

**THE HISTORY OF
LAKEWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**



**2317 CHAPEL HILL ROAD
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

2000

HISTORY

It was the days of ice trucks, coal trucks, wood trucks, home delivery of milk in glass bottles, featherbeds and quilting bees.

The Lakewood Park area, located half-way between Yates Baptist Church and Temple Baptist Church on what was then called Chapel Hill Boulevard was considered rural agricultural in one aspect, and in another, a bustling neighborhood due to the presence of Lakewood Park which included an auditorium, skating rink, dance pavilion and other recreational areas.

Families living in the Lakewood Park area rode wagons and buggies to Yates and Temple Baptist Churches, as in those days the two churches were considered "a good distance away".

Many church picnics were held at Lakewood Park, and our very first services were held there.

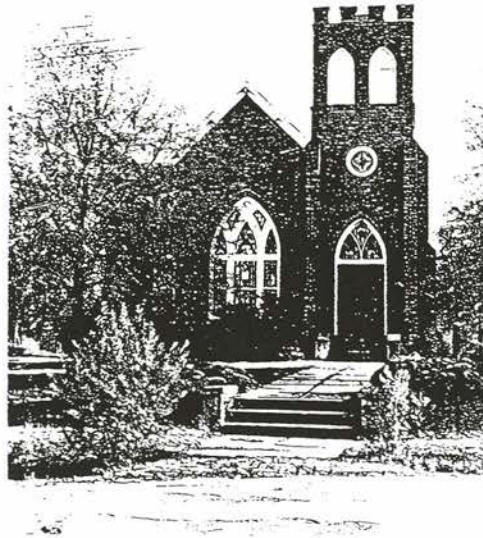
In November of 1907, two young men, Rev. W.V. McRae and Rev. C.B. Culbreth students from Trinity College, organized a Sunday School class. There was no church building, so the class met in the skating rink at Lakewood Park that was closed for the season. Even though the Sunday School was interdenominational, it was rooted in Methodism with literature from the Methodist Publishing House.

In May of 1908, the classes ended when the park reopened for the summer. The desire for community worship was not abandoned. In December of 1908, Rev. Reuben Hibberd reorganized the Sunday School class and arranged for them to meet in the Lakewood School building.

In the summer of 1909, following a revival conducted by the Rev. Henry M. North the official Lakewood Methodist Church was formed with a founding congregation of the following nineteen members: Mrs. D.W. Blackwood, Mrs. H.L. Carden, Carl Carden, Lawrence Carden, Mrs. Martha Fowler, Mr. R.E. Lee, Mrs. R.E. Lee, Elizabeth Lee, Minnie Ethel Lee, Wm. Wallace Lee, Ruth Mary Lee, Mrs. C.W. Latta, Mrs. Emma Lewter, Mr. W.E. Moss, Mrs. W.E. Moss, Bettie Perry, Mr. R.L. Wells, Mrs. R.L. Wells and Mantie Wells. Rev. Hibberd organized and took care of the administrative end of the church until the conference of that year. Rev. T.M. Grant was appointed as the first pastor and served until his graduation from Trinity College. The

Rev. L.D. Hayman, a student at Trinity College, was paid \$100.00 to take the Lakewood charge until the fall of 1910. He was then appointed by the conference as Pastor and remained at Lakewood for four years.

During the pastorates of Rev. Hayman (1910-1913), Rev. E.C. Durham (1913-1914), and Rev. D.E. Earnhardt (1914-1917), the Lakewood congregation undertook the construction and completion of their first church building. A lot on Palmer Street was purchased for \$450.00 and the cost of the building was \$3,500.00. Construction began in 1912 and was completed in April of 1914. Bishop J.C. Kilgo delivered the first sermon. The dedication sermon was delivered two years later in 1916 by Dr. William Preston Few the President of Trinity College.



The Sunday School class that at one time met at a skating rink and in a school house now met in its new church building. The class divided to form two classes and they were called the Adult's Men's Class and the Every Woman's Bible Class.

