

BRANCHES
of The **LIVING**
VINE

1916 - 1991

A Seventy Five Year History of
Highland Park
United Methodist Church

Edmund Deane

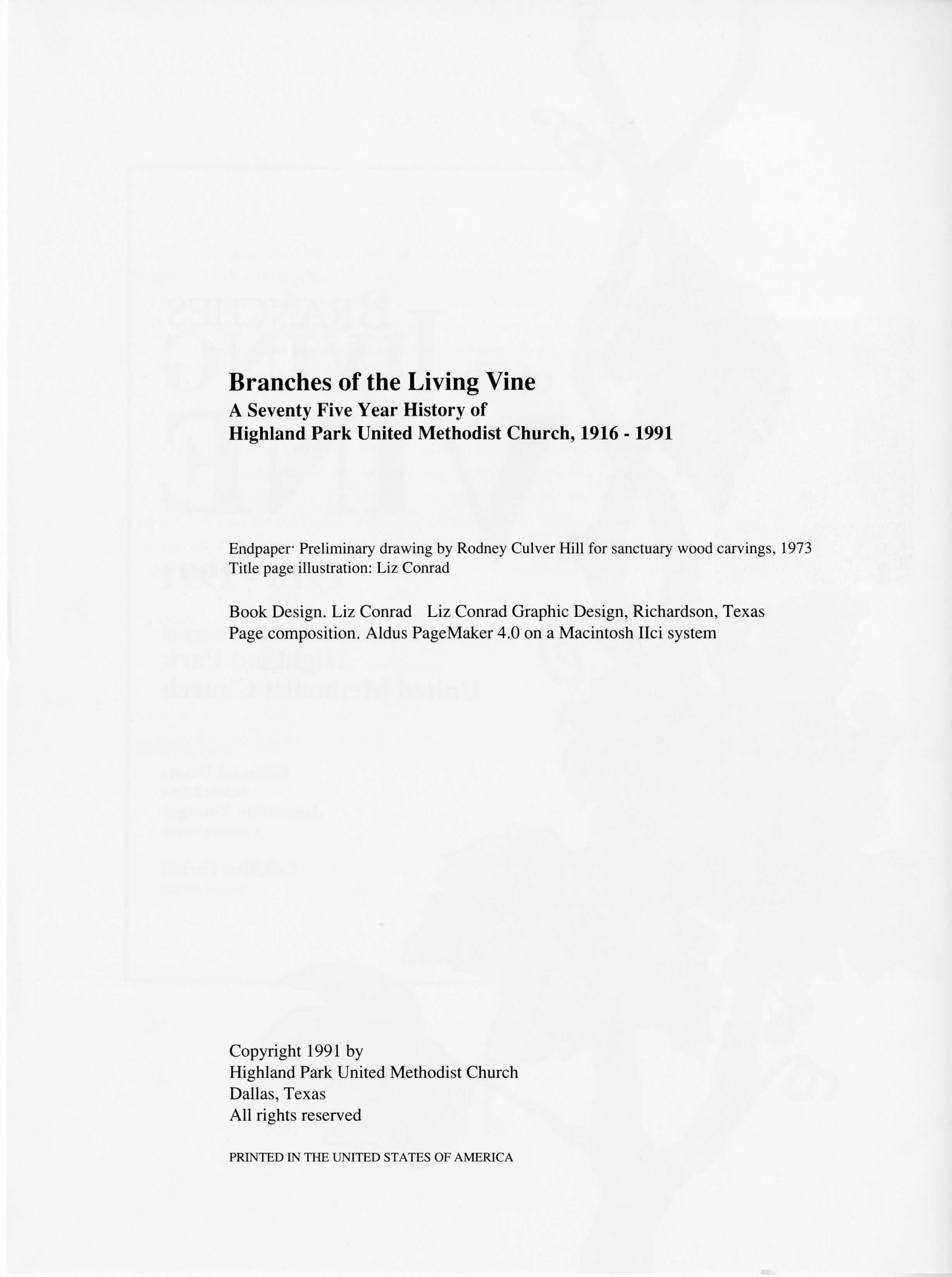
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Branches of the Living Vine
A Seventy Five Year History of
Highland Park United Methodist Church, 1916 - 1991

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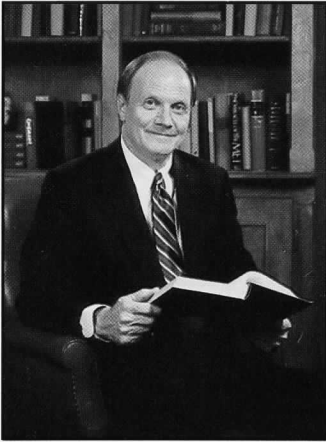
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MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Since its inception the Highland Park United Methodist Church has been unique in United Methodism. Under the wise and farsighted leadership of Umphrey Lee, Marshall Steel and Bill Dickinson, a marvelous church plant was envisioned and built to serve the needs of future generations. The spiritual depth of the church members enabled the congregation to share in exciting ministries from West Dallas to Bolivia. Numerous program ministries were developed to serve the needs of both the congregation and the community of which the church is such a vital part. A philosophy of multiple staff has evolved over the years which has enabled our church to minister to people through a variety of talented staff persons, each with his or her own different and unique gifts.

But the real strength of our church has been in its committed, dedicated and caring lay people! Throughout our church's history lay persons have been in the forefront of leadership. They have served faithfully in every ministry of the church. The staff can plan and envision, but only the laity can put those plans and dreams into action through their loyalty and faithfulness. Each year hundreds of volunteers spend thousands of hours in teaching, praying, visiting, witnessing, helping, planning, studying and worshipping.

As we look back across the past seventy-five years we see that outstanding leadership from both lay and clergy has provided the impetus to make our church a flagship church in United Methodism. But, it is God who has blessed us and made our church great! **He is the vine, we are the branches.**



Leighton Farrell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book represents literally years in a labor of love, not in its writing, but in creating the history of this particular People of God. Many people are recognized here for their efforts in building up this church; yet there are many more who have made the same labor of love, but of whom we have no written record. For all who have shared their faith, hope, and love, laboring in the vineyard in nurturing and building up of this little corner of His Kingdom, we offer our heartfelt gratitude and dedicate this work to God's glory

This volume is the work of many persons. You will find it does not read as if it comes from a single hand because it is the work of many, many hands. We drew on the first-hand knowledge of the different individuals, groups and classes that represent this church in mission, and asked them to tell their own stories in their own words. We asked others to contribute their oral histories, their pictures, and from all this wonderful collage of information about our church, we have attempted to share not only the story but the joy which is ours in being His people. The cover picture of the grape vine is symbolic of our story as a church, for it entwines and reaches up and out from its life-giving Source, the branches growing stronger and bearing more abundant, sweeter fruit with each passing season.

A special word of gratitude goes to Jessamine Younger, our Archivist and Assistant Editor, without whose boundless energy for preserving and organizing our past as a church would have made such a volume impossible. She has also written the opening chapter which tells the story of the first fifty years of this congregation. We have also been blessed to utilize the rich artistic talents of Liz Conrad, who has brought a unity, style and classic beauty to this endeavor. Karen Briscoe has given her special talents to the project in doing much of the detailed research work, as well as organizing and entry of the contributed articles into the computer, making everyone else's task infinitely easier. And a special thanks to Bonnie Blackman, Gayle Hardaway and Susie Starnes, each of whom proofread the copy and offered many helpful suggestions. Many other hands and hearts contributed to the successful completion of this endeavor, including the contributing writers, photographers, and those offering expert production and marketing assistance. Many are the volunteers who have worked diligently maintaining the Archives of the church and others who have gathered history first-hand by taping the oral history interviews. Still others have made unique special contributions, such as Lucille Duggan and Annette Groves who contributed the winning suggestions for the book's name.

I am indebted to the Seventy Fifth Anniversary Publications Committee and the labor of love in which they have engaged themselves. Each participant has brought special insights and expertise to make the project what it is, and together they formed a creative team to bring the project to reality. Much encouragement has also come from Dr. Farrell and the Seventy Fifth Anniversary Steering Committee, who have general oversight of this and all of the events of the diamond jubilee year of 1991. I am delighted to share in this time of remembering our rich heritage, celebrating the present, and anticipating what God has in store for all of us as His church in the future.

Edmund Deane

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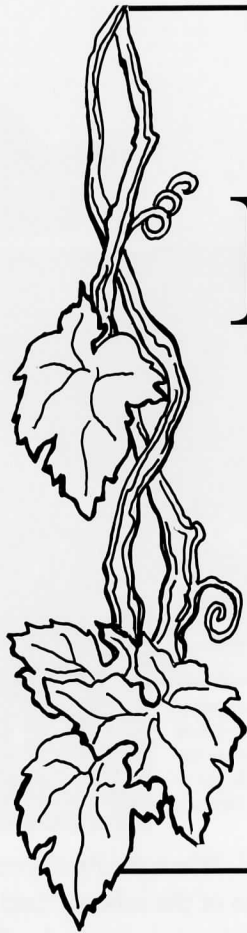
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PLANTED & NURTURED IN FAITH

*You did not choose me,
I chose you,
and appointed you
to go and bear much fruit,
the kind of fruit that endures*

John 15 16

On a bright Sabbath morning, September 28, 1915, the first worshipers to attend religious services in Dallas Hall made their way across a campus where shoulder high johnson grass had waved in the summer sun not long before. The dream and the anticipation had become reality for church leaders and students alike. In the group that climbed to the third floor chapel were 250 resident students, 200 visitors, and members of Southern Methodist University's first faculty, accompanied by their families. The Sunday School was organized that day under the skillful direction of Frank Reedy, Bursar of the university, with the assistance of Miss Dorothy Amann, SMU's first librarian and secretary to the newly organized Sunday School. Dr. Horace Bishop, chairman of the university's Board of Trustees, preached the first sermon.

The story of Southern Methodist University began many years before the school opened. The hilltop on which Dallas Hall now stands and all of the land which it faces to Mockingbird Lane were part of the one hundred acres that came to the Methodist Episcopal Church South as a gift from Mr and Mrs. John S. Armstrong. Both were staunch Presbyterians who had dreamed of seeing a Presbyterian school



Despite its location just north of the promising new suburb of Highland Park, it was an unlikely spot. "The site was six miles from downtown Dallas in a sea of grass with few trees and no houses in sight. It took vision to see this as an ideal location" ³



"The bleak winter landscape blossomed in the spring. Bois d'arc trees transformed it and shaded a branch of Turtle Creek that cut across the campus. A cluster of these trees that had once outlined a farmer's field followed this creek bed to the southwest corner of the campus.

erected on the site.¹ When the Presbyterians regretfully abandoned their plans, W H. Clagett, a trustee of the school, "laid before the Methodists the vision God had given him for a great university in the City of Dallas" ²

Dr Robert S. Hyer went out to view the site in June 1911 soon after he arrived in Dallas to take up his duties as first president of Southern Methodist University. When he found it impossible to walk through the weed-grown fields, he hired a farmer to plough a furrow through the middle of the campus so that he could walk to the top of the hill and place the buildings in his imagination. ⁴

A severe nationwide financial depression delayed the opening of the university until 1915. ⁵ During the summer a few students dropped by to investigate and found workmen racing to complete the buildings in time for the fall semester. Among those who remained to help were James Porter Owen and Stanley "Pat" Patterson who earned their tuition by pouring cement at 10 cents an hour. ⁶ A future charter member of the church, Robert J LaPrade, Sr., decided one summer day to check the building progress and unexpectedly ran into Dr. Hyer. He expressed his wish to transfer from Southwestern University at Georgetown to SMU, but felt that his academic credits would not be strong enough for acceptance by the "great" new Methodist University under construction in Dallas. Dr Hyer told him to consider himself accepted and to come back for registration. For the rest of his life, LaPrade felt that, unofficially, he was the first student to enroll on the SMU campus. ⁷



The Dinky

The “Dinky” Was Just Too Dinky!

Southern Methodist University awaited registration hoping that up to 300 students would enroll on September 22, 1915. Instead 706 students presented themselves for instruction. Overnight the faculty found their classes had doubled in size. While this was indeed an “ambarrassing [sic.] success,” as the *Texas Christian Advocate* reported, the location of the school presented an overwhelming initial problem. One of the university’s requirements was that all students must attend one church service each Sunday. However, without transportation except by streetcar (the unreliable “Dinky” held only thirty-five or forty people, and a round trip took about forty-five minutes) and isolated from the “mother church,” Oak Lawn Methodist, it was impossible for school officials to move the 250 resident students to a church of their choice. From this dilemma came the only possible solution. The faculty would conduct religious services on campus. They willingly accepted this added task.⁸

Early Sunday School Records

To the historian and researcher, nothing is quite so satisfying as finding documentary proof that supports long-held suppositions. A reexamination of the brittle, yellowing records and order slips, which were carefully filed away by Miss Dorothy Amann, yielded surprising information. For years it was assumed that the first Sunday School organized on the SMU campus consisted only of university students and faculty. If this were true, where were the wives and children of the faculty members? Miss Amann’s records provide tangible evidence of both a Beginners and a Primary Class. Between October 8, 1915 and November 6, 1915, the supplies listed on the left were ordered from the Methodist Publishing House.

Miss Amann’s report by classes for October 24, 1915, also included Primary Department Superintendent, Mrs. J. R. Morrison (wife of Coach Ray Morrison). Officers and teachers present: 4; Pupils present: 9; Collection: .40.⁹ The fragile records kept for so many years bear out one of the strongest characteristics of this congregation: the value placed on Christian education at all age levels.

12 Beginners Stories	.75
12 Primary Stories	.75
Beginners Text Book	.25
Primary Text Book	.25
Beginners Large Pictures	.50
1 Song Stories	.15
1 box crayons	.10
1 pkg. birthday cards	.10
1 birthday bank	.35
<hr/>	
Total	\$3.05

First Religious Services On Campus

Dr Hyer placed the responsibility for the preaching at Sunday services in the capable hands of Dr Ivan Lee Holt, the university's new Chaplain and Chairman of the School of Theology His reputation as an exciting speaker spread quickly across the campus, and he filled the auditorium for his first sermon. Years later in a letter to Dr Walter Vernon, Jr., well-known Methodist historian, he recalled his memories of the first services in Dallas Hall.

From the Desk of Ivan Lee Holt:

When the faculty of the School of Theology reached Dallas the President consulted us in the fall of 1915 as to church services...

I had been named Chaplain of the University as well as Chairman of the Theological Faculty I suggested to Dr Hyer that we have a University service Sunday afternoon at four I organized a choir and had them wear Oxford gowns. For the first service I secured as Preacher the Senior Bishop of the Southern Church, Bishop E.R. Hendrix of Kansas City We both wore gowns and marched in the Processional behind the choir into the chapel. For the second Sunday I got Bishop E.D. Mouzon, resident Bishop in Dallas as the preacher He wore a gown and marched with me in the Processional. I thought that with the example set by the Senior Bishop and the resident Bishop I would continue to use the gown. I held only 2 or 3 Sunday services alone when retired ministers living near the campus got up a letter to Dr Hyer condemning the "introduction of popery in religious services on the campus." They threatened to take this matter to the floor of the Annual Conferences. I use their words.

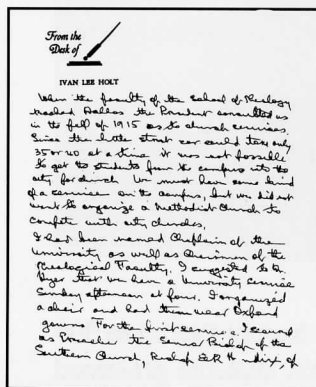
It was such a serious situation that the Presiding Elder, Dr Sensabaugh, Dr Hyer and I had a long conference. We decided that there was nothing to do but organize a church on the campus and get a pastor After several conferences we decided on the young preacher of the Detroit Circuit, A. Frank Smith. We could not offer a salary because we had no church yet. So Frank was appointed to a small church in Dallas while he worked up a church organization on the campus. He, his wife and little baby moved into rooms in one of the boys suites in the Boys Dormitory .. ¹⁰

Formal organization of the University Church took place on February 4, 1916, when Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon and Presiding Elder Oscar F Sensabaugh met to complete the necessary documents and to appoint the Reverend A. Frank Smith pastor of the new church. Dr Sensabaugh held the First Quarterly Conference of the newly established church on February 21, 1916. At that time Reverend Smith reported that 134 charter members had joined. ¹¹

The First Major Turning Point The University and Community Join Hands

As winter gave way to spring, Dr Sensabaugh felt that something had to be done to give proper strength and financial stability to the University Church. As early as October 1915, he had urged the formation of a church that would minister not only to faculty and students, but to the whole community and its environs as well. Now that the church had been organized, he took steps to bring it the friendly support and financial stability that it needed. Fully endorsed by Bishop Mouzon, he visited with Dr and Mrs. R. W Baird in Highland Park to suggest that a meeting be called in their new home inviting representatives of every Methodist family in the area. They graciously agreed and a date was set. ¹²

Thirty-eight people, not counting Bishop Mouzon and Dr Sensabaugh



The Holt Letter



Florence Langran

attended this historic meeting. Fifteen represented Highland Park families; the remaining twenty-three were SMU faculty members and their wives. Key to the success was a clear strategy: the Highland Park residents were asked to transfer their membership from other Methodist churches in the city to the new church. Dr Sensabaugh suggested that the name be changed to Highland Park Methodist.¹³

Among those who attended were Florence and J. C. Langran who remembered Bishop Mouzon remarking that “*.if the Methodists who lived in Highland Park and University Park didn’t support the new church, we could not expect any other community to do so!*” Mrs. Langran added, “*We, of course, did not wait for Trinity Church property to be sold, but proceeded at once to complete the organization of the Highland Park Methodist Church.*”¹⁴

This decision that brought “town and gown” together was the first major turning point in the church’s history. It brought together a remarkable group of people. They included most of SMU’s initial faculty, of whom forty per cent held PhD degrees,¹⁵ and a number of well-educated business and professional people who were moving into the new suburb of Highland Park. The largest group by far, however, and the one for whom the church was intended from the beginning, was the student body in residence on the SMU campus.

Faith and Commitment of Founders

Membership continued to increase through the charter year of 1916. One by one Methodists transferred to the new church, “leaving Trinity, Oak Lawn, Grace, and First Methodist.”¹⁶ It was a difficult choice. Many left churches where their marriages had been performed, infants baptized, and loved ones memorialized. But they did not look back, rather forward in faith. They came knowing that they were expected to befriend the student population. They came knowing that eventually they must provide a new building, a church home that would serve as the spiritual arm of the new university. It was powerful testimony to their loyalty to Methodism and their commitment to Jesus Christ.

SMU’s Priceless Gift To The Church’s Future

The matter of location was settled at a meeting of SMU’s board of trustees on June 27, 1916, where the following instrument was recorded in the minutes.

“WHEREAS, it is mutually desired by Southern Methodist University and yourselves that the future home of Highland Park Methodist Episcopal Church, South, be located on the campus of Southern Methodist University, and

WHEREAS, it is deemed for the best interest of said University and said Church that the future home of said Church be located on the Southwest corner of the Campus of Southern Methodist University,

NOW, THEREFORE, this letter is to grant permission and license the Trustees of Highland Park Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to locate the home of said Church and to build a church building as the home of said Church upon the Southwest corner of the campus of Southern Methodist University.¹⁷

A Carefully Crafted Plan

While the university drowsed in the summer heat, one of the most interesting periods in the history of Dallas Methodism got underway. For a short six months during the summer and fall of 1916, the University Church, as it was still known,

became part of a three-point circuit, along with First Methodist and Trinity Methodist downtown.¹⁸ In a move described by the *Texas Christian Advocate* on June 8, 1916, as “the highest quality of ecclesiastical statesmanship,” Presiding Elder Sensabaugh, with the cooperation of two bishops and the pastors of the three churches involved, devised a carefully crafted plan.

Trinity Methodist was asked to merge with First Methodist in order to create a much larger, stronger downtown congregation. First Methodist was asked to give up its old location and use the sale price to buy the two lots at Ross and Harwood. Both congregations were to worship in Trinity while planning and construction was underway. Trinity also agreed to contribute the sale price of their debt-free building to help fund the building of a permanent structure for the University/Highland Park Church.¹⁹ Though all parties came to agreement, it would be ten years before this plan came to fruition.

Women’s Missionary Society Organized

When SMU opened its second year in the fall of 1916, the women were ready to go to work. Mrs. O. F. Sensabaugh, whose husband had helped organize the Parsonage and Home Mission Society in the Northwest Texas Conference in 1893, and who was herself secretary for the Missionary Society of the Dallas District, called a meeting in SMU President Hyer’s office on October 2. It was there that the Highland Park-University Church Missionary Society was organized.

The twelve ladies who were present decided that the Society would meet on the first and third Monday afternoon of each month at 3 p.m., using President Hyer’s office as their location. The general order of the meetings included devotional exercises, mission study, and a business meeting. Their first announced study was “Old Spain in New America.” They were urged to participate in the Week of Prayer, November 5-11, and also asked to share their old clothing, to be used in the work of the deaconesses. From those early roots, today’s United Methodist Women at Highland Park have grown, still with the same goals of a deeper devotional life, mission study, and outreach to others. During the week following that initial meeting, eight other ladies joined the Society, and charter membership was held open for the next twelve months, garnering thirty-four charter members.²⁰

The First Building Program

Meanwhile worship services continued in Dallas Hall on the SMU campus, and the religious life of the little community proceeded with great zeal. Those charter members who had left established churches found their talents in great demand. In November 1916, they welcomed Clovis G. Chappell as the first minister appointed to this young church under its new name of Highland Park Methodist. He immediately initiated a building program for the purpose of funding a temporary structure to house the congregation. On the committee were Frank Reedy, Fred Harding, J. C. Langran, John Wynne Barton, and Frank McNeny.

A dusty road traversed the open field to Mockingbird Lane through wild gaillardias, trailing morning glory, and blue-eyed grass. This was the only thoroughfare which was dignified by a name. Bishop Boulevard was named for the first chairman of the University Board of Trustees. The northern portion of the campus had a few concrete walks that linked the dormitories to Dallas Hall, which was also connected with Hillcrest and the streetcar line by way of the famous “one-legged steps” that lifted pedestrians to “the Hill.”²¹



Symbol of
United Methodist Women

SMU Rotunda
1917 courtesy Mrs. Robert J. LaPrade, Sr

Bishop Blvd., the only thoroughfare
which was dignified by a name



Looking south down Bishop Blvd,
already divided, toward Mockingbird Lane

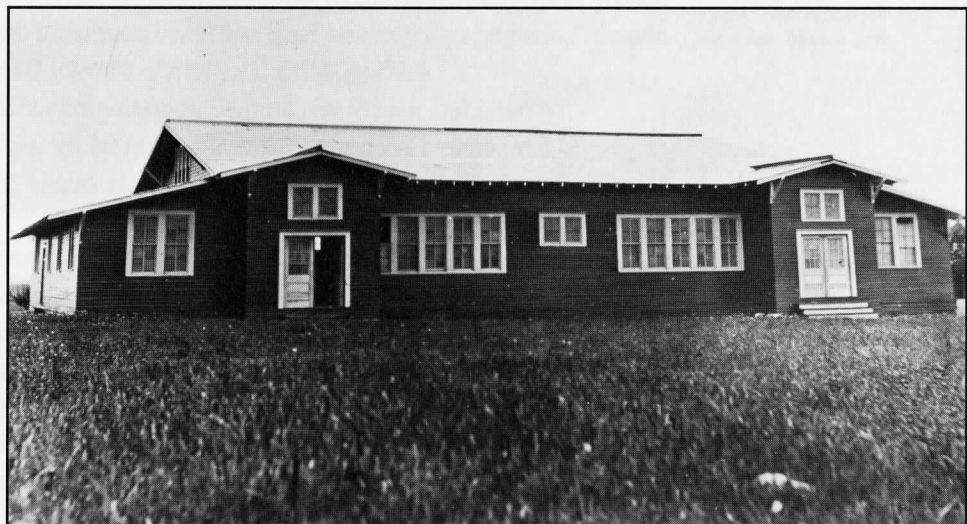


The Little Brown Church

With the resources of the university nearby, musical talent and good voices were of a higher quality than one might expect in a small frame church. Highland Park's first organ was secured by D. L. Whittle who purchased it secondhand from the Crystal Theater and sold it to the church at a greatly reduced price. Mrs. E. W. Shuler, a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory and the Boston Conservatory, became the first organist. The choir was a volunteer group under the direction of Professor Harold Hart Todd of the SMU faculty

The women of the church acquired a chancel rail and provided a linen cloth

Construction of a temporary church building began in March 1917 less than two weeks prior to our country's entry into World War I. On Mother's Day, May 13, 1917 the congregation held its first worship service in the Little Brown Church. The three oldest mothers received bouquets of roses. They were Mrs. Hudgins, mother of Mrs. Hyer, Mrs. Milton Ragsdale, mother of Mrs. Bradfield; and Mrs. Mouzon, wife of Bishop E.D. Mouzon. The cost of this structure, elegantly seated with "opera chairs" was \$4500. When completed the little church stood in barren and lonely fields. Pastor Clovis Chappell saw "No Hunting" signs nearby. ²²



for the communion table hemstitched by Mrs. J R. Bradfield. Mrs. R. W Baird baked the communion bread, a tradition she continued for the congregation almost to the day of her death.²⁴

Two adult Sunday School classes formed in 1917, and according to tradition, men and women met separately. One was the Brotherhood Class, later the Men's Bible Class, and the second was the Fellowship Class for women, whose motto was, "We have fellowship with one another and with the Lord Jesus Christ."²⁵ Both classes were vital forces in the life of the church for many decades. The



The Fellowship Class, 1919
 L. to R. Mrs. Bishop, Mrs. Lynch,
 Mrs. Langhlin, Mrs. Cunninggim,
 Mrs. Pettus, Mrs. Rezelle, Mrs. Berry
 unknown, second row:
 Mrs. Bradfield, Mrs. Langran,
 Mrs. Clements, Mrs. Necky,
 back row: unknown, Mrs. Woodland,
 Mrs. J. A. Bradfield, Mrs. Johnston,
 Mrs. Prince, Mrs. Lackey, unknown,
 Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Porter,
 Mrs. Arnold, unknown.

Fellowship Class carried out a ceremony for disbanding on December 11, 1974; the remaining members of the Men's Bible Class disbanded in 1988 and voted to lend their wisdom and experience to the still vigorous Fifty Fifty Class who welcomed them to their Sunday morning session.

During the remaining months of 1917, church membership and university enrollment seriously diminished due to war needs. The wisdom of Bishop Mouzon's and Dr. Sensabaugh's efforts in joining community and university became evident as the church, bolstered by Highland Park residents, continued through this difficult period.

