

Dunnellon, Florida 1885-2004

Our church is rich with history. All of us who come to worship here at First United Methodist Church should be eternally grateful to all those persons who have given unconditionally of their time and talents. Our church exists because of good and faithful parishioners and pastors who had a great desire of spreading the "Good News" of Jesus Christ to others in our community.

The task of mentioning every person who contributed to this church and its growth over the years would be monumental. However, you can read about many of these commendable Christians in the following pages. On behalf of First United Methodist Church, we wish to thank a few people who, without their insight and knowledge, this historical manuscript would not have been printed. Their contribution to their Lord and their Church should not go unnoticed or unrecognized. We wish to extend a warm and special thanks to:

Winne Lowe

Montine King

Maxie B. Lowe

Ruth Riley

Patricia J. Schaffer

As you read through these pages, you have the opportunity to look into the past. But, as you come to church, you have the honor and privilege to plan for the future. We celebrate the vision that many people had in this book, and we rejoice with you who continue to keep the vision, mission and ministry of our church alive.

Always Following Him,

Harold R. Hendren (past)
Minister

Oldest Congregation In Dunnellon

In 1885, a small number of people met under the trees near where Rockwell Cemetery now is and organized a Methodist Church. Services were held once a month with Rev. Southerland as the first pastor. The Rev. Allay and Rev. Reynolds were also pastors for a while.

The charter members were Mrs. Candace Turner, Mrs. Caroline Robinson, G.P. Southerland and family, the Herndon family, Mr. Tyler. Mr. and Mrs. Renfro and Alford Renfro. There are probably a few others whose names have escaped our memory.

Mr. Hendon donated land for a church building and cemetery and a church was built in 1886 at Rockwell, where the cemetery now is, and we continued to worship in it until about 1889. Mr

Albertus Vogt bought this church and moved it to his place, then one of the show places of Dunnellon, and made it a stable to house his fine horse.

About 1900 we built a church in Dunnellon. This was used as a church and schoolhouse, and all denominations worshipped with us. The Rev. Sam Scott was the first pastor of this church. The Rev. George J. Kennelly succeeded him. About 1901 we sold this church building to the black Baptists. It is known as Beulah Baptist Church, later replaced by a block building.

By this time the Presbyterians had built their church, and we worshipped with them for a few years. About 1903 we began to work towards our own church on the corner of Ohio and Chestnut. The Rev. B.T. Rape was the pastor at the time, and our parsonage was at Cotton Plant.

Morris Straus was the only Jew in Dunnellon at the time, and he was always ready and eager to help all church organizations. It was through his help and cooperation that the first one hundred dollars was raised for our church building. We had only a small membership, and the raising of money to carry on was done mostly by the ladies with their ice cream suppers, oyster stews and old maids' conventions.

The first organist was Miss Bessie Evasion, daughter of a Methodist Preacher. The first Sunday School superintendent was Mr. Seldon. Mrs. Wells was first president of the Home Missionary Society. Mrs. Austin, wife of our next preacher, was second president of the Missionary Society. She died the second year of his pastorate here. Mr. Lion Leitner and Mr. Weiche were two of the first trustees. The church was dedicated by the Rev. J.P. Hilburn, then president of Southern College located at Southland.

During this period, and for a number of years thereafter, Dunnellon was on a circuit. During 1904 to 1908 services were held only on Sunday mornings and one night during the month. The Rev. W.A. Weir and Rev. M.H. Outland were the pastors those years.

Just about this time a church and parsonage were built at Martel. This church was added to our circuit and the preacher lived there. The Rev. W.J. Nease, Rev. M.M. Lord, Rev. J.B. Rooney, Rev. J.W. Bridges, and Rev. A.M. Mann were pastors who served the charge which was composed of St. John's, Martel, Cedar Grove and Dunnellon.

Early in 1914 we decided to remodel the church, re-cover and re-paper it. This we did at considerable expense, the ladies shouldering the responsibility as usual. They gave a bazaar each year before Christmas, proceeds of which were applied to the repair fund.

At the 1914 Annual Conference, Rev. J.D. Major was sent to this charge, and on accounts of his wife's frail condition, he thought it best for them to live in Dunnellon. We rented a house for use as our parsonage. So, the Rev. Major was the first pastor to live in Dunnellon.

