

## A Brief History

The Calhoun First Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1852. A building of wood construction was erected on a large lot at the corner of Court and River Streets. The lot was donated by Senator John P. King of Augusta, Georgia.

The small congregation worshipped in that building until 1874 when a parcel of land was purchased on the corner of North Wall and Trammell Streets, current site of Calhoun First National Bank parking lot. A new and more adequate house of worship was erected and used until 1888 when it was destroyed by a cyclone. A new and better building was erected the next year some several yards south of the former building. This house of worship, dedicated in May, 1889 by Dr. H. C. Morrison, served the congregation until 1917.

The growth of the church membership was such that by 1916 a program was begun to build a larger and more modern place of worship. Under the leadership of the Reverend C. M. Lipman, Pastor and Architect, a new building was erected with a sanctuary seating 600, current site of Calhoun First National Bank Parking lot, and was demolished in 1986 and 1987. The structure was of brick and marble. Probably the most outstanding feature of this building was the exquisite stained glass memorial windows, some of which are now installed in the present church building. The building consisted also of Sunday school rooms, a kitchen, central heating and other conveniences. The church was completed at a cost of \$26,000 and was dedicated on August 5, 1917 by Bishop Warren A. Candler.

In 1948, the congregation of The First Methodist Church voted to launch still another building program. The lot at the corner of College and Line streets was selected, and was purchased from Miss Lulie Pitts at a cost of \$8,000. The program was begun under the ministry of The Reverend Y. A. Oliver, but was completed under the direction of The Reverend C. W. Fruit. Ground breaking ceremonies were held at the new building site on Sunday afternoon, June 5, 1949. Dr. J. E. Billings, chairman of the official board presided; to T. J. Brown, chairman of the building committee, was accorded the honor of wielding the spade which broke ground for the new house of worship. One year later, on June 4, 1950, the first service was held in the beautiful new church building.

Memorial windows moved to the new sanctuary were, "Jesus at the Door Knocking" in memory of Zach T. Gray and Elizabeth Gray; "Angel at the Tomb" sacred to Oliver N. Starr and Ella H. Starr, (grandparents of Bobbie S. Mathews); "Jesus and the Children" sacred to the Poor; "The Good Shepherd" in memory of Thomas M. Ellis and Susan A. Ellis, (grandparents of Gladys M. Powers). Also moved were the windows in the vestibule "Open Bible" and "Dove and Olive Branch", and the window in the balcony, "Jesus Ascending" sacred to James M. and Milda Harlan. It was not deemed advisable to move six of the windows, but those in whose honor or memory the stained glass was placed, now share a composite memorial. Their names are inscribed on a tablet of finely cast bronze which occupies an honored place in the vestibule just to the left of the sanctuary doors.

The church received a large number of magnanimous memorial gifts in connection with the new building. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Powers donated the church spire as a memorial to Mrs. Powers' father, Lawrence Moss, and a beautiful window in memory of her mother, Jennie A. Moss. Handsome, colonial style bronze lanterns at the entrance were given by Mrs. C. E. David and Mr. and Mrs. Estes David as a memorial to their husband and father, Claude E. David. Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Ramsey gave a piano to the Primary department in memory of Mrs. Ramsey's mother, Alma Slappy Jones. As a memorial to their parents, Ellen B. and George N. Koon and Bertie B. Hall, Dr. and Mrs. Wilbur Hall gave the flood lights on the front lawn and a window typical of the stained glass artistry employed in the sanctuary. Two other windows of this type were given. Judge and Mrs. J. H. Paschall gave one to honor Mrs. Paschall's mother and father, Thomas W. and Ida H. Harbin, and one was given by Dr. and Mrs. Fred Bolding with Miss Alda Bolding in memory of Thomas A. McClain and Mary Bolding McClain. The children of the Reverend A. C. Cantrell contributed the handsome pulpit stand as a memorial to the beloved former pastor, the Reverend J. T. Eakes. Mr. and Mrs. John I. Boston, Jr. gave the handsome communion table and chairs in honor of their parents. Mrs. Tom Brown, Mrs. Luke Spink, and J. H. Boston, Jr. gave the harmoniously proportioned altar set in honor of their parents. Mrs. Jewell V. Reeve gave a beautiful piano in honor of her husband, Charles Phillips Reeve, who from childhood until death was a faithful member of the First Methodist Church.

Money was generously expended by other members for many beautiful and valuable gifts; unfortunately, space does not permit the enumeration of them all at this time.