Living With The Little Brown Church

To outsiders the church seemed undistinguished indeed. Doris Clower tells of giving her uncle directions to find the campus by instructing him to turn at the Highland Park Methodist Church. He lost his bearings because he mistook the church for dairy barns.²⁶

In those early years the total membership grew and was reported at Annual Conference in 1921 at 540, an encouraging increase. Even so, attendance fluctuated greatly according to the weather. The roof of the main building began to leak. Members unable to move to a more favorable spot were forced to raise umbrellas to hear out the sermon. The pastor, Dr. C. O. Shugart, was fully aware of the needs and wishes of his congregation for a new, permanent church building. He cautioned patience, but attendance records indicate how disheartened the members were. On cold, rainy Sundays they simply did not come.



Despite the fact that the Little Brown Church was intended as a temporary building from the beginning, the small congregation continued to make expansions and additions to the original frame structure. Not once in the history of this church has the congregation turned down a building program benefiting their children's educational needs. The first small building attached to the main church in 1918 was "A model beginners and primary Sunday School Building." 23 Mrs. R. H. Shuttles made the Primary Wing her main concern.

Memories abound of worshipping in the Little Brown Church, especially among those who attended there as children or teens. Catherine Culbertson Crain (Mrs. Nuell) was twelve years old when her family moved to Dallas. She remembers the worship services *"through a child's eye. I just saw the funny things that happened. I remember one time when the choir was singing a beautiful anthem or cantata or something, but all I could see was Dr Harold Hart Todd (a large man) sitting on the little, tiny piano stool. I just kept wondering when it was going to break or fall over That's all I could see or think about.*

"Another time during a Sunday night service, the ushers were taking up the offering. The floor of the Little Brown Church was on a slant, and somebody at the back dropped the collection plate. The money—there wasn't much folding money in those days—just went clink, clink, clink down the aisle!" 27

The Second Building Committee

Members attending the Quarterly Conference on April 2, 1923, voted to erect a new church building. A building committee was appointed: R. H. Shuttles, W H. Francis, F E. McLarty, E. W Rose, Dr A. I. Folsom, Dr A. D. Schuessler, and A. C. Ebie. Dr Charles Selecman, president of SMU, and R. H. Shuttles, chairman of the building committee, went immediately to Louisville, Ky to appeal to the Board of Church Extension of the denomination for funds. The board set aside \$75,000 on condition that the church raise \$150,000.

Umphrey Lee Appointed Pastor

In October 1923, Umphrey Lee received his appointment to Highland Park Methodist Church. For him, it was a homecoming. He had attended the first worship service in Dallas Hall, served as president of the student body in the university's opening year, and received his master's degree in the first graduating class.

Umphrey Lee's first sermon in the Little Brown Church surprised his listeners with its brevity They had hardly settled down after the opening prayer when it was over When asked about it later he said, "No soul was ever saved after the first twenty minutes." No one dared look away or yawn during his sermons for fear of missing something; his messages sparkled with wit, logic, and scholarship.



Bob Gilbert's 1923 Promotion Certificate

The Gleaners Class



Umphrely Lee

A class whose record of devotion and service to the church continues to this day started in 1923 as a class for young women. The Gleaners Class (the name taken from the Book of Ruth) later changed their name to honor their first teacher and sponsor, Lula Rose (Mrs. Ed). Although this class carried out a ceremony for disbanding in 1987, the remaining members continue to add strength and vitality to the Bible Discussion Class, even keeping their name alive by joining it to what is now the “Lula Rose Bible Discussion Class.”

Six university department classes formed after Dr Lee initiated new policies designed to attract students to the church. He wanted them to come to church willingly and to be involved in opportunities for training in church-related activities. His tact and diplomacy avoided a mild student uprising against SMU’s requirement of weekly church attendance.



One of the six new university classes formed in 1923 was the Social Service Sunday School Class. Under the leadership of SMU Professor H. K. Taylor, these students looked beyond the local congregation. Each Sunday they climbed in an old bus nicknamed the “Glory Wagon,” and journeyed to small communities that needed their help. Each student selected one of three activities: Building up a graded Sunday School; organizing a physical training and recreation program; or organizing community entertainments. The SSSS Class was the first to take our church’s ministry to West Dallas, and symbolizes the continuing outreach to others in which this congregation still is involved today.

Building Preparations Begin

With the growing church activity, more and more people were interested in participating in this new emerging local church, about to break ground. Church membership jumped from 867 in 1925 to 1,160 in 1926,²⁸ when construction actually began on a new church building. Building Permit No. 7 issued on January 26, 1926, estimated the building cost at \$325,000.²⁹ The Board of Stewards raised \$115,000 in cash so that work could begin. First Methodist had succeeded in selling the old Trinity Church property of which \$35,000 had been promised to Highland Park. The Board of Church Extension had promised \$75,000³⁰, and twenty Highland Park members signed a note for an additional \$100,000.³¹

Although Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon did not live to see the magnificent structure that replaced the Little Brown Church, his death indirectly influenced the architecture. R. H. Shuttles, chairman of the building committee, was asked to serve as a pallbearer at Bishop Mouzon’s funeral at First Methodist Church. He remarked later that the casket was so heavy, he thought they would never get it down the steps. He vowed that if he ever had anything to do with building a church, he did not want steps in the front.³²

A Dream Takes Shape

The tremendous challenge of building a house of God led Pastor Umphrey Lee into an intense study of church architecture. His dream of a campus cathedral fired the enthusiasm of the two young local architects, Roscoe DeWitt and Mark Lemmon, and communicated itself to the congregation as well. For months prior to the opening, as members watched the structure take shape, each Sunday's worship bulletin carried the following quote from John Ruskin.

When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for the present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, "See! This our Fathers did for us." ³³

In a jubilant moment the cornerstone was laid on May 16, 1926. As a tribute to early members, the program was in their hands: Frank Reedy, Mrs. R. W Baird, Mrs. J. S. McIntosh, Mr and Mrs. J. C. Langran, Mrs. Ross Bradfield, J J Russell, and Jack Doty



Members of Highland Park Methodist Church watched as a brand new church building began to take shape in 1926. Excitement ran high in Mrs. J. C. Langran's class of teenage girls. "We were so thrilled," recalled Charter Member Dorothy Herrin (Mrs. E. T., Sr.). "As soon as they laid the plans, they let us go over and pick out the room we wanted. We would have our Sunday School lesson on saw horses amid the construction." These high-spirited young ladies probably were the first group to attend Sunday School in the new church.



Dr. And Mrs. Lee Tour European Cathedrals

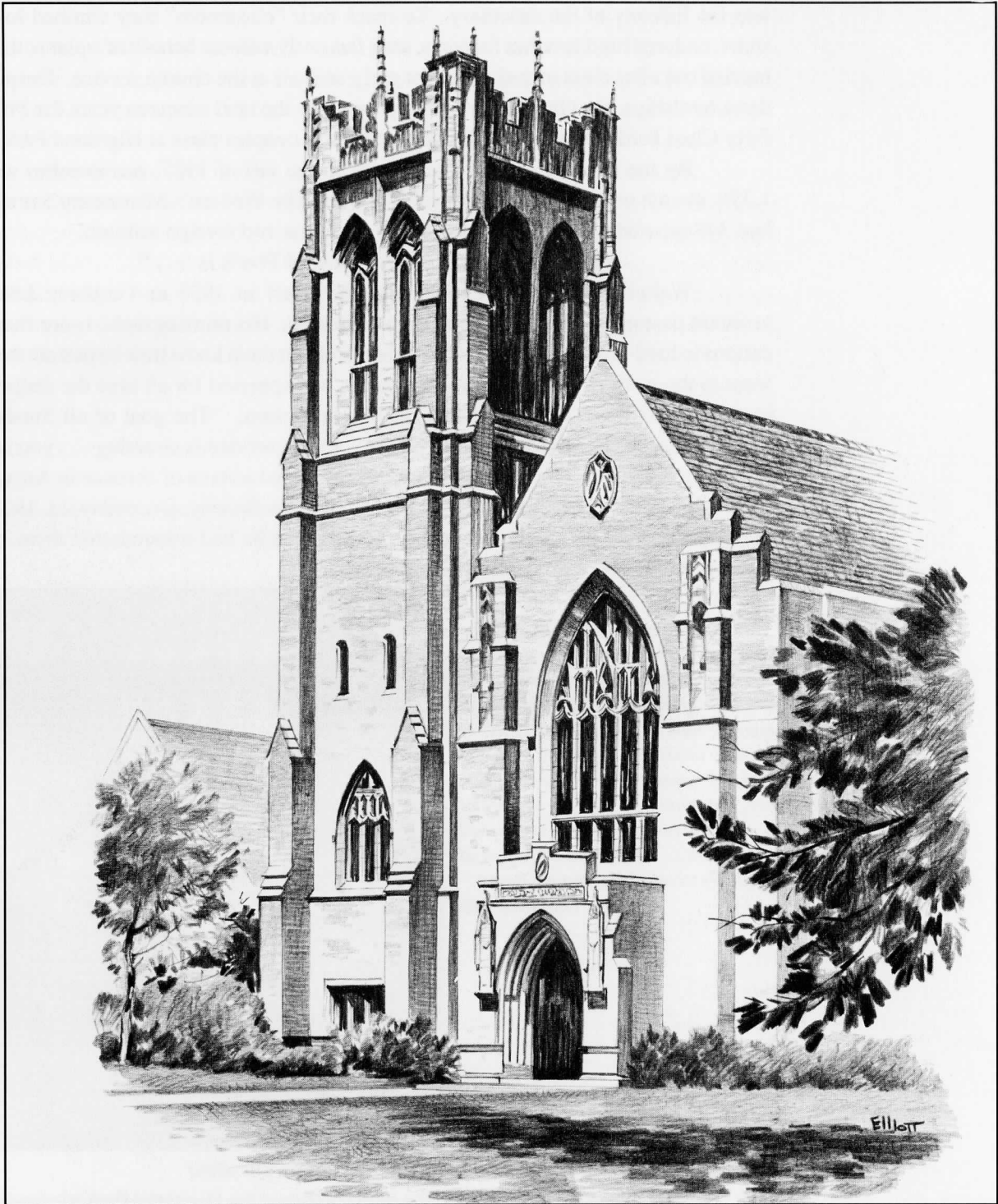
In summer 1926, in the company of Mark Lemmon, Dr and Mrs. Lee toured the great cathedrals of England and France paying special attention to details of Gothic symbolism that would be appropriate for Highland Park Methodist. Elise Golden, who was continuing her studies in London and Paris that year, met them

there. Years later she told of Mary Lee coming to the pension where she was staying. Mary would say, *“Elise, what are you doing today? Let me spend the day with you.”* Mrs. Golden would answer, *“Well, Mary, I have lessons today, and I have to practice.”* To which Mary Lee would respond, *“Well, for heavens sake, just let me hang around your room. I am so sick of looking at cathedrals I could just die!”*³⁵

We know of only one detail on which Dr Lee and his Board of Stewards disagreed. After his summer in Europe, Dr Lee expressed a desire for a cathedral-type sanctuary where one goes down the central aisle directly to the altar. The pulpit would be placed to the side. The Board disagreed, believing that this would make the sanctuary too much like a Catholic Church. They left the pulpit in the middle, a very Protestant action.³⁶ On another matter, however, they were more than willing to agree. At Dr Lee’s insistence, the church tower would be built so that it could house a carillon later on.³⁷

We can only imagine the feeling of triumph of those first members on February 6, 1927, as they entered the magnificent new sanctuary and stood to sing the great opening hymn, “All Hail the Power of Jesus Name.” Dr Charles C.





The Tower
becomes the symbol
for the future.

Selecman, President of SMU, preached at the 11:00 o'clock service. Presiding Elder O. T. Cooper preached at the 7:30 evening service. Mr. Harold Hart Todd and Mrs. E. W. Shuler prepared special music for that evening.

The Fifty Fifty Class Forms

On the third Sunday of September 1927, six young couples met in the nursery of the new church building and formed the first couples class at Highland Park Methodist, the Fifty Fifty Class. At the time, the only meeting place available

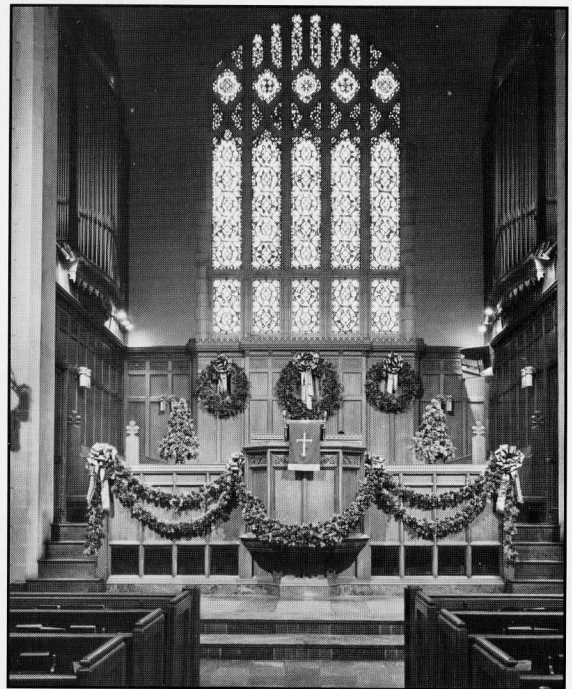
was the balcony of the sanctuary To reach their “classroom” they climbed long stairs, endured hard benches for seats, sang fervently without benefit of a piano, then hurried out after class to make way for early arrivals at the church service. Despite these hardships, the class continued to grow For the next nineteen years the Fifty Fifty Class held the distinction of being the only couples class at Highland Park.

By the time of Annual Conference in the fall of 1927, membership was 1,398; church property was valued at \$425,000. The Women’s Missionary Society had 349 members who had raised \$6,673 for home and foreign mission.

“The Goal of All Sunday School Work is . . .”

Walter Towner was appointed to the staff in 1927 as Umphrey Lee’s assistant pastor and director of Christian education. His mimeographed communications to hard-working church school volunteers let them know how important they were to the work of Jesus Christ. Invariably, he expressed for all time the deepest motivation of those who serve in Christian education. “The goal of all Sunday School work is lives consecrated to Christ your service is counting you are shaping lives for eternity”³⁸ Umphrey Lee requested a leave of absence in August 1928 to pursue his doctoral studies in New York. On Sunday, December 23, 1928, members opened their worship bulletin to find that he had remembered them, as always, with a message of Christian hope:

“As we grow older watching the passing of plans and men, feeling the touch of winter upon our heads and upon our hearts, we come to look forward to Christmas as the Festival of Beginning Again. The eternal youth of Christianity is in its insistence upon life, not—as has been charged—upon life as mere duration here or hereafter but upon that surging vitality of soul and spirit which is renewed hope, recovered love belief in the future .May you be happy at this Festival of Beginning Again.”
Umphrey Lee



Elise Golden Becomes Choir Director

Mrs. Elise Golden accepted the directorship of the Highland Park Methodist Church Choir in 1929, but only after three years of persuasion from the music committee, comprised of Rose Nelson Hughes, Mrs. R. H. Shuttles, and Mrs. Lawrence Diamond. Her reluctance stemmed in part from the fact that she had no experience in directing, had “*never sung those chants in the back of the Methodist Hymnal,*” and felt that she would need lessons in order to do so; but she was also worried about the fact that she and Harold Hart Todd were colleagues in the SMU School of Music. To Rose, who came alone one day to see her, she said, “*Now, Rose,*

Elise Golden's first choir
at Highland Park, 1929-30.
Mrs. Golden is in the front row,
fifth from left.



my studio is next door to Harold Todd. We are good friends. We meet at the water cooler on the second floor at least half a dozen times a day. The feeling of camaraderie is good, and I don't want anything to interfere with it." Only after discussing the matter with Professor Todd did she accept.³⁹

Hubert L. Sone Is First Missionary Pastor

The Rev Hubert L. Sone, stationed in Huchow, China, became Highland Park's own missionary pastor in the spring of 1929. The first "Sone Sunday," spearheaded by Walter Towner and Margaret Todd (Shugart), brought an offering of almost \$1,500. Each year, despite the depression that would soon bring financial ruin to so many lives, the offering increased. And in 1932, the worst year of the depression, it reached the high mark of \$1,902. "we feel that our contribution for (Rev Sone) has been a greater blessing to us as a church than it has been to those for whom it was given."⁴⁰

Church Perseveres Through Depression

The Great Depression of the 1930s, ushered in by the stock market crash in October 1929, was a crisis of such proportions that it jeopardized the nation's future. It was in a spirit of optimism that the members of the church had worked together to erect a House of God in 1926. But now they worshipped in a new and splendid church whose debt suddenly seemed staggering. The loyalty and commitment of the congregation would be challenged as never before.

As the gloom deepened, one of the first economies at the church was to dissolve the paid quartet and seek volunteer voices. Mrs. Golden mounted a tremendous effort to form the first volunteer choir. At Dr Lee's urging, she further enlarged the choir by adding the elementary and youth groups. Thoroughly charming and ladylike, Mrs. Golden was, nevertheless, a determined recruiter of good voices. Two of those she recruited as young people never forgot the experience; Walter W Davis, whose musical talent surfaced early in his life, grew up in Highland Park:

"One Sunday when I was about sixteen, I was visiting with her about something after church and out of a clear blue sky she said, 'Why don't you come and sing in our choir?' I was flabbergasted to be asked. She had me sight read something and I was totally prepared to be told that I wouldn't do, but she said, 'Well, I'll see you at rehearsal on Wednesday night.' It was the thrill of a lifetime!"⁴¹



Another young man, Harry E. Weber, was about the same age when Mrs. Golden heard his clear tenor voice while judging a school contest. "I want him for the Highland Park choir," she said. The fact that he lived miles away in a suburb north of Dallas did not deter Mrs. Golden from asking, nor did it deter Harry from joining the choir.⁴²

In keeping with the splendid new sanctuary, Dr. Lee sought ways to dignify the worship services. Both the pastor and the choir director were devoted to the solemnity of the ancient canticles of the church and wanted them sung. Because there was no money for church music, Mrs. Golden made a booklet containing the *Venite Benedictus, Te Deum, Laudamus, Jubilate Deo, and Sanctus*. Copies were mimeographed for each choir member. Mrs. Golden's style of directing became legendary. For years as he grew up, Walter Davis watched and listened. "I didn't even know which one was the choir director. She directed with just an eyebrow, or a very quiet nod."

In May of 1930, at the fourth annual commencement service of the Young People's Department (which included those from junior high through university graduates), the retiring officers included Eugene Slater, Paul McKnight, Margaret Wasson, Pauline Vernon, Dorothy Shuttles and Ellina Rigg.

A young man who had entered SMU as a freshman in 1927 agreed during his senior year in 1930-1931, to teach a class of boys in the Senior High Department at the church. His name was Willis Tate.

*"I remember it because I played football on Saturday, and in those days they didn't have two platoon football; you had to play the whole game. I would be so sore and so miserable the next day that it was hard for me to even get out of bed to go over and teach those boys. Nina Sadler (later Dickinson) was a high school girl in the senior department at that time. Mitch Grady Overton and Coach Ray Morrison's son were in that group. I'd get over there and instead of talking about the lesson, they wanted me to talk about the football game. But we had a good relationship with the department and with the church school."*⁴³

Depression Threatens Church Budget

By 1931 an overwhelming 25 percent of the labor force was unemployed. There were few who did not know the fear that their turn might come next.⁴⁴ On the SMU campus, university professors, most of whom had helped build the new church through their pledges and their service, accepted 50% cuts in salary.

The church dispensed with the printing of a weekly bulletin; but Dr. Lee prepared a "Depression Number," a mimeographed booklet handed to each member "in order that you may have certain information about your church as we come to the end of the Conference Year." A postscript added, "This is not being paid for out of church funds."⁴⁵

Church notes were coming due in 1931, and pledges to the building fund were \$8,000 in arrears. A financial report from J. M. Hadra, chairman of the Finance Committee, to members of the congregation called attention to the increase in membership and the decrease in number and amount of pledges. He wrote, "we are approaching the end of the Conference Year faced with the necessity of having to raise \$13,000 by November 5, 1931. The current indebtedness must be met on maturing dates, for the Northern holders of the bonds will not wait. This church can be easily foreclosed."⁴⁶



Willis Tate

Highland Park Methodist Church
in the 1930s.
Photo taken by
Pauline "Polly" Sadler Wilds



Depression Years Bring Second Turning Point

On the national level in Methodism, the lack of funds for foreign missions was so desperate that Methodists across the United States approved loans amounting to \$450,000 in order to keep missionaries in their foreign fields rather than bring them home. Highland Park continued its support of Hubert Sone in China, without really considering the problem on a denominational level. On the local level, many Methodist churches reneged on Conference claims during the Depression, a decision that caused severe hardship among ministerial families and programs supported at the Conference level.

Under Dr. Lee's tactful leadership, Highland Park Methodist Church reached a milestone of maturity in the Depression years. We came face to face with our responsibilities to Methodism as a whole, an understanding from which we never turned away. The event that brought about this new perception of our place in Methodism occurred after Dr. Lee left for the Annual Conference at Bonham in 1931. Someone suggested that Highland Park's conference claims be deleted from the budget. When he heard about this, Dr. Lee immediately hurried back to Dallas to begin an intensive campaign among the loyal and generous supporters of the church.

Church Struggles To Help Others

The church carried a tremendous social service load in 1932, supporting over 200 families. Various groups within the church set up a small loan fund for needy students; others undertook social service work in West Dallas; and everyone participated in an outpouring of food and clothing throughout the year. Three members of the Women's Missionary Society, Mrs. M. F. Armstrong, Mrs. J. S. McIntosh, and Mrs. J. J. Russell served as coordinators for channeling supplies where they were most needed.



Umphrey Lee

Wearied by the Depression and anxious to continue scholarly studies, Dr. Lee requested a leave of absence in 1933 to study in Germany. Dr. Robert Goodloe, successful teacher in the School of Theology and distinguished pastor, became the interim pastor. Membership growth continued, reaching 2,174 by the end of the year.

“Called To Teach, Not To Preach”

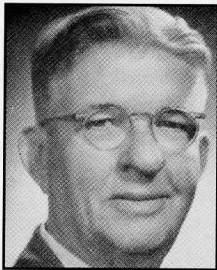
The man whose pioneering efforts would lift the vocation of religious education to a professional level for the entire Methodist Church, Dr. L. F. Sensabaugh, joined the staff of Highland Park Methodist in 1933. He was employed on a trial basis with the responsibility of establishing a program of Christian education at Highland Park that would incorporate a ministry to students on the SMU campus. Years later, regarding his employment, he wrote, “I began what has been for me the most satisfying ministry of my life.” His salary was paid jointly by the church (\$1,500), SMU (\$750), and the General Board of Education (\$500).⁴⁷

Dr. Sensabaugh’s excellent leadership in the field of Christian Education and his successful efforts to establish professional standards and qualifications for the vocation he had chosen were played out against a depression-oriented financial situation from which he was never able to recover. Before his employment at Highland Park, he had seen his savings dwindle away as he used them to supplement the small amount he earned.⁴⁸

During his fifteen year ministry at Highland Park, Dr. Sensabaugh introduced programs that followed the latest trends in Christian education. He immediately began a Training in Service program, stating, “it is a matter of great importance that our lay men and women who are teaching shall have a thorough grounding in the Christian faith.” He made great strides in the classroom by spearheading new methods, improving the curriculum, and installing new equipment.

One of his most successful experimental projects was the Laboratory School, a program of summer study involving all age levels. In it he included all of the elements that he felt belonged in a well-rounded program of Christian education: worship, recreation, fellowship, study and discussion, community service, and world friendship. “Youth Week” was especially successful. By making recreation and fellowship an important part of Christian education, Dr. “S” was breaking new ground. In the end, he broadened our viewpoint and inspired a new understanding of the church’s role in daily life.⁴⁹

On the point of retirement in 1948, he finally saw a personal dream realized. Years before he had made the decision to specialize in Christian education rather than study for the ministry. He wrote, “I was called to teach, not to preach.” The one great disappointment that had haunted him throughout his ministry was the lack of professional recognition given to those who entered the field of Christian education. “Heretofore,” he wrote, “the director was a nondescript in the Methodist Church and had no professional standing.” Finally, he was able to report, “The last General Conference took a long step forward in lifting the vocation of education in the local church. The General Board [of Education] was authorized to set up professional standards, and only those persons complying with those standards are henceforth entitled to be designated as directors or ministers of education in the Methodist Church.”⁵⁰ A new vocational opportunity was now available. In the years to come, it would attract hundreds of Christian young people who were “called to teach, not to preach.”



Dr. L. F. Sensabaugh

In 1934 a permanent Texas Centennial Commission was appointed. In September, Dallas was chosen as the site for the principal celebration but only after the city had offered \$10,000,000 in cash in competition for the location.⁵¹ The man who recognized the great economic potential inherent in the location of the site and

The first long choir vestments, black with white collar, were made by Mrs. B. J. Richardson in 1934. As her contribution to the church she made the first fifty choir robes for only 50 cents a piece.



who spearheaded the selection for Dallas was a member of Highland Park Methodist Church, Robert L. "Bob" Thornton, future Mayor of Dallas.

The great Centennial Exposition, occupying fifty buildings at the State Fair Park and estimated to have cost \$25,000,000, was open from June 9 to November 29, 1936. The six month period of this remarkable exposition, a project that employed thousands of people and helped pull Dallas out of the Depression, coincided almost exactly with the six month period when Highland Park Methodist Church was in the process of searching for a new pastor.



Robert L. Thornton

Marshall T. Steel's 1936 Appointment As Pastor

An occasional pastime of many Highland Park members is to tell their favorite 'Marshall Steel Stories.' Published here for the first time is Dr. Steel's account of the events surrounding his appointment to Highland Park in 1936. Those who remember him will be able to hear his voice, see the twinkle in his eyes, and laugh with him as he recalled the events of that year

After thirteen years as pastor of Highland Park Methodist Church, Dr Umphrey Lee left in June 1936 to assume duties as dean of the School of Religion at Vanderbilt University. Although he returned three years later as president of SMU, his departure deprived the congregation of a beloved friend, an inspirational preacher, and a brilliant theologian. Dr Robert Goodloe agreed once again to fill the pulpit as the interim pastor



J. Roscoe Golden

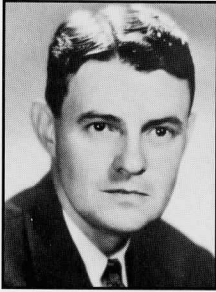
By agreement with the bishop, five stewards were named as a pulpit committee to search for a new pastor. They were J Roscoe Golden, R. H. Shuttles, E. B. Germany, Judge W H. Francis, and Luther M. Jordan. With Dr Goodloe in the pulpit, the search committee was in no hurry to find a permanent minister.

