

**The History of
Central United Methodist Church
1866 - 2000**

by
Annette W. Hampton

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Central United Methodist Church is an 1000-member congregation in Atlanta, located minutes from the downtown business district and within walking distance of the Atlanta University Center and the Georgia Dome. Central's members seek to model themselves after the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in service and in education. There are active ministries for people of all ages at Central, and there is also a strong Christian Education program. Established in 1866 and in its present location since 1929, Central has had a long-standing and rich tradition of being in mission to the larger community; current initiatives include the CentralMinistries Early Learning Center, the Central Methodist Gardens apartment complex, the Central Food Pantry, and the Youth Enrichment Program.

This history is dedicated to the precious memory of my mother, Fannie Greenwood West, and daddy, Frank P. West, Sr. The oldest documented material used in this history came from their collections. Namely, the program of the Central Anniversary of 1907 and the story of Rev. C. B. Mason from the book *The Black Side* by Rev. E. R. Carter, 1894.

I also dedicate this history to my husband, James A. Hampton for the love and support given me during the years I took to research and write. Also, much appreciation goes to my niece, Carolyn Figgers West, for the confidence she placed in me as we worked to complete this history. Her help and encouragement gave me strength.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Annette West Hampton was born the only girl of Fannie Lee and Frank P. West. She was destined to attend Clark College from birth - her father graduated from Clark University on May 11, 1911. Two of three brothers (Perryman and Milton) attended Clark. Alfred chose Morehouse and her mother attended Spelman.

She received the A.B. degree from Clark and an M.A. from Atlanta University and was fortunate enough to return to her elementary school, E. P. Johnson, to teach until being transferred to Sylvan Hills. She retired from Sylvan Hills.

Mrs. Hampton has traveled extensively in 45 states, the islands in the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, South America, Africa and tree trips to Europe. One trip to Europe was made as a member of the Friendship Force, an international organization whose purpose is to foster goodwill between countries.

She has received numerous honors from co-workers, her sorority (Sigma Gamma Rho), and Central United Methodist Church. A most recent church honor was being asked to attend the Interdenominational Theological Center to prepare for writing this church history. She serves as Church Historian for Central.

She and husband James A. Hampton, a Morris Brown graduate, are enjoying their retirement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people whose contributions were essential to the publication of this history; a few of them are mentioned here. I have labored for nearly a decade to tell this story, and want to particularly thank those who helped, guided, and encouraged me along the way.

I am most appreciative to the Reverend Rodney T. Smothers, pastor of Central from 1988 to 1998, for the trust placed in me to do such a tremendous job. He not only trusted that I could do the job, but saw to it that the Church's budget included the necessary funds for me to study at the Interdenominational Theological Center for one year in order to learn how to correctly write this history.

Thanks to Dr. Edith D. Thomas, longtime member of Central, for providing the information about the course "Church History" at the Interdenominational Theological Center. She was very helpful in seeing that I enrolled and participated in the class. To my instructor, Professor Gayraud Wilmore, I say thank you for your kindness and inspiration needed for such a job. Pastor Smothers, Dr. Thomas and Professor Wilmore were just so devoted to the Central story.

Special appreciation goes to my niece, Carolyn F. West for her love, research skills and invaluable help as she typed the original manuscript.

I also appreciate Bishop L. Scott Allen for reading the original manuscript, making helpful suggestions and writing the Foreword. Bishop Allen was a schoolmate of mine at Clark and later served as my pastor at Central from 1948 to 1956.

Central members Sherole Thrash, Josie G. Allen, Mary and Joe Amos, Rosa Bolton and Quayle Reed were also very helpful.

The story of this great church is now available because of the commitment that Reverend Frederick R. Gray, the current Senior Pastor of Central, and Central's Administrative Board made to ensure that these words would be shared with you and with others. Many thanks go to them and the others who helped update, format, and print this history.

April 2003

FOREWORD

The story of Central United Methodist Church as it is presented in this book, by one who has been personally involved, at close range, in its development over the entire span of her life, will help to fill the vacuum in Black Church history in general, including a significant stream of the Wesleyan Tradition.

The paucity of written accurate historical data concerning the many valuable contributions that Black people have made through religious institutions like Central Church has tended to impoverish the awareness and appreciation of the present generation for the firm foundations that were laid by the pioneers of Methodism in America. The community of Central, from its inception, as a religious and cultural influence upon former slaves and their posterity, has exemplified numerous elements of Christian Discipleship in areas of sacrificial Christian stewardship, intentional educational endeavors, patterns of essence filled orderly worship and managerial skills that are worthy of preservation for the future.

The objective and subjective approaches to the records of what members of Central have thought, said and done for more than a century of existence are combined in this brief but thorough account in a literary style that is both reflective and stimulating.

Those who read this account of such a vital congregation will in all probability catch the spirit of a new religious renaissance, which promises to breathe new life into the structure and program of a church that is in preparation for ministry and witness in the next century.

Bishop L. Scott Allen

INTRODUCTION

Historical Notes

In the United Methodist Church, Book of Discipline, it is stated that on November 29, 1758, John Wesley baptized the first Negro converts at Wadsworth, England. Mr. Wesley claimed that these were the first African Christians he had known. Nathaniel Gilbert owned the two converts. Gilbert later became a preacher in the Methodist movement.

In Black People in the Methodist Church by William B. McClain, it is written that one convert was a woman. No names were recorded for either. McClain refers to them as the "holy nameless two." This fact in history will go down throughout the ages as incomplete.

"When the three returned to the West Indies, they established the first Methodist Chapel in the New World. That first meeting place was Gilbert's home." In 1734, General Oglethorpe, governor of the Georgia Colony in America, invited Charles and John Wesley to come to America to work among the Indians in order to convert them to Christianity. On his return to England, John Wesley became more deeply religious than ever, preaching in the open and traveling continuously as his movement spread. He was one of the early evangelistic preachers. They tried to arouse the Church of England to a deeper and more sincere religious life. They had no thought of dividing the church. Their strict habits of life caused them to be nicknamed "Methodists." The new name stuck to them. This livelier religious interest was the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church organization.

John Wesley is considered the founder of Methodism. He was a clergyman, as was his father before him. His mother was Susanna Wesley, a woman of zeal, devotion and strength of character, who was perhaps the greatest single human influence in Wesley's life. The turning point in his life came when, at a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, on May 24, 1738, he learned what Paul had discovered, that it is not by rules and laws, nor by our own efforts at self-perfection, but by faith in God's mercy as it comes to us in Christ, that one may enter upon life and peace. (Book of Discipline, 1984)

Robert Strawbridge, a preacher from Ireland, came to America in 1764. He organized the first Methodist Society in his home, located on Sam's Creek in Frederick County, Maryland.

This historical record reveals that on the roll of the charter members was Anne, a slave of the Sweitzer family. Anne Sweitzer is historically important because she was a part of Methodism in America from its inception.

From England, Methodism spread to Ireland and then to America. In 1766 Philip Embury, a lay preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New

York. At about the same time Robert Strawbridge, another lay preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, Maryland, and began the work there. In 1769 Wesley sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to America, and two years later Francis Asbury, who became the great leader of American Methodism. (Book of Discipline, 1984)

Methodism was especially adapted to American life. These itinerant preachers served the people under conditions where a settled ministry was not feasible. They sought out the scattered homes, followed the tide of migration as it moved west, preached the gospel, organized societies, established "preaching places," and formed these into "circuits." Thus by the close of the American Revolution, the Methodists numbered some fifteen thousand members and eighty preachers. (Book of Discipline, 1984) As far back as the American Revolutionary War, the question of slavery and the Church has been of grave concern to many. The unanswered question was about keeping slaves while fighting for liberty. Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were split before the Civil War divided the nation.

Slavery and the Church

As early as 1780, minutes of the American Conference reveal that the slavery question was discussed. The question #17, "Does this conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man and nature and hurtful to society? Do we pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves and advise this freedom?" The answer, yes, was loud and clear. Yet this was a question of difference; a question not answered for the next one hundred years.

Prior to the Civil War, the Methodist Episcopal Church split into northern and southern branches. The split grew out of the question of slavery. The Methodist General Conference of 1844 rebuked a southern Bishop, James Osgood Andrew, for owning slaves. In 1846, Bishop Andrew's sympathizers organized the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

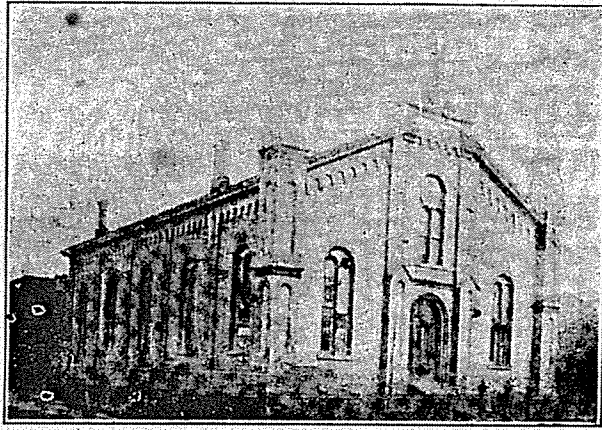
Northerners came south and reestablished the Methodist Episcopal Churches throughout the southland. They not only built churches for the White people, but reestablished Methodist Episcopal Churches among the Black people. Methodism won favor with Blacks for two main reasons:

1. Its evangelistic appeal
2. The church's attitude toward slavery

Free Black People

After the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves, was signed in 1863, the Blacks were left so very unprepared for living a prosperous life. The period of reconstruction provided jobs for former slaves and their families. Workers came from all over the south to work. The location of Atlanta made it one of the most successful cities for commercial trade, manufacturing, transferring and distribution of goods. The city was referred to as the railroad center, having two great railroads with trains going in and out of the city all day and night.

CHAPTER I



Old Loyd Street Church

Humble Beginnings of a Church: 1866-1901

With workers coming into Atlanta, Summerhill, a community near the downtown area, was an ideal place for Blacks to live. Blacks kept the worship habit as they had started in slavery days. Christ was a part of their everyday living. Groups would meet weekly for prayer. Clark Chapel is one group of people that were inspired by God to help shape and mold the civic and religious sentiment and character of a city that was destined to become great.

In the 1864 Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop Davis W. Clark organized all Methodist ministers of African descent. In 1866, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized to teach Black former slaves and their children. In 1866-67, history reveals the fact that Clark Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church was established for Blacks and Lloyd Street Methodist Episcopal Church was organized for Whites. Clark Chapel and Clark University were named for Bishop Davis W. Clark.

Some of the charter members of Clark Chapel were Izell H. Alexander, a shoemaker with a shop on Fraser Street. Mr. Alexander lived on Wheat Street. George Glenn was listed as a charter member, however, no address was found for him in the city directory. Brother John Leake and family lived on Martin Street at the corner of Little Street. Brother Leake was a carpenter. George Payne lived on Larkin Street and Ms. Adline Singleton, a wash woman, lived at 22 Terry Street. (In an "Historical Sketch of Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia," by Lula Leigh Hill, on page 6 is stated that the Clark Chapel was on Fraser Street between Jones Street [now Woodward Avenue] and Rawson Street.) Some early members who followed were: Georgia Payne, Amanda Zachary, Sarah Gray, Dawson Bailey, Charles Noble, and Jordan Coles. These charter and early members, along with unknown others, were instrumental in providing spiritual growth for a community of people eager to worship together.

It was common for ministers of that era to serve as pastor and teacher. This was necessary, for there was need for the Blacks to learn to read. It was reassuring to know that understanding the circumstances of the Blacks, education was looked upon as a way to provide for a brighter tomorrow. Many White missionary associations ventured to provide education for the freed men and their children.

Folk tales say that Clark Chapel was painted red and often called the "Little Red Church" or "The Little Red Cross" because the church was made in the form of a cross. Old timers also say it was located on the corner of Fraser and Clark Street. Here is another way to honor the Clark (Bishop) name.

Rev. J. W. Lee, the first minister in charge of Clark Chapel was a successful teacher. He taught in what was called the Church's primary school. This was maintained by the church and was to make a difference in the lives of the families and children. Education gave hope that was to sustain them for years.

Rev. Madison C. B. Mason, A.M.B.D.

Postmaster - Brilliant Pastor, Field Agent of the Freedmen's
Aid and Southern Educational Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church

This information was taken from The Black Side by Rev. E. R. Carter. The Black Side is a partial history of the business, religious, and educational side of the Negro in Atlanta in 1894.

Rev. Mason was born of slave parents on a sugar farm near Houma, Louisiana, March 27, 1859. When ten years of age, he was placed in the village school where he mastered the alphabet in one day. Reaching the limit of the country schools in the fall of 1874, he entered the State Agricultural and Mechanical College at New Orleans in January, 1875. This being a mixed school, he received no little persecution and ill treatment on account of color. He, however, refused to leave and stood at the head of his class from March until the close of the school in July.

In 1883, he joined the Louisiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He re-entered New Orleans University and graduated from the classical department in 1888. While pastor of Loyd Street Church, he deservedly won his popularity as a preacher and pastor. During a pastorate of two years, the church greatly prospered, more than doubling its membership.

Rev. Mason graduated from Gammon Theological Seminary in 1891 with high honors. Almost immediately thereafter, he was elected field agent of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Educational Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, being the first Colored man in his church to be honored with such a position.

Humble Beginnings of a School

The primary school was taken over by the Freedmen's Aid Society in 1868, and became known as Clark University. Clark remained in Clark Chapel, Summerhill, for five years. In 1872, it moved to Whitehall and McDaniel Street and was there from 1872 until 1880.

Dr. J. W. Lee, with the assistance of Dr. Fuller, secured options upon four hundred acres of land adjoining the city on the south side, now south Atlanta, for the building of Clark University. This land cost \$42.00 to \$45.00 per acre. Funds to pay for the land were raised by Bishop Haven, chiefly through lectures in the north. Mrs. Lee trained the first group of Negro jubilee singers. They travelled giving concerts to raise funds for the school. Later, 160 acres of this land was sold for about \$170,000. Ample campus remained. Gammon Theological Seminary began as a department of Clark University.

In 1883, Bishop Warren interested Dr. Elijah H. Gammon of Chicago in the development of a separate institution and a tract of land adjacent to that of Clark was purchased. Dr. W. P. Thirkield was selected as president and Gammon Theological Seminary began to take form. Lloyd Street - Clark Chapel played a significant role in the founding of Clark University and Gammon Seminary.

Summerhill was one of the two communities where large numbers of ex-slaves settled due to work opportunities. The other section was the Fourth Ward. It was in the Fourth Ward that the African Methodist Episcopal Church organized Morris Brown College in 1881.

Now other church related schools were being organized, yet there were no city, free or public schools for Blacks. This need became a topic for discussion.

Pastors preached the need for free schools, parents talked over the fence about free schools. The word was spread all over the city.

Summerhill Gets Public School

Now, Clark Chapel steps out in greatness again. Charles Walter Hill, one of Clark's first students, became the first Black (colored) principal of a city school, just 24 years after the conclusion of the Civil War. In 1879, the Atlanta Board of Education minutes showed that the Board decided to educate "colored children" as well as White children. Professor C. W. Hill, a product of Clark Chapel was to be paid \$600 a year. He worked first at Storrs School (Houston Street), then Mitchell Street, then Summerhill School. Summerhill School was later renamed E. P. Johnson to honor the pastor of Reed Street Baptist Church. C. W. Hill's name will reappear in the fifties.

The parents were very concerned about the new public school for the city being in Summerhill. The annual report of the Board of Education submitted by Joseph E. Brown, president, stated that colored people insisted on having persons of their own race to teach their children. The Board of Education was of the opinion that where there were colored men or women with sufficient education and proper qualifications as teachers that it was proper to gratify this desire on the part of their race. This was good news in the community. Now you see how the need for parents to really get involved in the fund raising came about. They needed to buy added supplies for the school. These needs were met by parents selling cookies, cakes, candies and eggs to buy paper, pencils, etc. As we move into the 20th century, you will see the involvement of Clark Chapel in the National Parent Teachers Association. You will be able to understand why Clark Chapel has been successful as a church for over 100 years.

Some facts that deserve special mention that took place in the growth and development of Lloyd (also spelled Loyd) Street are:

- 1868 Georgia Mission Conference became an Annual Conference (racially mixed)
- 1871 Death of Bishop Clark, founder of Clark University (now Clark College)
- 1872 Bishop Gilbert Haven succeeded Bishop Clark. Bishop Haven, described as a civil rights leader and champion of equality for the Black man, a radical and controversial figure in Georgia who gave a strong leadership until his death January 3, 1880. He gave great support for Clark University.

The Merger

In 1875, the move was made from Clark Chapel to Lloyd Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Black and White persons worshipped together during this period. One of Lloyd Street's trustees was Mr. H. I. Kimball (White), the founder of the Old Kimball House Hotel. With the congregation merged, the White members soon secured property on Marietta Street. The Marietta Street church was the first church in Georgia, so far as we can find any record, to open a free school for White cotton-mill operatives.

The White congregation wasn't large enough to keep the expensive building in downtown Atlanta. It was sold to the Black Methodist Episcopalians through the Board of Church Extension. Mr. H. I. Kimball and Mr. John Leake, Sr., Black Chairman of the Clark Chapel trustee board and a charter member, were instrumental in the transaction. Lloyd Street Methodist Church had been the property of the same White, Northern Methodists who were residing in the South. The erection of the building had cost \$20,000 and there was a church extension debt of \$10,000. Clark Chapel purchased the Lloyd Street Church with all its responsibilities and obligations. Through the leniency of the Church Extension Board, the \$10,000 debt was allowed to continue with interest being paid from time to time. Brother John Leake continued as Chairman of the Trustee Board until his death. John Leake, Jr. was once superintendent of the Sunday School which during his time enrolled approximately four hundred members. The students of Clark University composed a great part of the membership.

What joy it must have been for the Black congregation to worship in a beautiful downtown Atlanta church. Some of the builders, when working on the foundation, wished for a day when they could enjoy such beauty for their church. The two congregations were the most influential Methodist Episcopal churches in Atlanta.

Lloyd Street Church became the most influential in the Black community, as some of the most noteworthy events among blacks of Atlanta, both religious and social, were held at this church. This increase in Black prominence hastened the withdrawal of the Whites. Lloyd Street congregation was a thriving, bustling, energetic group. Those characteristics have been retained to this day.

A New Church

Not only has Clark Chapel-Lloyd Street given leadership in education, it has also given birth to another church. Clark Chapel was responsible for the birth of Clark University, Gammon Seminary and the first Black public school principal. Now, in the 19th century, we see the birth of a new church.

Between 1888 and 1890, when Rev. Arnold was pastor of Clark Chapel, a prayer band of holiness people met every Friday afternoon to hold service. They were soon in a position to buy and put up a tent for their own holiness services. This tent was erected on the corner of Clark and Martin Street. It became the Martin Street Church of God, the oldest existing church in the Summerhill community. The story of the birth of this church is included in the June 18, 1980 First Annual Summerhill Reunion.

Period of Adjustment

Some vestiges of the struggle caused by the Civil War remained, yet life was changing. People had to keep hope alive yet work was the same. Gardens had to be planted and kept weeded, chickens, hogs, cows, and fruit trees were part of the natural environment. Some cotton pickers were paid for their labor for the first time. Men shod horses, churned milk, made butter, and helped rebuild a city that was fast becoming the gateway to the south. Freedom changed the status of the workers but the nature of the work remained the same.

Children were learning about contributions being made by Blacks like George W. Carver, who worked his way through Simpson College, Indianola, Indiana. He graduated in 1894, the first and only black student there. Preachers preached about Tuskegee Institute, the school for Blacks in Alabama, and its founder Booker T. Washington, a pioneer and educator. The pastors and teachers were dedicated to the cause of education.

What a great contribution made by a small group of former slaves and sons and daughters of slaves. Eighteen sixty-five through 1900 were years that really placed great responsibilities on a church that no other period in American history can equal. The foundation for a race of people was strongly planted. See what can grow from a little seed of hope. The great church we know now as Central United Methodist Church as a most illustrious heritage. As this history moves into the 20th century, much will be revealed.

As the 20th century approached, it had mixed meaning to Lloyd Street Methodist Church. Many of the Black members were impressed by the progress made by the church thus far. Some members secretly resented the fact that Black and White persons worshipped together. Oral stories reveal that there was a separation in the seating for Blacks. One account is that Blacks were seated in the balcony. Another account is that Blacks sat from the rear forward, Whites from the front to the back. As the White members withdrew (similar to the White flight of the 1970's when the White population of Atlanta declined) the Blacks had to take control completely.

The church had really been under the guidance of well-trained White ministers followed by scholarly Blacks who were determined to keep the standards high. Within the period from 1866 to 1900, memory was fleeting. Some of the most vivid events were lost to the community. The one problem most members did not recognize was that of record keeping.

"Many Christians of the first century sensed no need for a long-term plan. They thought that Jesus would be gathered together for the final days with God. Since their memory of their own experiences with Jesus was vivid, they never thought about the possibility that the whole story might be forgotten by the end of the century. Only through the providence of God were procedures put in place to see that the decay of memory did not destroy the church before it got started" (Carter, 1990).

Similar thinking may have been why Lloyd Street records were not recorded earlier. Yet one must note that these were just children of slaves learning to read, write and understand human experiences. For most of the congregation taking care of the day-to-day existence was about all they could manage. A wealth of information about the early church was lost with the death of each charter member and surely each member that moved from Fraser Street to Lloyd Street.

Church and lay students have always been amazed at the speed with which Negroes assimilated the teachings and doctrines of Christianism, even though the chances for them to actually share the communal church was questionable. Lloyd Street Church congregation was mostly children and grandchildren of slaves.

According to Ben Richardson in his book, Great American Negroes, the slaves were segregated before God. Either they were required to remain outside the church building until a portion of the sermon directed to them was preached, or they were herded into the gallery and made to sit behind a high board wall into which peepholes had been cut.

Now Lloyd Street was growing and determined to be successful in controlling their own church, partly in repudiation of the segregation exercised against their fore-parents but also to have some cohesive institution that would "tie brother to brother in an irrefragable bond." Lloyd Street, thus far, has accomplished both of these. The best-trained Black ministers kept the congregation informed about all aspects of city life. They were encouraged to learn to read, particularly the Bible.

The New South

It was Georgia's revered Henry Grady, who, in substance, said of the Negro,

"A thousand torches lighted by him during the Civil War would have disbanded the Confederate Army but not one was lighted; into his keeping was given the responsibility of caring for the master's family, cultivating the crops that fed the army; it was he who, with the assurance of loyalty, sent his master off to war, the success of which would mean his continued slavery, and it was he who met his master on his return with sympathy and aid in binding his wounds. Never in all history was more responsibility placed on a slave and to his everlasting credit not once was that trust betrayed.

"It is the Negro to whom we have entrusted the raising of our children, the care of our homes. It is the Negro who has cultivated our crops and carried out those tasks in life distasteful to us and what is his reward today? Preach hate against him, grind him farther down the economic ladder, shackle him tighter and treat him more disdainfully. Holler 'Negro' louder and more often and Georgians will honor you with political success and revere your memory when you are gone, or so it would seem" (Beehive Press, 1971).

In the New South, writings and speeches of Henry Grady, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution during the prosperous 1880's and a most acclaimed southerner of his day, pleaded for sectional reconciliation and regional reform. After the Civil War, he wrote about political harmony for a generation of Georgians who had suffered. Grady spoke of justice for the Negro in a society where slavery had been ended recently and reluctantly. Some resented the freed Negro. The Northern Methodists were in full sympathy with the Negroes and most of them were abolitionists. It was the North that had given Negroes freedom, and it was the Methodists that gave them churches. Yet Black and White carpenters and masons worked together on the same buildings. Whatever the Black was fitted to do, he had abundant chance to do without protest or friction. The children went to separate schools, rode in separate cars and now were rapidly establishing separate churches. Here you see the desire for the so-called separate but equal paths. Most news articles would give the opinion that utmost harmony

was prevailing and there was no desire on either side for union. This made Lloyd Street Church more determined to be one of the strongest churches in the city.

Reading was an extremely important tool for the Blacks. The ministers of Lloyd Street preached the need for education weekly. It was in 1895, when a single speech thrust Booker T. Washington into national fame and recognition as a Black spokesman. Earlier in the same year, Frederick Douglass, the champion of abolition, civil rights, and political action, and the preeminent Black leader of the 19th century, died. Washington urged both races to "cast down your bucket where you are," and "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress" (Washington, 1901). The Atlanta Constitution brought Booker T. Washington personal fame as the Negro of the hour.

Henry Grady acquired one-fourth share of The Atlanta Constitution in 1880 and was its managing editor for the next ten years. He became the spokesman for Georgia's aspiring post-war white business class. His editorials were used to spread the news of the New South or Blacks after slavery. He was the acknowledged representative of the South spreading news of the Blacks' rights and improvements. Three leading New York papers boosted his name as Grover Cleveland's vice presidential running mate.

Suddenly, in 1889, on a tour in Boston, he collapsed with pneumonia and died. He was buried on Christmas Day, at the age of thirty-nine. He wanted harmony between the two races. The name Henry Grady is honored even today with Grady Hospital, Grady High, a city of Atlanta school, and the downtown statue.

Clark Chapel Methodist Church, at this point, had been organized for thirty-nine years. It had changed its name from Clark Chapel to Lloyd Street Methodist Church and moved from Fraser Street in the Summerhill Community to downtown Lloyd Street.

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CHAPTER II



Central: 1901-1913

From the Historical Fact Sheets of Central United Methodist Church's development, you find that in 1901, Lloyd Street, by city action, was changed to Central Avenue, which led the Church name to be changed to Central Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. There is a question of difference as to the year the street name was changed. E.J. Hammond in The Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia, notes a name change as early as 1876, the same year Calhoun Street was changed to Piedmont Avenue.

Whether Lloyd Street or Central Avenue, the church was noted for its leadership in pulpit, choir loft and community outreach. Records say "some of the best minds and most outstanding men" among Blacks in the United States graced the pulpit of Central Avenue, a tradition which continues even to the present time.

On July 1, 1904, Dr. William Henry Croghan was elected the first Black President of Clark University. He served as president until June, 1910. Dr. Croghan had the cooperation of Black and White preachers throughout the state and friends of Clark generally. Central Avenue did a very good job supporting her school, the school that started in Clark Chapel in Summerhill. Central and Clark worked together just beautifully. The Clark University students supported Central's Sunday School and the students from Gammon played an important part as Sunday School teachers. At one time, under Superintendent John Leake, Jr., there were 400 Sunday School class members. This was just great for Clark Chapel, which with fewer than 100 members, transferred to Lloyd Street less than forty years before. Some students walked from Clark University, while others rode the street car at a price of five cents on the Capital-Waymon car line or the old South Atlanta, South Pryor Federal Prison car line.

In the early years of the 20th Century, Atlanta was a thriving, energetic, bustling city. Changes were made that some citizens called regrettable. Some much needed changes were left as were old posters reappeared in some downtown store windows that sparked fear in the minds of Blacks. Such as the poster:

Slave Yard
by Robert M. Clarke
 Mechanics
 Coachmen
 Cooks
 House Servants
 Field Hands
 Buys and Sells on Commission

Another article that reflected the feelings of many was an old sign reading:

"3 or 4 Negroes gone to Yankees. It will be a disadvantage
 to me and a misfortune to them..."

Such old signs were not welcomed by Whites or Blacks seeking to establish a fraternal feeling between the North and South or Blacks and Whites. Some people felt the old signs were meant for the Blacks to read and remember.

You may know that Central Avenue pastors spoke weekly to the members telling them to stay out of trouble, learn to read and get prepared for life in the 20th Century.

Agitation of Blacks -- 1906 Race Riot

Some Whites were willing to make concessions to the Negroes, not because that was morally imperative, but because that would maintain an orderly society and encourage healthy business growth. In 1895, 1897, 1902 and 1903, the Supreme Court refused on technical grounds to hear disfranchisement appeals in South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama and Maryland. Georgia was defending lynchings which increased at this time. The leaders of Georgia felt that Negro inferiority had to be enforced and that measures against Negroes were essential to a recovery of freedom and independence.

In the introduction to The New Press by Beehive Press, it is stated that the traumatic, tragic climax of the New South era came with the 1906 gubernatorial campaign, when the self-styled reformer, Hoke Smith, challenged Clark Howell, representative of Atlanta's business leaders and publisher of Grady's constitution. Negro disfranchisement was the central issue of the campaign. Lurid provocative accounts of alleged Negro barbarities appeared in Smith's Atlanta Journal. In September 1906, the city exploded in a four-day race riot. Governor Smith's administration became progressive reform for whites only and disfranchisement led to further limitation on Negroes. Within ten years, the Ku Klux Klan was received in executive offices in Atlanta. Race relations had reached a perilous crisis. The outlook was depressing. Atlanta was not the city of Henry Grady's dream. Negroes grouped in churches for leadership. Central Avenue now was providing direction for the community. In one strong voice, the leaders asked Black men to stay off the street after dark if not going to or from work.

Poor White people objected to any concessions made to Blacks. White leaders in politics used the race issue to gain votes for election to office, local and national. Church leaders were well aware of the situation and continued to teach abstinence and self-control to the congregation. National attention was focused on Atlanta because of some of its well-known leaders. White leaders had expressed in the newspapers loudly and clearly that Atlanta could solve its race problem with equal but separate accommodations. This same paper only theory remained in print until the civil rights movement of the 60's. Yet, seen all downtown were Black caricature signs of worsening times. The Jim Crow era with all of its racist connotations was no help to the mood of the city, a reminder of the past.

The City Erupted -- 1906

From Atlanta And Its Environs by Garrett, you will read:

"Hoke Smith Landslide Whelms Georgia Carries Over One
Hundred Counties and Gives Him the Gubernatorial Prize

"WHEN CALLED COUNTIES CRY HOKE SMITH

“Such a Sameness About the Returns They Grow a Bit
Monotonous

“NO SECTION ESCAPED HOKE SMITH DELUGE

“Fulton, Floyd, Bibb, Richmond and Thomas, of 'Big Six'
are for Hoke Smith and Estill Saves Chatham by
Uncomfortably Small Margin.

"The Election, with its accent on Negro disfranchisement, had a tragic sequel one month to the day after Hoke Smith swept into office. The Atlanta race riot, which began on September 22, 1906, was the most serious disturbance of the peace in Fulton County since the War Between the States.

"The great heat engendered during the campaign, particularly by Tom Watson, on the Negro question, was, to say the least, a contributory cause of the riot. The immediate and overwhelming cause, however, was a series of assaults upon White women by brutal Negroes, which began in November 1905, and continued with more frequency and boldness during 1906.

"The situation inspired the *Journal* to editorialize, in bold-faced capitals on August 1, 1906:

‘Political equality being thus preached to the Negro in the ring pa--- and on the stump, what wonder that he makes no distinction between political and social equality. He grows more bumptious on the street. More impudence in his dealings with white men; and then, when he cannot achieve social equality as he wishes, with the instinct of the barbarian to destroy what he cannot attain to, he lies in wait, as to that dastardly brute did yesterday near the city, and assaults the fair young girlhood of the South... It is time for those who know the perils of the Negro problem to stand together with --- resolve that political power shall never give the Negro encouragement in his foul dreams of a mixture of races.’

"The pent-up volcano erupted on Saturday night, September 22, after four attempted assaults on white women by Negroes on that day were reported in a sensational manner by the local press. The first assault took place at a home on Sugar Creek near Flat Shoals Road in DeKalb County. The others all occurred in the same section of Atlanta – at 127 Julian Street, 182 D--- Street, and 275 Magnolia Street.

"In summing up the trouble on Saturday night, the *Constitution* on Monday morning said:

'People are asking what kind of mob was it that caused so much trouble ... How large was it and of what class of citizens was it composed?

'When the disorder first started there was no mob, but simply a crowd of turbulent, noisy men and youths. This seemed to be so apparent that the press did not realize there would be any serious developments.

'The mob was composed mostly of youths, 16 to 20 years of age. To these were added several men who were well known to the police as persons who would rather have trouble than not. There were also in the crowd men who were ready for lawless depredations. There were some, of course, who were angry because of the way in which white women of this county had re----- been treated by negro brutes.

'It is admitted by all who saw the mob that the large majority ... were minors. It was Saturday night and the boys had their week's wages and a few drinks. They started in for a night of negro chasing and this was all that was done for nearly two hours.

'The first disorder was at the corner of Pryor and Decatur Streets, when some of the youths attacked a negro bicycle messenger. The police had to ----- the boy. From that time on the mob chased negroes along Decatur and Pryor streets and Central Avenue until the fire department produced an artificial rain storm. The mob at that time numbered about 2000. It was believed that the mob had dispersed and that all further danger of a serious outbreak was passed.

'Then came the trolley car with negro passengers and the real danger of the night was at hand.

'When the attacks were made on the street cars other men joined the mob, men who were actuated by the feeling of hatred for the race to which belonged the negro brutes who had assaulted white women. It is believed by the police that the men who boarded the trolley cars and attacked the negroes, had not up to that time, had any connection with the mob. They were infuriated by the sight of negro men riding with white women.

'From that time on the whole complexity of the mob changed and the police had an element and a situation to deal with which had not before confronted them. None realized this more than did Chief Jennings. He leaped upon the first car which the mob raided and had a hand to hand fight with the men who were trying to kill the negro men. The mob then numbered about 3000.

'Early in the evening rushes were made upon the hardware stores for pistols and ammunition, but the stores were quickly closed, as were the saloons.

'One of the worst battles of the night took place around the post office, ---- at Marietta and Forsyth streets. Here, the mob, yelling for blood, rushed upon a Negro barber shop across the street. The two Negro barbers, working quietly at their chairs, made no resistance. Felled by bricks and gunfire, their bodies were dragged to the street and thrown in an alleyway beside the new Georgia Railway and Electric Company building. Soon thereafter another Negro was caught and killed on the Forsyth Street bridge.

'One of the most sensational attacks of the night was made on the old ----- depot. As in all of the other mobs of the night, this crowd was composed mostly of boys and youngsters who were absolutely without reason and ----- constantly to "kill every damned nigger in the town." ' ' "

During the height of the excitement at Pryor and Decatur Streets, Mayor Woodward (of Atlanta) mounted a box and addressed the crowd. He pleaded for peace. Dr. William F. Penn, a highly respected Negro physician, was called in to give leadership to the Negroes. (Central Avenue -- Mrs. W. F. Penn rendered a vocal solo on Friday, June 21, 1907 for the anniversary.) Samuel D. Jones was appointed to attend the Negro churches and address their congregations, assuring them of the sympathy and confidence of White people and their determination to prevent the recurrence of violence.

Manufacturers were naturally very anxious to get their plants running again as they were losing both money and trade while they were idle. Slowly, people returned to the daily routine. Horse-drawn wagons with the men yelling coal man, vegetable man, policy man, rag man buying old rags, ice man and all other services returned. The fear left so very many scars on the little Black children. They were afraid of all police, and would run and hide when they heard the horses. This fear had to be redirected and respect for police established. Some things never really change.

After the Riot

As Atlanta made an effort to live up to her expectation as a city able to solve its race problems, Central Avenue Church was growing. Rev. J. A. Rush led a most progressive and aggressive movement for racial betterment. He stressed education and was a leader that seemed to have the support and love of his congregation. As legend goes, Dr. Rush often told his people how he watched them end their work week at noon on Saturdays and stream downtown to buy the White man's goods.