*The above brief history was taken from the History of the First Methodist Church of Calhoun, Georgia traced through 100 years by Jean Herrin Bond in 1957 with credit given to Miss Lulie Pitts.*

# First Methodists Install Bronze Plaque Sunday

Members of the First Methodist Church celebrated homecoming day Sunday with the installation of a bronze metal plaque which officially opened the church for public worship.

The services began with a message at the morning worship hour by the Rev. William Hoyt Henderson, formerly of Calhoun, followed by lunch in the recreation hall. The congregation and visitors then assembled in the sanctuary for the installation ceremony during which Eddie Strickland sang "Bless This House," accompanied on the organ by Mrs. Tom David.

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**THE PLAQUE** was placed over a metal vault in the wall of

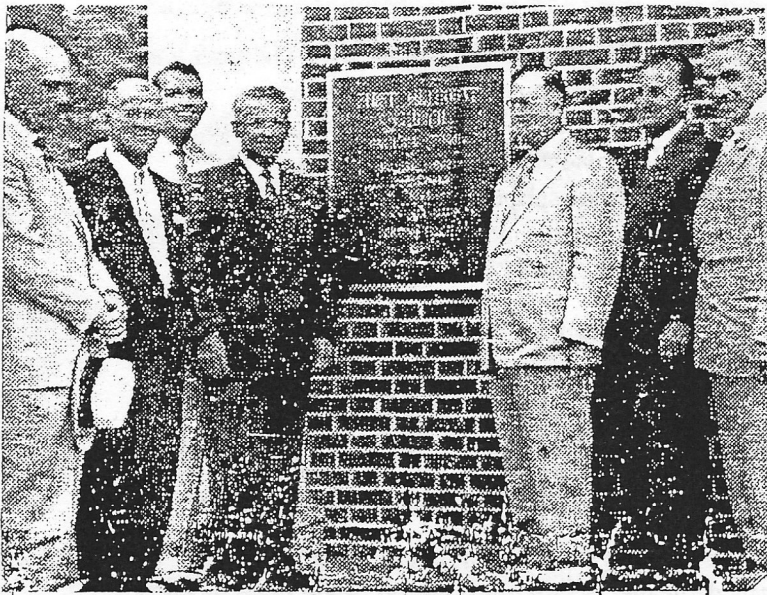
the church in which several documents were placed. Among the mementos which were sealed in the vault were a History of Gordon County, a pamphlet on the discovery of New Echota, a church history, a Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the church roll, a Church Journal of 1913, and a Conference Journal of 1954. Also included among these documents were pictures of Mr. and Mrs. T. Ellis Reeve and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Reeve, missionaries from the local church, and photographs of the Rev. William Hoyt Henderson and the Rev. Newton Wise, who have gone from the church in Calhoun into the active ministry.

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**THE BRONZE PLAQUE** bears the following inscription:

FIRST METHODIST  
CHURCH  
CALHOUN, GEORGIA  
BUILDING PROGRAM  
INAUGURATED  
1948  
Y. A. OLIVER, PASTOR  
BUILDING ERECTED  
1950  
C. W. FRUIT, PASTOR

Dignitaries who took an active part in the installation services were Jim Reeve, member of the building committee; Dr. J. E. Billings, chairman of the official board during the building campaign; the Rev. John C. Moore, present pastor; the Rev. C. W. Fruit, pastor during erection of the church; Luke Spink, chairman of the finance committee; W. F. Bond, chairman of the present official board; and the Rev. H. C. Stratton, Dalton, District Superintendent.



**BRONZE PLAQUE**—Shown flanking a bronze plaque which was placed on the First Methodist Church building here Sunday, are, left to right, Jim Reeve, member of building committee; the Rev. C. M. Fruit, pastor during the construction of the building; the Rev. John C. Moore, present pastor; Dr. J. E. Billings, chairman of the official board during the building campaign; Bill Bond, present chairman of official board; Luke Spink, chairman of finance committee which raised money to pay off all indebtedness; and the Rev. H. C. Stratton, Dalton District Superintendent.—(Staff Photo.)



Ground-Breaking \* First Methodist Church  
Thomas J. Brown Chair, Building Committee



## Remembering 1950 -- The Church and the World

The Korean War, *Guys and Dolls*, the Brinks Robbery, Smoky the Bear, Walt Disney's *Cinderella*. The year was 1950, and the world then was a different place. Imagine, no VCRs, copiers, computers, cell phones, or fax machines, and few TVs -- all of which were black and white. We had no microwaves, polio vaccine, shopping malls, credit cards, lasers, or interstate highways. But we had glamorous movie stars like Loretta Young and Tyrone Power and heroes like Roy Rogers and Trigger. Through radio and newspapers, we kept up with Dick Tracy, Dagwood, Amos and Andy, and the Lone Ranger. We had 78 rpm records and ridiculous popular songs like *RAGG MOPP*, *If I Knew You Were Coming, I'd Have Baked a Cake*, and *A Bushel and a Peck*.