The committee had heard glowing reports of a young minister, Marshall T Steel, who was pastor of the Winfield Memorial Methodist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. They informed him by letter that he was being considered as a successor to Dr. Lee and invited him to come to Dallas and preach. Dr Steel replied by return mail saying that he appreciated the honor but he was not interested.

Years later, recalling the events of that time, Dr Steel said, "I wanted to spend my life in Arkansas. I had been at Winfield for only two and a half years, and I didn't think it was right for me to be interviewed for a job that I wouldn't take if they offered it. So I declined to go."⁵²

Pulpit Committee Visits Little Rock

So the pulpit committee decided to travel to Little Rock to hear Dr Steel preach. Before they entered the church, they concocted a way of "voting" on whether they wanted to continue the interview process. Each man sat in a different part of the church positioned so he could see Mr Golden on the back row. If they liked the young preacher, they were to turn around and smile, in which case they would invite him to join them for Sunday dinner. Their plan was excellent but they made one mistake. As they entered the church, friendly Methodists that they were, each man introduced himself as a visitor from Dallas.⁵³



Marshall Steel

"As I started toward the pulpit walking behind the choir," Dr Steel continued, "the usher pulled me aside and said, 'Who are those five men from Dallas?' I said, 'I don't know.' After the service, they came up and invited me to have lunch with them. It was the first time in my life that I had ever been to a hotel for Sunday dinner. We visited, and they were as nice as they could be. No mention was made of my coming or not coming to Highland Park."

Committee Hears "Everybody's Doing It"

"I'll have to tell you about the sermon I preached that Sunday. In those days," he said with a suspicious twinkle in his eye, "I announced the subject in advance, but I quit after that Sunday. I was talking on following the crowd instead of standing up as an individual. At the time there was a song on the hit parade called 'Everybody's Doing It,' and that was the title I gave my sermon. They teased me about that at lunch. Gene Germany said they nearly decided that if I was that kind of preacher, they'd better not come and hear me."

"They called after they got back home, wanting me to come to Dallas for an evening to let some of the other members of the church meet me. I had been out of seminary only four or five years and I felt pretty strong about it. I just told them I couldn't come. I didn't think it was right to go down there and let them draw me away from the commitment I had (to Winfield). Finally, one of them said, 'Let me ask you a question. If the Bishop sends you to Highland Park, would you come?' I said, 'Certainly. I am committed to do whatever the Bishop tells me to do. But I should be honest with you. If the Bishop asks me what I think about it, I'll tell him I think I ought not to go (to Highland Park).' They didn't like that very much."

The Bishop's Response

"I learned later that they had the Bishop in Texas, A. Frank Smith, on their side (the same A. Frank Smith who had been appointed as the first pastor of the University Church at SMU in 1916). Bishop Smith told them, 'Find whoever you want and I'll see that he is appointed to Highland Park.' Well, as we got close to conference, Bishop John M. Moore, the Bishop in Arkansas, said, 'I understand you want to go to Highland Park.' I said, 'You misunderstand it. They invited me to come and preach, and I declined.' He said, 'Do you have anything against them?' I said, 'I don't know anything about them—I've never been down there.' Bishop Moore said, 'I think it's an outrage to take a man out of a church that's paying \$3,600 and put him in a church that's paying \$8,000!'" With that twinkle

in his eye again, Dr Steel said, "That was the first I'd heard anything about salary. The folks from the church never mentioned it, and neither did I!"

At The Conference Session

In 1936 the North Texas Conference (joining with the Central Texas, the West Texas, the Texas, the Northwest Texas Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Southern Conference of the Methodist Church in celebrating the Centennial of Texas Independence, as well as the Centennial of Texas Methodism) convened its Seventieth Annual Session on November 4, 1936, in the First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, with Bishop A. Frank Smith presiding.⁵⁴ *"When they announced transfers into the conference," Dr. Steel continued, "they did not announce my name, so I figured the thing had washed over I did not get definite word that I had been sent to Highland Park until I read it in the paper Monday morning. Neither of the Bishops ever said another word to me about it. In the Methodist Church the Presiding Elders (District Superintendents) had the right to override a Bishop's appointment. When Bishop Frank Smith told the Presiding Elders of the North Texas Conference that he was going to appoint me to Highland Park, they said, 'We will not accept him entering our North Texas Conference. We could get promotions and a big jump in salary for several of our own preachers if you do not bring a man in from outside.'"*

"On Sunday afternoon when Bishop Smith went into the church to read the appointments, they still had not approved my transfer into the North Texas Conference. He said, 'I made a commitment to that church (Highland Park) that I would give them anybody they want and they've asked for Marshall Steel. Either you accept him as a transfer, or I will leave the church open. (Meaning no one would have been appointed to the Highland Park pulpit in 1936.) One of the Presiding Elders then rose and said, 'I don't like it, but under protest I move we accept him.' So I was accepted by the rest of them under protest."

No Money To Move

"I had to borrow the money to move down there. While they were unloading my furniture in Dallas, a member of the church came up, introduced himself, and said that he was with the FBI. He told me that I was in violation of the law for having used the mover that I did. He said, 'Don't pay him. He's going to be indicted.' Actually the mover was a fellow I had met in the Rotary Club. He had a moving van and worked in Arkansas a good bit. He offered to move me down there and let me pay him whenever I could. Moving me across the state line without a license was against federal regulations. So before I'd been in town a month, I had to fly back to Arkansas to borrow between \$400-\$500 to pay my moving expense to Dallas.

"The fellow who moved me wrote later apologizing for the disturbance. 'I did that as a friend,' he wrote, 'nobody can keep me from loaning a friend of mine \$400 if I want to.' He enclosed his personal check for \$400, which I returned."

Setting Dr. Steel's Salary

"At the first Board meeting, the Stewards invited me to leave for a minute while they discussed salary. They voted to pay me \$4,800 instead of \$8,000. I thought maybe I was going down in value after they heard me three or four times! But they asked me if that was acceptable and, of course, I said it was. They always paid me more than I thought I was worth, not more than I needed. My only conflict on salary was when they wanted to put it too high." ⁵⁵

A New Era Begins

On November 15, 1936, Dr Steel preached his first sermon as pastor of Highland Park Methodist Church. When he arrived he found a church building that was beautiful, new, and entirely adequate to serve the needs of the university and the small residential community around it. The church school was running smoothly under the supervision of Dr Leon F Sensabaugh, director of Christian Education; the choir was under the capable direction of Elise Golden (Mrs. J Roscoe); and the Women's Missionary Society was responsive and sensitive to human needs. The staff was undermanned and overworked but willing to go the extra mile by both working with young people and carrying out pastoral visitations in addition to their clerical duties. Above all, he found a congregation that was not only generous, but had a talent for working together in harmony

News From China

Dr Steel had been pastor of Highland Park less than five months when he received his first letter from Hubert L. Sone, the church's missionary special in Nanking, China. The letters arrived sporadically and covered events that took place between 1937-1940, the period when the Japanese invaded and occupied Nanking. Although only a few made their way through to their intended destination, they comprise some of the most poignant communications in the church's Archives. Rev Sone recounts.

March 14, 1937

I am writing you again tonight to let you know that we are still carrying on as best we can under the circumstances. Our school work here has been stopped altogether .. Many of our students were faced with great difficulties. Some had to try to reach their homes over roads and areas occupied by the Japanese forces .. One of our married students was arrested as a spy when he went down to the river trying to make (transportation) arrangements .. His wife was left penniless with her four small children. She went to the city where her husband had been taken. We have not heard from them since .. If it was possible to return home, our seminary provided each student with enough money to reach his home .. Fortunately I learned of the special gift of more than one hundred dollars which your church had sent for special relief work, and I began to draw against it even before it arrived. ⁵⁶

The significance of this gift became astounding in light of another article stating that " Funds being sent from America for relief purposes are being used so carefully that an adult Chinese can be fed for one day for the price of an American postage stamp. Hubert Sone has remained in Nanking helping direct relief work. His family has gone into an interior province for safety " ⁵⁷ Dr Sone continued, "Bombing raids continue everyday For several days I was very busy transporting as much rice as possible to a central storehouse .. After the fall of Nanking, it was necessary to deliver the rice to refugees in the various camps. That became my job .. My presence in the truck was the only way to prevent the soldiers from taking our driver and truckmen away Many times I almost lost the truck as it was.

"After the entrance of the soldiers, disorders continued. Houses were systematically entered .. Valuables of all kinds were carried away .. They took the bicycles belonging to Margaret and Forrest [his children]. They broke into my garage and took my car They took ambulances, busses, fire engines, Red Cross trucks, and the cars from the various embassies.

“Many women have asked me if I can help them locate their husbands, or brothers, or sons, who have been taken away and have not returned. Women with children in their arms .. Women with tears in their eyes—all asking .. No prisoners of war are taken here. All soldiers, or those thought to be soldiers, were lined up, tied, and shot or bayoneted. Everything of value seems to be gone. So little seems to remain. But we still have faith and hope that we can rescue many from their despondency, and point them to One who is able to heal the wounds and bind up the broken hearts.”

1939 — A Momentous Year In Methodism

Highland Park Methodist Church was growing faster than members could be accommodated. On March 5, 1939, Dr Steel was obliged to establish a second Sunday morning worship service. Although he was encouraged by the growth of his congregation, he had definite reservations about offering two worship services. “There are problems in having two services,” he said. “You almost have two congregations and that’s not good.” He worried about members not getting to know one another, and he missed the close feeling that smaller churches generate. He wanted his congregation to be able to come together as one great church family, all worshipping with him at one time, not in parts.⁵⁸

Dr Steel Visits West Dallas

With other civic leaders, Dr Steel toured West Dallas in June 1939 The experience stunned him. He called the church and canceled all of his appointments for that afternoon. “I had no idea conditions like this existed in Dallas County ”⁵⁹

The turmoil of his thoughts culminated in a sermon on June 11, 1939, that shook all of Dallas County He vented his fury against those who apathetically accept injustice and oppression as part of the social structure. He pointed out the enormous responsibility of Christians to alleviate intolerable poverty, suffering and distress. “We have assumed we could live out here in a restricted residential area and have no responsibility for the impoverished people of Dallas.”⁶⁰

The pressure he applied that day on a stunned Park Cities audience brought a response that was both immediate and long-lasting. Eventually it led to the annexation of West Dallas, bringing it within the Dallas city limits. Highland Park Church began by increasing its contributions and service to Rankin Chapel. From that time to the present, this church has been a large contributor in both money and talent to what has now become the Wesley-Rankin Community Center

Another busload on "Shadrack" in west Dallas.



Georgia Bates' Ministry

One of Highland Park's most significant contributions to alleviate the poverty health conditions in West Dallas began with the unique ministry of Miss Georgia Bates. She served thirty-four years as our missionary nurse and daily presence with the people of West Dallas before retiring in 1973. Dr Steel paved the way for her decades-long ministry by arranging a deal with the Visiting Nurses Association. He suggested that Highland Park Methodist pay the salary of a nurse who would serve on their staff and under their supervision. "The VNA was just tickled to death," he said. He made only one condition. "We'd like her to feel a special relationship with the church, and be allowed to come and speak to our Sunday School classes from time to time." ⁶¹



Georgia Bates at work in 1939.

Every age level group of the church from the youngest children to the oldest adult classes listened to her pleas for help and responded wholeheartedly. The "West Dallas Milk Fund," a project of the Fifty Fifty Class, is just one example of the tremendous continued support Miss Bates received. The total amount contributed by Fifty Fifty Class members between 1939-1976 totaled almost \$60,000 dollars. The highest number of quarts of milk in one year was 10,612. The total church offering on Palm Sunday each year also went to support her ministry there with the people in West Dallas.

Georgia Bates heard God's call to devote her life to Christian service as a teenager. When she attended a youth conference where she heard Dr. E. Stanley Jones describe conditions in India. "I decided right then to be a missionary nurse," she said. "I wanted to go into the little villages in India, one-on-one with the people because he said that was what was needed." ⁶² She completed her training at Scarritt College, and then Vanderbilt School of Nursing, only to be told that India no longer accepted Protestant missionaries; nor did Mexico, her second choice. Miss Bates was serving at the Virginia K. Johnson Home in Oak Cliff when Dr. Steel called. She accepted the West Dallas position "because it sounded so much like what I had hoped to do." ⁶³

The conditions in West Dallas were terrible. Miss Bates was stunned by the lack of basic sanitation, by roads that were little more than dirt tracks, and by shack-camps in the open fields. And she sensed an almost tangible wall of resentment against any kind of governmental authority. The people were suspicious and cynical about anyone coming into their homes. When Miss Bates told them that she was paid by Highland Park Methodist Church, their next questions were Why? What do they want? What are they getting out of it?

West Dallas — Crime Capital of Texas

If conditions were bad in West Dallas, its reputation was even worse. As the area where Bonnie and Clyde had been killed, it was considered the "crime capital of Texas." Their relatives, the Parkers and Barrows, still lived there, as did the Hamilton Gang. Despite its bad reputation, Miss Bates was not afraid of physical harm. She was only afraid that she might not be accepted; she was worried they might say, "We don't want you in our home."

"After I had been there a while, that attitude began to disappear. I think it's because visiting nursing is such a tangible thing. When you go into a home to do a dressing for a cancer patient, or give penicillin injections to a sick child, or teach a young



Georgia Bates

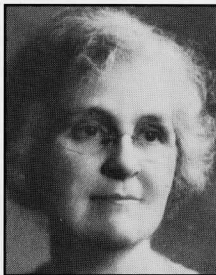


Georgia Bates makes a call.

mother how to bathe her baby and make formula, that's something tangible that they can see."⁶⁴ Without doubt, the unseen—God's presence—was even more tangible under the kind ministrations of Georgia Bates.

The Methodist Uniting Conference of 1939

It was in 1939 that Germany invaded Poland, and World War II erupted in Europe. Yet within the world of Methodism, the year 1939 was significant for its healing. The Uniting Conference of 1939 finally laid to rest the spectre of a church that had been divided by the Civil War. Three great branches of Methodism at last came together: The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. Mrs. R. W Baird, in whose home had occurred the transformation from University Church to Highland Park Methodist, attended those sessions.



Mrs. R. W Baird

"My first impression was one of pride—pride in a church whose history and progress had been of such magnitude. [As I listened to the speakers] I think I understood the meaning of John Wesley's heart being 'strangely warmed.' I was glad to be a part of a church whose purpose was the evangelization of the world—a church with a vision and a determination to do something about that vision."⁶⁵

Church Extension Begins

The process of establishing new churches, or, in evangelical terms, making the gospel of Jesus Christ known to all people no matter where they are, is so deeply rooted in the history of Methodism that it would be difficult for us to think of church extension as anything but "doing what comes naturally."

Divinely inspired, John Wesley set the pattern for the denomination that would follow. First, to preach the gospel to the needy who were not being reached by the established church, and second, to take care of those who were won to the Christian life. Step by step, Methodism became a great and transforming movement in the life of England. From England Methodism spread to America where it was especially adapted to American life. The first itinerant preachers sent by Wesley

“ sought out the scattered homes, followed the tide of migration as it moved west, preached the gospel, organized societies, established ‘preaching places’ and formed them into ‘circuits’ ”⁶⁶

This great two hundred year evangelical tradition never fails to move us. It is the driving force that inspires us always to seek new frontiers, to build new churches. It derives its energy from our belief in the mission of the church and in the part we are called upon today to play in that mission.

At Highland Park Dr Steel watched in astonishment as his congregation began to outgrow the church’s fine physical plant. A remark by Methodist Lay Leader Will Cullum alerted him not only to the need for new churches, but to a possible way of alleviating the overcrowded conditions. Cullum suggested that a survey be made of Dallas environs with a view to enlarging and strengthening small churches and relocating others; he urged that where churches were needed, he hoped it would be Dallas Methodists that would help in establishing them.⁶⁷

University Park Methodist Started

Highland Park responded immediately by helping to establish University Park Methodist Church at Caruth and Preston Road, still on the edge of the growing city. When it opened its doors on November 12, 1939, it was the first of thirty-eight



University Park UMC near the intersection of Caruth and Preston Road, 1942.

new Methodist churches that Highland Park has helped establish through the years since then. Privately, Dr Steel hoped that all Methodists living north of Lovers Lane would transfer their memberships to the new church.

Dr. Steel Looks To The Future

At the November 1941 meeting of the Board of Stewards, Dr. Steel presented a tabulation of the year’s work. Church membership stood at 3,470; the operating budget was \$60,000; the church debt was \$67,500. But he was not content simply to summarize the year’s work. He wanted to look ahead, and in doing so he made three recommendations that would have far reaching consequences across the

whole membership. Before they were realized in the decade that followed, every man, woman, and child in the congregation would be affected.

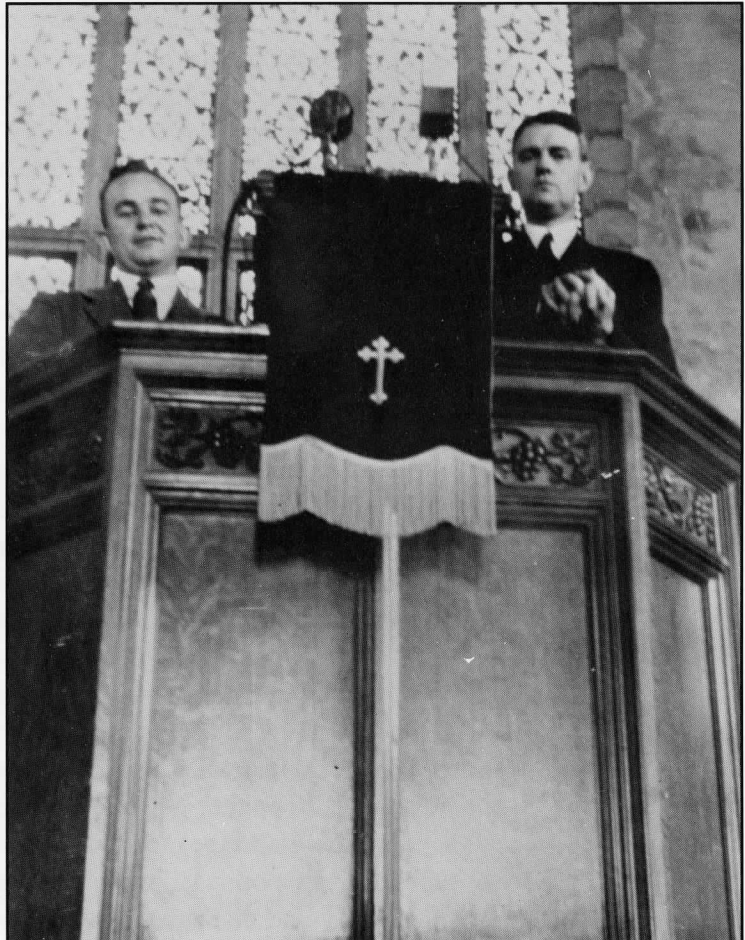
First, he wanted the church debt paid off. Not until then could his second dream be realized. After announcing that 31% of the church's budget had been spent on others outside the congregation, he said, ***"I want to live to see the day when this side of our church's work is enlarged so that fifty per cent of all we raise will be for others."***⁶⁸

The phrase that was coined later, "As Much for Others as for Self," became the banner cry for future benevolence campaigns. He closed by presenting his third recommendation, asking for a "Master Plan," a definitive study that would firmly establish the church's course of action for the future. Dr Steel's recommendations were to precede the shock of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II by just one month.

Radio Ministry Begins

Highland Park's long association with Radio Station KRLD began in 1942 when Dr George W Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church, relinquished his regular time slot due to illness. The radio station immediately called Dr. Steel, who had talked to them many times about the possibility of a live broadcast of Highland Park Methodist's worship service. ***"They asked me if I was interested. I said, 'I'll be there in ten minutes to sign up.' They said, 'Don't you have to consult with anyone?' I said, 'Yes, I'm going to consult, but I want to sign up while it's open!'"***⁶⁹

Live radio broadcast on KRLD
of worship service.



“Let’s Pay Off The Church Debt”

Dr Steel’s decision to recommend paying off the church debt right in the midst of World War II stemmed from his ultimate desire to develop the programs that were near and dear to his heart. The first time or two he had proposed new projects to the Board of Stewards, he had been met with the same statement. “We can’t do it. We owe [too much] on the church debt.” Finally Dr Steel said to them, “If you are going to keep your church debts from developing your [church’s] program, let’s pay off the debt.”⁷⁰



Marshall Steel

Dr Steel made his own list of ten or fifteen men that he felt were most able to make extra contributions to the church to liquidate the debt. He talked with them privately, asking whether he could count on their support. After visiting with a dozen, he had enough commitments to know that he could raise the rest of the money he needed.⁷¹

The church mounted an intensive drive under the leadership of Lovick Pierce, chairman of the Board of Stewards, Mrs. W B. Carrell, president of the Women’s Society of Christian Service, and Dr. C. A. Nichols, superintendent of the church school. Within fifteen months after the United States declared war, and even in the midst of its darkest days, the debt was paid. On March 23, 1943, with Bishop Ivan Lee Holt and SMU President Umphrey Lee conducting services, the debt-free church was dedicated to the glory of God. The first good news from the war front coincided with that dedication Sunday.⁷²

Membership Growth Brings Overcrowding

The population explosion of urban growth that brought thousands of new people into the Park Cities and North Dallas during and after World War II was responsible in part for the surge of growth in membership at Highland Park Methodist. Many who came to visit were drawn to the church by the magnetic personality and crusading spirit of its pastor. The overcrowded conditions in classrooms and worship services were both a joy and a burden to Dr Steel.

The Young People’s Department, for example, held their general assemblies in the hallway of the church because of the small classrooms. The visual focus was a large lighted cross at the end of the hall. It was this symbol that gave the first youth publication its name, “The Lighted Cross.”⁷³

Dr Steel addressed the Board of Stewards in September 1943 on the continuing increase in church membership. His most cogent argument for a larger building was that the warmth and friendliness of the church was now losing its cordial spontaneity “Today without planning it or working for it, we have a congregation so large that not one-third of the members could be seated in our sanctuary at any one time; and most of them would not know the people seated next to them.”⁷⁴

Planning Committee Formed

The chairman of the Board of Stewards acted quickly to appoint a planning committee: Eugene McElvaney, chairman, Judge W H. Francis, Marvin Malone, Orison McDonald, and J Roscoe Golden. There were two pressing needs submitted for their consideration, plus one other desire. First was the need for additional church school classrooms; the other was for a building envisioned as a center for weekday activities, promoting fellowship among members and providing a place where community and civic groups would be welcome. Members also expressed their desire for a small, intimate prayer chapel.⁷⁵



Eugene McElvaney



Youth meet in crowded hallway
with lighted cross.

Questionnaire Brings New Direction

The Committee began immediately to delve into every aspect of the church's life. They not only surveyed the physical plant, but also its financial soundness, educational programs, church fellowship, and social service commitments. In an effort to determine how members of the congregation felt about the plans, the Committee circulated a questionnaire that sought opinions and judgments concerning the future program of Highland Park Methodist Church. In the light of future events, the significance of the questionnaire was extraordinary

The very first question dealt with enlargement of the "auditorium" (sanctuary). Dr L. F Sensabaugh evaluated the results. "Expressions in answer to this question were clear cut and reveal a real fear that any effort to enlarge or expand will destroy what is now considered of a very great value."⁷⁶ The responses were a harbinger of things to come. To this day, the responses to that first question remain as the first written indication of the direction this congregation would take when the matter was finally decided twenty-five years later

The questionnaire was also significant in that it lent a measure of validity to subsequent decisions regarding the future expansion of church buildings, as well as positive support for the type of programs that later would be developed. In particular, there was an almost universal recognition of the need to expand the educational building, and to add increased facilities for the recreational and social life of all ages. There was even support to give "to some extent financial aid" for the establishment and building of new churches.





Highland Park Methodist Church, April 1945. Photograph, Captain Lloyd N. Young. This remarkable photograph, taken several months before World War II ended, shows more graphically than words can say that the church, the university, and the surrounding area to the north, were on the brink of tremendous population explosion. A few months later, on August 6, 1945, the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the historic event that would soon bring World War II to a dramatic end.

Historic Ties With SMU Honored

Ever mindful of the church's historic ties with SMU, the planning committee submitted its proposals pertaining to Highland Park's relations with Southern Methodist University to the executive committee of SMU's board of trustees. On May 26, 1944, they endorsed it with a statement affirming the close and cordial relationship between the two institutions, and recognizing the original intent of the founders. ⁷⁷

Master Plan is Church's Third Turning Point

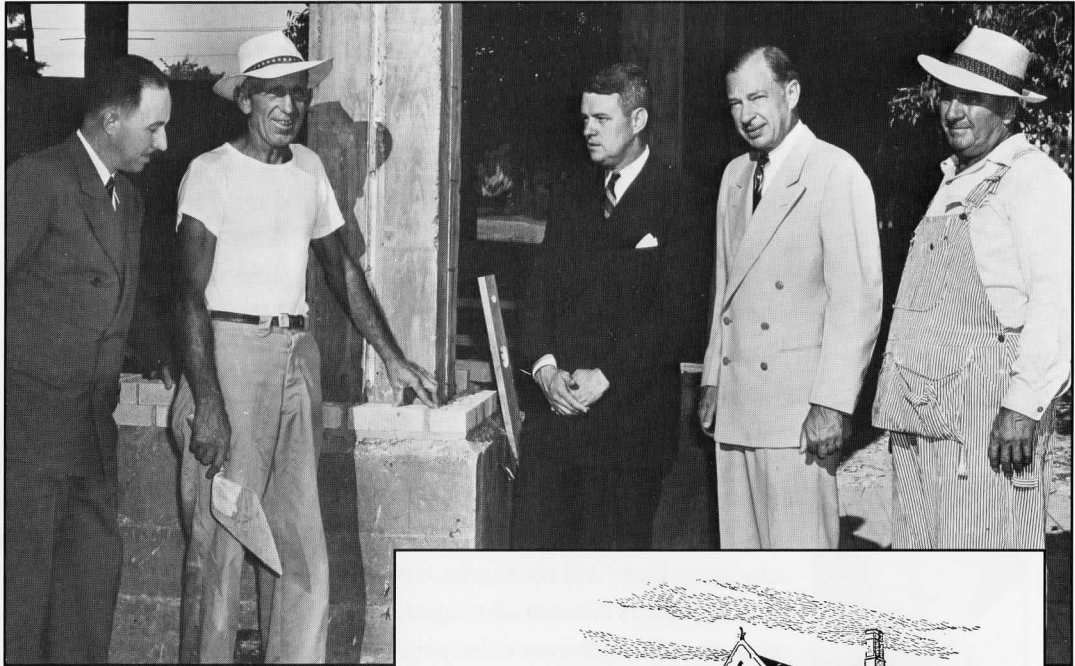
After a year of studying, sifting, and analyzing, the planning committee submitted a document that became a turning point in the life story of the church. For the first time in its history, Highland Park Methodist acknowledged that it was no longer a small church serving a quiet residential community. In its reasoned analysis, the report stated,

“ Whatever the conception of its founders, however well it may have achieved its earlier destiny, however adequate its program and its facilities in the past, Highland Park Methodist Church found its membership doubled within a period of eight years and its facilities entirely inadequate to meet the requirements of its greatly enlarged congregation .the area this church is called upon to serve has increased far beyond the original limits of Highland Park and University Park.”