Life was fraught with all the hardships and inconvenience that characterized the days immediately after the riot much like that which followed the Civil War.

Many Black mothers worked as servants for White people, when work at home required so much time. Some home work included quilting, soap making, washing clothes, candle making, cleaning glass chimneys, knitting, caring for chickens, hogs, canning food, etc. Most Black men were listed as laborers in the

old city directories. My research reveals that it is both little known and historically ironic that Blacks were involved in skilled crafts and in the scientific and technological developments of this nation prior to the Civil War and during the ensuing era. This was a picture of the situation in the south at this time.

A Look at the 1907 Anniversary

In the early years of Central Avenue M. E. Church, it is noted that "formerly Loyd Street Church" is used on the program. Let us not be too greatly concerned about the date 1875 on the program. There are other differences in dates and names. My research supports the founding date of 1866. The annual conference records indicate the founding date as 1866. Some choose 1867 as the logical date, however it defies logic to assume the building was completed the same year of the Church's founding.

Let us look at the six nights of celebration for the anniversary in 1907, from June 17 to June 23 with Rev. J. A. Rush, D.D. as pastor. All week the choir and other musical selections are included. Central has been known for beautiful music, so the week gave the public an opportunity to enjoy the orators and choirs.

Monday, June 27, 1907

The Monday anniversary sermon was delivered by Rev. E. P. Johnson, D.D. Dr. Johnson was pastor of Reed Street Baptist Church located for years on Fraser Street in the Summerhill Community. The church was relocated to Bankhead Highway, N. W. due to the erection of the Atlanta Fulton County stadium. Dr. Edwin Posey Johnson had the honor of having the Summerhill School named in his honor. The E. P. Johnson School closed ... also. The fact that a great Baptist minister delivered the anniversary sermon was credit to good planning even in the early days of our development of an interdenominational relationship.

Tuesday, June 18, 1907

Tuesday night was referred to as Young People's Meeting. The address was delivered by Rev. I. Garland Penn, Secretary of Epworth League. Central Avenue, in 1908, organized the Epworth League "to draw youth together for religious, educational and recreational purposes." The class song by Mr. Jesse L. Releford's Sunday School class is a fact that brings the Releford name out front where it has remained over the years. Presently, his son Martin Releford and wife Cassie are active.

Wednesday, June 19, 1907

The Wednesday night title was Historical Night. Let us follow the names and see the living history. Rev. John Leake was a charter member of Clark Chapel. He was a local preacher whose life is written in the history of the church he loved so well, and for which he labored through the struggles of its early existence. He served as chairman of the trustee board and was instrumental in the transaction that moved Clark Chapel to Lloyd Street. He continued as chairman until his death.

The address was delivered by Rev. Aaron P. Melton who had the honor of being the first graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary. He served as

pastor of Central Avenue twice. Rev. Melton was an active minister for about fifty years, twenty-five years of which were spent as presiding elder.

Bits of history was given by Rev. George Standing, a White Englishman who served for three years as pastor of Central. He was one of the greatest preachers of that time. Central Avenue was showing integration in her programs in the early part of our century.

Thursday, June 20, 1907

The theme for Thursday was the Organizations which have made the church great. The chairman was Rev. C. L. Johnson, Presiding Elder. (Rev. Johnson's daughter was a teacher at the E. P. Johnson School.) Mary Johnson Adams had worked long and effectively with organizations at Central. On program, the tenor solo by Mr. William Kellogg brings the Kellogg name into our history where it has remained even unto the present. His daughter has an interview later in this history.

The speaker on Christian Education was Rev. P. H. Travis, who later in the twenties became pastor of Central. It is said that Rev. Travis was endowed with spiritual power. During his administration all outstanding bills were paid. He constantly told his board, "I always feel better when I know that the bills against the church are paid."

Friday, June 21, 1907

On the Friday Night program, the Releford name appears again in the music. The lecture was by Rev. M. C. B. Mason. Rev. Mason was an eloquent, gifted speaker. As pastor of Central, he drew immense crowds. Only people that came early were able to obtain seats. He was called from Central to take the position of secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society. How pleased he must have been to return to this former church on such an occasion. He was the minister to preach the sermon at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, which was also Rally Day.

Sunday, June 23, 1907

The Sunday, 3:00 p.m. mass meeting afforded the general public an opportunity to hear great speakers. The Rev. W. A. Fountain, president of Morris Brown College of the A.M.E. church was one such speaker, as was Rev. L. H. King, who followed Rev. Rush as pastor of Central. (In 1940, Rev. King was elected Bishop in the United Methodist church.) Dr. John Wesley Edward Bowen delivered the 8:00 p.m. sermon Sunday night.

The Atlanta public heard two young ministers with great oratorical ability speak from the same pulpit on June 23, 1907. Years later, two were Bishops. This is proof of the fact that the early church wanted only the best.

In all written history of the growth and development of Clark Chapel, Lloyd Street, Central Avenue, and now Central United Methodist Church, complimentary remarks are used to describe the type of ministers that have given leadership. As the program for the anniversary week is read, names are found that even now are well known. It must have been the wisdom of the early church leaders to seek and find the best minds and

most outstanding Black men in the U.S. to speak to them. That tradition has continued until the present.

The President of the United States Speaks at Central Methodist Episcopal Church

In 1911, an attempt was being made by White politicians in Atlanta to project a new South in ways that would reflect approval from Northern businessmen. Some protection that had been withdrawn from the Negroes was gradually being restored. Yet, the constitutional rights of Negroes were denied them by law and through intimidation. Poll tax and White primaries and constant threats of violence against their person and property remained. This was covered over by the White politicians saying separate but equal. For all they knew the conscience of America had been awakened to their political plight.

In planning for the President of the United States, consideration had to be given to the Negroes. This occasion was the Southern Commercial Congress. It met in the City auditorium-armory (demolished in the late 50's) on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, March 8, 9, 10. The immediate past president of the United States, the incumbent president and his successor were guests of the city. With men of such great status, the eyes of the world would be looking at Atlanta. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, arrived Thursday. President Taft arrived Friday morning. All three statesmen were guests of the Piedmont Hotel and were entertained separately at both the Capital City and Piedmont Driving Clubs.

With reference to the President's arrival, the *Journal* said on March 10:

"The arrival of President Taft Friday morning at 11 o'clock was attended by all the spectacular formal dignity, and by all the popular acclamation that became the occasion -- the welcome of the president of the United States, come to the heart of the South on an official visit.

"The circumstances surrounding President Taft's coming were strikingly different from those which marked the arrival of Citizen Roosevelt Thursday. The latter came vociferously welcomed, but with his slouch hat on his head, and very little formality either in the manner of his arrival or in the reception which awaited him.

"But the Hon. William Howard Taft came as the president of the United States. His descent from his private car was thoroughly impressive. He was preceded from the car by Col. Fred J. Paxon and Brooks Morgan as the official (Chamber of Commerce) hosts, and by Governor Brown. By his side stood his military aide, Captain Archibald Butt, resplendent in gold braid. Close at his elbow was Lucien C. Wheeler, chief of the secret service men. Charles Dyer Norton, his secretary, was another of the party.

"Scarcely had the chief magistrate of of the nation set foot on Georgia soil when the cannon on the plaza began to boom in the presidential salute.

"In all the open square before the Terminal station, a sea of humanity surged and pressed toward the side driveway to catch a glimpse of the great man as the procession formed.

"The state and local military and a detachment of the Atlanta police were drawn up at dress parade, holding the crowd back as the automobile procession formed. Prominent among the military organizations were the Fifth regiment, N.G.G., with Gen. Clifford Anderson and Colonel (E. E., later Judge) Pomeroy in command, the Marist cadets and those of the Georgia Military Academy.

"Photographers were admitted within the lines, and half a hundred shutters were snapped in the direction of the presidential auto....

"Soon the procession started down Mitchell to Whitehall to Edgewood Avenue to the auditorium-armory. The crowd was perhaps the largest ever assembled on Atlanta's streets. Along the whole line of march the pavements were packed and jammed until pedestrian movement was practically impossible. Business was suspended along the line of march. Every window on the upper floors of the big department stores and smaller business houses along the route was filled with smiling faces, waving handkerchiefs and motioning arms. As the procession reached Five Points, people were observed on neighboring housetops. The decoration of Atlanta's public buildings and leading mercantile houses showed to splendid advantage. The sun was shining brightly. It was a fete day.

"At the auditorium-armory, President Taft was first escorted by a side door to Taft Hall, which was practically empty. Then the party entered the auditorium and proceeded, amid rousing cheers and waving flags, to the immense stage, where the President took the chair of the Southern Commercial Congress for an hour.

"The autos in the procession which escorted the President to the auditorium were occupied as follows:

"First Auto -- President Taft, Governor Brown, Secretary Norton, John M. Parker, Capt. Butt.

"Second Auto -- Secret service men (Wheeler walked beside the presidential car).

"Third Auto -- Mayor Courtland S. Winn, Edwin L. Quarles and others.

"Fourth Auto -- Secretary of War Dickinson, W. W. Finley, F. J. Paxon, Brooks Morgan.

"Fifth Auto -- John Hays Hammond, John E. Murphy, J. H. Nunnally.

"Sixth Auto -- G. Grosvenor Dawe, Robert F. Maddox, Gen. C. L. Anderson.

"Seventh Auto -- Dr. Clarence J. Owens, Mell R. Wilkinson, Henry S. Jackson, Asa G. Candler.

"Others followed, among them cars containing the large Augusta delegation.

"At 12:30 p.m., President Taft was escorted by Brooks Morgan to the Capital City Club for luncheon. At 1:45 he was escorted by Steve R. Johnson, Colonel J. V. Nash and Dr. A. H. Van Dyke to the governor's mansion, where a reception was held in honor of the president and the visiting governors. Gov. Cole L. Blease, of South Carolina, arrived by the way, Friday morning.

"After a rest at the Piedmont Hotel, President Taft, will, at 4 o'clock, go to the Central Avenue Methodist Church to address the Negroes of Atlanta. At 6 p.m., he will be entertained at dinner at the Driving Club. At 8:30 he will deliver his address on 'A Greater Nation Through a Greater South,' at the auditorium-armory. The public is invited.

"President Taft leaves at midnight for Augusta.

"Other speakers appearing with the President on Friday evening were, with their subjects:

"`Electricity and the South' -- George Westinghouse, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"`The South's Educational Obligation' -- Dr. Henry S. Hartzog, Secretary, Arkansas Education Commission, Little Rock.

"`The Citizens and the State' -- Hon. Woodrow Wilson, Governor of New Jersey.

"`The Enforcement of Law in the South' -- Hon. J. M. Dickinson, Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.

"*America* -- sung by the entire convention. Benediction -- Dr. Lincoln Hulley, President, John B. Stetson University, DeLand, Florida."

In commenting editorially upon the meeting, the *Journal* said, on March 8th:

"Atlanta is honored and fortunate in being the host of a convention so important at that of the Southern Commercial Congress. For several days to come this city will be a center of national if not world-wide interest, for in the sessions that began Wednesday morning at the auditorium there are being generated ideas and forces that will make a greater America as well as a greater South.

"Indeed, the influence of this Congress will sweep far beyond any city or state or section. Its purpose is the awakening of the South in order that she may reach speedily her destined place of national leadership and contribute more richly than ever to the wealth and progress of the Union.

"Perhaps it would be truer to say that the purpose of this Congress is to bring organization into a renaissance that has already begun. For there can be no doubt that within the past

decade or two the South has wakened to the vast treasure that lies in her soil and forests and streams and hills and harbors. Her cities are leading the nation in their rate of growth. Under advanced methods of agriculture, her harvests are becoming more abundant. Her industries are multiplying. Each year her resources are attracting larger volumes of capital. Her people are thinking in terms of the broadest Americanism."

The downtown Central Avenue Methodist Church was packed long before 4 o'clock. This was a first for so very many former slaves, daughters, sons, and grandchildren to sit before the President of the United States. This was the only time scheduled for the Negroes to hear President Taft. As would reflect good planning, the pastor of Central had provided for minutes to be taken of the speech given by the president. The notes were recorded by a Central member who was a Spelman Seminary student, Fannie Lee Greenwood (my mother). The minutes must have been very well recorded, for the President asked for and received a copy of the notes. President Taft later sent by U. S. mail a letter of congratulations to Fannie Lee Greenwood.

Here is the historical fact of a great people that has long been forgotten. Blacks from all over the city along with liberal White politicians wanted to send a favorable race relations message out from Atlanta, the southern city that was looked upon as a progressive city. Central Avenue was chosen as the downtown church to show off its greatness.

This was another attempt made by White people to project the "New South" in a positive position. More of the three-day Congress is recorded in "Atlanta and Its Environs" located in the Georgia Department of Archives and History, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State.

Names With Over 60 Years of Service at Central

The Releford Family

In an attempt to get some living, legitimate views of Central's history, I have recorded and interviewed some of the members that were active in their teen years early in the 20th century. They have remained active for over seventy years. Note: Of names that have appeared previously, some were the parents or family members of the interviewees.

The twenty-second anniversary program, for 1907 notes that Mr. Jesse L. Releford's Sunday School Class rendered the class song on Tuesday night June 8th. A photograph of Mr. Seaborn Releford (Jesse's father) is now hanging in the Annie E. Hall classroom, 2nd floor of the Education Building. I interviewed his son Martin and wife Cassie in March, 1990. The two have worked a lifetime in Central. Martin was living out of state for a short time. He was named for his grandmother, Mrs. Willie Martin. She was one of the early members of Lloyd Street and often told him of the seating arrangements used for Blacks and Whites. He recalls her telling him that Negroes sat from the rear of Church toward the front and Whites sat from the front to rear. This is one of three different accounts for seating arrangements I will note in this historical account.

Under the leadership of Rev. J. A. Rush, Martin often talked and played with their son, they would walk downtown and play around the church. Mother

Martin cooked very delicious dinners for her pastor. He was believed to be a White preacher as he looked white. A story is told about a conversation between two ladies on a Monday. Lady number one said, "Lord, didn't that White man preach last night; Lady number two said "that was not a white preacher man, he (Rev. Rush) is one of us Blacks but just looks White." Lady number one said, "Lord, if I had known he was one of us I would have shouted all over that church." Rev. Rush was very well admired by the congregation and was able to be quite effective. He found a \$6,000 debt on the property. During the first nine years of his administration, this debt was paid out.

Martin Releford served as a Unit Leader, Steward, member of the Men's Bible Class, Methodist Men and was most successful as the contact person for the NAACP from Central. This action was necessary as a large number of Central's members were City of Atlanta public school teachers and the NAACP organization had been labeled subversive by the superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools and state. This made joining the NAACP a job-threatening situation. Without members, the organization could not be successful. More of this will be recorded in the 1960s history.

As the Releford name grows in importance to the church in the first twenty-eight years of the 20th century, let me note that other names refer to Jesse Releford as the one Sunday School superintendent who provided all types of modern equipment for the children. An example was the little children's piano in the nursery class room. This piano is only one such purchase he saw and wanted his Sunday school children to enjoy. He had the first sandbox for the little ones and any written material/booklets for plays at Easter, Christmas, etc., he would let the teacher select what they needed and put it aside, as he worked across the street from the bookstore and his word was highly respected. He would stand for the material and later the church would pay for it. Often, he paid cash on hand for gifts at Christmas for each child enrolled in a Sunday school class.

Some years later, Cassie Anderson Releford was christened at Central Avenue and soon after started her work in the church school. She is one that has worked all her life in various positions. Her grandfather, King George Gay, was a local preacher and served as assistant to the Central pastor. Cassie's longest contribution has been to the choir, having joined as a teenage student at B. T. Washington High School. Her voice even at this writing is sweet and clear.

As the Releford name continues like a thread in a tightly-knit garment, you will note that Seaborn Releford served as sexton of St. Philip's Cathedral, across the street from Central, for 27 years. This White cathedral may have provided some inspiration for Seaborn to pass on to his son Jesse in the fine arts.

Mr. Jesse Releford was in inspiration to his Sunday School teachers. They were expected to be effective. They not only taught the Bible stories but used arts, crafts, songs and creative activities to motivate learning. At the death of Seaborn Releford, father of Jesse, grandfather of Martin, the *Atlanta Constitution* recorded this article:

“Aged Negro Sexton of St. Philip's Dies

"A familiar figure at St. Philip's Episcopal Cathedral has disappeared in the death Friday morning of the aged colored

sexton, Seaborn Releford. He was 71 years old and had served at the Cathedral for over 27 years.

Funeral services were held Sunday morning at 10 o'clock from Central Avenue Methodist Church, of which he had been a member for the past 40 years. Dr. L. H. King, pastor, assisted in the service."

Reading this article substantiates the fact that the Releford name in the growth and development of Clark Chapel - Lloyd Street into Central Avenue is one of the oldest names in years of uninterrupted service. Cassie and Martin Releford have no children. The death of Seaborn was in early 1920. Dr. L. H. King was pastor of Central until Summer, 1920.

The following was taken from the Central Board minutes recorded by Secretary E. E. Trammell, June 5, 1922:

"The Releford family is asked for a photograph of the late Bro. S. Releford who went to heaven recently. The class members of that Class #19 will lead off in having the likeness of Bro. Releford enlarged as a real portrait and hung upon the wall of the classroom.

As late as October 4, 1920, the minutes of the Board meeting show "we were led to a throne of grace by Bro. S. Releford."

With the Central Avenue Sunday School growing, the Releford name was yet giving leadership with Jesse as superintendent. Much of the success of the Church was due to understanding leadership of successful pastors. Jesse Releford passed at the time the new church was being constructed. It must have been a very emotional time, not only for the family, but the entire church. A long hard worker, whose name was already engraved in the cornerstone of the new church, would pass without worshipping in the building he had played such an important part in designing. Read the biblical story of Moses, who never was allowed to enter the promised land. Grief has no limit.

Kellogg - Johnson

Parents would often send the children to Sunday School early. Most parents would join children later at church. Groups of children, by habit, would meet at designated corners and walk together to Sunday School. One such group was the Kellogg family. Again, the 1907 anniversary program noted that Mr. William Kellogg rendered a tenor solo on June 20. The oldest daughter of the Kelloggs was Sarah. She would oversee a group of younger children as they walked from the west side of the city to Central. It was a memorable experience for the group to walk over the viaducts by the Terminal Station at Mitchell and Spring Streets. Often, trains were rolling under the bridge. The history of Atlanta parallels that of the railroads because it was a natural distributing point. Looking at trains was fun to the children. Several blind people would be standing outside the terminal station, some led by a child, others alone begging for money. Some pennies intended for Sunday School went into the cups of the blind. Parents were

not so fearful for the safety of their children in these times. Black carriage drivers, working men or women would correct and protect the children.

Children arriving early for Sunday School would go to the Catholic Church across the street from Central Avenue. They would sit in the rear of that church and listen to their first service. Usually, this service would end just before Central Avenue services began. So some groups experienced two services. This led to more speculation that Dr. Rush was White. Records list him as Black and at this writing, his Black daughter yet lives in Atlanta.

The old Catholic church still is located in the same place on the opposite corner from where old Central Avenue was located. This fact leaves unanswered the folktale that the city really wanted to move Blacks from the downtown community in 1927. Underground Atlanta occupies part of the historic sacred land where Central Avenue once stood.

The Kellogg family played an important part in the development of the church. Sarah was taught to play the organ for the church. Her brother sat beside her and pumped for her. Later she was able to play for special as well as all regular church services. Her father would leave five cents on the dresser for her to ride the street car to church on week days for funerals. Church members would take her home. Sarah's parents made arrangements at Atlanta University for her to get out of school early when necessary. As the interview with Sarah Kellogg Lowery revealed in March 1990, the church paid 25 cents a month to a Mrs. Essie Groves of Warren Memorial Methodist Church for organ lessons. Sarah became quite accomplished as an organist, and remained in that position until her marriage in the thirties. Sarah was one of the creative Sunday School teachers under Superintendent Jesse Releford. As the needs of the Sunday School pupil's became known, Sarah would go to the bookstore -- near where Jesse Releford worked -- and get the necessary supplies. Central Avenue Church has a rich tradition for presenting very excellent programs at Easter, Christmas, Children's Day and programs to close Vacation Bible School. Early in the developmental program, Sunday School promotions were introduced, attendance stars and several other innovative devices were awarded to keep children motivated. Some imaginary nursery rhymes and plays with costumes were used as fund-raising activities.

With Sarah Kellogg as church organist and C. R. Brown as director of the choir, the music became a very important part of the city as the choir often was presented in concerts. The then famous Clef Club, composed of nine ladies, brought fame to Central as it went around the city presenting concerts. Some most melodious voices were those of the Kellogg sisters, Grace and Sarah, Dora L. Darden, Cosby Maddox and Bessie Toombs. Another name for this group was the Superb Choir. At one time, they sang for Gammon's Founder's Day and graduation.

Neighbors, friends and church members were the Kellogg and the Robert Presley Johnson families. The Johnson children were like the Kelloggs as they traveled to and from Church. They lived near and developed a closeness that yet exists. When good things came to one all enjoyed it. Mr. Johnson was a chauffeur for a very wealthy White man. Due to his dedication to Central Avenue, he was privileged to use the car as needed, even on Sunday. Often he would rush and fill

up the car, taking members home and return to get his and the Kellogg's children. When he moved from Hunter Street to 880 Beckwith Street, S.W., he, along with his wife Emma and children were not content leaving their friends. Soon, Mr. Johnson had his boss help the Kellogg family buy their home on Beckwith -- so again friends, neighbors, church members. R.P., as he was affectionately called, came in around 1912 and worked until his death for the Central he loved.

This relationship proved to be very beneficiary to Central Avenue as years passed. Mr. Johnson was a member of the building committee and a church officer. Often during the depression years, he borrowed from his boss for the church. The loan was said to be interest free. Such dedication helped Central meet her financial obligations. He expressed opposition only to poor performance. He was a dedicated member. His only daughter, Laurie, is an active member.

The Tatum Family

We might have lost much of the importance of the early working of Central Avenue if it were not for some old families that handed down its history. Not all was written as would have been what we in the present period would have been so very pleased to hold and read. Much was told by words only. One name from the teen years is that of Edgar T. Tatum, who, as a trustee, gave leadership to Central Avenue for years, working with his family to make successful Christians. At this writing, his one living son has told a most interesting story.

Carter B. Tatum, Sr. was christened when the church was on Lloyd Street. His early memories of the beauty of Central Avenue ar the colorful windows that carried the names of the members, a truly indescribable beauty. Carter recalls how Rev. Rush, the dynamic pastor, would leave the pulpit and walk down the aisles delivering his sermons. Carter Tatum was a member of Central's baseball team, organized by Jesse Releford before he became Sunday School superintendent. Mr. Godboat was manager of the team which mostly was supported financially by Jesse Releford. The Tatum sisters, Angelyn Tatum McLilly and Ann Tatum Long, were Sunday School teachers. They were educated at Clark University. Angelyn married and moved to Washington, D. C. At her death, she was an active member of Ebenezer United Methodist Church, serving as a Lay member of the Annual Conference. Her love for her home church, Central (she visited yearly), was projected even in death, for she willed a sum of money to Central.

Carter Tatum tells a most obscure fact about Central Avenue. He related that the church once burned and, until it was repaired, the church service was conducted at David T. Howard Funeral Home Chapel.

E. T. Tatum, Carter's father, played an important part in the selection of land and the building of our present church. He was a trustee and member of the building committee.

Helen F. Mitchell

Helen Foster Mitchell, only daughter of Marie Gaither Foster, was a life-long member of Central, having joined old Central Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church when Rev. D. H. Stanton was pastor. Her class leader was Mr. Samuel McGill. Her Sunday School participation was under Jesse Releford. She later was assigned

assistant nursery school teacher with Sarah Kellogg as teacher. This assignment proved to be the beginning of a 60 plus years of teaching nursery school at Central. In an interview with Helen on March 19, 1990, she states that her nursery class was held in a small classroom equipped with little tables, chairs, sandbox with sand, and toys. After Sunday School, the children were given toilet privilege and carried up to church where they sat on the back pew. Parents picked up children after church.

The church was unhappy over the necessary move in the mid-twenties. After meeting, praying and planning, it was finalized that Central Avenue would move. After the grieving process, which was natural, normal and necessary, the congregation seemed to band together and planned for the celebration of the new Central. Helen, at this time, was a student at Atlanta University. As required by school, she had to board in her senior year. She was honored by the church to be the young adult speaker at the dedication of the new church. She recalls speaking from the steps on Mitchell Street.

As the church was being constructed, her mother's twin brother, Marion Gaither, passed. His name is on the cornerstone as a member of the building committee. Central held service at the Royal Theater on Auburn Avenue. The Gaither family did not want Marion Gaither's final hour to be in a movie house, so his funeral was held at his wife's church. Thus, two hard-working officers whose names appear on the cornerstone are taken by death before the opening of the new church.

Helen continued her work with Central with the Wesleyan Service Guild, United Methodist Women Global Concerns, and Church School. Her organization adopted Miss Anna E. Hall, a missionary who served in Africa for 25 years. (Miss Hall received her testimonial, Normal Course, on May 12, 1892 from Clark University while W. H. Hickman was president. She returned to Central in 1931 and remained active until her death.) Mama Hall received a very small pension. The Wesley Service Guild assumed responsibility for her so she could continue to do her home missionary work and maintain a respectable lifestyle until her death.

As a matter of history, Helen Foster Mitchell and Evelyn Thomas organized the first girl scout troop at Central. Evelyn was the sister of Whitman Ogletree, presently in a nursing home.

Charles Marion Foster, Helen's brother, served Central well also. He has been president of the Steward Board, Methodist Men. He along with his sister were honorary members of the Administrative Board for life.

Helen retired from the American Red Cross, Atlanta Chapter on January 31, 1975, after 35 years of service. She retired as Central's nursery school teacher in 1988 after over sixty years of service. She was absent only for illness and for three months spent working in flood stricken New Orleans.

Dr. John Allen Rush Reassigned To Leave Central After 15 Years

When the stunning announcement was made that Rev. Rush had not been appointed to Central Avenue, the congregation was shocked. The events of the past fifteen years had been so very successful. The officers and members felt like the change was unfair. Note that so very many members had known no other

pastor. Rev. Rush had been admired and appreciated as a religious leader whose influence crossed denominational and racial lines even in the early 20th century.

After some very stressful meetings, Rev. Rush opted to leave the church. He was assigned to a small church in Stockbridge, Georgia. It seemed to be a demotion for a pastor of a very large church to be moved down not up or laterally.

Some members had strong feelings that they should attempt to recover and go on with the work of the Lord. They were willing to accept the new pastor, Rev. L. H. King. Some members objected so bitterly that they made an attempt to lock out Lorenzo H. King. Plans were made so that three to five men would sit outside the church and refuse to let Dr. King in. This went on for about two or three days, then cooler heads prevailed.

One member who was assigned to sit outside was Frank P. West, who had learned to love Rev. Rush not only because of his pastorage, but what he had done for him, a country boy, by way of encouraging him to get an education. Frank sat with his nephew Garmer W. Darden. There were other men involved but the writer was not able to obtain other names. In fact, of all the historical accounts found, this story is not reported. The fact came from my daddy, Frank West.

As the church members really split, one group went on to work for Central Avenue and a small group left and followed Rev. Rush. F. P. West and G. W. Darden stayed and worked for Central Avenue until their death. The two sisters of F. P. West, Amanda Branch and Cecelia Darden (one was the mother of Garmer) left and became charter members of a new church organized by Rev. Rush. They were able to see the Rush Memorial church grow and become a respected part of the Atlanta community.

Other Names of 60 years and Over

Another thread in the living history of Central is the story of Fannie Lee Greenwood and Frank P. West. Records show that on May 18, 1904, Fannie Lee Greenwood received a certificate of proficiency from Spelman Seminary. Hearrit E. Giles was president of Spelman; Lucy Upton was dean and Ida Shellenberger, teacher. Reader will note that Fannie was the young lady who served as recorder for the 1911 appearance of President Taft when he spoke at Central Avenue. Frank P. West joined Central Avenue in 1902 under Dr. Rush. Education was the focus of attention for the young people. Dr. Rush encouraged Frank to go to school. He provided the necessary leadership for him to go to Tuskegee. After one year there, apparently proving unusual, he again was helped by Dr. Rush and entered Clark University. At Clark special help was given him by a teacher named Sybil Abbott. Frank often told his children how this white teacher from New England sat with him for hours explaining the lesson. He was her prize student when, on May 11, 1911, he received his college preparatory certificate. From 1904 until his death in 1967, he remained a most dedicated member of Central and a lover of Clark.

He and Fannie were married December 18, 1913 by Dr. L. H. King. The union was blessed with four children. The writer of this history is their only living child.

Some others who worked over the years are Minnie Askin, who joined in 1913, a young widower with three children. Of those children, only Buna A. Guffie is living. Buna has served as an usher over 55 years. Other descendants include a granddaughter, Mignon McDonald and great-granddaughter, Therese. The same is true of Mrs. Marion Rabb, who had one son Ralph and numerous grand and great-grand and even great-great-grandchildren worshipping at Central today. Her daughter, Alice Rabb Blake, is an active member today. Cosby Maddox joined in 1912 and remained dedicated and faithful until she passed. Rosa B. and Bert Harper have two daughters serving Central well now -- Juanita H. McMillan and Mattie H. Briscoe. Mattie wrote "In Retrospect" for the 100th church anniversary. Former Associate Lay Leader Stedman Southall is the grandson of the late Rev. N. A. Bridges, who joined Central Avenue in 1915, while a student at Gammon. There were countless others like Mrs. Lula Leigh Hill and her family that were very strong members. Mrs. Hill was the author of "An Historical Sketch of Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia." It is most unfortunate that the booklet told nothing about her outstanding church work and gave no date of its writing. My research reveals that in the late teens Mrs. Hill served as Sunday School superintendent under Dr. D. H. Stanton. She was very devoted to the cause of foreign mission. A box was kept in the gym (now Fellowship Hall) for children to place articles for shipping to Africa. (Letters received from Anna E. Hall and a Martha Drumon told of the needs of the villagers.)

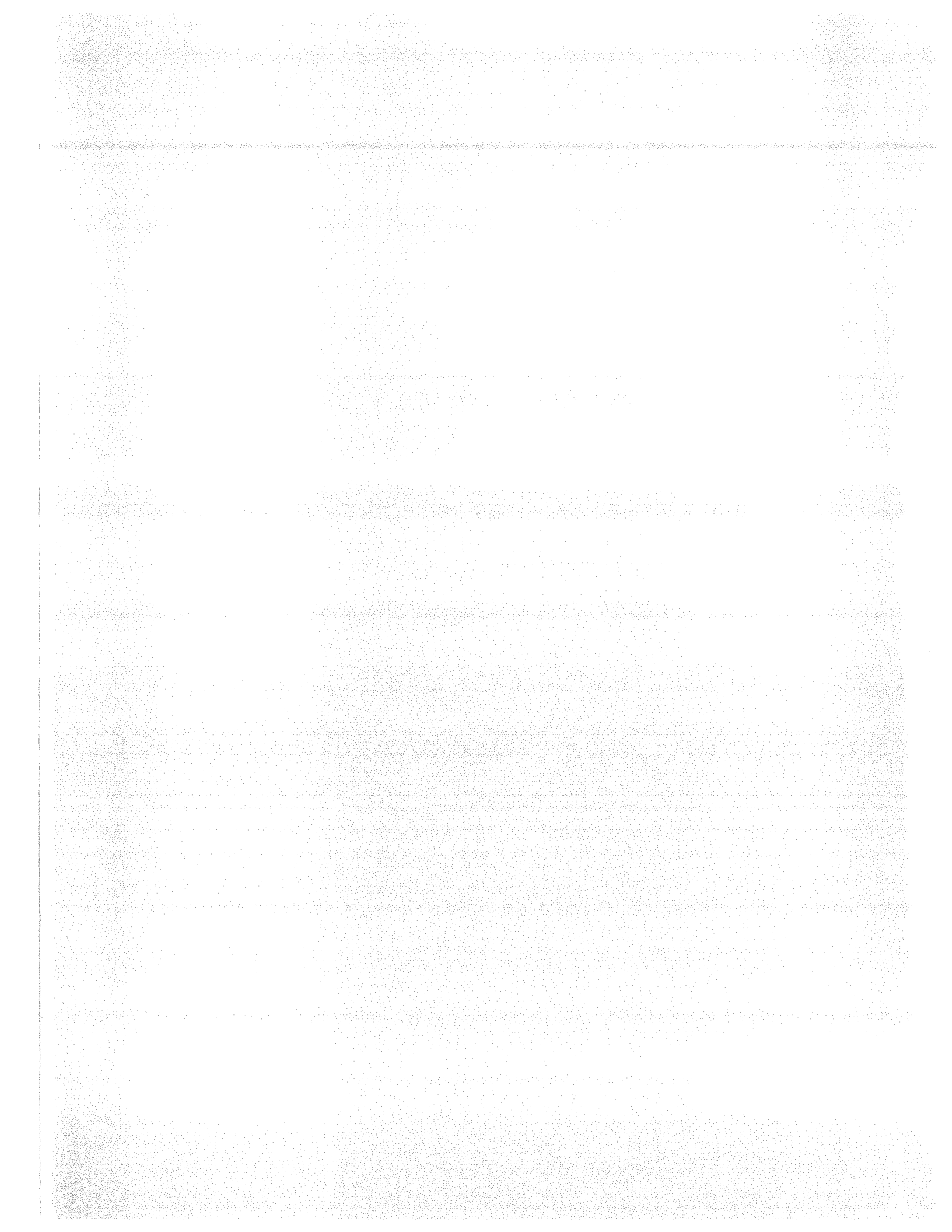
Mrs. Hill's history was most informative up to the then-present pastor, Rev. J. A. Baxter, who served from 1930-1937. Research shows that one of her sons was Dr. L. M. Hill, who for years had his office on Fraser Street in Summerhill. Dr. Hill was an officer of Central Avenue and served at Clark University as National Alumni Association president in 1941. In his office in 1922, St. John C.M.E. Church was organized. His office was a community meeting place at night.

A church history is necessarily a collection of facts about its members. One historical fact not before recorded is one given by Rev. T. P. Grissom, Sr. in an interview February 9, 1990. When Rev. Grissom entered Gammon Seminary and Clark University, he joined Central Avenue. He was a Sunday School teacher. He often walked one way to church and for five cents he would ride back home. As his work scholarship required him to get some industrial training, he worked making bricks that were used to build Thayer Hall at Clark. "Industrial education at Clark reached its peak during the first decade of the 1900's, as there was a shift to agricultural education. In the second decade, the emphasis on industrial education began to wane. Impeded by World War I, by 1920, industrial training had become mere history." Thomas P. Grissom was a part of the last brick-making at Clark. He was there from 1918-1919. After the war, he lived in New York before returning to Atlanta and becoming a most forceful minister.

