

3/31/94 The Journal Star Extra Emory Bapt Box 7

Congregation bids adieu as Emory Baptist closes

By Chris Grimes
STAFF WRITER

The day of its last service, Emory Baptist Church resembled the vibrant house of worship it once was.

The congregation numbered in the hundreds, and after the service it feasted on fried chicken, casseroles and cake, just like thousands of other Southern Baptists this past Sunday afternoon.

But the chapel was filled with visitors, mostly — people who had come to witness the final service of a church that saw its congregation dwindle from more than 500 in the early 1960s to around 50 in the last few years.

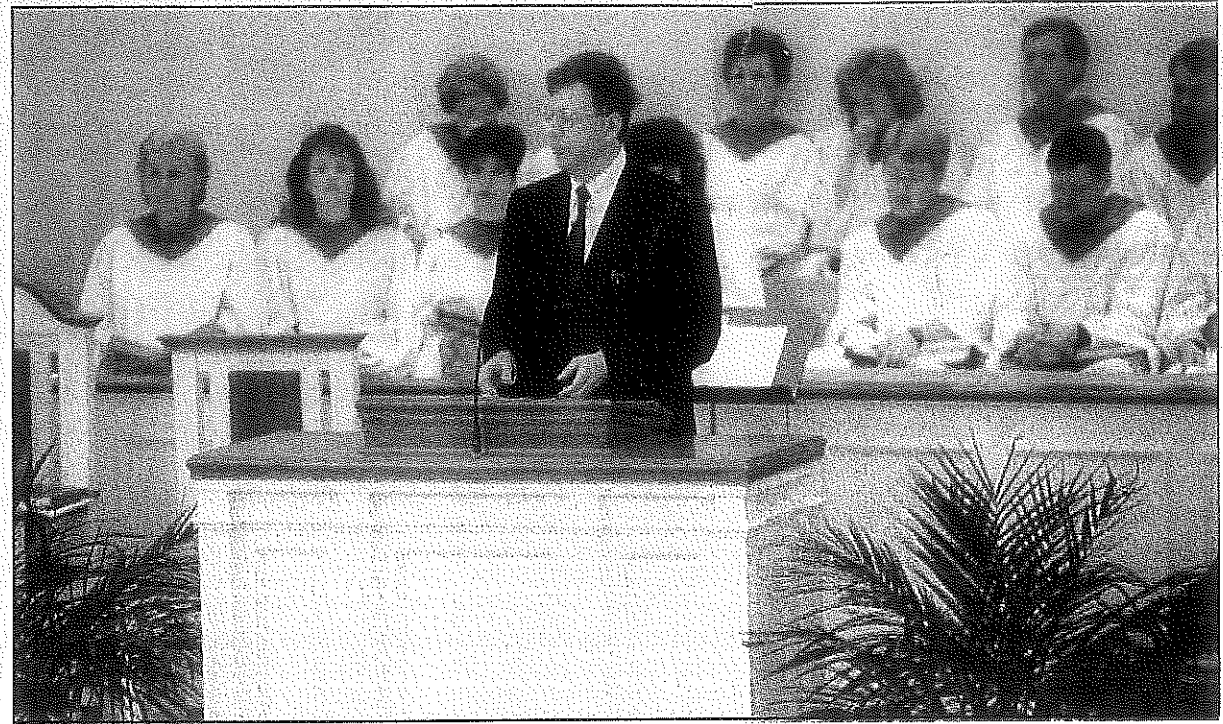
For that core of about 50, there's a real sense of loss. Yet the members are following the lead of the last pastor at Emory Baptist, the Rev. Nelson Gran-

ade, in focusing on the church's legacy. When the property is sold, 80 percent of the proceeds are being left to Mercer University to establish a seminary.

"Emory Baptist Church is going out with dignity," said Dorothy Sayer, a member since 1963. "It is continuing the work of the good Lord by deeding itself to Mercer."

Granade, the pastor at Emory Baptist for its last three years, said the church saw its congregation decline over the years as the neighborhoods around it became populated with younger, mostly single people while the church's population was growing older.

"I don't like to think of a church as a business, but it's the same demographic factors as when a business fails," Granade said.



DWIGHT ROSS JR. / Staff

Please see **CHURCH, J5** ▶

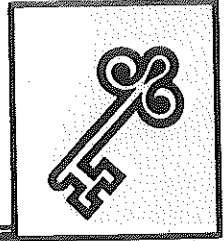
The Rev. Nelson Granade has been pastor of Emory Baptist Church for the past three years.

