth plans for the raising of $3,500.00 needed for this project.
The church roll was divided into 18 groups and everyone contacted for this project.
In March, 1956, Rev. McNeil purchased 200 booklets entitled "Christ And Myself" which were distributed to members.
Rev. McNeil preached during the Spring Revival.
In April, 1956, it was reported that the tile and rock work had been completed on the front of the church and $1,046.00 had been given thus far.
A new power lawn mower was purchased.
In April, 1956, funds were started for cleaning the stone exterior of the church.

To the deep regret of the church Bro. McNeil left Underwood after only one year. The heart and soul of his sermons and the life he lived and preached will long be a treasure for many. He was a man gifted in many ways and was unique among men. He loved God and his people and was able to make people understand and feel this. He often said "I love to preach." One little girl was so moved when she heard of his leaving tha
she wrote him a note on a church envelope and put it in the collection plate. She said, "I love you, and I will miss you." So did all of his people.

From July, 1957, to July, 1959, the pastor of Underwood was the Rev. J. R. Phillips. Rev. Phillips, a handsome young man and his beautiful wife, Lois, with their four young children moved into the parsonage in July, 1957. Rev. Phillips was a very mild mannered man and had a dry wit. Lois worked very hard in all branches of the church and taught school as well. She was a true beauty, within and without, and a charming young mother, and an excellent cook. Rev. Phillips was noted for being an excellent pastor. He visited his members—the sick, the well and the needy. He always held a gross concern for the needs of people and always stood ready to help. He preached many good sermons while at Underwood. His first sermon was entitled "Our American Heritage" and many remarked what a marvelous history lesson this was as well as putting a Biblical light on our precious independence.

Included in the work of the church during 1957-1959 are the following:

A person was hired to keep the nursery each Sunday.
The $2,100.00 Higher Education Program was presented by Rev. Phillips at the September Official Board Meeting.
A young married Sunday School Class was organized.
The Sunday School Department announced that 36 attendance pins had been given out on Church School Rally Day in September.
Christmas of 1957 marked the beginning of the traditional tree for the church children. The children gave a program and brought gifts for the Methodist Children's Home. All members helped with this.
Plans were set in January, 1958, whereby a financial sheet would be sent to each member along with the church bulletin every three months.
A large visitation program was held in the spring of 1958, and an attendance campaign was held with good success.
The choir purchased 22 new robes in April of 1958. They were paid for by the choir members and various other individuals.
In August, 1958, plans were started to invest $5,500.00 in a new heating and air conditioning system for the church. Later the amount was advanced to $12,000.00.
Repairs were made in the Nursery Department at a cost of $350.00.
In December, 1958, a $20,000.00 15 year loan at 5 ½% per annum was approved. The loan was obtained from Fulton County Federal Southern and Loan Association. This would lump all our debts in a basket.
On December 27, 1958, Rev. Andy Pate, youth director, and Miss Martha Tokey were married in Thomson, Georgia. Two pieces (serving spoon and gravy ladle) of their silver pattern were given to them by the church. This fine and talented young couple did much for the church.
A letter was written to the Rev. Hagood of Northside Baptist Church giving our support in asking the surrounding service stations to remain closed during the church worship hours on Sundays.
During March, 1959, the loan passed for $20,000.00.
The long awaited heating and air conditioning system was completed in April, 1959.

Rev. Phillips reported in April that during Holy Week Services seventeen members were received and three infants were baptized.

Rev. Phillips and his family left Underwood in June for a charge in Nercross, Georgia. He will be remembered as a very gentle and kind man and for his devotion to details of the church work. He was deeply committed to his life for Christ and always took his calling seriously.

From July, 1959, until his death in March, 1961, the Rev. George H. Stone served as pastor of Underwood. The Rev. and Mrs. Stone, their son, Allen, and Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Stone's mother, moved into the parsonage in July, 1959. Just prior to their moving in nearly $800.00 had been spent on the parsonage for painting, sanding of floors and reupholstering of furniture.

Rev. Stone was a fine looking man and truly was an affable man. Mrs. Stone made a very striking appearance and immediately entered into all church work as well as singing in the choir. Rev. Stone quickly made friends of many and was one of those sparkling individuals. He was dearly loved by the children too as he had the ability to draw them out. He saw service in World War II and came out with the rank of Colonel. He brought many impressive sermons related to his career in the army and always one was aware of how much he enjoyed living and how much he loved people. He was a hard worker and always "on the go" for God and his church.

Listed below are some of the important activities of the church during Rev. Stone's pastorate at Underwood:

Rev. Stone gave pamphlets "What Do You Mean Pledge?" to Official Board members in October, 1959.

November, 1959, saw many repairs to the Sunday School Department being started.

January, 1960, saw the interior of the church waterproofed for $112.00.

In February, 1960, Rev. and Mrs. Stone attended camp meeting at Epworth-By-The-Sea. The church paid the $75.00 expense. Rev. Stone brought several glowing sermons about this meeting and the new spiritual insight gained there.

Two church members gave an electric stove for the parsonage, and the parsonage was wired for this.

Rock wool insulation was installed in the church annex at a cost of $120.00 in May, 1960.

Rev. Stone conducted the Revival services in April, 1960, and this was a good meeting.

