

**ATLANTA  
FIRST WESLEYAN CHURCH**

3220 Bouldercrest Road, S.E.  
Ellenwood, Georgia  
(404) 243-1900

**Homecoming and Mortgage  
Burning Service**

September 5, 1982

L. Ed Galyon, Pastor

243-1973

*in book 1982*

A BRIEF HISTORY

of

THE ATLANTA FIRST WESLEYAN CHURCH

3220 Bouldercrest Road

Ellenwood, Georgia



## LIST OF PASTORS

John Ernest-----	1923-1924
E. D. Packer-----	1924-1925
Miss Anna Linville-----	1925-1926
Rufus and Oneida Gleason-----	1926-1926
E. Leon Gunby-----	1926-1932
S. I. Keeler (Supply)-----	1929-1929
Emory P. Cowan-----	1932-1934
William P. Fessenden-----	1934-1935
J. C. Reynolds-----	1935-1935
George E. Davis-----	1936-1939
C. F. Johnston-----	1939-1941
George E. Davis-----	1941-1944
Raymond R. Hicks-----	1944-1948
W. T. Brinson-----	1948-1950
Raymond R. Hicks-----	1950-1955
N. C. Hoagle-----	1955-1961
Paul L. Swauger-----	1961-1963
John A. Giles-----	1963-1970
Sidney A. Hamby (Associate)-----	1965-1970
Paul E. Coffey (Associate)-----	1969-1982
James C. Meaders-----	1970-1974
Frank R. Coleman-----	1974-1975
Horace Huddins-----	1975-1978
L. Ed Galyon-----	1978--

Once upon a time, in the great metropolitan area of Atlanta, there was no Wesleyan Church. Sometime between the years 1915 and 1920, Mr. Charles L. Eppley, a layman in the North Carolina Conference, along with his wife and six children, moved to Atlanta. In 1923, he invited the Rev. J. M. Hames, a general evangelist, whom he had known in North Carolina, to come to Atlanta and hold a tent meeting. In July of that year, a large tent was set up on the southeast corner of Woodward and Loomis Avenues. Rev. Hames is quoted as saying, "God put his seal on the first service. The crowds came; conviction settled down; revival fire began to spread; and souls prayed through to victory.

During that meeting, several Wesleyan Methodists living in Atlanta, along with a number of other Christians, expressed a desire to organize a Wesleyan Methodist Church. On Sunday morning, July 15, 1923, at the close of the revival, 17 people came forward for membership; and the First Wesleyan Methodist Church of Atlanta was organized.

The charter members were: Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Eppley, Miss Stella Eppley, Miss Cora Eppley, Miss Juanita Eppley, Mr. Ralph Eppley, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Jones, Miss Evie A. Jones, Miss Carrie Jones, Miss Mary Jones, Mrs. George A. Caldwell, Mrs. Eura D. Howard, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Austin, and Mr. and Mrs. S. N. House.

A committee was appointed to locate a building site for the church. A vacant corner lot at Woodward and Park Avenues was subsequently purchased. On February 15, 1924, 75 feet of the lot was sold to a Mr. Wittingham for \$800, which was the original purchase price of the entire lot.

Soon a plain, tabernacle-type, frame building (approximately 32 x 48 feet) was erected on that corner with salvaged lumber from old Camp Gordon (which was being demolished at that time). This building served as sanctuary, Sunday school, and parsonage.

Rev. John Ernest was appointed to serve as the first pastor of the church, and Mr. C. L. Eppley was the first Sunday School Superintendent.

During the six years that Rev. E. L. Gunby served as pastor (1925-1932), he also served as President of the North Georgia Wesleyan Methodist Conference. In his conference report dated November 1932, he is quoted as saying: "These are days that try the saints and test their faith, but those who come through as gold tried in the fire are those who keep the spirit of devotion and benevolence. Some have quit giving for lack of faith, some for fear of the wolf; others because they have nothing to give. The scarcity of work, reduction of wages, and the low price of farm products have caused a great shortage in our finances. But, the thing that encourages is the spiritual condition of the conference. The prospects for real revival were never brighter. People are beginning to turn from material gods and look to the Eternal God as their refuge."

In 1939, 16 years after organization, the church membership was 30, and the church property was valued at \$2,000.

In 1943, a stone church was built on the same corner (Woodward and Park Avenues) during the pastorate of Rev. George E. Davis. As soon as the basement was completed, the Sunday school moved in for classes; and, by April of that year, the entire building was ready for the congregation to move in.