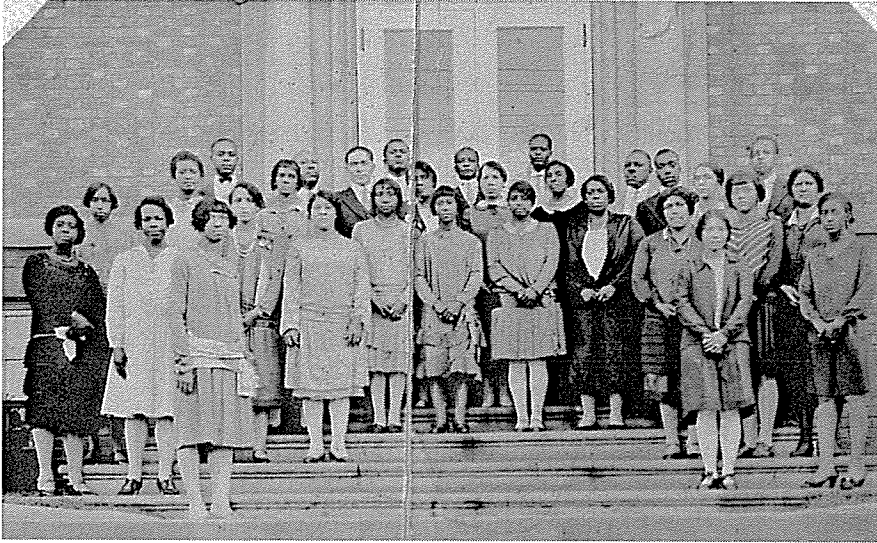
Rev. Grissom's brother Jordan T. Grissom with wife Cora were doing their part in making Central a great Church. The Grissom family will be of great service as further history is revealed.

Information on so very many great families is not available, yet their names are in the hearts of Central. Looking back to the years through which Central Avenue has come, we see that each worker, preacher, superintendent, trustee, steward, choir member and all members have contributed through the years. Some other names to honor at this time are James Lamar, W. H. Crogman,

T. T. Greenwood, Tom Clark, Lovingood, Elijah Melton, Clara Pullen, A. B. Brown, Charles Oslin, Elmer Hatchet, James and Rosa Mitchell, Pinkie Coggins, Ernest and Bessie Abbott, the Wade family, Lillie Davis, Thorntons, Bryant, and oh so many Johnsons, all of whom were hard workers at Central Avenue under Revs. Rush, King, Stanton, Travis and the Rev. J. Walter Moore, who served as transitional pastor when the cornerstone and foundation were laid during his administration.



CHAPTER III



The Split And Aftermath: 1913-1929

Rush Memorial Organized

As mentioned, in 1913, Dr. J. A. Rush and some ardent supporters from Central Avenue met and organized a new church. This group that left Central Avenue caused families to be separated, friends became indignant and dedication to the belief of each group seemed to be stronger.

Dr. Rush, who was a Martin Luther type leader, and his followers were determined to have a church. They started having service in the Morgan Williams Hall next door to the present building and became known as the People's Church. After much fund-raising, they purchased land at 150 Chestnut Street, S.W., and built a Sunday School building. This building was to be used until a sanctuary could be erected.

The People's Church was able to get help from the American Missionary Association, which later became known as the Board of Homeland Ministries. Service was held in Stone Hall on the old Atlanta University campus. Stone Hall is now known as Fountain Hall on what is now the Morris Brown College campus.

Dr. Rush died in 1915, and was succeeded by Dr. James Bond, grandfather of former state senator, Julian Bond. The name of the church was changed to Rush Memorial Congregational Church. Services were held in the Sunday School building from 1915 until 1952 when the sanctuary was completed. Rev. John E. Garnett was pastor at that time.

Rush Memorial has had a long history of social services for the Community. The first Negro Boy Scout troop in the city of Atlanta was organized in its Sunday School building. The troop moved to Friendship Baptist Church and was headed by Andrew J. Jewis. During the mid-thirties, a thrift shop was opened. In the sixties, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee convened and planned at Rush. Mrs. Emma R. Brown is the lone descendent of Dr. and Mrs. Rush.

Central Avenue Church is the mother church of the vitally active church on James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. Information provided by Rev. Laurence E. Calvert, Sr.

Elijah Etowah Trammell, Recording Steward

The following information was taken directly from the recordings in the record books for the years 1918-1927. The records are for Central Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, 71 Central Avenue: corner of Hunter Street, Atlanta, Georgia. Records of the Board meetings were recorded by E. E. Trammell:

Book I	Rev. L. H. King, A.M. D.D.
Book II	Dr. D. H. Stanton
Book	Dr. P. H. Travis

As the notes are taken from the minutes, often you may not gain the complete idea. If you follow the month by month recordings, you will gain insight on just how dedicated the early church members were. The competent, caring programs they presented were ones that would improve their prospects for both growth and effectiveness. The ministers were very appreciative of the work done

by the Board. Yet, in a most caring matter, they put emphasis on not only preaching but scriptural reading, education and social involvement.

We are fortunate indeed that some of the writings that reflect the true word of our early church have been saved. Note with admiration mistakes in some areas. Please note that in the April 18, 1927 minutes, there is a mistake in the addition, and again on May 2, 1927.

1918

Stewards	Trustees
Paid Pastor	\$1,450.00
Value Church property	\$100,000.00
Insurance	\$6,000.00
Raised	\$2,173.18
Indebtedness	\$1,009.30
District Superintendent	Benevolence
Paid D. S.	\$190.00
Raised	\$361.82
Charity	Clark University
Paid	\$76.85
	\$625 Joined
Easter – raised	\$10,525
70 souls	
Children's Day	\$43.34
Grand Rally July Remarks	\$1,711.76

Officers – 1919

Stewards - Williamson, Jones, Releford, Woodward, Trammell, Reeves, Edmondson, Rivers, Keeling, Clemmons, Johnson, Norris, Pace, Kellogg, Estes, Brown, Metts, Hall, Darden, Thomas, Wynn

Trustees - Mitchell, McGill, Hatchett, Hunter, Tatum, Adams, Simmons

Local Preachers - Samuel Sherard, Moses Jones, A. B. Keeling, K. G. Gay, Elder A. P. Melton, G. W. Hatcher

Sunday School - Jesse L. Releford, Superintendent; Miss Nell Hall, Secretary

Exhorters - B. J. Wor----, S. C. Nixon, A. N. Harmon, R. P. Johnson, E. P. Listen

Epworth League - Arthur B. Kul, President; E. W. Hatchett

Women's Club - Rosa Mitchell, President; Dora Darden, Secretary

Ladies Aid Society - Nancy B. Chambers, President

Unit Captains - Lindsey, Coffee, Ward, Thomas, Simmons, McGill, Reeves, Releford, Edmondson, Hatchett, Brown, H. M. Mitchell, Baker, Rivers, Clemmons, Hunter, Perry, Gay, Turner, R. Mitchell

Class Leaders - Rivers, Watts, Trammell, Crawford, Reeves, R. Mitchell, Baker, Anderson, Gay, Wynn, St----, Chambers, S. Releford, Sherard, Hall, Hill, Young

Ushers Association - C. C. Wynn, President

Young Ladies Auxilliary - Alice Thornton, President

Parsonage Committee - Emma Holcomb, Chair

W. H. M. Society - Louise M. King, President; Emma Holcomb, Secretary

Brotherhood - J. A. Mitchell, President; R. L. Edmondson, 1st Vice President; Solomon Rivers, 2nd Vice President; H. L. Thomas, 3rd Vice President; E. W. Hatchett, 4th Vice President; J. E. Norris, Treasurer; Moses Williamson, Chaplain; E. E. Trammell, Secretary

Dist. of Reserved Stewards - A. B. Keeling, R. L. Edmondson

Local Council - Mitchell, Simmons, Trammell, Releford, McGill, Reeves, Hatchett, Edmonson, Woodward, Williamson, R. Johnson

Quarterly Conferences - 1919

March 24, 1919

Paid Dist. Supt.	\$47.50
Paid Pastor	15.05
Total Raised	62.55
Classes Raised	30.69

Prayers by District Superintendent
Scripture: Matthew 7:1-12

H. W. B. Wilson

June 23, 1919

Paid Dist. Supt.	\$47.50
Paid Pastor	18.10
Total Raised	65.60
Classes raised	24.45

Prayers by E. E. Trammell
Scripture: 23rd Psalm

Held by J. F. Demery

September 1, 1919

Paid Dist. Supt.	\$47.50
Paid Pastor	3.00
Classes raised	8.80

Prayer
H. W. B. Wilson Presiding

Nov. 30/Dec. 1, 1919

Paid Dist. Supt.	\$47.50
	1.35
Stewards	7.00
Trustees	12.10
On 19.20	.25
Total	\$68.20

Prayer by K. G. Gay

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 7:12
New Iron Fence - Bills Paid

January 6, 1919

The first official Board held at the Pastor's residence, 120 Chestnut Street. Dr. L. H. King, pastor, was sick yet he presided. Prayer led by Brother Gay, then Dr. King called for the minutes of previous meeting, which was read, received and adopted. It was moved by Bro. Edmondson and seconded by Bro. Chambers that the new iron fence be examined and if found satisfactory, we pay for the same. This was carried. \$38.00 was noted out to pay for 1917 envelopes. Paid pastor at this meeting \$42.84. The walls are to be fixed at the earliest opportunity. The sexton is to be paid \$15.00 per month.

February 10 - Unit System Working

Board open with the pastor, Dr. King, presiding with prayer by Bro. Edmondson. The unit system was perfected and each unit of some 30 members, consists of a captain, with four assistants -- prayer, stewardship, education and life service work. Five "minute" men were selected, namely Brothers Edmondson, Releford, J. L. Woodward, Mitchell and Tatum. A contract was let to McNime----- Company to fix the gutters for \$45.00 as soon as money is in hand.

Bills ordered paid were as follows:

Organist	\$10.00
Sexton	20.00
McGill	2.00
C. Electric Co.	4.00
Mrs. Dora Darden	1.00
Mrs. Fannie Estes	1.00
Storing of Coal	1.00
Lights	5.00
Water	.87
Wine	.95
Total	\$45.82

The money paid to Sisters Darden and Estes was for playing organ while Mrs. Finley was sick in the month of January. It was decided hereafter to pay organist her regular salary and she would be responsible for someone to play while she is absent.

Pastor to Get Horse and Buggy -- March 7, 1921

Board meeting opened at 8:00 p.m. with Dr. Stanton in the chair. Song - "Jesus Lover of My Soul." Prayer and next song, "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross" was followed by the scripture lesson, the first 20 verses of the 37th Psalm.

After a lengthy discussion concerning the ways and means of getting the pledges for the special collection, Dr. Stanton asked each member for \$5.00 on the budget.

It was decided to permit the pastor to have a horse and buggy to visit members for the purpose of explaining the project. The church is to take care of the expense.

Church Fire -- May 2, 1921

Meeting opened at 7:55 p.m. with Dr. D. H. Stanton, pastor, in the chair. Prayer by Bro. D. A. Teasley was followed by song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and scripture lesson.

Chair thanked the members for their loyalty in standing by the dear old church especially since the fire. It was reported that the work would be completed within the next six weeks. The work will be done by D. Hamilton. Worship in the auditorium would resume by the first Sunday in July.

Official Board - December 12, 1927

This is a combined board including November 14 and December 12, 1927. Opened at 8:30 p.m. with the Pastor, the Rev. Patrick Henry Travis, presiding who lead in repeating the 1st Division of Psalms.

Minutes of the last Board, October 10, were read, received and approved. After a long drawn out accounting of figures in the nature of finance, it was found that we owe the \$175.00 on the pipe organ note and around \$153.00 to the Citizens Trust Company for borrowed money to pay the Morris Plan Banking institution for Annual Conference expenses years ago and \$134.00 for insurance on church property.

The Board votes to let stewards have the collection of 1st and 2nd Sundays in December without dividing the 60-40 percent.

\$1,040.00 paid to World Service
 \$1,506.00 paid to Pastor for up to date
 Total in hand \$471.69 -- Spent \$233.14

After ----- the pipe organ \$175 was on hand for the Trustees disbursement \$61.55.

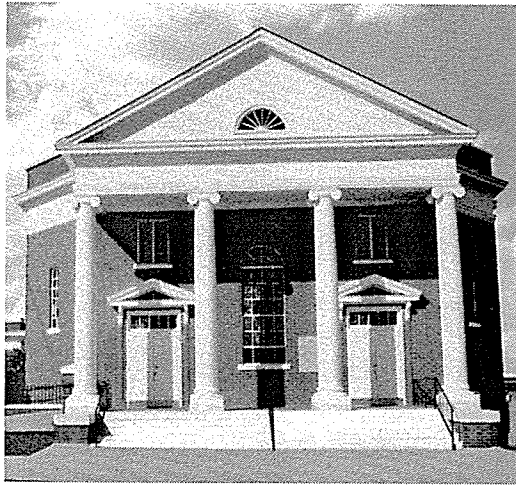
The following voucher for checks were given:

Organist	\$ 16.00
Janitor	10.00
Sacramental purposes	3.60
Stamps and Stationary	5.00
Lights	17.07
Total	51.69
Left in treasury	\$ 8.86

Mrs. R. L. Mitchell sends by Professor J. L. Releford \$12.00 for cafeteria, use of gas and so forth. Brother Frank Kellogg, through the treasurer, Bro. Angus Harley, of the "Sinking Fund" gives the pastor \$10.00 on the fund. Col. Everett is to take care of the \$175.00 note of pipe organ. Balance due Pastor \$494.00.

Thus, the 1927 board meeting went down in history.
 Dismissal with prayer by the pastor
 E.E. Trammell, Sec.

CHAPTER IV



A Time Of Transition 1928-1929

REV. J. WALTER MOORE, Transitional Pastor, 1928

When the congregation was forced by city rebuilding projects to relocate from Central Avenue-Hunter Street to Hunter-Mitchell Street on the other side of the heart of downtown Atlanta, some members were just devastated.

For reasons I can't uncover, there are no written minutes for the year 1928. In the old secretary book, one can see that after the December Official Board meeting with Rev. P. H. Travis, pages are clear. We will never know why such action took place. I will try to relate the story as I have researched it. In the 1927 official board minutes, recorded so very legibly by E. E. Trammell, nothing is noted about the move. It may well be that there was some correspondence made between the city and conference about the church. If this was true it may well be that the conference bishop and or district superintendent reported same at the December conference. Rev. Travis was not returned to Central Avenue. J. Walter Moore was sent as pastor.

State of Georgia - County of Fulton No 458211

The document on the next page was filed in the county of Fulton, 4:30 p.m. on January 25, 1928 and recorded January 27, 1928. It was signed by C. Millen, C.S.C.

With the \$80,000.00 in hand, now Central is really planning to move. Central Avenue M. E. Church began using the Y.M.C.A. building for meetings in April, 1928 at a rental of \$15.00 per month. This rent was hard to pay. The Executive Secretary J. M. Chiles of the Y.M.C.A. reduced the rent to \$5.00 per month on August 23, 1928.

Butler Street YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Central Avenue M. E. Church

April, 1928--Rental for one month at \$15.00-----	\$15.00
May, 1928 through March, 1929-- 11 months at \$5.00 per month-----	55.00
Total Rental	70.00
Payments--April 6, 1928--\$10.00	} ----- 26.00
Sept. 13, 1928- 6.00	
Feb. 5, 1929-- 10.00	
	44.00
\$5.00 balance due on April, 1928--discounted-----	5.00
Total bill	39.00

Butler Street Branch
 Young Men's Christian Association
 22 Butler Street, N. E.
 Atlanta, Georgia

Date 2-29 1929
 Central M. E. Church
 Address W. Mitchell St.

An Acct	10 00
Balance due \$1900	
Change	
#8081	
J. M. Chiles	10 00

0001

Land Purchased for New Church

The trustees of Central Avenue purchased land on the North side of West Mitchell Street in May, 1928 for \$10,000. Construction of the new church began. Services were held in the theatre on Auburn Avenue on Sundays. The contract with the Y.M.C.A. does not address the use of the theatre. It was in this period of time that Brother Jesse L. Releford and Marion Gaither, trustees of Central, passed. Without a church building, the funeral of Brother Gaither's service was held at another church and Brother Releford's funeral was held at the theatre. When Martin Releford returned to Atlanta for his father's funeral, he was driven

past the land that would be Central's new church by Robert P. Johnson. Brothers Releford and Gaither had signed for sale of the church and land purchase and their names are listed on the cornerstone.

It was revealed to me that Rev. Moore was a young man who spoke his mind deliberately, often considered too frank. The entire church did not share his expression of authority. He would often leave the congregation feeling abandoned. It was probably a major factor in communication that confirms this. The young people were very pleased with him. Rev. Moore preached love and mercy, visited both members and prospects, regularly planned activities for fellowship and support to keep the congregation growing for the new church. He was a dynamic pulpiteer. With so much work put into planning, he expected to lead the congregation into the building he had helped to plan.

A New Church - REV. J. W. QUEEN, Pastor

With the completion of Central, the officers and members voted to delete the word Avenue from the church name and just use Central Methodist Episcopal Church. This name change would not let the identity be lost completely. The new building on Mitchell Street presently stands as a landmark in greater Atlanta.

Description of New Central

Central M. E. Church was a most outstanding building. The beautiful auditorium for worship comfortably seated 750 people. The concealed organ was a topic for conversation. Some special features were the John Wesley Pulpit and Lectern, Celotex acoustical tile walls and ceiling, advanced communion rail and table behind the pulpit, chancel window: Christ in Gethsemane (costing \$1,000), choir loft seating 50 persons, bronze doors, gymnasium (60 x 64' with a 15' ceiling), equipped with stage for plays and gymnastics equipment, moving picture booth, and lockers.

There was a Sunday School or Educational Building with five departmental rooms and a church parlor; ten classrooms - each separated by solid walls; a tea room and kitchen; minister's and church administration offices, minister's home with eight rooms, including breakfast room and bath. With such an eloquent description of the new Central, all the city took pride in the opening of such a church.

Members Misinformed or Uninformed

Shortly after the highly celebrated opening of the new Central, questions came up that required much attention. Some members felt they had been misled about the new church. They felt the sanctuary was too small. Was it the size the prints had shown? Was it small only because they could not really understand blueprints? Any type of discord in the lives of a great congregation had to be solved with patient, wise, loving guidance. The fast moving events played an extra fault in inharmonious relationships.

For one year, they had worked and planned for the new Central with the Rev. J. W. Moore. Now he was moved and Rev. J. W. Queen who was district superintendent when the planning took place and was appointed pastor of

Central. Local legend goes on to question the fact that by habit when a district superintendent comes off the district, he has his pick of a position.

When the old Central Avenue church was sold for \$80,000, officers and members were told they had the only building of its kind this side of the Mason-Dixon line. Clark Chapel (Central's first name) was sold for \$5,000. The purchase price of Loyd Street was \$15,000. The Home Mission Board's participation in the transaction made the terms lenient, so the congregation had several years to pay off its debt.

With many questions not answered as to why the church was small, why the struggle to pay bills (ex. Y.M.C.A.) and buy furniture for the new parsonage, all the dedication of a caring pastor was needed.

New members were attracted to the new church. New programs improved prospects for both growth and effectiveness. Rev. Queen used the challenges he faced to serve with a true commitment to his belief in God and was able to overcome challenges with renewed strength.

Bills - Important and Small

In researching historical information, I came across so very many interesting notes. The following are bills I just must share with you. You'll probably never see prices like these again.

Bill I

July 29, 1929
Central Methodist Episcopal Church
City

In Account with Robinson Cofer Company Printers
298 Auburn Avenue, NE Phone: Walnut 3047

Balance	\$19.75	
Purchase		79.00
Credit	25.00	
Due	54.00	

Bill II

Atlanta, Ga.
5-5-1929

Wine and Linen	\$2.60
C.C. Wynn	

Bill III

Janitor's Supplies
Sanitary Supply Company
72-74 Edgewood Avenue – Phone Ivy 2280
Atlanta, Ga.

Central Methodist Church
West Mitchell Street
City

T.J. Furgerson – Note Life Insurance Company, Auburn Avenue

Account Rendered
 April 2 \$3.50
 April 6 5.15
 \$8.65

Bill IV

Phone Walnut 5613
 Atlanta, Georgia
 58 Edgewood Avenue
 May 1, 1920

In Account with
 Bryan Electric Company
 Electrical Contractors

Central Methodist Episcopal Church
 501 Mitchell Street, SW
 Atlanta, Ga.

Bill Rendered
 March 29, 1929 \$2.70
 March 29, 1929 2.70
 \$5.40

 6 – 75 watt lamp/45 = 2.70

Bill V

Duffie-Freeman Furniture Company
 Furniture of Quality
 Corner Broad and Hunter Street
 Telephone Walnut 6671
 Atlanta, Ga.

Central M. E. Church
 Mitchell Street
 Atlanta, Ga.

Purchases	3-29		\$230.00
Payments	3-29	30.00	
	5-13	20.00	
	6-29	10.00	
	7-27	10.00	
		70.00	
Balance			\$160.00

Bill VI

Campbell Coal Company
 Ivy 5000

General Office
 236-40 Marietta Street
 at Foundry & Walton Sts.

Central Methodist Episcopal Church
 206 Auburn Avenue
 c/of T.J. Furgerson
 Atlanta, Ga.

4/13	2,000 lbs. FL	7.00	
2/16	2,000 lbs. ROM	6.00	
2/16	2,000 lbs. ROM	6.00	
		19.00	
			-7.75
			11.25

The first ton of coal was delivered to 501 Mitchell Street and signed for by J.W. Queen. The last two tons were ordered by Richard Walker to test the furnace at the church. Apparently, this was done in preparation for the opening of the new church in March. The bills were made February 16 to test the new furnace and not paid by July 25, 1929. This bill went to Brother T. J. Furgerson, long time officer of Central.

Pre-Depression Days

Just how could a great church like Central Methodist Episcopal survive? Please know it took prayer, faith, hard work and dedication to keep the dear old church first in the city of Atlanta.

These prices and bills recorded in this chapter reflect the economy of the late twenties. The great Wall Street crash took place in 1929. In Atlanta, many of Central's members were working for \$1.00 a day. So, how could church collection be great? Listen and read for you will be informed. Fathers worked and planted vegetable gardens; parents had chickens, cows, hogs at home or nearby in a field. Mothers made jelly, preserves, canned fruits and vegetables in summer for winter food. For fun and because it was necessary, women gathered to make quilts. There were some jobs done at home like washing (laundry) for white people, baking and selling cakes, etc. All jobs were done with pride and honor. Central probably had more professional jobs than most black churches at that time. This was due to the fact that Central had been drilled from its organization to get an education. Education being equated with success.

Another fact in the economy was that prices were low. Think 1929 prices now. Car fare - .05, candy stick - .05, soft drink - .05, eggs - .20/dozen, insurance - .05/week per person. Clothing fell in three categories -- Sunday clothes, school clothes and play clothes for children. For adults, Sunday and work clothes.

Where there were large families, the older children would usually get new clothes first, then hand-me-downs was put into practice. Often, parents were able to sew and make new clothes for the family. Some ladies would take in sewing for their job. All of this took place here in Atlanta by extraordinarily talented, understanding, determined, God-fearing people.

Central is an expression of love and thanksgiving that has opened doors of help to untold numbers of people. Let us forever be grateful to our founders and early leaders for the contribution they made toward making Central a great, loving, caring church with a great heritage. As we look at our palatial home, with vast grounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, beautiful flower gardens.

fashionable wardrobe and bank accounts, let us not forget from where we came as a church and give as the present economy dictates.

It is the writer's hope that the information written here will be not only a story of some wonderful events, handed down from generation to generation with much historical basis, but accepted as facts as I have presented much documentation to prove or support the facts.

Financial Record for 1929

Notes taken from the finance book of Central M. E. Church, the Rev. J. W. Queen, pastor, 505 W. Mitchell Street, S.W., Atlanta, Ga. Dating from December 15, 1928 to December, 1929:

James Anderson Mitchell, Chairman of Steward Board
 Richard Wadsworth Woodward, Treasurer
 Elijah Etowah Trammell, Recording Steward
 C. R. Brown, Financial Secretary
 Edgar T. Tatum, Chairman, Finance Commission

January, 1929

<u>Collections</u>		<u>Paid Out</u>	
Jan. 6	\$31.09	Stewards	\$18.65
Jan 13	26.10	C. R. Brown	9.00
Jan 20	36.83	Organist	9.00
Jan 27	60.00	Burson	5.00
Brought forward	2.60	Stewards	15.55
from Dec.		Wynn	2.60
		Stewards	22.09
		Printing	4.00
		Stewards	35.40

February, 1929

<u>Collections</u>		<u>Paid Out</u>	
Feb. 3	\$ 31.09	Stewards	\$43.47
Feb. 10	28.56	C. R. Brown	15.00
Feb. 17	26.25	Burson	8.00
Feb. 24	34.67	Printing	4.50
Brought forward	1.27	Organist	15.55
		YMCA rent	10.00
	\$163.20	Stewards	17.13
		Simmons (moving)	6.00
		Stewards	16.35
		Burson	5.00
		Printing	2.25
		Stewards	20.00
		Scott Bros. (adv.)	3.50
		Robb Co/Printing	2.50
			\$170.50

March, 1929

<u>Collections</u>		<u>Paid Out</u>	
Mar. 3	\$ 64.85	Stewards	\$38.91
Mar. 10	33.50	Stewards	19.89
Mar. 17	65.45	Burson	3.00
Mar. 24	32.95	Burson	2.00
Mar. 31 (Easter)	352.69	Printing	3.50

Brought forward	1.40	Theatre rent	10.00
		YMCA rent	10.00
	\$550.84	C. R. Brown	10.00
		Organist	10.00
		Dist. Supt.	5.00
		Stewards	22.47
			\$194.77

From various sources I have contacted, I do know that Central worshipped in the theatre on Auburn Avenue as the building was constructed. Note the \$10.00 rent to the theatre and Y.M.C.A.

April, 1929

<u>Collections</u>		<u>Paid Out</u>	
Apr. 1 (Opening Celebration)	\$14.31	Stewards	\$52.02
Apr. 2 "	10.65	Organist	16.00
Apr. 3 "	2.61	Burson	10.00
Apr. 4 "	9.17	C. R. Brown	10.00
Apr. 5 "	5.85	McNille	5.00
Apr. 7 (First Sunday)	96.45	Wynn (Sec.)	2.60
Apr. 8 (Opening Celebration)	9.08	Stewards	30.50
Apr. 9 "	6.12	Varnishing table	1.75
Apr. 10 "	2.50	Janitor - Jas. Hunter	5.00
Apr. 11 "	16.13	Stewards	28.74
Apr. 12 "	3.50	Lester	5.00
Apr. 14 (Second Sunday)	158.07	Trustees	2.50
Apr. 15 (Opening Celebration)	3.97	Printing	2.75
Apr. 21 (Third Sunday)	50.84	World Service	200.00
Apr. 28 (Fourth Sunday)	47.90	Sis. Amelia Allen	10.31
	\$436.97		\$382.17

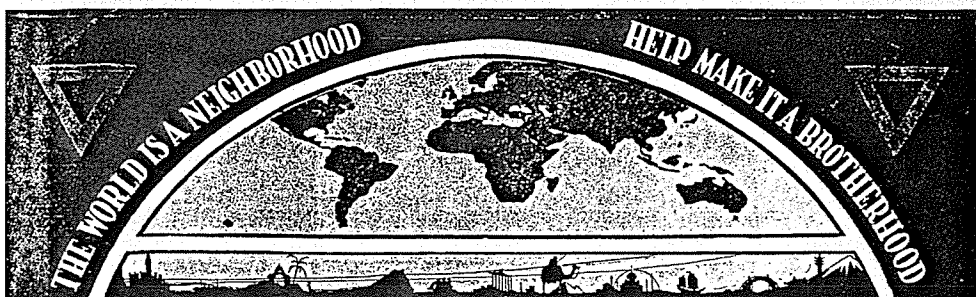
This April report is one that is the key that opens the door to the fact that Central opened officially in 1929 under the pastorate of Rev. J. W. Queen. The calendar lists opening celebrations eleven nights in April. On Easter Sunday, March 31, the Central Methodist Episcopal Church was officially opened by the Bishop with all seats taken. The audience stood in a most emotional display of honor, reverence and joy and looked at the beautiful Chancel window, Christ in Gethsemane, costing \$1,000. This was the high point of the day and down through the years, people have told of a look at the window on Easter Sunday. In April, eleven of the collections were for Opening Celebration. The celebration is the grand entry into the new church.

The contract made with Butler Street Y.M.C.A. was for Central Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church.

April, 1928 - Rental for one month at \$15.00	\$ 15.00
May, 1928 through March, 1929 - 11 mos. at \$5/mo.	<u>55.00</u>
Total Rental	70.00
Total payments: April 6 & Sept. 13, 1928 and Feb. 5, 1929	<u>-26.00</u>
	44.00
Balance due on April, 1928 discounted	<u>- 5.00</u>
Total bill	\$ 39.00

With the church being sold, one would think the transaction was not so very sound as it was a struggle to pay for meeting space at the theatre and Y.M.C.A. As you read the communication between the church and Y.M.C.A., you can see just how hard it was to pay bills. This was just one of the many bills left by Rev. Moore, or let me say made under his leadership. Sunday services were held at the theatre and night meetings took place at the Y.M.C.A. on Butler Street.

Below is a copy of the letter from J.W. Chiles, Executive Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, sent to Rev. J.W. Queen, Pastor of Central Avenue M.E. Church, on April 12, 1929.



THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

22 BUTLER STREET, N. E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

TELEPHONE WALNUT 0135
April 12, 1929

J. M. CHILES,
SECRETARY

Rev. J. W. Queen
Mitchell St., S.W.
Atlanta, Ga.

My dear Rev. Queen:

The Central Avenue M. E. Church began using the Y.M.C.A. building for meetings, April, 1928 at a rental of \$15.00 per month. Under date of August 28, 1928, we wrote Rev. Mr. Moore, reducing the rental from \$15.00 to \$5.00 per month, because it seemed quite a task to meet the normal rental of \$15.00.

It is true that three (3) payments were made by your Trustee Board. The first payment of \$10.00, however, was April 6th, 1928 and in our statement to you under date of March 14th, we did not include the April transaction, but simply submitted to you, statement as of May 1st, 1928 to March 1st, 1929 at the monthly rate of \$5.00 per month, which makes a total of \$50.00 and showing a credit of September 13th for \$6.00 and February 5, 1929 for \$10.00. As you see, this statement excluded the April transaction at the monthly rental of \$15.00 per month and your payment of April 6, 1928 of \$10.00 on April rental.

Your Trustee Board was correct that three (3) payments were made, this would not alter, however the total bill, only in our favor, with an additional \$5.00, which was the balance due on the April, 1928 payment for April rent.

We shall be very glad, however, to have you consider our statement submitted, April 10th, 1929 for \$59.00.

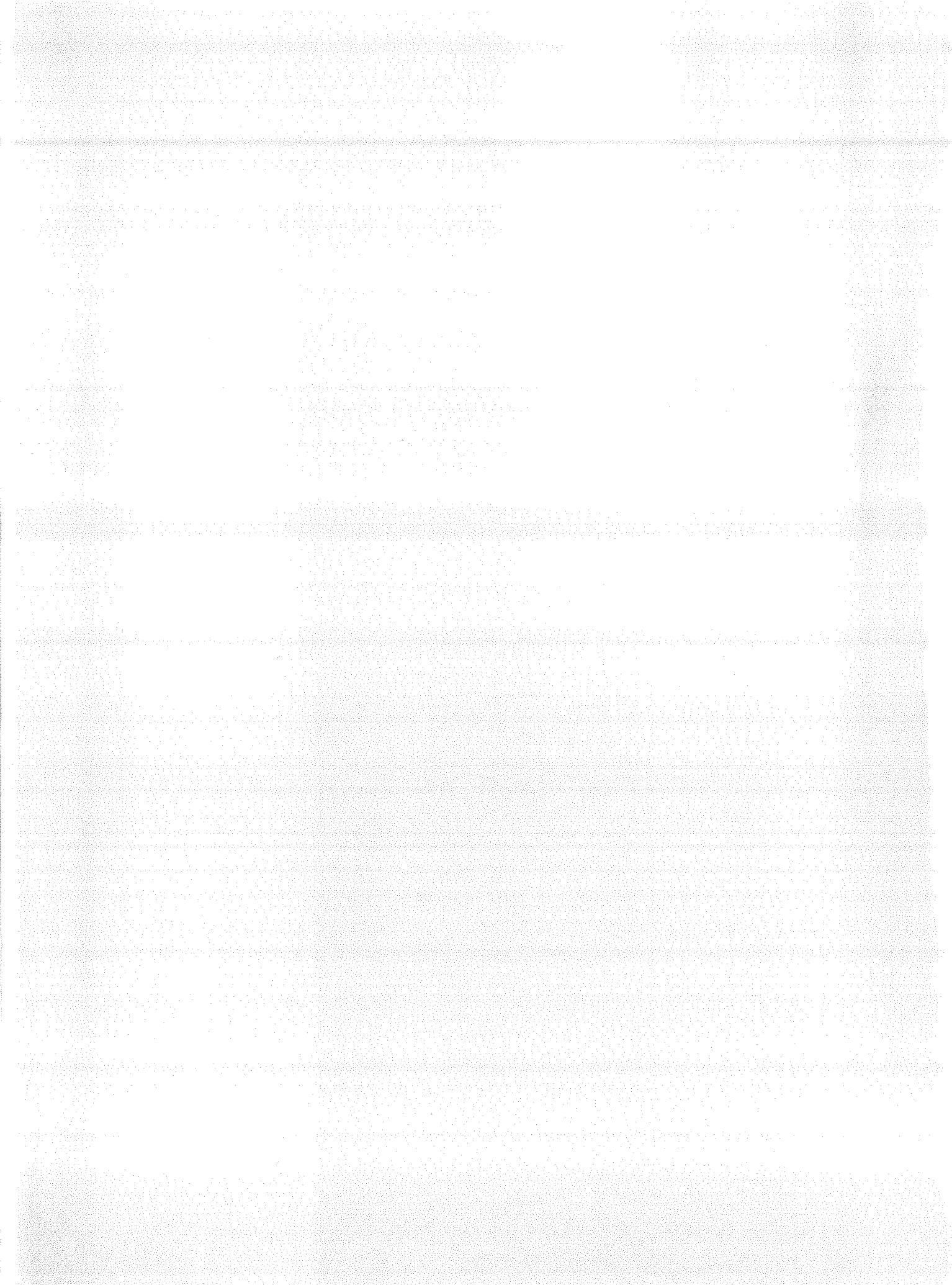
Sincerely yours,

J. M. Chiles
J. M. Chiles,

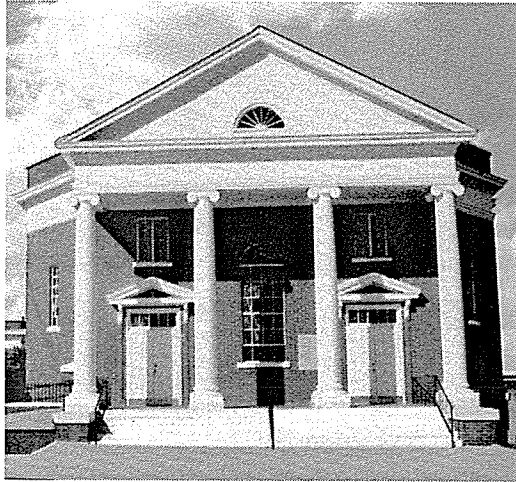
Executive Secretary

JMC:HE

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CHAPTER V



The Depression Years 1930-1939

REV. JAMES ASBURY BAXTER - Transferred to Central from North Carolina, 1930

James A. Baxter, son of Rev. and Mrs. Francis S. Baxter, was born on John's Island, S.C., August 25, 1885. He received his A.B degree at Claflin College in Orangeburg, S.C. and his B.D. degree at Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia.

