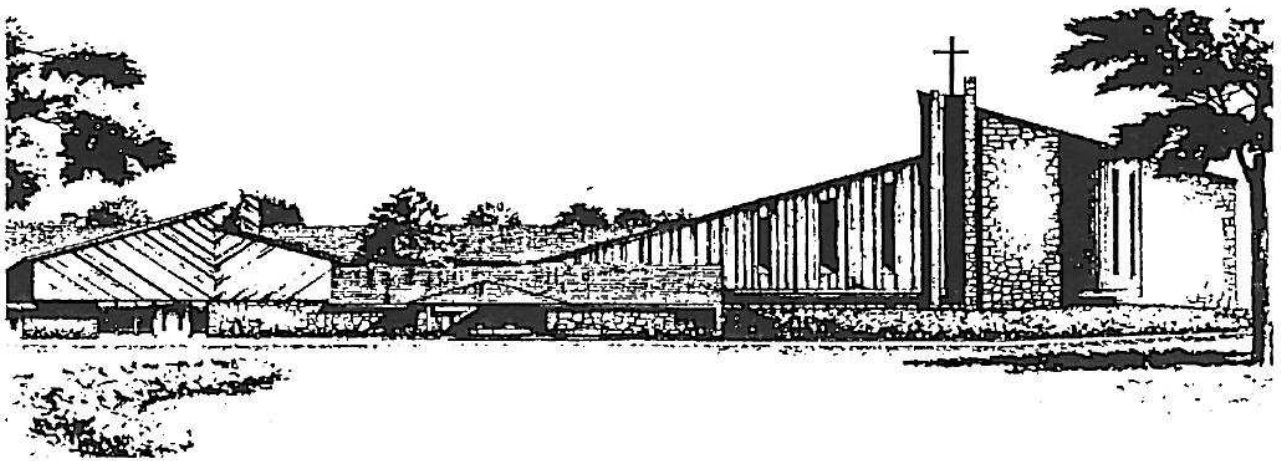


History of
Kingswood
United Methodist Church



**Twenty-five and
much alive.**
1968-1993

HISTORY OF KINGSWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

From the time of its origin in August of 1968, Kingswood United Methodist Church has been a church on the move. Perhaps it was the informality of the group that met to bring it into being, or perhaps it was the youthfulness that made it move quickly from its start. It surely has enjoyed a remarkable momentum which has brought it far in its rather brief history. Its first minister also added to the quick spirit with which it became a reality. Rev. Orion Hunt had a liveliness about him which transmitted itself to the members and helped to move them along in their efforts to create this brand new church. At the time many homes were still being built and new streets created in Dunwoody North, Kingsley and other new developments in the then far-out areas of the bustling city. The residents were from just about any spot in the United States; so the members of this new church often were meeting for the first time when they assembled for worship.

The clubhouse of the Shangri-La apartments near the corner of 1-285 and N. Shallowford Road was the first home for this church - tentatively named North Peachtree United Methodist Mission. Among the first organizers were:

Sam and Shirley Hancock	Mike and Dakie Tindol
Leone and Jack Stovall	Don and Joy MacConnell
Roger and Laura Hove	Marshall and Gloria Frady
John and Mary Hates	Sill and Ann Whatley

The clubhouse served as a meeting place until arrangements could be completed for the use of a study hall in the new Peachtree High School, where the first worship service was scheduled for September 8, 1968. At that service, 92 were in church school, 130 in the worship service and a total of \$208.34 was collected. The choir was directed by Roger Hove and accompanied by Mrs. Lenora Hartford on a newly acquired Baldwin organ. This organ was used in our first service in order to make our new study hall home seem as much like a sanctuary as possible.

There were 76 members' names on the charter list when the charter was given by District Superintendent, Dr. Frank Moorhead, on November 24, 1968. It was during this Charter Sunday service that the first Charge Conference was held and the name Kingswood Methodist Church adopted. The committee charged with selecting a name chose this name because of its association with the experiences of John Wesley while preaching to the workers at the colliery at Kingswood, England - then the locale of the most challenging congregation Wesley had faced.

At the time of Wesley's preaching in Kingswood, the church was intertwined with the aristocracy. There was exploitation of the working people. The workers at Kingswood were changed by Wesley's preaching from

unregenerate nonbelievers to vital believers in Christ's teachings. It was the first time the church had come to the common people with its message instead of requiring them to go to the organized church. Kingswood was considered to be one of John Wesley's crowning achievements.

The first communion service was held in the study hall in December of 1968. The altar set, cross, two candle holders, and two collection plates were presented by Sam and Shirley Hancock. The study hall was made useful as the setting for church services by the contribution of a pulpit and altar rails built by Sam Hancock. Original financial support came mainly from the North Georgia Conference through their builder's club and from St. John and St. James United Methodist Churches. Just how vital this support was can be illustrated by the fact that the original bank account, opened in the name of Peachtree Road United Methodist Mission, totaled \$108.