This was during the midst of World War II, and there was much heartache and sorrow because of the war. Many men, women, and teenagers went into the armed services and others went away from home to work in government offices and war plants. Many had to work seven days a week and were unable to attend services regularly; building materials were scarce due to the priorities placed on war supplies; but the Lord supplied all the needs. Many gave sacrificially in order to build the church. One such incident that we discovered in our research was that Mr. Caleb Gunby put up his own home as collateral for the church loan.

In May 1944, Pastor Davis resigned to accept an appointment as Chaplain of the Georgia State Prison at Reidsville, the church membership at that time was 40, with an average Sunday school attendance of 65, and the church property was valued at approximately \$9,000.

In 1948, during the pastorate of Rev. Raymond R. Hicks, a brick parsonage was built on Atlanta Avenue; and in 1953 a Sunday School Annex was added to the stone building. Once again, we found that Mr. Caleb Gunby had cut timbers to build himself a new house, but chose instead to donate the lumber to be used in building the parsonage.

A nursery was added in 1961, under the pastorate of Rev. N. C. Hogle.

In June 1968, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was merged with the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and the name was changed to The Wesleyan Church.



In January 1969, under the pastorate of Rev. John A. Giles, the parsonage on Atlanta Avenue was sold for \$16,750; and in March of that year, a 3-bedroom, 2-bath, brick parsonage and 14 beautiful acres of land, which included a large lake, was purchased on Bouldercrest Road, in Ellenwood, Georgia, for a total price of \$75,000. Rev. and Mrs. Giles were able to move into the new parsonage soon after the purchase.

In April 1971, under the pastorate of Rev. James C. Meaders, the sanctuary and educational building on Park and Woodward Avenues were sold for approximately \$50,000. The last service in that church was on Easter Sunday of that year. The congregation worshipped in the Bouldercrest School on Sundays and in the Ellenwood Civic Center building on Wednesdays until the new church was completed.

The ground-breaking service for the new church was held on October 17, 1971, and the first service in the new church was on Sunday, September 23, 1973. The official dedication service was conducted on November 21, 1973, with General Superintendent Dr. Melvin Snyder officiating.

The total cost of the new parsonage and church building was approximately \$225,000; and a loan was secured from the Wesleyan Investment Foundation for \$72,000, which was the total indebtedness at that time.

Immediately after moving into the new building, the church had great and numerous problems. Many left the church for various reasons, resulting, of course, in a decrease in membership and income. However, by the Lord's blessings and help, the church was able to endure the hardships and to overcome.

In 1978, when Rev. L. E. Galyon accepted the pastorate, the indebtedness was approximately \$52,000. In September 1979, a debt-liquidation drive was initiated by Pastor Galyon and Associate Pastor Paul Coffey. The total indebtedness at that time was \$41,000. Once again, many gave sacrificially; and in March 1982 (less than 30 months later), the final payment on the indebtedness was made, and a mortgage-burning service was set for Homecoming Day, September 5, 1982, with Dr. Virgil Mitchell, General Superintendent, presiding.

The church has recently experienced a period of growth spiritually, numerically, and financially. The present church membership is 59, with an average Sunday school attendance for 1981-82 of 61. It is estimated that the present value of the church property is approximately \$400,000.

We praise the Lord for enabling our church to secure a beautiful place to worship Him, but most of all for His presence in our services.

It is impossible to list the many sacrificial contributions which have been made toward the progress of the Atlanta First Wesleyan Church, however, for every physical, financial, and spiritual contribution made by each pastor, member, and friend, we say a big thank you, and we know the Lord will bless you accordingly.





