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Churches - Methodist -
Sithonia Methodist Church

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10-26-73

Church was organized on Oct. 14, 1860.
First services were held in a wooden
structure on Church Street located at the
time near the home of Mrs. J. J.
(Margaret) Summers, Cornerstone
for the present building, designed by
John Parks Olmstead, who passed in
1910. This was Mr. Olmstead's first
assignment after graduating from
A. Tech in 1909.

A Joyous and Nostalgic Occasion

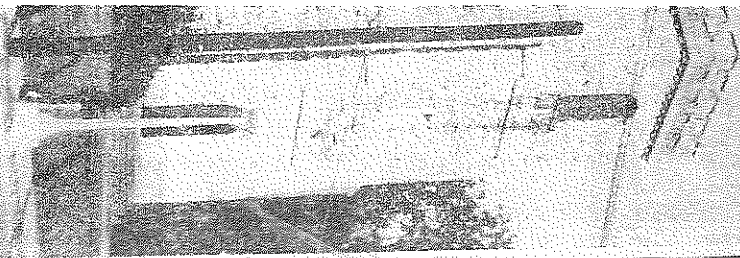
Fellowship, Pride Share Honors As Methodists Observe Centennial

Homecoming Attracts Former Members; Area Churches Extend Congratulations

By GAINES BREWSTER

The cheerfulness of homecoming and the pride of an anniversary observance kindled the spirit of Lithonia Methodists Sunday, as they shared a memorial and historic day with visitors and townspeople.

Inspired by the significance of the event and warmed by an Autumn sun, which burnished surroundings in a blaze of color, some 500 churchgoers attended the 100th birthday celebration. For many it was a joyous but nostalgic occasion.



Structure was eminent architect
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his special centen-

History of Lithonia Church Cited By Historian

By

MRS. SADIE ALMAND TUCKER

In 1850 there were in this community two men of different faiths, and both ministers of the Gospel. One was a Baptist who bore the

A typically southern "camp meeting" atmosphere prevailed as the throng mingled around long tables where an abundance of fine food and fresh fruit provided "substance and nourishment" for the happy and devout worshippers. From atop the square-towered church structure, clear soothing tones of melodious chimes enveloped the area.

The mood for the day was firmly established by Charles L. Davidson, layman, as he extended a reverent and hearty welcome. In citing the church's early beginning, Mr. Davidson said:

"Today we worship in a church brought into being by the vigor and determination of devout ancestors, their sacrifices, contributions, and loyalty through the years have brought us to this celebrated occasion."

Principal speaker during the morning service was a former pastor, the Rev. W. M. Twigg, now retired and living in Newnan, Ga. Rev. Twigg's recalled the years he served as pastor and reminded the congregation that the "debt for this present structure was raised" during his tenure. His interesting, friendly and warm talk brought back heartwarming memories, quiet tears, and appreciative chuckles.

Considered by many as one of the highlights of the program was the solo, "The Holy City," sung by Mrs. W. T. Gentry. Also on the musical side of the program was a beautiful anthem, "Benedictus Es Domine," rendered by the church choir, under the direction of Stan Christian, and accompanied by Mrs. Frances Marbut.

Mrs. Sadie Almand Tucker, a member for 69 years gave an informative, inspiring and thrilling narration of the church's event-filled 100 years. She told of a friendship between a young Methodist and an elderly and generous Baptist, both ministers. This friendship resulted in a gift of land from James R. George, the Baptist, to the ambitious young Methodist, Henry Clark. It was on this land that the first Lithonia Methodist Church was established.

camp name of James R. George, the father a Methodist, Henry Clark. They evidently lived on adjoining farms and traveled together a great deal. Mr. Clark was, what was called then, a local preacher, who preached in Lithonia quite often.

These meetings were held in brush arbors — one of these located where the first Methodist Church was later erected. Mr. Clark, realizing the necessity of a permanent building, had talked it over with his friend, Mr. George, saying that he hardly knew where or when to begin. Mr. George said, "I know a man who will give you a plot of ground." That man was none other than Mr. George himself. Not only did he give the land, but also a liberal donation of money.

We really are a daughter of the Rock Chapel Methodist Church, for on the roll of that church we see, recorded in 1860, the names of those who transferred to become the Lithonia Methodist Church. These were: W. P. Bond, Elizabeth, Sarah, D. P. Jacob, M. R., J. C. and S. W. Chupp, John Cleland, Elizabeth and Robert Jason, J. J. Marbut, and Elizabeth Swift. N. B. Ousley was the first preacher.