The one-time outlying residential church had become within a few short years one of the ten largest churches in Methodism. It would never be the same again. The planning committee concluded the report by listing three prime objectives for the church: to achieve and maintain a sound economic equilibrium, to care for the immediate and reasonable future needs of its people, and at all times to extend its most effective ministry to any and all who may come within the sphere of its influence.

Interior of the original sanctuary





Laying the groundwork for the Activities Building.



Architects Submit Plans

A penchant for planning ahead, brilliantly exemplified by the work of the Master Plan Committee, is one of the outstanding traits of the people of Highland Park Methodist Church. Despite discouragement and crisis in the war news and the involvement of Highland Park families who had loved ones participating, plans for expansion continued. Architects Murrell Bennett and Norman Crittenden submitted plans for the new buildings, and they were accepted by the Quarterly Conference.

Building Fund Launched

Marshall T Steel stepped into his pulpit in November 1945, almost nine years to the day when he had preached his first sermon at Highland Park, and reminded his congregation that it was time to begin the first phase of the building program. He announced that pledges for a building fund of \$400,000 would be accepted immediately. In less than two weeks the membership raised \$409,000 and Mrs. Edwin B. Cox had provided for a memorial chapel.⁷⁸

Architects Murrell Bennett and Norman Crittenden published a handsome brochure in November 1945 at the start of the building campaign, using the title "Building for Service," the slogan that had been chosen. The brochure effectively presented the overcrowded conditions that made expansion necessary, as well as the magnificent architectural sketches proposed by this creative team of architects.

Bill Dickinson Joins Staff

The military chaplain of the 45th Infantry Division, William H. "Bill" Dickinson, returned to Dallas in 1945. He had intended to go on to Union Theological Seminary to complete his doctorate, but a former professor at Perkins

School of Theology suggested that he talk to Marshall Steel first. “He’s desperate for an assistant,” he said. Bill replied, “I don’t want to be an assistant pastor I want a little church of my own.” When someone suggested to Dr Steel that he hire one of the returning military chaplains as an assistant, he said, “I don’t want any old broken down chaplain.” But after working together for two months, they both decided that it was a partnership that would last forever ⁷⁹

Other Staff Changes

Choir Director Elise Golden resigned in 1946 because of her increased responsibility at SMU. A young graduate of Union Theological Seminary, V Earle Copes, took her place. Walter Davis remembers “singing under Mr Copes for about a year. He could play hymns faster than anyone I have ever known a completely different style from what we had heard before.”⁸⁰

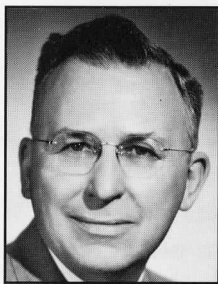
As early as 1948, in anticipation of the new programming that would be needed for the expanded facilities, and in response to the ever-increasing membership, Dr Steel added to his staff. Miss Olive Smith, the first of several professional educators from Arkansas who would be invited to join the staff, succeeded Dr L. F Sensabaugh as director of religious education. Rev Carl E. Keightley joined the staff as an associate minister to help lighten the increasing pastoral load carried by Dr Bill Dickinson.



Olive Smith

Dr F L. Whittlesey Becomes Music Director

When V Earle Copes left in 1949 to accept a music position at Hendrix College, Dr Steel interviewed Federal Lee Whittlesey to fill the position as director of Music Ministries. Claiming that “I don’t know anything about singing; I can’t tell whether they’re off key or on key,” Dr Steel asked Dr Whittlesey whether he would move toward paid soloists or toward a large volunteer choir. Dr Whittlesey replied, “It’s been my theory that 10% of the congregation ought to be involved in the music program.”⁸¹ To Dr Steel, who himself couldn’t carry a tune, those words were music to his ears.



F. L. Whittlesey

Dr Whittlesey immediately began putting his theory into practice. Under his leadership, Highland Park Methodist was the first church in the nation to have multiple choirs of all ages. He also pioneered the introduction of handbells in the Dallas area, and wrote music for them. “The degree of commitment required to sing



Dr. Whittlesey conducts a final rehearsal with the Youth Choir.

or ring in one of Dr Whittlesey's choirs was formidable. Choristers did not default on their responsibilities with this man." 82

The commitment and fervor Dr Whittlesey generated are reflected in the comment of Gerry Petty (Mrs. Carl) who has been a member of the choir at Highland Park United Methodist Church since 1955

*"I used to come home from choir practice so excited that I couldn't go to sleep. I was just so enthusiastic .My mother was an invalid, and through all the years that she lived in our home, Carl stayed home with her on Thursday night, allowing me to come to choir practice, giving me my one real outlet .One of the funniest things that happened while Marshall Steel was here was when Dr Whittlesey asked one of his friends from the Jewish Synagogue to come to Sunday service and, at a certain point in the music, blow his ram's horn. He failed to tell Dr Steel that his friend would be in the choir loft. When he blew the horn, I think Marshall nearly jumped out of his seat."*83

The Activities Building Opens

The Activities Building and the expanded and redecorated rooms of the main Education Building opened to great fanfare with festivities that lasted four days, March 7-10, 1950. An open invitation to participate was issued in the Sunday Bulletin, March 5, 1950, not only to members but to "those people who think of Highland Park Methodist Church as their church "

The program for each evening began when V Y Rejebian, chairman of the Board of Stewards, invited the audience to sing "Lead On O King Eternal." Following the hymn, Rev Carl Keightly, a new member of Highland Park's ministerial staff, offered a prayer of thanksgiving. In the balcony behind the congregation, a brass quartet picked up the theme of the Doxology

Seven scenes involving every department of the church followed the introductory narration. The program closed with a statement from the Senior Pastor, Marshall Steel, and the congregation joined in the hymn, "Blest Be The Tie the Binds."84

"Building For Service"

In the four and a half years preceding the opening, spiraling construction costs had driven up the building expenses to an approximate \$1,250,000.85 In an interview with the *Dallas Morning News*, Dr Steel pointed out the purpose of the huge expenditure:

"'Building for Service' was our slogan when our master plan began to chart our church's future," he said. "Service has been our central interest through these years of construction. And now we have a building that lets us meet our unparalleled opportunity with adequate facilities. Service was a recurring theme in our Lord's message. Service is a basic element in the church's purpose. Service is at the center of every Christian's idealism." 86

The Activities Building held one of the keys to the church's future. It allowed for diversity of age and interests and solved the problem of what to do about "bigness." In the handsomely decorated space the large congregation could break into small groups to get better acquainted and develop friendship and fellowship. In a small group there is warmth and welcome, support and caring, and a sense of belonging. Yet one is still part of the large group, feeling the sense of accomplishment that comes in knowing that each individual is part of the great mainstream of United Methodism.



V Y Rejebian

Fellowship time in the new
Activities Building.



The extensive newspaper coverage also carried an article by Dr Willis M. Tate, then dean of students at SMU, who reaffirmed the ties between university and church. "Since their beginning, two great institutions have lived as close neighbors with common aims and purposes. Highland Park Methodist Church long has been the spiritual inspiration for the faculty and students of a university dedicated to Christian education. Although made up of all denominations, the Southern Methodist University student body has felt that the Highland Park Methodist Church is peculiarly theirs."⁸⁷

Two By Two Class Forms

Within a short time after the opening of the Activities Building in 1950, a new adult Church School class formed. The Two by Two Class for young married couples was the third couples class to be formed at Highland Park, and only the second which met on Sunday morning since the first one was formed in 1927. In the early years they were drawn together as young parents sharing problems and joys in rearing their children. The underlying force that bound them then and binds them still, was the need to laugh and have fun, worship and learn, and share their lives in an atmosphere of spiritual enrichment with others who had the same interests.⁸⁸

TNT Class Responds To Singles Movement

The young people who joined the TNT (Twenty Not Thirty) Class in 1950 were in the vanguard of a population movement entirely new in the history of this country—the singles movement. This class established a singles program at Highland Park long before there was national awareness of the increasing number of single people in our culture.

In a scrapbook containing their history, the TNT Class stated its reason for forming: "We were all keenly aware that we had not found a group we felt we belonged in when we finished college. A person just out of school and working, starting a career, seemed to be at a turning point in his life at which he could so easily

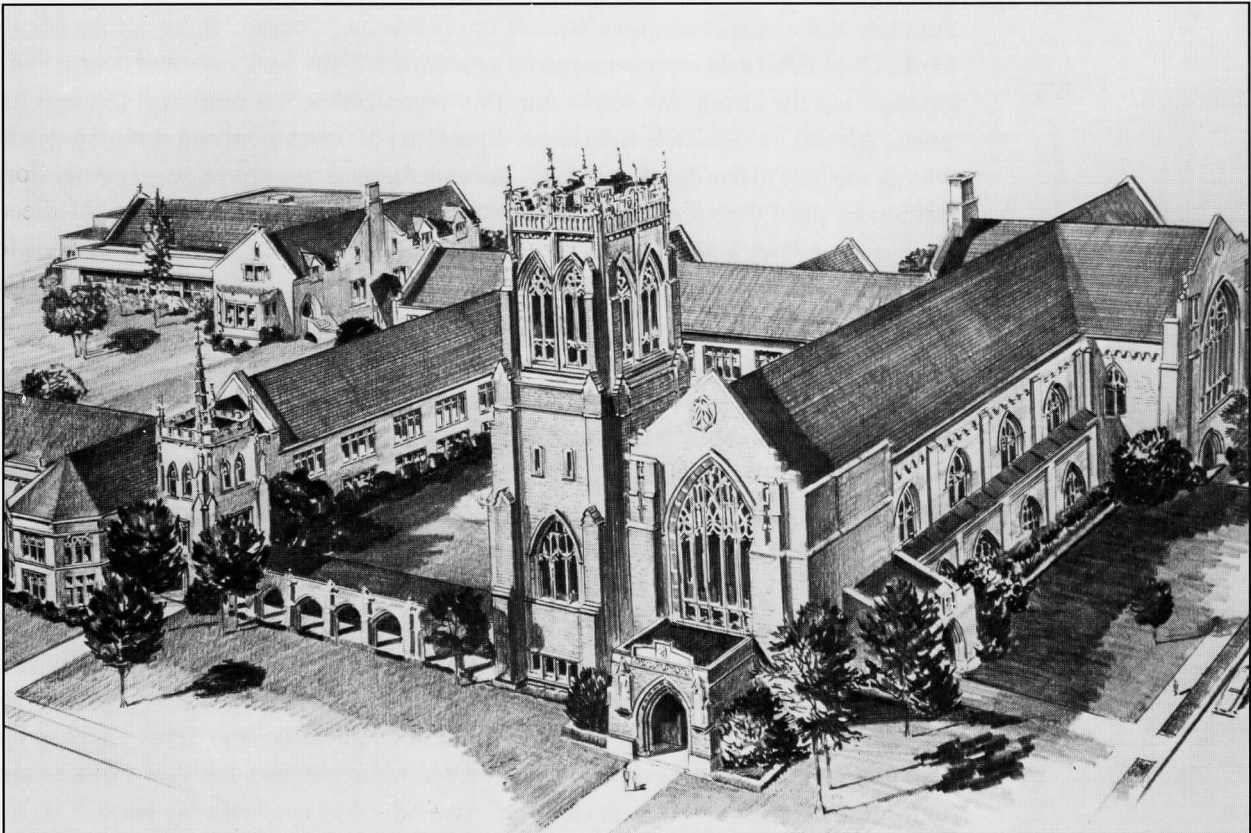
either turn away from the church or turn toward it. We felt the constant and urgent need of a force to attract these people toward the church ” 89 The TNT Class was dynamite for twenty-two years and its dedication to Christian service and fellowship lives on in the Becomers Class today

Greater Dallas Community of Churches

Highland Park also took the lead in working with other denominations in the Dallas community Dr Steel was instrumental in the 1950 formation and continuing support of the Greater Dallas Council of Churches. GDCC has worked through the years to be a uniting force for the interdenominational concerns of the community They addressed these through their radio and TV communications, public meetings, chaplaincy in the hospitals and jails, and on the community college campuses. Several Highland Park lay leaders have also served as president of the GDCC through the years.

Six Years Of Building For Service

Upon the completion of the Cox Memorial Chapel in 1951, architects Murrell Bennett and Norman Crittenden prepared a final brochure, featuring stunning photographs of their completed work. The architects dedicated it to the



Artist's concept of the new church complex.

members of the building and furnishing committee: Eugene McElvaney, chairman; J F Albright, Joseph L. Higginbotham, Dr Reuben Jackson, Stanley Patterson, DeWitt Ray, V Y Rejebian, C. A. Tatum, Jr., and Fred Truett. Also included in the brochure was a letter of appreciation to the congregation from Dr Steel.

In six years of building fund emphasis you have given more than a million dollars for building, furnishing, and landscaping

During this same period you have given another million dollars for

continuing your regular church work. Of that amount more than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars have been given to help organize two new churches within a five-minute drive from our church. (Lovers Lane and Preston Hollow) you have increased your giving to benevolences from thirty-five thousand dollars a year to over eighty thousand dollars annually

More impressive still is the fact that during these six years your church membership has grown from four thousand seven hundred to six thousand seven hundred The multi-choir program of Christian Education has been developed with four hundred enrolled. The Women's Society has increased its membership from six hundred fifty to fourteen hundred; and a Men's Club has been organized with eleven hundred members

During the years of fund raising our slogan has been "Building for Service." Now it is our common responsibility to see that these buildings are used to the utmost for the worship of God, the religious education of our children, and the service of our fellow men. With gratitude for achievements won and a prayer for God's leadership and blessings, we commit ourselves to such a task.⁹⁰

Men's Club Organized in 1951

An organization that would have a profound and lasting impact on the program and benevolent ministries of Highland Park Methodist began when 600 men met at the church on April 16, 1951 to celebrate "Charter Night" of the Men's Club. Over 1000 men were recognized as members. The first president, Deryl Hull, exemplified the strong lay leadership this organization has produced through the years. Almost immediately they began a program of benevolent and service projects which continue to this day In addition, through the years they have given tremendous support to special nonbudgeted needs of the church.

As a Highland Park staff member a few years later, Crawford Whaley was directly involved in working with the Men's Club for many years. "One of the finest and most influential projects they initiated was 'The Methodist Men's Hour,' a radio program featuring music, scripture reading, and a short sermon by Dr. Steel. These recorded programs were furnished free to radio stations, sponsoring churches, and Methodist Men's clubs. Hundreds of thousands of listeners were reached by these sermons."⁹¹ Among many other projects sponsored by the Men's Club were the Clothes Bank (still in existence as a service of this church), and special support to St. Luke's United Methodist Church in South Dallas.

Greeters Offer a Warm Welcome

The practice of using "greeters," who open the doors of the church and welcome us as we come in on Sunday morning, originated with the Men's Club. One of the members saw a man standing outside a doorway to the Education Building. He seemed to want to come in but was hesitant because he was new Seeing his hesitation, the member went outside, greeted him, led him into the Men's Bible Class and introduced him. "This is Charlie," he said, "and next Sunday he will be the greeter of all those who come to the door of this building. He will direct them to any service they wish to attend, and he will help me find other members who will man the doors of the church on Sunday mornings so that no one who comes here will feel as if they are a stranger"⁹²

Second Master Plan Begins

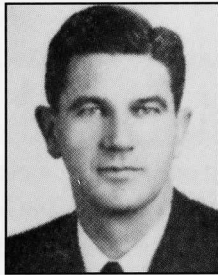
In January 1952, Dr. Steel spoke to the Board of Stewards regarding the need for study and evaluation of the work of the church, with particular attention to the



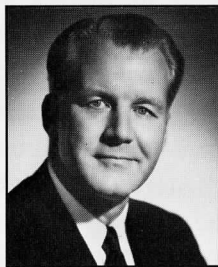
Men's Club Charter Certificate



Friendly Greeters help make a warm church.



C. A. Tatum



Willis Tate

responsibilities in the coming decade. He suggested hearing what other private and public service agencies were doing in the area of long-range planning. To that end, four representatives of different community interests appeared before the Board. Dr Frank Williams, Assistant Superintendent of the DISD; Mr R. L. Thornton, banker; Mr C. A. Tatum, president of Dallas Power and Light Co., and Mr Angus Wynne, Jr., a realtor. The last program in this series inspired Highland Park's second master plan study "It was clearly evident that if the church was to meet the changing needs of the community, serious planning should be done."⁹³

Executive Committee Begins Study

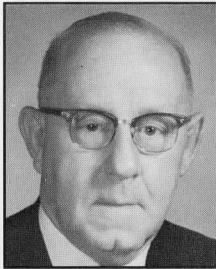
Under the leadership of the executive committee made up of Dr Willis Tate, chairman, and committee members L. B. Houston, Felix McKnight, V Y Rejebian, and Dr Frank Williams, two years of analysis and study followed. These were talented men of great vision and organizational skills. By September 1, 1952, fifteen major areas of church programs and services had been identified, and individuals with special interest or training in each area were asked to consult. They explored such areas as food service, aids to communication, transportation, radio and television, camping, library, and publications, as well as the traditional areas of the church's ministry such as worship, pastoral care, church school, music, benevolences, Women's Society, Men's Club, and business administration.⁹⁴

The genius of this committee was in its effective use of the unusually broad range of talent within the church's membership. Altogether ninety-five men and women and seven staff members worked together to create an inspired plan for the future. The master plan study was presented to, and approved by, the Official Board on January 11, 1954. On its approval, it became the official plan of action for Highland Park Methodist Church for the next ten years. "Out of it came a sense of unity and a sense of direction for the church."⁹⁵

New Staff Positions Added in the 1950's

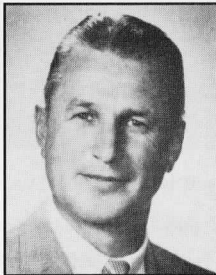
The pressure of expanded programs in a church that hummed with activity day and night, seven days a week, called for enlarging the staff. With the full endorsement of the Board of Stewards, Dr Steel continued his search for new

personnel. He was fortunate in having the part-time assistance of young preachers who were theology students at SMU. Among them was Durwood Fleming, a future president of Southwestern University in Georgetown. They helped with the pastoral visiting, and on occasion in the pulpit. Vera Newcum was employed as the first director of the Activities Building in 1951. And a young man of great promise, William A. "Bill" Holmes, joined the ministerial staff in 1952 as a full time associate, helping to lighten the growing pastoral load for Bill Dickinson.



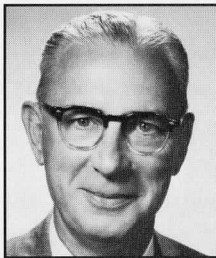
Bryan Brawner

To fill the position of church business administrator, Dr. Steel turned once again toward his native state of Arkansas. Bryan Brawner, formerly superintendent of schools in North Little Rock, joined the staff in 1952 as executive director. Before the year was out, upon Bryan's recommendation, Elvin Geiser, a young man who was director of athletics at North Little Rock High School, became the director of youth work and church activities at Highland Park Methodist Church. To his surprise he found that "church activities" included such areas as quilting, rug hooking, painting, millinery, and art, to name just a few. Elvin was soon acting as staff liaison to numerous committees, and several years later becoming director of business services.⁹⁶ Still serving the church today, Elvin Geiser has been on this church's staff longer than any other person.



Elvin Geiser

By spring 1953 another Arkansas school administrator, Crawford Whaley, was lured away from his native state. He had given thirty years to the school system of Monticello, Arkansas, when the invitation came offering him the position as director of adult work. Crawford Whaley is remembered not only for his leadership in the growth and development of new adult classes, but for his work with the Men's Club, as the originator of the Book Review Series, and for his outstanding efforts in developing the church library.⁹⁷



Crawford Whaley

Church Extension Continues To Expand

As the nation approached mid-century, Dallas Methodists were caught up in an unparalleled population explosion that literally propelled the people of Highland Park Methodist into the continuing business of church extension. The Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church was anxious to give all possible assistance in establishing new churches. Unfortunately, the funds available through the North Texas Annual Conference budget were simply not enough.⁹⁸ So Highland Park Methodist took the lead in devising a new plan of action.

At Dr. Steel's suggestion, a committee was formed for the purpose of concentrating solely on church extension in the Dallas area. This committee eventually became the Dallas Board of Church Extension, chartered in 1952. It was charged with the responsibility of "purchasing new sites and assisting in financing buildings for new churches."⁹⁹ Among the members on the Board were Richard J. "Dick" Price, a member of the Board of Stewards at Highland Park, and R. Bryan Brawner, the talented financial strategist who had just been employed at Highland Park.

There were two "plans" formulated by the board for raising money, both of which were quite ingenious. One plan (which started as the 50 cent plan but soon became the \$1 plan) asked each of the forty-three churches in the two Dallas districts to contribute 50 cents per member for church extension. A second plan targeted individual givers by offering them the opportunity to invest in the "Greater Methodism for Greater Dallas Share Plan." The 1500 Methodists who bought shares were asked

to give \$10 at a time, not more than three times a year when a new church plan was presented to them.¹⁰⁰

The Highland Park pastor was as much involved as any member of the Board. His friendship with Dick Price brought them together on frequent church scouting expeditions.

“Dick and I would get in his car and ride in areas that he thought were going to grow. We found out that the man who was in charge of real estate for the Dallas Public School system was on the Board of Stewards at First Methodist. We asked him, ‘How do you locate public schools?’ He told us that he studied real estate reports to get ideas of where there was going to be new development. We asked him if he would tell us when he located an area that he thought was going to grow. If so, we would consider buying property adjacent to the school property, knowing that if we waited, it would be too late, it would get too expensive, or there would be too many houses around it and there would be no place for a church.”¹⁰¹



Richard J. Price

The speed with which the Dallas Board of Church Extension had to work in



Marshall Steel and Dick Price look over a new church site.

order to stay ahead of real estate development was recorded for posterity in the magazine, *The Christian Century*. The author was shown the spot where a new church was to be built. It looked like any other pasture and it faced open fields. “Why here?” was the natural question. “Where’s the congregation to come from?” “You see that wheat field? The contractor promises to have 450 houses completed there by January 1, and every one of them will be sold before it is finished.”¹⁰²

In an effort to raise money quickly for the purchase of land, Dr. Steel went to a member of the church who was president of one of the insurance companies in Dallas.

“I asked him if he would consider making a loan to the Dallas Board of Church Extension. He said ‘I’m loaning a little more money than I ought to be loaning to some of these new churches. Do you think our church is going to stand behind those churches if they get in trouble?’ Dr Steel replied, ‘Friend, I can’t

*endorse the notes, but as long as I'm here and have anything to do with it, we'll stand behind any church you make a loan to, if we know about it."*¹⁰³

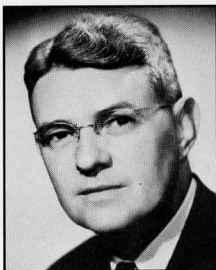
The fact that Dr Steel could commit his church to this large expenditure without blinking an eye is a remarkable tribute to the people of Highland Park Methodist. In the background was a congregation that was not only willing, but eager to support their pastor in every program he proposed. A staff member remarked in 1952 that one of the problems for the staff at Highland Park during this period of booming prosperity was "to keep ahead of the demands of the members to be accomplishing something in the name of the church."¹⁰⁴

Women Elected to Board of Stewards

For the first time in the history of Highland Park Church, and with some reservation on the part of the pastor, women were nominated for membership on the Board of Stewards in 1953. Of the 240 stewards elected, twelve were women. They were listed by their husband's names with one exception. Mrs. Willard Chamberlin, Mrs. Jack Elliott, Mrs. J. H. Etheridge, Mrs. W. H. Francis, Mrs. L. B. Houston, Mrs. Rose Nelson Hughes, Mrs. Reuben Jackson, Mrs. Luther M. Jordan, Jr., Mrs. L. R. Mitchell, Mrs. L. L. Nichols, Mrs. L. S. Thompson, and Mrs. George O. Wilson. Clarice Nichols (Mrs. L.L.) remembers asking Dr Steel why he happened to select her to be one of the first women on the board. He said, "Well, I picked ones that wouldn't cause trouble, and I figured you'd cause less trouble than anyone else."¹⁰⁵

"As Much For Others As For Self"

Dr Steel's impulse to reach out to help others was never very far from his thoughts or his heart. As early as 1945 he had expressed the dream that Highland Park Methodist Church would point toward the goal of designating fifty percent of its total budget for ministries to others. His administrative style worked to his advantage in launching this policy



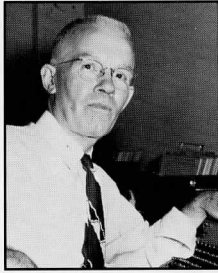
Marshall Steel

Before introducing a project that would require extensive commitment of funds from his congregation, Dr Steel often consulted influential laymen first. He found that having their support pledged beforehand helped smooth the acceptance of new proposals. On this occasion he made a list of about forty or fifty men in the church that he felt could be more generous to the budget than others. "I wrote them a personal letter," he said, "and told them I wanted to visit with them about the future of the church. I invited them to meet with me for a weekend in a hotel in Mineral Wells, at their own expense." Forty men and a few wives attended this weekend retreat. Three other members of the staff accompanied the group to talk about their particular area of work, Olive Smith, Elvin Geiser, and Crawford Whaley¹⁰⁶

"I told them that I was convinced that a congregation like ours, if *any* congregation, ought to make a commitment that we'll do as much for others as we do for ourselves." When Dr Steel asked for a secret ballot allowing each man to express how he felt about the idea, there was not a dissenting vote. He proposed a huge raise in the budget, which "they pledged as easily as they ever had before."¹⁰⁷ The amount allocated in the budget for benevolences in 1953-1954, was \$125,110; the budget for the 1954-1955 fiscal year was \$534,305, of which \$227,603 was allocated for benevolences.¹⁰⁸

Renewed Emphasis On Foreign Missions

After the war there was a heightened awareness of needs throughout the world, which in turn stimulated a new emphasis on foreign missions in the mid 1950s.