Congregation, Stone Church, Pastor Rev. Raymond Hicks



Sunday School Class, Stone Church





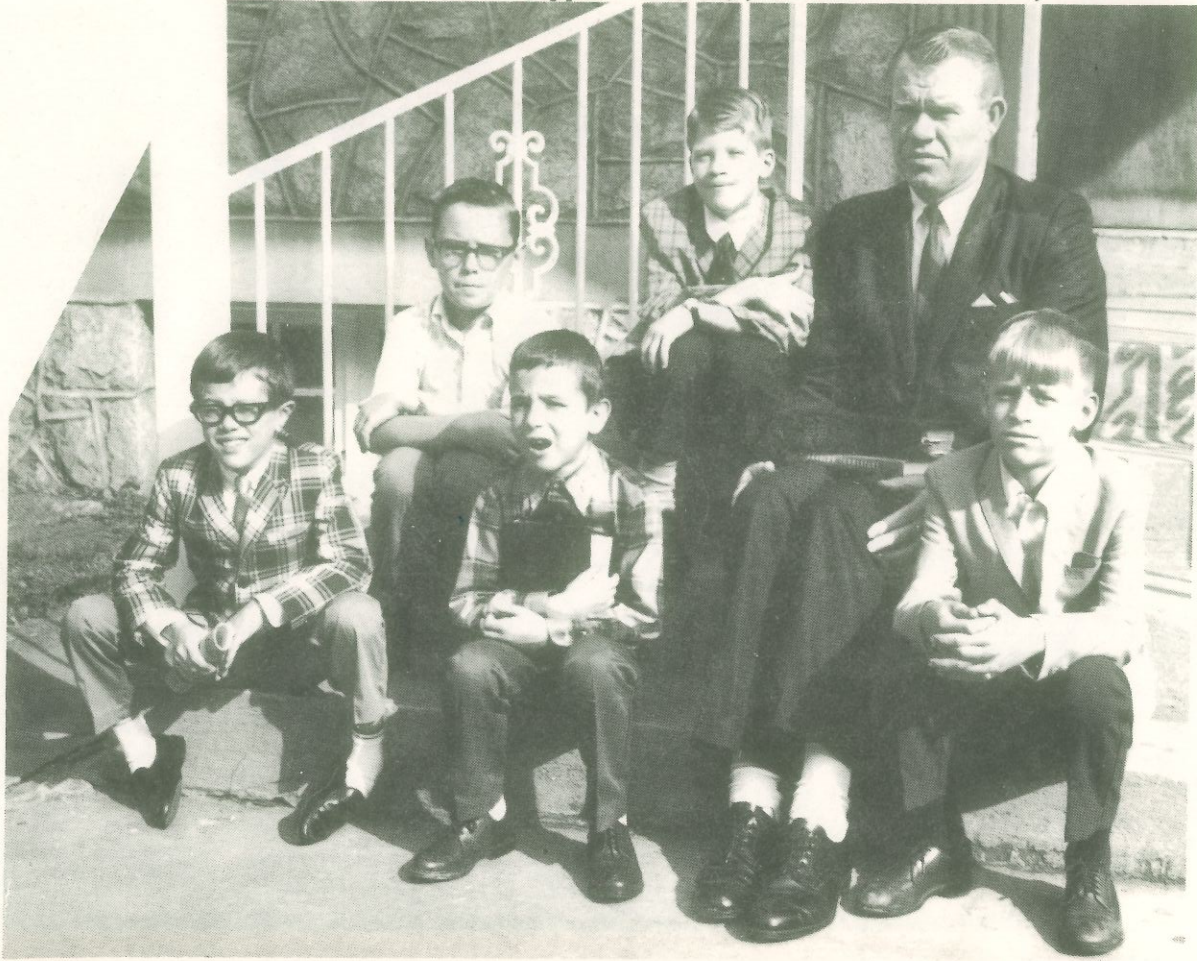
Sunday School Class, Stone Church, Teacher Mrs. N. C. Hoggle



Sunday School Class, Stone Church, Pastor J. A. Giles

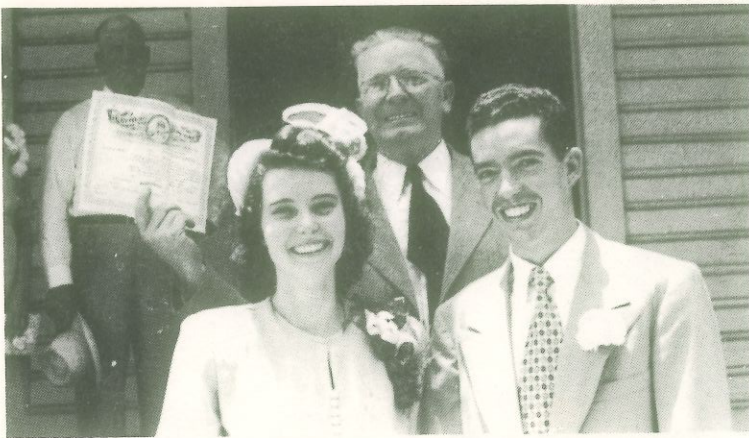


Sunday School Class (Approx. 1968), Elton Strickland, Teacher



Sunday School Class (Approx. 1968), Dot Coffey, Teacher





Rev. W. T. Brinson and Wedding Couple



Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Eppley  
at Golden Anniversary 1946