The Rev. C.A. Saunders and Rev. S.F. Stephens were pastors in 1915 and 1916. In 1917 Rev. L.D. Haynes served the charge but lived in Rodman. In 1918 and 1919 the Rev. A.L. Hope and Rev. K.H. Koestline served us, and it was during his pastorate that a parsonage was built. We had a number of men who were very active at this time and it was through their untiring efforts the Rev. Koestline was able to complete the building. The ladies furnished the house, and each year some furnishing, painting or other improvements were done.

In 1925 young Rev. Jesse Jones came as a bachelor and raised much speculation among the ladies as to whom they would marry him to. He conducted a teenage boys Sunday School Class which met in the parsonage until he brought his bride- Verona Ponder (not a local girl!).

The Rev. C.C. Tyler was our next pastor, but he was unable to finish his pastorate because of ill health. He died in a rented house in Dunnellon in late 1927.

The Rev. R.F. Kersey was next in the 1927-1928 year. Church leaders elected to the Board of Stewards were: T.K. North, C.A. Dinkins, J.J. Turner, S.W. Petteway, and 20 year old M.B. Lowe.

In June 1928, Rev. C.R. Mingledorff came with his young wife, Nell, and a little son, Glenn (who became President of the Methodist College of Emory and Henry in the Virginia Mountains). Rev. Mingledorff said M.B. Lowe was too young to serve a voting position on the Board, so the older gentleman promptly elected him Treasurer of the church. Under Rev. Mingledorff much happened.

He was active in civic affairs, and in those days all small towns had amateur baseball teams that played on Thursday afternoons. He was a respected umpire!

Also, those years District Conferences were big events and when one was to be held in Dunnellon, there was much preparation activity getting places for ministers and representatives to stay for the three-day - two-night meetings. The last night was a fish fry in the park on the river which held a grandstand among the beautiful magnolia and oak trees (at this writing it is a mobile home park that the city is trying to close and return as a park). No one wanted the job of coordinating the fish fry, so the young treasurer was appointed, and since his bride of a few months had taught school in Crystal River the year before and had lived with the family of one of the fish house operators, it was a natural. After work they went to Crystal River and picked up a barrel of fresh caught mullet. The fish barrel was loading in the trunk of the Ford and money changed hands then the dealer said, "I'm doing this for you as a favor, but by all means tell no one from whom you bought the fish because the mullet season is closed and these fish for the preachers are bootlegged!"

At this time the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad had a Division Headquarters in Dunnellon and the Superintendent, G.E. Rollins, and a very active business man, E.O. Wyman, organized a mens Bible Class that was effective for several years. Easter Sunday morning in 1929, there were seventy-five men in the morning class. In the last months of Rev. Mingledorff's ministry, his treasurer suffered severe spinal injuries and he was able to get the young man into Emory University Hospital through the Gold Cross Program of the Methodist Church.

The next pastor, Rev. F.L. Crowson, a more mature man who greatly opposed the Methodist systems of presiding Elders, and his son, were trying to oust Dr. Ludd Spivey from the presidency of Florida Southern College. At Conference they were both "located", received no appointments and started a small independent church in South Florida. His salary for one year here was only \$600.00.

Next was Rev. J.D. Murry for one year and leadership in the church went to Mr. E.P. Brown who played a major part over the next several years.

The Rev. W.H. Herndon was next with a large family and still small income from the church. The current Treasurer was an unmarried semi-retired carpenter who had mental problems. It was seen that after church services he put the envelopes and some bills in his coat pocket, some and all change in his pants pocket. When confronted, he thought nothing of it since he "wanted some change". Mr. E.P. Brown, then Chairman of the Board, had the saving solution-he resigned, and the Treasurer was promoted to Chairman and Mrs. M.B. Lowe was named treasurer (with husband to do the work). Shortly thereafter the disturbed man was institutionalized and Mr. E.P. Brown again assumed Chairman of the Board.

In June the Rev. Jesse Jones again came for one year. The women of the Susanna Class and the Wesleyan Class redid the parsonage.

