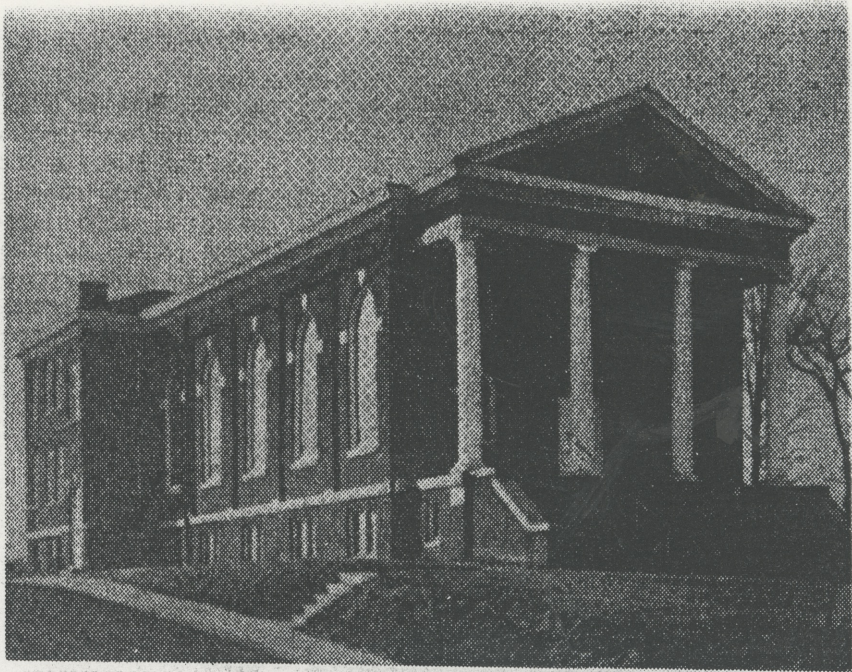


4-16-81



Rockford Street UMC

Rockford Street United Methodist Church is unique in several ways.

First, the land for the church was purchased before the congregation was organized. This happened because the Rev. George W. Williams, who was visiting the community, passed an auction sale, decided that the lot would be a good location for the church the community needed and, on April 29, 1922, bought the land from Edward Leake from El Paso County, Tex. for \$1,200.

November 16, 1922, the Rev. Mr. Williams and his wife, Minnie, transferred the deed to W. R. Kiger, et al. The church later paid the \$1,200.

The trustees were W. R. Kiger, J. W. Badgett, J. W. Barker and W. F. Lawrence.

The Rev. Mr. Williams conferred with the Rev. W. F. Womble, presiding elder, the Rev. W. B. West, minister of Central Methodist Church, and with many of the Methodist laymen, including E. H. Kochtitzky, district lay leader. It was decided that the Methodists of Mount Airy would sponsor the organization and build the church.

The cornerstone was laid in 1925 and the church was dedicated in 1929. The Rev. Mr. Williams served the church for six years.

The Rockford Street Methodist Church was formally created by the Thirty-Second Session of the Western North Carolina Conference which met October 29, 1921 in High Point.

In 1921 while serving the Mount Airy Circuit, the Rev. Mr. Williams held a tent meeting where the water tank is now located. He bought the tent and the congregation was formed through two tent meetings.

The "Tabernacle" was built across the street from the water tank. It was a frame building about 30 feet by 30 feet, heated by two sheet metal stoves. The

All four furniture factories gave substantial contributions to the building fund of the church. Dr. Charls Lawrence, an uncle of Mrs. Ruth Lawrence Sawyers, gave a large amount and Will Reynolds gave generously. Church members made pledges.

With a small amount of money, the Rev. Mr. Williams bought an old Ford truck. With a few workers, digging and blasting was begun.

The Rev. W. J. S. Walker was assigned to the Ararat Circuit in 1923 and was closely associated with the Rev. Mr. Williams in the ministry. He and two of his sons, Clyde and Calvin, scooped the first dirt to begin construction on the church. Many of the men of the church worked late every night, after already working 10 hours at their jobs.

The Rev. Mr. Williams went to J. D. Sargent, president of the North Carolina Granite Corporation and asked for enough granite for the steps and window sills. Some of the granite had been used in other areas of the church. When truck load after truck load of granite went out, Mr. Sargent came over to the church site and remarked to the pastor, "I thought you were building a church, instead of building a stairway to heaven."

Several people gave 100 or more brick. Earl Tate did the tapestry and built the four columns on the front porch of the church.

The late Mrs. Otis Wimbish was church organist for around 35 years. The late W. R. Kiger was superintendent of Sunday School for about 25 years.

The first stewards of the church were Harvey Badgett, John Badgett, J. W. Barker, Joe Booker, W. Y. Davenport, G. B. Gardner, J. B. Jarrell, W. R. Kiger, W. F. Lawrence, Joe Lineback, Otis Moore, W. M. McCoy, M. S. Nichols and C. W. Roberson. In the 1925-26

Official Members were J. W. Badgett, J. W. Barker, J. T. Booker, Lucille Brossell, T. E. Davenport, J. C. Harris, M. S. Jones, W. R. Kiger, W. F. Lawrence, J. M. Lineback, M. S. Nichols, Fred Pruitt and J. S. Redmon.

Trustees were the Rev. G. W. Williams, J. W. Barker, J. W. Badgett, W. R. Kiger, m. S. Nichols and W. F. Lawrence.

The parsonage was built before the church.

Ministers who have served the church include the Rev. Mr. Williams, 1921-26; the Rev. J. O. Ervin, 1927; the Rev. Mr. Williams, 1928; the Rev. W. M. Heckard, 1929-30; the Rev. R. S. Howie, 1931-33; the Rev. R. G. Tuttle Jr., 1934; the Rev. D. H. Rhinehart, 1935; the Rev. H. R. Cornelius, 1936-37; the Rev. H. Grady Hardin, 1938-40;

The Rev. C. E. Williams, 1941-42; the Rev. E. M. Graham, 1943-44; the Rev. J. E. Rink, 1945-47; the Rev. B. C. Winn, 1948-50; the Rev. J. M. Barber, 1951-52; the Rev. F. H. Shinn, 1953-56; the Rev. Ben F. Stamey, 1957-60; the Rev. Giles O. Bowman, 1961-63; the Rev. John T. Frazier, 1964-68; the Rev. Arthur B. Pearce, 1968-69; the Rev. George Carver, 1970-72; the Rev. Harry M. Sherrill, 1972-79; and the Rev. Max W. Dulin, 1979 to the present.