One distinguishing characteristic of the Kingswood congregation was its youthfulness. People came from many locales and different denominations. Another characteristic was the frequent moves these people had experienced. Many knew they could be moved away at any time. Still they contributed of their time, talents, and money while they were in the area and never failed to act as if Atlanta were destined to be their home for the rest of their days. Our church benefited greatly from their presence.

And death, as it must, has claimed some early members, as have misfortunes of other types; but a spirit was created within this church which has survived as a tribute to those who contributed so much to make it a reality.

Once a United Methodist Church is chartered, it quickly becomes an integral part of the church's fabric with its organization, its schedule, and its program. Kingswood was no exception. Rev. Hunt was, indeed, a man of action and vision who gave untiring leadership and guidance. With the support of a willing congregation, this new church moved ahead rapidly with its day-to-day programs as well as plans for the future.

Of course, plans for a building quickly gained priority. With weekly collections of \$100 - \$200, it was hard to visualize from where the financing for such an undertaking could come, but there was never any doubt that there would be a building. As membership grew, the need for an adequate home for this church became more apparent. The North Georgia Conference had an option on property on Tilly Mill Road near its intersection with North Peachtree Road and this subsequently was purchased by the conference. It would be transferred to the new church when a permanent building was started. Immediately an appropriate sign was placed on the lot announcing plans for a building. A quotation in a Kingswood newsletter of March 14, 1969 stated, "A man with a plan will get far more done for the world than will a saint with a complaint." Kingswood was a church of men and women with a plan.

In January 1969, a church office was secured at 3455 Sexton Woods Drive. The building committee announced its first meeting for January 19. Church membership had reached 103. A decision was made to acquire a parsonage and a fund for that purpose was established. On August 15, the purchase of a house

at the corner of Peeler and Coldstream Drive was announced. The closing date was August 18, 1969. Generous contributions from the realtor, John D. Warren Company, and its representative, Mr. Joe Bradford, made possible the quick closing of this transaction. Many members of Kingswood made contributions of time, physical labor, and money to provide this new home for Orion and his wife, Deanna.

In October 1969, a new attendance record of 166 worshippers was announced. The parsonage purchase was completed. The interviewing of architects for the proposed church building was also begun. A first anniversary celebration was set for November 16 at which time Rev. James A. Budd, pastor of Saint James United Methodist Church, would speak. On November 20 Kingswood would be the church of the day on WSB Radio. An exciting period!

Kingswood has been blessed with a Women's Society of Christian Service, which has been thoroughly dedicated to the Lord. The ladies have been supportive to the programs of Kingswood in more ways than can be mentioned. From Kingswood's first days, their presence and contribution to the life of this church has been significant.

On Sunday, December 7, 1969 we celebrated our last service at Peachtree High School. A new school, Chesnut Elementary, built next to Peachtree, made its cafetorium available for our use. The advantage of this school over its neighbor was that we could use regular chairs in a much larger room. In Peachtree the congregation had met in a classroom with chairs which had study-arms on them. The first worship service was held in Chesnut on December 14, 1969.

Christmas, 1969, found the fledgling church well on its way to becoming a vital part of the North Georgia Conference and a fulltime partner in the life of the community it served. The excitement of its achievements in its short life gave buoyancy to the church community as it grew in its Christian commitment and vitality.

Those first few years for Kingswood were not without trials or testing. Not all Methodists in the area were ready to commit their religious lives to a new place of worship that was rather informal, existed in makeshift quarters, and frequently required of its parishioner's dedication and participation far beyond that which would normally be expected. Each Sunday the altar rail, pulpit, and other materials necessary to create a church service had to be set in place from the storage areas. The organ had to be uncrated from its box. Church school equipment had to be found and brought to its proper locations. The furnishings for worship, music and education had to be totally set up each week. The zest that had been evident from the start, however, made it clear that no one considered these things to be a burden. Instead, the companionship resulting from being part of the project brought newly acquainted members into a much closer relationship. This was their church and their hearts were light and their spirits were high.

During 1970 and 1971, the Building Committee, headed by Gus Mathis, spent hours studying plans for the first building. It was a bold undertaking that was in keeping with the spirit of the new church. There was no doubt that the structure was needed and that it would be built. As always there was the "incidental" problem of money. This meant "Where are we going to get it?" It did come, not always easily, and certainly from a source not always expected. There were no wealthy members. The depth of support made the difference. Some members had earmarked funds for the Building Fund almost from the first service. Those helped. What was surprising was the amount of money that was given by people not connected with Kingswood in any way. One anonymous contributor surprised the Building Committee one night with a check for \$10,000 because he felt that in order to have a good community, you had to have good churches.

A contract was let, after eliminating all but the essentials in order to stay within the bounds of "cash on hand". The Building Committee at the same time drew up a list of items to be omitted. As has always been the way here at Kingswood, the extra effort monetary response was such that practically all the items were restored to the contract so that they could be included in the final construction.

