

THE HISTORY OF WEBB AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH

In 1893, a few Methodists living in East Burlington decided that they ought to organize a Sunday School. Led by Mr. Daniel Humble and his three sons, John, Bynum, and Hilary, a Sunday School was started in Floral Hall on the old fairground site. It is interesting to note that all three of these Humble boys became Methodist preachers in the North Carolina Annual Conference.

On a site donated by Mr. George W. Anthony, a member of Front Street Methodist Church, the people built a modest "chapel" one block from the present site of Webb Avenue Church. To this Chapel, Rev. J.A. Daily came as the first pastor in 1895. He remained as pastor for four years, while preaching also at Haw River and Graham.

In 1899, Rev. B.C. Thompson came as pastor and stayed one year. In 1900 the name of the charge was changed to East Burlington, Graham, and Haw River. Rev. Thompson was succeeded by G.R. Rood. The next year, Rev. G.O. Green came to serve the church and died before the year was out. His brother, W.B. Green of Graham, a local preacher supplied for over a year. In 1903 Rev. C.M. Lance came and spent two years on the charge and was succeeded by Rev. G.D. Langston who spent only one year on the circuit. Next Rev. W.T. Sanford was sent to the charge for two years and in 1908 Rev. T.G. Vickers came and remained for two years. Most of these pastors lived in Graham while preaching at East Burlington Church.

In 1910 the church was placed with the North Alamance Circuit which was being served by Rev. M.M. McFarland, who died during the year. He was succeeded by Rev. B.T. Hurley who remained for one year. During the pastorate of Rev. F.B. Noblitt (1911-1912) the church was moved from the original site to its present location. A lot was bought, and funds were collected for a new church building. The work progressed slowly.

In 1914 while serving the Mebane circuit, Rev. E.C. Durham preached at East Burlington. In 1915 East Burlington became a station and Rev. R.E. Atkinson was the pastor for two years. He was followed by Rev. E.C. Glenn for two years, Rev. J.F. Starnes for two years, and Rev. N.E. Coltrane for two years.

During Rev. Coletranes second year the station was changed to Webb Avenue. In 1923, however, the church went back with Graham and Haw River with Rev. L.V. Harris serving as Junior preacher under Rev. G.M. Daniel, as the pastor of Webb Avenue Church. The following year Rev. Harris was made pastor of Webb Avenue Church which again became a station. Rev. J.W. Autry was pastor for two years, and in 1927 the church was placed with West Burlington and served by Rev. E.C. Durham in his second pastorate at the church. During this year the present church building was finished as far as funds would permit. Rev. Durham served only the Webb Avenue Church his second and third years. Rev. E.G. Overton served the church for one year, and was succeeded by Rev. Robert L. Jerome who came in 1931. At this time Webb Avenue and Haw River were served as a charge. Rev. Jerome served the charge for four years. He was a great

1927-1928

worker with the young people, and the first Boy Scout Troop at Webb Avenue was organized under his leadership. He was followed by Rev. R. Grady Dawson in 1935. He served Webb Avenue and Haw River for three years. Many members were added to Webb Avenue Church during his years of ministering. Rev. O.I. Hinson followed Rev. Dawson in 1938. He stayed for two years, at which time Haw River church was withdrawn from the charge, and Fountain Place was added to it. Rev. C.J. Andrews came to serve the charge, succeeding Rev. Hinson in 1940. He served the charge, succeeding Rev. Hinson in 1940. He served for five years. During his service here as pastor, Webb Avenue Church again became a station church and has been since that time. The church was dedicated during the pastorate of Rev. Andrews on September 13, 1942.

Rev. I.S. Richmond followed Rev. Andrews and served Webb Avenue for nine years. This was an honor both for the pastor and the church. During his pastorate, many outstanding things were accomplished. A pipe organ was given by Mr. & Mrs. W.S. Griffin and family. It was installed and dedicated in 1947. Beautiful stained glass windows were given by members and families in Honor and In Memory of various members of the church. They were installed and dedicated in 1948. The windows added much beauty to the sanctuary. The basement of the church was dressed up. The floor covering of asphalt tile, was given in Honor of Miss Blennie Way, who served for many years as Superintendent of the Children's Department. New chairs were bought and the walls were painted. A large number of members were added to the church under the consecrated leadership of Rev. Richmond. It was also during his pastorate that plans were made for an Educational Building, to provide ample room for Sunday School classes and to add beauty to the present building. Through the years there have been long hard hills to climb but gradual progress has been made and much has been accomplished.

During the last years of Rev. Richmond's ministry at Webb Avenue Church a building fund for the new Educational Building was started. Interest in the project was high and a meeting was called and it was decided to have an architect draw up plans. The following persons were named to the Building Committee. J.T. Lindley, Chairman, D.D. Matthews, F.F. Overman, W.T. Hinshaw, W.T. Hargrove, C. C. Michael, Cecil Tomlindon, Phil Selden, T.H. Traynham, Treasurer, Swanson Robertson, Dwight Hopkins, J.D. McDonald, J.O. Hayes, W.E. Bivens, R.L. Johnson, W.E. Andrews and Rev. I.S. Richmond. Mr. R.R. Markley was chosen as Architect. The above Committee was appointed in the summer of 1953 and the Architect began working on plans. This activity helped the building fund to grow.

It was at the beginning of the Conference Year, 1954 that Rev. M.W. Maness came to serve as pastor of Webb Avenue Church. He served for four years, and it was during the last years of his service at Webb Avenue that the beautiful Educational Building was built. It was completed and put into use in the fall of 1957. All who had a part in the building of this well planned educational unite have a right to be proud of it.

Rev. J.K. Bostick came to serve as pastor of Webb Avenue Church at the beginning of the Conference Year 1958.

To the above history should be added the names of four Duke Divinity School students have rendered useful service to the church while serving as Youth Directors at Webb Avenue. They are Russell Montfort, Earl Crow, Don Welch and Joe Morris.

Also, Webb Avenue Church was fortunate to have as its Organist and Choir director for nine year (1949-58), Mrs. E. Leonidas Smith. Mr. Wynn Riley, and Elon College music major is now serving his second year as Organist and Choir Director. These too, have assisted the ministers and people in the Lord's work at Webb Avenue Methodist Church.

Mr. Bostick continued as pastor until conference, 1962. At that time the present pastor, Rev. Grady L. Kinley, was appointed to Webb Avenue.

A Duke Divinity School student, Ezra Earl Jones, served as an Assistant with Rev. Bostick for about three months, and returned as Assistant with Mr. Kinley from September, 1963 through May, 1964.

The present organist and choir director combined is Mrs. Thomas Lewis, who came in February of 1961.

A new, gas boiler and furnace was installed in October, 1960. The church was re-painted inside in 1965.

Note: The above History of Webb Avenue Methodist Church was compiled by Mrs. D.N. Webster, and J.K. Bostick.