

Snapshot *Your introduction to a metro Atlanta place of worship*

Church History

# Go tell it on the mountain: Yearly service draws thousands

5/17/05

## STONE MOUNTAIN FIRST UNITED METHODIST

5312 W. Mountain St.,  
Stone Mountain GA 30083

- **Phone:** 770-469-9767
- **Web site:** [www.smfumc.org](http://www.smfumc.org) (currently being redesigned).
- **Members:** 400
- **Pastor:** The Rev. Joy Rikard Brown
- **Services:** 8:30 and 11 a.m., with Sunday school at 9:45 a.m.
- **Affiliation:** United Methodist, member of North Georgia Conference of United Methodists

### Mission statement

"Our mission is to build disciples, who will reach out in God's love with the life-changing message of Christ," Brown said.

### History

In October 2004, members celebrated the church's 150th anniversary. The church was founded in 1854 with just seven members, and the first meeting place was built in 1870. In 1909, the cornerstone of the existing structure was laid. Over several years, the sanctuary was built with Stone Mountain granite. The original stained-glass windows remain today. The church has been served by 45 ministers. Members say they often hear their congregation described as the "friendly church."

In 1950, the Methodist Youth Fellowship, under the leadership of Lucile Lanford, started the Easter sunrise service that takes place on top of Stone Mountain. On a good-weather day, as many as 8,000 people attend the mountaintop service, while another 2,000 gather for a separate service on the laser lawn.

The Stone Mountain Ministerial Association, a cooperative group of area pastors, oversees the services.

### Special program and ministries

The Stone Mountain church has played host for the Wesley Walk for Others since 1982. Another regular event is a Santa Claus breakfast that raises money for families who need help at Christmas.



KEITH HADLEY / Staff

The Rev. Joy Rikard Brown and associate pastor Rev. Kevin Days, in the sanctuary of Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church, lead a congregation of 400. Brown had a career in sales for several years before graduating from Candler Theological Seminary at Emory University.

The historic church is a leader in the Stone Mountain Ecumenical Cooperative ministry, which includes a food pantry. Brown said she feels drawn to help needy families in the area.

Church members participate in the Stone Mountain village July Fourth parade and Christmas Eve candlelight community service. An AARP tax-assistance program for low-income families and retired persons is held at the church each year.

"We are very involved in our community," Brown stressed, adding that the church facility is used for community meetings such as the local ham radio club, coin collectors and the Highland pipes and drum corps.

### Career path

Brown is wrapping up her second year as pastor. Ministry is a second career for the Atlanta native.

"In 1971 is when I first felt called into the ministry," Brown said. "I had never

seen a woman minister. I didn't know that was possible."

After earning a bachelor's degree in English from Mercer University, Brown worked for five years as a sales manager for an Atlanta costume company. In 1979 she enrolled at Candler Theological Seminary at Emory University, graduating in 1982 with a master's of divinity degree.

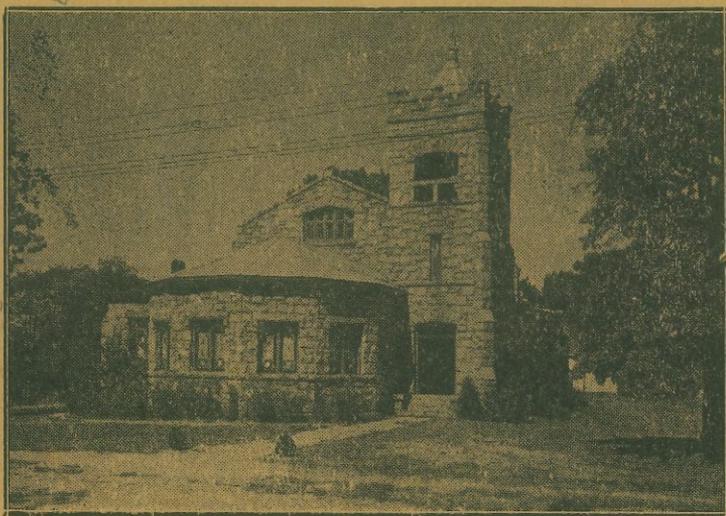
Brown has served churches across the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, most recently as pastor of Clarkesville UMC, before her appointment to the Stone Mountain church.

