

History of Andrews Chapel United Methodist Church

Andrews Chapel Methodist Episcopal was established in 1875 in a brush arbor on Spring Street in Jonesboro, Ga under the pastorate of Rev. Frank Calhoun. The congregation later moved from Spring Street to Key Street to a small wooden framed building. In 1891, the congregation moved from Key Street to 112 Watterson Street due to poor road conditions on Key Street. The new building was a wooden framed building with lanterns and handmade benches.

On February 21, 1881, land was purchased at 122 Watterson Street from Luke McElory and Sam Leach for \$300.00 to erect a parsonage. In the early 1900's (approximately 1908), a parsonage and a small wooden framed church were erected on the site. In 1919, with Rev. J. W. Tharpe as pastor, plans were developed for a new and larger facility. In 1920, the first brick building was completed. The new building had indoor lighting, handmade pews, two coal heaters, a pump organ, and stained-glass windows. There were approximately 80 members on the church's membership roll and services were held on the first and third Sundays only.

The name of the church was changed to Andrews Chapel Methodist Church due to a conference merger in 1939 during the pastorate of Rev. J. W. Swain. In the early 1940's, the parsonage burned and a new one was built. In 1943, the church's mortgage was paid in full to the Methodist Board. In 1958, during the pastorate of Rev. A. P. Mitchell, the present parsonage was planned and construction began. In 1959, the parsonage was completed and furnished during the pastorate of Rev. Cornelius L. Henderson. His family was the first occupy this parsonage. In 1968, the church's name was changed to Andrews Chapel United Methodist Church due to the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Evangelical United Brethren. Plans to establish a new church facility began during the pastorate of Rev. Cornelius L. Henderson. Blueprints were decided during Rev. Harold Sharpe's pastorate (1966-1970). Groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility was held on Sunday, March, 1970. The new sanctuary was completed in 1972. Entrance day was held on Sunday, March 21, 1972.

During the pastorate of Rev. King A. Harris (1974-1978), Andrews Chapel began to have worship service every Sunday. In 1982, the mortgage was paid in full to the First National Bank of Jonesboro. During the late 1980's and under the pastorate of Rev. McCallister Hollins, plans for a Family Life Center were

developed. The Family Life Center was dedicated in April, 1991. During Rev. Hollins' tenure, the congregation began having two worship services.

Sabrina Crowder Kennedy, Former Church Historian, 2014

Here we focus on an expanded history of the last 32 years of ACUMC providing some context and perspective.

Rev. Frederick Gray came to Andrews Chapel UMC in 1993 as its 32nd pastor (1993 to 2001). Very shortly after his arrival, Rev. Gray focused his energy to accomplish mission projects: the parsonage was adapted to be a half-way home for a family in transition from homelessness to employment and self-sufficiency and the Food pantry program were established. Rev. Gray worked tirelessly to enrich the church body with Christian Education while laying the groundwork for Disciple Bible Study Classes 1-4, Short Study Bible Classes, a Prison Ministry, and the Summer Christian Wellness Camp. The Arthur James Johnson Finance room was dedicated.

The Speakers and Leaders of Tomorrow (SLOT) ministry was started in 1994 and the ministry just celebrated its 30th anniversary in March of this year. Rev. Gray asked Ms. Yvonne Ogletree to resurrect the Missions committee in 2001. Rev. Gray also found time to mentor several ministerial students who went on to establish other ministries.

The church continued to have a strong music ministry with a Young Adult choir, Youth choir, Senior choir, Children's choir, the Male chorus and the Voices of Faith and a large musician staff.

Rev. Gray was a gifted and compassionate pastor who made each member feel seen and heard. He had an uncanny knack for remembering your names and those of your family members. During his tenure Andrews Chapel finally accomplished its first completed church directory in 1999. There had been failed attempts for 12 years but through the detailed planning and hours of hard work by the Communications Committee and the support of the congregation the directory was accomplished. Members could finally put names with faces and the church could have a reasonably complete and accurate roster of our membership with names, pictures, addresses and telephone numbers. Rev. Gray thought the directory was a key of our church's vision to be a shepherding church in which we would know each other by sight and we would know how to get in touch with each other.