On June 18, 1972, a ground breaking took place. In November 1973, we moved into our new home. Thus Kingswood became a United Methodist Church in the fullest sense. Rev. Orion Hunt had walked a path that had not been easy. It had always been challenging. His faith in the future of the fledgling church, which he had started by ringing doorbells, had never faltered and it was a beacon that led us through many exciting days, as well as through a few troublesome ones.

Shortly after the Consecration Service, on April 28, 1974, Orion Hunt, along with his wife Deanna and two children, Mark and Allison, moved on to new challenges in other pulpits and Rev. Joe Bowen became our pastor. Joe was accompanied by his wife, Harriet, and two teenage children, Lucy and Bruce.

Although he became spiritual leader of a thriving church, Joe Bowen brought Kingswood to higher ground than it had ever seen. Strong leadership was combined with the ability to convey his deep religious commitment to the congregation. He was a superb counselor and administrator. Kingswood also felt loved by Rev. Bowen because he undertook to visit every family of the congregation. Kingswood continued to grow in every respect during his years of leadership. He expanded the staff and program so that Kingswood continued to attract outstanding Christians to its rolls. Each year, because of the mobility of its membership, we bid farewell to so many fine people that it would seem that we must suffer. But others came, just as dedicated and willing, so our program continued successfully and our vitality grew along with our numbers.

In 1979 Kingswood's membership was approximately 1200 and the annual budget had grown close to \$200,000. Kingswood held a position in North Georgia Methodism that was unique. It was not a rich church, but it stood high in giving. It existed in an area of comfort and sophistication, but the Spirit of the Lord was

alive and moving through its members. Its members moved in many different directions in their daily lives, but compassion and love flowed between those who participated in its worship. Biblically speaking, "in the fullness of time, all things come to pass." So it was that all the space in our new building, that we thought would take several years to fill, became inadequate in all too short a time. David McCoy in 1976 rallied a second building committee. The main unvarying condition that carried over from our previous construction was the money - or the lack of the same. But once more, prudent management of that vital commodity proved to the lenders that we were a sound risk. The funding for our \$250,000 addition was provided and we were finally able, in 1978, to have our intended front entrance actually become just that. Previously it had been more or less an emergency exit. Practicality had led to the Tilly Mill entrance being the main entrance through our first five years. Other changes brought our pastor out of his cramped office, barely out of the main stream of traffic, into a new office in the new church building. The choir gratefully moved from its multi—purpose classroom/choir room to a full-fledged choir room. Both pastor and choir found themselves in commodious accommodations which were much better suited to their needs.

Classes were able now to seat themselves in real classrooms instead of corridors, under-stair cubby holes, etc. Kingswood thus found itself on the threshold of becoming a large church instead of the small intimate group of worshippers it had always fancied itself to be. But, true to the spirit of caring, the members decided that the member to-member relationships could be encouraged by neighbors. So it was that the NETWORK (Neighbors Engaged in Togetherness) was created. Through it, both good news and bad brought recognition to those affected, and especially from those members in closest proximity to them. It aided greatly in helping Kingswood continue to be a personal church.

Although far too many members of the congregation have contributed too much to be listed, our many staff members must be given credit for their able direction of this growing church. First and foremost would be our pastors. Associate pastors, who often do their part out of the limelight, cannot be overlooked. In the first days, Mike McFarland and his wife were helpful to us while he was a student at Emory. He surely would be pleased to see now how the mustard seed he helped to plant has grown.

Bob Luton also joined us while still a student at Emory. He worked with the church school and youth, directed the first youth choir, and occasionally served in the pulpit. Our worship was greatly enriched by several creative Worship experiences which Bob originated using music and media. In 1976 as the church continued to grow, and after his graduation, Bob joined Kingswood's staff full time as its first Minister of Program. At the same time, David Powell, another Emory student, took over the youth program, part-time at first and later full time. David experienced the love and commitment of our congregation as a positive force in his life and he grew at Kingswood as Kingswood grew with him.

Our youth found David a person with whom they were very comfortable and with whom they could relate well. They responded accordingly and the youth program expanded significantly. Rev. Luton and Rev. Powell left Kingswood in 1979 almost simultaneously.

In keeping with the long range plans for our staff, the Rev. Mrs. Martha Forrest came on as Associate Minister in July 1979 and the Rev. Mrs. Sally Osmer joined us as Minister of Education and Program in September, 1979. This put Kingswood in the unique position of having two ordained female pastors. Rev. Forrest had charge of Evangelism and a new growth spurt occurred. Her Vivacious personality, femaleness and uniqueness helped her to be a special counselor and friend to many.