The Rev. T.R. Adam, a most exceptional man, came from 1936 to 1940. His first sermon was memorable in that during his morning prayer a bee stung him on the nose. The congregation was not aware until his nose started getting red and swelling. Bees had set up residence in the North wall through a crack at the edge of the chimney. In the next week, they were removed. New cement walks and steps were built at the parsonage/ Mrs. Ida Niblock collected funds for material for screening the front porch, with Rev. Adams doing the work. He also did some repair jobs for members of the church. The Women Society then got new living room furnishings, a new kitchen stove, a new refrigerator and lace curtains. A new rug and carpet was purchased for the church. To get a picture of this church...it was at the corner of Ohio and Chestnut with the belfry just inside the sidewalk at that corner. The pulpit was on a raised area on the west side and the pews were curving facing the pulpit.

The Board and Trustees (mostly the same) after much debating of financing, agreed to purchase the Bargaineer property (Mrs. Bargaineer had died and her sister and only heir, Mrs. Dot Roberts, wanted to sell). These men asked for and got help from the Methodist Board in Nashville: E.P. Brown, P.D. Nichols, E.M. Nickerson, D.F. Koonce, M.D. Lowe and L.A. Bridges. Mr. Bridges was office manager for Henry Chalker Chevrolet dealer, and head of the Baptist Deacons. When we signed the mortgage for the Nashville Board, he had Mr. Chalker and four more Baptist Deacons sign as witnesses. When all was complete and we got the money, we discovered the Methodists had signed on the witness side and the Baptist Deacons had assumed responsibility for the debt!

Rev. Adams did a great deal of work making the newly acquired property suitable for Sunday School rooms, and the old dining room into a small social hall. Then five dozen plates, cups, saucers, and glasses for the kitchen were purchased. The china was trimmed with a gold band and each piece had the image of our Methodist church in gold. A piano, second hand, was added.

In 1937, under the inspiration of Rev. Adams, the first of the big time homecoming was held. Rev. C.R. Mingledorff delivered the sermon and a great number of former members were present at this memorable occasion. During the last year here their daughter, Glady, was married at the parsonage to Isaac Sheir.

At the evening service of October 11, 1936 saw thirteen teenagers (among them Lela Mae Barksdale-Riley Evers) coming into the membership on profession of faith, and two adults on transfer from other churches. Many of these grew into active leaders and one became a minister, Buddy Parker (tho not Methodist).

In June 1940, Annual Conference was held in Ocala, Mr. E.P. Brown and another steward sent to see the Presiding Elder and asked for a certain pastor, which was promised. However, when the Bishop read the appointments at noon on Sunday (and every Methodist was at a radio listening) a different name was announced for Dunnellon. The Tampa Tribune always printed all appointments in the Monday morning papers and still, a different name was listed for Dunnellon. On Tuesday morning, the Rev. R.H. Carr showed up- the fourth and final appointee. The Carrs were here just one year, during which time she had a son and he had an appendectomy.

In 1941 came the Rev. W.G. Strickland, a much more mature man who had been "in the mercantile business" as he put it, for many years. His call prompted him to prepare to preach, and he responded in a dedicated manner. During his pastorate, the Annex was remodeled and painted inside and out with a new metal roof added. The church building was painted outside and had a new shingle room. The Friendship Class bought new curtains for the reception room, painted the room and recovered the settee and bench, making this a popular meeting place for all committees, groups, etc.

Mrs. Strickland, serving as chairman of Spiritual Life, organized four prayer groups in different [arts of town that met for fifteen minutes every Tuesday morning. One by one, three of these dropped out over the years but one, The Lillian Turner, continued to meet at Mrs. Paulk's until 1991, when Mrs. Paulk closed her Senior Citizens Home. In 1943 new flags, the American flag and the Christian flag, were purchased for the sanctuary and an honor roll of our young men in service was kept. At that time, there were twenty-five names on the roll. An interesting sidelight of Rev. Strickland was shown in this manner the PTA sponsored a recreation hall operated by and called "Maxie's" used for ping-pong, checkers, chess, dancing (to a five-cent juke box). One local church condemned it from the pulpit (tho praised and used by members). Rev. Strickland would come in late afternoon about once a week to play a game of checkers with someone from that church. No words necessary.