Robert Goodloe

In addition to doubling its commitment to the Annual Conference for World Service, Highland Park made direct donations to the work of Dr Frank Beck in Bolivia,¹⁰⁹ and to a Training for Leadership program in India.¹¹⁰ The Robert Goodloe family inspired a further expansion of our horizons in 1956. Upon retirement from the Perkins School of Theology, Dr Goodloe was invited to teach at the Union Theological Seminary in Manila. When he and Mrs. Goodloe left for the Philippines, Highland Park assumed responsibility for the financial support of this mission project. In the same year, Robert Goodloe, Jr and his wife, Mary, were commissioned missionaries and assigned to Umtali, Southern Rhodesia, Africa, and Highland Park allocated an equal amount for their work there.¹¹¹

“A Very Important Message From Your Pastor”

Still troubled by the lack of adequate space for worship services in the sanctuary, Dr Steel went to his Board of Stewards again in February 1955, to request another building program. The matter was placed in the hands of the Commission on Finance and Management where it remained under consideration for more than eighteen months. Finally, in October 1956, the Commission recommended the appointment of a building committee. They also recommended that additional land be obtained, if possible, with the idea of constructing a new sanctuary and converting the old sanctuary to educational space.

The Quarterly Conference took formal action on this recommendation on November 12, 1956, electing the following building committee: C. A. Tatum, Jr., chairman, James Stewart, vice chairman, and members Charles Sharp, Sam Dickinson, Trammel Crow, and Vance Foster. Among other duties assigned it, this committee was authorized to confer with SMU's Board of Trustees concerning the acquiring of additional land immediately north of the church.¹¹² Dr Steel informed the congregation in a written communication of these actions stating that the Official Board had instructed the building committee to develop plans for more adequate housing of our worship services and our educational program. He then aired this plan on KRLD radio and television.¹¹³

Easter Service In Moody Coliseum

No one was more overjoyed by the growth and vigor of church membership at Highland Park Methodist than the pastor, Dr Steel. He had been conducting two Sunday morning services each week since 1939. Yet no one felt as deeply the desire for the entire congregation to worship together at one time. As spring approached in 1957, SMU agreed to open its new field house, Moody Coliseum, for Highland Park's Easter Sunday Service. It began as a temporary measure until a new larger sanctuary might be built, but it provided the pastor with a dramatic opportunity to demonstrate what a mighty company of God's people Highland Park had become. On Easter morning the congregation of 10,000 members and visitors converged on the coliseum for the one united service.

As people entered, they found that the entire east wall of seating had been transformed. Resting against a background of greenery was a mammoth cross that had been placed aslant the tiers of seats. A magnificent floral spray of thousands of white lilies had been placed across the arms of the cross. (Dr Steel said that he would never forget his shock when he got the bill of \$2,500 for the flowers.)¹¹⁴ Below the pulpit 300 robed choristers were seated. The service required 200 ushers to guide the worshipers to their seats. What a glorious Easter experience when the whole

Easter Service
at Moody Coliseum.



congregation worshiped together in one place. The service that had begun as a temporary measure continued each Easter for thirteen years.¹¹⁵

Church Extension in Hamilton Park

Dr Steel's enthusiasm for church extension extended to helping the black churches expand their ministry. At his suggestion, Highland Park gave \$10,000 to purchase a church site in Hamilton Park, an area just being developed near Central Expressway and Forest Lane. A second gift of \$10,000 followed, which coupled with funds from the denomination's Board of National Missions, provided for the building. The first services were conducted by Dr I. B. Loud in the homes of the Hamilton Park members until they moved into their new building in 1957.

Building Urgency Increases

With the exhausting effort of the great Easter convocation behind them, church members and staff moved quickly to capitalize on the space need it presented. At the request of the Building Committee, Dr. Steel went before SMU's Board of Trustees to present the church's need for additional land. But the request was denied, because of the university's plan for future use of the property.¹¹⁶

Prior to the presentation, Dr Steel had contacted Dr. Willis M. Tate, then president of Southern Methodist University, and a long-time supportive church member, hoping that he would help influence the board in favor of the request. Dr Tate surprised Dr Steel with the information that he was not in favor of a new sanctuary building, nor could he control the action of the SMU Board. This conversation resulted in a feeling of alienation between the two men that never healed. Dr Tate carried this burden with him for the rest of his life.¹¹⁷

Property Purchased Across Hillcrest

In another action to carry forward the overall program of the church, the Quarterly Conference at its meeting on July 8, 1957, authorized and directed the trustees of the church to purchase property between Potomac and Shenandoah Streets on the west side of Hillcrest. They purchased the property with the idea that the land might be exchanged for adjoining SMU property at a future date.¹¹⁸



The crowded conditions kept increasing.

Building Program Put On Hold

The booming prosperity of the early 1950s suffered a setback in the following months of 1957 as a downtrend in the economy occurred. To the building committee, it was enough. On November 11, 1957, C. A. Tatum, Jr., chairman, reported to the Official Board, stating that in the best judgment of the committee it would be unwise for the church to embark upon a building program at this time. He suggested that any building program be deferred for an indefinite period until conditions for building are more favorable.¹¹⁹

Dr Steel Resigns

On November 19, 1957, Dr Steel wrote a letter to each member of his congregation.

“My Dear Friends. “ The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Hendrix College at Conway, Arkansas, has voted to nominate me for the presidency of the College . . . If elected, I have agreed to resign as your pastor and accept the responsibility

“This decision has been, as you may guess, extremely difficult. It has not been made hastily Most of you are familiar with our love for Arkansas; and many have known of our devotion to Hendrix College. Ouita and I are convinced that this is a call to service which we must accept.”¹²⁰

There is a strong tradition in the Methodist ministry that when the congregation no longer follows, it is time to move on. In a statement prepared especially for *The Tower*, Felix McKnight, chairman of the Official Board, had this to say: “In recent days, Dr Marshall T Steel has decided after prayerful deliberation to leave the ministry of Highland Park Church to accept the presidency of Hendrix College in Arkansas. Dr Steel’s service to this church has been deep and unwavering. He leaves with the prayers and best wishes of all of us. His leadership has been responsible for our place in Methodism and in God’s service. We carry a tremendous responsibility and must increase our efforts in the future.” Mr McKnight’s words epitomized the spirit of Highland Park’s lay leadership through every year of the church’s existence.¹²¹

Dr Steel had invested twenty-one years of his life in Highland Park. He had devoted his considerable talents into building a great church. He had given his congregation a new vision of Christian living. He had given the poor and needy new hope by publishing their plight and arousing the conscience of the people of Dallas.



Marshall Steel

He had worked actively in every religious and civic enterprise for the betterment of his community Through the Methodist Men’s Hour, he had spread the message of Jesus Christ over the United States and into military camps around the world. He had been instrumental in adding 6,000 members to the church’s membership roll. Both he and Mrs. Steel had the loyalty and devotion of church members and staff.¹²²

Dr Steel gave the month of December 1957 to completing and recording the remaining sermons in his final series for the Methodist Men’s Hour A Pastoral Relations Committee was named consisting of James H. Stewart, chairman; Robert L. Dillard, vice chairman; members Eugene McElvaney, C. A. Tatum, Sam Dickinson, J F Albright, and Hawkins Golden, as well as alternates Roy W Hill, Dr James Addison, and V Y Rejebian, to consult with Bishop William C. Martin and District Superintendent T Lee Miller on the appointment of a new pastor ¹²³ Without hesitation, the Pastoral Relations Committee recommended that William H. Dickinson, Jr be named interim pastor ¹²⁴

Rev And Mrs. Kenneth Dickson Added To Staff

At the end of the year, 1957, a young graduate of Perkins School of Theology, Kenneth Dickson, joined the ministerial staff. His wife, Mary Jane, added further talent to the ministry of education when she was named interim director of the Children’s Division. From the perspective of thirty-three years, it is a certainty that God intervened in the life of this congregation at this crucial time by calling Ken and Mary Jane Dickson to the service of Christ at Highland Park Methodist Church.

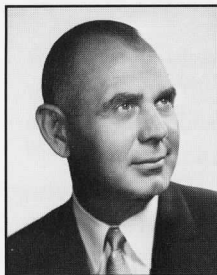


Kenneth Dickson

“Those Having Torches, Pass Them on to Others” Plato

William H. Dickinson, Jr., who “only wanted a little church of his own,”¹²⁵ was destined to lead one of Methodism’s largest churches through some of the most difficult years in our nation’s history As if that were not enough, one of the most traumatic turning points in the life of the church also occurred during his ministry

Bill Dickinson had come to Highland Park in January 1946, thinking that he would be here only six months until his home conference, the Texas Conference, met the following June. But within two months, he and Dr Steel had formed a partnership so strong that neither man expected it to end.¹²⁶ Dr Steel’s vision of the church, of its tremendous potential for good in the lives of others, and his pressing need for an associate who would be happy in pastoral duties, inspired in Bill a desire to carry out his life’s service to Christ at Highland Park. His decision was a blessing to this congregation. A part of the dream Bill accepted as his own was Dr Steel’s deep yearning for a building large enough to seat the congregation in one great worship service.



Bill Dickinson

When Dr Steel accepted the call to become president of Hendrix College in 1957, the congregation was not prepared for a change in pastoral leadership, and made Bill Dickinson interim pastor as they considered what to do. In his years as Dr Steel’s associate, Bill had engendered a vast loyalty among members of the congregation. He had said many times that his duties in the pastoral care ministry were the most satisfying that the church could offer Knowing his commitment to the work, the Pastoral Relations Committee hesitated to ask him to assume greater responsibility While they looked far and wide for a new minister in the early months of 1958, the voice of the congregation issued its own imperative, “We want Bill Dickinson!” On March 16, 1958, Bishop Martin and District Superintendent T Lee Miller announced his appointment as senior pastor of Highland Park Methodist Church.

The perception of Bill Dickinson as shepherd of his flock, one who responded immediately to those who needed him in times of illness, grief, or trouble, remains the strongest memory of many who knew him as a pastor. It is matched in equal measure by memories of him as fun-loving, friendly, and kind, a person who loved people.

“Together We Advance”

While Bill Dickinson was still acting as interim pastor, the Official Board, under the leadership of Chairman Edwin L. Cox, and Carl Phinney, chairman of the Committee on Finance and Management, mounted a previously planned pledge campaign to increase the 1958-1959 budget by a huge 17%. One of the most widely held misconceptions about Highland Park (which still exists today) is that our members make extremely strong pledges to the church budget. This pledge campaign information in 1958 gave a startling and clearer picture of the actual state of affairs. “In two churches that are among our closest neighbors, the per capita giving is more than twice what it is in our church.”¹²⁷

The proposed jump in additional funding would provide a dramatically improved ministry to and with the congregation, making it possible to increase the church staff to provide for a more adequate ministry in fourteen areas. Among them were: worship, counseling, teaching and training, and the pastoral care ministry. In addition, the campaign recognized the desire of our members to continue benevolent sharing on a fifty-fifty basis, “providing as much for others as ourselves.” By comparison the 1990-91 budget allocates 26% for benevolences.¹²⁸ A handsome descriptive brochure titled “Together We Advance” depicted areas of church life and activities.

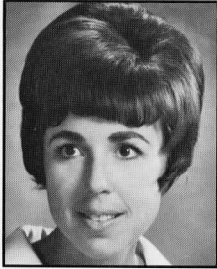


Bill Dickinson visits
with members.

In response to this change in pastoral leadership, Highland Park members were determined to make their new pastor’s added responsibilities easy and pleasant. One month after accepting the appointment as senior pastor, Dr. Dickinson announced that the new budget had been pledged. One year later, he made another encouraging report to his Official Board, stating that 500 new members had been added to the church rolls, and all apportionments and benevolences had been paid in full. The

Women's Society of Christian Service also had completed an outstanding year, raising a total of \$19,500 for benevolent purposes under the leadership of Mrs. Walter Goodman.

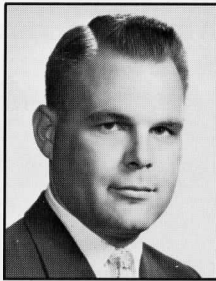
Adding Excellence To The Staff



Barbara Hart Siekman

Newly created staff positions in 1958-1959 added ministers whose excellence and dedication to the church helped fill the areas of need outlined by the pledge committee in 1958. Dr Fred Edgar and the Reverend Don Benton joined the staff in June 1958. Dr James Hares' appointment to the church as director of children's work came in 1959, as did Barbara Hart, who joined the staff as Dr Hares' assistant. Barbara Hart's ordination later as a Methodist Minister and her eventual appointment as associate pastor at Highland Park in 1965, made her the first woman ordained minister on the staff. Each of these people was influential in shaping the church's future in the decade ahead.

One staff position that had been requested by Dr Whittlesey remained to be filled in 1959. Before the year ended, a young man of tremendous talent, Philip Baker, whose ministry here has spanned over thirty years, came into our lives. Philip was in the Second Missile Command and was about to be moved from Fort Hood to Ft. Carson in Colorado, when he heard that "the famous Dr Whittlesey" needed an organist. Knowing that he would be mustered out of the army in a few months, he decided to apply. He arrived for the interview wearing his uniform.



Philip E. Baker joined the staff in 1959 as organist and assistant to Dr. Whittlesey. He later became Director of the Music Ministry in 1965.

"He took me down to meet Bill Dickinson, who seemed to like me....They offered me the job on the spot. Neither of them ever heard me play a note on the organ. I have often wondered. whether Lee Whittlesey had any 'what-have-I-done' misgivings about my musical abilities between the time he hired me in April and the time he first heard me play, which was the processional hymn on the second Sunday in September 1959. I remember looking at Dr Whittlesey in the mirror as he stood in the narthex with the choir, thinking to myself, 'You're not going to be sorry you hired me ..You can relax.'" ¹²⁹ In the ensuing years Philip Baker has advanced Highland Park's tradition of excellence in the music ministry, enriching our worship services and creating his own special vision of music and the arts in the hearts of this congregation.

"The More He Preached, The Better He Got!"

Somewhat overwhelmed by the awesome responsibility of following in Dr Steel's footsteps, Bill turned his attention first to the most visible aspect of any minister's life—his Sunday morning sermons. He had always been a popular speaker with both civic and religious groups, but he had never spent a great deal of time working on his infrequent sermons, since his primary responsibility had been in pastoral care. Now he rose long before daylight, arriving at the church as early as 5:30 a.m. to start his sermon preparation.¹³⁰

Within weeks he was delivering sermons that had his listeners reexamining their own lives in a new light, as he emphasized human behavior and personal relationships within the context of the Biblical message; within a year he had been asked to prepare a paper for publication.¹³¹ Bill Dickinson's confidence in his ability to write as well as speak the word of God is further evidenced by the demand for his published sermons. Yet the myth that he was not a great preacher still persists.

Charter member Ed Mouzon said it best, “Bill Dickinson was the most beloved person who has ever been in this area. .even though he couldn’t preach very well. But he did get better—the more he preached, the better he got!”¹³²

Building For Youth

As Bill continued to improve his pulpit skills, the church’s pledge campaign ran to a successful conclusion in April 1958. Meanwhile, the baby boom generation was crammed into every nook and cranny of the Education Building. The largest class of children (85) since 1952 had entered the church membership in 1958-1959, literally crowding out some 400 young people. It was not a new problem, for five years previously the entire Senior High Department had moved to Selecman Hall on the SMU campus.¹³³ Youth counselors and teachers became increasingly restless and unhappy with this remote classroom situation a block away from the church.

The demands for resolution of this overcrowding became more insistent. At the October 1959 meeting of the Official Board, Dr Dickinson moved for a secret ballot and asked each person “to vote what he thought would be the conscience of the 8,700 members of the church and not his own personal feeling.”¹³⁴ The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of a new addition to the Education Building. It was not a new idea. The congregation’s desire for more educational space had been expressed years before in the Master Plan of 1944. This would be the culmination of that long-range expansion program.



Overcrowding was at all age levels.



L. B. Houston’s first duty as chairman of the Official Board in January 1960 was to nominate the following building committee: C. A. Tatum, chairman, Dr. J P Addison, Judge Dallas Blankenship, J Roscoe Golden, S. J Hay, Trent Root, and Angus Wynne, Jr. Using the theme, “Building for Youth—Tomorrow’s Christian Leaders,” Dick Price, director of the building fund campaign, and David McConnell, coordinator of all campaign information, mounted one of the most effective, well-organized, campaigns ever conducted at Highland Park Methodist.

The organization of volunteers alone was formidable. In addition to more

than 700 who were involved in the solicitation campaign, there were at least 200 more involved in different support services. The names of those who volunteered for our youth reads like a list of “Who’s Who” in Highland Park Methodist’s membership roll.¹³⁵

Lake Sharon Assembly

Included in the total building plan was another project, a church camp, first proposed in the master plan of 1953. A magnificent gift of 135 acres of land in Denton County was received by the church in January 1959 as a memorial gift from Mr and Mrs. L. R. Strickland in memory of their son, Michael. The gift also included \$150,000 in cash for the construction of a main building. This gift made possible the dream of “a beautiful assembly area with wooded glens, and a sparkling lake, just 30 miles from the church.”¹³⁶ The campaign literature that arrived in every member’s home carried the banner cry, “Let’s add a new north wing. Let’s make Lake Sharon Assembly a retreat for Christian fellowship.”

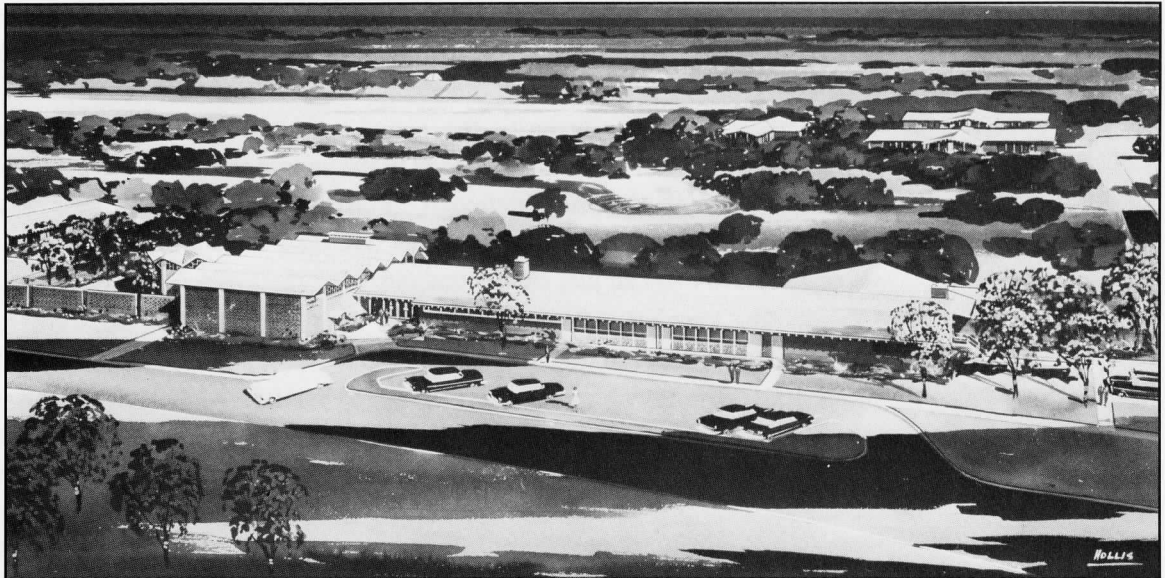
Elvin Geiser, shown looking over the site, acted as staff consultant to the camp planning and development committee for Lake Sharon Assembly, 1960.



Construction work started there early in 1959. Committee members were D. O. Tomlin, chairman, James G Hill, P M. Rutherford, Jr., J Hub Hill, L.B Houston, Dr Lloyd Messersmith, Carl L. Phinney, Rudolph Prins, Marion B Soloman, A. C. Van Tassel, Carl Taylor, and Gordon Warren. They worked with Jack Corgan, architect, and Avery Mays, builder

Stanley “Pat” Patterson, resident engineer of the church, and Ray Morrison made a preliminary survey of the land, chopping their way through heavy underbrush. Native oaks and trees were saved. Only those with trunks less than the size of a man’s fist were cleared away. The natural beauty of the place emerged, revealing land that sloped to a small lake. From the highest point one could look across valleys and farms and meadows to blue hills, “a perfect spot for regeneration of body, mind and spirit.”¹³⁷

An overflow crowd of several hundred gathered on September 18, 1960, for the service of consecration in the auditorium of the new Michael Strickland Memorial Building. Since then, groups of all ages, within our congregation and the community at large, have made Lake Sharon Assembly a place of spiritual and



Architect's view of Lake Sharon.

personal growth. Our young people, especially, have found it a place where friendships form and faith deepens.

In the early years there was much to be done to improve the natural surroundings. As a sponsor for Methodist Youth Fellowship in the 1960s, Robert "Bob" Whiteside designed a masonry/rock altar to be built by the Senior High MYF in the campfire area at the north end of the property. Each young person who helped with the project brought a rock from home to place in the face of the altar.¹³⁸ Dr. Stephen Crane has never forgotten that he brought as his contribution a highly prized fossil he and his father had found.

Adding The New North Wing

The cost of the new building and the resulting remodeling necessary to the



An inviting place for all ages.

existing building was estimated to be \$1,451,666, to be paid over a three year period.¹³⁹ In his letter to the 8,700-member congregation on January 25, 1960, Mr Price, as building fund director, did not mince words. The money would have to come from 3,500 family units, the actual source of the regular budget. (This compares with 2,600 who have pledged to the annual budget in the 11,700 member church of 1990.)¹⁴⁰ Mr. Price continued, "You can readily see that this is not a job for a few big givers and a few others. This will take work and sacrificial giving by everyone. No one can just sit this one out."

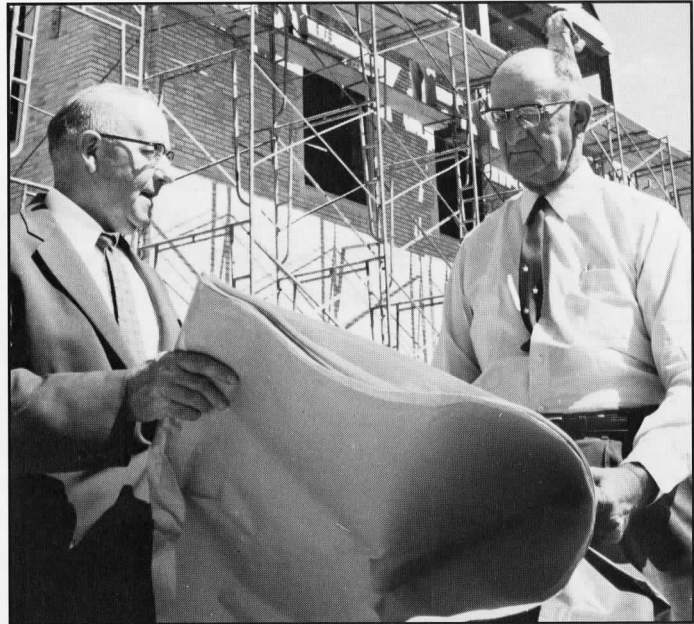
The kick-off solicitation program began on February 28, 1960, and was scheduled to end on March 14. Within the two week period of the first intensive drive, those families who were reached pledged \$1,105,994.¹⁴¹ Unfavorable weather, sickness, and other factors extended the visitation time to April 14, but the pastor and lay leaders felt confident enough to proceed. The Quarterly Conference passed the resolution on April 11, and by July, construction work was under way. If ever there was evidence of this congregation's belief in its young people, the building campaign of 1960 and the effort to make Lake Sharon a retreat for Christian fellowship clearly demonstrates the love and admiration in which we hold them.



Celebrating the
Fund Drive at
the Victory Dinner

Growing Tensions in a Changing World

The remarkable accomplishments of Highland Park Methodist during the decade of the 1950s were achieved at a time when Americans felt threatened by the menace of Communism and the Cold War with Russia. Events in the world at large seemed beyond control. the threat of atomic energy, spy scandals, Senator Joseph McCarthy's accusations, the Korean War. For the first time in their history, Americans heard their government proclaim a policy of containment and appeasement without victory, racial unrest at home, and Russia's launching of Sputnik I. The Russian crackdown on religion alarmed Americans. Churches in communist



Bryan Brawner and Stanley Patterson check the plans for the new north wing of the Educational Building

countries were boarded up, and cathedrals were turned into museums or office buildings. All of these fed this nation's fear. It reached a focus in September 1959 on the occasion of Soviet Premier Khrushchev's well-publicized visit to the United States. Newspaper articles announced that the two super powers were reaching accord, but the average American believed the worst.

Dr. Dickinson stepped into his pulpit on Sunday, September 20, 1959, and confronted the situation clearly and forthrightly. His sermon made headlines the next day. The visit of the Soviet premier "brings into sharp focus the real point of conflict between Communism and Western culture—religion (not economy, government, or social structure). At times when they speak of atoms for peace and disarmament programs, they appear close to the Christian viewpoint but their promises are empty and unconvincing. Knowing they have no confidence in God, we have no confidence in them. God's love is the only force strong enough to break through the vicious circle of man's fears and this love provides the only permanent answer to the problems of the world. Let the challenge of Communism and Khrushchev's arrogance be met on this basis and this basis alone."¹⁴²

Examining the Methodist Curriculum

Despite the steady influence of Bill Dickinson's leadership, undercurrents of worry about Communism and other world problems continued. Eventually it focused on the content of Methodist church school literature. In particular, parents and teachers were concerned about the trend away from traditional Bible study, and toward an "experience-centered" curriculum. With the construction of a new north wing in progress, the time seemed ripe to investigate and improve the church's program of Christian education.

On the pastor's recommendation, the Official Board elected a committee on curriculum study on January 11, 1960. It was composed of Judge Clarence Guittard, chairman, and members Mrs. A. Q. Sartain, Margaret Wasson, Robert L. Dillard, Douglas Jackson, Sterling Wheeler, Harry Brutsche and Elvin Geiser, church staff. Also serving in an advisory capacity were members of the religious education staff,



Bill Dickinson preaches the Word.

James Hares, Ben Hines, and Crawford Whaley, all of whom met with the committee on a regular basis.

During the next two years, the committee carried out an intensive program of analysis, discussion, research, testing and evaluation. Their efforts locally coincided with those of the Curriculum Committee of the Methodist Church in Nashville, which was also in the process of preparing completely new materials for children and youth. As a member of both committees, Dr James Hares' advisory position was particularly valuable.¹⁴³

The curriculum committee produced a monumental study formulated around broad objectives centering on:

- personal faith and trust in God;
- commitment and loyalty to Christ;
- knowledge and appreciation of the Bible, the history of the church, and the Christian doctrines and traditions;
- understanding and appreciation of the meaning and forms of worship;
- a Christian philosophy based on God's plan and purpose;
- attitudes, habits, and goals motivated by Christian love in response to the forgiving love of God;
- and responsible participation in Christian fellowship and service.