In 1980, Rev. Bowen was appointed to the First United Methodist Church of LaGrange and the Rev. Juel Sealey was appointed to serve Kingswood as its senior pastor. With this pastoral change, an updating of parsonage facilities was also undertaken. A search was commenced to locate a suitable residence which would more closely meet conference recommendations. Ultimately the church decided to sell its parsonage and, at Rev. Sealey's request, provide instead a housing allowance so that he could purchase his own residence. Rev. Sealey came to us with his wife, Juanita, teenage son Wendell and two older daughters who lived elsewhere. Dr. Sealey brought an informal style of preaching to the pulpit which was a change enjoyed by many in the congregation.

In 1981 Rev. Don Clarke took over the youth program and family ministries from Rev. Osmer when she left for the birth of her second child. Miss Betsy Anderson, a starting Emory student, was hired to work with the children and adult programs. Betsy stayed for a year and then she decided to return to school teaching. Miss Lynne Alley came on staff to work with the youth freeing Rev. Clarke to work more closely with education. In 1983 Rev. Clarke, upon completion of his doctoral program, then became full time Minister of Education and Program.

The year 1982 started off with another staff change when Rev. Forrest was called to be pastor of Cedar Grove United Methodist in January. In her place the Rev. George Owen joined us as Associate Pastor. He served as Minister of Evangelism and Membership Care. That same year, Kingswood acquired a computer. With this expanded capacity for record keeping, the church added its first financial secretary in the person of Mrs. Sherry Bates.

Roger Hove, Director of Music, had the distinction of having served as Choir Director from the first days. From an original choir of about 10 to a 1983 choir membership approaching 40, he has brought his musicians from a "must do" basis to a really fine choir and music ministry. Thanks to Roger's persistence, Kingswood has always had the benefit of an organ and organists from the very first service when our first organ was rented with an option to buy. We've also enjoyed some very fine organists. Lenora Hartford was our first organist, followed by Joy MacConnell who played for an interim period. A new regular organist, Julian Turner, played until 1979 when Miss Kathy Cook, an Emory student,

became our regular organist and choir accompanist. After graduating from Emory, "Rev. Kathy" became a full time staff member as Associate Director of Music. For a short time Kingswood had three ordained women on staff. Kathy became director of the youth choir, which grew to about 45 in 1980-82, and had several ministry tours to its credit. Rev. Cook left Kingswood in 1982 to assume choir and pastoral duties in Virginia. Shortly after, Mrs. Suzanne Scott joined the staff as Associate Director of Music and Organist and became full-time in that role after completing her work for a Master of Music Degree. Under her direction the children's choir program grew significantly.

No history of Kingswood could be written without a bouquet being tossed in the direction of Mrs. Betty Jean Bentley our church secretary from September 1973 until 1982. True Christian dedication and heartfelt love for Kingswood's people were personified in Betty Jean, who cheerfully and willingly did whatever was necessary to keep the church functioning and running smoothly. Frieda Breazeal, Nancy Donaldson Turner, Jane Sargent, and Alve Anderson followed Mrs. Bentley. Since May of 1985 Mrs. Suzanne Bell Wilson has served with equal dedication and caring concern for the Kingswood congregation.

In 1983, in spite of using all the nooks and crannies available, our sanctuary, education, and music facilities again became too small. Another building committee was created, this time chaired by Jack Camarda. In that 15th anniversary year, we were ready to move forward again - this time toward a new permanent sanctuary building, and additional church school and music facilities.

Some of the highlights and accomplishments of Kingswood in those first fifteen years, from 1968 until 1983 are worthy of note. Kingswood's congregation has always had a capacity for giving when it has been most needed, originally, two families donated our sanctuary piano. Later as the music ministry expanded, another piano was needed and it too was donated. In 1974 money was given to purchase two additional lots adjacent to the first property. Later, when the North Peachtree/Tilly Mill corner lot became available, money was contributed so that too could be purchased. Handbells were purchased through individuals each pledging to buy a bell. Kingswood later acquired two vans which enhanced the fellowship on trips - a generous and welcomed gift indeed. In 1982 money was raised for a new electronic organ by individuals making pledges to buy a stop or a key. Kingswood collective generosity has been revealed on many occasions. It has surely enriched our ministry in many ways.

For 1983, the annual budget for current expenditures was \$400,000 and approximately \$144,000 had been pledged for a growing building fund. The confirmation Class numbered 55 boys and girls. Each year it seemed to increase in size as our numbers continued to grow. Recorded membership in 1983 was approximately 1600. This represented 375 families. There were 23 church school classes meeting regularly with an average church school attendance of 400. The United Methodist Youth Fellowship numbered 100 active youth. Fifteen adult counselors worked with them. Our music ministry was strong, with three handbell choirs and seven singing choirs including The King's Men, an inspiring outreach group. The United Methodist Women were active and had 100 members who

were organized into 6 circles. From Bible study to service at Wesley Woods, and in many other ways these women have been a vital part of Kingswood's ministries.