Lakewood's numbers grew, and with that growth came a Methodist Youth Fellowship, which was then called the Epworth League.

In July of 1922, the Women's Missionary Society of Lakewood Methodist Church was organized. The society began with fifteen charter members, and Mrs. R.E. Lee, Sr. served as the first president. In 1939, the name was changed to the Woman's Society of Christian Service. In 1968, the name was changed to the United Methodist Women.

During 1924-1925, the Lakewood congregation built their first parsonage on Lakewood Avenue. The lot was purchased at a cost of \$2,000.00 and the building was erected at a cost of approximately \$4,000.00.

In the late 1920's, a log cabin was built on the lot behind the church. Mr. A.P. Stewart donated logs from his farm and helped to build the structure at a cost to the church of \$25.00. The congregation would gather there for fellowship meals.

Lakewood Methodist Church continued to grow. The Sunday School classes were held in the church building with curtains dividing them. The children attended Sunday school in the Parsonage and later in the log cabin. There was a need for individual Sunday school rooms and the feeling that a new community location would draw more new members. In 1948, fund raising began. A lot was purchased on Chapel Hill Street at a cost of \$4,500.00. On November 16, 1952, Rev. W.M. Maness broke ground for the new Lakewood Methodist Church. The building was completed in 1953. The first worship service in the current church was on Sunday, August 23, 1953. The new church building was built at a cost of \$50,607.00 for the building and \$4,185.00 for the furnishings. The debt was liquidated in September of 1966.

In December, 1966, a lot was purchased at a cost of \$1,917.00 for a new parsonage to be built at 2211 Elmwood Avenue. The new parsonage was completed in 1968 at a cost of \$30,000.00. The first parsonage family was the Rev. and Mrs. Carlton F. Hirschi, son Carlton and daughter Karen.

On December 8, 1968, Rev. Carlton F. Hirschi presided over the dedication service for the church. Bishop William R. Canon delivered the sermon and was assisted in the dedication by District Superintendent Dr. C.D. Barclift. The church officers joined together stating that the church building was to be dedicated to the glory of God and the service of man and that the church would henceforth be known as Lakewood United Methodist Church.

Around 1976, the Rev. Charles Hutchinson with the assistance of the UMW members began the Chrismon Tree tradition at the church. Members of the UMW and other women of the church made the ornaments and members of the UMM got a live cedar tree each year. The tradition still continues today using an artificial tree purchased in 1998. It is always a highlight of the Christmas season.

On April 9, 1985, under the leadership of our pastor Rev. William W. Snotherly the church joined twenty other United Methodist Churches in Durham to found the United Methodist Mission Society of Durham, Inc. The Mission provides needy persons goods and staples from the food pantry and clothing closet that the twenty one churches and other organizations donate to the Mission each month. Our church continues today providing volunteers and provisions each month.

In 1990, the Rev. Eddie Jo V. Jarrett became the first woman pastor to serve at our church.

Rev. Ramon Torres III, a student pastor attending Duke University began to gather and bring the children from the Lakewood community to church and initiated the growth of our present day multi-culturally diverse congregation.

Rev. Carolyn W. Lucas, the first African American pastor to serve the Lakewood Church fostered the growth of our congregation and was instrumental in bringing people from diverse backgrounds into our membership. She worked with the Duke University Community Affairs Office in getting some of our youth in the Partners for Youth Programs. This program finds work for the youth during the summer.

Our current pastor is the Rev. Dora Russell Dorsey.

Part of Lakewood's uniqueness in Durham is in her name. This church is the oldest Methodist Church in Durham to carry the name of the neighborhood in which it was founded.