In 1950 we had the draft, racial segregation, and a minimum wage of 75 cents. The boll weevil destroyed over \$750 million worth of cotton. Alger Hiss was found guilty of spying for the Soviet Union, and Senator Joseph McCarthy searched for Communists. President Truman gave permission for a hydrogen bomb's development. China and the USSR signed a 30-year treaty, naming the US and Japan as enemies. Antihistamines came into use, the first Xerox machine was produced, suburban population soared, and the Gross National Product reached \$284 million.

Calhoun experienced great progress in 1950, with many Methodists as civic leaders. Calhoun's population was 3,217, and Gordon County's was 18,922. A new water plant was dedicated, a city gym opened, rural telephones became available in the county, and the school board approved consolidation of the county high schools. There was no county hospital, no recreation department, no public swimming pool, no chamber of commerce, no 12th grade, no New Echota State Historic Site, and no Northwest Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station.

But Methodist community leaders made possible the Experiment Station on the Rome Road, which soon became the second largest in the state. Because of the leadership of several Methodists, archaeological excavations were in progress, with plans underway to create a state park at New Echota. In 1950, work was also in progress on the Gordon County Hospital on Pine Street. The Sequoyah Garden Club was born that year, with many Methodist ladies as charter members. Roland Hayes returned to his birthplace for a concert in 1950, and he also celebrated 40 years in the national and international music world with a concert at Carnegie Hall.

Members of First Methodist were busy preparing for and moving into their new building on Line Street. Great care was taken to move the magnificent stained glass windows from the old building on Wall Street. Church women were actively raising funds to furnish and decorate the new church, as well as the new parsonage on Hillcrest Drive.

## Remembering Half a Century -- The Church and the World

From their new building, Methodists served their community and their world, generously supporting mission and social service projects. In the 1950's Sputnik orbited the earth and Elvis Presley gyrated around it. Ed Sullivan had some really good *shews*, and our church women started a church library, sponsored Vacation Bible Schools, and served fellowship suppers, MYF refreshments, and Rotary and Lions Club luncheons.

In the 1960's Gordon County got a new courthouse and recreation center, and the nation got Kennedy's New Frontier, the Peace Corps space program, civil rights movement, Fidel Castro, Berlin Wall, and the Beatles. Pope John XXIII brought Catholics and Protestants closer, the minimum wage was raised to \$1.25 an hour, and the Supreme Court ruled official prayer and Bible reading in schools unconstitutional. Sadly, the 60's brought the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., but Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, a walk in space, and the first Early Bird Satellite gave us new hope. As the Vietnam conflict grew to a full-scale war, protest marches abounded.

In 1964 and 1965 First Methodist had another building program underway for an educational wing and chapel. A mimeograph machine was purchased for the office, and a new organ was donated. Children's choirs were organized, and a scout hut was built for our active scouts. One of the biggest events of the 1960's for Methodists

and Evangelical United Brethren was the merger that formed the United Methodist Church. Social activism was the order of the 60's, and Methodists were in the forefront, believing that to serve people is to serve God.

In the 1970's the US began withdrawing from Vietnam, Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned, and 18-year-olds across the nation got the vote. Inflation and pollution were growing problems, and women entered the workforce in record numbers. The 70's gave us Watergate, Nixon's resignation, the Alaskan pipeline, skyrocketing OPEC oil prices, the energy crisis, airline hi-jackers, the Panama Canal treaty, and the death of Elvis. Jimmy Carter went to Washington, and the US President and his family came to Calhoun to worship on Easter Sunday.

Church members were busy organizing what became the Gordon County Training Center, the Voluntary Action Center, and the nutrition program. The Women's Society of Christian Service and Wesleyan Service Guild combined as United Methodist Women. New adult Sunday school classes were formed, a week-day pre-school was organized, and there were lay witness events and mission studies. As always, an active UMYF enjoyed many Halloween haunted houses in the church basement, live Nativity scenes on the lawn, and the first *His Kids* choir tour. A hand bell choir was started, and children's choirs performed *Down by the Creek Bank* and other musicals.

The 1980's brought the artificial heart, Gulf War, Indiana Jones, Michael Jackson, Star Wars, ET, the death of Princess Grace, the war on drugs, and increasing violence in movies and TV. Conflicts continued in the Holy Land, Ireland, and Third World countries. A first class postage stamp was 20 cents, the prime interest rate went to 13.5%, and unemployment reached 10.8%. A woman was nominated to be US Vice President. Gordon Central High School was built, and the community gained several new diversified industries.