Go out and serve --- this has always seemed to be Kingswood's Commission. Its Christian leadership and its outreach ministries have often extended beyond its neighborhood, sometimes to very far places. David Griffin went with a group to Peru to serve and repair a church and to minister to its congregation. The UMW has served with their outreach to the Methodist retirement center, contributions toward fighting cancer and their active support of The Doorstep Ministry, a multi-church group organized to help those in need. The King's Men have served with their singing in nursing homes, retirement centers and other churches. The church membership served through such efforts as periodically providing the soup kitchen for Trinity UMC, a downtown church feeding hungry street people, on a regular basis. It was also involved in serving individuals through its participation in CARE Fellowship, a group focused on meeting needs of hurting individuals through the contacts and efforts of others who have likewise been hurt and healed. Our youth have served on work teams to an Appalachian service project for several summers. A small group attended a World Methodist Conference (International Youth in the summer of 1983 in Nassau, Bahamas.

Kingswood's serving ministry on an individual basis was equally noteworthy. Kay DeGrow, a mother of three, was at Kingswood when she felt the Lord's call. She went back to college, then to seminary, and now is a pastor. Paul Dubois, another lay person, also felt the Lord's calling in his heart. He studied by correspondence and later became pastor of a small church in Cumming. Jeff Ross, from our congregation, became a full time ordained Methodist minister. Brian Beckett, who came up through our church school and youth program, but later moved away, entered seminary and now is a pastor. Rick Hove, a charter member, Lanny Creedle and Lori Stehman Creedle all entered full time ministry with Campus Crusade for Christ. More recently, both Judy Warner and Cece Morgan have been ordained. Kingswood has indeed sent its own into the world to win others for Christ.

In 1984 the building committee spent long hours in planning and study. There was much enthusiasm in the congregation for the people of Kingswood wanted a sanctuary which would give expression to their love of the Lord. There were advanced gifts and pledges raised for a five year period of \$960,000. On January 8, an annual budget of \$400,986 was adopted. Members were asked to give an "I Care" portion of their pledge for a new building and an "I Share" portion for operating expenses. The "I Care" portion was to assure that we could build on a pay-as-you-go basis and be able to fund the projected \$1,400,000 cost of the new building. The new building was to provide a 700 seat sanctuary, eight additional classrooms, expanded administration and office space, new music facilities and added storage places. The then present sanctuary would be converted to use as a fellowship hall. Restructuring of the kitchen to facilitate the feeding of larger groups was also needed.

1984 also was a period of more staff changes. Nancy Donaldson (later to become Nancy Turner) became church secretary. Eric White became our new youth director. Rev. Sealey moved to Tucker First Methodist and a new pastor, Rev. Dan Maxey, came to Kingswood, along with his wife Lynette and two daughters, Marian and Jane. Rev. George Owen became the pastor of 10th Street United Methodist. Rev. Mabel Foster was assigned as our new Associate Pastor. Cathy Lee became education director when Don Clarke went to First Methodist of Marietta. Rev. Kathy Cook (later to become Kathy White) returned to us from Virginia to be full time Associate Director of Music and Organist. Nancie Johnson joined the staff as Financial Secretary.

With new leadership in place on June 24, 1984, the Charge Conference saw Kingswood vote to build - at an astonishing cost - a building not to exceed \$1,260,000 plus furnishings and landscaping at \$74,000. Kingswood had a 10 year loan agreement at a floating rate of 1 1/4% over prime with a cap at 17%. Kingswood had entered "Big Time". A building permit was issued on August 20 and construction was begun. With it came a surge of enthusiasm!

Since Rev. Sealey had desired a housing allowance, Kingswood did not have a parsonage for its new pastor, Rev. Dan Maxey. In early summer the church agreed to purchase a new parsonage on Springfield Drive in Dunwoody. It was larger than the previous parsonage and was considered more appropriate housing for a pastor serving a church of our size. During the months following, Kingswood's people again revealed their generosity with donations of carpets and furniture. Library paneling and book cases were installed and the garage converted to a study for the pastor.

As Kingswood grew so did its missions. It continued its support of the Trinity soup kitchen in downtown Atlanta by furnishing 30 volunteers, 60 gallons of soup and 800 meat and cheese sandwiches quarterly for over 700 homeless. In 1985 they also participated in a foot-washing service. The Lord's Storehouse, right in our church, furnished clothes and food continually for people in need locally.

Staff changes in 1985 included Eric White's resignation. Art O'Neal and Cece Morgan completed the year as directors of the youth program. Cathy Lee left and Elaine Neal undertook responsibility for the education program.

The start of 1985 found the building about 28% completed. A Memorials committee was formed to afford individuals opportunity to honor loved ones with memorial gifts. Although a September completion date was contemplated, it was delayed by a problem with the supply of pews. With that problem finally resolved, the first worship service in a beautiful new sanctuary was held on Wednesday, December 18. The first regular Sunday service was held on December 22, with 804 worshippers present. Consecration of the building was set for January.