EMORY
BAPT. CH.

DeKalb News/Sm
3/4/92

On
DeKalb

Keynotes



RYAN SAUERS has been named to the Dean's List at the Mercer University Stetson School of Business and Economics for the fall quarter, 1991. To attain Dean's List, a student must receive a grade point average of 3.66 or better while enrolled in a regular program of 12 or more academic hours. A 1991 graduate of Tucker High School, Ryan is the son of Rick and Sheila Sauers of Stone Mountain. He recently was initiated into Pi Kappa Phi fraternity.

EMORY BAPTIST CHURCH observed "Victory Sunday," Jan. 26, with an Olympic theme, "Going for the Gold," emphasizing personal commitment of time, talent and finances. A luncheon followed morning worship.

THE NEELY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS of Emory Baptist Church is continuing its church-wide sponsorship of a "mile of pennies" for the Baptist Children's Home. The class members recently enjoyed dinner at Morrison's with special gifts for Buford Warren and John Wurst.

UNITED METHODIST EVANGELICALS will meet in Louisville, Ky., May 5-16. "The Memphis Declaration" which was approved at a meeting of evangelical pastors and lay persons held Jan. 24-25 in Memphis, Tenn., will be a strong point of the conference.

KYLE ALAN JOINER, son of Mr. and Mrs. John T. Joiner of Atlanta, was named to the Fall Quarter Dean's List at Southern College of Technology in Marietta. He is majoring in mechanical engineering. Kyle graduated from Lakeside High School and is a 1991 graduate of Furman University.

WILLIAM NEELY HANNAH, JR. of Decatur, a junior at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va., has been elected into membership in Washington and Lee's Gamma of Virginia Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Annually, a limited number of students of outstanding character and superior academic records are elected into Phi Beta Kappa. Hannah is the son of Ms. Barbara B. Hannah of Decatur.

PLEDGES INITIATED into Delta Phi Chapter of Kappa Delta sorority at West Georgia College, Carrollton, included Tonia Tumbleston, Lithonia, Amy Vaughan and Mary Wilkinson, Stone Mountain.

MELANIE JANE KAY, daughter of Rick and Jane Kay, was initiated into the Lambda Sigma Chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi at the University of Georgia. Melanie is a freshman biology major. She received a 4.0 grade point average.

BRADLEY AND MARGIE LITTLETON JOHNSON of West Columbia, S.C., announce the birth of their second child, Holly Elaine, Dec. 11. Their first child, Samuel Bradley, two, was born in Fairfax, Va. The grandparents are Dan and Carolyn Littleton of Stone Mountain and Robert and Georgia Johnson of Webster Grove, Mo.

THE METRO ATLANTA OLDER WORKERS awards luncheon will be held Wednesday, March 11 at the Sheraton Center Hotel at noon. Employee and Employer for 1991 will be announced. This is sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Commission, Metropolitan Atlanta Older Workers Project, Operation ABLE, Sears-Roebuck Foundation and WSB-TV Channel 2.

TIM BRANSCOMB, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Branscomb of Tucker and a 1989 graduate of Shamrock High School, has been named to the Dean's Honor Roll for the fall quarter at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala. He has recently been selected for membership in the Pre-Engineering Honorary fraternity, Pi Gamma Tau.

APRIL AND DAVID MC KAY of Hilton Ridge Court, Lithonia, announce the birth of their first child, Alison Marie, Jan. 26 at Northside Hospital. The grandparents are Mary and Jerry Wenger of Stone Mountain and Victoria and Raymond McKay of Lewiston, N.Y. The maternal great-grandparents are Mrs. Ethel Skiba of Decatur and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Wenger of Youngstown, N.Y. The paternal great-grandmother is Eva McKay of Newfan, N.Y.

DIANA GABHART, minister of Childhood Education at Decatur First Baptist Church, has returned home following surgery at DeKalb General Hospital.

THE REV. JAMES CARTER is the new minister of seniors at Rainbow Park Baptist Church.

SUE AND LLOYD CUNNINGHAM and children are recent newcomers to the Stone Mountain area from Houston, Texas.

WAYNE SPANGLER has joined the ministerial staff of Mount Carmel Christian Church in the area of administration and evangelism. For the past 12 years he has served as chaplain of DeKalb Medical Center. He has over 40 years of other ministerial experience. He and his wife, Ida Mae, live in the area.