### Thoughts from the pastor

"Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church offers a rare worship experience in that it is a traditional, liturgical church that is at the same time warm, spontaneous and exciting," Brown says.

— Candice Hannigan, for the Journal-Constitution

HISTORY  
OF THE  
STONE MOUNTAIN  
*Methodist Church*



STONE MOUNTAIN, GA.

1870 -- 1937

DHS  
Quilines

Churches - Methodist -  
Stone Mountain Methodist  
Church

Newspaper -  
Articles New  
DeKalb News  
Nov - May '11  
Nov 1917

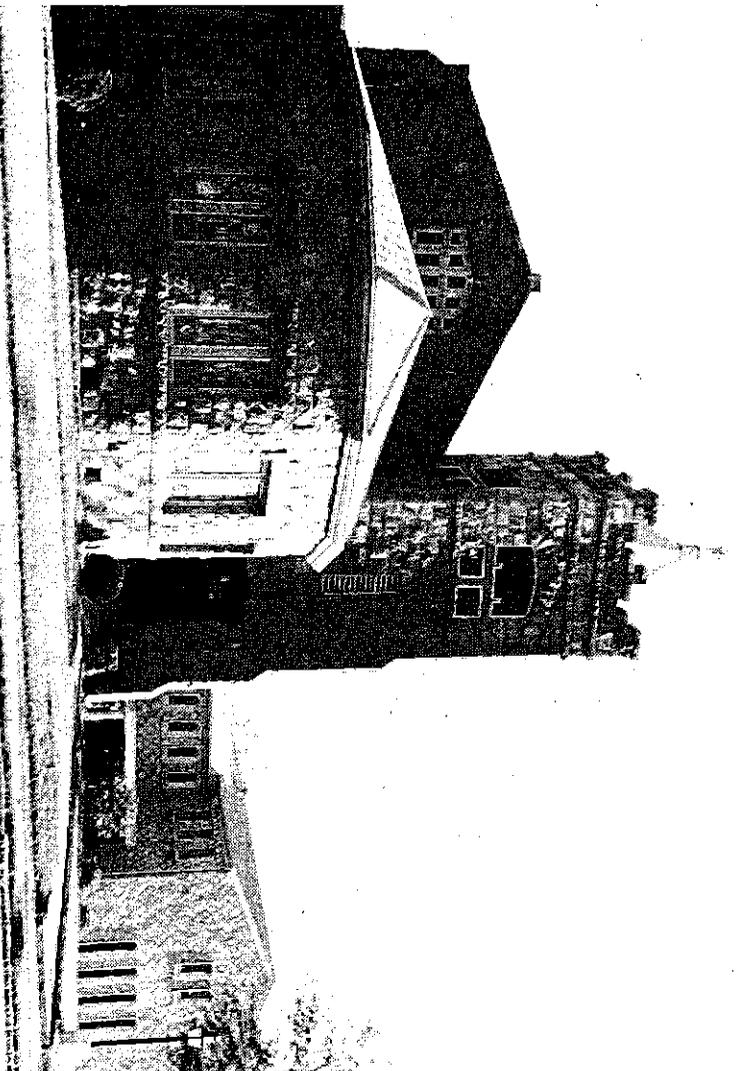
Stone Mtn. Methodist Church, located on  
the corner of Mountain St. & Ridge Ave,  
was organized in 1854 about 15 years  
after the settlement of the town in 1839.  
For the next 16 years the congregation  
used the same building as other groups  
used for assembly & worship. In 1870, the  
first Methodist Church was constructed  
on the present site. This little white  
frame church served the congregation  
until 1909 - when it was torn down  
& lumber used in building a parsonage

D.H.P.  
Ondines

Stone Mountain  
Methodist Church

On the church grounds, The present church  
of Stone Mtn. granite, replaced the old  
wooden structure. In the fall of 1926,  
It was possible to dedicate the building.