Rev. Baxter was married to Miss Mary Banks. They were parents of two children, J. A. Baxter, Jr., affectionately called Jim, and Catherine Baxter Hill. After the death of Mrs. Mary Baxter, he married Miss Susie Cunningham, with whom he lived out his life.

After a most productive career in the North Carolina conference, including Superintendent of the Winston District, he was transferred to Atlanta. Here he served as pastor of Central from 1930-1938.

Arriving in Atlanta with two small children was indeed a challenge. Here the family was to occupy the beautiful new parsonage with eight rooms. The church was yet very new and much a subject of conversation. They often had company from all over the states. Leaders in the Methodist church just called and came. This kept the Committee on Pastor Relations quite busy. It was an added expense as often there were meals to be prepared and served. Mrs. Baxter being new to the city welcomed the help of a loving committee. They provided hospitality for visitors and tried to make the first family comfortable.

Key Note Speaker at P.T.A. Conference - E. P. Johnson School

Soon after moving to Atlanta, Rev. Baxter was asked to be the speaker for the P.T.A. Conference held at the E. P. Johnson School in the Summerhill Community. This being the community where Clark Chapel-Lloyd Street-Central Avenue was organized, the occasion was historical.

Ministers were expected to be community leaders at this period in Atlanta. Programs and strategies that involved childhood education were of utmost importance. Rev. Baxter presented himself in a most elegant way to the parents.

Depression Years Worked on New Programs

Rev. Baxter continued so very many of the programs he found in place at Central. As time passed, he presented new programs for the youth. Scott Edwards was building the music department.

One new program used for a financial drive was the Fateful Fifty Club. Various circles presented or supported fifty youth. Each was expected to appear in white and report \$1.00 each. This was an effort to get the youth in the habit of giving money to support the church.

The financial condition of the church reflected the nation's economy. The great depression of the 30's caused so many people to become unemployed.

Central was in a position to rent the gymnasium for weekday federally-funded programs. This gave the church added income and provided activities for children under supervision of trained adults. Soon some of the children returned on Sunday for Sunday School, which was a plus for increasing attendance and saving children.

Looking back over the years through which Central has come, one may say with pride and very much thanksgiving that all have wrought well through any and all difficulties they met.

Among the names of former outstanding Sunday School superintendents during this period in our history were: James Lamar, W. H. Crogman, T. T. Greenwood, Tom Clarke, Bro. Lovingood, Elijah Melton, John Leake, Miss Anna E. Hall (retired missionary to Africa; returned under Rev. Baxter), Elmer Hatchet, Jesse Releford, Nixon, James A. Mitchell and Mrs. Pinkie Coggins. All worked hard to keep children and adults in Sunday School. Believing that the children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, train them well and lovingly so that leadership can spread for years to come. This church history will show how very effectively and deeply the roots were planted. Rev. Baxter passed on March 26, 1975. Information from the record book showing minutes of official board meeting as recorded by V. G. Cameron, Church Secretary for the years 1936-1938 follow.

Official Board - December 7, 1936

Meeting opened, with Rev. Baxter presiding, by singing hymn #370, "O, For a Heart to Praise My God." Prayer by Rev. Baxter was followed by a very inspiring talk on how we should stand every one in his place for the Church and our God. The minutes of the last meeting were read, received and adopted.

The Board meeting was then opened for business and discussion. The service, shorter hours and visiting of the members of Central Methodist Episcopal Church was discussed by Brothers Bigham, Johnson, Mitchell, Reid, Brooks and Sister Annie E. Hall.

The treasurer reported money for disbursement:

	\$32.25
Money paid to Pastor	12.00
Clerk	3.00
Organist	1.50
Sector	1.25
Morris Plan	4.00
Pioneer Loan	4.00

The meeting was closed by singing together "Let Us Sweetly Live."

V. G. Cameron, Secretary

1937 Budget Approved, December 1936

The call Board meeting on December 10, 1936 was opened by Rev. J. A. Baxter. Song Hymn #1, Scripture Isaiah 40th chapter, prayer by the pastor. After devotion, the election of Stewards took place. Professor E. Luther Brooks, Science professor at Clark University, was elected to succeed himself as chairman. J. A. Mitchell was elected Assistant Chairman, Virgil G. Cameron, Secretary, R. L. Edmonson, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

The cost of operating the church for the year 1937 was approved.

Pastor's Salary	\$1,700.00
Clerk's Salary	100.00

Organist's Salary	192.00
Sexton	255.00
Telephone Bill	32.00
Fuel Bill - 20 tons	105.00
Gas Bill	35.00
Light Bill	100.00
Water Bill	36.00
Street Improvement/per month	33.00
New Property	250.00
Communion Expenses	6.00
Janitor Supplies	50.00
Office Supplies	50.00
Envelopes	50.00
Due Carter Electric Company	15.00
Church Insurance	319.00
	\$3,328.00

January 4, 1937

The official Board met on January 4, 1937, the pastor presiding. Sung hymn #277 - My Soul Be on Thy Guard. Prayer by the pastor. Sister Hall lead the song, "A Charge to Keep I Have." Rev. Baxter gave an interesting explanation on how to carry on the work of the church.

To Honor Central's First Family

Mrs. Maggie Carter offered a suggestion that the church have a program in honor of the pastor. Bro. Bigham made a motion that each auxiliary support the suggestion. It was seconded by C. W. Clemmons.

Dr. Hill made a motion that the program be in honor of Pastor and his wife. This was seconded by R. L. Edmonson. Dr. Brooks made a motion that the official board reserve the rights of the first program, seconded by C. W. Clemmons. Finance Committee made their report...

February 28 to be Clark University Day. Meeting Closed by singing together "Let Us Sweetly Live." Inactive members to be visited by Pastor and committee. Two dollars turned over to Board by Mrs. P. J. Coggins, Superintendent of Sunday School for use of Gymnasium.

July 7, 1937

It was motioned and seconded that all money raised in 4th Sunday Rally on June 25 would go to District Conference and Salaries of the workers of the church.

Money taken in from June 6 - July 4 was \$146.48.

Disbursements:

District Superintendent	\$25.00
Pastor	63.62
Light Bill	8.19
Water Bill	5.52
Sexton	5.00
Organist	5.00
Clerk	5.00
Pioneer Loan	4.00
Total	\$101.39 (as written)

August 3, 1937

Board Meeting - Delegate To Go To White Plains, Ga.

After devotion lead by Rev. J. A. Baxter, business was discussed. The board approved \$5.00 to be paid to Sister Lula Hill for railroad transportation and delegate representation fees to the District Conference at White Plains, Ga.

September 7, 1937

New Stewards Appointed

Pastor appointed and board approved Bro. J. H. Sellers, Charles Thomas, William Evans and William Veal as stewards of Central Methodist Episcopal Church.

November 8, 1937

Coal Bill - Winter Approaching

With winter approaching, the Board moved to pay \$10.00 each month on the coal bill. Brother Kellogg mentioned that the boiler was in need of some repairs. Bro. Webb said he would repair the boiler free if he could find the trouble.

March, 1938

To Borrow Money

Bro. R. P. Johnson brought to the Board meeting facts about the balance due on property and amount to be borrowed, monthly note and all necessary information. He stated total due \$1,996.98, amount to be borrowed \$2,500.00, monthly note \$35.00. He stated the \$2,500.00 would involve the parsonage but not the church.

April 11, 1938

Loan Note Amount Changed

Bro. R. P. Johnson again reported that \$2,500.00 borrowed from Guarantee Tile and Trust Company and the notes are to be \$100.00 plus interest per month. Rev. Baxter asked that the church put on a drive for coal and Pastor's salary money. Request approved by the Board.

July 5, 1938

General Status of Church

Several called attention to the needs of the church. Bro. Thornton gave finance report. Mrs. J. A. Baxter stated the need of a janitor, Bro. George Harper suggested that a table be set aside each Sunday for a sinking fund for the trustees. Bro. R. P. Johnson reported on buying property near the church and what was needed by way of repairs.

November 7, 1938

Rented Property

R. P. Johnson was commended for renting the church gym for \$20.00 per month. He also had 20 tons of coal put in for the winter.

THE MCMILLAN YEARS - Plans for 1939

At the Annual Conference of December 1938, Rev. E. Webster McMillan was transferred to Central. In order to set up budget and make plans for 1939, the Board met in December 1938. This first meeting provided the new pastor an opportunity to present his goals to the Board. In his briefing, Rev. McMillan stated he expected:

- 1) every member should be responsible for bringing in one member this year;
- 2) members should be in their seat at eleven o'clock;
- 3) when stewards take collection, all members should stand when they start walk from rear of church toward pulpit;
- 4) only four members to a unit and each unit leader need have information on members -- name, address, occupation, income, rent or buying home, etc.;
- 5) if any member felt he could not stand the storm, get down tonight as he wanted members willing to link up and go;
- 6) he stated he would surely carry on his side of the work.

A rally was planned for February 12 at which time each member would be asked for \$5.00, each club asked to raise \$50.00. The club reporting the largest amount would be honored at the parsonage. The finance report was read and dues were collected.

Rev. McMillan thanked God for coming to Central at this difficult time and prayed for Rev. Baxter's success.

January 18, 1939

Goal of \$5,800 for the Year

In an attempt to reach the expected goal for 1939, the following recommendations were approved:

Bro. E. Luther Brooks recommended each member
pledge their support for the church
Sis. Johnson recommended a social be given in the gym
Tuesday, February 7 or benefit of
pledges
R. P. Johnson stated all members should be contacted
about their pledge

Pledges made at this meeting were:

R. P. Johnson	\$60.00	Nina Charmichal	\$ 7.50
R. L. Edmonson	45.00	Beatrice Thornton	20.00
R. N. Johnson	65.00	Angus Holly	26.00

V. G. Cameron	30.00	Robert Fluellen	26.00
E. L. Brooks	52.00	H. H. Royal	52.00
Alice Thornton	26.00	Minie Turner	13.00
P. J. Coggins	15.00	Lillie B. Parham	5.20
H. L. Thomas	40.00	J. M. Dyer	26.00
Edna Bryant	13.00	Anna E. Hall	13.00

February 13, 1939

Prayer More Important Than Money

At this Board meeting Rev. McMillan thanked members for their loyalty and said because of such, all would be invited to a social at the parsonage.

Prayer and soul saving is an important factor in the kingdom of God and all members should offer prayer more often. Money was very much needed but prayer was needed in Central, stated the Pastor.

June 23, 1939

Repairs Needed

Bro. Harper gave the Board an estimate of \$150.00 cost for labor and paint to repair the church. Rev. McMillan said the paint would be a gift. A paint committee to work out plans will be Bro. R. L. Edmonson, George Harper, H. H. Royal, Andrew Hill, Willis and Virgil G. Cameron. It was decided that the painting would be done by each member donating a day or two labor free. Sister Anna E. Hall was recommended by the Board or local preacher to the quarterly conference. Rev. McMillan stated the ushers were neglecting their duty. Visitors come and leave the church and nothing is said to them.

Minutes Recorded by Miss Alice M. Thornton - Acting Secretary, Church Year 1940

The February 19, 1940 Official Board was held at 8:00 in the church. After devotional service, the Pastor told the object of the meeting. The rally not being a success and what to do next. Mr. R. P. Johnson spoke of existing conditions that he thought caused the drop as the hard winter so far and the aftermath of the Annual Conference and rain on Sunday caused the slump.

Prof. E. Luther Brooks explained the fact that we are poor people, etc. and extra expense caused by the severe weather prevented some from paying. Mr. J. Gray suggested that the rally be continued until next Sunday. Miss Anna Hall spoke on the same line and asked that cards be sent to the Unit Leaders encouraging them to see their members and tell them of the financial need. The Pastor spoke on the effect making the appeal (presenting the financial condition) had on his ministry. The chairman Prof. Brooks of the Steward Board or Mr. R. P. Johnson of the Trustee Board could save the Pastor of situations like this by making the request.

Mr. R. P. Johnson said he had a diamond that could be set in a ring that he would donate. The church would have the expense of making the ring to be given in a contest.

March 4, 1940**Stewardess Board Congratulated**

After devotions, Rev. McMillan spoke of the enthusiasm which seems to prevail. He congratulated the Stewardess Board for work done on Sunday, March 3.

Bro. R. P. Johnson again spoke of the ring. He was told that the Board would name 25 members to enter the contest. The ring would go for the highest amount over \$35.00. Rev. McMillan thanked Bro. Johnson for thinking of world service.

Honor Members While They Live

Rev. McMillan suggested that we honor our members while they live. Our Board will go on record as calling our Women's Foreign Missionary Society the Lula Hill Foreign Missionary Society of Central Methodist Church. Suggestion was put in for of motion by Miss Anna E. Hall and seconded by Mr. J. T. Sharpe.

April 8, 1940

The Official Board meeting opened at 8:00 in the Adult Assembly Room. After devotion, the Pastor, Rev. McMillan spoke of the finances saying we did raise more in regular collections but not much in financial efforts. He stated that the spiritual side of the church was moving on nicely and holding its own. We should be thankful for health and good jobs. Pastor asked the Board who is to keep up church grounds. Mrs. Lula Hill said that was the janitor's job.

Request for Hymnals

Pastor spoke of Mother's Day, saying he wants hymnals in church given in honor of or memory of mothers. The trustees are to put racks on the back of the pews for hymnals. Later, we will put bibles in church. These should be dedicated. Members present debated on how to keep people from taking the books away. Pastor suggested that we black the edges of the hymnals.

Carpet to be Given Church

Communion Rail Needed - Mrs. Helen F. Mitchell and Miss Estella Clemmons say they will put carpet on floor across the front of church.

Pastor requests a communion rail (which was voted on some time ago) be built. He said this would save time and make communion service more sacred. He also expects to get a lighted cross for the communion table.

May 13, 1940**Why Revival Night Service Not Working**

Bro. R. Fluellen says ask the Choir to sing more gospel songs. Pastor speaks in regard to revival saying that every Sunday is a revival. Rev. McMillan feels that the members taken in during a revival will not stick to the church as well as those who join on regular Sundays. Mr. Scott Woods prefers gospel songs along

with the sermon. Mr. R. H. Thornton said the minister should watch the audience and study his problems.

Mrs. Ables, Mr. Reid, and Miss A. M. Thornton spoke of the gospel songs and the effect it has on the audience. Rev. McMillan spoke of the Alive Church in Atlantic City and said he wants to revamp his program for the church.

August 5, 1940

Ushers to Improve

Rev. McMillan said there should be a check up on the duties of ushers so they will be prepared to take the offering and know just who will take the penny offering. They should be dressed in uniform. Mr. Harley, president of ushers, is to give names of ushers so he can write and encourage them.

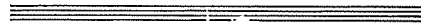
Epworth League

Mr. R. P. Johnson said we should get some literature for the children to study and invite other Leagues from other churches.

Miss Hall says we have too many club meetings on Sunday. Pastor states as long as clubs meet on Sunday, the League and night service will not progress.

September 17, 1940

Central was selected as the host church for a program and reception in honor of Bishop and Mrs. Lorenzo H. King, newly elected Bishop of the Atlantic Coast area. This was given by Atlanta Methodism. It was a most historical occasion as Bishop King was at one time pastor of Central Avenue Church. Dr. King left Central Avenue June 1920 to become editor of the Southwest Christian Advocate at New Orleans. From Central to Bishop and now returning to his old church to be honored. It was a grand and glorious night.



PROGRAM

of a

RECEPTION

in honor of

BISHOP and MRS. LORENZO H. KING, D. D., LL. D.

ATLANTIC COAST AREA. METHODIST CHURCH

given by

ATLANTA METHODISM

to be held in

CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH

TUESDAY EVENING

SEPTEMBER SEVENTEENTH, 1940

AT 8 O'CLOCK





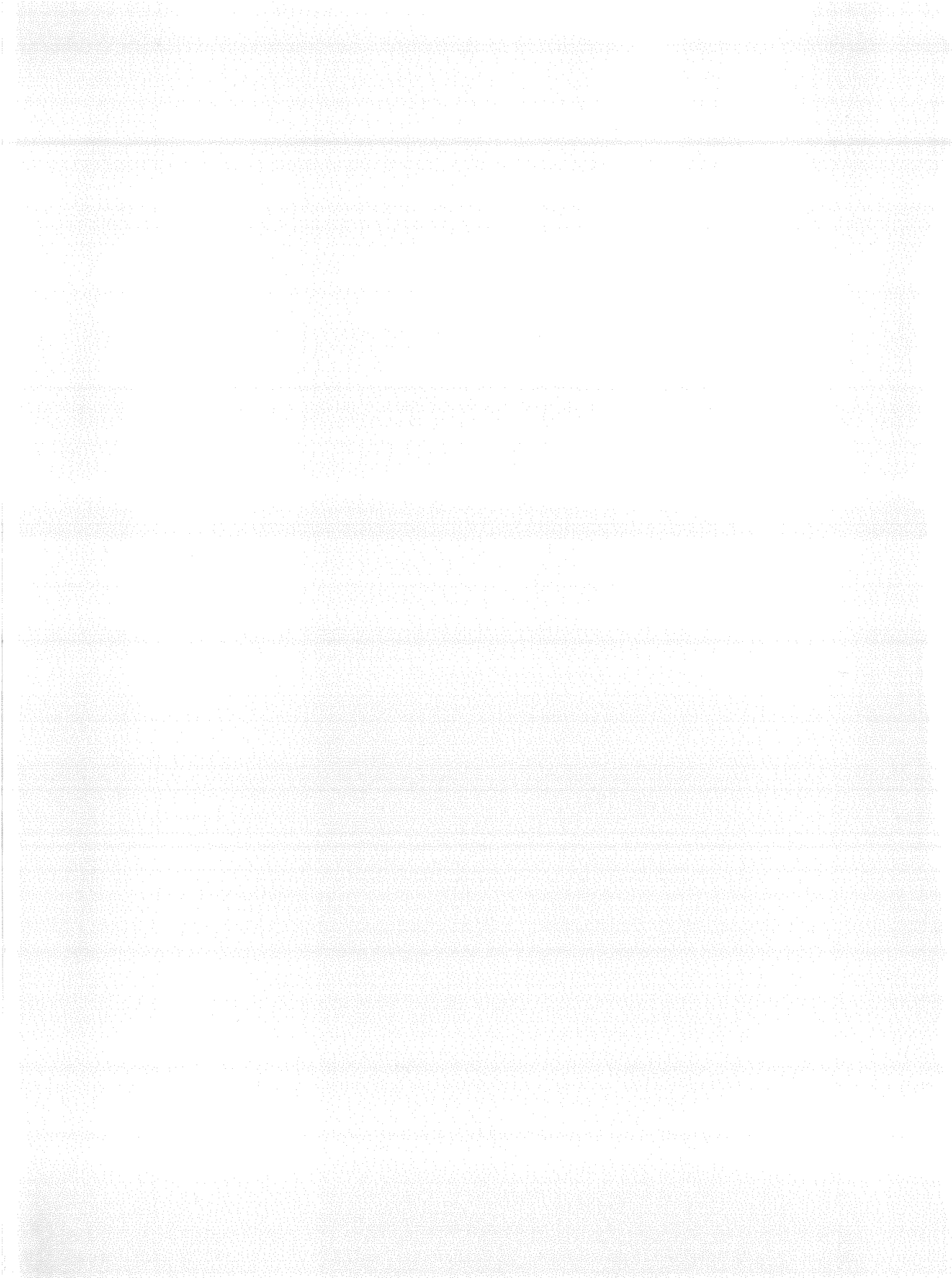
BISHOP LORENZO H. KING, D. D., LL. D.
ATLANTIC COAST AREA, METHODIST CHURCH

— P R O G R A M —

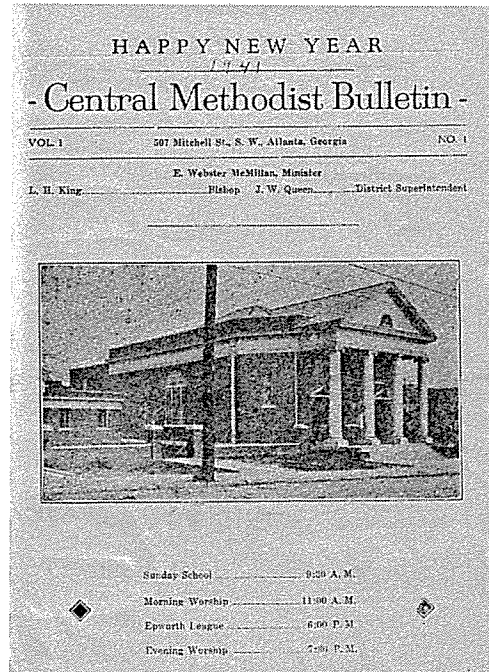
1. Music by The Combined Choirs
 2. Scriptures Rev. J. W. Queen
 3. Invocation Rev. J. H. Bridges
 4. Music
 5. Remarks, Master of Ceremonies, Rev. J. F. Demery
- GREETINGS:**
6. From the ministers of the Atlanta Conference,
Rev. E. G. Newton
 7. From the Laymen of the Atlanta Conference
Prof. E. Luther Brookes
 8. From the Women's Division of Christian Service
of the Atlanta Conference, Mrs. W. J. King
 9. Solo Miss Mahala Smith
 10. From our Educational Institutions, President
W. J. King
 11. From the African Methodist Episcopal Church,
Bishop W. A. Fountain
 12. From the Baptist Church Dr. C. D. Hubert
 13. From the Interdominational Ministers Alliance,
Dr. John C. Wright
 14. Letters of Felicitation Rev. N. J. Crolley
 15. Music
 16. Introduction of the Bishop, Dr. D. H. Stanton
 17. Response Bishop King
 18. Benediction, Rev. J. A. Baxter

It is evident from reading excerpts of minutes recorded by Miss Thornton and Virgil Cameron that we were a growing church. Much work was put into program planning, spiritual growth and development. Just to emphasize the dedication of one member, I recorded this information from the financial record for December 22 and 29, 1940:

Emmanuel - .01 (written in "all I have"). That is all we are required to do --
our best.



CHAPTER VI



The War Years 1940-1945

Bulletin 1941 – Three Added to Church Last Sunday in December.

In the Central Church bulletin dated January 5, 1941, it is noted that three members joined the church on Sunday, December 29, 1940. They were Mr. Earnest Abbott, Sr., Miss Doris Moreland, and Miss Orville Clark. Let me note that when Bro. Abbott joined, his wife, Mrs. Bessie Abbott, was working with the Circle #6 and serving as a communion steward at that time. They remained true to Central until death. Orville Clark passed suddenly very early in her career as a local public school teacher.

Hymnals Purchased "In Honor" - March 30, 1941 (cost \$1.00)

1. Mrs. Lecumsih Lemon by daughter Ruth Harden
2. Mrs. Evelyn Shaw Gates by Mrs. Minnie Rakestraw
3. Mrs. Lydia Barnett by her children
4. Miss Alice M. Thornton by W.S.C.S. Circle #6
5. Mrs. Minnie L. Askin by daughter Mrs. Buna M. Guffie
6. Mrs. Rosa Fluellen by husband Robert Fluellen
7. Miss Alice M. Thornton by sisters Beatrice and Elizabeth
8. Mrs. R. Sams by grandchildren, Pres. and Mrs. James P. Brawley
9. Mrs. Lula Hill by children, Dr. and Mrs. L. M. Hill & family
10. Mrs. Marie Lee by sons Ben, Will and grandson T. H. Lee
11. Mrs. Docia V. Viel by husband William Viel
12. Mr. E. L. Wright by wife Mrs. Ocie Wright

Hymnals Purchased "In Memory" - March 30, 1941

1. Mrs. Jane Stanton by daughter-in-law Mrs. Emma L. Stanton
2. Mrs. Effie Hawthorne by daughter Mrs. Herbalene Avery
3. Mr. E. W. Hatchett by friends Mr. and Mrs. George Harper
4. Mr. Joseph F. Post by wife Mrs. Willena Post
5. Mrs. Lizzie Cox Burch by son B. S. Burch
6. Mrs. Lucy Anderson by daughter Mrs. Eugina Thomas
7. Mr. R. H. Thornton, Sr. by child R. H. and sisters
8. Mr. J. H. Bennett by daughters Misses Pearl & Catherine Bennett
9. Dr. and Mrs. G. W. Arnold by daughter Miss Emma C. Arnold
10. Mr. Jesse Lee Releford by son Martin S. Releford
11. Mrs. Mary Parks Lemon by husband Mr. A. R. Lemon
12. Mrs. Fannie Greenwood West by husband, Frank P. West & children
13. Willie Bowman by mother Dora
14. Mr. James Lester by wife Mrs. Josephine Lester
15. Mrs. Ida Bell Thrasher by daughters Mrs. Carriker & Mrs. Thrasher
16. Mr. Elijah Anderson by daughter Miss Cassie Anderson
17. Mrs. Lizzie Cox Burch by daughter Mignon Cates
18. Mr. Marion Gaither by wife Mrs. Birdie Gaither
19. Mrs. Marie Foster by daughter Helen F. Mitchell
20. Mrs. Ethel Murray by daughters Evelyn Thomas & Whitman Ogletree
21. Mrs. Amanda Johnson by daughters Misses Elizabeth & Alberta

Johnson

22. Mr. Raymon Davis by wife Mrs. Julia Davis
23. Rev. P. H. Travis by wife Mrs. P H. Travis
24. Mrs. Pattie Leggett by friend Mrs. Grace Walker Trammell
25. Mrs. Susie Lindsay by husband W. P. Lindsay
26. Mr. Henry Thomas by friend Mrs. P. J. Coggins
27. Miss Martha Drummen by Miss L. Campbell
28. Mr. J. L. Releford by Scott Woods
29. Mrs. Cyn by Scott Edwards
30. Mrs. D. H. Stanton by Dr. D. H. Stanton
31. Benn Bryant, Jr. by mother Elizabeth Bryant

May 8, 1941

Notes from official Board meeting show that Rev. McMillan explained the new Pension and Relief fund saying each church is to pay .10 per member. A day will be set aside for it just as we have a day for stewards. The church raising the highest amount over \$25.00 will receive \$50.00 from the Church Board at large, the one raising highest amount over \$15.00 will get \$25.00.

Committee appointed on Pension and Relief was Mrs. Lula Hill, Miss Anna Hall and Mrs. Edna Bryant.

Highlights from the Minutes

May 26, 1941

A Red-White-Blue rally was planned to raise \$2,000. It was moved and seconded that we take Mrs. P. George's suggestion using the three sections of the church. The members of each group should wear its color of ribbon:

Mr. Sharpe	Red
Mr. Edmonson	Blue
Mr. H. Chambliss	White

The idea seemed to have been accepted with pleasure, yet I could not find the results of this drive.

July 7, 1941

District conference to be held in Hogansville, Georgia. Pastor to appoint a junior steward board from the young men's group. Mr. Wilson spoke of the junior stewards being a help to the church for it would be youth along with age trained in the church.

September 8, 1941

Mr. J. B. Bigham says that it might be a good idea for the Pastor to take time Sunday morning to speak to the members and let them know the condition of the church. Pastor says the Steward board should work out a budget and then get pledges with which to run the church.

December 16, 1941

Mr. R. P. Johnson spoke saying that the phone was too expensive so he disconnected it. He told of the organ in need of repair. The Board gave him the authority to do necessary work.

Pastor spoke of the 1,000 members on roll. Mr. Sharpe and R. P. Johnson spoke saying that we are not able to pay for so many members names. The roll must be a padded one. Just when is the proper time to thrash out the assessment or the church. Pastor says it is at Annual Conference.

As the year ends with a slightly different air than it started, we must know that research is limited. The change in attitude of the officers concerning statistics of church membership may well be due to the financial struggle this year.

January 3, 1942

Debt on property \$1,100. One hundred members to raise \$10.00 each in 90 days to pay off debt.

May 11, 1942

To Pay Off Mortgage - The Pastor, R. P. Johnson and Harry Reid will go to pay off the \$1,121.28 mortgage. Prof. E. L. Brooks could not go as he would be in school at Clark University.

Mr. S. G. Edwards was asked to give the church a write-up in the Atlanta World.

Pastor Requests Vacation

Pastor states he would like his vacation in July. Prof. E. L. Brooks says vacation does not include pastor's salary.

Mr. J. B. Bigam moves to pay pastor salary, then give him a vacation. This was seconded by Miss Hall. The vote was 14 yes and 3 voted against.

It was moved and seconded that a certain amount be donated for the Pastor's vacation. Prof. Brooks moved that the amount be \$100. Brother Harry Reid offered his resignation as leader of his group at this time. Pastor said another will be placed at the head of the group.

Apparently, Bro. Reid was one of the three who voted no to the vacation plan. He was a strong supporter of the church and one of three that went to pay off mortgage on church.

Members who spoke of this vacation to me did not want to be identified. Some said this was the fall of a trip up the hill to a successful financial year. Just when money was paying the bills in spite of all the little drives and the month vacation was a long time.

Church Property Needs Repairs

The building next to our church was the property of Central. It is now grass parking lot. At this period it housed a restaurant and pressing club operated by Black people.

Mr. R. P. Johnson reported that he had contacted two companies about the cost of repairing and hoped to get a lease after the work was completed. The Pastor explained this was not an emergency so we must make plans for raising money.

August 3, 1942

Just how long the Pastor was out of the city was not determined. His vacation was for one month of July salary. The Pastor stated that the \$100 extra was what he asked Mr. Scott Woods to raise.

He said he had no ax to grind at any time. There were times when he gave up his salary to pay bills. In the last rally, he took \$12.00 on his salary so that \$100.00 might be paid for tax.

He said he was not begging for money, but Mr. Woods could have spoken to Miss Hall and had her send cards to members asking for the money. Pastor McMillan went on to say the members were talking about him saying he thought more of a vacation than he did the debts of the church.

Work Stopped by Bishop

In reading over the ten pages of minutes recorded by acting secretary Mrs. P. J. Coggins, it seems this meeting was a long and very involved one. Mr. Johnson went to the Pastor Sunday night before he left and asked him about the repair of the building.

He was told to wait until after conference as we must raise our claims. Mr. Johnson said Mr. Dorsey would let him have the money and would not charge any interest.

The Bishop and Superintendent called Rev. McMillan and told him about the work which had been done. Bro. Johnson said when the Bishop and Superintendent came and closed the work, he did not know what it was all about. The contractor was told to stop the work and that he did not know if he would get any pay for what he had already done. The contractor said, "Well, I am a Christian gentleman and I am going to close in the front of this man's business if I don't get a dime for it." So he did as he said.

Mr. Johnson said he read the law from the Discipline and went about his work. He also stated that if he made a mistake, it was of the head and not the heart.

The Pastor asked Dr. Hill and other trustees if he thought they were right in what they did. Dr. Hill said, "technically, I believe I was right." Mr. R. P. Johnson, Mr. J. T. Sharp, Mr. J. B. Bigham and Mr. Thornton also said they believed they were right.

The Pastor asked the board would they accept the work which had been done and pay for it or let the men pay for work done. Dr. Hill moved that the Bishop be given a copy of the minutes of the trustees meeting. He would know what was done. After much discussion, the pressing club rent was raised from \$20.00 to \$25.00 per month. This would be used to pay the note for work done.

The Pastor said he could not go against the official board. He also said the men who went ahead with the work were going against 52 bishops. Yet all the trustees present stood or one act -- that as they read the law, the work was not done on the church or parsonage, but on church property.

November 2, 1942 - War Years

During this period in our history, many young people are going into service of the United States or working in some government service. Grace Grissom, Daniel Love, James Barnett and George West have asked for a transfer to go to Asbury Church in Washington, D.C.

Charles Clemmons was our only Gold Star World War II casualty. He was the son of Rachell and C. W. Clemmons. The Clemmons' were a family from the old Central Avenue Church. The Gold Star flag was placed in the sanctuary. It served as a constant reminder of the agonizing tension created by war.

From *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, page 101, #G, we note that we reject violence and war and urge the establishment of the rule of law in international affairs as a means of elimination of such evils. In the Atlanta University Center, located within walking distance from Central, was the Army Administration School Branch #7. This school provided training in leadership for Negro servicemen. Often they worshipped at Central. One Central member who was enlisted in the school was Alfred B. West.

Harvey M. Johnson, John F. Grissom, Horace E. Griffith, Earnest Abbott, Charles M. Foster, Frank and Alfred B. West, William Jackson, Walter and Wilford Prothro are only a few of the numerous sons of Central who gave service in the war. Oswell Thornton went on to become a lieutenant in the U. S. armed forces. Many young men from Central returned from service and assumed active duties in church. Some relocated and new families were added. The church became a clearinghouse for Negro ills of a social, economic, and political nature. These were days of segregation in all branches of service.

Women were trained for defense work because men were called into active service. This might well have been the start of both parents working away from home. Mother in defense work, father enlisted, children in daycare -- the numbers were up and growing. After the war, the two parent work habit continued. It has had an affect on the community.

1943

One could say that Central did overcome some difficult experiences. An analysis of the work lead by Rev. McMillan over the coming years proves that the church was growing and making changes that were most positive.

This was the time of the unification of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South and Methodist Protestant Church. Rev. McMillan was recognized as one of the great administrators of methodism.

During the mid-1940's, tremendous changes took place enhancing our church. The members grew to love Rev. McMillan and understood his desires and aspirations for them. He had to learn with his officers that old friends just work together in trust and love.

The motto for Central was:

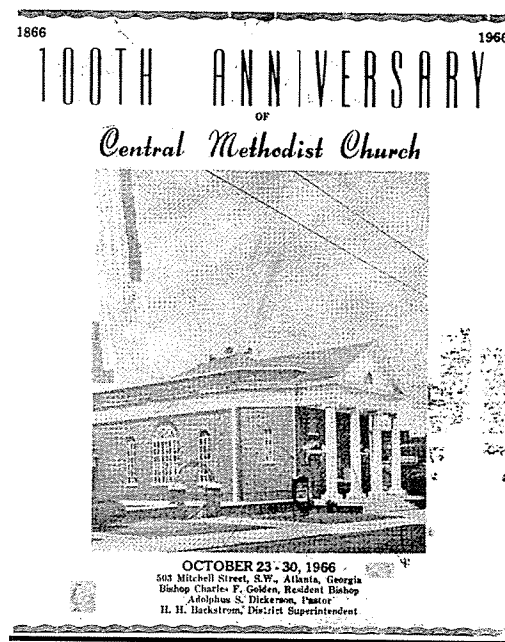
"The doors of Central Methodist Church swing wide to welcome
all who sin and seek a savior
all who are lonely and seek a friend
all who are discouraged and seek hope
all who sorrow, and seek for comfort
Come -- Christ will satisfy!"

Following Annual Conference in 1948, Rev. McMillan was a part of Central. Dr. J. A. Baxter, former pastor of Central was District Superintendent and the Bishop was J.W.E. Bowen.

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CHAPTER VII



From Evangelism To Civil Rights 1948-1967

Dr. LINEUNT SCOTT ALLEN - 1948-1956

Dr. L. Scott Allen came to Central as one of the youngest men to grace the pulpit as Pastor at this time. He was in control of the church from day one. Age was an advantage to him as the energy he put into the programs of a growing church was enormous. Membership increased greatly, as Dr. Allen was a forceful leader, orator and organizer.