DR. AND MRS. JAMES P. WESBERRY were honored Feb. 6 at a gala affair at the Atlanta Athletic Club for their long-time work, 17 years as executive director of The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States. Considered the patriarch of Georgia Baptists there were a number of Baptist layment, and several Presbyterian pastors, participating in the program and the Catholic Monsignor of the Archdiocese of Boston led the invocation.

WALLACE CONRATH will serve as instrumental director in the new Instrumental Music Ministry of Decatur First Baptist Church. He is the band director at Central Gwinnett High School and an accomplished trumpeter.

YOUNG AT HEART of Mt. Carmel Christian Church plans a visit to the Chateau Elan Winery and on to Commerce to the Pottery Factory or outlet stores on March 19.

BERTHA SUE AND DAVID LAWRENCE PHILLHOUSE and children recently moved from the Decatur area to Birmingham, Ala., where he will be employed.

RONALD AND SHARON MC CLUNG, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries to Ecuador, are on furlough in the states. They are living at 1326 Mt. Vernon Rd., Dunwoody. She is the former Sharon Wheeler.

LERSTIENDUMRONG JONJIT of Thailand and Kit Ping Tam of Hong Kong were two of the students who participated in Friendship International House. Lloyd Carver and family of Norcross recently had two Japanese college students visit with them.

Church: Congregation goes out with dignity

▶ Continued from J1

"We've had our share of funerals here in the last few years. Recently, we lost a member who was here 40 years, who contributed a lot to the church, and we can't replace someone who's been that active that long with a new member."

Granade said the decision to close has taken about six months.

"I think our people should be congratulated for being proactive," he said. "We could keep meeting here, but they chose to either have a ministry here that will help the community" or to close its doors.

"Although Decatur is experiencing a rejuvenification, we won't be around to see it," he said.

Granade said the church began a young adult and singles program to try to lure in a younger congregation, with some success.

"Even though we've gotten some younger people here, we haven't been able to offer programs to meet their needs. Since I've been here, we've actually recruited young people and put them on important committees.

Our people have been intent on bringing in younger people."

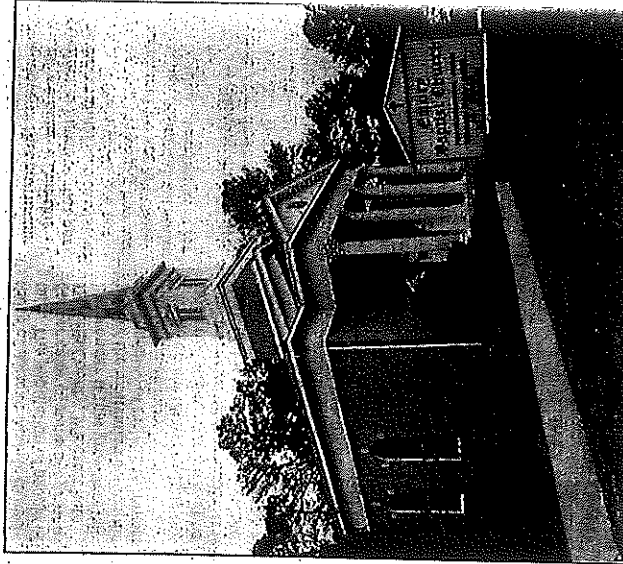
The church was founded in 1945, originally meeting on the Emory University campus. In 1949, the 200 members of the church attended their first service at 1804 N. Decatur Road, and the congregation rose steadily until the early 1960s. The church reached its largest enrollment, 513, in 1967, when the young families that had settled in the area in the 1940s had all of their children at home.

It's those people who have largely been with the church for its entire life. And for many of them, it was the setting for the major ceremonies of their lives: marriages, baptisms and funerals.

"This is the only church I've ever been really active in," said C.H. "Red" Emmert. "My children were married in this church."

At a meeting called this month to help the members cope with the closing of their church, many compared it to going through the pain of death, divorce or a terminal illness, Granade said.

First Baptist Church in Deca-



DWIGHT ROSS JR. / SAYER

The congregation declined as the area around the church became populated with younger, mostly single people while the church's population was growing older.

ture is taking over the Emory Baptist rolls, and Granade will begin working there as an associate pastor later this spring.

Sayer said she still feels "dis-

belief, but we all feel that Emory Baptist is still carrying out its work. I feel pride in knowing that I have been a part of that church."