In 1994, John M. Sikes began a short but vigorous ministry. Much interest in a new building was shown. The Quarterly Conference gave permission to proceed and about three thousand dollars had been raised when he was suddenly moved to Tarpon Springs. His job there was to unite a rebel Methodist and a yankee Methodist church into one loving congregation. This was accomplished. He later became a District Superintendent of the Gainesville District (during the integration of the black and white churches).

The loss of Jon and Florence Sikes in 1948 was somewhat eased by the arrival of Eldon Simmons and his wife Elizabeth. This couple became an endearing part of the church and community that has lasted over the years. A detailed survey of all contributors to the Building Fund showed a willingness to re-do rather than re-build. The bell tower was sagging, but there was a member, Mr. Hugh Rives, that could and did remedy that. He brought his heavy jacks, other equipment and crew from a phosphate mine to jack up, replace rotted timbers, and firmly level up the tower. This bell tower was still firm when the old building was razed years later. Mr. A.F. Hintze was hired to do the work with members of the congregation helping almost full time. The elevated rostrum was sealed off and that made into two classrooms. The two buildings were joined on the north side and that made into an elevated area for the pulpit and choir door leading into the Annex. The floors were sanded and refinished, walls and ceiling covered with ivory colored "celotex"

material, new light fixtures, new pews and pulpit furniture completed the sanctuary. In two short years, Eldon was suddenly moved to another trouble spot area. He, too, later became a District Superintendent...of the Orlando District in its explosive growth years.

The Rev. C.B. Hutchenson was sent to complete the 1950 years. An arrangement was made with St. Johns to hold an early morning service thereby giving Dunnellon two regular services every Sunday. This arrangement was in effect at Conference time when Rev. J.R. Hill came as our regular pastor.

During Brother Hills Ministry, 1950-1952, St. Johns was put on another charge and Dunnellon became a full station. A men's Class was reorganized and an outdoor furnace in the Annex yard and a new blonde mahogany piano was put in the sanctuary completing the matched furnishings (this piano is still in service in 1994 in the choir room).

In 1952 Rev. Claude E. Stanfield began his pastorate in Dunnellon. A lighted cross in honor of H.C. Williams, who served as Sunday School Superintendent for years, was hung behind the pulpit and choir. A red dorsal hung behind the pulpit as background the cross. This cross hangs in the back of the sanctuary in 1994. The WSCS completely re-did the inside of the parsonage, sanded floors, rugs, and new furniture.

The outside of the church and Annex were covered with shingles, and interest in new Sunday School rooms and a social hall peaked. A committee of Claude Stansfield, James Corbett, and Lowe, made three trips to Orlando to see Hugh Brolman, an architect, which resulted in the plans for our Friendship Hall. Much of the money raised for this project was raised during the ministry of Claude Stanfield, but in 1956, he was moved before construction could begin. His work with the children climaxed with a "shutter bug" camera campaign resulting in many unposed pictures. These "bugs" grew into the "Busy Bees" under the direction of the wife of Rev. Howell, our next minister.

The Rev. W.R. Howell came to us from Alachua where he had just completed a building program and he wanted to "catch his breath" before going into another. Consequently, it was late in 1957 when work was begun. Billy Ogle, who had gone to school in Dunnellon, was eager to get the contract for this, his second building contract. Mr. Earl Danforth was the official "unofficial" building inspector. Their works resulted in several changes in the plans, greatly improving the building. The Florida Power Corp. sent an "expert" on kitchens to do attendance. However, there was a slight difference in opinions as to who would use the facility, but this ended with all happy. Brother Howell stayed five years and retired from active service on leaving this appointment.

A complete change in procedure came with Rev. William H. Compton, a Union Theological Seminarian, just three years out of school. His clerical collar, introducing acolytes using the "long form" communion, and Wesley hymns as much as possible, brought accusing labels of "high church" and even "Romanism". His interest in music brought him the honor of being one of those to consider the value hymns to be used in the next Hymnal authorized by the General Board of Methodism. He was first to have three Sunday services, with Holy Communion served at the early service every Sunday. A youth choir that he organized and directed developed with Byron Nichols playing and even using some services as outlined by John Wesley. Brother Bill's calm and sweet personality was not enough to keep three prominent families from withdrawing their membership because of the "Wesley-Catholic" forms used. The Friendship Hall mortgage was paid off and the building dedicated in 1961.