Dr. Allen launched a major campaign for expansion to enlarge the sanctuary and build additional church school rooms. A special Central Methodist Church School Bulletin was published, showing the need for the expansion. It showed pictures of overcrowded classrooms. Included also were ways members and friends could help with the special campaign which was to close April 6, 1952. At this time, the nursery Class was meeting in the kitchenette with Mrs. Helen F. Mitchell as teacher and Mrs. Lillian Collins, assistant teacher. Mrs. Inez, as, teacher of the Kindergarten Class was greatly in need of a larger room as was the Primary Class with Mrs. Birdie Wallace as teacher.

Rev. Allen listed the following twenty-four campaign workers:

Birdie Wallace	Mamie Glenn
Lurlene Allen	Josie Allen
Rosa L. Mitchell	Carrie Gaither
Ella Bigham	Jessie Chambliss
Marie Willis	Sallie Harden
Annette West	Maggie Carter
Elizabeth Bryant	Daisy Dunn
Erma Latham	Cosby Maddox
Susie Cameron	Dora Darden
Mamie Cameron	Louise Clark
Addie Flemming	Emily Sturdivant
Versalle Shoemaker	E. J. Smith

As an innovative means of obtaining necessary funds for the expansion, Rev. Allen placed a plaque on a wall in the assembly room (music room) listing the names of the persons giving a designated amount. This created much interest and the plaque proved successful. The plaque was quite an eye-catcher until, while redecorating, it was lost. One will never know the names inscribed there to the honor of those dedicated members.

As the Youth Department grew in numbers, it also grew in importance to the total program of the church. Rev. Allen took pride in working with the Commission on Education to see that they provided meaningful activities for the youth. Bibles were given all graduates of Central. Certificates signed by church school teachers and Rev. Allen were given in an elaborate ceremony for promotion activity. All activities involving children were most outstanding. His belief was if the new building was to be useful, there must be children to occupy the classrooms.

Sunday Afternoon Sunday School

In an attempt to be a vital force in the Vine City area, Sunday School for the community was held in the afternoon. Only one teacher stands out at this time and that is Mrs. Josephine Smith. She proved to be a home missionary as she tried to serve the community. Later, the house was demolished and Mrs. Smith's class became a part of Central's Sunday morning class. Rev. Allen made it clear that Central was God's church and that there were no big I's and little You's in Central. This fact is alleged to have caused much discussion as some parents apparently did not want the children to mix. I was unable to find any member willing to be quoted directly, so I use the word "alleged" for lack of proof. At one time, all the community children were placed together regardless of age. This was corrected as time passed on.

Music

By tradition, music was very important to the development of Central. During this period, Scott G. Edwards and wife, Mrs. Mamie Sue Edwards, served most successfully. The Sunday night concerts provided added money for the expansion program.

Revival

One of Rev. Allen's special interests was evangelism. Rev. Allen worked closely with the various organizations of the church to provide evangelical approaches for church revival. Often, revival would begin on Sunday as the 11 O'Clock service was well attended. This would give the large congregation an opportunity to hear the great preacher and plan to return some weeknights with friends for the service. The various choirs and organizations took nights for leadership.

Another seldom used ceremony performed under Dr. Allen, much to the delight of the members, was the "Love Feast." Some openly expressed the act that they had never been a part of such holy service. Some members told of the "Love Feast" observed in the old church. The ceremony was held on the Wednesday before the first Sunday, in place of the regular Wednesday prayer meeting. This story was retold --

"Brother McGill, former slave, would get high in Spirit when talking about the trials and tribulations we had. At times, he would pull off his shirt and show the scars he got in slavery."

The church program dated August 22, 1954 reveals the following:

"The following new members united with our church last Sunday. We most cordially welcome them into our fellowship:

Miss Edith Dalton
Mrs. Eva Dalton
Mrs. Willard Faye Jones"

Rev. Allen was competent in the theology of the church and one would expect him to be appointed to a higher position. In 1956, he became editor of the

Central Christian Advocate, New Orleans, Louisiana and in 1967 was elected and consecrated a bishop of the Methodist church. He was later assigned as the Resident Bishop of the Holston-East Tennessee-Southwest Virginia Area, and later holding the same position in the Charlotte, North Carolina Area. The following directory was a part of the worship program each Sunday:

OFFICIAL DIRECTORY

Office—Dial CYPress 4052

Parsonage—Dial MAIN 3057

Bishop J. W. E. Bowen.....	Resident Bishop
Reverend H. H. Backstrom.....	District Superintendent
L. Scott Allen.....	Minister
Chairman of Steward Board.....	Calvin Carnford
Chairman of Trustee Board.....	Wm. R. Evans
President of Methodist Men.....	Martin Releford
President of Woman's Society of Christian Service.....	Mrs. Maggie Carter
Church School Superintendent.....	Mrs. P. J. Coggins
Church Treasurer.....	H. H. Royal
Organist.....	Scott G. Edwards
Organist for McMillan Guild.....	Miss Ludora Darden
Charge Lay Leader.....	Robert W. Lowe
President of Wesleyan Service Guild.....	Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson
Parish Visitor.....	Miss Anna E. Hall
Chairman of Commission on Finance.....	Wesley McCollum
Chairman of Commission on Missions.....	Mrs. Addie Flemming
Chairman of Commission on Membership and Evangelism.....	Mrs. R. L. Mitchell
Chairman of Commission on Education.....	Miss Marie Hill
District Steward.....	R. C. Fluellen
President of Ushers.....	Darwin Strickland
Chairman of Parsonage Committee.....	Mrs. Charlene Ware
President of Senior Choir.....	Elliott Wolfe
Chairman of Communion Stewards.....	Mrs. Mamie Mitchell
President of E. W. McMillan Guild.....	Mrs. Irma Wainwright
Chairman of Unit Leaders.....	R. C. Fluellen
President of Methodist Youth Fellowship.....	Miss Barbara Patten
President of Young Adult Fellowship.....	Miss Juanita Hill
President of Women's Progressive Club.....	Mrs. Mildred G. Lowe
President of Young Ladies' League.....	Mrs. Marion Kelly
President of Willing Workers' Club.....	Mrs. Naomi Thorn
Community Worker.....	Miss Rebecca Sidewell
Church Secretary.....	Miss Evelyn Jenkins
Director of Public Relations.....	Mrs. Mary Thompson
Custodian of Building.....	Rudolph Flood

Rev. H. H. BACKSTROM - 1956 - 1960

Rev. H. H. Backstrom came to Central after a successful term as District Superintendent. He was not a stranger to the officers as they worked with Rev. Backstrom under Rev. L. S. Allen's pastorate. As reports to the District Superintendent indicate, projects are outlined quarterly when large sums of money are involved.

The campaign or the expansion of the building was launched under Rev. Allen at the time Rev. Backstrom was District Superintendent. The plans were followed.

Cornerstone Laying - December 11, 1960

On December 11, 1960 at 3:30 p.m., the laying of the cornerstone on the additional church school rooms took place. The message was delivered by Dr. E. W. McMillan. The act of laying the cornerstone was lead by Dr. Backstrom.

One of the most outstanding programs presented in 1960 was the Ninety-fourth anniversary of Central Methodist Church. At this time, the resident Bishop of the Atlantic Coast area was Bishop M. L. Harris; Dr. E. W. McMillan was District Superintendent. The two extended congratulations as did former pastor L. S. Allen and President M. J. Wynn of Gammon Theological Seminary.

The calendar of events follows:

- | | | |
|---------|----|--|
| October | 3 | Rev. W. W. Wideman, Laster Chapter Methodist Church |
| | 4 | Rev. F. W. Montgomery, South Atlanta Methodist Church |
| | 5 | Rev. C. S. Stinson, Warren Memorial Methodist Church |
| | 6 | Rev. D. T. George, Antioch Baptist Church, North |
| | 7 | Rev. G. P. Wilson, Fayetteville, Georgia |
| | 9 | Rev. H. C. Fisher, Bowen Methodist Church |
| | 10 | Rev. J. A. Wilborn, Union Baptist Church |
| | 11 | Rev. Harvey Hill, Poplar Springs & Hapeville |
| | 12 | Rev. T. P. Grissom, Sr., Ariel Bowen Methodist |
| | 13 | Rev. J. D. Grier, Fort Street Methodist Church |
| | 14 | Rev. C. O. Gordon, Centenary Methodist Church |
| | 15 | Rev. Roosevelt Dell, Oak Hill Methodist Church |
| | 16 | The Resident Bishop of the Atlantic Coast Area at 11:00 a.m. |

Rev. Backstrom stated in his greetings, "...for ninety-four years, Central has shone with unequal brilliance amid the constellations of churches of the city of Atlanta."

The trustees who worked hard for the success of the program were: C. T. Bell, Chairman; Cleveland Kirk, Secretary; J. H. Sellers, Adam Burriss, H. Royal, William R. Evans, J. S. Rutledge, Marvin Favors, J. C. Gray, Jr. and R. W. Woodward, ex-trustee. The stewards also worked with the Pastor on the programs. Souvenir plates were produced and sold for one project. The organizations that assured the financial success of the program were:

E. W. McMillan Guild - Mrs Louise Clark, President, Helen Daniel, Secretary, Versell Shoemaker, Treasurer, Gertrude Russell, Misc. Treasurer and Scott G. Edwards, Organist

Women's Progressive Club - Mrs. Sadie Wilson, President

Church School - Mrs. Helen Mitchell

Church School Superintendent - Mrs. P. J. Coggins

General Superintendent - Mr. Horace Griffith

Women's Society of Christian Service - Mrs. M. M. Saxton, President

Circle #7 - Mrs. Naomi Thorn, Chair

Circle #5 - Mrs. Helena Smith, Chair

Circle #6 - Mrs. Mary Adams, Chair

Circle #4 - Mrs. Rosa L. Mitchell, Chair

Parsonage Committee - Mrs. Oletha Hixon, Chair

Circle #1 - Mrs. Ella Brayboy, Chair
 Circle #3 - Mrs. Elizabeth Bryant, Chair
 Unit Leader Chairman - Mr. Arthur Ricks, Jr.
 Commission on Mission - Mrs. S. J. Saxton, Chair
 H. H. Backstrom Club (organized by Rev. Backstrom from new members taken in by him and the Methodist Men) - Mr. Charles Foster, Chair

Rev. Backstrom was appointed to a second term as District Superintendent in 1960. Thus he became a part of the Central history. He passed suddenly in 1970.

Rev. ADOLPHUS SUMNER DICKERSON - 1961 - 1968

Leaving the position as Atlanta South District Superintendent, Rev. A. S. Dickerson came to Central in the Spring of 1961. At this time, work was in progress that would certainly need the leadership of a dedicated pastor. Rev. Dickerson was just the person; he accepted his responsibility and performed his duties with marked success. He graced the pulpit with the air of a college president. His training had prepared him for the type of leadership our great congregation needed. Without losing the opportunity to use existing programs that had proven to be successful, he improved and/or reorganized some church organizations.

Dr. Dickerson was quite an influential minister in the community. He was in a position to bring many distinguished activities to Central. Central purchased property on Hunter Street (Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) and renovated other church property. The educational building was dedicated. We became the first Black church in Atlanta to have an early morning service. The church was able to secure federal funds to build low cost housing. This project was started (Central Gardens) and became a highly respected, most effective means of providing low-rent housing.

100th Anniversary

Dr. A. S. Dickerson was greatly involved in the 100th Anniversary of our church. He served as the General Chairman and put together an excellent week of activities. He put together a souvenir booklet that was commensurate with the long history of Central. This booklet included greetings from Governor Carl E. Sanders, Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., Charles F. Golden, Resident Bishop, H. H. Backstrom, District Superintendent, Rev. & Mrs. T. P. Grissom and other outstanding citizens.

One page was listed as "Our Fallen Bishops." It included pictures and identifiable information about Bishop Marquis Lafayette Harris, elected to Episcopacy on July 17, 1960 and died October 7, 1966; Bishop Lorenzo H. King, former pastor of Central, elected to the Episcopacy in 1940 and passed in 1946; Bishop J. W. E. Bowen, elected Bishop in 1948 and died in 1962.

Another unique feature of the booklet was "700 Years of Dedication and Service to Central." Pictures of dedicated members of Central who had been actively serving the church for fifty years or more as adults. They were: Rosa Mitchell, Edna Bryant, Alice Clement, Grace Trammell, Marie Foster, Nell Herterbrook, Cosby Maddox, Dora Woodward, Minnie Askin, Mamie Mitchell, Willie S. Walls, Richard Woodward, Frank West, Shelby Armstrong, Angus Harley, J. A. Long, Rev. T. P. Grissom and Romain Webb. A special tribute was given Mrs. Grace W. Trammell, 94-year-old member reared in Central. The week-long activities for the 100th Anniversary was very successful.

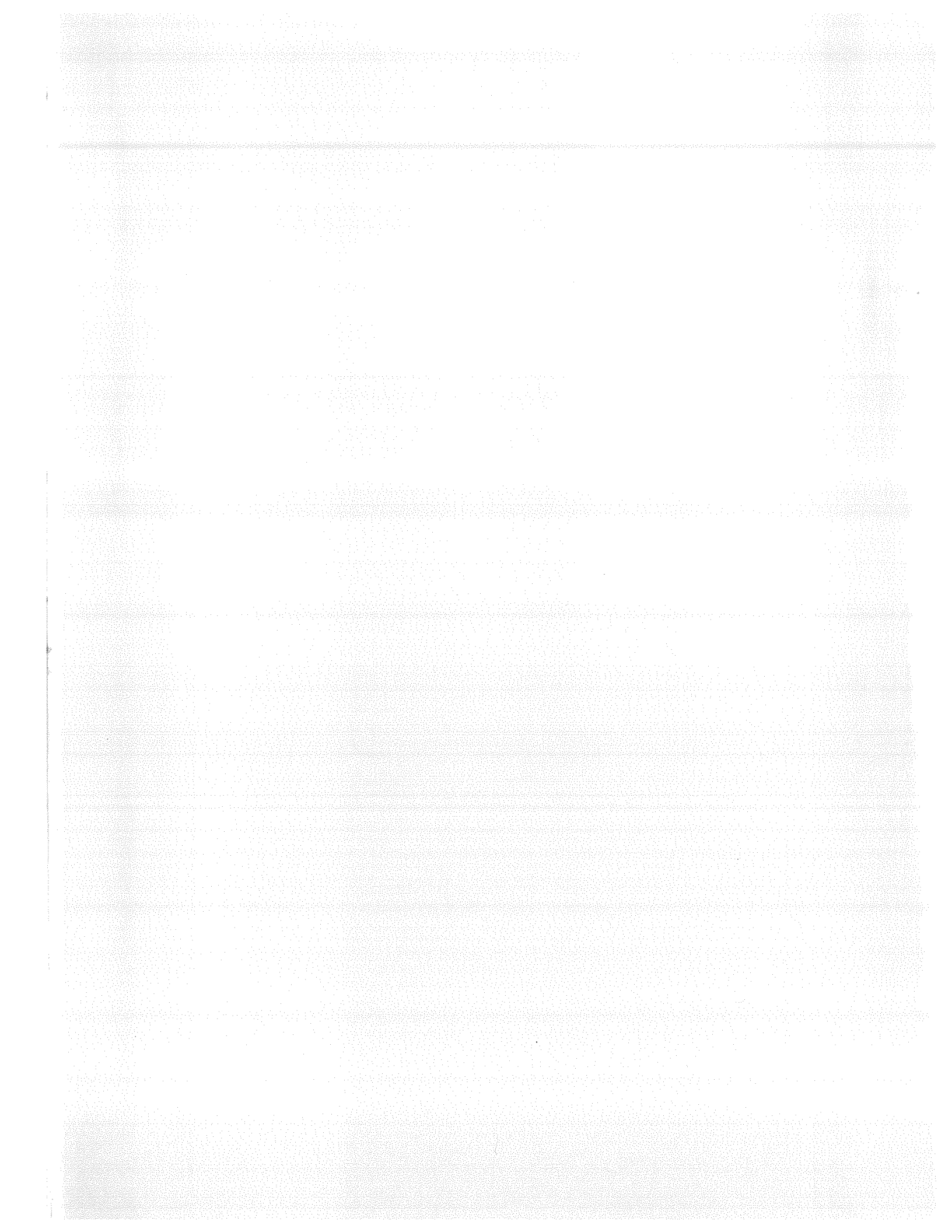
Building Dedicated

A service of dedication of the Educational Building was conducted under Rev. Dickerson. A fact related by Mrs. Oletha Hixon, then president of the senior choir, is that the choir sponsored a calendar tea and raised over \$1,200 for the purchase of a new organ. Mrs. Margaret Kirk was the choir treasurer, keeping close records of the finances.

The membership was well pleased with the leadership of Rev. Dickerson. He accepted and met the church obligations. He promoted social, cultural, educational, civic and religious activities. Rev. E. W. McIver was appointed to work with Central, receiving funding from the Board of Missions, Department of City Work to coordinate a "Creative Exploration Project." Rev. McIver served for two years on the project and then was given his own pastorate. Two seminarians were invited to join the church staff to continue the Inner City Ministry -- Jerry Wilkins of Candler School of Theology and Thomas Robinson of the Interdenominational Theological Center.

The conference reassigned Rev. Dickerson in 1968, ending a most productive tenure of service.

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CHAPTER VIII



The New Era 1968-1986

The turbulent sixties gave great cause for increased church attendance. People were concerned about the social unrest. Sunday altar call at Central became a very emotional period. Family members with employment expressed appreciation. Those with college children were hopeful the young would act or react wisely. All seemed to appreciate the efforts made for freedom. Some had differing opinions as to how and why the sit-ins should be carried out. Central was supportive of the civil rights movement. Dr. M. L. King, Jr. had captured the hearts of Blacks around the world when, on April 4, 1968, he was assassinated as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

Shortly after Dr. King's death, Rev. J. E. Lowery was appointed pastor of Central. He, at that period, was an established civil rights leader, having worked closely with Rev. M. L. King in Alabama. Central soon became a church greatly involved in all civil rights movements.

Dr. JOSEPH ECHOLS LOWERY - 1968 - 1986

Rev. and Mrs. Lowery came with their family of daughters to Atlanta in 1968. Having no church parsonage, the officers had to provide a comfortable home for the family. For a short time, they lived in the Wallahaje Apartments on West Lake. Soon, Albert J. Martin, church officer, and his wife Helen, took the family into their newly constructed home where they remained until they could find proper accommodations.

Dr. Lowery was an early supporter and fundraiser for the 1955-56 Montgomery bus boycott led by Dr. M. L. King, Jr. and Rev. R. D. Abernathy. Legend has it that there was no strong voice supporting the movement from Black Methodist churches in Atlanta. This is a question that could be left unanswered, as young Blacks in Atlanta did play a role in the movement. When Rev. Lowery came to Central, his commitment to the struggle was well known. He came to lead a well-organized, very cooperative congregation. Much could be written about his years at Central, but this writer will highlight only a few of his many accomplishments as he took Central to even greater heights. The city was waged in legal battles that would later result in desegregation during the civil rights movement. Prominent Blacks from around the globe visited Central due mainly to the involvement of Dr. Lowery in the movement. His style of speaking appealed to the college students. Many joined Central and have made valuable contributions to the church and city.

Women's Day - Men's Day

Dr. Lowery presented the idea of two financial efforts a year to take care of the church budget. Youth Day would be used as an opportunity to encourage leadership. The speaker for Youth Day was often from the church school. The Women's and Men's Day speakers were usually prominent national personalities and would attract crowds. Some program speakers are listed below:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1971 | Miss Theresa Hoover, Associate General Secretary,
Board of Missions, New York, New York |
| 1972 | Mrs. Claire C. Harvey, President, Church Women
United, USA |

- 1975 Bishop L. Scott Allen, United Methodist Church
Jesse Jackson, Founder and President of the National Rainbow Coalition, Inc.
Benjamin Hooks, National President of the N.A.A.C.P.
- 1975 Mrs. Ella Montgomery, Director of Admissions, Dekalb Junior College (product of Central)
- 1976 Walter E. Fauntroy, U.S. House of Representatives
- 1976 Rev. Leontine Kelly, Associate Director of Council on Ministries, Virginia Conference
- 1977 Mrs. Ella G. Yates, Director, Atlanta Public Library
Prayer by Mrs. Maggie Mezőrewa, Zimbabwe, South Africa
Solo rendered by Elinor Harper, New York Metropolitan Opera
- 1979 Dr. Richard Arrington, Mayor, Birmingham, Alabama
- 1982 Dr. Wilsie G. Jenkins, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Fort Valley State College
- 1985 Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, Pastor, Zion Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Some others that have graced the pulpit from the Atlanta community are Michael Lomax, A. Reginald Eaves, Alonzo Crim, Coretta Scott King, Lyndon A. Wade, John Lewis, Wyche Fowler and George McGovern, while a candidate for president of the United States.

Women's Day Steering Committee - 1977

Chair	Mrs. Jeannette Wilson
Co-Chairs	Mrs. Mignon McDonald, Mrs. Barbara Robinson
Finance Committee Chair	Mrs. Annette W. Hampton
Co-Chair	Mrs. Maxine Webb
Program Committee Chair	Mrs. Evelyn G. Lowery
Co-Chair	Mrs. Marian Kelly
Music Committee Chair	Mrs. Mary Amos
Publicity Committee Chair	Ms. Dora McDonald
Co-Chair	Ms. Patricia Hutto
Courtesy and Chair	Mrs. Mattie Greenwood
Decorations Co-Chair	Mrs. Mattie Briscoe
Ushers Chair	Mrs. Eleanor Proctor
Co-Chair	Mrs. Buna Guffie
Members-At-Large	Mrs. Lorean Irons, Mrs. Anita O'Neal, Mrs. Edith Thomas
Typists	Ms. Mona Millikan, Ms. Glean Stafford, Ms. Betty Cooper, Ms. Avon Waters

Under Rev Lowery's pastorate, some of the organizations formed were: Youth Ushers, Leisure Wednesday Fellowship (1972), New Young Adult Fellowship (1974), Health Coordinators Task Force (1977), the Cherub Choir (1976), the bell choir. The McMillan and Senior Choirs merged to form the Cathedral Choir.

Under the United Methodist Women, the Central Grocery Closet was initiated as an emergency food relief resource for community agencies seeking to help needy Atlantans. Central Methodist Gardens was completed. We became part of a television ministry in 1975. At the peak of the missing and murdered children's crisis, Central was often televised for overseas viewing.

112th Anniversary Celebration

October 14 - November 5, 1978: "Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow"

The "History in Brief" for this occasion was written by Richard Morton, using James P. Brawley and Mrs. Lula Hill as his source. 1978 marked Central's 112th anniversary and 50th year in the present location. Central was blessed to have in the congregation more than a dozen 50-year members. Since 1968, Central's congregation grew steadily under Dr. Lowery's leadership. This impacted both local and national scenes, as a civil rights associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and now as national president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as well as many other religious and human rights involvements.

In summary, the history of Central United Methodist Church has a history of community and world involvement led by some of the nation's best minds. Hence, this historical statement gives, at best, a cursory view of Central's development -- Atlanta's "Church at the heart of the city with the city at heart." The complete story is yet to be written, said Richard Morton.

Holy Land Trip

Rev. and Mrs. Lowery travelled to the Holy Land with a group of which the following Central members were a part: Rev. and Mrs. T. P. Grissom, Helen Martin, Arthur Ricks, Lillie Sims, and Sadie Wilson.

Tribute to Missionaries - Anna E. Hall - Dorothy Barnett

Sunday, March 11, 1984, Social Involvement and Sub-Group I of the United Methodist Women presented the following program in honor of two of the three deceased missionaries who went to foreign soil from Central. Miss Anna E. Hall spent 25 years in Liberia, Dorothy and Ellen Barnett, two sisters, spent time in India and Africa.

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 501-7 Mitchell Street S. W.
 Atlanta, Georgia 30314



MARCH 11, 1984
 4:00 P. M.

PROGRAM

I

PRESIDING Ms. Lillian Woods
 HYMN "The Church Is One Foundation" . . . #297
 THE APOSTLES' GREETING #738
 THE LORD'S PRAYER
 DIMENSION OF PRAYER Mrs. Gaines E. Green
 SOLO "Garden of Prayer" . . Mrs. Arlena Robinson

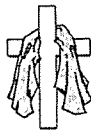
II

PRESIDING Mrs. Majorie Tolbert
 Miss Anna E. Hall and Miss Dorothy I. Barnett
 HYMN "This World Is My Father's World" . . . #45
 A TRIBUTE TO MISS HALL Mrs. O. Hixon
 A TRIBUTE TO MISS BARNETT Ms. Doris Ward
 INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER Mrs. Mattie Briscoe
 SPEAKER Mrs. Saunie Dennis
 SOLO "He Touched Me" . . Ms. Paula Nealey
 INTERESTING VISITS TO MISS HALL . . Mrs. Carrie Williams
 REMARKS

"AFTERWARD"

*God always has an "afterward"
 For every cloud of rain;
 We may not see the meaning now
 Of sorrow and of pain,
 But nothing God permits His Child
 Can ever be in vain;
 The seed here watered by our tears,
 Yields sheaves of ripened grain.*

*God always has an "afterward"
 He keeps the best in store,
 And we shall see it hath been so
 When we reach yonder shore;
 The cross, the shame, He once despised,
 For the joy set before,
 And as we follow we shall find
 Death is Life's opening door!*



It was Dr. Lowery's belief that church music could be rock or Bach. There should be no dead, dry service for God. A joyful noise should be a way of praising God. This concept of joyful worship is citywide now.

As a way to work with other churches in the community, a worship service or Holy week was launched in April 1977 at Friendship Baptist Church and Central was invited to become part of the celebration. We have alternated now for more than fifteen years. This service has grown in attendance, holiness, understanding and is most inspirational.

Bishop Urged Not to Move Lowery

May, 1986

When members of Central learned of the bishop's plans to move Dr. Lowery, plans were made to try to prevent the move. Mrs. Gwen Campbell, Chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee led six other members to a meeting with Bishop Ernest A. Fitzgerald. The only reason given for why he was considering the move was that Reverend Lowery had been at Central for 18 years. He said that there was no question that he (Lowery) was an excellent preacher and possibly we needed to share him with another church. "That concerns us," she said, "because we know there are white ministers in this city that have been at their churches longer who are being returned to their congregations."

Dr. R. V. Ozment, for instance, was in his 21st year at First United Methodist, another downtown church. Fitzgerald himself was a pastor for about 18 years in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Although the concept of an itinerant ministry is basic to the denomination, the United Methodist Church has no set policy on transfers. John Wesley, Methodism's founder, believed that pastors should move every six months. City Council President Marvin Arrington, a parishioner at Central, said (after spending an hour with Fitzgerald), "I just tried to say to him that Rev. Lowery had been a good shepherd and I thought we had been a good flock. To have our leader walk off at this particular time was just like having Moses leave his flock when he had carried them into the Promised Land." The bishop said, "no final decision had been made and he would take my comments under consideration," Arrington said.

When Lowery announced that he would accept the bishop's decision to transfer him to Cascade United Methodist, who could doubt that he was greatly admired at Central. When Gwen Campbell passed out the press release, her face was fixed with grief. After service, a reception was held in the undercroft (later named the Fellowship Hall) to honor the last Sunday at Central of Dr. Joseph E. Lowery and his family.

Members Leave Central

From the Central congregation, some well-known members who joined Cascade to work with Rev. Lowery and show the bishop he had failed to act according to church rules were: Gwen Campbell, Marvin Arrington and family, Beverly Harvard, Deputy Chief of the Administrative Services Division of the Police Department and highest ranking woman on the force, Aaron Turpeau and family, and Joseph Strawbridge. Another 100 members left, going to Cascade and other churches throughout the metropolitan area.

Much of this information appeared in the Atlanta Constitution on Tuesday, May 27, 1986 in an article by Mike Christensen, staff writer.

Other Members Act

Members bombarded the bishop with letters, phone calls and other visits. Following, you will read a letter of response most received.



The United Methodist Church

ERNEST A. FITZGERALD
Bishop

May 28, 1986

ATLANTA AREA
North Georgia Conference
South Georgia Conference

Mrs. Annette W. Hampton
1769 Detroit Avenue, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Dear Mrs. Hampton:

Thank you for your letter concerning Central United Methodist Church. Please be assured that the Cabinet will give full consideration to your concerns.

Thank you for your continued loyalty and support of the Church. May God's blessings be with you.

Yours sincerely,


Ernest A. Fitzgerald

EAF:bc

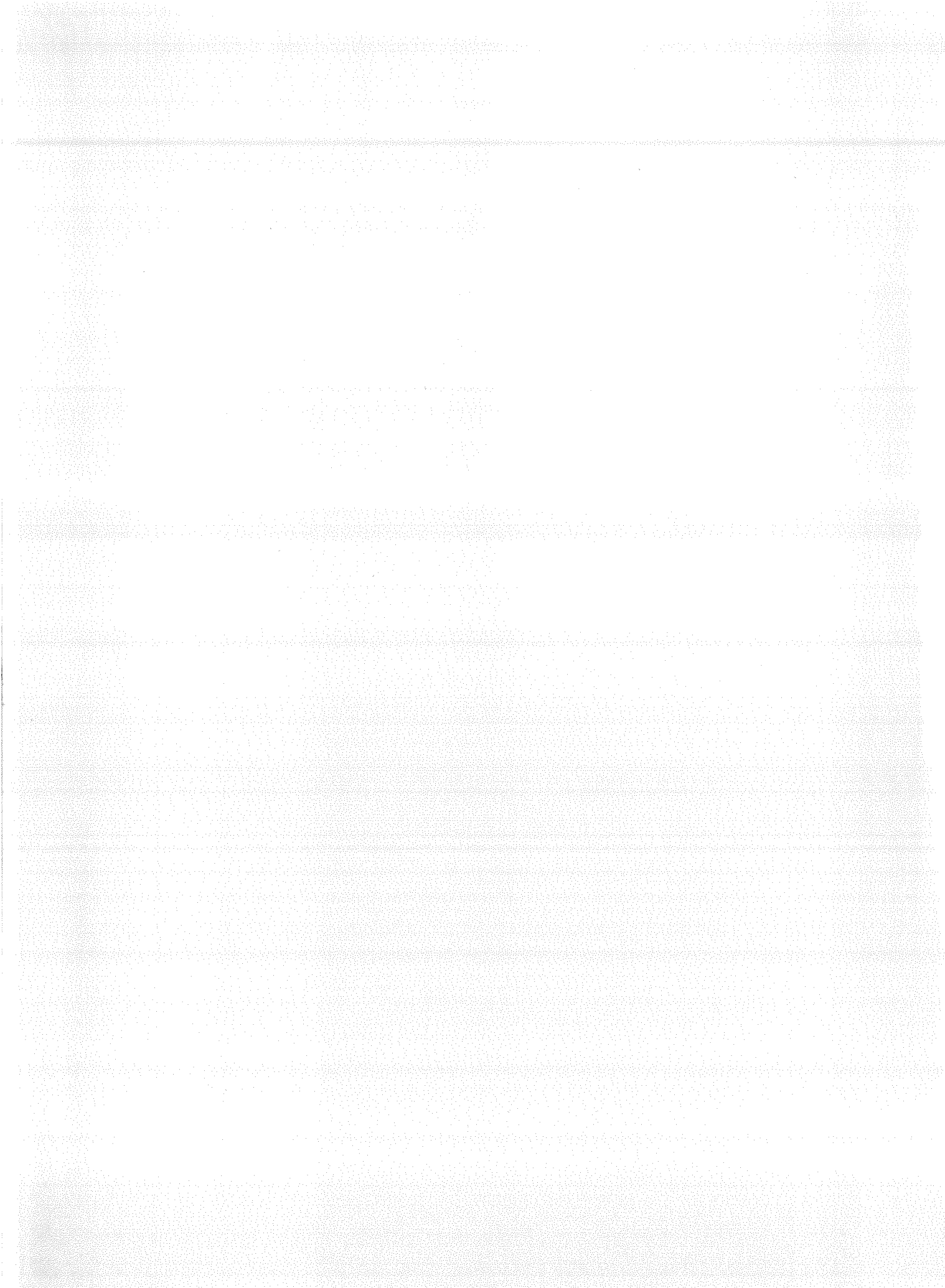
159 RALPH MCGILL BLVD., N.E., ROOM 208, ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30385 TELEPHONE 404/659-0002 EXT. 226

Longtime associates of Rev. Lowery were urging him to stay in the ministry and accept the transfer. Lyndon Wade, Atlanta Urban League President, and a member from an old church family stated, "It is important that this town not lose him as an active pastor. He adds something to the issues that need to be resolved." Wade and other members say that the bishop decided to move Lowery without adequately consulting them, as church rules require.

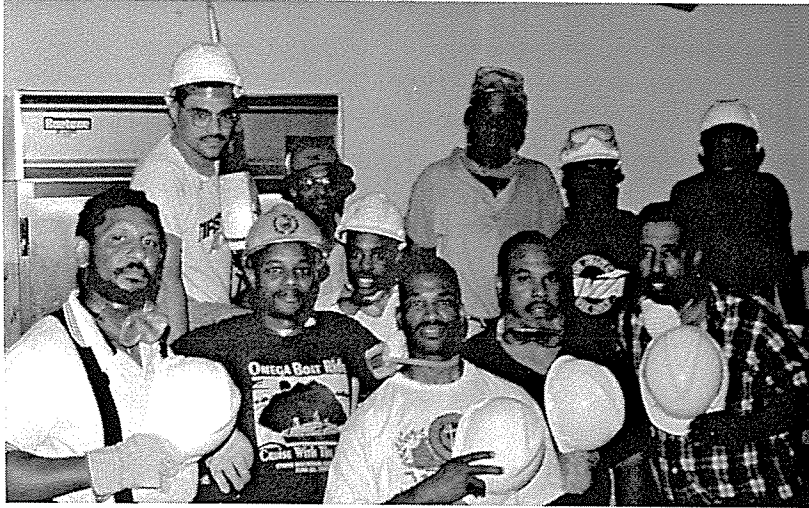
Rev. J. E. Lowery Bids Farewell

No one who saw the misty eyes of the standing-room-only crowd at Central on Sunday, June 8, 1986 could but think why the move was made. Did it strengthen Central for a life of faith? Did it serve a purpose?

On June 8, 1986, Dr. Lowery read a statement to a packed sanctuary filled with Central members, friends and news reporters, in which he said, "I accept the new assignment. I feel that God is so leading me and where He leads me I will follow. I shall continue to preach the Gospel of love with justice; peace with justice; hope with justice...in the great congregation at Cascade and in all the world. Indeed, the world is my parish."



CHAPTER IX



The Challenge To Build Again 1986-1990

DR. P. HAROLD GRAY - 1986-1987

The Reverend Pinkney Harold Gray was appointed pastor of Central at the Annual Conference in the Spring of 1986. This appointment came as no surprise to the church congregation or the Atlanta community. The news media had followed the controversy for weeks. Yet with the official announcement, more sparks appeared. The officers and members worked hard to have the pastor received properly. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee was left without a chairperson. Gwen Campbell was now at Cascade. Mignon McDonald and Doris Buster took the lead. They planned an after-church reception with all the beauty of a real Central affair.

As chairperson of Worship, I was in a most questionable position. I had done all I could to keep Dr. Lowery at Central. My picture had appeared in the local paper (Atlanta Constitution) participating in the protest. Plans for my vacation, if followed, would have me out of the city the first Sunday of Rev. Gray's appearance. I postponed my trip so I could be a part of the congregation on what was expected to be a history-making day.

