

1950 History 1993

of

Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church

The Raleigh Board of Missions was organized in 1948. Since its inception, it has been a co-operative agency with all our churches and the North Carolina Annual Conference to found, organize and nurture new churches, as well as to give aid to the older but needy churches.

Wesley Memorial was the first church to be formed under this administration.

Many of you do not realize that a church was in the planning "B. C.", that is before Collins - the Reverend Thomas Collins.

Mr. Robert Merriman, a Duke divinity student, visited a few families in the Hi-Mount area on Saturdays. We held Wednesday night prayer services in several homes, and on Sundays we attended our regular churches.

The Board of Missions contacted Mr. Merriman about acquiring a quonset hut from Camp Butner to be put on our land. But the trip was cancelled before he and three of the men of the church had planned to go for the hut. The city of Raleigh had zoned this site. where our church now stands, against quonset huts.

Several weeks later Mr. Merriman dropped out of sight, never to be heard from again.

In the latter part of 1949 the Reverend and Mrs. Thomas Collins came to us from Gatesville, N. C., and that was the beginning of our church.

Those who are acquainted with Mrs. Collins know what a great worker she is, and a Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized in February, 1950. The first meeting was held in the home of Mrs. Collins with ten ladies attending. We were a Woman's Society before we were a church. Some years later the name was changed to United Methodist Women.

On Easter Sunday morning, April 9, 1950, several families met together in the home of Reverend and Mrs. Collins for the first time in a formal Sunday Worship Service. This was the beginning of what is now known as Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church. It was known then as Hi-Mount Methodist Church.

On July 16, 1950 we began holding services in Hayes Barton school (what is now known as Myrtle Underwood School.) It was complete in every way from a nursery to a full choir. Sessions continued at the school for over a year.

Once again meetings were held in different homes. Every Wednesday night there was a prayer service followed by choir practice.

On Oct. 22, 1950 a Charter Day Service was held with the late Reverend E. B. Porter, District Superintendent, presiding. Sixty-six members composed the initial charter roll.

The Raleigh Board of Missions purchased the land, where our church now stands, and helped with the planning and financing of the building program in those first years.

Ground was broken for the first unit of our church the latter part of 1950. The building was completed and occupied for the first time on August 12, 1951. By this time the members had changed the name of the church to Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church.

As the fellowship grew, additional church school space became an urgent need. The three room building to the rear of our present church area was built by the members and Reverend Collins. This proved to be only temporary relief and plans were prepared for the main educational wing which now adjoins the sanctuary.

Ground was broken for this unit on November 12, 1957, for a building with six classrooms and a large fellowship hall. On January 12, 1958 the corner stone was laid in a special mid-day service with Reverend Collins and the late Grady Dawson, who was our district superintendent, assisting in this service. This building was first used on Easter Sunday, and special consecration services were held on May 4, 1958.

The Methodist Men's Club was chartered on April 20, 1951.

In 1952 Boy Scout Troop #324 was also chartered using the "hut". In 1954 a Cub Scout Troop was chartered. In 1959 Explorer Post #324 was organized and received its charter.

Wesley has a very active Methodist Youth Fellowship. Last summer the Appalachian Service Project Team (ASP) went to Perry County Kentucky to put a roof on a home and also did some painting. Their present project will be fall chores (cleaning windows, gutters, painting, etc.) Another project is the Wednesday Night Diners Club.

The MYF has a fine young student from Southeastern Seminary as their leader.

Our church now has 320 members on roll, with an active list of 2/3 of the membership.

Wesley Memorial is involved with missions, both local and foreign. We send one of our members to Haiti for two weeks every year. In 1986 we sent six. We also support a missionary in Africa.

Our local works include money to Meals on Wheels, the Shepherd's Table (better known as the Soup Kitchen) and Walnut Terrace Child Development Center.

We have had three young men from our church to go into the ministry. One is serving in the western conference and two in the eastern conference.

We are grateful to the Raleigh Board of Missions for our church. We have a very progressive forty-three years, and with Gods help and our prayers we will look forward to many more in the future.

Present Charter Members

Mr. and Mrs. Worth Barber
Mrs. Z. V. Barnes
Mrs. Wiley Bryan
Mr. Earl Faison

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Fralick
Mrs. Sallie Martin
Mrs. Margaret Parker
Mr. and Mrs. Bernice Watkins

Former Pastors and Present Pastor

Thomas A. Collins
*Millard W. Warren
James E. Sponenberg
*George W. Blount
*Harvey B. Johnson
Neil H. Thompson
Rudolph H. Hodges

*Ralph W. Pritchard
William C. Spencer
James E. Sutton
James C. Chaffin
John D. Mitchell
Murry L. DeHart, Jr.

*Indicates Deceased