It is interesting to read the items in their old record book. For instance, a committee was appointed to reprimand certain members for the use of bad language, and other habits that were not becoming to those who called themselves Christians. Absences and attendance were recorded.

Jacob Chupp, one of those coming to the Lithonia Church from Rock Chapel seems to have been a man of great piety and liberality. He gave the bell that hangs in the bell-fry today — also this beautiful walnut chancel rail.

The Lithonia Church has two daughters — Rockland, which we helped organize in 1893, and Rodan, organized in 1894.

Our church has given two of her sons as ministers of the gospel, M. L. Underwood and C. A. Norton; also a daughter, Anita Moore, who volunteered for work on the Mission Field.

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Descendants of 12 of the 13 original church members were present Sunday. Many of these came back to Lithonia from such distant areas as California and New York. Also present Sunday was the church's oldest living member, Mrs. W. D. Abbott. Attending with Mrs. Abbott and sharing honors were Mrs. Birt Norton Bishop, with 76 years active membership, and Mr. Matt McClelland, 63 years. Unable to attend because of ill health were Mrs. Mamie Rogers, 90 years of age, and Mr. Jack Davidson, the oldest male member of the Lithonia Methodist Church. The church's youngest member is his great granddaughter, Nina Elizabeth Gentry.

Greetings and congratulations were extended to the Lithonia Church by representatives of nearby community churches. These were Mrs. Eugene Phillips, Redan; Mr. Lem Bond, Rockland; and Mrs. Mary Bond Sorrow, Rock Chapel — the church which sponsored and organized the Lithonia Church.

The Rev. G. B. Henderson is serving the church as its 60th pastor. The first minister assigned to Lithonia was the Rev. N. B. Ousley.

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The Lithonia Church was part of a circuit, until 1926 when we became a station.

The original one-room structure was used until 1910. No alterations were made on it except a vestibule and two small classrooms, on either side of the vestibule. This building was in the area which is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Kelley, and Mrs. Margaret Summers.

During J. A. Quillian's pastorate the records of a 1910 Quarterly Conference show plans being made for a new building. Permission was obtained to sell the church property and invest in another plot of ground for a new building, the one in which we are worshipping today.

W. P. King was the pastor during its construction. Bishop Candler presided over the ceremonies for the laying of the corner-stone. It is said that, while a student at Emory College in Oxford, he preached his first sermon in the old Lithonia Church.

For a long time a large indebtedness hung over the membership. In 1923, when W. M. Twigg was pastor, he and the persevering membership lifted the debt, and Dr. C. Jarrell preached the dedicatory sermon in December 1923.

In 1919, \$10,000 was spent for improvements in the sanctuary. The pipe organ, the cathedral lights and memorial windows make for the present membership a place of real worship.

A Brief History

The church was constituted on February 18, 1848, using the Lithonia School House as its first meeting place. A new building across the street was completed in 1849, located on the site of the present Lithonia First United Methodist Church. A larger building was built on the same site a few years later. In 1853, plans were being made to relocate. Deacon John M. Born donated property for a new building at the corner of Main and Stone Mountain Streets. (This area is now the site of the Family Dollar Store and Eckerd Drug Store plus parking areas.) Special efforts were made to finish the new church by 1861 before soldiers left for the war. There were several additions to the original building. The church continued to grow and by the early 1960s, members realized that a new site should be secured. On June 20, 1965, ground was broken at the seven-acre site on Hillandale Drive, and the first service in the new facilities was held on March 20, 1966.

The church began with eleven charter members. Over the years the church grew in size and ministry, with over 1000 members (both resident and non-resident) in the 1980s. Currently the membership roll reflects approximately 500 resident members.

Ministers Who Have Served First Baptist Church

James R. George	2/18/1848	M.L. Keith	1907
David Cook	9/23/1848	J.M. Waller	1909
James R. George	9/27/1851	T.E. McCutchen	1912
James McDonald	11/26/1853	J.A. Reiser	1916
James H. Weaver	1857	T.C. Burrell	1919
Stephen Mayfield	1858	A.E. Logan	1921
C.C. White	1861	T.C. Burrell	7/5/1922-12/23/1923
W.E. Spears	1867	B.D. Porter	1/20/1924
William D. Adkinson	1868	H.O. Fowler	1/1/1925-5/23/1927
C.C. White	1871	W.H. Wages	7/24/1927-11/15/1927
J.M. Stillwell	1872	D.T. Buice	12/8/1929-10/1/1939
V.C. Norcross	10/19/1878	Bryon Kennerly	4/28/1940-8/29/1943
W.M. Davis	10/27/1878	Charles C. Duncan	10/6/1943-10/15/1945
Edgar Jewell	10/20/1880	W. B. Hollingsworth	11/1/1945-6/8/1947
A.J. Goss	10/11/1884-1887	Earle F. Stirewalt	8/6/1947-6/11/1950
J.M. Brittain	9/17/1887	Alec F. Thompson	8/27/1950-5/3/1953
T.C. Carleton	8/24/1889-1891	J. Homer Philpott	8/1/1953-7/1/1955
B.D. Ragsdale	12/6/1891-1895	Robert L. Franklin	10/2/1955-3/31/1959
A.J. Beck	7/27/1895	John Caylor, Jr.	10/25/1959-5/31/1965
L.G. Walker	1/26/1906	A.J. Pritchett	8/8/1965-11/1967
L.T. Reid	1906	Charles W. Drake	4/10/1968-8/31/1979
		Jim Martin	10/3/1979