To implement their recommendations, the committee issued ten specific proposals, well-defined and detailed.¹⁴⁴ In so doing, the Curriculum Study Committee not only set standards that significantly advanced the church school program for Highland Park, but they also produced a document that served as a model for changes on the national level of Methodism.

Meeting The Communist Threat

The triumphant notes of the Messiah had hardly died away following the great Easter convocation in Moody Coliseum on April 2, 1961 when Dr Dickinson was beset with reports of idle and irresponsible gossip about Highland Park Methodist Church being infiltrated with liberal and socialistic and communistic ideas.¹⁴⁵ In a strongly worded sermon on April 16, 1961, he denounced name calling and charges of Communist infiltration. His congregation listened attentively as he called them to be responsible and conscientious Christians.

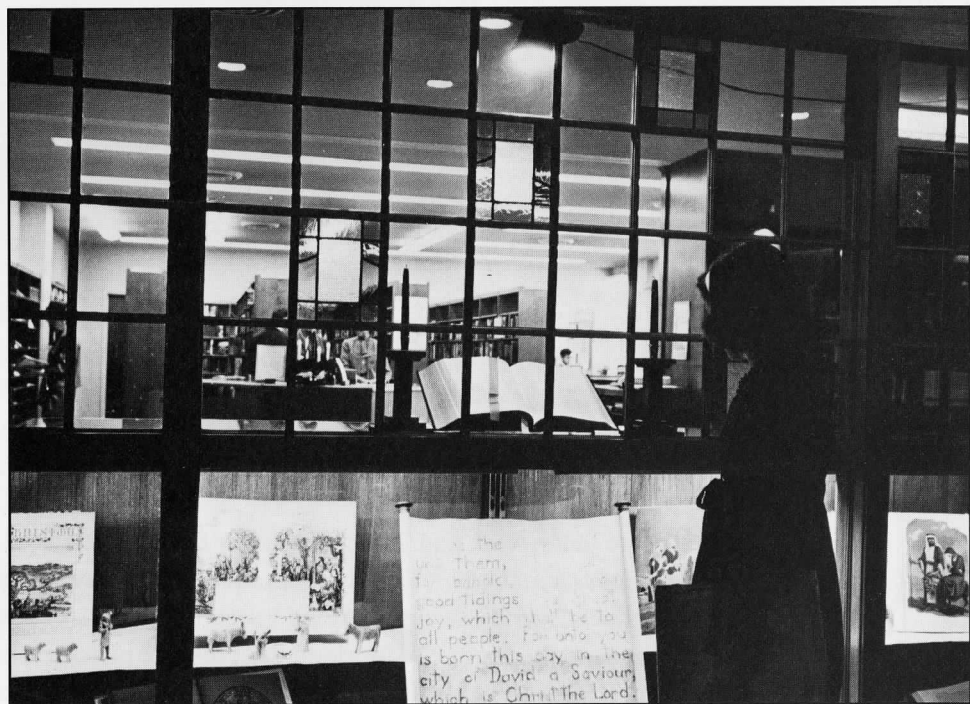
Anti-Communist hysteria and the church's valiant efforts to combat it continued through the following months. Leadership came from many sources. SMU professors were engaged for special courses that ran as a series at the church, drawing large numbers of people. On a Thursday evening in October 1961, an audience of 1,700 crowded into the sanctuary and overflowed into the chapel to hear William C. Sullivan, Assistant Director of the FBI, speak on "Communism and Religion in the United States." Mr Sullivan compared John Wesley and Karl Marx, and discussed the allegations of Communist infiltration of churches, concluding that, while Communism had made a persistent effort to infiltrate, its success had been negligible. He pointed to America's religious institutions as one of our most formidable bulwarks in the crusade against Communism.¹⁴⁶

New North Education Wing Opens

The consecration of the Education Building on Sunday, November 19, 1961, was both a day of fulfillment and a day of new beginnings. Angus Wynne, Jr.,

chairman of the Official Board, presented the building to the congregation “ .consecrated to the glory of almighty God and to the purposes of worship, fellowship, study, and service.” Three of the children’s choirs sang anthems written by Mary Elizabeth Montgomery and Jane M. Marshall, former members of the church and choir. The prayer of dedication put into words the unspoken supplication of every parent whose children would be using the new building, “.graciously accept, we pray Thee, this building which we now consecrate to Thee, to Thy service, and to Thy glory, that in it love and wisdom may unite to bring joy and strength to those who gather here. .may they be stirred in spirit to serve Thee wisely and steadfastly ”¹⁴⁷

Architect Mark Lemmon had designed the new wing to complement the Gothic style of the original building. The addition increased the church’s physical plant by 25,000 square feet and added enough space to serve 3,000 persons at one time.¹⁴⁸ Approximately 4,000 persons toured the facilities that afternoon. They saw a handsome new library, forty classrooms, and a lounge for high school and college students. The new north wing boasted the latest educational innovation: one-way see-through mirrors, which would allow trained observers and parents to evaluate children’s learning behavior without being seen.



The Church Library

Operation Murray Dickson Becomes Mission Focus

A tragic accident on a mountain top in Bolivia on December 16, 1961, took the lives of two Texas missionaries, Murray Dickson and Louis Tatom, Jr. Highland Park responded immediately to the challenge of carrying on the work of these two young men. Murray Dickson’s ministry in Bolivia had begun in 1942. In a statement made in November 1960 in Washington, D.C., the Bolivian Ambassador to the United States credited the Methodist Church as the main reason why Bolivia was not another Cuba.¹⁴⁹ Before his death, Murray Dickson had proposed a plan that would attempt to secure resources for continuing the Methodist mission work there.



A Bolivian family.

“Operation Murray Dickson for Bolivia” was launched in July 1962 to honor the author of the dream and his companion. Highland Park’s interest in Bolivia intensified in 1963 due to the efforts of Rev. James Palmer, formerly pastor of the Community Church in La Paz, who had joined the Highland Park staff in February. Jim Palmer’s personal knowledge of the mission field in Bolivia and his stirring tribute to the work and vision of Murray Dickson, inspired a significant investment of benevolent funds. “Twenty years changed the face of a nation,” he said, “because this man (Murray Dickson) stood beneath the cross of Jesus and could see clearly what had to be done. ” The Methodist presence in Bolivia had changed dramatically, from two churches in 1942 to twenty-one in 1960, the year before his death.¹⁵⁰

Five years later, an additional twenty new churches had been formed, because of continued increased interest in Operation Murray Dickson. Other advances in Bolivia were equally astounding. Highland Park’s interest and investment in Bolivia continued well into the next decade. Beginning in 1969, the church contributed \$25,000 over a three year period for the construction of a pediatric wing on the Methodist Hospital in La Paz.

Speaking Out On Social Concerns

The world of politics and dissension seemed always to be surfacing in the decades following World War II. Partisan political statements made by various



Clarence Guittard

church officials and interdenominational bodies such as the National Council of Churches of Christ in America had received wide media coverage. Often these statements were in direct contrast to viewpoints held by Highland Park Methodist leaders. Although it had long been the view of Methodist laymen and clergymen that churches should practice a hands-off policy in politics, the situation sparked a formal response from Highland Park's Commission on Christian Social Concerns. Under the leadership of Judge Clarence Guittard, the commission submitted a resolution to the Official Board setting out the church's position regarding politics and controversial public issues. It was unanimously approved by the board on January 14, 1963.

Essentially this document stated that leaders and staff executives of The Methodist Church should avoid any implication that they are representing the views of Methodists generally or that they are using their positions to further partisan objectives. "Each Christian . . . must take his stand on matters of public controversy and should, as a matter of Christian duty, join with others . . . to promote and preserve such . . . values as his individual conscience may direct."¹⁵¹ In formal and eloquent language, this resolution made it quite clear to Methodist officials in the northeast that Methodists in Dallas, Texas preferred to make up their own minds on controversial issues.

Layman's School of Religion

The published report of the curriculum study committee in 1963 left little doubt about the deep faith and strong beliefs of the local church. One of the proposals for implementing the committee's stated objectives was for short-term adult study courses, "designed primarily to develop an appreciation of Methodist Christianity as a distinctive and vital modern faith, and increase zeal and loyalty to the Methodist Church." They recommended that these courses be taught by a special team of highly qualified teachers.¹⁵²

The Layman's School of Religion, described as "a channel for adult education in religion," answered the need expressed in this proposal. For four years starting in the fall 1963, this ambitious endeavor offered eight-week courses each fall and spring. There was no charge. The doors were open to all interested persons whether or not they were members of the church. The range of subjects, the courses offered, and the faculty who taught them, drawn largely from the church's own membership, was impressive.¹⁵³

The last week of the opening fall series in 1963 coincided with the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Dallas. His assassination on November 22, 1963, sent shock waves around the world, and it plunged the people of Dallas into depression and a feeling of guilt by association. The sermon Dr. Dickinson preached following that national crisis is the first in a volume published later about the tragic event. He described the sense of unbelief that swept through the crowd waiting at the Trade Mart to honor the president and his wife, the feeling that it could not be true. "When the cold, hard facts seeped slowly into our consciousness, we were left desolate. There was nothing we could do but pray. The question was how to pray? Pray for what?" Characteristically the sermon ended with the answer:

"We pray to a God who is still at work in His world. We pray with a faith that calls us to new dedication to law and order. We pray for the ability to be responsible citizens, characterized by orderliness, restraint, and courage. And we pray for a world where our human,

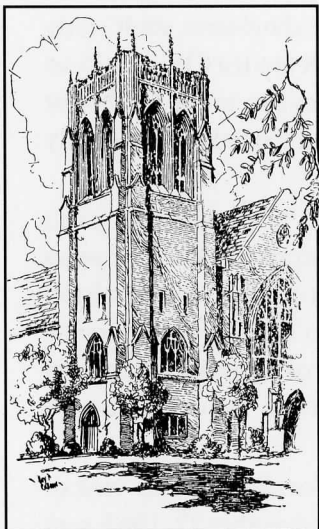
selfish motivations will be brought under the judgment of God and our concerns broadened far beyond our city to all mankind.”¹⁵⁴

Dr. Dickinson was speaking to a grieving city Three days later at the closing session of the Layman’s School of Religion, Barbara Hart was scheduled to finish her series on “Christian Answers to Children’s Questions.” The topic for the evening was, “About Prayer ” Without doubt the parents in her audience were dealing on a very personal level with the topic for the evening.

“To The Limit Of Our Vision”: Third Master Plan Study

“Our vision of the church is that it shall become, in fact, a priesthood of believers, a fellowship of people who are ministers to Christ. Our mission, therefore, is to find ways that this can be accomplished, not only for individuals within the church, but for all people in our sphere of influence.”¹⁵⁵ Within the spirit of high idealism expressed in this statement, Highland Park Methodist Church embarked on its third master plan study Brilliantly conceived and executed from its beginning in 1962 to its publication in 1965, it would be, in its own way, as significant to the church’s future as the two previous master plans had been.

The Official Board appointed a master plan executive committee in September 1962. They were Robert C. Dunlap, Jr., chairman, members Frederick E. Burnham, Roy W Hill, L. B. Houston, Douglas Jackson, C. A. Tatum, Jr., Angus Wynne, Jr., and R. B. Brawner, coordinator Dr. Dickinson was thrilled by the possibilities inherent in the new study In preparation for an overnight meeting of the executive committee in November 1962, he set out in writing his own thoughts and aspirations that they might be used as a point-of-departure for the discussion. His thoughts ranged over all the major areas of the church’s program. Four are of special interest: missions and benevolence; Christian social concerns; the church’s relationship with SMU; and the possibility of a new sanctuary These would continue to shape the church’s future for several years to come.¹⁵⁶



Within the next few months, the master plan executive committee had established goals, selected committees, and formulated a rationale regarding the need for a study Thus began a process of self-examination in which the church sought clarification of what it considered itself to be and a clarification of its mission to the community in which it existed. Their spirit of high idealism did not cloud their clear assessment of the changing and troubled world. As they worked, the Vietnam conflict broke out.

“Our church has now entered a new era of broadened and multiple ministry .Its purpose must be clarified, its techniques (programs) critically evaluated, and its involvement should be made relevant to the issues that characterize life in our time.”¹⁵⁷

The three major section leaders for the third master plan were Robert L. Dillard, Roy Hill, and Dr Douglas Jackson. Over 240 volunteers met in committees and sub-committees for more than a year to consider the various areas assigned to them. In May 1965 the Official Board accepted the final draft, and urged every department in the church to begin implementing the study’s recommendations.

New Local Church Organization

Along with the Third Master Plan Study came a new organization of the church into nine ministries, still largely in place today Business Services, Leadership

and Development, Music and the Arts, Pastoral Care, Preschool Age Groups, Elementary Age Groups, Youth Groups, Adult Groups, and Membership and Attendance. These ministries were designed to make the most effective use of lay and ministerial talents. Each ministry functioned under the leadership of a lay council who worked closely with a director from the ministerial staff. In addition to Dr Dickinson, ministerial staff members named as directors of the new ministries in the fall of 1965 were: R.B.Brawner, Elvin Geiser, James Hares, Philip Baker, Kenneth Dickson, Lillian Sills, Barbara Hart, Ronald DeVillier, Gilbert Zyzniewski, Crawford Whaley, and James Palmer. Among the lay people who came forward to head the corresponding councils were Bill Smellage, Dr Margaret Wasson, Mark Schooler, Kirk Phillips, Dr John E. Wiedeman, Mrs. Lloyd Messersmith, Doris Dowdell Moore, Paul Corley, and Jack Lowe. In a church that came into being through the efforts of dedicated and active lay people, the 1965 reorganization was strong testimony to the continuing loyalty and leadership of Highland Park members.¹⁵⁸

Church Ties With SMU Redefined

There was one sobering assessment in the 1965 master plan. Near the end was an analysis of the church's relationship with SMU that defined the ways in which the considerable growth of both institutions had changed their relationship. It stated in general, Highland Park Methodist is a local church to faculty and students who go there in much the same way that it is the church to every other family attending, without a distinctive relationship between the two. The climate of the time, it continued, is less church-going for college students, and the students of the 1960s are not inclined to participate in church-related young people's organizations. The presence on campus of the chaplaincy, Sunday worship, and the Wesley Foundation, makes less apparent the need for the church to assume major responsibility for students at SMU.

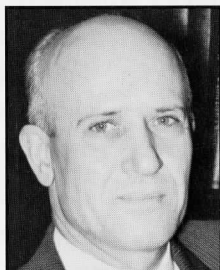
The committee also found that the support of SMU by members and staff at Highland Park Methodist continued, in particular the willingness to raise funds for scholarships, serve on the board of trustees, and lend teaching services when needed. Finally, they found that when the university faculty supported Highland Park, they did so primarily as church members rather than as university personnel. The committee reached the conclusion that a detailed program or structure was not desirable. Instead, "the committee is of the opinion that open communication at all levels between Highland Park and SMU is the one really important thing."¹⁵⁹

The University Department

Those students who did find their way to the University Department at Highland Park Methodist found a warm welcome and a lively program. The strong conviction exists today, as it did then, that this particular department holds a unique place in the history of the church. Ed and Kay Vinson remember the deep satisfaction and enjoyment they received in their six year sponsorship of the group. ***"We not only had invigorating discussions of the problems which faced University students in those days, but outings as well. Some of them included overnights at Lake Sharon, as well as opossum hunts, picnics, roller skating parties, skiing on Lake Dallas behind Dr Jim Addison's 'yacht,' and baseball games galore."*** Strong leadership was especially important in the university department; it has come from many members, among them Mr and Mrs. Harold Boss, and Mr and Mrs. Herbert Rogers.

Church Benevolent Activities Multiply

The outreach programs of the church proceeded to flourish in a whirl of overlapping activity in the early years of the decade. The deep vein of generosity and commitment that links this church with its past, overflowed into a world torn by turmoil. Each circle in the Women's Society of Christian Service, each church school class on every age level, each individual who bought a "share" in church extension, or made a special donation to "Mission Possible," (the great Palm Sunday outreach program of the late 1960s) were all seeking ways of sharing their faith through their gifts and service. With all the world's demands, it became increasingly difficult to achieve a proper balance among all the benevolent interests of the church as a unit and those of many groups within the church.



Hawkins Golden

O. Paul Corley, as chairman of the commission on missions and benevolent services in 1963, suggested a review of the total benevolent concerns of the church. Hawkins Golden and other members of the commission undertook this task with the goal of helping groups within the church avoid duplication. The outcome was a clear policy statement that effectively coordinated the church's wide range of benevolent programs.

Helping A New Church In Hong Kong

Highland Park's interest in foreign missions continued to be a strong and vital part of church outreach in the 1960s. Highland Park gave increasing amounts to Bolivia, to various missionary efforts in Africa, and to Methodist projects in India. The church's historic ties with missionary effort in China, which began for Highland Park in 1929 with Rev Sone, received new life when the congregation helped build North Point Methodist Church in Hong Kong and subsidized the work of Dr. and Mrs. Sid Anderson and Rev and Mrs. Kenneth McIntosh who succeeded them.



Kenneth McIntosh

On frequent trips to Hong Kong, O. Paul Corley attended North Point Methodist Church. He was there soon after the new sanctuary opened in 1963. "The new church building is now open. .and seats about 450. It was almost full last Sunday It is completed and furnished in. simple taste and along simple but conventional lines."¹⁶⁰

"I was impressed with the way they took up the offering. They had what I guess you'd describe as a little stick. There was a bag on the stick that had two handles, and you'd just pass it down the pew. It was easier than passing a plate. They dropped their money into this bag. That was the first one. Then they took up another offering for the poor

"I sat in that room and thought, 'Gosh, these people are already poor—how can you get any poorer than they are?' And so it came out of the heart that no matter what they did for themselves, they were always able to do something for someone else.

"That little church, just like Highland Park United Methodist Church, helped build other churches. There were eleven or so other Methodist churches established within the confines of Hong Kong in the course of my twenty years of going over there."¹⁶¹

Golden Opportunity Unfolds

Highland Park Methodist Church saw the advent of its 1966 golden anniversary as a golden opportunity. A vision of the goals the church hoped to attain in the years ahead was before them in 1965 as every department in the church turned its attention toward activities centering on the upcoming celebration of their 50th anniversary.

As part of the observance, a symbol was developed and introduced in *The Tower* on November 26, 1965.

The past fifty years. . . is symbolized by the golden tree of life, in full growth, represented in the leaf design background, thus paying tribute to those who established and built Highland Park Methodist Church, the heritage of a proud past upon which we build a dynamic future.

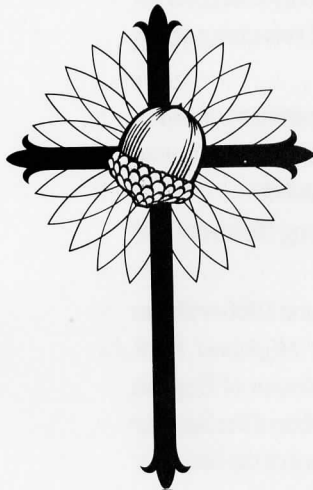
The trunk and limbs of the tree take the shape of the cross, emblematic of the existence of the church for the glorification of God.

The acorn, the symbol of growth, reminds us of a further dedication of our energies to the extension of God's kingdom.

The words give the theme of the anniversary year observance, "Golden Anniversary—Golden Opportunity." In addition, the emphasis for all worship, study and service will be "A Year of Extra Effort."¹⁶²

The glorious notes of "The Christmas Oratorio" by J. S. Bach heralded the approach of the 50th anniversary on December 3, 1965. Earlier in the year, Philip Baker

had succeeded C. E. McMeans as director of Music Ministries, and for this special evening service, he had invited Jane Marshall to conduct the Chancel Choir. Philip played the organ and the harpsichord, with Ann Petty as flute soloist. Vocal soloists were Mary Jane Dickson, Mrs. Lloyd Pfautsch, William Kreitzer, and Harry Vernon.



Golden Anniversary symbol



Phil Baker at the organ.

Churchwide Celebration of Golden Anniversary

"The past is but a foundation upon which to build the future," said Dr. William H. Dickinson as he launched the 50th anniversary year of observance on Sunday, January 3, 1966. "Golden Anniversary—Golden Opportunity" was the theme throughout the year as well as the title of a beautiful brochure prepared for all members. Its pages asked each member to acknowledge the call to purposeful living as a "people of God." It was a call to worship, to learn, to serve, and to share in the life and ministries of Highland Park Methodist Church.¹⁶³ It was a time of celebration, renewal, and service.

Anniversary celebrations were planned by a committee appointed by the Official Board. They were Chairmen James H. Stewart and General Robert J. Smith, with members Hubert Johnson, Powell Gibson, Raymond Cummins, Gordon Sibeck, Mrs. Jack Elliott, Mrs. Herbert Nash, Angus Wynne, Jr., James A. Russell,

Willard Chamberlin, Mrs. R. J Price, and Mrs. Percy Goyne.¹⁶⁴ The special events they planned highlighted the church's illustrious growth and service of the past. Memories and highlights of the year include:



Gen. Robert J. Smith

- The establishment of the Rejebian Holy Week Sermons with Rev William Steel, son of Dr. Marshall Steel, preaching the first in this long-lasting series (which still continues) which has so enriched our lives. The annual preaching series is a gift of the V Y Rejebian family

- The special Easter bulletin of 1966 was a cherished possession of many Highland Park families. The planning and design was carried out by Ray Cummins, Ayres Compton, Ralph Scott, Bill Newman, and W W "Bill" Bracken.

- The Music Ministry made a sound recording celebrating their musical heritage.

- A work of great significance to the church occurred in June 1966 with the publication of *Golden Prologue To The Future, A History of Highland Park Methodist Church*, by Doris Miller Johnson. Mrs. Johnson, a professor of English at SMU, was barely three years old when she was enrolled as a member of the Sunday School by her parents. Expressed with grace and charm, her account of the first fifty years of this church is a legacy without equal.

- In September another publication appeared, "Our Church, A History of Highland Park Methodist Church Written for Boys and Girls" Illustrated by the author, it was the innovative work of Rev Barbara Hart.

The climax of the year's observance came in November with several memorable events:

- A reception honoring charter members.

- A Sunday morning when former choir directors Elise Golden and F. L. Whittlesey, assisted by John Rejebian and Jean Kreitzer, returned to lead the congregation in a full hour dedicated to the great hymns and anthems of the past 50 years.

- The W H. Francis Memorial Sermons, first preached by Bishop Gerald Kennedy

- The culmination of the golden anniversary on November 27, when Dr. Marshall Steel returned to preach the sermon.



Doris Miller Johnson

The people of Highland Park Methodist Church celebrated their past in 1966 while their hearts and minds were firmly fixed on transforming into reality the legacy of faith and dedicated service inherited from the original founders—a legacy already redefined and reworded to meet the challenge of the future.

Sanctuary Study Renewed

Even as the 50th anniversary festivities began in January 1966, decisions concerning the future direction of the church were also being made. The Official Board elected a sanctuary building study committee composed of James H. Stewart, chairman, and members Sam Dickinson, R. C. Dunlap, Jr., Roy W Hill, L. B. Houston, Dr. Floyd Norman, Edward "Ed" W Rose, II, L. R. Strickland, and C. A. Tatum, Jr They were charged with the responsibility of making a study of the sanctuary needs, of employing such professional help as required, and of submitting their findings to the Official Board.

Fourteen months of investigation and consultation followed. They met with highly respected architects, engineers, and experts in the field of church architecture. It is particularly noteworthy that one stipulation made to these firms was that “the proposed architecture must harmonize with present Gothic structure.” Two firms were retained to draw up the preliminary proposal, and they presented plans showing a magnificent Gothic building.¹⁶⁵ Those who saw these preliminary drawings assumed that the final proposal would be of a similar design. It was not until shortly before the historic Church Conference of 1969 that the sanctuary building committee learned that the preliminary drawings were only a feasibility study, and that the architect would never have recommended the actual building of such a structure.¹⁶⁶

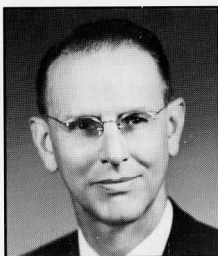
A comprehensive and detailed report was presented by the study committee to the Official Board on March 13, 1967. Their recommendations, which were presented in the form of answers to twelve questions that had claimed their attention most often, focused on the inadequacy of present seating capacity, the desired seating capacity of 1800-2200, and then focused on the question:

“Can the present sanctuary be renovated, enlarged and rearranged so that the recommended capacity would be available? Yes, but. no professional counsel at any time has offered the enlargement of the present sanctuary as a proper solution to our problem.” The key words here are “at any time,” for this statement was true of every previous study, formal and informal. The cost was estimated to be around \$3,000,000, but this cost was stated as a very tentative figure based on square feet alone.¹⁶⁷

The preliminary work had been completed. The Official Board adopted the report on April 10, 1967, with the understanding that the 1966 committee, having completed its responsibilities, was discharged. The Board then asked the district superintendent to call a special session of the quarterly conference for the purpose of constituting a sanctuary building committee, “the duties of which are to receive the report herewith adopted and to proceed.”¹⁶⁸

Sanctuary Building Committee Proceeds

By unanimous vote the Official Board approved the resolution establishing a sanctuary building committee on June 12, 1967. Dr. Dickinson prevailed upon Robert L. Dillard, Jr. to accept the chairmanship and in addition to Mr. Dillard, the Board elected the following voting members: Henry Akin, James Bailey, Martha Clark, O. Paul Corley, Mrs. W. H. Francis, Henry Gilchrist, R. Percy Goyne, George Gregerson, Ed Hilliard, Jack Lowe, Scott McDonald, Gene McElvaney, Loren Miller, Mrs. Herbert Nash, Albert D. Roberts, Jr., Mark Schooler, Ruth Score, Jack Spring, Bob Thomas, and Cedric Willson. The members of the previous building study committee, with the addition of Judge Clarence Guittard, were elected as advisory members. At this same meeting, subcommittees on architectural plans, interim worship facilities and financial plans were also formed.



Robert "Bob" Dillard

So began a journey that would end as a major watershed in the church's history. The handwriting on the wall came in the form of objections that had been raised to the sanctuary building project. At their first meeting on July 2, 1967, committee members were given three papers, one of which spoke to sixteen objections, each carefully analyzed. As Chairman Bob Dillard stated, “The worst

mistake we could make is to assume that there is substantial understanding. .or that there is an overwhelming consensus of opinion. While it is true that the Official Board has given its approval, we should not assume that this represents a cross section opinion within the congregation.”¹⁶⁹ His statement was prophetic, for the doubts raised in this list of objections went far deeper than the committee realized.