**MINISTERS WHO SERVED LAKEWOOD UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

| | | | |
|--|-----------|---------------------|--------------|
| Brother R. Hilberd (Organized Sunday School) | 1909 | J.H. Overton | 1943-1947 |
| T.M. Grant | 1909-1910 | C.S. Boggs | 1947-1952 |
| L.D. Hayman | 1910-1913 | M.W. Maness | 1952-1955 |
| E.C. Durham | 1913-1914 | A.L. Chaplin | 1955-1960 |
| D.E. Earnhardt | 1914-1917 | W.L. Freeman | 1960-1961 |
| B.C. Reavis | 1917-1918 | A.F. McClung | 1961-1965 |
| S.A. Maxwell | 1918-1919 | T. Fant Steele | 1965-1968 |
| R.N. Price | 1919-1920 | C.F. Hirschi | 1968-1972 |
| W.C. Ball | 1920-1924 | J.R. Oliver | 1972-1975 |
| D.A. Clark | 1924-1925 | C.H. Hutchinson | 1975-1983 |
| J.W. Dimmette | 1925-1927 | W.W. Snotherly, Jr. | 1983-1987 |
| H.L. Davis | 1927-1930 | John M. Russell | 1987-1990 |
| W.C. Huckabee | 1930-1932 | Eddie Jo V. Jarrett | 1990-1993 |
| M.W. Warren | 1932-1933 | Ramon Torres, III | 1993-1997 |
| B.A. Sisk | 1933-1935 | Carolyn W. Lucas | 1997-1999 |
| M.O. Stephenson | 1935-1939 | Dora R. Dorsey | 1999-Present |
| W.K. Barrs | 1939-1942 | | |
| J.M. Ormond | 1942-1943 | | |

History Committee

Carl Allen
Louise Allen
Annie Ruth Durham
Dennis Nichols
Jean Nichols

Walt Bass
Emma Bass
Kathy Strickland
Hilda Strickland

Reflections from former Lakewood Church Pastors

Rev. A.F. McClung 1961-1965

My four years at Lakewood Church were a delightful part of my ministry. The church was able to meet all Conference obligations, and the leadership and members were cooperative with the Pastor and the goals of the North Carolina Conference. In the integration issue of the sixties, the church did not reject African-American students but exhibited a Christian spirit by accepting them in several visits to worship.

William W. Snotherly, Jr. October 1983-June 1987

I was called to serve Lakewood United Methodist Church in the summer of 1983. We moved into the spacious and beautiful parsonage at the end of September. My fondest memories are of the people, past and present. And the rose garden afforded me many moments of pleasure in times of meditation. Recognizing that the community was beginning an inevitable transition caused me much concern. Being task oriented, I looked for ways and means to grow the church. Growth was slow, but the Christian joy of the faithful members of Lakewood UMC was great. One can never forget the delight of everyone in the God serving music program. Many saints were lifted up to Jesus in my three and three quarter years there. It was an honor and a privilege to have been the Pastor of Lakewood.

John M. Russell 1987-1990

My time with the people of Lakewood United Methodist Church remains among the most enjoyable that I have spent in pastoral ministry. The words “extended family” accurately describe the caring, closeness, and the love of Lakewood’s members. Rarely, do I see such consistent loyalty, kindness, and acceptance exhibited by a group of people. I had the privilege of serving as their Pastor and I continue to look upon those three years as a time of genuine blessing. My family and I established deep, lasting bonds and friendship with so many people from Lakewood. For them, for the time that I spent with the parish family of Lakewood UMC, I give thanks.