In 1964 we welcomed Rev. Morris J. Holtzclaw, his wife Marcia and daughter Marcia, and shortly after their arrival a new parsonage was acquired in the Vogt Springs area of Dunnellon. The old parsonage on West Park Avenue was sold and proceeds went to the new purchase. Trustees, Bill Gracy and David Dickerson, were two principal people in the selection and securing of the new parsonage. Rev. Holtzclaw was the prime factor in organizing the Rainbow Lakes Estates Church. With Mary Virginia Dinkins as pianist, and early morning service was held in the Lakeside Club House.

This remained a preaching service with succeeding pastors until 1975. After just two short years here, Morris went into the military service as a chaplain. We believe Chaplain Colonel Holtzclaw is still serving in the military.

The Rev. Raymond J. (Spike) Sharp moved here in 1966 and, shortly thereafter, started an addition to the parsonage. This for a while was the pastors study, but also served various pursued for different families. Since this construction was 95% Spike's own work, it is considered his addition. Another addition came in these years- a beautiful baby girl named Chris. Other lasting events were the purchase of the Ruby Walker (a long-time member) property from her children for \$8,000.00 and traded to Mrs. Mae Tucker for the home located where the present sanctuary stands. This was an even trade, and this advantageous- to - all deal was accomplished thru the loving dedication of P.D. Nichols.

The Cedar Grove Methodist Church was declared "abandoned property" by the Florida Annual Conference in the 1960's, and Brother Sharpe secured the ownership for this church and cemetery by First Church and so deeded November 7, 1968. When this property was about to be sold to a newly formed "independent" Christian group, some who had loved ones in the cemetery objected so the deal was called off, and the property has remained as somewhat of a responsibility for First Church to the present time.

In 1970, Rev. William G. Cofield came with a profound sense of prayer. All visits and phone calls ended with a prayer. Rev. Coalfield and his wife Dorothy's ever present smiles lightened many burdens. While here, Dorothy also served as church organist. In his first year here, Bill produced and directed a Passion Play that had to show two nights to serve the crowds. This play had scenes (2 on stage and on each side with special lighting effects by Charlie Keele). All ages were used and costumes were of a professional caliber. In construction of the stages for scenes, a non-churched newsman was heard to say, "that's the hardest working preacher I have ever seen". A full page of pictures was presented in the Ocala Star Banner. The next play was a musical "Joseph's Multi-Color, Techni-Color Dream Coat". This was nearly two years before the play became a hit on New York's Broadway. This colorful musical was also taken to Crystal River and to Plant City where the cast (again all ages) was applauded and praised. Both productions used teenagers from other churches and, one a Presbyterian, became a minister. During Brother Cofield's two year ministry, Friendship Hall was air-conditioned.

From 1972 to 1975 Rev. Morris G. Hanley was the "Pastor in charge" and that was a most accurate description. He served two churches, First and Rainbow Lakes, and both launched into building programs. In First Church, it was layman Paul Post that took the leadership in promoting a new sanctuary. He visited a number of new churches and had other members go with him. On the occasion of the Hernando Nazarene and the Dunnellon Pentecostal, a dozen or more members went with him to get ideas. Paul then drew the plans but had to get them done by a licensed architect to make it all legal. Ground breaking was held on February 16, 1975 and work immediately started. Removing the old "Tucker house" and an enormous camphor tree were part of the drudgery work before the visible construction began. Paul acted as general contractor and made advantageous deals with sub-contractors and material suppliers, and did daily work along with J.C. Meredith and son C.S. Meredith, Everett Griffith (Paul by proxy), and one skilled pro, Mr. Jesse Pritt. Financing the project was handled by Maxie Lowe and when the building was completed and furnished completely, there remained only \$25,000 indebtedness. Pews from the old church were used for the choir and pulpit, two pulpit chairs and the communion table were used in the Narthex. The beautiful stained glass window was given by Sally Seigler, a long time, much loved and faithful member of our church. The old organ, given anonymously during the Stanfield ministry, was used until the present Allen church organ was given by Marjorie and Douglas Hazen (Marjorie being the daughter of the late Raymond and Montine King). Stained glass from a window in the old church is lighted about the outside center door of the sanctuary, and the old church bell is in a usable steel structure near the Friendship Hall. Morris and his lovely wife Marvinne, their three grown children and family pooch, filled the parsonage almost to the explosive point. He served two churches in building programs, did some substitute teaching, repaired small motors, all coming from a heart attack in a large church and told to "take it easy". His devotion to God and sense of humor kept him going...he could have made it as a stand-up comedian.