The sanctuary building committee’s deliberations started in the summer of 1967 when race riots of unprecedented scope and intensity affected over 100 cities across the United States. Dallas escaped serious disruptions through the cooperative efforts of black leaders and elected city officials, but the general unease was apparent throughout the city. The pastor's concern for the problems behind the race riots triggered a strongly worded sermon in which he pointed to our responsibilities as individuals and as a church to those in our midst who were less fortunate. In addition to the turmoil of the times, Dr Dickinson was getting mail from those who were unconvinced of the need for a new sanctuary, alerting him to the fact that he was not communicating the reasons which had led to the decision to build.

Dr Dickinson was convinced that the future of the church depended upon providing adequate facilities. Three different building committees over a period of ten years, as well as the Official Board, had arrived at the same conclusion. As the person who was ordained to lead the congregation and attract persons to Christ’s ministry, Bill Dickinson had committed himself to the project believing that it was part of God’s will for the church and for the city ¹⁷⁰

The Board was informed in March 1968 that three architectural firms had been named to develop the plans. Chief design architect was Uel C. Ramey of Wichita, Kansas, a nationally recognized church architect who had been recommended to the committee by Dr James F White, a member of the faculty at Perkins School of Theology (Dr White had served as consultant to the 1966 building study committee.) Working with Mr Ramey were the two Dallas firms who had drawn up the preliminary proposals for the 1966 committee, Pierce-Lacey and Associates and Bennett & Bennett.

The positive feeling of accomplishment that came with knowing the architectural plans were underway lasted only a few weeks. This time the shock of disapproval came from SMU in the form of an open letter to the entire congregation, timed to coincide with the great uniting conference of 1968, signed by members of the Student Social Action Committee and a Group of Concerned Seminarians, Perkins School of Theology. This letter was distributed twice, the first time in April 1968, and again during Minister’s Week in February 1969, within days of the conference called to decide the issue.

The Church Becomes “United”

The historic service of union that joined The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church was held in Dallas, April 21-May 4, 1968, on the campus of Southern Methodist University. From this great convocation came a new church, The United Methodist Church. Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke, in a “state of the church” address, issued a call to action to meet the crisis of the cities and a plea for the church’s voice to continue to ring out against war.¹⁷¹ The Highland Park staff put aside their regular duties to help host the Dallas conference and make the occasion as smooth and meaningful as possible.



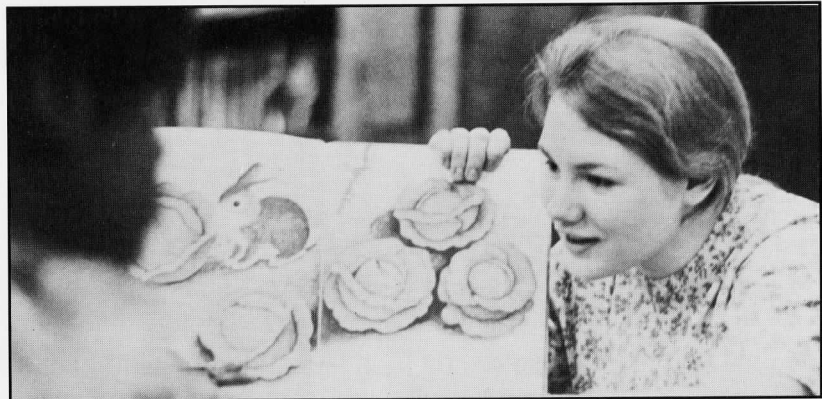
Symbol of the 1968 Uniting Conference

“They That Wait Upon The Lord . . .”

Against the background of racial tensions and a war in Vietnam, the spiritual life of the church seemed to strengthen as if to meet the threat of conflict and evil. Still ahead lay a big decision about the sanctuary, but God was at work in the personal lives of the people of Highland Park, inspiring them to give of themselves in service and mission. The benevolences for special Christmas and Easter offerings and from adult classes, Womens Society, Men’s Club, as well as individual gifts and miscellaneous offerings in 1967 amounted to two thirds of the benevolent budget, bringing the total to over \$328,000.¹⁷²

In addition to the challenge of the message, the congregation found unity and constancy in the services of worship. One constant point of excellence in each worship service was the music, selected and conducted with great sensitivity by Philip Baker. At the organ was John Erickson, one of the most gifted musicians to be employed by the church, gifted not only as an organist, but as a composer ¹⁷³ The flower arrangements on the altar were another constant element in the worship services. In a ceremony on September 9, 1968, the Official Board paused to honor Mr and Mrs. L. L. Douglas and Miss Dorothy Douglas, owners of the Flower-A-Day Shop who had given the flower arrangements for the sanctuary for 35 years.¹⁷⁴

Often the young people of the church inspire the congregation and lead the way to deeper commitment. In an effort to extend its ministry to a point of critical need in 1967, the Youth Department undertook a massive tutoring project, eventually taking it to the children of South Dallas. During their study of *The Poor in an Age of Abundance*, they visited areas in South and West Dallas.



Tutoring in south Dallas as part of "Project Friend"

The Time of Decision Approaches

Under the leadership of Dr. Floyd Norman, Chairman of the Official Board, steps were taken to keep the congregation fully informed about the building program. A series of “Building Program Notes” began in the fall and continued through February 5, 1969, just prior to the decision. In addition, a special presentation on the adequacy of worship facilities was prepared and scheduled for four showings in the fall.

Working to insure that all members of the congregation had a voice in the matter, the church retained a research firm to conduct a survey. It sampled, among other things, the congregation’s awareness of the building plans, size, estimated cost, and whether they understood that the final decision on the matter would be determined by their votes. The responses indicated confusion about the purpose of the questionnaire itself. On January 10, 1969, only one month before the final vote





An outside view of the proposed sanctuary with the rest of the building.

would take place, the sanctuary building committee, chaired by Robert L. Dillard, Jr., announced that plans for a new sanctuary had been completed.

Quickly meetings were scheduled on January 19, 22, 29, and February 2 and 9, so that all interested members would have an opportunity to inspect the architectural plans and drawings. Members of the staff, the building committee, and the architects explained the plans to the groups, using large detailed drawings and a brochure, "To Worship Together." Church members attended in large numbers. No one better described their reaction than Ruth MarDock: "They reacted with dismay, excitement, wonder, and chagrin. No one was indifferent."

An explanation of the structural defects in the 1927 sanctuary was an important element in these meetings. Thinking that they were making the best possible case for building a new sanctuary, the speakers detailed the deficiencies of the foundation, the deterioration of the tower to the point where bells could not be rung or stairs climbed, the inadequacy of the air-conditioning, the lack of TV facilities, and the need for more seating.

A picture of the plan quickly reached the local newspapers and on Monday, January 20, 1969, members opened the *Dallas Morning News* to see the headline, "\$5 Million Sanctuary Set." SMU students picketed the church on Sunday mornings, carrying placards protesting the huge expenditure for a building rather than for outreach to others.

One of the most telling signs pointing to future rejection is summed up in the report of R. Percy Goynes, chairman of the feasibility subcommittee, which he wrote it in the form of a letter to his pastor on January 22, 1969.

Dear Bill,

The proposed sanctuary building program has been a major source of mental agitation to me for several months. This has been occasioned for several reasons: My personal love and admiration for you and a desire to be of help in accomplishing those things, which in your judgment, are good for the congregation of today and particularly for the congregation of tomorrow.

.Here are some of the facts that lead me to believe our present program to build a new sanctuary is not feasible.

- 1. There is a noticeable and obvious lack of enthusiasm.*
- 2. From those who profess to be enthusiastic, there is a noticeable and obvious lack of sacrificial pledging*
- 3. We are dealing with a construction and labor market which is unpredictable and frightens some of the most knowledgeable men in the business.*
- 4. In general, the climate, the mood and the attitude of many of our thoughtful people is, to say the least, not encouraging .Bill, if this fails, we should have an alternate plan to go to."*¹⁷⁶



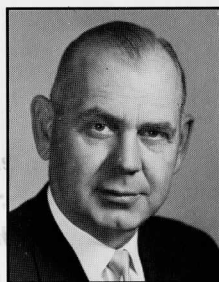
Percy Goynes

The two issues that emerged as major points of controversy among members were 1) the worship needs of the church (undoubtedly, there was great concern about its cost), and 2) the architecture. The power of the pictured image would never be more graphically demonstrated than in this attempt to build a new sanctuary. Comments about the modern architecture seen in the brochure were, more often than not, derogatory

The Tower carried articles from Dr. Dickinson explaining the crucial nature of the decision and urging attendance at the church conference on February 10, 1969. The various communications that had been sent to members implied that to vote against the building program was to vote against the future. Dr. Dickinson left no doubt that to him the new structure heralded a “renewal of faith in a time of great indecision in the world.” Yet he always listened to opposing views, and as the fateful day approached, he added, “We want everyone to come to the Church Conference and vote his convictions, regardless of whether they are for or against the building program.”¹⁷⁷

Shortly before the church conference date, the youth department held their own mock conference. Under the leadership of staff members Fred Kandeler, Bill Smith, Bill Bulay, and superintendents John Lewis and Loren Miller, about 150 young people attended. After a “cloud of questions, answers, and statements,” their vote was very close—52 for, 48 against, a surprising result for a group traditionally open to the type of challenge a new sanctuary would require.¹⁷⁸

Of all the people who were on the cutting edge of this tremendous endeavor, the staff was in the most difficult position of all, for they were effectively caught in between. No matter what their private opinions, there is no permanent record of how each one felt. To the church and outside world, they united as a team behind their pastor, and the vitality of the church’s programs and its ministries indicate that they were a tower of strength. It was soon apparent that they would be called upon to shoulder an even more serious burden when, three days before the church conference on February 7, Bill Dickinson suffered a heart attack.



Bill Dickinson

The 1969 Church Conference: The Fourth Turning Point

The Church Conference convened in a packed church. Ironically, the sanctuary was too small. The crowd overflowed into the narthex and hallways, out in every direction. District Superintendent Bob Middlebrooks presided with careful and deliberate skill. Reverend Kenneth Dickson, who had been named acting pastor after Dr. Dickinson’s heart attack, gave the keynote address in which he advocated building the new sanctuary, thus giving his support to the views and decisions of the senior pastor and the church leaders who had made the decision.

Members were given full opportunity to speak, pro and con, by means of microphones placed throughout the sanctuary. In every way the Church Conference was a model of the democratic process. “After more than two hours of debate, Building Committee Chairman Robert L. Dillard, Jr. summed up the pro arguments, urging support for the proposal lest Highland Park Church show Methodism that it ‘is for the status quo and no change.’ A rustle of No’s produced the only discordant note of the evening. Eventually the vote was ordered.”¹⁷⁹ John Biggers and Fred Kandeler tallied the votes in the church balcony while the congregation sang hymns.¹⁸⁰

One by one, several took the floor to call for a rebirth of the church “no matter what the outcome.” Among them was Ermance Rejebian, who rose to state her belief that the church would emerge triumphant. She called for a renewed dedication.¹⁸¹ Then the announcement came — the proposed new sanctuary had been decisively voted down, 1,236 to 504.

The final word at the conference came from Acting Pastor Ken Dickson. “It was a thrill to see you take us seriously when we ministers talk about the priesthood



The proposed sanctuary interior.



The existing interior in 1969.

of all believers. We have heard another word tonight. Let us then get on with the task of the church, with a new understanding of mission, with new modes of worship, and with a new understanding of each other, and let us accomplish the work of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁸²

The Aftermath

In the immediate aftermath, each of the leading proponents faced the problem of working through his feelings of failure and defeat. Keenly disappointed by the decisive turn of events, both Pastor Bill Dickinson and Chairman Bob Dillard accepted the decision of the congregation. In the best democratic tradition, both affirmed, "It is decided; now let us as a congregation go forward, and bind up the wounds."



Looking toward the balcony.

Henry Gilchrist published a scholarly tract on the defeat of the plan in which he presented a reasoned analysis examining, “Why Did It Happen? What Does It Mean? What Should We Do Now?” Regarding why it happened, Mr Gilchrist spelled out the feeling of the congregation that they were simply expected to rubber stamp what had been decided by the leadership already. And he reiterated that the major shift in design from Gothic to contemporary was a shocking surprise. Basic to why it happened, however, was the lack of any real demand or support for the building from the congregation itself.¹⁸³

Today the most repeated statement regarding the Church Conference of 1969 affirms the belief that divine guidance was at work in the decision of the congregation. From the vantage point of twenty-two years, there is an important message underlying those events. The people of Highland Park United Methodist Church felt involved enough in their church and its future to speak up. The great tradition of service and ministry that characterized the early years of the church was still at work in this Church Conference.

It would have been so easy to acquiesce, to sit idly by, then let someone else assume the huge burden of cost. Charter member Edwin D. Mouzon was asked, “Do you feel the event hurt the church, or do you think it brought it together?” He replied, “Well, I think the fact was, they were together *all* the time!”¹⁸⁴

In the two decades of ministry that have transpired since then, it is evident that this turning point was not a turning *away* from something. It was a turning *toward* something—redefinition, renewal and rededication. It was clear that the gap between congregation and leadership would have to be closed. The sharp differences of opinion would not be easily erased; but once the decision had been made, a healing process began. There came a surge of determination to view and solve the problems of the future in new ways.

Church Objectives Clarified

The weeks following the church conference were spent in reflection and re-evaluation, the purpose of which is best described in a letter to church members on March 21, 1969, from Robert B. "Bob" Cullum.

We are writing to you because we need your help. Since the Church Conference in February .the official leadership of our Church—the pastor's office, the Executive Committee of the Board, the appropriate standing committees—has been engaged in intensive introspection of our mission and our ministries. This soul-search has evolved more questions than answers.

The Executive Committee of our Board has appointed a Church Objectives Committee of representative members of our congregation and charged us to hear directly from you in whatever ways you wish to converse—by mail, person-to-person, in small groups or in large. To list your questions, to pose questions and to record the consensus of your thinking and your suggestions about our Church is our goal.

.Give us one thought or a dozen—trivial or profound, your joy in the Church or your annoyance with it. You will help us to get a sense of direction.¹⁸⁵

Working with Bob Cullum on the Church Objectives Committee were Felix McKnight, Jack Lowe, Henry Gilchrist, V Y Rejebian, Max Ligon, Mark Schooler, Ed Rose, Bob Dunlap, John French, Lee Gilbert, Marilyn Bragg, Mrs. Fay Brown, and Mrs. Walter Abbey

Over 1,300 members returned the church objectives survey. The level of feeling about the material covered was very high. From the survey a ranking of the church's goals developed, among them to improve the effectiveness of its ministry to youth, and to repair and remodel the present buildings and physical facilities¹⁴⁶ Mr. Cullum's subsequent report to the Board included many recommendations and observations, all of which originated from congregational responses:

- The committee recognized the diversity of the large Highland Park congregation as a collection of many smaller congregations and overlapping groups, differing as to size, age, sex, and interests. The committee recommended multiple programs to meet the many different needs.

- They also recommended various forms of worship services, at different times and places and even at the same time in different places. They were at a loss in suggesting a way to reach and hold young adults who should be active in the church. They expressed a desire for better dialogue and communication between those in official positions and the congregation, and were particularly interested in finding some way to involve more members of the congregation in the programs of the church. After a meeting with the staff, they were impressed by the aspirations and plans of their professional leadership.

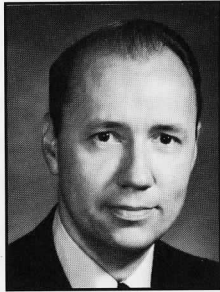
Although this report was never published, except in the sense that it was submitted in writing to the Administrative Board, it served as a basis for rethinking and reshaping the church's program ministries. In the years since, many of its recommendations have become reality in this congregation's work and witness.¹⁸⁷

Dr. Dickinson returned briefly to his office on March 14, his spirits lifted by

the good wishes and prayerful concerns that had poured into his hospital room and into his home as he recuperated. But as acting pastor, it fell to Kenneth Dickson to shoulder the major responsibilities of the church during the succeeding months of serious readjustment within the congregation. He lightened Bill's load and shielded him from many of the resentments and complaints that surfaced during the time of the church objectives survey

Refining the Staff

Dr Dickinson began immediately to implement the findings of the church objectives committee. He rethought what was needed to complete his staff organization. The staff members whose plans and aspirations would shape the future were pictured in a pamphlet which listed their positions, and the corresponding lay council members who worked with each one. It was one of the first efforts by Rev Ed Deane, newly appointed as director of communications in June of 1969, to bring staff and congregation a little closer. Dr Dickinson also brought Rev Joe Strother, who had retired from the Texas Conference, on the staff to recruit new members.



Edmund Deane

On the staff as the new conference year began in June were Dr William H. Dickinson, Rev Barbara Hart, Elvin Geiser, Rev Edmund Deane, Philip Baker, John Erickson, Rev Kenneth Dickson, Dr E. B. Bowen, Rev Leslie Seymour, Rev Joe Strother, Rev Roger Whiddon, Rev Harold Reynolds, Mrs. Lillian Sills, Mrs. Frances Smyth, Rev Fred Kandeler, Rev Charles Allen, and Crawford Whaley¹⁸⁸

Dickinson Place A New Area Of Ministry

The sanctuary building issue behind him, Dr Dickinson turned his attention to the growing problems of ministry and housing for the aging. The Dorchester House project, later named Dickinson Place in his honor, got underway in 1970 when A. C. Moser and Claiborne Johnson presented a proposal to buy an eleven-story residential hotel near Baylor Hospital. They proposed that Highland Park operate the building, providing 165 apartment units for elderly and low income persons as well as a staff for this new ministry. Loan funding of 100% from the Federal Housing

Dickinson Place



Administration made the purchase feasible for the church as sponsor. After extensive review, the church approved the plan and received FHA loan approval. Chairman Jack Lowe recommended to the Administrative Board at their meeting in January, 1971, that they authorize the Highland Park Methodist Foundation, Inc. to enter into an agreement to purchase the property and begin a total renovation.

Located near Baylor Hospital, the building project included not just adequate housing, but also developing ministry possibilities with the residents there, both through the resident manager and staff as well as interaction from members of our congregation. The task force that researched the project and its possibilities for the church consisted of Jack Spring, chairman, Bob Gwinn and Gibby Ledyard. This kind of ministry project was a new direction for our congregation, and because of its size, was a unique venture for any local congregation to become involved in. It was clearly a leap of faith that the congregation could not only initiate but also sustain through the years a ministry with these ever-changing residents who for the most part were not otherwise connected to our church.

While Bill Dickinson did not yet have the answer to housing his own worshipping congregation, he was aware that affordable housing for senior citizens in Dallas was a growing problem. Through federal funding the Dorchester House project was a unique opportunity for the church to break new ground in helping to solve this basic human need. At this point the congregation needed to look beyond themselves and reaffirm the church's basic mission. They needed to move ahead and to grasp in a fresh way the high calling to which they had been summoned as a People of God. Now was a time of rebuilding, of regenerating, and as a church proclaiming in new ways the redeeming love that God has for all people.



BEARING THE FRUITS OF FAITH

*Remain united to me,
and I will remain united to you.
A branch cannot bear fruit by itself;
it can do so only if it remains in the vine
In the same way you cannot bear fruit
unless you remain in me*

John 15 14

The decisive 1969 vote to not build a new sanctuary forced upon the whole church a time of resettling, healing and reevaluation of the direction and mission of Highland Park. For the first time in a number of years, the whole congregation was drawn into this reconsideration, since everyone had been a part of the vote in the fateful decision.

From that moment on, the church as a body had a new and urgent agenda — to find out what this congregation, now grown to over 8,000 members, was about. Both in nurturing the membership within its own walls, and also needing a new vision about its mission out in the world, this was an agenda that could not wait.

In an effort to respond quickly, the church leadership immediately formed a Church Objectives Committee. The task of this committee was to poll the total congregation and get a sense of the priorities of the average church members across the membership. “Business as usual” for the church was no longer acceptable; the sanctuary vote had spoken loudly to the leadership that the congregation’s mind was not being adequately heard.

Church Objectives Give New Direction

Open meetings were held, mailings were sent, and every means of listening to the congregation’s response was used. By the October following the big February

vote, the Church Objectives Committee had tallied its findings, and the ways to implement these priorities were soon thereafter forthcoming. The need for change in the Youth Department was listed as a top priority, along with remodeling of the present structure. Other concerns included more program options for adults, better communication of the church's programs and decisions, communion in the sanctuary and additional worship options, lay involvement in pastoral care, examination of the Methodist curriculum and teacher preparation in elementary and younger children, and instilling personal interest and involvement in mission and outreach projects.

The results of the Church Objectives Committee Survey evaluated, the church leadership was ready to swing into action. By February, 1970, a year after the vote, programs and ministry were coming forth that reflected the church's response to the survey's findings. One of the first things to happen was the return of the Easter service from Moody Coliseum to the sanctuary. For thirteen years Easter at Moody had been done there as a "temporary measure," until a new larger sanctuary might be built. Now, in accordance with the vote to continue using the existing sanctuary, the service was moved back.

Associated with this decision was a heightened awareness that there were several sub-congregations existing within our total congregation. Thus it was decided to have multiple services on Easter morning to take care of the crowds, plus restore the regular church school sessions on Easter Day at both 9:30 and 11:00. Plans were also made for multiple services on Sundays thereafter, in order to appeal to the different worship preferences of our members, and to offer the people different times to worship, in light of the limited seating. Also the practice of serving communion in the sanctuary was instituted on the first Sunday of each month. The multiple service approach which was set at this time would serve well in the coming decades.

Though the church's worship service had been on radio and television for some time, the decade of the 70s brought yet another new avenue of communication outreach for the church. When Elizabeth Criswell moved to Dallas and joined our congregation, she volunteered to interpret live our televised worship service to the deaf viewers in the Dallas area and add a televised worship opportunity to over 30,000 new viewers! After working out the details with the station, Ed Deane coordinated this "first of its kind" worship broadcast. This outreach ministry still continues today because of the untiring devotion of Elizabeth and others who help her sign the service to our deaf viewers.



Elizabeth Criswell

Prior to 1969, worship services had been scheduled at 8:30 in Cox Chapel with communion each Sunday, and 9:30 and 11:00 worship services in the sanctuary. Thirteen months after the vote, an additional service was added in Cox Chapel at the same time as one of the main sanctuary services. This concurrent service was an attempt to respond to the needs of one of the largest sub-congregations within the total membership, in particular, younger persons and those associated with the SMU campus. It began in April, 1970, and was called a "contemporary" service. It was led by Dr. Grady Hardin, who was then professor of preaching at Perkins School of Theology, and John Erickson, who was responsible for the music leadership.

Another avenue of response to the survey took the form of using the church's Lake Sharon camping facility to work with inner city children. As this project got underway, Highland Park and the Tejas Girl Scout Council cooperated in providing



Mission Camp Counselors
at Lake Sharon

the professional staff for the camp. After the first couple of years, it was decided that the church would recruit its own camp leadership personnel, plan the activities, and raise camp scholarship money from congregational special gifts, since funding it was not a budgeted item.

Another manifestation of the reformation that was going on was the written formulation of the stated purpose of the church. After several months of working with the staff and lay leadership in perfecting it, Dr Dickinson announced the statement as a one-sentence “working philosophy” for Highland Park, against which proposed programs were to be measured. It read, “The purpose of the church is to re-present the redeeming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ by responsibly meeting human needs through words and action under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” This statement served as the guiding rule for reevaluating the existing program ministries of the church, as well as new program proposals for several years, as new directions for the church’s ministry were explored.

Restoration Begins

The survey had confirmed that there was a general recognition in the congregation that even though building a new sanctuary had been voted down, that general repair of the existing 1927 facility was necessary and overdue. By August, 1970, remodeling had been approved and was underway in the oldest wing of the Education Building, which had been built along with the original sanctuary. The church offices were totally renovated, including the business office, communications office, senior pastor’s office suite, education offices, pastoral care and music suites. A new, second elevator was installed; and a number of the classrooms were recarpeted and painted, and new chairs being placed in Great Hall. This six-month long renewal of the outdated office space was the first in a series of renovations to come to the church plant, which would finally restore the total building to its current standards. It was at this time that the resident Bishop and District Superintendent were invited to move their offices from the Cokesbury building downtown to the third floor of our remodeled Education Building, where they remain today.

In October, 1970, the Administrative Board passed a new financial policy for underwriting the church’s operating budget. Based on the spiritual recommitment of the congregation rather than normal business guidelines, it was proposed that each coming year’s possible ministry opportunities be presented to the membership. Upon receipt of their pledges for the upcoming year, it would then be decided by the church leadership which of the many possibilities for ministry would be engaged for the coming year. This would keep the church from over-committing funds to too many benevolent causes outside the sustaining support needed to run the church.

By the end of that year, the renovation of Dorchester House (which is now Dickinson Place) was being considered by the Administrative Board as one new direction for the church’s outreach ministry. The facility would provide housing and ministry to the elderly and those who qualified for the low cost housing.

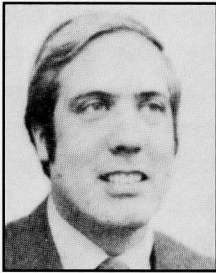
Other new ministry programs were coming forth from almost all areas. To enhance the fellowship time of church members and visitors on Sunday mornings, Coffee Time was begun in Storm Lounge. A “Healthy Family” study was being concluded by the Timberlawn Foundation, under the direction of Dr. Jerry Lewis. A good friend of Bill Dickinson, Jerry Lewis had received Bill’s cooperation in recruiting a number of families from our congregation to participate in the study.

This unique approach aimed at pinpointing what makes a family setting whole and well, rather than examining the situations of troubled families.

In order to pursue visitors and prospects more aggressively, weekly attendance registration in the worship services was begun. At the same time, there was a concerted effort to clean the church rolls of members' names who could no longer be contacted (a three-year process according to the United Methodist Discipline procedures). All the while, Joe Strother was recruiting new members at an amazing rate. New Member Orientation classes were established to handle those joining, and help them to understand the nature and background of our church and its ministries, and to assimilate them into the mainstream of active church life.

Now that it was clear that the present sanctuary would stay, the leadership analyzed what was needed to bring the forty year structure up to standard for the future. The trustees heard many suggested improvements from across the congregation, and turned them over to an architect to incorporate the best into a remodeling plan. Other options were also listed, which were to be voted on separately, including enclosing the garden area as a fellowship room, creating an east cloister garden, and providing an enclosed drive-through area on the east side of the sanctuary. But when the December 1971 Charge Conference came, only the sanctuary renovation was approved. When the sanctuary remodeling construction started soon thereafter, the sanctuary worship services were moved to the Great Hall.