Sunday, June 22, 1986

Before Church school, I did the necessary things to ensure the sanctuary was in order -- placing water, bulletins, hymnals, etc. in the pulpit. Now I was ready to go to the church office to meet Rev. Gray. He and his devoted wife were in the office. I greeted them and introduced myself. This meeting I will never forget. They were elated. I think my name rang a bell. Rev. Gray said he had been told that if I came in, he would have no worry about the Worship Committee. He did so very much want me to continue in my job, which I was pleased to do. He said he would set up a meeting for the Worship Committee on Wednesday so we could go over some plans.

The order of divine worship was for the fifth Sunday after pentecost. Just before the organ prelude, Rev. Robert E. Bridges, District Superintendent, rushed in with a friend. His last minute entry brought a whisper from members and officers who felt he had misled them. Rev. Gray was introduced by Mr. Horace Griffith, chairperson of the Administrative Board. He preached from the topic, "A Challenge to be in Ministry."

The air was cool as the sanctuary full of members and visitors looked to see who was gone. When Dr. Bridges was introduced, there appeared to be cool silence. His appearance caused another group of young members to leave Central. The young ladies felt they did not need a white overseer. They felt Dr. Bridges came to see how the church would receive Rev. Gray. I asked Rev. Gray some time later why Dr. Bridges came knowing the situation. Dr. Gray said he felt the timing was poor, yet he had to present him as Dr. Bridges was his boss and protocol was so established.

The lower level was packed for the reception. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee had really planned and carried out a most beautiful reception.

June 22 and 29, 1986

Following, please read messages that appeared in the first two bulletins of Dr. Gray's administration.

A MESSAGE TO CENTRAL FROM THE GRAYS

Since the late 1950's we have been fortunate enough to be engaged in Ministry for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Across the years we have discovered the philosophy of St. Paul holds fast during any time of our existence; "And now abideth faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love." Cor. 13:

To the best of our abilities this love has been a vital part of our Ministry. Although we have attempted to give love, and we shall continue to do so, we have been blessed by being recipients of love from our previous Ministry and above all, from God Almighty, Himself.

We consider ourselves highly privileged once again to be servants of the servants of God. We know that Central has had a long and wonderful tradition of holding high the blood stained banner of Jesus Christ. We are convinced that Central will do no less even now as we all immerse ourselves in the Ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us know we are all witnesses to the fact that His love is the key!

Sincerely,
Your Pastor and Wife
Harold and Nan Gray

A DAY LONG TO BE REMEMBERED

What a warm welcome we received the moment we entered the premises of Central! The Pastor/Parish Relations Committee started our day by presenting Nan with a beautiful corsage and me with a boutonniere. However, this was merely the beginning. The atmosphere was almost electrifying as we joined with the beautiful Choral Ensemble in the processional hymn. In fact, the entire worship experience for Nan and me, elevated our spirits.

The "packed" sanctuary, including the balcony was indeed, an inspiration, especially for the "new preacher". It goes without saying, that the reception immediately after worship was one of the best that we have ever participated in. The warmth, congeniality, and love that was expressed by so many of you, will stay with us for the remainder of our lives.

We must say with Jacob, "Surely, the Lord is in this place..." Genesis 28:16. Please know, for the both of us, last Sunday will be a day long to be remembered.

Devotedly,


P. Harold Gray
Your Pastor

Summer 1986

With the decrease in membership, the Board decided not to have the early morning (8:00 a.m.) service. Groups worked to rebuild and implement new programs. One such program implemented by Dr. Gray was the Children's Sermon. This program, now called Children's Church, has become one of the most successful services of the church, growing continuously.

September 1986

In early September, the officers and Dr. Gray were greatly concerned about the lack of interest shown by the congregation. Mrs. Linda Richardson, Co-Chairperson, Council on Ministries, sent out the agenda for an informational meeting scheduled for Sunday, September 28, 1986. Members had been asked to submit in writing questions they wanted answered at this meeting. Observations and suggestions for improvement of dear old Central would be welcomed.

Congregational Information Meeting - September 28, 1986

Agenda

OPENING John Grissom, Lay Leader

Song - My Hope Is Built (222)

Scripture

Prayer

INFORMATIONAL MEETING Bernard Walker, Moderator

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PERIOD

CRITIQUE

CLOSING Rev. Gray

REMARKS

SONG AND PRAYER

Participants

CATEGORY	RESPONDENT
1. Church and Society (Community Outreach)	1. Linda Richardson
2. Worship	2. Annette Hampton Rev. Gray
3. Council on Ministries	3. Stedman Southall
4. Music	4. Thomas Hager
5. Nominating Committee on Personnel	5. Rev. Gray
6. Financial	6. Marvin Favors A.C. Robinson
7. Youth and Children's Ministries	7. Stella Taylor Regina B. Brown
8. Church Expansion/Improvement	8. Ralph McDonald
9. Minister	9. Rev. Gray
10. Administrative Board	10. Horace Griffith

After a long and most heated meeting, we (officers) felt that we were well on the road to healing. It was with renewal of dedication to our dear church we went forward. Dr. Gray said, "If we would catch the spirit," we would grow.

Women's Day - May 24, 1987

The speaker for this occasion was Rev. Patricia Pace. A most impressive program was planned and implemented by Chairperson Valeria Clark and Bennie S. Chapple, Michelle Heard, Juliette Oliver, Rosalyn Joseph, Juanita McMillan,

Joyce Jones, Barbara Robinson, Paula Beal, Stella Taylor and the Music Department.

Steering Committee Chairperson	Valeria Clark
Co-Chairpersons	Hazel Griffith, Jeanette Wilson
Secretary	Rita C. Hardy
Program	Bennie S. Chapple, Anita O'Neal, Vera Knowles, Dorothy Owens, Stella Taylor
Finance	Margaret Kirk, Chairperson Hazel Griffith, Brenda English, Phyllis Burse, Patricia Webb, Mozelle Robinson, Georice Scott
Publicity	Leigh Waddell, Yvonne Gaither, Dolores Watkins
Hospitality	Mary Carter, Inetz Stanley, Zepherine Thompson, Marie Dotson, Donna Metts, Lucille Royal
Music	Mary Amos, Hazel Barkley, Audrey Anderson, Tom Hager
Ushers	Buna Guffie
Awards	Mignon McDonald, Cassie Releford, Brenda English
Flea Market	Jeanette Wilson, Anita O'Neal, Mary Carter, Doris Buster, Bettye Cooper

Men's Day - November 8, 1987

Speaker for Men's Day was the Bishop Ernest W. Newman of the Nashville, Tennessee area. (This bishop was to return to Atlanta on December 12 to pay tribute at Dr. Gray's passing.)

Steering Committee Chairman	Hope Merritt
Co-Chairman	Robert Manley, Sr.
Lay Leader	John F. Grissom
Chair, Administrative Board	Horace E. Griffith
Finance	Horace E. Griffith
Program	Rexie A. Yancey, Jr., James Adair

Publicity	A. C. Robinson
Courtesy	Arthur Ricks, Burney Walker
Music	Bernard Walker, Thomas Hager
Ushers	Clarence Webb
Special Events	David Searcy

Administrative Board - November 23, 1987

At this board meeting, necessary information reported for the Charge Conference on November 30, 1987. This conference was reported to have been very stormy with many unclear answers given.

December 1987

For the Advent season, Mrs. Brenda Scott donated a beautiful advent wreath to the church. This was the first time Central had used the lighting of the Advent wreath. Rev. Gray asked me to do the service for the first Sunday in Advent. This lighting was the only one observed by Dr. Gray. The Christmas tree, beautifully decorated with handmade crafts by Mignon McDonald, Mary Carter, Annette W. Hampton, Cassie Releford and other ladies, was set up but left unlighted after the passing of our Pastor.

With the sudden passing of Rev. P. H. Gray, one can understand that Christmas plans had been made. The children, under the direction of Mrs. Jackie Trawick, had planned to present "The Greatest Gift, A Rainbow of Promises." This day would be after the funeral of Dr. Gray, so the church went on with the presentation by the children.

The performance was really outstanding, the young Centralites were most inspirational. Closing remarks and acknowledgement of visitors was not given by Dr. Gray, as printed on program. This was extended by Rev. A. S. Dickerson, who became our interim minister. Thus, the end of a short stay at Central, Rev. Gray goes into our history.

1987

This had been a very busy year for the church. The Children's Choir was revitalized. This choir, composed of children 12 and under, was trained by Mrs. Jackie Trawick, who was extremely dedicated to her job. The church attendance continued to improve. Children's Choir was a way for children to bring parents out to hear them sing. Ironically, though Dr. Gray encouraged the revitalizing of the Children's Choir, he never heard them sing.

Church Directory

The last major project of Dr. Gray was the Central U. M. Church Directory. This was a tremendous job and needed dedicated workers. The committee worked night and day to give members an opportunity to have pictures made, to view

proofs and make selections. Before the completion of the directory, Dr. Gray passed. The first church picture directory was dedicated to his memory. Words under his picture in the directory read:

Dr. P. Harold Gray - Our Beloved Pastor
 In memory of our beloved preacher, pastor and friend
 Dr. P. Harold Gray who outran us to the father's house
 December 12, 1987

You are not here, you did not die
 We think of you as a raindrop in the sky
 Waiting to fall and ripen earth's grain,
 For as the rain falls the sun will shine again
 Sleep on and take your rest
 We loved you, but God loved you best.

DR. ADOLPHUS S. DICKERSON - Interim Pastor December 1987 - March 1988

When Lay Leader John Grissom received the call from Mrs. Nan Gray telling him that Dr. Gray was ill, Grissom went to work. He had to secure the service of an ordained minister to administer holy communion for Central on the first Sunday in December. Grissom went to see Dr. A. S. Dickerson and requested his service. Dr. Dickerson had a previous commitment, however, he cancelled it after learning the seriousness of the situation. He kindly led the service for Central.

After the death of Dr. Gray, it was with much consideration and dedication to dear old Central that our Lay Leader John Grissom worked enthusiastically to see that we had competent leadership. After much candid discussion with Dr. Bridges, District Superintendent, Dr. Dickerson accepted the position as Interim Pastor of Central. This appointment was considered by some as just brilliant. We were in need of a very caring leader and Dr. Dickerson, a former pastor of Central, was just such a person. He guided with patience and wisdom until the appointment of Rodney T. Smothers.

Church attendance was kept at a high level under Dr. Dickerson. Much can be said about the high type of proficiency given by the officers of Central as they conducted business of the church. The church had not previously experienced the death of a pastor and had no guidelines other than the District Superintendent. Dr. Dickerson, the Administrative Board, chaired by Horace Griffith, Pastor-Parish Relations, chaired by Doris Buster, are to be complimented for a most successful job under most trying times.

Dr. RODNEY T. SMOTHERS - March 1988 - June 1998

On Sunday, March 1, 1988, Rodney T. Smothers graced the historic pulpit of Central U. M. Church as its pastor. Thus he became the ninth Pastor to lead the Central congregation at this location. He was very warmly received by an overflow of members and city news seekers. Pastor Smothers came to lead at a time when our church was in a crisis. Just when growth exceeded all expectations,

Dr. Lowery was moved, followed by Dr. Gray's passing after less than two years as pastor.

Pastor Smothers had served as organizing minister of Hoosier Memorial United Methodist Church in Atlanta from 1982-1986. In 1986, he assumed new responsibilities in Nashville, Tennessee with the United Methodist Board of Discipleship Section on Evangelism. His ministry on the national staff involved providing consultant service and training in the areas of evangelism, revitalization and new congregational development. His wife, Jacqueline, is also a United Methodist minister. They are parents of a daughter Jasmine and son Jason.

Pastor Smothers continued the healing and renewing of Central, adding reassurance and commitment. The need to revitalize the congregation was evident. His wise leadership skills added so very much to a membership in a state of disbelief. With the assistance of Minister Clarence Brown, Danny Alexander, and student minister Sherroll James, things moved, programs developed, members returned, workers showed pleasure. Soon Matt Murphy was appointed Associate Pastor, followed by student minister Sherry Townsend. There was stimulated growth in membership. Some former members rejoined after leaving during the crisis. All were welcomed warmly.

Pastor Smothers' first major project was completing significant structural renovation. Early morning Sunday worship service was started to meet the needs of the growing membership. Breakfast, served each Sunday, was often sent to shut-in and homebound members. Enthusiastic involvement in Bible study classes was experienced; there are four mid-week Bible study classes.

Pastor Smothers said, "Central United Methodist Church is rich in history, rich in heritage, authorized from above, moves forward with a strong mandate for the future."

Our church creed: Revitalizing Our Spiritual Witness
Our church goal: To equip, to send, to minister

Excerpts from the Minutes of the First Board Meeting With Pastor Smothers - March 28, 1988

The meeting was opened with the singing of hymn #248, "Stand Up For Jesus."

Minutes of the January 18 meeting were distributed, read and received as corrected on a motion by John Grissom, seconded by John Carter, and adopted unanimously.

Pastor Smothers introduced Clarence Brown who would be proposed as the new Assistant to the Pastor in a move to expand the Central ministerial staff with the consultation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. He distributed copies of the job description for this position, as well as for the proposed Associate Pastor and current Student and Senior Pastor positions. He said other job descriptions for other staff will be forthcoming.

Pastor Smothers explained the financial statement has been pulled from the Sunday bulletin because: 1) there will be a newsletter to members and this

information will be included; 2) money business is family business and should not go out to the public; 3) money amounts in the bulletin advertises to thieves; 4) the offering goes down when people see amounts of giving in the bulletin.

Ad Hoc Stadium Committee - Bernard Miller said the obvious question with the advent of the Domed Stadium is, "Do we move or do we stay?" and there is a considerable amount of work to be done collecting information on which to base this decision. He said the Book of Discipline outlines a specific process if a relocation is to be made. He said the Council on Ministries has been asked to outline its work areas, their current programs, when they meet, and proposed ministries they want to undertake. He said the Board of Trustees has been asked to give directions on how to utilize the present facility, and the mechanics that would effect a move. The Task Force has contacted the Methodist Church and the Church Development office, learned that an 8-acre site is the minimum for a move, that there would need to be an assessment of Central's ability to pay the funds necessary, and that the process would take 3-5 years if a move is desired. He said Marvin Boyd and Sherole Alexander are identifying use of present funds and the level of debt.

Reports from work areas were given by the following:

Health and Welfare	Dr. Jerome Taylor
Worship	Mrs. Annette Hampton
Social Concerns	Jackie Sykes
Evangelism	Curtis Bailey (for Chair Edith Thomas)

Methodist Hymnal Revision

Controversy among United Methodist over the language of traditional hymns had steamed since the authorization of a revision. The editor, Rev. Carlton R. Young, professor of church music at Emory University, Candler School of Theology, stated that "in only about 10% of the instances would there be changes that would even be challenged." In the present book, there are 81 Wesley hymns but over 9,000 texts in all. Central put forth an effort to purchase the new hymnal and had an impressive dedication service in 1988. The following members supported the effort:

Don and Sherole Alexander	Penelope E. Glass
Joseph H. Amos	Tommie T. Glass
Curtis Bailey	Nan N. Gray
Alyce Marian Blake	Horace, Hazel and Pam Griffith
Rosa S. Bolton	John F. Grissom
Shirley Brown	T. P. Grissom
Phyllis Burse	Annette W. Hampton
John and Mary Carter	Rita C. Hardy
Zandra Chapman	Geneva N. Harris
Louise J. Clark	Kathleen Hawthorne
Isaac & Valeria Clark	Helen J. Hill
Lillian R. Collins	Helen R. Hill
Marvin Favors	Laurie F. Johnson
Rosalind E. Ferrell	Rogelio Jones

Rosalyn V. Joseph	Dollie S. Rozier
Horace Kemp	Inetz C. Stanley
Bernetta Keeton	Jean D. Stevens
Maureen Lacy	Jerome and Carol Taylor
Lamar Lyons	Florence Thomas
Ralph and Mignon McDonald	Zepherine Thompson
Juanita McMillan	Curlie M. Thurmond
Lillie F. Middlebrooks	Jacquelyn P. Trawick
Mona M. Millikan	Audrey Quick Tyler
Helen Mitchell	Lolita Welch
Barbaralaine North	Carolyn F. West
Charles T. Rabb	LaVerne West
Martin Releford	Carrie F. Williams
A.C. & Barbara Robinson	Rhunell H. Williams
Mozelle Robinson	Doris D. Willingham
Lucille B. Royal	Rexie Yancy, Jr.

Women's Day - June 26, 1988

With the theme, "Women Committed to Discipleship Through Prayer and the Word," the Central women presented a most inspiring day. Led by Chairlady Mrs. Normarene Merritt, the two services were witnessed by a packed sanctuary, the early morning celebration speaker was Rev. Jacqueline R. Smothers, wife of our Pastor R. T. Smothers. She is Senior Minister of Rocky Head United Methodist Church. Her message was quite forceful.

The eleven o'clock speaker was Ms. Angella P. Current, Associate General Secretary, Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Her address was very informative. Many young people of Central had recently graduated from high school and received valuable information about scholarships available within the Methodist Church.

Church-wide Fall Retreat - October 21-22, 1988

A most exciting retreat was held at the Falcon Inn Conference Center in Suwanee, Georgia, the weekend of October 21. The theme was, "Dynamics of Spiritual Discovery and Growth: Christian Education, Evangelism, Leadership, Development, Planning and Goal Setting." Generally, the retreat was planned for all members of the church, but specifically for church leaders. Pastor Smothers stated that all officers, work area leaders and those considering future leadership roles were strongly encouraged and expected to attend. On Friday night, the Rev. Walter Kimbrough, Pastor of Ben Hill United Methodist Church, was featured as the keynote speaker at the banquet. Saturday's activities included a series of workshops:

Evangelism	Pastor Smothers
Christian Education	Rev. Fred Smith
Leadership Development	Rosalyn Joseph
Planning/Goal Setting	Esther Silver-Parker

In addition to the workshops, emphasis was placed on the partnership between clergy and laity.

Men's Day - November 13, 1988

The theme for Men's Day was, "Christian Guidance for Tomorrow's Leaders," and actually began on the Friday night before with a panel discussion on "The Status of the Black Male." The early morning service on Sunday was honored to have as its speaker Mr. Lyndon Wade, Director, Atlanta Urban League. Dr. Thomas Cole, President of Clark-Atlanta University, gave a most illustrious message at 11:00.

1988 - A Great Year for Central

With the closing of 1988, much could be said of the progress Central made. Using the theme "Revitalizing Our Spiritual Witness," Pastor Smothers lead with pride our congregation to accomplishments that only dedication could make possible. If there was ever a question of Central reclaiming her place in the role of leadership, the time from March to December provided the answer. We have had leadership training, Bible study, stewardship commitment and many successful programs this year. As reported in the Annual Church Conference, November 28, 1988, by Pastor Smothers, "the nine months have been challenging and rewarding. Each and every week I have witnessed growth in the lives of the men and women who I am privileged to serve. Just a glance around the church and you can see that Central is alive and well -- alive in spirit, alive in love, and alive in the hope of what a bright future will bring."

1989

The year's goals have been set and much work to effectively achieve the goals is in progress. Mrs. Mozelle Robinson continues to give outstanding leadership to the older adults. She has had added responsibility in caring for a homebound member, Amie Shepard. This she did until Mrs. Shepard passed.

Drs. Jerome and Carol Taylor, working with Health and Welfare, have continued the collecting of canned goods started by United Methodist Women about ten years before. The Taylor's did begin Saturday enrichment classes for youth who have been participating in the sports component. The program would have three components:

1. Saturday education - African history
2. Arts and humanities
3. Discussion groups

This program has expanded into computer education and has proven successful.

The SOURCE

Spiritual Outreach Utilizing Rejuvenated Christian Energies (SOURCE) is a newsletter that provides valuable information for members and interested

persons about activities of the church and community. In addition to publishing the SOURCE, the Communications Committee works to make more effective use of bulletin boards, bill boards and district and conference newspapers.

Children's Ministries

Children's Ministries is responsible for coordinating the planning and implementation of the congregation's ministry with children from birth through age 12. This year's calendar included spiritual, educational and recreational offerings for the children. Successful activities or 1989 were:

- Skating Outing
- Children and Youth Concert (coordinated by Jackie Trawick)
- Introduction to the Bible and Church Etiquette
- Zoo Outing
- Nursery Shower/Dedication
- Reading, Math, Study Skills Workshop
- Second Annual Candlelight Service
- Fire Safety - Latchkey Kids
- Reading, Math, Study Skills Workshop II

Children's Ministries was chaired by Dolores D. Watkins with Carolyn F. West as Co-Chair.

Women's Day - June 25, 1989

Mrs. Sallie Parrish, Minister of Music, Director of the "famed" Choral Ensemble and a student at Interdenominational Theological Center majoring in Ministry of Divinity and Sacred Music, was the 8:00 a.m. speaker. Mrs. Parrish held the congregation's attention with her most dynamic spiritual message. The church was full before the 8:00 a.m. hour and many remained to hear the 11:00 a.m. speaker. At this service, another full house listened with joy to Leah Sears Collins, Superior Court of Fulton County judge, presently presiding on a full-time basis over civil, domestic, felony and misdemeanor criminal cases. Mrs. Cindra Bailey and Ms. Jackie Sykes were chairpersons. Mrs. Phyllis Burse, Vernice Gibson, Genova Lawrence and Quaye Reed served as co-chairpersons.

Men's Day 1989

"Black Men Accepting the Challenges of the Nineties Through Leadership and Participation"

8:00 a.m. - Central's own Lloyd T. Swain, Sr., lawyer and training coordinator for the Ford Motor Company, delivered a most powerful message reflecting on the theme in a dynamic way. The 11:00 a.m. speaker was Dr. Alfred L. Norris, President of Gammon Theological Seminary, kept the tradition started over 100 years ago by Central -- to provide elegant speakers or a great congregation.

The ministerial staff -- Rodney T. Smothers, Senior Pastor, Matt Murphy, Associate Pastor, T. P. Grissom, Senior Associate Pastor, Danny K. Alexander, Associate Pastor, Clarence Brown, Assistant to the Pastor and Fred Smith, Education, were a credit to the success.

Men's Day Chairman Joseph R. Hudson and Co-Chairmen Don Alexander and Malcolm Walker were congratulated for a job well done.

Revival - September 24-27, 1989

Christ is the head of the church and Pastor Smothers is a spirit-filled preacher, keeping his flock near the cross. Much time is spent in soul-saving. This year, the Evangelism committee, chaired by Dr. Edith D. Thomas, coordinated the following revival schedule:

Sunday, September 24 - 8:00 a.m., 10:50 a.m., 7:00 p.m.
Rev. Tyrone Gordon, Young Adult Ushers, Voices of Central

Monday, September 25
5:45 Dinner
6:15 Study period led by Pastor
7:00 Revival Service
Faith in Action ushers
Choral Ensemble

Tuesday, September 26
5:45 Dinner
6:15 Study Period
7:00 Revival Service
Senior Ushers
Cherub, Youth choirs

Wednesday, September 27
5:45 Dinner
6:15 Study Period
7:00 Revival Service
All Ushers
Cathedral Choir

In addition, a Love Feast, spearheaded by Mrs. Mozelle Robinson took place on Wednesday, September 20. On Saturday, September 23, a prayer vigil was held from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. with each hour having one of the church work areas leading the participants in spirit-filled prayer, song and praise.

Church Anniversary - October 29, 1989

The 123rd anniversary of Central was chaired by Ollie and Robert Manley. The activities were most impressive. The city of Atlanta honored Central with a plaque in recognition of the 123 years of outstanding service to the growth and development of the city. The honorable John Lewis, congressman from the Fifth District of Georgia, honored the members of Central who came from the Central Avenue Church in 1929. The Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition with the official U. S. seal was a most heart-warming honor. The members were:

Earnest Abbott	Nancy Johnson
Josie G. Allen	Ruby Johnson
Ella May Brayboy	Grace G. Kemp
Mattie H. Briscoe	Erma B. Latham
Evelyn Burriss	Sarah Lowrie
Lillie Davis	Nellie McDay
Fannie Estes	Juanita H. McMillan
Charles M. Foster	Helen M. Mitchell
John F. Grissom	Daisy Middlebrooks
Thomas P. Grissom, Sr.	Whitman Ogletree
Buna A. Guffie	Charles T. Rabb
Annette W. Hampton	Cassie A. Releford
Annie Harmon	Martin Releford
Alberta Johnson	Gertrude Russell
Laurie Johnson	Carter B. Tatum, Sr.

The oldest member honored was Rev. T. P. Grissom, Sr., 95 years old at the time, with Mrs. Lillie Davis having the honor of being the oldest lady at 89 years.


The Central year ended with the Watch Night service which was restored by Pastor Smothers. God was blessing Central.

1990: The Year of Opportunity

The keys to a great new year appeared in the bulletin January 7, 1990:

1. Educate Thyself
2. Put First Things First
3. Conquer Fear and Doubt
4. Develop a Personal Mission Statement
5. Seek Meaningful Interdependent Relationships
6. Practice Win/Win Strategies
7. Listen With Your Heart and Your Mind
8. Provide for Spiritual Renewal
9. Learn How to Pray Effectively
10. Discern Your Spiritual Gift
11. Don't Forget the Source
12. Believe That With God, All Things Are Possible!!!

As we entered the year 1990, our January SOURCE carried a most profound message from Pastor Smothers. A letter marked by such intellectual depth should be preserved for the next generation.



THE S.O.U.R.C.E.

JANUARY 1990
VOL. 3 NO. 1
CENTRAL U.M.C.

"SPIRITUAL OUTREACH UTILIZING REJUVENATED CHRISTIAN ENERGIES"

NEWSLETTER

Message from Pastor Smothers

The Old Testament Book of Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) reads; "Where there is no vision the people perish..."

Thanks Be to God we have been blessed to enter another year. A New Year and a new decade that offers us another opportunity to be in Christian service is before us. I have proclaimed 1990 "The Year of Opportunity", because all the signs point to the fact that we are on the verge of several important opportunities in the life of our church.

We begin this year with four major emphases in mind:

1. The newly elected leadership team is already at work

implementing the programs and ministries that we pledged to undertake during our Fall Church Conference.

2. Mr. Horace Griffith and Mrs. Annette Hampton will soon be dispatching our newly trained Class Leaders to assist us in providing quality nurture and care to our membership.

3. In early spring Mr. C. David Moody and the Trustees will present to our congregation the preliminary plans regarding the construction of the new activities building.

4. Mr. Joe Hudson will begin leading our Long Range Planning Committee towards study recommendations that will help prepare us for ministry well into the 21st century.

These new thrusts, along with our existing ministries, prom-

ise to present us with challenging and rewarding opportunities in 1990.

To begin our year on firm footing I am encouraging all of our elected leaders to participate in two very important leadership training events. First, on January 6th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. the Council on Ministries (C.O.M.) will sponsor training sessions for all members and support agencies of the C.O.M. This is a required meeting for all persons serving in leadership positions in 1990. Second, on January 21st at 2:30 p.m., the Atlanta-Marietta District will provide training for all elected officers in our local church. This too is a required meeting for our local church leadership.

Let's start the new year off

continued on page 2

Pastor's message (continued from page 1)

right by receiving the training and team building resources that are being provided to equip our elected officials with the tools necessary to do the work of ministry. It has been said that, Titles do no engender fellowship; people follow best when their leaders provide knowledgable, responsible leadership.

Yours in a Partnership for Vital Ministry
Pastor Rodney Smothers

Excerpts From Annual Church Conference

From the Pastor's report ending November 26, 1990, the membership summary is heartwarming. We have added 136 members to our church family. The expected goal was 100.

Ray Robinson, Chair, gave the preliminary report of the Building Committee. He stated that the DCA Architects, Inc. was selected for Central's building program. The Committee is ready to look at financial resources, with construction hopefully to begin in 1991.

Pastor Smothers expressed appreciation for the laity and ministerial staff for their faith in God, vision for growth and commitment to vital ministry in our community."

Some activities that were very successful in 1990 were:

January	Leadership Training Youth Enrichment Program Professional Directory Explored
February	New Members Orientation African-American History Month Class Leaders Begin Ministry of Caring
March	Group Pictures of Inspirational Cherub Choir Task Force on AIDS Spring Family Night Choral Ensemble Encore Concert Youth Retreat Maundy Thursday Service Rehearsals between Friendship Baptist and Central
April	Holy Week Services at Central Amanda Flipper Temple A.M.E. Love Feast (The Love Feast has become a Central Holy Week tradition climaxing a day of feast in preparation for the Easter experience.) Friendship Baptist Church - Maundy Thursday service Seven Last Words Sunrise Service

Women's Day 1990

Christian Women Facing the Challenge of a New Decade - June 1990

The morning speaker was Esther Silver-Parker, Public Relations District Manager for AT&T in Georgia. A Central member, she is responsible for managing media relations, constituent relations, philanthropy, and marketing support or the large and small business customers.

Mrs. Marjorie L. Kimbrough, instructor in the School of Arts and Sciences at Clark-Atlanta University, delivered the 11:00 a.m. message in a most challenging fashion. Vernice Gibson and Lillie Middlebrooks were chairpersons for this most successful program.

Central Travels to Wichita

Members of the Central family joined the St. Mark United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas to celebrate St. Mark's 80th anniversary. Twenty-nine members of the Chorale Ensemble accompanied by Minister Sallie Parrish, musicians Don Ogletree, Darwin Strickland, Rev. Wallace Hartsfield, Ministers Clarence Brown and Sherry Townsend and members Emily Cotton, Tommie Glass, Earnestine Hargrove, Betty Jones, Cassandra Newkirk, Abe Ogletree and Pastor Smothers. St. Mark and Rev. Tyrone Gordon were our special guests during the 1989 fall revival.

Cathedral Choir Concert - June 10

The Cathedral Choir presented its annual concert under the direction of Rev. Gerard Ancrum, accompanied by Gedney Vinings. The selections ranged from classical to gospel to anthems to spirituals. The sanctuary was packed before the first note was played. The program was in memory of two of its beloved members who passed in 1989, Mr. Arthur Ricks, Jr. and Mr. H. Eugene Craig, Sr.

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|---------|---|
| June 24 | Rev. LaVerne Pendleton, Pastor of St James U. M. Church in Darlington, S.C., was the speaker for the Annual Youth Day at 11:00 a.m. on June 24. |
| July | Central T-shirts on sale
Family Ministries take appointments for photographs for the new church directory
Teen-Parent Communications Sessions |
| August | Annual Church Picnic
MUST Month - Ministries United for Service and Training responded to the needs of impoverished individuals in the community |

September 9

Dr. Herschel H. Sheets, District Superintendent, with his wife, worshipped with us. He preached from the title, "Levels of Living."

Fall Revival - September 16-21

Central U. M. Church presented a Fall Revival featuring the following evangelists: Rev. Kenneth Samuel and choir of Victory Baptist Church; Rev. Cynthia L. Hale and choir from Ray of Hope Christian Church (this September 17 service is one fact that need be recorded as Rev. Hale was the first woman revival preacher for Central); Rev. Eddie Long and choir from New Birth Baptist Church; and September 19-21, the Rev. Tallulah F. Williams of Hartzell United Methodist Church, Chicago, Illinois, was the preacher.

The music staff, Evangelism Committee, ushers and the ministerial staff were praised by the congregation for an excellent week of "Declaring God's Praises."

September 28-29

Central's Church Retreat was held on the ITC campus. The theme was "Enlarging Our Vision." Friday evening's guest speaker was Rev. Gerald Durley, pastor of Providence Baptist Church.

On Saturday morning, the chairperson on Missions, Edith Thomas, reflected on the findings regarding current ministries at Central. The findings indicate that although we are involved in a number of outreach ministries, there is a tremendous need for us to do more in our outreach ministry and mission if we are to do what God has called us to do. Sharing with us on Pastor Smothers ended with his adaptation of "Vision 2000." He also made several

recommendations that will strengthen us as a vital congregation, two of which included ways to help Council on Ministries and Administrative Board function more effectively.

Men's Day - October 28, 1990

The theme was "Men of Central Accepting the Challenge of the Nineties Through Leadership and Participation." The chairman was William R. Jackson, with James Thomas, Jr. and Bernard Campbell as co-chairmen.

The 8:00 a.m. speaker was Central's own Ray Robinson. Mr. Robinson is Service Vice President of AT&T. He manages over 2,000 installation and maintenance personnel covering the 14 states of the Southern region. The 11:00 a.m. speaker was Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, Jr., Ph.D., Director of Programs for Black Studies and Assistant Professor of Ethics and Society in the Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

Spiritual Disciplines Seminar - November 11-13

The Worship Committee, co-chaired by Vera Knowles and Mary Carter, sponsored this first in a series of seminars. The sessions were led by Dr. Keith Bolton, Senior Pastor of the Horace Bushnell Congregation in Hartford, Connecticut. He is a marriage and family therapist and has a wealth of practical experience.

Pastors' Gallery Dedication - November 18

The Interior Design Committee worked long and hard to find a way to honor all the pastors who had served at our present location. The result of the months of work was the Pastors' Gallery, a display of portraits in the hallway of the educational building. These portraits were painted by Central's own James Adair, a distinguished artist.

The dedication services were especially moving, as the families of the former pastors participated in the unveiling. Hazel Griffith was chairperson of the Renovation Committee.

Service for Missionaries - December 14

Central was honored to host the commissioning of ten missionaries who completed training at the Mission Resource Center in Atlanta. Most of those commissioned had been worshipping with us during the period they were in Atlanta.

The commissioning of the United Methodist Missionaries was performed by members of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, Lincoln, Nebraska, officiated and delivered the message, along with Dr. Randolph Nugent, New York general secretary. The new missionaries included Jerry and Patricia Wagner (Jamaica), Maria Fosmire (Bolivia), Liza Go and Kevin Uchilda (Japan), Donald Reasoner (Nicaragua), Rebecca Bartow and Julie Todd (Japan), Patricia Hefner (Zimbabwe) and Frances Willert (South Korea).

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CHAPTER X



Central's Bridge Builders

Mrs. Lula Leigh Hill

Mrs. Hill was born on April 2, 1860, in Newnan, Georgia. She was quite active as a child in every phase of church work. This laid the foundation for the noble achievements of this great personality, not only in the religious realm, but in community life as a whole.

She entered Clark University in 1877, being one of its first students. She worked her way through school, diligently applying herself to the job of fitting herself for life.

Mrs. Hill was the mother of Dr. L.M. Hill, Ms. Marie Hill, Esther H. Smith, Mr. Andrew Hill and Ms. Lena H. Walker. In Newnan, she worked in the Methodist Episcopal Church under the pastorate of Rev. George Standing. Upon moving to Atlanta, she joined Lloyd Street N.E. Church in 1877. She served as class leader, steward unit leader, assisted in the Epworth League, organized Woman's Club, Foreign Missionary Society and served on the Committee of Court Appeals for thirty years.

During her presidency of the Foreign Missionary Society, she made outstanding achievements. Much work was done in sending supplies and money to foreign fields. She organized societies in South Atlanta, County Line, Summerville and Newnan, Georgia.

One of her most cherished honors was, after being a Central member for 66 years, she was honored as the oldest mother at age 83, along with Fannie Morton Clemons as the youngest Central mother at age 20.

Mrs. Hill was the author of a pamphlet, "The History of Lloyd Street Church." She remained active and a loyal supporter of Central until her death.

