Winters Chapel United Methodist Church had its beginning in the late 1860's. Early services were held in the people's homes when a minister was available. The Hardman family had ties with the Prospect Methodist Church at Chamblee, Ga., and occasionally brought the Chamblee Pastor, Rev. W. A. Dodge, home with them in order to have worship services under a brush arbor. Christian people felt the great need of a church in the community, but there were no leaders at the time.

In the late 1860's Jeremiah Winters came from Piney Woods in South Georgia to live in the community. He was married to the former Elizabeth Boring whose father, Thomas Boring, was a minister. Mr. Winters saw the need of a church. Dr. Boring, his father-in-law, served as an agency to spur him on and occasionally preached in the community. Rev. Wooten from Norcross, also preached occasionally.

In the spring of the early 1870's Mr. Winters announced that Sunday School would be held in a beautiful grove at his home on the Adel Woodall place. The people, hungry for the Bread of Life, came in great numbers.

The need for a church was apparent. Mr. Rice and Mr. Mitchell gave the land for the church and the cemetery. Since money was hard to get, Mr. Winters said "We can go to the woods, cut logs and have them sawed and hull us up a church". Mr. J. W. F. Tilly sawed the lumber.

Work on the first church building was begun in October, 1871. That first structure was hulled in and covered in nearly a day. They used wide, coarse weather boarding. There was not a square corner in the church. There was no flooring, but the people were so anxious for a church that they were not primarily concerned with its appearance. There was only a dirt floor for quite a while. The benches were slabs with pegs in augur holes for legs. There was a small soap-box like stand for the preacher to stand on. The windows had shutters and no glass. In 1882, Sam Jones, the famous evangelist, was responsible for windows and ceiling. During a sermon, he made a remark that was funny and the people laughed. He said "I wish you'd laugh up some sash and ceiling." The people got busy and ceiled the church and put in windows. Little brass lamps were purchased and served as lights for years.

In this little chapel the women sat on the left side and the men sat on the right side. Whenever prayer was announced all Christians knelt on both knees. Hymns were lined. About 1902 the first musical instrument was secured.

Through the influence of Dr. Boring the church entered the conference. The first conference preacher was the Rev. George Gardner. The church had nine members at the beginning: Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Winters, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Hardman, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Ware, Mrs. Susan Cobb, Mrs. C. N. Woodall, and Mrs. Itura Womack.

The first preacher to serve Winter's Chapel was Rev. Quillian. He lived at Norcross and served Norcross, Prospect, Duluth, Winters Chapel and Mount Carmel Services were held at Winters Chapel only at night.

The next parsonage was at Roswell. Rev. Strozier was the first preacher to live there. He served Roswell, Sandy Springs and Winters Chapel.
The next pastor lived at Buckhead and served Sardis, Sandy Springs and Winters Chapel. He was the Rev. John Logan. Other preachers who followed him and lived at Buckhead were: Rev. R. C. Clecker, Rev. J. T. Eaks, Rev. Spiers. During the time that Rev. Spiers was pastor, the property for a new church was given by Mr. Thompson. The old church was torn down and a new church was built.


The church was on circuits of two to five churches until 1948, when it became a full time church with a parsonage and a full time pastor. Rev. H. E. Garrett was the first full time pastor of Winters Chapel and the first to live in the parsonage, a modern six-room brick veneer house which was constructed across the road from the church at an approximate cost of $10,000. The labor required for completing the parsonage was donated by the laymen of the church and community. The church building was improved by the building of five Sunday School rooms and the addition of a new front on the church.

Dr. James Turpin, Founder of Project Concern, was pastor of Winters Chapel from 1950-1951. As more people moved into the community, attendance increased in the Church School and Worship services. The facilities of the church building were overtaxed and it was imperative that additional space for the Church School be built. Under the leadership of the Rev. Marion Pierson, pastor of the church in 1952, a Building Committee was appointed to study the needs of the church and to recommend adequate building plans. The following year the Rev. Ray Melear was appointed pastor. He continued the Building Committee approved by the Quarterly Conference of the church.

The dream of a two-story concrete block Education Building, 40 ft. by 80 ft. slowly became a reality. This building had 6,400 square feet of floor space, and was valued at $60,000. Over 95% of the labor was donated by the members and interested friends. The building was completed in 1955. Its indebtedness was paid in full during the first years of Rev. Marvin Brewer's pastorate in 1958. The dedication of this educational building, which is known as the Ray Melear Building, was on January 21, 1962, by Bishop J. Owen Smith. This was the first time in the history of Winters Chapel Church that a Bishop had visited it. Rev. Julian F. Thompson was pastor at this time.

In 1957 the parsonage was remodeled and more than doubled in size, adding two bedrooms, a bath, family room and carport.

In July of 1964, ground was broken for a second educational building which was comparable in size to the first building. This building is known as the Eula Jones Building. Rev. Robert E. Lyle was pastor at this time.

Membership continued to increase over the years to the present 560 members. It became apparent that a new sanctuary would be a great asset to the church and community.

A building committee was appointed in the spring of 1968 and detailed plans and specifications were approved by the Church Conference on April 6, 1969. Rev. David R. Wilson was pastor from 1965 to June 1968.
After a fund raising campaign and a bond program, construction was begun on the new sanctuary in June of 1969. This building has 5000 square feet of space and the exterior is white holiday stone with the focal point being a lighted stained glass cross on the front. The windows are opaque amber.

The air-conditioned interior has a seating capacity of 500 and is carpeted throughout. The full size basement consists of a choir room, a small chapel and a recreational area for the youth of the church. Rev. Bobby Anthony served as pastor during this time-1968 to 1972.

Two young men have gone out from the church to preach the Gospel of Christ. They are members of the North Georgia Conference. Rev. Ewell Blackburn who is presently serving in the North Georgia Conference and Rev. Homer Morgan, who after serving several charges, is presently serving as a missionary in India.