Historic Lithonia First United Methodist welcomes female pastor

By Valerie J. Morgan

A former Augusta, Georgia minister has been appointed to Lithonia First United Methodist Church, one of the city's oldest churches.

The Rev. Renea Slater is the first African American senior pastor assigned to the 146-year-old predominately white church. Slater delivered her first sermon to her new congregation on June 25.

"The reception has been overwhelmingly great. Many of the members have come to welcome me personally. I'm looking forward to this new assignment," Rev. Slater said.

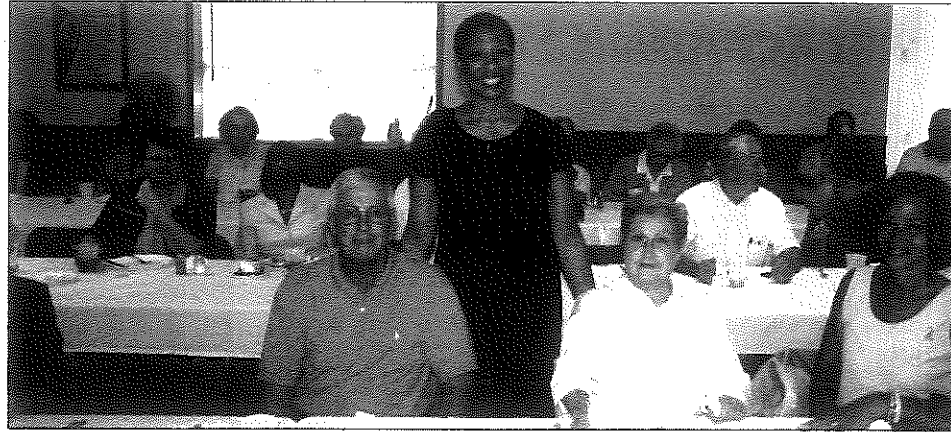
Slater, who spent two years as senior pastor of St. Johns United Methodist Church in Augusta, replaces Dr. Larry Wilson. Wilson, who had served 16 years at Lithonia First United Methodist Church, accepted an appointment by United Methodist Church officials to oversee Lithia Springs United Methodist Church.

For Slater, being the first African American at an historically white church is nothing new. It's the third such assignment that she has taken on during the 13 years that she has been a pastor with the United Methodist Church.

"The fact is we have fewer black United Methodist Churches in every town, so there's a pretty good chance that an assignment will be made to a predominately Anglo church," Slater said. "With the United Methodist Church, you can receive a new assignment at any point. When we receive our assignments, typically, we don't know anything about the church. We just have to be ready and willing to serve."

Slater is part of a growing flock of women who are willing to serve and are taking their places in United Methodist Church pulpits. Today, ordained women number about 150 of 900 pastors in the North Georgia Conference, Slater said.

The United Methodist Church has at least 10,000 clergywomen, including elders, deacons, local pastors and re-



Setting In: The Rev. Renea, who left Augusta, Slater said she is looking forward to her new assignment in DeKalb County.

ties, according to the United Methodist News Service. Of those 10,000, 800 to 1,000 are ethnic minority clergywomen. Historically, the largest number has been African American. Other ethnic groups include Korean American, Hispanic, Native American, Japanese American, Chinese American and Pacific Islander.

"Ten years ago, you had about 10 women who were part of our group. Women have come a long way in the United Methodist Church. Now, most seminaries have about half women and half men," said Slater, who received her master's in divinity degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.

Slater said that Bishop Lindsey Davis, who oversees the North Georgia Conference of United Methodist Church-

es, is working diligently to appoint more women as senior pastors.

Slater says she is looking forward to working with her congregation to increase membership at the church, which has about 100 members, many of them elderly.

"I don't have any reservations that the congregation will do well. I don't know where we will find the increase, but we're going to work together to bring people to the body of Christ," Rev. Slater said.