Notwithstanding its amazing achievement of a new permanent worship facility, the congregation continued to look to the future. To proceed forward, one must have direction and so it was with Kingswood. In August, the Administrative Board adopted a statement of purpose for KUMC: "Kingswood is a fellowship of

believers in Christ who share a common faith while we struggle to appreciate our differences. We witness to Christ's life in the community and the world through missions, education and worship to the end that all might come to share this witness."

1986 was of course off to an exciting start with the move into our new sanctuary - and how beautiful it was. To sit amid its splendor inspired one to want to worship and praise. Consecration Sunday was January 5, 1986 with Dr. Reynolds Greene, Superintendent of the Atlanta-Chamblee District and the Rev. Doctor Ernest A. Fitzgerald, Bishop of the Atlanta area of the UMC, participating. A large photograph and story of that occasion even made the front page of the next day's Atlanta Constitution. It was announced that the cost of the building was \$1,458,518 plus architectural fees. The Boy Scouts of our church sponsored troop contributed some landscaping. Memorial fund gifts at that point totaled \$57,000 and would rise considerably higher in the days ahead. A budget of \$720,747.64 was proposed. Kingswood was moving forward. It was estimated that it would take \$42,000 monthly to run our new plant.

Shortly after the start of that year Olive Kellum joined Kingswood's staff as Director of Christian Education. At the April Administrative Board meeting, Rev. Maxey requested a transfer and in June he was replaced by Rev. Julian Brackman. Julian's wife, Jackie and two sons, Jay and Joey, enthusiastically joined Kingswood and actively participated in many of its activities. Jackie was a fine musician and willingly gave of her talents. Russell Davis joined our staff as Minister of Youth, and Kirk Bowen became our new Custodian.

A highlight of the year was the Rev. Mabel Foster becoming an Elder in the United Methodist Church. A large following of Kingswood friends went to witness the ceremony. Mrs. Judy Warner's candidacy for the ministry was also approved as she enrolled at Candler School of Theology. Other events in 1986 included a March invitation for the King's Men to sing for a conference at Simpsonwood, the beautiful new United Methodist conference center on the Chattahoochee. Kingswood's United Methodist Men sponsored their "Holy Smoke" barbeque to cook hams and turkeys to be sold for Thanksgiving. The church enjoyed its annual picnic at Simpsonwood. Rev. Foster was invited to participate in The World Institute of Evangelism activities in Africa for three weeks. A Walk-thru--the-Bible seminar was planned for 1987.

Missions continued to expand. In 1987 Kingswood voted to sponsor a refugee Hungarian family. The Jenó Kurucz family overcame many difficulties and finally arrived in September 1989. Missions found an apartment, furnished it and supported the family financially and emotionally. A "spring fling" or great Mission flea market was begun and has continued annually since that time to support Mission projects. Christmas gift boxes were again packed for Georgia prison inmates. In 1988, some \$44,000 was spent in mission outreach. The Children's Home is supported annually and the 1988 contributions totaled \$5.64/person. Kingswood people opened their hearts and again made themselves known as a caring congregation.

The 1987 Annual Conference produced again another staff change as Rev. Mabel Foster was moved to Tucker First Methodist and the Rev. Terry King joined us as our new Associate Pastor. Then in 1988 Kingswood celebrated its twentieth anniversary. It was in this year that Rev. Brackman set about to update our membership rolls. They had become swollen by members who had moved away or had changed churches. This resulted in a reduction in recorded membership to a more accurate reflection of our actual size. The revised membership at that time was approximately 1,317.

The United Methodist Men sponsored a Sweetheart Dinner near Valentine's Day. It was a fun time and the first of several such socials. In a more serious vein, the men of Kingswood built a house in downtown Atlanta under the Charis program to provide better living facilities for a deserving family. This began a tradition which has continued with 8 houses completed in an equal number of years.

Our youth were always busy. They prepared a dinner theater presentation of three one act plays which played to a full house. A mission trip was planned in the summer to John's Island, S.C. with a church carwash scheduled to help raise money for the trip. The UMYF dedication to mission trips has continued and has often been funded through similar fund raising by the youth themselves.

1989 was another big year for staff changes. In January Russell and Becky Davis left and the Youth program soon gained a new leader in the person of David Hancock. He and his wife Cheryl joined us at that time. Rev. Terry King was assigned to Red Oak United Methodist and a new Associate Pastor, Joy Brown was appointed. She came with her young son, Jonathan. In September Olive Kellum, our Education and Program Director left. These changes precipitated a reassignment of staff responsibilities. David Hancock became Minister of Youth and Program while Joy Brown headed up Evangelism and Education. The music department was saddened by Rev Kathy Cook White's resignation as she left to accompany her husband in a transfer to a new location.

