

## Early History of North Raleigh Methodist Church

Approximately 15 people attended the first and second organization meetings in the spring of 1971, first at the home of Lois and Paul Sharpe, then at the home of Joe and Frances Trollinger. Joe's father was a Methodist minister and he knew most of the people in the United Methodist Conference Board who helped us get a new church planted.

Joe became our chief leader and along with Turner Williams, Paul Sharpe, Noah Sites, Roger Eller and George Robinson our new Church was formed. It was an exciting and rewarding time along with hard work to see our Church progress. Since we only had thirteen families at the beginning, most of us were on multiple committees meeting three or four nights weekly. Everyone was working hard for our new Church with organization, Sunday School and singing in the choir.

The United Methodist Conference allowed us to meet and worship at Monk Chapel on the campus of The Methodist Home for Children. The Conference also provided four ministers from the staff of the Conference including the Chaplain of the Methodist Home for Children. These ministers rotated so that each preached once monthly. Reverend Sidney Huggins was assigned to be our first full time minister on June 8, 1972. He was a perfect fit for our young congregation.

During 1971 or early 1972 we found seven acres of land on Honeycutt Road for sale. The North Carolina Conference, The Raleigh Board of Missions and the Duke Endowment Fund assisted us with financial gifts that enabled us to purchase the land to build our first building. The largest gift was from the N. C. Conference Ten Dollar Club which provided us with \$20,000 for the purchase of the land. The Ten Dollar Club is a fund which aids new startup churches and helps struggling churches. The Ten Dollar Club has members throughout the Conference. The Conference makes two to three calls each year for members to donate \$10.00 per call. Our church then borrowed funds from the North Carolina Conference to build our first building which is still in use on our campus today.

Another exciting and rewarding event happened on September 3, 1972 when we held the groundbreaking for the first building on Honeycutt Rd. There was a large crowd at the groundbreaking and on March 25, 1973 Rev. Sid Huggins conducted the first Worship service in our new building. What a wonderful blessing to be in our own church building.

Another exciting event happened in June, 1973. The United Methodist Conference recognized North Raleigh United Methodist Church as the Church of the Year based on our achievements and goals accomplished for our first two years. Our Church had the largest percentage in the Conference for member contributions to the Ten Dollar Club. We also had the largest percentage in the Conference for members attending church services and had grown to 49 families with 132 Church members.

A few years later a member of our church, John Wiegler, helped organize our first softball team which participated in the Church County League. This team became goodwill ambassadors for our Church as it became well known within the county churches. A few of the members on this team were John Wiegler, Sid Huggins, Dick Petty, Jay Dixon, Ken Blue, Horace Johnson, Larry Fredrick, Larry Purdue and Ray Taylor. This was an exciting time as we represented our church well by finishing the season with an excellent record.

In just eleven years Reverend Huggins led our church from 98 charter members to 849 members in March 1983. By this time we had outgrown our first building and our new Sanctuary was completed. What an eventful and exciting time this first twelve years of being a part of our church was for us.

Ray and Martha Taylor