Single with three adult children, Slater has five grandchildren.

First United Methodist Church is located 3099 Stone Mountain St., Lithonia. Worship services are Sundays at 11 a.m. 770-482-6394.

"Lithonia Observer"
10/26/93

Church Observes 112th Birthday

by Gaines Brewster

The Lithonia (United) Methodist church is 112 years old.

Members and visitors will gather Sunday to celebrate the birthday. It is the annual and traditional Homecoming event for this protestant group which was organized on October 14, 1860.

Activities for this special service, which begins at 11:00 a.m., have been especially designed to be enjoyable and meaningful. The happy occasion is expected to attract a large number of worshippers, many from distant areas.

An elderly, retired - and beloved - Methodist minister will be the guest clergyman. Returning to the "country" church he served 30 years ago will be the Reverend Mr. L.F. Vanlandingham, known far and wide as an inspirational and fiery speaker.

In announcing the program for October 29, Horace Couch, the amiable and zealous local pastor, said, "We are looking forward with fervor to this year's Homecoming as it will be a happy, spiritual, festival and memorable event for everyone. There'll be tears of joy as our families share fellowship, food . . . demonstrating love toward one another."

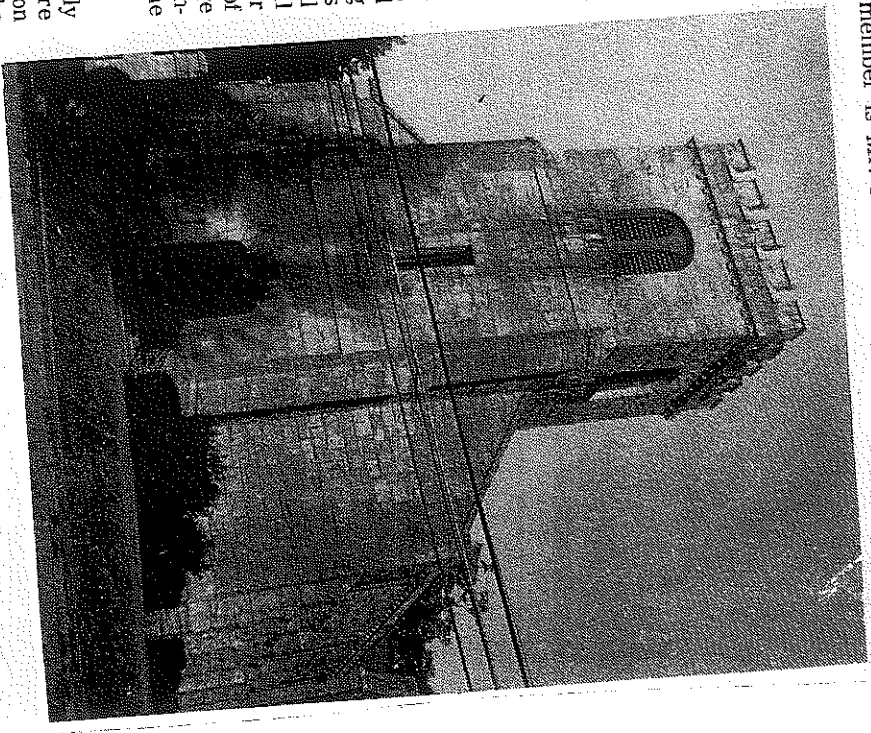
First services for the newly organized Methodists were held in a wooden structure on Church street located at the time near the home of Mrs. J.J. (Margaret) Summers. Cornerstone for the present building, designed by John Parks Almand, was placed in 1910. Services were held in the

new granite edifice the following year. Mortgage papers covering construction costs and purchase of the building were burned in 1923.