Like many of the pastors before him, Rev. Gray focused on the elimination of the church's debt. In 2000, the name of the Family Life Center was changed to the Arnold Education Center. In 2001, the mortgage of the Arnold Education Building was paid in full.

June 2001 heralded the arrival of Rev. Wimbley Hale, Jr., a former District Superintendent. He served from 2001 from 2016. Rev. Hale had a special place in his heart for the senior members of the congregation and the Prime-timers ministry flourished. There were fundraising activities like the Calendar Tea and the Senior Roast Banquet. With the help of Bro. Cutis Green and his company, Portrait EFX and a strong Communications and Church Directory team, Rev. Hale presided over the completion and distribution of three more church directories in 2004, 2009, and 2015.

Rev. Hale expanded the ministerial staff to include Minister Ferris Williams as the Assistant to the Pastor. Rev. Gwendolyn D. Magby, Rev. Fleming Thompson, Jr., and Ministers Chaloea Hale and Jeremy Mahaffey all served as Ministers of Youth. Rev. Susan Warren served as Lay Leader and Minister Annetti Anderson as Minister of Evangelism. The church congregation was very fortunate to have Rev. Bradley Watkins as the assistant pastor. Rev. Watkins was a retired pastor and District Superintendent from the Illinois Conference. Rev. Watkins was an excellent speaker and he had a special spiritual gift for pastoral care which helped the congregation, especially the sick and shut-in feel loved, seen and remembered.

The Church continued to have a strong Music Ministry during Rev. Hale's long tenure that included the Senior, Gospel, Youth and Children's choirs, the Male Chorus, the Chapel Voices of Praise, Praise dancers, and a strong musician staff. Andrews Chapel UMC has always been known for its music.

The church had ongoing traditional ministries like new members classes, the children's ministry, and the UMM and UMW, with continued Discipleship classes and a Christian Wholeness Summer camp. There was a very active Missions and Social Awareness committee which led the church's efforts to engage with the outside community and non-profit organizations like Habitats for Humanity, Rainbow House, Calvary Refuge Center, United Way Shoebox campaign, Securus House Women's Shelter, The Colson Prison Fellowship Ministry Angel tree for prisoner's children, the Lion's club glasses collection and Phones4Charity. This ministry also provided backpacks and supplies for back-to-school, conducted several "warm-up Sunday" coats, hats and gloves collections for the homeless and initiated the giving of gift cards at Thanksgiving and Christmas to caregivers and sick and shut-in members. This ministry joined forces with the UMM for the "Feed

the Hungry...Feed the Community...Feed the Spirit”, a Clayton county-wide program, to provide meals, new and gently used clothing and toiletries to those in need.

Bro. Robert Mitchell went on 2 missionary trips to Ghana in 2004 with the North Georgia United Methodist Men. ACUMC United Methodist Women went on a mission trip to Haiti in November 2015. Eight members of the unit gathered food, toys, clothes to give to orphanages and churches. The unit was able to feed approximately 125 families and distribute items to approximately 150 children. The unit later sent a large donation of “Shoes That Grow” to Hati.

Rev. Hale led the church on a new journey; supplying the future by “Opening New doors of Opportunity for Ministry”. Our members initiated several new ministries such as the Drama ministry, the Boy Scouts, fitness programs, the Sports ministry-- both softball and basketball, the Motorcycle ministry, the Bowling ministries, the Margarita Mamas and the ACUMC Walking disciples. These ministries allowed church members to fellowship in different environments.

In 2002, 1.8 acres of property was purchased at 117 Stockbridge Road for \$130,000.00 in cash. Andrews Chapel currently sits on 4.5 acres.