This year, as most, was noteworthy with several special highlights. The Trinity Bible Study was begun. Kingswood hosted the North Georgia children's Choir Festival. The corner lot and entrances were landscaped. Regular fellowship dinners were commenced on Wednesday nights. A men's bible study was started at Jack Camarda's home. A twelve week parenting course, "Living in Families Effectively", was taught by Dr. Sandra Hoffman. A new pictorial directory was published. Thanks to Kingswood's usual enthusiasm for music and the arts, and its willingness to supply the necessary volunteer labor, both choir room risers and the fellowship hail stage were also constructed that year. The new stage made possible a new era of outstanding Wednesday evening dinner programs.

Realizing the power of prayer, Kingswood organized prayer vigils for important events. In April, forty-five people participated in one vigil. A prayer chain was started to pray for people with prayer requests. In three months 95 requests were received. Thirty-two people participated. Prayer Fellowship met Sunday evenings at the church to pray. It continues to be active.

The youth choir, called Freeway, though few in number, made a summer trip to Orlando, Florida. In early fall the adult choir went on its annual retreat to the North Baptist Assembly in Toccoa. In September the chancel choir presented Gaither's "Alleluia". In August, Kingswood acquired, again through inspired individual giving, the New Methodist Hymnal. It was the first denominational hymnal of a new group formed from the merger of the United Brethren, Evangelical and Methodist traditions which is now known as the United Methodist Church. This new hymnal was used in conjunction with "Sing His Praise" which was a special supplemental hymnal published that same year by Kingswood. It contained hymns and praise songs not in the Methodist hymnal but which were favorites of the congregation.

Camp meeting, a worship style descended from the early days of Methodism in the U.S., became our style for the 1969 summer. Informality in dress, less structure in the service, and uplifting spiritual type singing became our mode. It was so warmly received that it was continued through 1992.

In 1989, a long-range planning committee was formed and charged to identify the goals that Kingswood should strive to achieve in the next decade. Their report presented recommendations for future directions for Evangelism, Missions, Facilities and Staffing. In addition, a "Vision" statement against which all of our programs should be judged was composed: "We believe God's purpose for Kingswood United Methodist Church is to be a Christ-centered, people-oriented church, reaching out and receiving people as they are; a place for spiritual growth through Bible study, prayer, worship and fellowship, providing an environment and an opportunity for all to be in service to others as Christians in a caring ministry of mission outreach both in the community and around the world, so that our commitment to these actions will draw others to Christ."

The planning committee's recommendations included generation of a renewed evangelism program, not just to achieve church growth, but to purposefully and intentionally reach out to fulfill Christ's commission. They urged serious consideration of revising worship and church school meeting hours to better strengthen family worship together and they encouraged efforts to gain more widespread congregational involvement in church programs. Expansion of programs for singles of all ages was urged. The committee proposed setting a monetary goal for Missions outreach by the church equal to a full tithe of the church budget. An expanded young adult ministry was suggested. Installation of a local area computer network was encouraged, as well as staff initiation and maintenance of a permanent historical archive for the church. Consideration for the purchase of additional property for a future indoor recreational facility and for a pipe organ for the sanctuary were also proposed, whenever current mortgage obligations were satisfied. This report and recommendations were unanimously accepted by the Administrative Council in August.

Early in 1990 our music program experienced a significant change in leadership. Roger Hove, who had been Director of Music since the founding of the church in 1968, retired. In April a special day and service were dedicated to him. For 22 years he gave willingly and ably to lead Kingswood's Worship

through music. A search committee was formed to secure both a new director and organist. Jeff Jones became Organist in January and David Bowen became the new full time Director of Music in March.

In 1991 Rev. Julian Brackman was assigned to Douglasville First United Methodist. The new pastor assigned to Kingswood was Dr. Joe Peabody who joined our church family along with his wife Anne and sons Joe, Jr. and Andrew. The same Annual Conference reassigned Rev. Joy Brown as associate pastor at Tucker First Methodist. Other staff changes that same year included the director of music, David Bowen, assuming the job of organist when Jeff Jones left.

With the pastoral staff reduced, 1992 saw us with a new need for a part-time person to lead the youth ministry. Phil Beck was hired as assistant youth minister. Charlotte Wells joined the office staff as staff secretary, replacing Martha Stewart. Later, after the untimely death of Nancie Johnson, our financial secretary, Charlotte also assumed those responsibilities. As time passes, changes come and go. So it has been with Kingswood's programs and activities as they have changed continuously to meet the needs and desires of a changing congregation. That year a significant change was made in the Sunday morning worship schedule. Previously, the early church service and church school were scheduled simultaneously at 9:30, with a second worship service held at 11:00. In order to better encourage worship of families together a change was approved to schedule church school between the two worship services.

Membership in July of 1993 was 1,237 with an average morning worship attendance of 358. \$668,313 was the annual budget adopted for this year. Our mortgage obligations have diminished, as of the end of July, to about \$429,679 and should be paid off in 1995.

