

"THROUGH THE YEARS"

The Davis Street United Methodist Church of Burlington, N. C., formerly known as the First Methodist Protestant Church had its beginning in the year 1890. At that time, services were held in the Old Union Church, by Rev. W. C. Kennett, who at that time was pastor of Belmont Mission, which consisted of Belmont, Haw River, Maple Grove, and Burlington churches.

Two years later, in 1892, Rev. W. F. McDowell was sent to the charge, and early in that year he organized the Burlington Church with seventeen charter members. The present membership is approximately twelve hundred and fifty.

On April 6, 1892, the lot on which the present church now stands was secured and deeded to Robert N. Thompson, W. M. Baulding, and Berry M. Cates. For three years following the organization in 1892, the church existed as a mission with one service each month. In 1923 the desire was expressed for a new church in West Burlington, and under the sponsorship of our church, Fountain Place Methodist Protestant Church was organized, which in more recent years has been moved from West Burlington to Grove Park, a growing development, and the name was changed to St. Paul.

In 1939 when the three branches of Methodism united, The Methodist Episcopal Church, North; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church, our church changed its name from the First Methodist Protestant Church to Davis Street Methodist Church.

The following pastors have served our church from its beginning: Rev. W. C. Kennett, Rev. W. F. McDowell, Rev. C. A. Pickens, Rev. W. A. Bunch, Rev. J. G. W. Holloway, Rev. C. A. Cecil, Rev. C. H. Whitaker, Rev. G. F. Milloway, Rev. William Porter, Rev. J. H. Abernethy, Dr. J. D. Williams, Rev. Thomas E. Davis, Rev. George L. Curry, Dr. J. E. Pritchard, Dr. S. W. Taylor, Rev. L. W. Gerringer, Dr. Fred W. Paschal, Rev. J. O. Long, Rev. B. D. Critcher, Rev. S. J. Starnes, Rev. T. R. Jenkins, Rev. Dermont J. Reid, Rev. H. M. McLamb, Rev. K. R. Wheeler, and Rev. R. E. L. Moser, who is serving at the present time.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. B. D. Critcher that definite action was taken to build our present church building, and before he left our church, more than ninety thousand dollars in cash had been raised toward this project.

It was during the ministry of Rev. S. J. Starnes, who followed Brother Critcher, that our new church plant became a reality instead of a dream, which stands out today as one of the most beautiful churches in our city.

From our church have gone out the following men to become ministers of the Gospel: Dr. C. E. Forelines, Dr. F. L. Gibbs, Dr. R. M. Andrews, Rev. N. G. Bethea, Rev. C. B. Way, Rev. D. M. Loy, Rev. Kenneth Sexton, Rev. S. G. Dodson, Rev. John Biggerstaff, Rev. James Biggerstaff, and Rev. William B. Starnes., and D. I. Garner.

In 1958 Rev. James C. Stanford was assigned to our church as Associate Pastor. Jimmy, as he was called, was a very dedicated person, especially interested in young people. It was during his work in our church he felt the call to the Mission field, and on December 9, 1960 he was commissioned as a Missionary to South America. He and his wife, Jo Ann, and his family served in this capacity faithfully until his untimely death in 1969, while still serving in the mission field. It was his desire to be buried there among the people he loved and served so well.

Our church has always had an evangelistic spirit, and we have been fortunate to have many outstanding laymen and ministers for services in our church. Included among these have been: R. G. LeTourneau, Dr. Charles L. Allen, Bishop Ralph Cushman, Dr. Roy Smith, Dr. Harry Denman, Dr. George Fallon, Bishop Arthur J. Moore, and many others.

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Our church has been wise enough to acquire additional property adjoining the present building to take care of future needs. Mr. Charles Foster, who was a loyal and faithful member of our church, in addition to giving the pipe organ and chimes for our new church, also purchased the house and lot on the corner of Davis and Tucker streets and donated it to the church. The church also purchased the house and lot adjoining it, the Cheek property, and the Cates property. These are being used for parking facilities and recreation, but will provide the grounds for expansion in future years.

With the splendid history of the past, the encouragement of the present, and the bright prospect for the future, let us all "THANK GOD" and continue to move forward.

Joe W. Holmes, Historian

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