Rev. George E. Davis



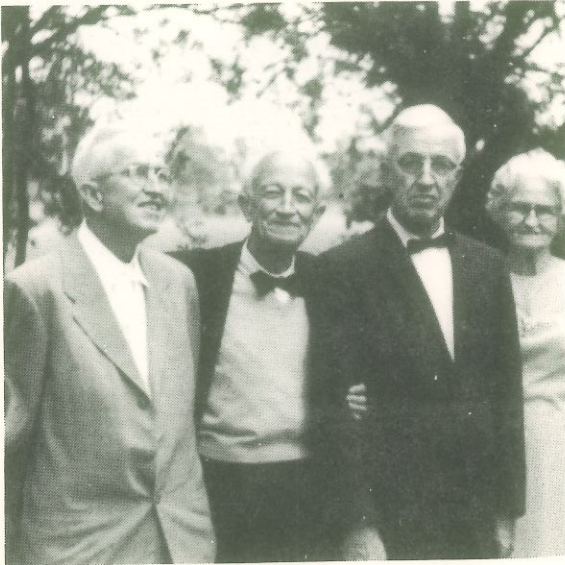
Rev. and Mrs. Raymond R. Hicks  
and Pat

Dr. Roy S. Nicholson and  
Rev. J. A. Giles





Clifford Gunby  
 Hammond R. Gunby  
 Leon Gunby  
 Mrs. Agnes (Gunby) Cowart



Rev. and Mrs. H. R. Gunby, and Mrs. Doster  
 (Rev. and Mrs. S. A. Hamby in background)

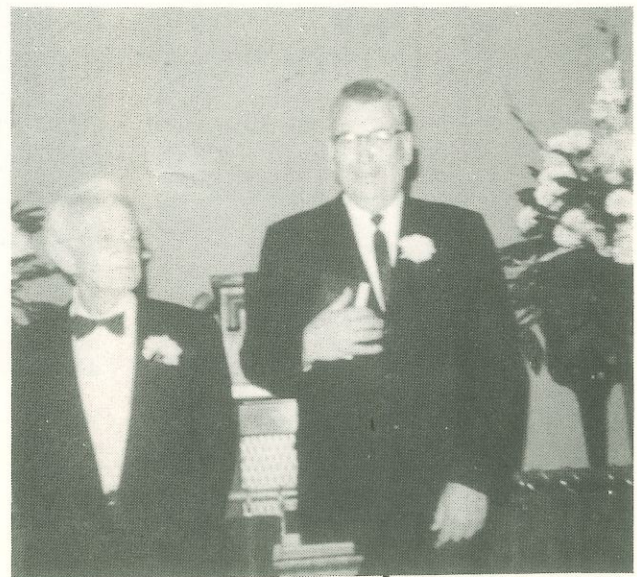
Dr. Roy S. Nicholson, General Superintendent



Rev. Hammond R. Gunby  
 and Rev. J. A. Giles



Rev. Raymond R. Hicks  
 Dr. Melvin Snyder, Gen. Supt.







Rev. and Mrs. Paul L. Swauger and family



Rev. and Mrs. S. A. Hamby,  
Tim and Joe

Rev. and Mrs. James C. Meaders  
Calvin and Gloria



Rev. and Mrs. Horace Hudgins



Rev. and Mrs. Outler Poole  
and Rev. Hudgins

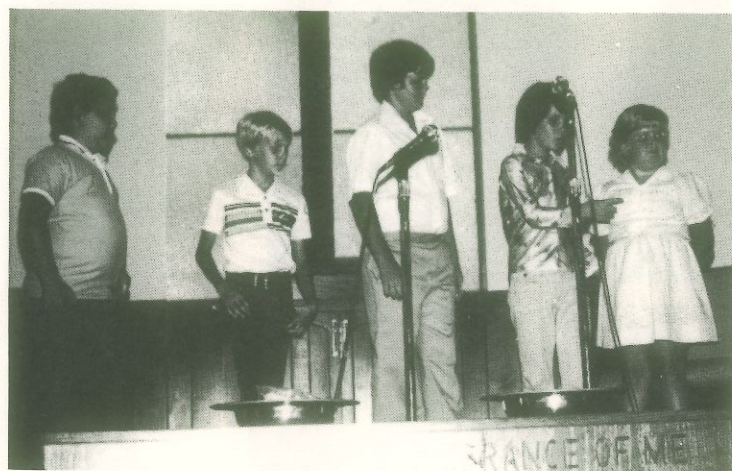
Rev. Hudgins and Richard Hicks







Children's Church, 1981



Children's Church, 1981

VBS



Wayne and Mary Alligood



At General Conference, Marion, Indiana, 1980

J. R. King at the Organ

Homecoming Day



Homecoming Day







Rev. and Mrs. Ed Galyon,  
Pastor Appreciation Day, 1981

Rev. Ed Galyon and Rev. Paul Coffey, 1981



Congregation, Pastor Ed Galyon, May 1982