Carolyn W. Lucas June 1997-June 1999

As I write this reflection on the time I spent as Pastor of Lakewood United Methodist Church, I must pause to give thanks to God for the mighty way that God moved in our midst from the time of my arrival at Lakewood in June of 1997 until the time I left to become Chaplain at Duke Divinity School in June of 1999. The two years spent at Lakewood UMC were two of the most rewarding and productive years of my entire ministry. The members of Lakewood UMC opened their hearts and lives to me, their first African-American Pastor. They loved me with the love of God and worked with me to help bring about God’s vision for the Lakewood congregation. Because of the love of the people at Lakewood, the church began outreach to the community, especially to the children. In two years, Lakewood was transformed into a community of faith that was beginning to become a multi-racial, multi-cultural church. We began a community Gospel Choir which included children from age six all the way up to senior adults. We hired a classically trained African-American man as our organist and another young African-American man to provide music and direction for our Gospel choir. New members, African-American, Anglo-American, young and old, began to join the church. One Latino-American family began worshipping and working with us as the result of a Spanish class which was begun at the church. We started a new Sunday School class for young adults and involved the growing number of youth in various community programs. We located job placements for at least half of our youth each summer and began a program for single mothers with children that offered them financial assistance and support. The story of the new life and revitalization that God was bringing to Lakewood was reported in the Durham Herald and throughout the Durham Community people began to hear the good news of

what God was doing in our midst. I have never been more proud of a congregation of people than I was of the people at Lakewood. Together we struggled to overcome the barriers of race and culture that continue to divide the body of Christ. During the June 1998 Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Bishop Marion Edwards invited the Lakewood Church to make a presentation to the entire conference when we were honored as one of the “model churches” of the conference for that year. People said it could not be done. No one really believed that a long established Anglo-American congregation would open its heart and doors to an African-American pastor or to people of the community who were of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. They said it could not happen. But it did! The faithfulness, love, and hard work of all the wonderful people at Lakewood proved to me and to many that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. Lakewood and its wonderful people will be in my heart and memory forever. I love you Lakewood. Don't ever stop being obedient to the vision that God has laid upon your hearts.

Memories of the First Lakewood Church 1914-1953

Annie Ruth Durham

The choir in the old church was located in the left hand corner in the front. There was about eight or ten seats. The choir had four members: Mrs. Daisy Beck, soprano, Mrs. Pattie Crabtree, alto, Mr. Tennie Rigsbee, tenor, and Mr. Ben Durham, bass. Miss Margaret Crabtree was the pianist. On occasions, she was given money for her services which she always put in the collection plate. Their favorite song must have been "Whispering Hope" because they sang it almost every other Sunday. Later some of the young people joined the choir.

Sunday morning was a busy time for the Durham family. They rose early to prepare for the Every Woman's Bible Class. In the old church, there was only one room. The children met there and the young people met in the Parsonage. The class had about eight or ten members. The side door from Palmer Street went into the kitchen and most of the ladies came in that way. Before going to the church for the eleven o'clock worship service, they usually toured most of the house.

Hardin Gunter

My earliest recollection of Lakewood United Methodist Church goes back to the 1930's when I was about 13 years old. My grandmother, Roberta Atwater, took me to the church on Palmer Street. She was small in stature and carried a small stool with her because her feet did not reach the floor when she sat in the pew.

Hilda Strickland

The former Lakewood United Methodist Church on Palmer Street was a one room building with two potbelly stoves a choir in the corner and four Sunday School classes. A log cabin in the rear was used for Sunday School classes. The choir was in the front corner of the church. There was a bell in the loft which was rung every Sunday morning. The church had an elevated floor which led to the pulpit. The ceiling was unfinished in the church but was very attractive. A very dear man, Grandpa Blackwood, built the fires in the stoves. The cabin behind the church was used for many activities;

cooking bar-b-que and brunswick stew, Sunday School classes, folk dancing, youth activity. The choir was composed of six people. We sang "Whispering Hope" every Sunday almost. We decided they would sing "Whispering Hope" every Sunday. We told them if we sang it one more time, we would quit. The preacher said, "Okay, that will be fine".

Tom Tatum

When I was eight or ten years old, I remember going to the old church on Palmer Street with my half sisters. Our house was located where the present fire station is now on Chapel Hill Road and we walked to the Lakewood Church on Palmer Street. Mr. V.E. Wilson was the Superintendent of Sunday School and was in charge of the young people's meetings that was called the Epworth League. I remember the big potbelly stove down in front to the side and the curtains used to make classrooms for Sunday School. The log cabin back of the church was used as a fellowship hall.