In June of 1975, the Rev. Gene Carter took over this ministry and had the new sanctuary ready for consecration on December 14, 1975. The Rev. Hanley, having had so much time in planning and

actual construction of the building, was invited back for this first service. Dr. Durward McDonnell, District Superintendent of the Gainesville District, conducted the consecration service. During Gene's two-year ministry here, the utility building, parking lot, bell tower, fence on North and West boundaries of the property, were added. He also had the distinction of being the first pastor to regularly wear a clerical robe in the pulpit.

The Rev. Allen DeWald could best be described "as angelic". Here only one year, 1978-1979, because of health problems, but lending strong spiritual support to all ages and getting new and better air conditioning for the sanctuary and a new roof on Friendship Hall. They also gave fifty copes of the Cokesbury Hymnal to the church for special use in evening worship services. He and his wife, Alma, left a grateful membership.

In 1979 the Rev. Ronald Dowman came for two years. He was listed in the Florida Conference Journal as Supply Pastor from another denomination, coming directly from England. Mrs. Dowman was helpful with the music both as soloist and with a children's choir. In 1979 the United Methodist Men was organized and became an active part in church activities. The organizational structure of the church was changed to that of Administrative Council. The popular coffee-punch fellowship time in Friendship Hall, immediately following morning services, has continued.

Members of the Florida Conference are reluctant to purge the church membership rolls because a decrease in membership looks bad on their records. However, Ron agreed and eight- nigh names were removed by Charge Conference bringing the membership roll down to 167 active and inactive members. On March 16, 1980 the burning of the mortgage and dedication of the sanctuary took place in Friendship Hall with a house full of rejoicing members. The total amount spent on building, furnishings and equipment came to \$81,516.75. Other property improvements included a new roof on the parsonage and fresh paint; also the church Lounge was started. This ministry ended with a cloudy condition among disgruntled older members, but this time there were no withdrawals from the rolls, and we proceeded to grow. The Dowman's were warmly received on a visit back from England a few years later.

The return of Eldon Simmons was a great blessing. He had retired from one of the largest churches in Florida, and having served as a District Superintendent of the exploding Orlando District, came to be near his favorite vacation area - the Rainbow River. But retired he was not. In his four years, the pastorate moved from a Conference subsidized one to a full local responsibility. As a "for instance", in 1983 the Conference Church Development Campaign set our goal at \$4,500.00 for a three year program and on Easter Sunday we gave \$5,200.00 and before the year ended and additional \$800.00. Property improvements were almost too many to list all: painting all property, padded backs to pews, security light, chrome communion set. In Friendship Hall: replaced doors, new kitchen appliances, new supply of tables, chairs, water fountain, coffee urn, china, PA system and furnished the Lounge. The parsonage: new heating and cooling system, all floors recovered, sofas and chairs, and all appliances. The two rooms, originally designated as office in Sanctuary building were furnished with desk, chairs, IBM typewriter, copies, folding machine, master addressor, calculators, files and storage. The CANDLE, a newsletter, began in 1982 and in 1983 a standing order was placed the a local florist to provide fresh flowers for the altar each Sunday. Eighteen new members were adde during this ministry of Eldon and Elizabeth Simmons.

In 1985 came handsome Rev. Bruce T. Jones and his charming and pretty wife, Haley. Bruce kept busy with ministering to an ever growing membership, preparing and delivering dynamic sermons, and all the while working on his doctorate which he completed in 1992. His seven year pastorate was the longest in this church history.