Living History Over the Years

In the history of the first 25 years of this century, my reflections of families were highlighted as roots were planted. Be it known at this period of our Church history that other families have grown and helped greatly in building Central. Time nor space will permit me an opportunity to tell the story of all the dedicated loving members, living or dead, who held Central so very dear.

This is an attempt to record as much of our past as possible. As Mrs. Lula Leigh Hill recorded in her "Historical Sketch...", "It is a long trek from the Little Red Church to Central today. Gone is the first tiny building, gone is the imposing Lloyd Street, gone is Central Avenue, and here we are at Central U. M. Church."

From the Old Central Avenue to Central M. E. Church

As part of Central's living history, the following members who came from the old church are still members of Central U. M. Church. The numbers decrease yearly, yet those alive are so very much appreciated. I have no record of the members who received 50-year membership certificates for the 117th anniversary celebration in 1983.

On June 26, 1988, 36 old-timers received citations from the church. In 1989, the honorable John Lewis gave congressional recognition to the old timers. As of this writing, thirty are still alive, of which the following are in nursing homes: Fannie Estes, Daisy Middlebrooks, Whitman Ogletree, Gertrude Russell, with Evelyn Burriss and Annie T. Harmon being homebound. As one reads about the work of old timers, it is evident that some of the present leaders are descendants of old church members.

Other Living History

The Abbott Family

Bessie and Ernest Abbott came from the old church with their four small children. They lived in the community, so it was just habit for the children to be at Central every time the door opened. They grew up in Sunday School.

The record shows that it was Sunday, December 29, 1940 when Ernest Abbott, Sr. joined Central. At this time, his wife was working hard as a Willing Worker and Communion Steward. Daughter Ray worked in the young people's chorus, Youth Progressive Club and unit leader, and as an adult, she was a member of the Senior Choir and a charter member of the McMillan Choir. Her young life ended in death in 1954. Ida Abbott Hoyle relocated after marriage. Ruby Abbott Johnson has continued to work at Central, serving as a most dedicated Sunday School teacher for 18 years. She stated that Sunday School teaching was the joy of her life. She often picked up many of her students while bringing her son Harvey each Sunday. Presently she works with Christian Social Involvement of United Methodist Women and AARP.

Harvey, Sr. has been an officer of Central and usher for over 40 years. Ernest was an usher until health failed him. The Abbott family from Central Avenue to the present has shown dedication.

We must be ever grateful to the Thornton family from the teen years of our church to the present. The same can be said of Mrs. Cosby Maddox, Edwin Wilson, husband of Sadie Wilson, Oletha Hixon, Stella Taylor, James Adair, Jackie Sykes, Jerome and Carol Taylor, Doris Buster, Mona Millikan, Robert and Carrie Williams, Marie Dotson, Phyllis Burse, Joyce Staley Carr. These members were instrumental in the development of many of Central's programs.

The Harper Family

Recorded in the minutes of Central Avenue Church, November 8, 1920 is the fact that Sister Rosa Harper was to work with Unit Captain #13. This unit was expected to help with the finance of the church. This same name appeared often when Dr. D. H. Stanton was pastor. The two surviving children of Rosa and J. B. Harper are Mattie H. Briscoe and Juanita H. McMillian. They are dedicated members that have to continued to work with all programs of Central. Mattie has served as president of the Wesleyan Service Guild, various units of United Methodist Women and Sunday School officer. She is the author of "In Retrospect," written for the 100th anniversary celebrated when Dr. A. S. Dickerson was pastor. Sister Juanita has worked long and hard with the food

bank and communion stewards. Their service is documented by the many honors bestowed upon them by the church. As a memorial to their parents, the sisters gave to the church a permanent set. This gift was received by Pastor Rodney T. Smothers.

Carrie and Robert Williams

For almost four decades of working side by side in church, the Williams' have been a most active couple. One may only try to recall some of the activities in which they have participated. They are the couple willing to help out when and wherever there is a need. They go to nursing homes, sing and play music, and give service. Carrie has been active as an officer and member in the United Methodist Women, Church School and Bible Study, collecting glasses to send afar so children may see at one time was her joy. Robert has a most impressive voice and willingly uses it to read scripture or Psalter as a layperson. He participates as a steward and usher. The Williams' are a couple volunteering their resources daily. We expect them to share their skills to better educate the next generation of Central workers. Voluntarily, they work without a spotlight on them.

James and Maureen Lacy

Mr. Lacy, a qualified lay speaker, served the church continuously over the years. Mrs. Lacy worked tirelessly in many capacities, including holding several offices in United Methodist Women, Sunday School teacher, and choir member. The words "I can't" were not in her vocabulary.

The Grissom Family

Special thanks is given to the Grissom family for its long-standing tradition of service to Central. Cora and Jordan T. Grissom brought their four children with them from Central Avenue. The children, now grandparents, have served well to honor the memory of their parents. John Grissom has served as an officer of Central for over thirty years. His office as Lay Leader was held for seventeen years. As he provided leadership with pride and honor, he made a most impressive mark on the Central family. The Lay Leader is the person elected by the Charge Conference with great responsibilities. Grissom was well-trained for the position as he attended many training workshops and was totally involved in the leadership of the church. His actions were appreciated so very much when he worked with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to fill the pulpit after the passing of Dr. Gray. He has served as layman's day speaker, president of United Methodist Men, represented Central at numerous conferences, member of the Building Committee, and works most effectively wherever he sees a need. He and his wife Helen are fine examples of Christian parents. One of his last duties before leaving office was when Pastor Smothers extended him the honor of receiving his daughter-in-law Susan into the church.

Josie G. Allen has served well with the United Methodist Women and some 30 years as a Church School teacher. Grace G. Kemp is one of the organizers of the Anna E. Hall Loyal Daughters of Central Sunday School Class. Ma Hall's request was that the young mothers bring their children to Church School then

come to her class. One of Grace's three children, Jean, the oldest Grissom grandchild, was most outstanding throughout her childhood at Central. She served as pianist for the Children's Department, Editor of the Children's Newsletter and often represented Central's youth at conferences. Jean was an early entrance student at Clark (15 years old) and became the first woman in the 95-year history of Clark to serve as president of Clark's student body. Nancy, the youngest sister of John's, along with her husband Moses Johnson, are active members of Central. They are parents and grandparents of active Centralites.

Mrs. Cora B. Grissom passed February 6, 1946. Later, Mr. J. T. Grissom married Lizzie Anderson. Her funeral, in November 1981, became a first to feature three generations on program. Such representation included:

Children	John F. Grissom
Grandchildren	Jean W. Lewis
Great Grandchildren	Mechelle Heard

It is with regrets that I could not locate a most valuable tape interview given by Mr. Jordan T. Grissom, father of the four Grissoms. I am sure much could have been added to our history as Mr. T. P. Grissom was a most dedicated officer, serving once as secretary of the official board.

Ella Mae Brayboy, daughter of Rosa Wade and husband, came over from the old church as a child and has reared her three girls in Central, two of whom are still working with their children to build a stronger Central. Ella Mae Wade Brayboy has served as chair of Circle #1, where her mother was a member and could lead her in the correct ways of leadership. This leadership has been a gift of hers as she has served as local U.M.W. president and has held regional office. Parent leading child is often seen even now, as Joyce B. Jones and sister Eleanor B. Proctor worship with their children. The two sisters worked together with other committee members to produce the first church directory in 1987-88.

Charles T. Rabb, another from the old church, married Inez S. Rabb. They are parents, grandparents, great great grandparents of hard working Centralites. Charles Rabb has served as an officer over the years. Mrs. Rabb was honored for having been a Church School teacher for over 30 years.

Charles, the only descendant of Mrs. Marion Rabb, has children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren growing up loving and working for Central.

Mrs. Alberta J. Johnson has remained faithful since childhood. She often tells of joining Central along with her sister Elizabeth and Helen Foster Mitchell. Alberta is regularly in attendance and works with the United Methodist Women.

Laurie F. Johnson

Laurie, only daughter of Emma and Robert P. Johnson, has made a contribution to the dear old church loved so dearly by her parents. Look back to Central Avenue and trace the work of R. P. Johnson from Rev. L. H. King until his passing under Rev. Allen. His name goes down in the history of Central as one of the greatest contributors of all times. Much thanks is given here to his daughter for giving historical papers and pictures to Central's history. One most

appreciated picture is that showing the celebration of the mortgage burning. Rev. E. W. McMillan was pastor.

Brenda M. Hatcher English - 1940 - 1990

Brenda worked all of her life at Central. A leader in the Faith in Action ushers, Membership Committee, U.M.W., Evangelism Committee, Council on Ministries, kitchen patrol and the Chair of Higher Education Committee. At her passing, she willed money to Central for scholarships. The scholarship fund was named for her.

Brenda was the only daughter of Mary G. Briscoe. Mary is an active usher and member of United Methodist Women, Kitchen patrol, Church School member and has served as a trustee. Her sister, Margaret G. Kirk, a long-time member, worked even from her sick room for Central until her death. Among the offices Margaret held were: Co-chair of Worship, United Methodist Women treasurer, choir treasurer and the one person that could and would chair the finance committee of Women's Day and see the project go over expected goals. She was a planner of bus trips with profit going to the church.

A most dedicated member, Lillian Rucker Collins was the first woman Chair of an official board in the city. She served for over 30 years as a Sunday School teacher and worked with United Methodist Women, Wesley Service Guild, and other organizations.

Mrs. Edna Bryant (Sister Sunshine) worked hard and long with Women's Society for Christian Service, communion stewards, and unit leaders. Presently, her daughter, Erma B. Bryant Latham is a communion steward. Daughter-in-law Elizabeth Bryant raised her family here at Central. She worked hard as chairperson of Commission on Missions.

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Bigham, officers who gave 100% services to all activities.

Rosa and J. A. Mitchell, from the old church, are officers, leaders, workers. The Rosa Mitchell Conference room is named in her honor.

Mary and John Carter and Family

Mary served as president of Women's Progressive Cultural Club and has worked with the acolytes for over 20 years. Her husband has been an officer for years. Brother Robert Carter has served as Sunday School teacher for years at Central and also at the Rising Star Homeless Shelter.

Rachell and C. W. Clemmons are the parents of our only Gold Star World War II casualty. Charles was killed in action while Rev. McMillan was pastor.

Mrs. Minnie Askin joined Central Avenue in June, 1913, under L. H. King. She continued her devotion to Central until her passing. Her only living daughter is Buna A. Guffie who is one of the organizing members of the Senior Usher Board organized by Rev. E. W. McMillan. Mrs. Askin's granddaughter, Mignon L. McDonald, is carrying on the tradition started by her grandmother. One of the many contributions to Central is that of being a part of making and decorating the first Chrismon tree. This was directed by Mrs. Evelyn Lowery. A picture of

the Chrismon tree appeared in the local newspaper. This tradition of the tree has continued even after Mrs. Lowery left with her husband. Mignon kept the tree aglow.

Mrs. Geneva Harris

Mrs. Geneva Harris, teacher of the Women's Bible Class for over 12 years, has worked with success as her goal. She is a very well trained leader in Methodism, being the widow of the late Bishop Marquis LaFayette Harris. She was privileged to travel all over the Atlantic Coastal Area and observe other church programs. Presently, she is active with Church Women United, Christian Social Involvement of the U.M.W. of Central, and the financial secretary for the church. Due to her love for Christian Social Involvement and the respect given her by its members after Asbury Harris Epworth Towers was renamed in honor of her late husband, the unit presented the home a gift as part of the program. The unveiling of a portrait of Bishop Harris took place May 28, 1988. Coordinators of C.S.I. at the time were Mignon L. McDonald and Mary E. Carter. Mrs. Harris has traveled extensively in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

Hazel and Horace Griffith

Hazel grew up in Central, so when she married, it was just expected that her husband Horace would become a Central member. He was often playing down in the gym and around Central and soon he did join (April, 1946). Thus, a long and most impressive tradition of dedication to the church began. Horace has over the years worked with the church school as a dynamic student, responsible teacher, and superintendent of various departments of the church school. As early as June 25, 1956, in a meeting of the Commission on Education, he recommended that all activities for July and August be discussed so that calendar could be cleared for daily Vacation Bible School, such as a picnic. He worked closely with Mrs. P. J. Coggins to foster helpful activities for a growing Church School. As a steward, he worked hard for the success of the 94th anniversary under Rev. H. H. Backstrom. He launched the cluster system of leadership for member interaction in 1990.

Horace has served as Chairman of the Administrative Board for many years, being honored for his service by the church in 1989. He was the representative of the church at the funeral of Rev. P. H. Gray and had the distinct pleasure of welcoming Pastor Smothers to the Central family.

Hazel Griffith has worked as his indispensable companion. She served as a trustee, United Methodist Women and Church School member, and most recently chaired the Renovation Committee that presented the Pastors' Gallery Dedication on November 18, 1990.

Mary Victoria T. Amos

The Talmadge family moved to Mitchell Street with Alexander and Charles Nobles, who were Central members. Charles Nobles name appears in the teen years of Central Avenue history. They invited the Talmadge family to church with them and thus a line of workers started. Victoria followed sister Eunice to

Central. As a child, she sang in Children's and youth choirs directed by Miss Edna Middlebrooks, the Methodist Youth Fellowship, served as a Youth delegate to conferences, and later joined the McMillan choir and sang as soloist until it merged to become the Cathedral Choir. She was a Sunday School teacher for 20 years, usher board member, secretary of the Administrative Board and member of many committees. She is married to Joe Amos, who is retired from the Atlanta Police Force and officer of Central. They are parents and grandparents of Central workers.

Edith D. Thomas

Edith D. Thomas, who during her career served as assistant professor, Christian Education, and Registrar/Director of Admissions at the Interdenominational Theological Center, has been an active member of Central for years. Transferring membership to Central along with other family members she has given most distinguished leadership. Her commitment to Central is essential to the writing of this history. Dr. Thomas had talked with Pastor Smothers about the necessity of the Church Historian recording some history. She asked Co-Chair Mary V. Amos to take the course Church History I at I.T.C. Mary had just agreed to keep her grandchild and could not accept. When she asked me, before giving an answer, I talked with my husband, James, because I knew I would need his support. I also talked with my niece, Carolyn West, as she is the only person I knew with whom I could work day and night. I did accept the challenge and worked for ten months on this most interesting story of Central.

Dr. Thomas has served as president of United Methodist Women, the Women's Progressive Cultural Club under Dr. Dickerson, Sunday School member while bringing her twin daughters to Sunday School, church anniversary celebration committees. She made a most unique time line of members, making a slide presentation while working with members Robert and Ollie Manley on the celebration in 1988. She served most proficiently as Chair of Evangelism, directing several services, and also served as Co-Chair of Christian Education in the mid-1990s. She has been a Layman's Day speaker, Women's Day Steering Committee member, Church School teacher, and member of the Board of Trustees. She has been available for all and any work needed to help implement the goals and objectives of Central.

Marvin Favors

Marvin Favors' involvement began, when as a young man, his small son asked him why he went to another church and not with the family? He then started to accompany his wife regularly to Central. Being in the habit of supporting church activities, he got involved here. Favors was just so very concerned about the condition of Central that most of the congregation thought he was a member.

Rev. L. Scott Allen saw in Favors great potential as a leader. This observation has proven to be a fact. As time passed, Favors officially joined under the pastorate of Rev. H. H. Backstrom and became a member of the H. H. Backstrom Club. In 1960, Favors was a trustee and chairman of the H. H.

Backstrom Club, serving 20 years as a trustee and chairman of the Finance Committee.

He has given long and distinguished leadership. Recognized as one of the largest contributor to the church, he gave the entire cost of the air conditioning system of the church under the pastorate of Dr. Lowery. More recently, under Pastor Smothers, Favors and wife Lillie, gave the cost of a paint job for Central. He has loved, nurtured and cared for the building as if it was his baby, overseeing work in Phase I, stopping a water leak, nailing a plank or anything necessary, using his business expertise.

His love for Dr. Lowery was much like that of a brother. When Dr. Lowery was moved, the question was would he stay or would he leave? With a heavy heart, he told his decision -- he loved Central and could not leave his church.

His wife and son are active. Mrs. Lillie Favors has worked with U. M. W. Women's Progressive Club, Sunday School and other organizations when needed. His son is a part of the kitchen unit who prepare breakfast every Sunday.

Favors, a retired businessman, went to work in one of Atlanta's largest department stores as a tailor, and by request of the Board Chairman, became a salesman, then on to supervisor of men's clothing department. He received the most distinguished service award for seven consecutive years. At the time he served as manager of a shoe store, he was elected president of the Broad Street Merchants.

Marvin Favors chaired the finance committee of Men's Day when the honorable Benjamin Hooks, National President of the NAACP was the speaker. He called all men of the church to a dinner meeting at his expense and outlined plans to beat the women for the first time.

Also, he secured a television to be placed in the lower level when there was an overflow of people in the sanctuary. Marvin Favors is living history.

Arthur C. Robinson

A. C. Robinson came to Atlanta to attend college. He lived with Central member Mrs. Rosa Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell was from old Central Avenue and had by tradition worked very untiringly for Central. She encouraged A.C. to attend church and he later joined. Soon, he was assuming leadership roles with much dedication. His skills were numerous. One which endeared him to the hearts of Central was the care he took with his mother (Alba), Mrs. Mitchell, Brother Long and some others that needed a son. Mr. J. A. Long was treasurer and soon A. C. was training under him for the position. He has served as Summer Camp Director, member of Methodist Men, member of Finance Committee and Church treasurer for years. He is a charter member of A.A.R.P., serving as president of the Central Westside Atlanta chapter.

A. C. received the Women's Day award for dedication from Brenda H. English who affectionately told of his ability to help anyone in need. He is married to Dr. Barbara L. Robinson, who is a hard worker and helpmate for A.C., and he has a daughter and two grandchildren.

Oletha Hixon

Mrs. Oletha Hixon, who lived to be nearly 100 years old, labored for Central over the years. She served as a leader in most areas of women's activities. Her influence was used to bring countless young people into the church. Her pleasant ways caused young people to follow her and work in the church. (She often spoke of Sherole Thrash and the Green family as some of those she encouraged.) Her name and work has been recorded throughout this history.

Joseph R. Hudson

Joe Hudson, C.A.M., is President, Hudson Strategic Group, and former President off the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council. He is a Certified Administrative Manager with over 20 years involvement in assisting with the development of minority owned businesses and is considered by many as an expert on the subject. Mr. Hudson works hard for Central as an officer, including Chair of the Administrative Board and a member of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. One of his most little known contributions to dear old Central was recovering the parking lot, bringing it up to Class A standards.

Inetz C. Stanley

Inetz C. Stanley, a nurse by profession, a caring person by choice, has worked for Central over the years. She has served twice as president of the United Methodist Women. One history-making event involving Inetz is her act of caring for a member, Mrs. Josephine Smith. When Mrs. Stanley found Mrs. Smith living in very undesirable conditions, she did not ask why. Mrs. Stanley took it upon herself to clean, feed, heat and protect Mrs. Smith until she passed. Thus, her last days were tendered with love from a church member of her beloved Central. Today Mrs. Stanley leads Central's Food Pantry Ministry.

Marie Prothro Dotson

Marie P. Dotson grew up in Central. Her father brought Marie and the two brothers Walter and Wilford to Sunday School. She is one of the most dedicated women in the United Methodist Women. She is the lady in the kitchen along with Josie G. Allen, Helen Hill and others preparing the meal for families after a funeral. It is her love expressed by doing that makes this task a more pleasant one. Much could be said about her role as a foster mother. Over the years she has loved, trained and cared for so very many foster children. She is the natural mother of three. Janice, her youngest child works untiringly in the church.

The Kitchen Men

The following men at one time or another prepared breakfast every Sunday morning for many under the leadership of Brother Abe Ogletree, all in memory of Brother Arthur Ricks (professional cook, who worked as long as health permitted): Damien Beal, Wilfred Beal, Nick Bond, Wayman Cameron, Calvin Favors, Sr., Calvin Favors II, Chris Swain, Lloyd Swain, Paul Turner, Wendell Wolfe and other helpful men.

Local, Student and Associate Ministers

There are standards and procedures for an ordained minister to follow in the United Methodist Church. Early in the 1900's men moved by the Holy Spirit to preach would be referred to as local preachers. They would not sit in the pulpit but would place chairs on the floor around the pulpit or communion rail. Their duties were mainly warm up activities. They conducted prayer, praise and testimonial service before the Minister entered the pulpit. Often they would turn chairs to face the pulpit or sit with officers in the amen corner. Later students from Gammon Theological Seminary would either be assigned or voluntarily attend churches and provide service. Serving at Central Avenue was Brother Gay, uncle of Cassie A. Releford. Others names are not recorded here due to lack of records, yet we are thankful for their service. Here at Central, some such service has been provided for us by well-qualified retired men and some students.

Let us not forget the dedication of the following: Rev. T. P. Grissom, Sr., John T. Amey, W. H. McIver, Momoh Kpaan, Tony Minor, Wanda Parker, George Walker, Fred Brown, Alvin Anderson, Joseph Ewoodzie, Sherry Townsend, Sherroll James, and Derrick Rhodes.

Our first full-time Associate Pastor was Rev. Matt A. Murphy in 1989. The ministerial staff brings to us a unique combination of skills which are most helpful to the building of a great church.

Building Program Proposal

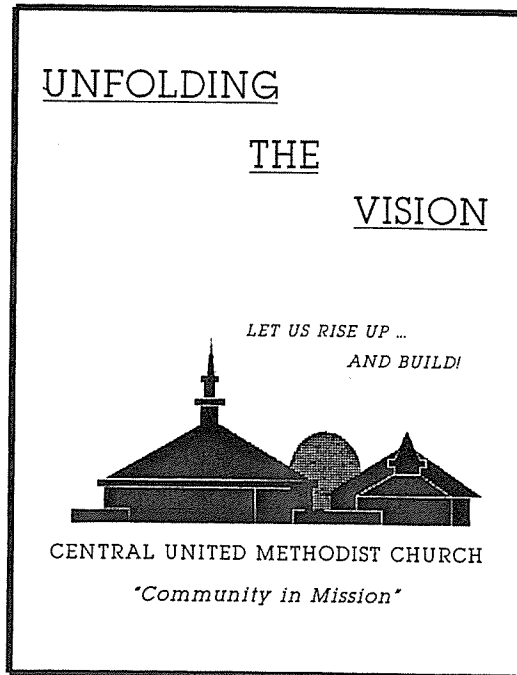
As Central moved into 1991-92 led by the most dynamic Rodney T. Smothers, it had been determined that church growth had exceeded all expectations. Plans were well outlined for a multimillion-dollar building program. This project was in addition to the numerous traditions and most innovative programs now making an impact in the Atlanta community.

On April 17, 1991, Dr. Herschel Sheets, District Superintendent of the Marietta District of which Central is a member, convened a meeting of the District Board of Church Location and Building at Central. Bernard Walker, Step North, Beverly Hargrove, and Joseph Hudson presented the proposal to five members of the District Committee. They commended the report and said that it could very well become the standard to which all other church would have to aspire. The presentation consisted of a five-part preliminary report:

- Section One addressed ministry plans
- Section Two contained architectural plans: Phased Approach to Expansion of Facilities
- Section Three - cost estimates, permits, fees, etc.

Throughout the presentation, members of the District Committee asked probing questions about the contents of the plan and the impact the Georgia Dome (which at that time had not yet been built), along with the changing community would have. Pastor Smothers assured them that we were not duplicating ministry offerings, but working in partnership with sister churches in order to enhance our contributions to the community.

The District Board unanimously approved the proposal and gave permission to engage an architect to develop final plans and cost estimates. After such plans are finalized, we went before the board again in a church conference to gain approval of the final plans and financing recommendations. The Central Ministry Center stands as the legacy of this effort.



Central United Methodist Church

501-7 MITCHELL STREET, SOUTHWEST
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314 (404) 524-4263
Reverend Rodney T. Smothers, Pastor

June 7, 1992

Dear Central Members,

Today we begin the formal KICK-OFF of our Capital Campaign. For two years we have been praying, planning, and preparing to implement God's vision for the expansion of our facilities. Countless persons have given unselfishly of their time and talent and you now have in your hands the proposed building plans.

These plans represent our collective efforts to provide for ministry, witness, and mission for many years to come. Our theme, "Rise Up and Build--Community In Mission" outlines our thrust for this building opportunity. These new facilities will represent more than just bricks and mortar, they represent our commitment to Christian education, child care, senior care, youth ministries, family and community empowerment.

Today you can make the vision become a reality with your gifts and pledges to the capital campaign. Let us rise up and build with the assurance that with God all things are possible.

Building For The Kingdom,

**BUILDING PROGRAM
CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** JUNE 7, 1992

Dear Centralite:

A few years ago we began our overall commitment to renovating and expanding Central Church. To that goal we have renovated the sanctuary and are currently renovating the church school facilities.

We have overcome many obstacles and made many sacrifices to prepare Central for its many ministries of today. But, what about tomorrow?

After much research and evaluation the long range planning and building committees recommended and the church membership subsequently approved moving forward with additional facilities to meet tomorrow's needs for ministry. To achieve this objective we embark on "Unfolding the Vision--Community in Mission, so let us Rise up and Build".

This unique fundraising campaign kicks off our Phase II construction of a new Educational Building. Our campaign sets the tone to let us "Rise up...and Build." Everyone can assist in the effort. Let us "Rise up and Build". Build for our planned and anticipated ministerial needs, build for our children and build because it is needed.

Help Central "Unfold the Vision--Community in Mission" and lend your prayers, pledges, support and most of all, Faith!

The will of the Lord will do the rest. Praise be to God!

Sincerely,

Beverly M. Hargrove
Building Committee Co-Chair

Joseph R. Hudson
Building Committee Co-Chair

Women's Day - Men's Day, 1991

The theme for Women's Day '91 was purposefully taken from our 125th Anniversary. The colors, yellow representing power and white for purity, were used most effectively.

The 8:00 a.m. speaker was Mrs. Lorraine Jacques White. She was a very dynamic speaker. Her husband is the Rev. R. L. White, Jr., pastor of Mount Ephraim Baptist Church, Atlanta.

Mrs. Joyce Wallace Favors, a Christian Education consultant in Illinois and the Midwest was the 11:00 a.m. speaker. The two women were well received by the full audience.

The men selected the theme, "Men Working to Serve Christ." The Steering Committee chairman was Gregory Jones and Moses Johnson served as Co-Chairman.

Women's Day - 1992

The Women's Day theme for 1992 was "Unfolding the Vision". The 8:00 a.m. speaker was Mrs. Joyce B. Jones, life-long member of Central (Brayboy-Wade family). Dr. Cassandra Newkirk, local psychiatrist and dedicated member of Central delivered the 11:00 address. The services were well planned and provided inspiration to the capacity audience.

Some Of Central's Innovative Programs

- AARP (American Association of Retired Persons)
- Aids Task Force
- Cancer Support Group
- Homeless Task Force
- Shelter Feeding
- All-night prayer and praise service (10:00 p.m. - 6:00 a.m.)
- Old Fashioned Picnic (held on church grounds in observance of the church's 125th anniversary)
- Central Connection Players, Hazel Scott, Director
- Hope House, Central's transitional housing program to assist selected families who have experienced the devastation of homelessness to regain independent living.
- Central's Christmas Post Office - Communications Committee sorts and distributes mail to members, and the sick and shut-in through the Christmas Mail Box.
- Central supported Gammon Theological Seminary 108th Anniversary with two tables at the Founder's Day Banquet.
- Central's Business and Services Directory by Bonita Swain, Career Development, Planning and Counseling.
- Central's Prayer Band - Evangelism team worked with Sadie Mays Nursing Home weekly to help give spiritual leadership to the residents. Our member, Gertrude Russell was selected, "Miss Sadie G.

Mays 1992." Gertrude was a member of the McMillian Choir and served as a unit leader during her active years.

Associates And Students

Pastor Rodney T. Smothers is often described as a "visionary leader" who is the only one with the necessary skills to lead the great Central Church into the 21st Century. Giving honor to all former pastors, this young man has seen the necessity to build for tomorrow today. He has expanded the work of the church greatly, reactivating inactive members, accepting new and transferred members weekly. Space has to be carefully scheduled for weekday activities.

Our first full-time Associate Pastor was Reverend Matt A. Murphy. Rev. Murphy assisted the Senior Pastor in all duties. Following Rev. Murphy came Rev. Danny K. Alexander, who worked with Central's sick and shut-in members in a personal way. Rev. Alexander remained at Central until he was appointed pastor of Bethlehem U. M. Church in the Adamsville community of Atlanta. Minister Clarence Brown joined the staff shortly after Pastor Smothers arrived. Having worked together previously, there was instant evidence of expanded activities. Minister Brown served as staff liaison to the Council on Ministries. He was one of the most learned students of the Bible in the Methodist Church. He remained with us until June, 1992, at which time his wife was given an executive appointment in Norfolk, Virginia and the family relocated.

The appointment of Rev. Barbara Woods to us as Associate Minister became a reality in June, 1992. Rev. Woods had worked as a student minister at Central under Rev. Lowery while she was enrolled at Gammon. Rev. Woods received her Divinity degree at Gammon Theological Seminary, her Master of Divinity degree from Tennessee State University and has done extended study at New York University.

Some outstanding assistants who have served Central very effectively and with a high degree of dedication include Rev. J. T Amey, Rev. W. H. McIver, Rosa Clements, Thomas Mills, Bruce Evans, Sherry Townsend, Georgia Wilson, Ron Johnson, Joseph Ewoodzie (West Africa), Dorothy Winfrey, John Bowie, Matthew Jaiah, Marian Grier, and Theria Jones, US-2 from the Atlanta Urban Ministries. Theria was a member of the first class commissioned at Central, and now serves as the Director of the Central Ministries Early Learning Center.

Worthy of admiration for an excellent job as office manager during her time at Central is Ms. Dinah Foote. Her professionalism and knowledge of secretarial and office practices has been most helpful to Central. In addition to Ms. Foote, it should be noted that Ms. Mona M. Millikan has served with a great degree of effectiveness as recording secretary to the Council on Ministries. Her minutes should serve as a useful tool for the updating of our history. She is the one non-black member that has remained active over a period of nearly thirty years.

Prayer and Study

From the September 1991 edition of the SOURCE, an article written by Pastor Smothers titled, "We're on Target," listed the following weeknight prayer and study opportunities available at Central:

- Monday Night Study, 6-7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday Night Fellowship Class, 7-8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday Genesis Class, 6-7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting, 7:15 p.m. until
- Thursday Prime Time, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- Thursday DISCIPLE Study, 7-9:30 p.m.

Other classes coming soon:

- For Men Only
- For Singles Only
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Bible Study at Noon

Central United Methodist Church - 125 Years Of Christian Service

October was full of events in celebration of Central's 125th Anniversary celebration. Some of those events were:

- October 6: 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. services commemorated Central's global mission heritage and observance of World Communion Sunday.

- October 6, 6:00 p.m.: Memorial Service of Remembrance. A scroll of remembrance was available where members signed the names of loved ones.

- October 13: Central's relationship to Martin Street Church of God was highlighted at the 6:00 p.m. service. Martin Street Church of God had its start in Old Lloyd Street Methodist Episcopal Church. After it organized and grew, it pitched a tent on Martin Street. Martin Street Church is now the oldest church in the Summerhill community. Its pastor and members worshipped with Central in a most rewarding spiritual service.

- October 20: Central's connection to Clark College was recognized at this Laity Sunday service. The speaker was Dr. Thomas Cole, president of Clark Atlanta University.

- October 27-30: Rev. Eugene Blair of the United Methodist "Upper Room." blessed us with teaching and preaching at the 8:00, 11:00 and 6:00 service on Sunday and services at 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Wednesday.

Programs for Children and Youth

Youth ministry efforts were led capably by Ray and Arlene Robinson. Two of the activities in which they participated in 1992 are "The River of Life" Spiritual Life Retreat in April in Dahlonega, and the Youth Annual Conference July 15-18, Emory at Oxford Georgia. Youth Sunday introduced a theme that was just

so very close to the heart of Central -- "Youth Surviving the '90's - Developing a Foundation with Christ."

One of the unique programs for children was the Great Pumpkin Fall Carnival. This Church School party for the family held on Halloween was quiet, unique and enjoyed by adults and children.

Appreciation Banquet for Pastor Rodney T. Smothers

Many members were extremely disappointed when the appreciation plans scheduled during the 125th anniversary week did not take place. Pastor Smothers was very highly respected by the members. His leadership was acknowledged by the fact that all activities have been successful. The committee soon announced the date for the Pastor's appreciation as December 14, 1991 at the Interdenominational Theological Center cafeteria. The gala affair was a most beautiful seated banquet. The program was well-presented and enjoyed by Pastor Smothers family members from Washington, D.C., church and community supporters.

The Music Department

From a piano player to paying .25 for an organ lesion for Sarah K. Lowery, Bessie Tooms, and Dora Darden to learn to play the organ, we have come a long way. Our music department has grown and included such names as Mr. Brown, Edna Middlebrooks, Mamie Sue Webb Edwards, Scott G. Edwards, Tom Hager, Dr. Barker, Ann McIver, Amy McMillan, LuDora Darden Preciph, Doris Ward, Jackie Trawick, Robin Brown, Gerard Ancrum, Gedney Vining, Clifford Terry. Sallie B. Parrish, a long-time Minister of Music, proved to be quite an asset to the church working with other musicians, such as Rev. Wallace Hartsfield, Darwin Strickland and Jordan Dyan, all deeply devoted to the development of a strong music department. Other talented and devoted musicians include Vernon Kimbro, our current Minister of Music, William "Billy" Jones, and Susan Gibson. The Music Ministry now has five dynamic choirs to support the worship service.

Central has long been known for choirs with voices you love to hear. Under Pastor Smothers, the Bell Choir for children was reorganized, and an adult bell choir organized under the direction of Mrs. Bernice Hall. Mrs. Hall is a most talented musician with a unique ability to train children and adults. The Inspirational Cherub Choir, composed of children from pre-school through age 12, provided music before going to Children's Church, which is held in the fellowship hall during the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

Rev. Sallie B. Parrish, Minister of Music, proved to be quite an asset to the church working with other musicians, such as Rev. Wallace Hartsfield, Darwin Strickland, Jordan Dyan, all deeply devoted to the development of a strong music department. The department presently has five great choirs, one for each Sunday in the month with combined voices on the fifth Sunday.

The Chorale Ensemble presented MacClendon Brown in concert. Mac was a multi-talented member of the Chorale Ensemble. He toured the country as a solo artist and opened for the Original Chi-Lites, Cissy Houston, Della Reese and others. His death silenced a beautiful voice that cannot duplicated. Richard

Morton, another outstanding, talented member, was presented in concert with proceeds going to the building fund.

Central has a history of providing inspiring music for all services. Often the Clark College Choir would provide music. However, no group has equaled the popularity of the choirs of Central. They have been congratulated on their performance and success with music over the years.

Just at what may be called the crossroads in church music, Central provided a well-rounded music department. The repertoire of the choirs varied from classics, traditional hymns, spirituals, to the new music of gospel. It was at this pivotal point around which the African-American creative genius in the field of music took what the writer calls unequaled popularity in Central.

The Cathedral Choir has rendered beautiful music over the years, both in concert and in worship. Some of the directors of this choir have included Tom Hager, Clifford Terry, Gerard Ancrum and Vicki Jackson. Organist Gedney Vining is the thread weaving it all together.