In the 80's, the UMYF thrilled us with *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*. Adjoining property was purchased for parking and a future building. Construction of the Christian Activities Center brought new programs that made a real difference to the community: the day care center, after-school care, summer day camp, recreation leagues, and Wednesday night suppers. We supported the Winners Club, bought a church bus, started a TV ministry, and added an early Sunday worship service. The youth went on mission trips, and the church supported our missionaries, maintained Sunday school, prayer groups, Vacation Bible School, and United Methodist Men.

The 1990's brought our nation's best economy in history, the Atlanta Olympics Games, astounding new medical technologies, computers, CD's, cell phones, and fax machines everywhere. We admired Mother Teresa, laughed at Forrest Gump, and mourned for Princess Diana. The fast-paced world of the 90's also brought the war in Bosnia, violence, terrorism, bombings, and school shootings. The AIDS epidemic, road rage, drugs, increasing coarseness of our culture, and the Clinton impeachment scandal saddened the nation.

In Calhoun, many good things happened in the 90's. Major additions to the health center and Gordon Hospital, and a new technical school, arts center, and senior center helped improve our community's quality of life. The church office joined the computer age, and generous church members made possible college and nursing scholarships, the literacy council, and an endowment for future ministries. Another new bus and more adjoining property were purchased, and active ministries such as Habitat for Humanity continued. The Disciple Bible Study and "living" Bible stories in Vacation Bible School brought God's word to us in creative ways.

We are thankful for those who went before us to build foundations for our ministries, and we pray that First United Methodist Church will always meet the challenge of reaching out into the community and the world, being more open and inclusive, as we serve God and share His love in an increasingly diverse and complex society.

*These memories are certainly not a history of the church or the world. Omissions are not for lack of significance, but of space. Others would, no doubt, remember differently. These are simply our memories.*

*The 50th Anniversary Committee*



## 2000 Administrative Council

Lay Leader:	Paula Weaver
Chairperson:	Jean Overby
Vice-Chairperson:	Frank Sullivan
Recording Secretary:	Suzanne Hill
Membership Secretary:	Ann Stephens
Lay Member to Annual Conference:	Bill Purcell
Alt. Lay Delegate	Helen Purcell
Youth Representative	Nichol Sainato
Chairpersons:	
Staff Parish	JoAnne Owens
Trustees	Gerald Hite
Nominations	Mike Gunter
Finance	Russell Dudley
Long Range Planning	David Lance
Ministerial Housing Study	Dale Bentley
Memorial	Christina Tarpley
Roberts Fund	George Crowley
Interior Decorating	Dawn Hite
Historical	George Chambers
UMM	Barrett Hagood
UMW	Tammy Swink
Recreation	Tony Swink
Education	Dana Hammond
Children	Tammy Stewart
Youth	Nancy LeBlanc
Adult	Tim Leonard
Church School Superintendent	Jan Goble
Worship	Kent Chapman
Spiritual Formation	Carol Inman
Family in Crisis	Anita Davis
Family Life	Julie Chapman
Hospitality	Judy Prater
Church and Society	Joan Bentley
Community Volunteers	Sandra Fletcher
Missions	Joe Blackmon
Communications - T.V.	Gene Greeson
Communications - Media	JoAnn Lewis
Evangelism	Rodney Mathis
Scouting	David Jordon
Pre School	Angie Prater
David Day Care	Suzanne Hutchinson
Altar Guild	Myra Owens

## Members at Large

### Class of 2000

Dale Bentley	Rick Correll	David Hammond
Suzanne Hill	Dean Hite	Bobbie Johnson
Jeff Sasser	Pat Thornton	

### Class of 2001

L. P. Owens	Philip Beamer	Frank Dickinson
Bill Green	George Hutchinson	Jack Kime
Bill Mathews	Joe Stewart	Ray Towers

### Class of 2002

Betty Coughlin	Chuck Faulkner	Todd Harrison
Henrietta Palmer	Charles Prater	Helen Purcell
Richard Strawhorn	Christopher Tarpley	

## Staff of Calhoun First

Senior Minister	Michael D. Gunter
Assistant Minister	Charles Z. Gardner
Program Director	Wilma Reinhardt
Program Assistant	Lori Ethridge
Church Secretary	Ann Stephens
Financial Secretary	Stephanie Falconer
Organist	Barbara Blackmon
Pianist	Margaret Thornton
Director of Preschool	Lee Linn
Directory of David Day Care	TaRahma Gullledge