In May, 1960, the Finance Commission decided to give all members a financial status sheet each month.

In May, 1960, Rev. and Mrs. Stone entertained the Official Board members at the church. A delicious baked ham supper was served and special music was brought by their son, Allen, and Miss Joann Alexander. Beside the place cards the Stones had placed a lapel gold cross for each member. Another special treat of the evening was an informal talk by Miss Rebecca Earnest on her recent trip to Europe and her deeply moving experience.
on seeing the Passion Play in Germany.

Exterminating work was completed in June, 1960, at a cost of $485.00, and insurance was taken out for a yearly check of the church--$20.00 per year.

In July, 1960, Rev. Stone wrote personal letters to various friends of the church and received contributions amounting to $195.00 to be applied on recent work done.

Also in August an additional $235.00 was received as a result of letters written by Rev. Stone.

In September, 1960, miscellaneous repairing of the church windows, eaves, and painting of trim was started--total cost $885.00.


In October, 1960, the church started sponsoring a Brownie Scout Troup.

In October, 1960, Rev. Stone became seriously ill.

Rev. Gene Simpson took over the responsibilities of the pulpit.

On March 19, 1961, a called meeting of the Official Board was held. M. L. Gilleland, Chairman, stated the sad event of the past week--the "going home" of our beloved pastor, Rev. George H. Stone, on March 15, 1961. His funeral was held March 18, 1961. Mrs. Stone and her family were asked to live on in the parsonage until June, and the pastor's salary would be paid through June.

When Bro. Stone died he left an earthly life of being a servant of God, of being a Christian son, a loving and devoted husband and a proud father. In his short time at Underwood he had become very "special" to many and he will have a place in many hearts always. He used the 23rd Psalm many times and those who knew him know he is dwelling in the House of the Lord as he lived and preached his God here on earth. Truly II Timothy 4: 7 is fitting for Bro. George H. Stone.

Rev. Eugene Simpson, Student Youth Worker at Underwood, carried the pastor's responsibilities during Rev. Stone's illness and until the end of Conference Year, 1961. Rev. Simpson was enrolled at Emory University completing his education for the ministry. Everyone was immediately attracted to Rev. Simpson and his wife. They were both "tar heels" from North Carolina and were recognized as a most unusual pair. They were adored by the children and young people, and respected by the adults. Rev. Simpson was the all American looking young man and had a very winning personality. His wife, Margaret, was very pretty and dainty and played the piano during the church services. He very capably took over the pulpit and during his short tenure he preached a funeral, conducted a wedding, and baptized a baby. He also asked for and helped in the participation of a city-wide church survey in January, 1961. In March a three-member committee was appointed to handle welfare matters for the church. In May, 1961, a motion was made and carried to prepare a room in the church annex in memory of Rev. Stone--this room to be the church office and Mrs. Stone will give the necessary furnishings.

Rev. Simpson and his wife will be long remembered at Underwood. They filled a gap and a need that knows no earthly bounds. Though young in years his grasp of the Bible and ability to put across the deep meanings in simple and forthright manner were often awesome to hear. One especially good sermon was the drawing of a verbal picture,
and his sermon about the home of Mary and Martha will enter many hearts often. Just as that Biblical home was dedicated so was young Rev. Simpson dedicated to Jesus and the high calling that was his.

In July, 1961, the Rev. Malcolm A. Coleman was appointed to Underwood, and he and his wife, Wilma, moved into the lovely parsonage to begin their work. Wilma became a Sunday School teacher in the Adult Department, a counsellor of the Children's Fellowship Group, Secretary of Missionary Education in the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild, and a member of the choir.

During Conference Year 1961-1962 the church records showed a net gain in the average attendance at Sunday School, a net gain in church membership, and an increase in giving by church members.

Other accomplishments of the church since July, 1961, are as follows:

New Methodist Hymnals were bought by groups and individuals of the church for the sanctuary.
A new mimeograph machine was bought for the church.
New chairs were bought for the choir loft.
Two pictures, painted by Mrs. Vera Earnest, were framed by the Woman's Society of Christian Service Day Circle and the Woman's Society of Christian Service Night Circle and placed in the living room at the parsonage.
A new desk and chair given by Mrs. George Stone in memory of Rev. George Stone were placed in the new church office.
A Church-Wide School of Missions was planned and presented by the Commission on Missions.
The church sanctuary was repaired and painted.
The Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild each completed three Jurisdictional Credit Courses during Conference Year 1961-1962.
At the end of Conference Year 1961-1962, 83% of the 1962-1963 church budget was pledged.
A new lawn mower was purchased.
The outside woodwork was painted at the parsonage.
The Adult Assembly Classroom and halls of the annex were repainted. Also new drapes were bought for the room. This was a joint project of the Sarah Margaret Gilleland Sunday School Class and the Commission on Education.
Four fire extinguishers were placed in the church building for safety.

In June, 1961, the Rev. Stuart Taylor, a theology student at Emory University, came to Underwood as Student Youth Worker. He and his wife, Gaye, are very talented and have helped in different areas of the church program; Sunday School, Methodist Youth Fellowship and choir. Rev. Taylor also serves as church pianist for the Evening Worship Services and is Chairman of the Christian Vocations Commission. Rev. and Mrs. Taylor have an adorable young son, Frankie.