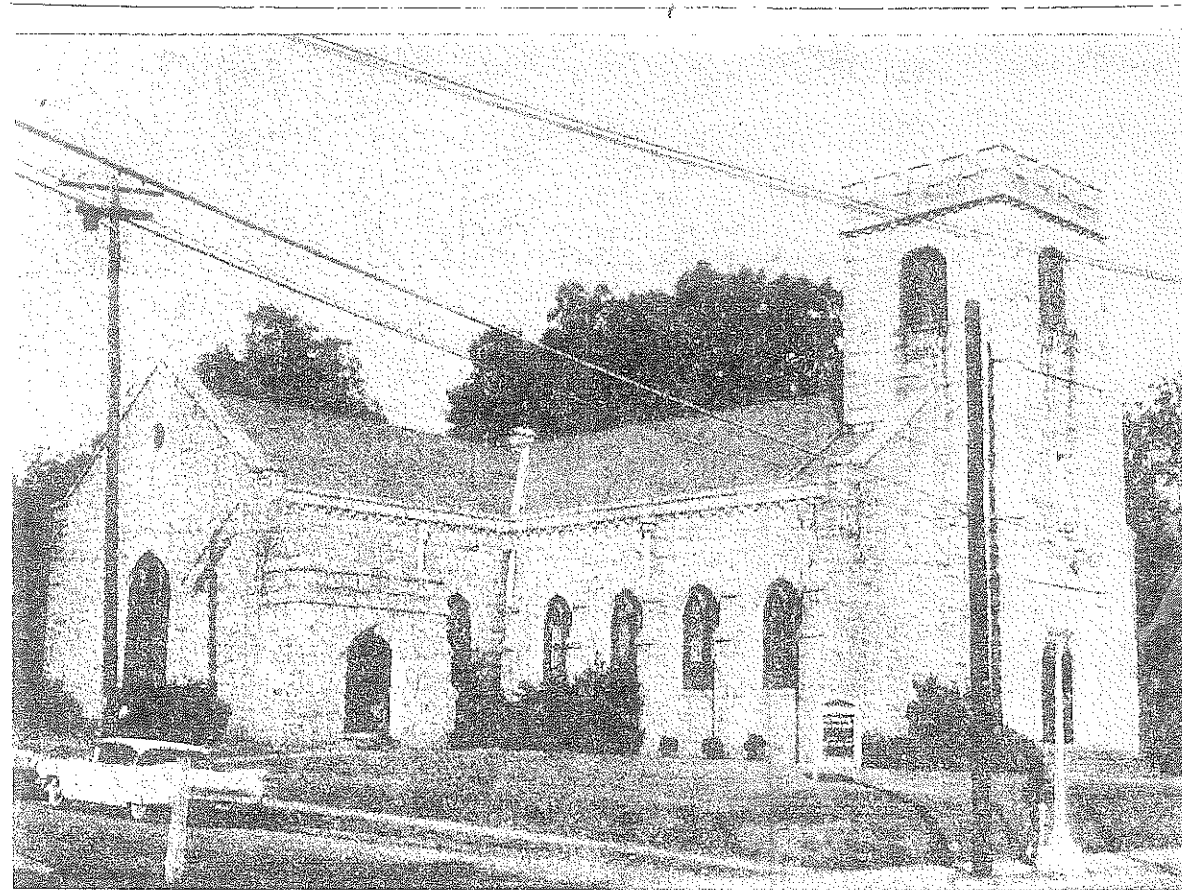
Judge Glynn Abram '79, considered to be the "oldest" on membership rolls, joined the church in September 1904. Believed to be the oldest living member is Mr. H.J. Lindig.

Other long-time members include Norton Davidson, Mrs. Mary Lou Brantley, J. Keay Davidson, Mrs. V.C. (Rachel Davidson) Strickland, Charles L. Davidson, and Mrs. Leto Phillips.

Weather permitting, dinner will be spread on tables in the recreational area back of the church.



"HOMECOMING" - Members of the Lithonia United Methodist will gather in this 62 year old building Sunday to observe their 112th anniversary. Architect for this handsome, granite edifice was John Parks Almand, his first assignment after graduating from Ga. Tech in 1909.



This is the Lithonia Methodist Church. This handsome, Gothic structure was erected in 1910. Designer and architect was John Almand, now a prominent architect living in Little Rock, Arkansas. Last Sunday, Lithonia Methodists observed their 100th anniversary with special worship services and homecoming which were attended by some 500. Former members from distant areas returned for this special centennial observance.

Colorful, Eventful History of Lithonia Methodist Reported In This Issue

(Editor's Note: On Sunday October 30, the Lithonia Methodist Church observed its 100th anniversary and homecoming. To enable us to give complete coverage of this historical and interesting event, we held back a general news article covering the services from last week's paper. In the next few issues, our readers will find several articles reporting this centennial observance, including a history of the church prepared especially by Mrs. Sadie Almand Tucker, a news story by Gaines Brewster and the talks given by Charles L. Davidson, Lem Bond, Mrs. Mary Bond Sorrow, and Mrs. Eugene Phillips.

A Joyous and Nostalgic

Fellowship, As Methodist

Homecoming Attracts
Area Churches Extensive

By GAINES

The cheerfulness of homecoming anniversary observance kindled the hearts of Lithonia Methodists Sunday, as they gathered with visitors and townspeople.

Inspired by the significance of an Autumn sun, which gladdened the faces of a throng of some 500 church members on this joyous birthday celebration. For many a nostalgic occasion.