Church Of The Week



**STONE MOUNTAIN METHODIST CHURCH**  
5212 W. Mountain Street, Stone Mountain, Ga.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1983



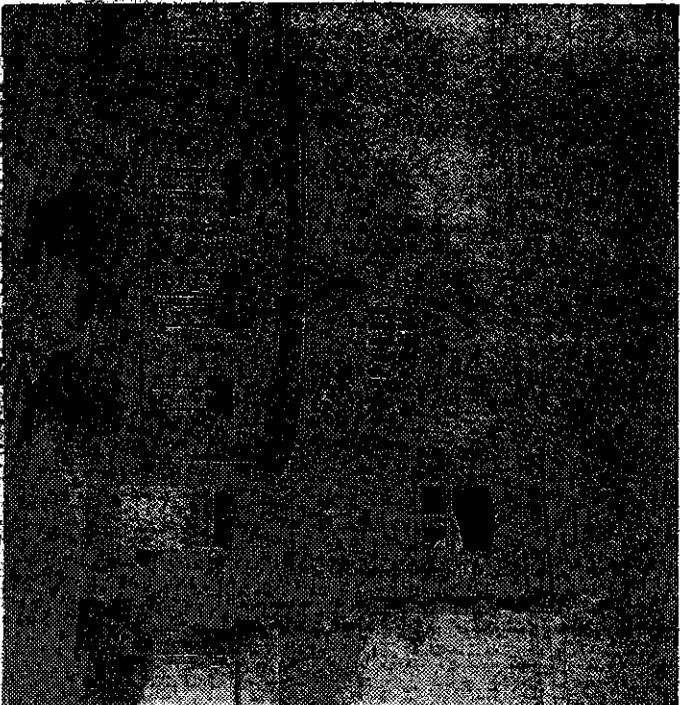
### Stone Mountain Methodist Bazaar

These ladies from Stone Mountain First Methodist are getting ready for the church's bazaar Saturday. Here, Lucille Lanford (L), crochets a doll dress, while Lois Baxter (C) prices jewelry, and Codel Skelton (R) also crochets a project for the bazaar. All are from the Stone Mountain

area. There will be plenty of hand-made items for sale along with baked goods and a country store. The bazaar begins at 9 a.m. and lasts until 5 p.m. The church is located at 5312 W. Mountain Street in Stone Mountain. (Staff Photo By Paul Eiland)

Religion

St. Mik. Methodist



**STONE MOUNTAIN METHODIST CHURCH**  
Founded in 1854 by Seven Charter Members.

## Church Centennial At Stone Mountain

**BY LINDSEY BRADEN**  
The Stone Mountain Methodist Church will celebrate 100 years of history next Sunday.

The church was founded in 1854 by seven men, some of whom have grandchildren who are members of the church today.

The church, however, is younger than the city of Stone Mountain. Its 100th anniversary was celebrated in 1935.

The church has had a colorful history.

The first meeting place was in a building which was part of the old Stone Mountain fairgrounds.

**HERE**, the Methodists alternated their meetings in the buildings with members of other faiths.

In 1870 a wooden structure was erected on the present church site. This building served the congregation until 1908 when a granite structure replaced the wooden one.

Through 17 years the church struggled to finish and finish a building. In November of 1926, dreams again true and the present granite building was dedicated.

Bishop Warren A. Candler was the speaker on that day.

During 1950, an educational building was added and in June, 1951, Bishop Arthur J. Moore dedicated the addition.

**SOME** of the former pastors of the church are the Rev. Nathaniel Young, the Rev. J. F. G. Steyer, the Rev. H. H. Dillard, the Rev. J. D. Maxwell, the Rev. J. L. Hall, the Rev. George Hamilton, the Rev. Thomas Shackleford, the Rev. Jack Nichols and many others who are deceased.

Next Sunday the church will celebrate its 100th birthday with special services and dinner in the recreation hall.

Invitations have been issued to former pastors, district superintendents and members to join in the celebration.

The Rev. Lamar Watkins is the present pastor.

Bishop W. T. Watkins of Louisville, Ky., father of the pastor, will

be the speaker at evening services at 7 p.m.