As we approach our 25th anniversary the early 1990's are a good reflection of our most recent complexion. For the children, there are church school classes for all, with an extended session for the preschoolers, and a children's church for grades 1 to 3. Both the John Wesley and Little Angel choirs are organized for the younger singers. Special programs have included the Children's Christmas Pageant, a march to the manger on Christmas Eve, an Easter egg hunt, the Procession of Palms on Palm Sunday, and the annual presentation of Bibles to 3rd graders. Vacation Bible School has been a regular part of every summer program. There is a year-round pre-school. The church sponsors Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout groups. The Boy Scout troop is the largest in the district and one of the largest in the council. It has supported the church with food drives and service projects. The Cub Scout pack is also a very large group. Children regularly serve as acolytes. The children collectively undertook a mission project of their own with "Pennies for Peru" to support our missionary in Peru. Average children's attendance in church school in 1993 has been 52.

For the youth, again, church school classes for all ages. There is junior UMYF for grades 7-9 and senior UMYF for grades 10-12, youth choir for grades 7-12, confirmation classes each year, and acolyte programs and youth retreats.

The UMYF have undertaken both a volleyball marathon and presentation of a dinner theater to raise money for their summer mission trips. Other youth trips have included the B.A.S.I.C. Training spring beach trip, and skiing and rafting trips. "Fifth quarter" socials after high school football games have continued and there has been SPORTS, an informal sports program for summer activity. About twenty youth have been involved.

The vitality of our adult church school ministry has always been strong. With eight adult classes meeting every Sunday morning, representing an average collective attendance of 101, we clearly continue to hunger for learning in the Word at every age.

Kingswood's involvement in service to others has continued to remain an important Mission focus. In 1990, Jean Jacobs, our missionary to Peru and Mexico, visited the congregation and reported on her ministry. She spoke to all, including a special visit with the church school children. The United Methodist Women conducted a silent auction and donated substantially to both the Women's Shelter and the Methodist Children's Home. This group also continued its weekly visits to Wesley Woods to play bingo with residents there. The spring Mission Fair has continued to do well, thanks to the tireless efforts of numerous dedicated members of the congregation. Projects supported by Missions in the early nineties have included continued support of the Trinity Soup Kitchen in Atlanta, the Charis housing project with a new house being built every year, support for Campus Crusade for Christ in its college campus ministry, support of the Northside Shepherd Center, Hinton Rural Life Center, the Atlanta Community Food Sank, Prison ministries, the UMCOR worldwide relief effort for hunger, the local Doorstep Ministry, and the meeting of numerous local needs. Also supported have been the Red Bird Mission, a Kentucky school and medical center, the Atlanta Woman's Day Shelter for homeless women and children, the Fairhaven Ministries, a ministers' renewal center, a Bibles for Russia project, and various emergency and assistance programs. The Lord's Storehouse has continued to provide food and clothes for many in need. Several members of the church walked in the Wesley Walk for Others and the youth undertook a volleyball marathon to support their own summer mission building project. The Missions budget in 1993 was \$20,000 and the Mission Fair contributed an additional resource of some \$3,818.

In music, the chancel choir under David Bowen Continues to grow. It now numbers 30 on most Sundays while over 60 have sung for special presentations. There have been many of these, including Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" and "The Messiah." These have been exciting and meaningful experiences for both the participants and our congregation. The choir continues its participation in the annual Dunwoody ecumenical Christmas Choral Sing. They have also presented a number of fun-type secular programs such as "That's Entertainment", "Just Go to the Movies", and Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial By Jury". Each year the Chancel Choir has continued its ritual of a late summer retreat to the mountains for fellowship, renewal and practice. An instrumental ensemble and an adult handbell choir Continue to be active during the school year and enrich our

worship whenever they perform. The youth and children's choirs, though fewer in number than when Kingswood was a younger church, Continue to sing for selected worship services. The King's Men ensemble also continues to sing god's praise, both at Kingswood and away with its ongoing Christian musical Outreach ministry. In 1992, thanks again to generous members who purchased keys and pedals, our music ministry was beautifully enhanced with the purchase of a new grand piano for the sanctuary.

The United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Men, at present, are not meeting regularly. One study/sharing group is active and the men's Monday night Bible study has continued. Wednesday night fellowship dinners remain a vital and very popular fellowship activity with many fine programs appealing to all ages. Kingswood's hostess, Merijoye Rucker, has played no small part in the success of these delightful evenings. The church continues to sponsor several blood donation drives each year and members have participated in the Wesley Walk-a-Thon for others.

Yes, Kingswood has enjoyed many fine days in its history and, with Cod's blessing and with a continuation of its heritage of inspired leadership and individual Christian commitment, it will go on to serve the Lord in the finest possible way. Praise god for our beginnings! Let them be only a foretaste of ministry yet to come.

Written, revised, and updated, 1979, 1983 and 1993, by Mr. Fred Wilenchek and Mrs. Laura Hove.