Context and perspective

Andrews Chapel is a traditional UMC with an aging membership. During this time the church, the nation and the denomination was experiencing a transition. We saw many of the youth the church had nurtured and help educate with an J W Arnold scholarship, go off to college and the military to then start their new lives, their new careers and their new families in other parts of metro Atlanta, the state, the US and abroad. We also saw “sons” and “daughters” of the church receive their call to preach and/or establish music and other ministries of their own and their families and friends left to support those efforts. More churches entered the Jonesboro and Clayton County communities, some providing non-traditional and contemporary services with an emphasis on community focus and engagement. Some of our members retired and moved back “home”. Then there was the rise and appeal of the mega church with their expanded programming for families, the introduction of social media and virtual services which allowed people to attend church at home and feel a part of a community all over the country and the world, the rise of “the elevated brunch”, opportunities to travel, YOLO, allegiances to sports teams and having so many choices are all things that competed with Sunday church attendance. Andrews Chapel keeps praying, praising and trusting God. Our

present pastor, Rev. Donald K. Reed came to Andrews Chapel in 2016. He continued to lead the congregation through expanded Christian education, Sunday school classes, and the Food SHARE program. Decisions were made to return to one Sunday service and the Senior choir and the Voices of Faith were consolidated into the New Inspirational choir. The Male chorus and the Children's choir continued. Minister Jackie Parker provides very powerful leadership for the Lay ministry.

In 2018, Rev. Reed introduced Destination 2025 which involved several listening sessions and the compiling of data by Deirdra Raines. This document was to be a roadmap to our 150th anniversary. Also in 2018, Rev. Reed took a large group of church members on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Several of the members reported being baptized at the mouth of the Jordan River.

March 2020 the US shut down because of the Covid-19 pandemic in an effort to slow the rapid spread of the virus and prevent overwhelming the healthcare system. This shut down included stay-at-home recommendations except for essential activities and discouraged gathering inside in large groups. Up until this time church services had been recorded on DVD, cassettes and then CDs and distributed to the sick and shut-it. The Church was now forced to regroup and provide an on-line presence. Pastoring on-line was especially challenging to pastors in general, since the congregational response is vital to engagement. Rev. Reed went from verbal "Amen's" to the chat box. Rev. Reed rose to the occasion and faithfully preached, presided over the sacraments, provided a daily word and remembered the sick and shut-ins and provided bible study to the church all on-line. Many of the members adapted and went on-line also. The Sunday school classes and most of the ministry meetings went on-line. We just didn't know it would be two years. During this time the church lost a significant number of members to death, declining health, depression, caretaking responsibilities and social isolation since many of our older members could not negotiate the internet.

Rev. Reed presided in a time of death and loss of pillars of our church, pandemic, disease, sickness, a number devastating and long term dx for members, disaffiliation, the impact of social media, and generational changes leading to a contraction of church attendance at Andrews Chapel and many mainstream Protestant denominations.

Still ACUMC kept moving with Evangelism, with the support of several ministries, presenting community-wide "Praise in the Park" events. Church members continued to participate in walks supporting Breast and Blood cancers research, "Witness for Fitness", and the food pantry, S.H.A.R.E. During this time the church updated our audio-visual equipment and volunteer staff, updated our technology including QR codes for the bulletins, upgraded our security system and brought new windows for rooms below the sanctuary.

The church has had several members on North Georgia Conference district committees with Claudette Neal and Frenda Norwood holding district offices in the United Women in Faith and Connie Ward, PhD, sitting on the Central North District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) for 4 years, under the leadership of our District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Michael McQueen. The North GA conference has gone from 12 to 8 to 5 districts. As of 2024 the church was placed in the Central-South District.

Stay tuned for an expanded history of ACUMC in 2025 with annotated context, perspective, and congregational leadership names and dates. We are making history.

Connie M Ward, PhD, ACUMC church historian 2024

149th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE 2024

Dr. Connie Ward, Co-Chair
Dierdra Raines, Co-Chair

ACUMC History Committee 2024-25

1. Connie M Ward, PhD, Chair
2. Myra Thrash
3. Cornelia Smith, Church Council chair
4. Dierdra Raines, 150th Anniversary chair
5. Chris Snell
6. Reggie Pettus
7. Georgia Wilson

Technical Consultants:

1. Isiah Moore
2. Charles Hampton, PhD

Children's Ministry and SLOT:

1. Rev. Susan Warren, PhD, SLOT
2. Ruthie Moore, SLOT
3. Esther Alexander, Children

Legacy Consultants:

1. Frenda Norwood
2. Vickie Broughton
3. Stephanie Glenn
4. Patrica Cannon and Bertha Crowder
5. Jeanette Crowder
6. Annie Broughton
7. Janet Broughton