Gedney Vining

Gedney Vining came to Central to substitute for the organist on an emergency basis on Easter Sunday, 1975. It was by coincidence that Central moved into the present edifice on Easter Sunday, 1929. Gedney (affectionately called) celebrated our historical forty-sixth year in the church. This fact was not historical then but as we move forward into our growth and development, this fact must be noted as significant. The appearance of Gedney Vining at Central called for much conversation. Not only was he a young white man, but he appeared to be an instant success. Was he schooled for such a time? Was he on a mission to gather information about our leader or church? Was he going to write a book about the Black church? Such questions surfaced from time to time. Yet the dedication to his work was such that he was loved and Central wanted him on a permanent basis.

Gedney was born in Binghamton, New York. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Education from Columbia Bible College, Columbia, South Carolina, studied three years of music at Moody Bible Institute, received the Bachelor of Sacred Music, organ major, voice minor, from Houghton College, Houghton, New York. All these accomplishments did not surpass his dedication to his work at Central. Gedney said he enjoyed the pipe organ, building stained glass windows and house restoration. Members said he made the organ talk. From his words, "God has been so good to me and I feel my relationship with Central has been His will for me. I know the ministry and fellowship with God's Children at this church wa God's provision for me."

Gedney Vining is living history in the Central story. He has retired from Georgia Tech and has been with Central from 1975 to the present. He is praised highly for his talent, character, tireless efforts to the success of the music at Central.

C. David Moody, Jr.

C. David Moody, Jr., president and owner of C. D. Moody Construction Company, Inc. has emerged as one of Atlanta's most successful businessmen regardless of color. He is one of our most dedicated church officers, giving of his finances, talent, and skills to help the growth of our church. Central as a church is fortunate to have such a member. Moody is one success story that gives God the praise.

Moody's accomplishments are many and include being named the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Person of the Year for 1991. He also served in a consultant capacity for the City of Atlanta as manager of minority tenants of Underground Atlanta.

Moody created the Moody Construction Company Educational Foundation, which provides scholarships to graduates of his alma mater, Huron High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan and here in metro Atlanta. They were an asset to our church and an honor to God.

Helen Foster Mitchell Learning Center Dedicated Church School Wing

When the need became evident that the Church School was in great need of repair, Annette K. Bond and David Carr acted. The act was a play presented by the little children from Church School. Central gave generously and the work was completed and paid for in cash within six weeks.

The brightly painted newly decorated wing was dedicated on July 26, 1992 at the 11:00 a.m. service. Pastor Rodney Smothers asked John F. Grissom, Lay Leader Emeritus, to escort Mrs. Mitchell to the pulpit. (Mrs. Mitchell has served as a church school teacher for 60 years.) The two were joined by Associate Lay Leader Jeannette B. Wilson. Pastor Smothers read a proclamation from Michael L. Lomax, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, Georgia. The Board proclaimed July 26, 1992 as Helen Foster Mitchell Day. Other commissioners signing the proclamation were M. L. King, III and Michael Hightower.

On August 2, Helen presented the Church a photo book with approximately 100 photos of her former church school students. This book will be placed in the library of the new church.

The Taylor Influence

Innovative programs must be given time to prove worthy of one day being described as traditional. Some will become well established, others will be replaced. January ushered in thanks from Drs. Carol and Jerome Taylor for the support given the Health and Welfare Committee. This committee sponsored the third annual Christmas campaign to aid families at the Central Methodist Garden Apartments and Central Church. Gifts were donated and delivered to forty-three children in December.

Central Methodist Gardens Educational Program, Inc., through the efforts of Dr. Jerome Taylor and some concerned parents saw a dream come true as the first study hall tutorial session was held on November 26, 1990. The session consisted of instruction in math, English, science, and social science. Members have resolved to be more active in 1991 with the youth. During King week, 1992, Dr. Jerome Taylor received the Citizenship Development Award for service given at Central. Scores of Central members led by Minister Clarence Brown stood to honor Dr. Taylor.

The Service of Commissioning

For the second time, Central was the site for the Service of Commissioning. On Sunday, August 2, 1992, twenty-six young people were commissioned as US-2's to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world, in the name of the Creator, and of the Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. Pastor Smothers delivered a soul stirring sermon entitled, "A Calling to Fulfill." He prescribed the Bible, rich in relevance and meaning, as a need for the new workers to use daily for strength to do the work for which they had prepared. It was a most impressive service.

Family Night Series Renewed

The first in a series of Central's renewed family night event series was held. Four family night events are planned under the newly-formed committee for Family Ministries. This ministry, centered around the goal of creating expanded opportunities for events and programs, will allow church families to become more effective witnesses for Christ. (The SOURCE, March 1990)

Vincente and Mary Scott led the Church family in a most enjoyable picnic in 1992 at Camp Sid Truitt in College Park. In 1991, the picnic featured the old-fashioned picnic on the Church ground.

Room for All

The work of Central is so very inclusive, one may ask how is so much accomplished? It is a seven-day-a-week job. With the aspiration of so many people, much is done. Long-range planning has been done by Joseph R. Hudson, Sherole Alexander, Bonnie Cameron, Beverly Hargrove and Dr. Edith D. Thomas.

A new and successful group has emerged, led by Hazel P. Scott. The Central Connection Players presented two most outstanding performances. The March 28, 1992, "Don't You Want to be Free," by Langston Hughes, was really worthy of an award for excellence.

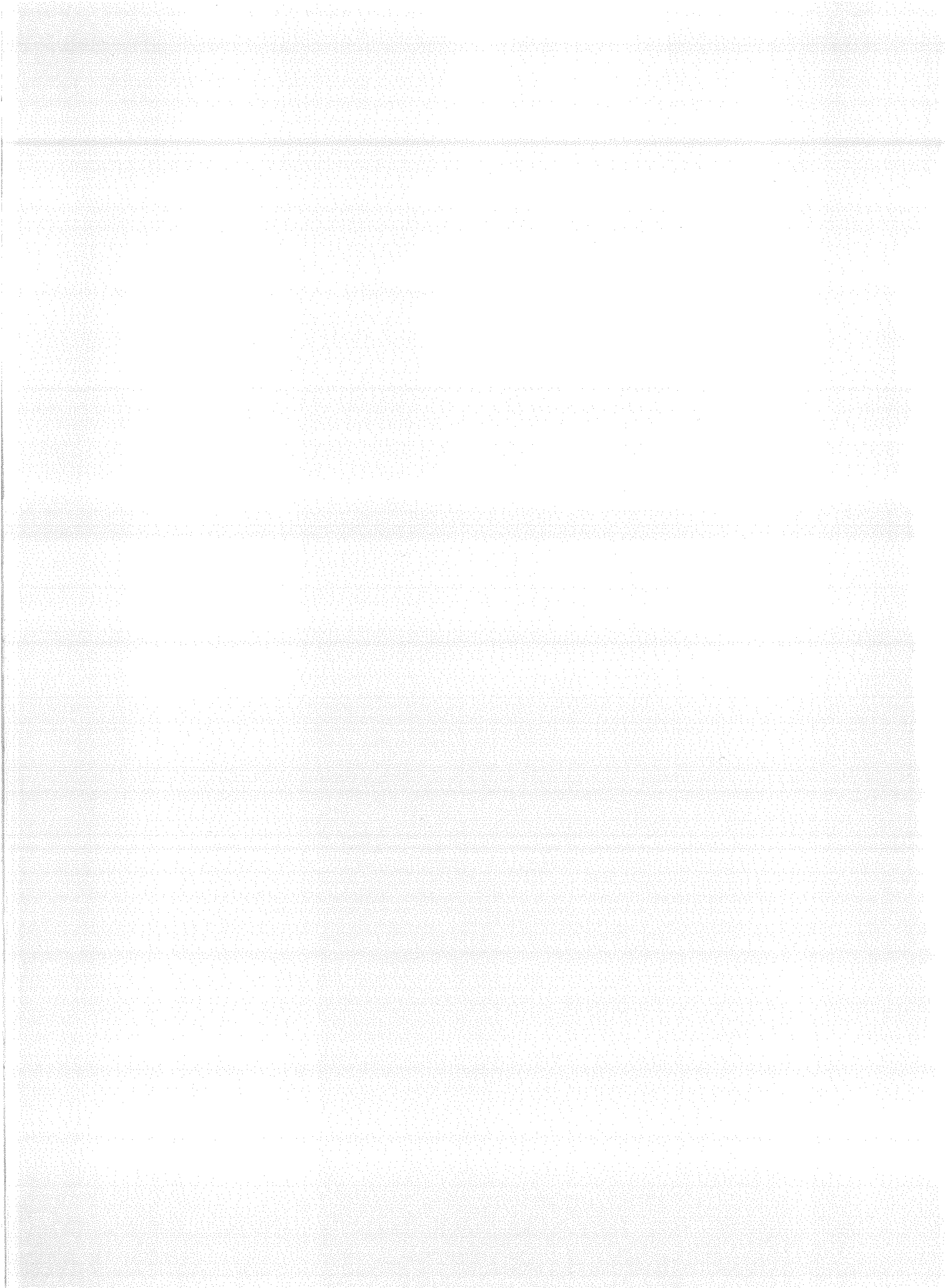
Vacation Bible School, 1992 - "Marketplace 29 A.D."

One of the most innovative programs of the century was the 1992 Vacation Bible School. After years of the traditional Bible School summer programs held in the daytime, we moved to evenings for the family. Central revamped its program

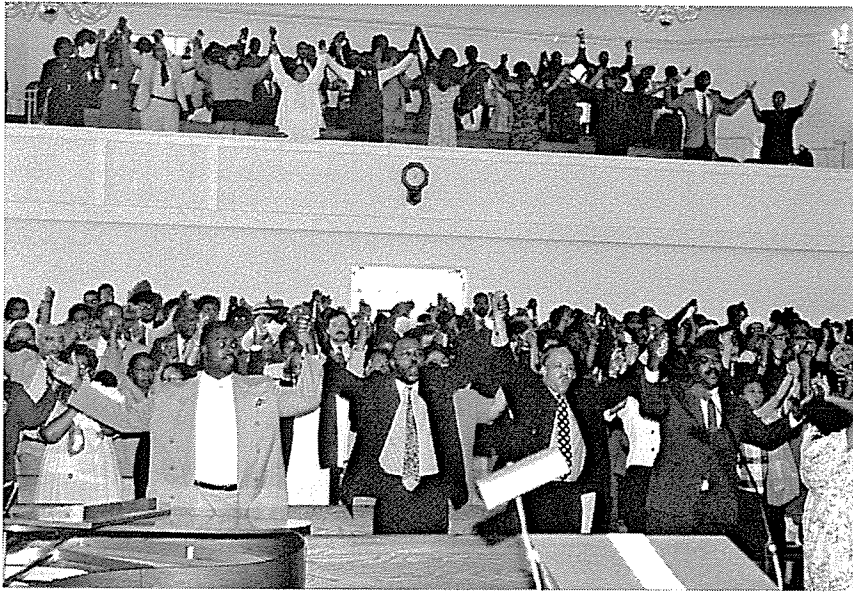
to include supper followed by activities. This seemed very successful. However, 1992 was a more comprehensive program and was one of crowning achievement.

The theme, "Marketplace 29 A.D." showed on sight the look, smell and experiences of old world. The tents for out of door eating on the grass under the stars was part of the genius and success of the program that gave children and adults a feeling of being a part of that time period. Inside, the Fellowship Hall was transformed into tent cities with booths for art/pottery, story-telling, spices, basket weaving, sandal-making, kites and candy-making. All of this to show the modern-day child how it was in the old days. The dress, music, dance and games were symbols of 29 A.D.

The young people who prepared and carried out the school were very pleased with the results. Some dedicated leaders were Justine and Marvin Boyd, Wilhemenia and Curtis Bailey, Penelope Glass, Barbara Hubbard, Rosalyn Joseph, Lois and Terrence Fleshman, Barbaralaine and Step North, David Searcy, Felicia Phillips, Lolita Welch, Samuel Winley, Robert Ward, Ernestine Hargrove, Horace Griffith, Marcia and Malcolm Walker and Sherole Alexander. All of these people worked with Annette Bond, church school superintendent, for a very successful program.



CHAPTER XI



Toward 2000

Rev. JOSEPH L. CRAWFORD, Sr. 1998-2001

The torch, a symbol of love for Central Church, with the pastors being the torchbearer, has been passed from 1866 to the present. Each pastor, like an Olympic runner, has done his job, run his race and step by step, helped build a great Central United Methodist Church.

The congregation had been prepared for change in 1998 and accepted the challenge with pride. History will keep our dreams alive, insuring a vibrant future for Central. You need to know where you came from to appreciate where you are, and work toward where you expect to go as you step into the next millennium.

A look back in time will show that our first Church was Clark Chapel, located on Fraser Street in southeast Atlanta, followed by Lloyd Street (Central Avenue), and on to the present location. Lest we forget Rev. Crawford is expected to lead us into the Church's third century of existence. What a great God. He has led us thus far. Let's give honor to the torchbearers living and dead.

Into the Next Millennium

When Rev. Joseph L. Crawford took the torch on June 28, 1998, the message of love for Christ was the same only the messenger changed. He came to impact the community by inviting children, youth and adults to Jesus Christ. He came to lead a congregation into a new millennium. Records have proven him to be deservedly the one capable of being successful. The Rev. Cynthia V. Vaughn remained as associate pastor with her wealth of knowledge about the church program. She helped to make the path as smooth as it had been over the years. In the bulletin, the welcome note to Rev. Crawford read:

Rev. Crawford, we open our arms and our hearts to welcome you and your family to Central. We pray that God's blessings and divine wisdom will guide each of us as we seek to do God's will.

He delivered an inspiring sermon titled, "A Coming Together," to a full congregation at the 7:45 am and 10:45 am service. He deservedly won his popularity as a great gospel preacher. Central would continue to grow.

The former Pastor Smothers left the wheel of progress in place as he prepared the members to be acceptable to change. One quote often stated is "be not the first to lay the old aside or the last to take up the new." (We have passed many old ways... Pastors moved from travel by foot to horse and buggy to automobile to bus to train to air. Communication evolved from word of mouth to handwriting, to typewriting, to computer entry to e-mail.)

The Staff Parish Relations Committee, chaired by Mrs. Bonita H. Swain, planned two receptions. June 21 was an appreciation for Pastor Smothers and June 28 was a most elegant welcome to Rev. Crawford and his family -- Mrs. Luncino, Joseph Jr., Brian and Salena. Accolades were extended to Laurie Johnson (daughter of R. P. Johnson from old Central), Mary Carter, Mary Briscoe, Cedric Brooks, Jackie Trawick, and others for unselfishly sharing their talents with the church family for a successful celebration.

The July-August calendar was full. I'll note only a few of the activities: Vacation Bible School, Bible classes (night and day), Spreading the Gospel (a new ministry going into John Hope Homes community), Cherub Choir's return to regular schedule, Youth Ministry, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Youth Enrichment Program, Legal Ministry and many more.

An August Special Camp Meeting

Theme Song: Walk Together Children

Prayer Marches each Sunday: 7:30-7:45 am & 10:30-10:45 am
(march around the block surrounding the church)

August 2	Kick off – Holy Communion Special Guest Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, Reserve, Louisiana
August 5	Spreading the Gospel in the community
August 9	Instruments of Praise (special sending forth For college students by assigned prayer Partners) Missionary commissioning
August 16	Liturgical Dancing Children singing
August 23	First Consecration Sunday Anniversary: Remembering our Pledge Homecoming Sunday Dinner/Fellowship on grounds
August 30	Healing and Reconciliation Service Songs, praying, personal testimonies

Dress for the month was casual. One common concern about casual dress was what it is. Casual, as an adjective means without formality, free and easy. However, the dress for church must remain appropriate. We should never mislead our young people, for they learn by example. Beachwear is not casual. I expect, in another year, dress will reflect appropriate casual attire.

A special Charge Conference was convened Sunday, September 13, 1998, after the 10:45 am worship service. The purpose of the Special Charge Conference was to consider a resolution authorizing the Central Ministries Early Learning Center to lease space in connection with an agreement with Morris Brown College Head Start. The Rev. Martha H. Forrest, Atlanta-College Park District Superintendent, authorized Rev Joseph L. Crawford, Sr. to preside over the meeting. Members of the Administrative Board, including clergy, are voting members of the Charge Conference. The Early Learning Center is presently operating with a strong Board of Directors.

Central United Methodist Church presented the All Atlanta Chorus in a "Gospel Christmas Celebration" on December 13, 1998 at 5:00 pm. The Rev. Sallie B. Parrish was the director. Rev. Parrish was Minister of Music at Central for many years.

The year 1998 closed in prayer with our annual Watch Night (New Year's Eve) worship celebration. With thankful hearts, we went into another year.

Toward 2000

1999

We moved into 1999 with grateful hearts. Some hearty thanks go to our Senior Pastor, Rev Crawford, Associate Pastor, Rev Vaughn, and the entire Administrative Board for the way they continue to provide leadership for the congregation.

January 6 Food Pantry resumed a regular schedule

January 10 Farewell banquet for Rev. Robert Manley, our Youth Minister for 1997-1998. He was appointed minister to Bentley Hills United Methodist Church.

Banners for Silent Auction – Innovative Artist

Kim Foster-Isreal has been blessed as an artist. Her display of banners were seen first at Central's Christmas play. Kim offered three of the five banners to the Central congregation for silent auction bids, returning 50% of all winning bids to Central. I record this as a first for Central. We are witnessing the synergy of art and the artist in a Central member with talent given her by God. Her art has been displayed in galleries and has made profound and lasting impressions. We expect to see and hear more about Kim's art.

Some other notable activities during 1999 include:

Black History month was celebrated

Pictorial Directory appointments made with special arrangements for home bound members

Telephone hot line was established to receive concerns, problems or complaints about church property and equipment

Interest box placed in Narthex for messages

United Methodist Women of Central and Calvary United Methodist Church hosted a Mission Study on March 20 with Rev. Vaughn as the instructor.

Youth Enrichment classes held April 10 through May 22. Classes offered included African-American History and Culture, dance, drama, art printing, karate, computers, and photography.

Our spring revival spanned several Sundays in April:

April 11
April 18
April 25

Dr. Walter Kimbrough, Cascade United Methodist Church

Rev. Craig Oliver, Elizabeth Baptist C

Rev. Otis Pickett, Capitol View United Methodist C

Our Easter celebration began with a special 6:00 am Sunrise Service, followed by the 9:00 am Easter program and 10:45 am worship service.

Central always has been a leader in recognizing the contributions of all age groups and in that spirit, celebrated Senior Adult Sunday on May 23, 1999. High on the program was a 25th anniversary salute to Gedney Vining, Central's organist. Gedney first played as a substitute for Dr. Hampton Baker on Easter Sunday, 1974. The 7:45 am speaker was Mrs. Xernona Clayton, corporate consultant, creator and executive producer of Turner Broadcasting's Trumpet Awards. Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) was the dynamic speaker at 10:45 am.

June 20 was another high day for Central. The Sounds of Praise of Epworth United Methodist Church, Baltimore, Maryland presented a praise explosion at 4:00 pm. The founder and co-director of the Sounds of Praise is Jean West-Lewis, a Central family product. She was baptized and grew up, married and returned to present a very exceptional program. Her family and friends warmly received her group. Jean is the oldest daughter of Mrs. Grace W. Kemp and the late George West. Her Grissom roots go back to the old Church - Central Avenue.

Other 1999 notables:

In July, Mrs. Georgia Brown and family presented Bibles to Central Church in memory of the late Tom Brown.

Men's Fall retreat at Rock Eagle

Annual Church School promotion

Voices of Central presented their gospel extravaganza on September 26 under the direction of Vernon Kimbro

ROSA, a senior adult organization with administrative offices located in the Central Annex, honored Pastor Crawford at their Annual Honors Dinner.

Study Hall and Tutorial held at the Central Methodist Gardens community center under direction of Dr. Jerome Taylor.

Administrative Board chair, Joe Hudson, reported that moving forward in faith, we expect to continue the pursuit of our mission/vision with vigor, as it is God's calling for Central.

December 1999 begins a holy season for Christians all over the world. Central seemed to know how much and how far we as a community of believers have come. Central has a department of excellent music. It was with visions for a new year in mind when the calendars listed Christmas preparations, some of which were: Church Decoration Day, Rehearsal for Christmas Cantata, Christmas Play, Christmas Eve Services and New Year's Eve services. After a very spiritual service, the 1999-2000 worshipers went into the Fellowship Hall for a meal. The memory of a congregation in prayer, sharing food as the year 2000 became a

reality was unique and will long be regarded as an answer to “where were you when Y2K came in?”

The Wednesday daytime Bible Class lost in death a four-year member. Mrs. Ida Baugh Smith was an active member of Ariel Bowen Memorial U. M. Church in Atlanta. On Sunday, December 12, 1999, members of the class made a special presentation of Bibles to Ariel Bowen Church in her memory. Dr. Edith D. Thomas was her teacher for three of the four years. Her last year was incomplete due to her illness and passing. Mrs. Cindra Taylor was her last teacher.

The Passing of Rev. T. P. Grissom, Sr.

A Service of Worship
Celebrating The Life

of

Rev. Thomas Hendleton Grissom Sr.

October 2, 1893 - December 12, 1999



Friday, December 17, 1999
- Eleven O' clock a.m.-

Central United Methodist Church
501-7 Mitchell Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia

Reverend Joseph L. Crawford, Sr., Senior Pastor
Reverend Cynthia Vaughn, Associate Pastor

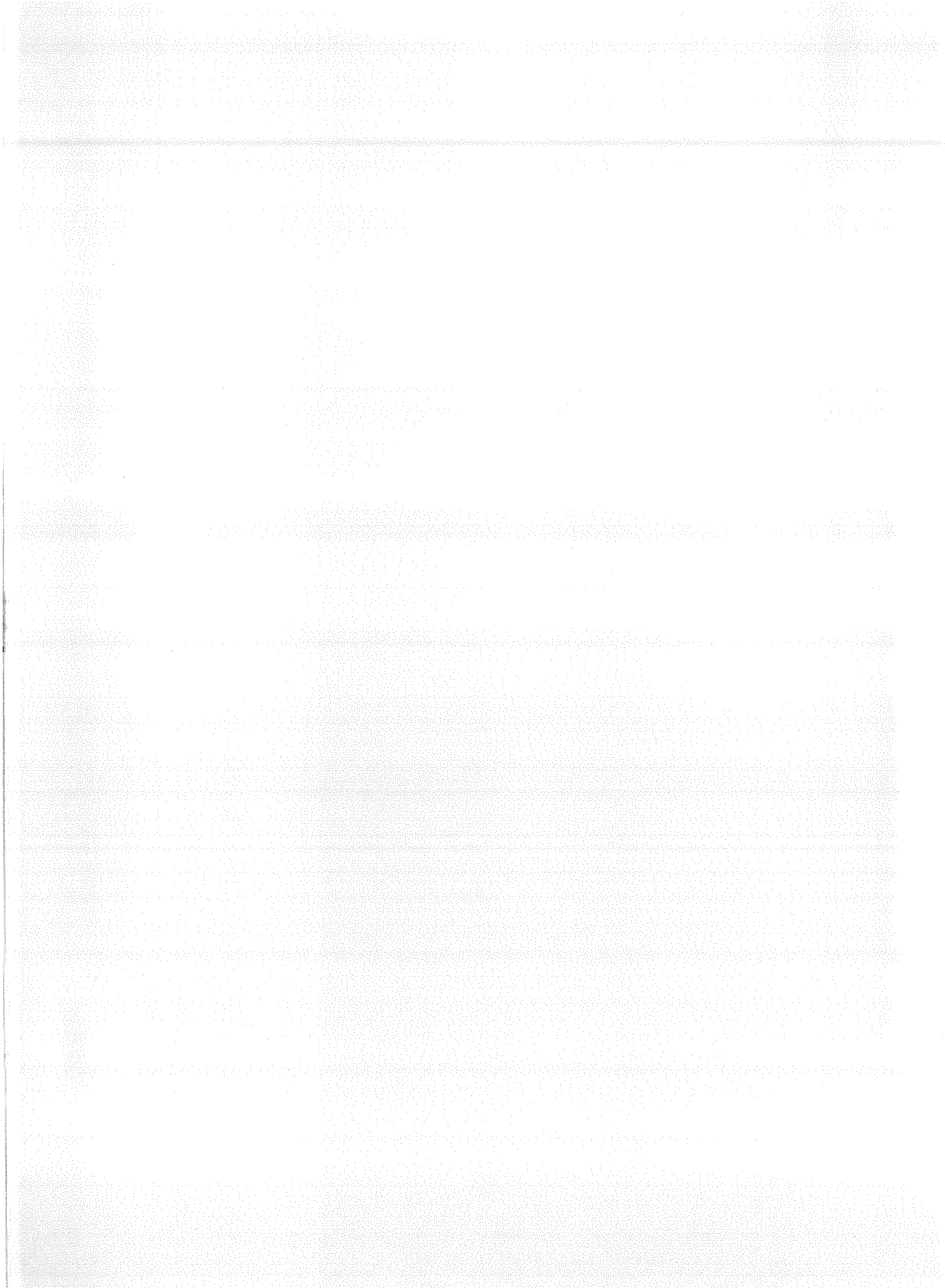
The Year 2000

The wonderful celebration for bringing in the year 2000 set the stage for the leadership team to plan a schedule of successful activities. February, known as "Black History Month," was themed "A Moment in Black History," to highlight some members. Central was pleased to honor our faithful member, Ms. Ella Wade Brayboy, one of Georgia's first black registrars and a community activist, was highly honored as history where you live, a pioneer in her community. A life-long volunteer who worked as a congressional aide to former Congressman Andrew Young and as the director of Community Affairs for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

The year 2000 closed with the traditional Watch Night Service and the new century was ushered in with a prayer breakfast in the fellowship hall. Thus far, by faith, we have traveled from 1866 into 2001.

The new century really will bring in new goals as hands reach out and touch others spreading Christian love. May God continue to bless our leaders as they carry the torch of love at home and around the world.

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EPILOGUE



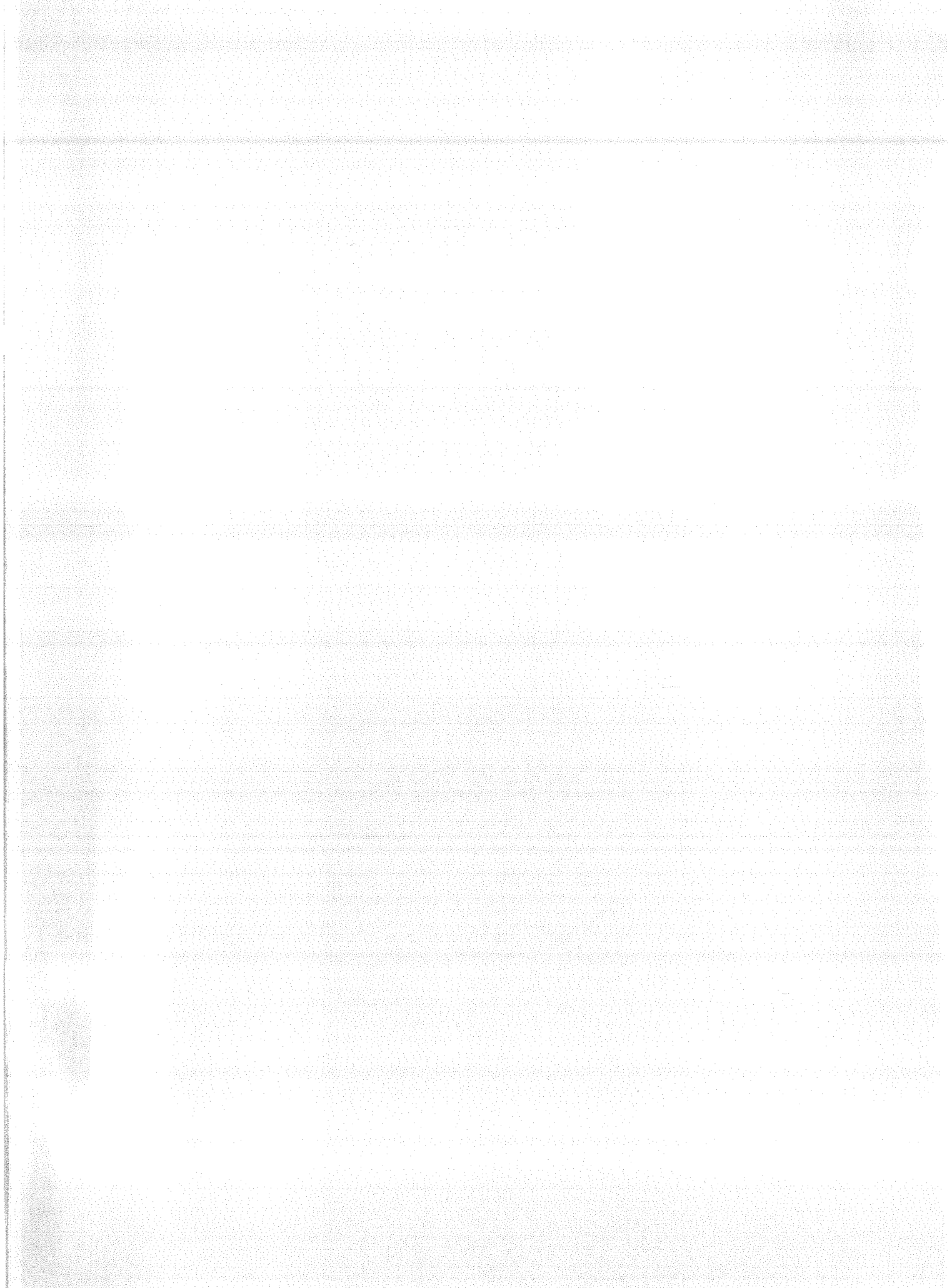
Beyond 2000

Now that we have entered into the new millennium, we must take one look back to see from whence we came. In order to know where you are going, you need a plan -- a map or some directions to help obtain the goal.

At Last The Story Has Been Told

At this period of time, I am greatly concerned not so much about what I have written as what I failed to record. I think of all the devoted Central members who loved, worked and died over the 137 years of our existence. Those who worked behind the scenes, some never received a pat or a plaque, yet they helped build a great Church. Some workers used a hand whenever they had a chance. They labored behind the scenes, never being in the picture, never being published in the SOURCE or local paper. I want them and their families to know they helped make this celebration great. They are in God's picture of Central's greats. We look at the whole church congregation from 1866 until today. We thank God for each one, whatever part they played, in the building of a grand and glorious church. I do believe there are no big "I's or little you's."

Despite the inexperience of the writer, the story has been told. Members have expressed concern about the time taken to do the research. What started as a small project developed into this writing. Giving honor to all former pastors and the present pastor, Frederick R. Gray, Central has become a most widely heard voice in Methodism. The Pastors have been anointed to preach the gospel, counsel the community people, work with political leaders, and touch countless people throughout the nation. Total involvement at this point will be needed as the 21st century unfolds. Central will be a voice in the history of the community, city, county, state, nation and world. The history that I failed to record will be done better by another. I have made an effort to provide much never-before-recorded material. May God bless Central.



APPENDIX

Pastors of Central United Methodist Church

<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Dates Served</u>
J. H. (W) Lee	
✓ Joseph Sams	
✓ Walter Hunter	
✓ Aaron Melton	
Robert T. Kent	
T. Thomas	
Asbury Lynch	
J. J. Lansing	
Trimmer	
H. R. Pharmenter	
✓ George Standing	
✓ J. B. Williams	
✓ C. O. Fisher	
✓ A. P. Melton	
✓ M. C. B. Mason	
✓ George W. Arnold	
✓ S. J. Harris	
✓ R. T. Adams	
✓ J. A. Rush	1898?-1912
✓ Lorenzo H. King	1912-1920
✓ D. H. Stanton	1920-1924
✓ P. H. Travis	1924-1927
✓ J. Walter Moore	1927-1928
J. W. Queen	1928-1929
J. A. Baxter	1930-1937
E. Webster McMillan	1938-1948
L. Scott Allen	1948-1956
H. H. Backstrom	1956-1960
A. S. Dickerson	1960-1968
Joseph E. Lowery	1968-1986
P. Harold Gray	1986-1987
A. S. Dickerson	1987-1988
Rodney T. Smothers	1988-1998
Joseph L. Crawford, Sr.	1998-2001
Frederick R. Gray	2001-present

Available records do not list the tenure for each of these pastors, but they all served at some point between 1866 and 1898

*Thoms
Mosley*

Pastors During the Twentieth Century

(in alphabetical order)



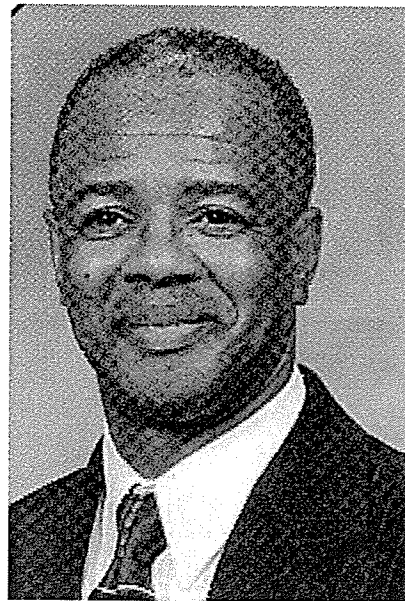
Rev. L. Scott Allen



Rev. H. H. Backstrom



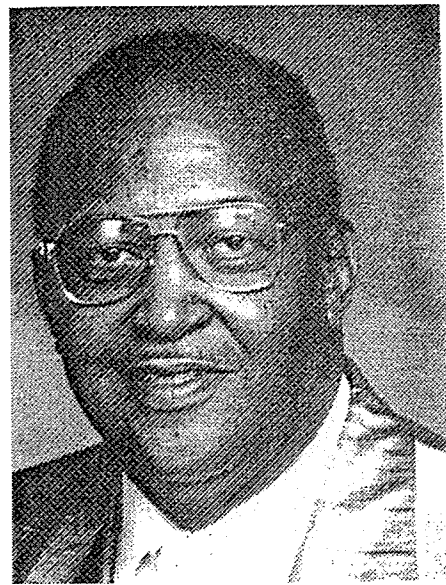
Rev. J.A. Baxter



Rev. Joseph L. Crawford, Sr.



Rev. A.S. Dickerson



Rev. P. Harold Gray



Dr. L.H. King



Dr. Joseph E. Lowery



Dr. M.C.B. Mason



Dr. E. Webster McMillan



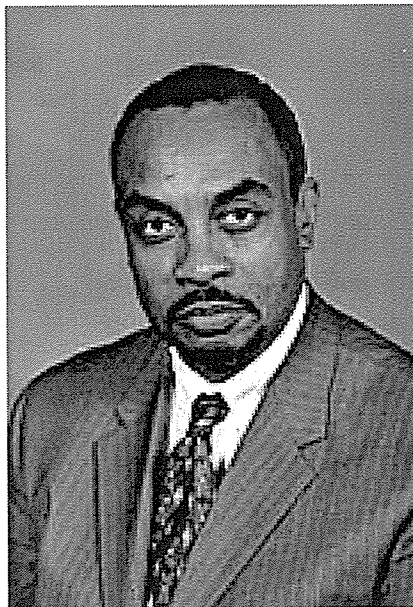
Rev. J. Walter Moore



Rev. J.W. Queen



Dr. J.A. Rush



Dr. Rodney T. Smothers



Dr. D.H. Stanton



Dr. P.H. Travis