# Church In Shadow Of Mountain

By GEORGE O. GREENE, Pastor

The Stone Mountain Methodist Church, on the corner of Mountain Street and Ridge Avenue, stands in the shadow of Stone Mountain and overlooks the little town of Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Three of the town's four churches are located on Ridge Avenue which, the older citizens always said, was the highest point within the city limits. The forefathers must have had a purpose in building

the churches on high ground so that they might keep a watchful eye on the little community, and help its citizens follow Jesus in "wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The Stone Mountain Methodist Church was organized in 1854, about 15 years after the settlement of the town in 1839. There were 7 persons, whose names are known, who met and chartered the organization. There are members of the church today who are descendants of **REV. GEORGE O. GREENE** four of the founders. The following was taken from minutes of the Georgia Conference for 1867-69:



Members - 258 white - 40 colored  
Infants baptized - 15 - Adults baptized - 10  
Sunday School - 314 pupils

Financial Report:

Value of property - Buildings	\$2600.00
Settings	\$ 875.00
Paid Pastor	\$ 275.00
Home Missions	\$ 15.00
Foreign Missions	\$ 6.00

For the next 16 years the congregation used the same building as other groups used for assembly and worship. In 1870, the first Methodist Church was constructed on the present site. In the vestibule of the present church hangs a painting of this church which was painted by a great, great grandson, and presented to the church by a great granddaughter, of two of the founders.

This little white frame church served the congregation until 1909 - when it was torn down and the lumber used in building a parsonage on the church grounds. The present church, of Stone Mountain granite, replaced the old wooden structure. So anxious were the members to get into the edifice that small inconveniences - like bare rock walls and no windows, did not dampen their spirits. Even the dampness of the dirt floor, which was used for some months, did not keep the faithful souls from coming to worship in the "New Church".

The stained glass windows were donated by church groups and generous individuals. In time, the floor was laid, the interior finished and pews bought. The pulpit furnishings added to the beauty of it all. The old pedal organ was replaced by a grand piano, but later an organ and chimes were added.

In the Fall of 1926, it was possible to dedicate the building, and the late Bishop Warren

A. Candler presided at the dedication ceremony. Records show that the Stone Mountain Methodist Church was connected with other churches until 1947, when it became a full time station.

The need for an Educational Building was great and in October, 1948, work was begun on it. This addition included 13 classrooms, kitchen, recreation room, and rest rooms. On June 24, 1951, this building was dedicated by Bishop Arthur J. Moore.

As time and customs change - so do the needs of churches, so it became necessary to secure a parking area. This was included in a beautification of the church grounds. Sidewalks around the church and parsonage were paved, and cement walks to the church's entrances were included in the beautification program.

It may be that the Methodist are a little biased in thinking this, but some people feel that the aforementioned improvement was the beginning of the paving of some sidewalks in the town, since it was done immediately after this improvement.

Our next improvement was the renovation of the sanctuary and the building of a new parsonage. A lovely brick home was built on the site of the old one.

As the community grew, the church's needs increased and more space became necessary. So the membership, as usual, answered the call, paid off the old indebtedness and made plans for another addition. This included classrooms and assembly room for the Youth Department, a Nursery Department, Church Parlor, Pastor's Office and Study, and a beautiful Memorial Chapel.

During the past quarter century, the Stone Mountain Methodist Church has not only triplicated its physical plant but has taken an active interest in all worthwhile programs of the community, as well as carrying on the programs of the church, and has striven to set an example of Christian living. The church has had Christian leadership in outstanding pastors through the years. It has always seemed that the minister sent has had the special ability to answer that particular need of the church.

Since July 1, 1965, when the present pastor, the Reverend George O. Greene, came to serve the church, there have been 200 additions to the church membership. The program of the church today attempts to take care of the needs of all its members in a wholesome, Christian way.

The Sunday services are sent by intercom to the Stone Mountain Manor Convalescent Home across the street from the church.

The Sunday night service, called "The Finest Hour of the Week", finds the pews full. The good singing, the inspirational message, and the friendly folks make it a fine hour.

An invitation is extended to all and a warm welcome awaits everyone.

It is the fervent hope of all that the next century will be as fruitful for the Lord and as meaningful to its members as has the first one.

(over)