In 1985, the Brooks property (next to the church) was purchased to make room for parking, but was turned into the Methodist Mansion for youth department. Thru Bruce's efforts, the Ecumenical Development was worked into a vital movement in the community (including the Chattier area) and is old on- going reality today. The church organizational structure changed to a Council of Ministries/Administrative Board. We established a Covenant Relationship, thru the General Board of Global Ministries, pledging support of a missionary. This covenant Relationship is still active today.

Again, improvements were made including: furnishing a Conference Room, purchasing 3 televisions, VCR's, movable stands, and many Adult Bible Study and Children's Sunday School videos.

The church became "of age" in Bruce's pastorate when he added a complete computer programming system to the office equipment, and our first church secretary was hired. When Bruce left, the church was completely staffed with a secretary, music director, organist, custodian, grounds keeper, youth director, and nursery attendant. In June of 1992 Jones was transferred and this church was again blessed with a young, dynamic pastor.

The Rev. Harold R. Hendren, a consecrated and concentrated bundle of energy, took over the leadership. To enhance the beauty of this family picture is Harold's beautiful wife Donna, and sweet little daughter, Olivia. In October of 1992, a precious son, Logan, joined the family. In April of 1993, the Methodist Mansion was demolished to make room for more parking. On July 18, 1993, John O'Donald, a long-time member of the congregation, was recognized for 50 years of ringing the church bell and a dedicated plaque was inscribed out on the bell tower. A fenced-in playground was built on the old Methodist Mansion site and was dedicated in November 1993. Harold has kept the roads busy visiting the sick and shut-ins. By the end of his first year in Dunnellon, Harold had taken 70 new members into the congregation.

As you have read, our heritage and tradition runs deep in Dunnellon. With God's help, we will continue to accomplish the goals of our church. As our vision for ministry becomes increasingly clearer, our church stands tall and strong in the community. With you help, we look forward to what new traditions may be established as we grow together.

Moving into this last decade of the century, the First United Methodist Church of Dunnellon, Florida is totally dedicated to serving our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen!**

Interesting Notes:

The pictures in the hall opposite the church office are the work of Mrs. J.C. (Juanita) Meredith. It took months of research and tireless contacts with old friends and relatives to get these pictures of former pastors of this church. Also, the J.C. Meredith became the backyard neighbors to all the parsonage families when the Vogt Springs property was purchased. They have helped incoming pastors and their families in many ways.

The beautiful 5'x7' **crochet picture** of "**The Last Supper**" was given to the church in July 1992 by Mr. Jesse Gilligan. It was created and designed by Jesse's late wife, Dorothy, and it took her five months to finish. She put a lot of work and love into making it, and we are very grateful to have it beautify our Friendship Hall.

Sunday School: Biggest Membership, 317 in 1951!

Music: Always good Methodist singing. Early years had a piano and organ. Occasionally trumpet, accordion, saxophone, guitar and flute being played by various members. In 1991 came the addition of handbell choirs.

Women's Missionary Society of Christian Service, United Methodist Women: Several titles throughout the years, but this is still a dominant part of the continued success of our church.

United Methodist Men: Strong in the 20's, 50's, 80's with some dead years in between. In the 90's this group had developed into a "service" ministry- dedicated to serving and helping our church and its members.

Here are the names of some long time members and the dates they joined:

Mrs. Mamie Ruth Pipkins (6-21-14); Mrs. Edith Mae Scarborough (5-12-21);
Mr. Maxie B. Lowe (1-29-28); Mrs. Virginia B. Dinkins, Jr. (4-1-34);
Mrs. Lela Mae Evers (10-4-36); Mr. P.D. Nichols (5-9-37);
Mrs. Leona Koonce (9-3-39); Mrs. Ruth Riley (8-20-44);
Mrs. Ruth Hinson (5-45); Mrs. Doris Clark (6-3-45);
Mrs. Edna Farrell (11-4-45); Mrs. Cora Lee Giles (12-30-45);
Mr. J. Carroll Meredith and Mrs. Juanita Meredith (2-1-48);
Mr. C.A. Dinkins III (3-21-48)