Other plans were underway to extend the church's ministry into new areas. Richard (Rick) Bell was brought on staff to develop a new recreation and free-time ministry for the whole congregation as an alternative to many of the disturbing things that were happening to youth and families in society. The development of this ministry led to the hiring of college-age summer staff who provided the leadership for the Lake Sharon camping program. A reworking of the lower floor of the Activities Building allowed for "The Corner" where youth could spend their leisure time. Organic gardening and camping trips were among the many options offered.



Rick Bell

A new drama group was also forming at this time, which took the name, "Celebration Players." Under the direction of Music and the Arts, they provided still another outlet for the creative fervor that was in the air, presenting a number of productions for the congregations to enjoy and in which to be involved.

The richness and diversity of all these new activities called for coordination and a sense of unity. With Labor Day and Promotion Sunday in 1971, Ed Deane published an all-program brochure entitled "Today Is The First Day..." outlining the many facets of the church's total ministry and how every member could be involved, as well as staff responsibilities and other information. It was the first attempt by the Communications Department to give every member an overall picture of the church and its ministries, and invite their immediate response and involvement. Another edition followed the next fall, called "Our Church."

The encouragement of the full membership's participation came in a more structured way through the creation of a new Leadership Development department of voluntarism, and information gathering across the full membership on a form called "Opportunities for Christian Service" (OCS). The OCS form was the first church-wide effort to update the church's records, and also to determine the members' skills, interests, and talents, enlisting them in Christian service, whether within the church's programs or in the community. John Lewis of our congregation

gave significant leadership to this endeavor

As the summer of 1972 unfolded, the congregation was stunned by the sudden retirement of Dr Dickinson as senior pastor in mid-July. He announced his retirement from Highland Park in order to become chaplain at Timberlawn Hospital and administrator of Timberlawn Foundation. His subsequent illness and finally his death the following October was a personal loss to so many, not only within the congregation. Across the city and area many had been blessed by his vital ministry both as pastor and friend. His final sermon topic, "Press on to God's High Calling," reflected his desire for the Highland Park congregation to realize its full potential in meeting human needs in Christ's name and spirit.

Leighton Farrell Appointed Pastor

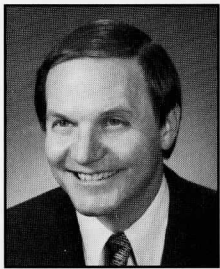
Bill's senior associate, Ken Dickson, ably filled the administrative role of Interim Pastor until the Bishop's Cabinet could meet and a new pastor could be assigned to lead Highland Park. Effective September 1, 1972, Dr Leighton K. Farrell was appointed as the pastor. Moving from the fast-growing First Methodist Church in Richardson, Dr Farrell was well acquainted with keeping a church on the move, growing in participation, membership and budget.

Dr Farrell was well known for his preaching abilities, and the worship services in Great Hall were packed. Overflow crowds participated by closed circuit television from downstairs in the Activities Building. Only weeks after he came, he began an additional service of worship at 8:30 in Cox Chapel, and preached three times each Sunday, as he had done at Richardson.

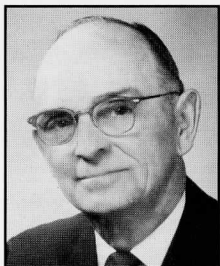
Dr Farrell had a unique ability to remember individuals' names, and quickly got acquainted with not only the Highland Park members, but visitors in worship as well. Many visitors returned again and again to hear this vital young preacher, and soon joined the ever-expanding membership.

Not one to let the momentum of this revived congregation slip, Dr Farrell was soon reshaping the staff to carry forth the broadening program ministries and assimilate the new members. Frank Warden joined the staff as minister of Evangelism to work with Joe Strother in the recruitment and assimilation of new members. Joe had come to Highland Park upon his retirement from the Texas Conference, where he had last pastored a church in Houston. Up to retirement in 1969, he had received into the Methodist Church 5556 members during his ministry. In his 19 years in evangelism at Highland Park following retirement, he received an amazing 11,339 new members! Joe Strother in his 61 years of ministry has been a part in the joining of 16,895 persons into the Methodist Church, which is probably more than any other Methodist preacher, past or present! Joe always claimed it was easy, giving credit to the wonderful preaching and strong program at Highland Park, but anyone who knows Joe also is aware that he would never take "no" for an answer either! What an incredible salesman for God and for our church!

Frank Warden concentrated on assimilating all the new members that Joe was receiving, with new member orientation dinners, Methodism training, completing the church records, and basic Bible study (open to all members). In this way, persons could quickly become acquainted and active in the church's life and work, whatever their background. Frank's interest in basic Bible literacy for all Christians gradually grew into what has become Trinity Bible Studies, a non-denominational Bible study series that is used around the world today.



Leighton Farrell



Joe Strother

The first Sunday back in the sanctuary following the renovation of the sanctuary facilities was July 8, 1973. Gordon Sibeck and Associates served as the architect, and Hal Dyer Construction Company did the actual remodeling work. The dedication service was held the following September. Changes included in the remodeling were the moving of the chancel and pulpit area forward to the center of the crossing, the addition of a small antiphonal organ in the balcony (which was used until the main organ was completed), a new main organ which was installed a few months later above the choir area, an enclosed sound room in the balcony below the antiphonal balcony organ pipes, and pews, choir and wood screens that all display a similar design theme. Other features in the modernization included reworking the heating and air conditioning, rewiring and improving the lighting, improving the acoustics, replacement of the pews, increased choir seating capacity, the addition of restroom facilities and construction of a first-aid room, as well as updating the television and sound facilities.

The addition of the symbolic hand-carved modesty panels facing the chancel area interpret the rich history and mission of our church. These unique walnut panels were carved by Rodney and Sue Hill of Bryan, Texas. The book, *Signs of His Presence*, by Doris Dowdell Moore was published in 1975 to explain the symbolism in the panel carvings and the rest of the remodeled sanctuary.

Crowning the sanctuary improvements that were made are two magnificent memorial musical instruments. The first is the new pipe organ, which was dedicated

The remodeled sanctuary



on May 12, 1974. It was given by Mrs. Ruby Prince in loving memory of her mother, Virginia C. Jennings, and her sister, Willie E. Mitchell. The instrument, built by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut, has six divisions, 113 ranks, 85 stops, 96 voices and 6,323 pipes which range from 32' to 1/8" in speaking length. There are two consoles controlling the instrument: a large, four-manual console in the chancel area which plays the entire instrument, and a small two-manual and pedal console in the balcony which plays only the division in the gallery. The stops on the instrument afford the player an extremely wide range of color and volume, from almost inaudible to a magnificent sound which fills the entire room.

The carillon bells are ready to install.



A decade later, in 1984, the Porter Memorial Carillon was given to the church by Rufus C. “Buddy” Porter and his sister, Alicia Washam, in loving memory of their parents, Loula Lee Porter, Ralph A. Porter and Lena Kay Porter. One of the finest carillons anywhere in the world, this instrument in our bell tower was cast by the Paccard Foundry in Annecy, France, the premier foundry for these bells for the last two centuries. Our instrument contains 48 bells, with the largest bell weighing just over two and a half tons, and the smallest being 26 pounds. The instrument is played from a manual and pedal clavier in the room just below the bell chamber, which members can visit in order to watch the bells being played. There is also a practice clavier in a second room, just below this one.

New Strategies of Ministry

When Dr. Farrell analyzed the demographics of his new congregation, he found that he needed to encourage singles and young families to become a part of the congregation to bring more young adults into the current membership. He promoted the growth of the Child Development Program, which by offering through-the-week child care and classes for preschool age children, could attract young families. The program was designed for children who were two years through Kindergarten age that needed a half-day or all-day learning experiences while their parents were at work.

Dr. Farrell also gave additional resources to developing new singles classes, and assigned extra staff to give their energies to expanding this singles ministry. He also encouraged the congregation’s concern in updating the aging church plant. With the renovation of the Educational Building already completed and the sanctuary remodeling done, Dr. Farrell extended their initial interest in renewing the church’s physical plant across a decade of improvements to other areas of the building and grounds.

A new organ for Cox Chapel had been commissioned in 1970, to be installed in the rear of Cox Chapel with a small balcony built to accommodate it. When Cox

Chapel was built in 1950, only a Baldwin electronic organ had been installed, but it had proved unsuitable. The new organ was a three division instrument of 24 stops, 32 ranks, built by the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company in Boston, and is considered to be one of the finer mechanical action (tracker) instruments in this part of the country

Cox Chapel organ



Soon thereafter Dr. Farrell initiated the remodeling of the Activities Building, including Great Hall, the stage area, Tyndale Lounge, Coverdale and the Sun Room on the second floor, Wyclif Lounge, office space, the ramp enclosure, and Reynolds Room downstairs, and made the third floor rooms into classrooms. In 1981 the kitchen in the Activities Building was completely redone. It had served for three decades, and the demands upon it increased with the growing congregation and more scheduled activities. An elevator was installed in 1989 through a special lay drive to finance it, and a major gift from Dorothy and George Irwin.

The next large renewal of the church facility was undertaken in 1977. The Landscape-Garden Project included many facets of improvement to the parking, grounds and facilities. The committee, chaired by Henry Gilchrist, brought a comprehensive report of suggested areas of improvement, both in beauty and

The new playgrounds were built for the physical skills of each age group.



function. New playgrounds west and north of Cox Chapel were constructed for the CDP children, the traffic flow improved, new outside lighting installed, the church's parking lots reworked and repaved, the sanctuary garden replanted and landscaped, flagstone walks installed, and the other grounds around the church renewed and replanted, along with lawn sprinklers installed.

The first all-new building facility completed under Dr. Farrell's administration was the Dallas and Virginia Biggers Family Activities Center, which provided additional meeting rooms, a gymnasium, and a covered parking area. The landscaping for the Biggers Building was made possible by a gift from Dorothy and Bob Cullum. As the Biggers Building was being completed in 1983, attention turned to remodeling Cox Chapel, which included repainting, refinishing of the pews, improving the sound system, a new parquet floor, and renewal of the altar area. Extensive remodeling was also done to Lake Sharon in almost every area of the camp. Dr. Farrell and many lay persons have worked long and hard renewing the facilities of this great church in order to maximize their use now and well into the future.

Cox Chapel interior remodeling included repainting, refinishing of the pews, improving the sound system, a new parquet floor, and renewal of the altar area.





Maple Lawn Apartments

Highland Park was also busy helping the mission outreach in the community both with volunteers and sustaining funding. The forty-unit Maple Lawn Apartment Complex and Service Center at Cedar Springs and Crestview was opening for occupancy for the first time. The complex was designed to be a ministry to single working parents, featuring quarters for daycare of infants and preschool children, as well as before and after school care for older children. Norma Meyer was responsible for the ministry and counseling service there. The complex was divided into two sections of twenty apartments each, with the Kenneth Pope Chapel in between. It also housed the headquarters for Contact Dallas telephone ministry at that time. Don Learner later took over the administration of this ministry

By mid-July of 1973 a new cassette tape ministry had been launched, offering Dr Farrell's sermons, which were recorded each Sunday and used in the church's radio ministry as well. These audio tapes were used for hospital and homebound visitation, and were available through the church library for those who missed the worship service.

As 1973 drew to a close, a new Council on Ministries structure was announced. The adopted structure for 1974 was organized in the Work Areas of fellowship, education, evangelism, outreach, congregational concerns, outreach projects, stewardship, worship, and music and the arts. Age level councils completed the COM structure. On December 10 of that year Highland Park organized its Blood Bank Club in cooperation with Wadley Blood Bank, when 79 persons each donated a pint of blood. The Club's aim was to make a supply of blood available to those members in the hospital with special needs. Through the years the Blood Bank has become still another means of outreach and caring between members.

On March 3, 1974, the sacrament of Holy Communion was first celebrated in the newly remodeled sanctuary. The congregation could now come forward to the three-sided altar area to kneel and receive the elements of communion, rather than receiving them in the pews as they had done previously. Dr Nuell Crain, brother of Lacy Crain of our congregation, joined the pastoral care staff, having just retired from active ministry in the Oklahoma Conference.

Outreach Ministries

The summer of 1974 brought the beginning of the first year of four week-long Mission Camps at Lake Sharon, providing camping experiences for 240 children from the inner city areas of Dallas, along with the children from our church. Meanwhile our youth were traveling to Appalachia to perform a unique service project, working with individual families in the repair and rebuilding of their homes.

The Dickinson Place Bazaar began as an annual event soon after this new housing facility opened, with Highland Park members helping by contributing supplies which were needed for the residents to make different items for sale. In addition, a nurse from our congregation volunteered to help residents. Other volunteers also stepped forward to work in the office there, and to provide occasional transportation for the residents.



Hand craftsmanship is found in each item.

The church's outreach in Bolivia was coming to fruition with the completion of the construction of the pediatric wing of the Methodist La Paz Hospital, with Dr Lindsay Smith directing the project. The search was on for a Bolivian administrator who would complete the staff of native Bolivian doctors. Excerpts from his letters to the Highland Park congregation indicated that 80% of the 96 beds in the clinic were

already full, and the new wing was sorely needed. Lindsay and Ann Smith had gone to Bolivia four years earlier as medical missionaries when only 35% of the then 65 bed hospital was occupied.

In the decade of the 80s Highland Park concentrated its overseas mission outreach in Haiti and Alaska. The Medical Mission teams that have gone twice a year to Haiti have returned the sight of literally thousands of Haitians who otherwise would have had no hope. The singles have spent considerable time in Alaska renewing the campus of Alaska University and other missions in that state.

Church Growth

Highland Park in the 70s and 80s was growing at a surprising rate, and adjustments had to be made to handle the number of activities and crowded conditions. Between 500-600 new members were being received each year, and even with transfers out and deaths, the congregation was expanding. Attendance in Church School classes and the operating budget were growing as well. This was at a time when the United Methodist Church nationwide was losing membership and church school participation.

With an emphasis on new members becoming integrated into the life of the church, there was also a need to activate both them and long-time members into active volunteer service. A lay visitation task force was formed to help members visit sick and shut-in members. Over seventy people were in ministry the first year to the homebound, both through phone calls and personal visits. The original Leadership Development system was the first attempt at organizing such a large reserve of Christian volunteers to tap their talents and interests.

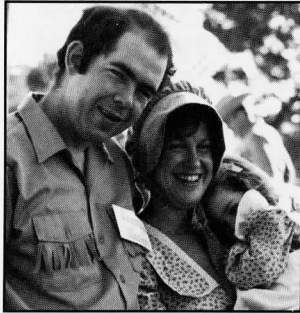
Dr Farrell saw a number of areas in the church's life that needed to be addressed in order to channel the congregation's growth and activity. In the spring of 1975 the Prayer Tower ministry came into being, offering a 24-hour phone ministry of available prayer intercessors. This ministry has grown and matured over these past fifteen years, and has offered spiritual intercession to thousands of persons. In 1978 Frank Warden met with great success when some three hundred people responded to his invitation to learn the Scriptures through Trinity Bible Studies. It provided an introduction to the basic Biblical literacy, and initiated a renewed interest across the congregation in the daily study of God's Word.

Adele Hatcher started
the Prayer Tower.



As the decade of the eighties began, Highland Park had reached a membership of over 10,000, with an annual operating budget of almost \$2.5 million. For the next several years the budget expanded by almost \$500,000 a year before the recession hit Dallas. Participation was moving steadily upward, and even parking was at a premium on Sunday mornings. So city buses were hired to shuttle worshipers to the sanctuary from the Moody Coliseum parking lot, two blocks away

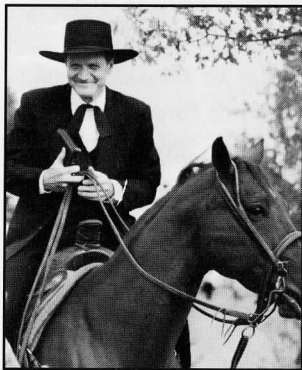
A travel ministry was also begun, providing overseas trips for members to explore their roots as Methodists and Christians. The Oberammergau Passion Play, Wesley's England, the journeys of Paul, and the Holy Land were all destinations that were part of gaining a new first-hand perspective on our religious heritage. At the church too, the Christian heritage was being explored in other ways. The Bicentennial year of Methodism offered an opportunity for the whole congregation to gather in 1984, and in 1986 Texas Methodism was experienced at Lake Sharon in a fellowship setting, celebrating "Texas Yesterday" Our rich heritage as Christians was also explored in new and deeper ways as the Lay Academy was introduced. Led by Ted Campbell, it offered a theological grounding for lay men and women through a structured series of courses. Also the new area of Church Resources was organized; it included the Church Library and created the new Archives department. Many different subjects of interest were also offered through the Wednesday evening School for Creative Living which continued for a number of years.



Jackson, Dana and
Amanda Harkey
at Texas Yesterday

In an effort to help the new members become assimilated more quickly and thoroughly, the Shepherd program was begun. A sponsoring person or family from the congregation was matched with each joining member or family, so that new members could become acquainted with the life and ministries of the church immediately, and become actively involved.

In the last part of the 1980s the Older Adult Ministry was created to develop many different facets of involvement and outreach. Central to the vitality of this broad ministry was the Tuesday Adventures programming, which offered retired adults a full day each week at the church to experience interests, classes, fellowship, a hot noon meal and a mid-day program. Royce Hardaway and a dedicated group of older adults led this program, which still thrives today



Dr. Farrell at the
Sesquicentennial celebration.
Texas Yesterday

The growth and breadth of ministry of Highland Park under Dr Farrell's leadership has been recognized in a recent study of "Parable Churches."¹ Set against a denomination which was declining, this church was recognized as the fourth fastest growing church. Dr Farrell's guiding hand can be seen in all of these diverse ministries as together the Highland Park congregation, now 12,000 strong, moves into the decade of the 90s. Under Jerry Overton's direction, the Center for Spiritual Formation opened in September 1990. Also a School of Fine Arts, under Mark Unkenholz, has opened in our church, which teaches the violin by the Suzuki string method. The church is striving to reach its full potential in ministry to its own and in the larger Dallas community which it has served so well.

Each group, class and ministry has its own story to tell and a rich heritage to celebrate. The rest of this volume lifts up the diverse tapestry of ministry that is ours together as we celebrate seventy five years of witness and service together as God's People, branches of the Living Vine.



GROWING IN FAITH

*This is how my Father's Glory is shown,
by your bearing much fruit,
and in this way
you become my disciples*

John 15 8

Potentially the most important mission of the church is Christian education. As the first Highland Park director of Christian education, Walter Towner's words to church school workers in 1928-29 expressed the solid rock on which it stands. "The goal of all Sunday School work is lives consecrated to Christ. .you are shaping lives for eternity "1

Highland Park United Methodist Church originated as a Sunday School on September 26, 1915, when religious services were held for the first time on the SMU campus. Superintendent Frank Reedy, bursar of the university, assigned students to classes according to their university classification. By the second Sunday, a graded Sunday School had been organized to accommodate children of faculty members. The formal organization of the church did not occur until 1916, but our long commitment to Christian education began with that very first Sunday service in Dallas Hall.

Highland Park members moved into their first church building in May, 1917, a temporary frame structure affectionately called the "Little Brown Church." Within a year they added a wing to this building to house the Beginners, Kindergarten, and Primary Departments. There was no provision for children under age three. Parents were instructed to sing, tell stories, and pray with their little ones at home.

With the completion of the permanent building in 1927, each grade level had its own room for the first time. L. F. Sensabaugh's tenure as director of religious education (1933-1948) brought a new standard of professionalism to Highland Park, and built a strong program for university students. His belief that recreation and fellowship were as important as Bible study and worship in developing a well-rounded Christian life broadened our viewpoint of the church's role in daily life.

A tremendous growth in membership during the years before and after World War II stimulated the huge building program that culminated with the opening of the Activities Building in 1950 and Cox Chapel in 1951. For the first time, there was room to care for children under age three. Professional educators joined the staff, including Olive Smith (children), Elvin Geiser (youth), and Crawford Whaley (adults). When the "baby boom" generation literally crowded out the Senior High department, the decided to build an education wing on the north side of the building, a need first recognized in the Master Plan of 1944. It was dedicated in November, 1961.

Miss Smith was succeeded in 1958 by Mary Jane Dickson as the interim director of children's work. She was assisted by Mildred Chapman. Soon the search for a permanent director was completed with the coming of James Hares from the faculty of Southwestern University in Georgetown. He hired Barbara Hart as his assistant. In 1968 Harold Reynolds joined the staff to coordinate all areas of Christian education, and Charles Allen assumed the responsibility for adult classes and educational opportunities. Crawford Whaley moved to work with the church library and senior members.

A lovely setting
for Christian education.



So Christian education has flourished and grown in our congregation. Now each age level has a full-time director, and about 2,000 attend classes each Sunday Highland Park is blessed with a large reserve of leadership in its adult classes. Young and old, they come forward time and time again to fulfill their vow of membership: to uphold the church with our prayers, our attendance, our gifts, and our service.

Child Development Program

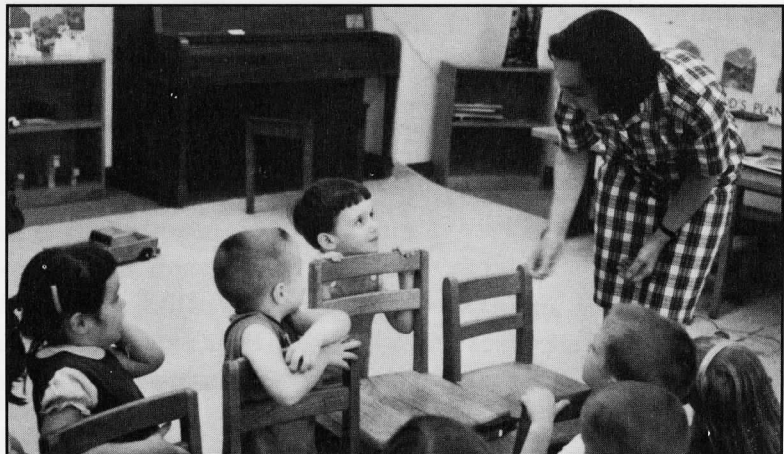
It was near midnight in May, 1982, when a car turned into the empty parking lot. The driver parked near the north entrance and turned off the lights, remaining in the car. Beside him on the seat were a pillow, a blanket, a thermos of hot coffee, sandwiches, and a small, battery-powered radio. He settled in to wait.

No, this is not detective fiction. The driver was a parent who wanted to be sure he arrived in time to enroll his little one in the Child Development Program (CDP). He knew, as did many other parents, that the fall semester classes would be filled by the end of that first pre-registration day in May. Enrollment procedures changed soon after that, making such an all-night vigil unnecessary, but the popularity and excellence of the program remains, as do the waiting lists of applicants.

CDP had its start three decades ago in 1961 as the Weekday Class of Preschool I. In that year, James Hares met with interested parents who wanted to discuss expanding the weekday program for preschoolers. When requests continued to increase, Dr. Hares went to the Commission on Education of the Administrative Board with a recommendation that the church offer a second class in the fall. He announced plans in January, 1962, little dreaming that pre-registration and tuition payments would begin arriving immediately for the September enrollment.²

Also in 1962 a weekday kindergarten was proposed. The daily program was designed as an extension of the religious education that children received Sunday mornings and coincided with well-established guidelines of the Methodist Church. Mrs. Elaine Ward, met with educators in the Highland Park School System to outline its purposes. In a letter to parents, Elaine Ward, teacher of the Kindergarten class, included the flexible schedule to be followed each morning, and a subsequent leaflet explained that teachers would use Bible stories and verses, songs, simple art and craft activities, role playing, pictures, and personal conversation to stimulate children's interest and to teach them facts and ideas basic to our Christian faith.³ The success of the program spread quickly, and the resulting increase in enrollment led to the formation of three additional weekday classes in 1963.

Learning more about God and one another.



A Mother's Day Out program began in 1966. It offered a class one morning a week for children younger than three years of age. Another day was added very quickly. Eventually the program offered care morning, afternoon, or both, depending upon the availability of space. The name changed to Parents Day Out in 1976, as more and more women entered the work force and fathers became more involved with child care.

God's presence guided the thinking and planning of teachers, parents, and church staff alike as they considered the needs of working mothers. A 1970 task force evaluated the weekday nursery and kindergarten programs. Members of the task force were Mrs. Robert Mitchell, chairman, Jenny Abbey, Evelyn Brooks; Mary Ann Daughety, Mrs. Melvin Howe, and Halcuit Moore. Among their recommendations to the Younger Children's Council were the following: weekday teachers should not be asked to teach on Sundays; Christian principles should receive continuing emphasis in the classroom; children and teachers should meet mandatory health requirements; the staff should continue to call on volunteers to help in the classroom; and a new playground should be constructed.⁴

Leighton Farrell's appointment in 1972 heralded a stronger emphasis on child care. He approved administrative changes and new programs that in 1973 established CDP as a separate ministry under Lillian Sills' direction. At the same time, a through-the-week Day Care program designed to meet the needs of working parents began. For the first time, child care was available from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.⁵



A fitting memorial gift to bless new generations.



Also in 1973, the new playground area was constructed. Bette Perot and her brother Ross donated the money, and the new playgrounds were built west and north of Cox Chapel in memory of their mother. The playground dedication took place on November 19, 1980. Bette remembers this as the church project she enjoyed most. "Because of who they serve and who they remember, the playgrounds are still special to me," she said.⁶

An important element in the establishment of an all-day program at the church was the necessity of providing a nutritious lunch, not to mention healthful snacks for both morning and afternoon sessions. Until 1983 the CDP staff managed the menus. Menu planning today is in the capable hands of Odetta Russeau, director of Food Services, while the actual cooking is carried out by Mildred Haggerty and Jean Simmons, familiar faces to all CDP children and parents.

Parent participation is one of the great hallmarks of CDP. Through the years parents have provided thousands of hours of volunteer work, serving as room mothers, celebration planners, fund-raisers, and teacher helpers. In recent years two effective fund-raising events, garage sales and T-shirt sales, have raised over \$3,000 for classroom materials and equipment. A newsletter, first published in 1981, gives parents information about CDP activities.

In 1984 a CDP Advisory Board of parent representatives was formed. Through its bimonthly meetings, the Board is in close contact with all CDP plans and programs. It also is responsible for arranging the annual CDP family picnic, planning the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon, and tallying the results of the CDP evaluations.

The dream of a successful weekday program for the children of the great church has become a reality. It thrives today as one of the best known in the city. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs granted accreditation in 1987, and CDP is in the process of earning this honor again.

In John 15:5 we read Christ's words, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit." The teachers and staff in the Child Development Program abide in Christ, fulfilling this text in every way. The many children who have passed through this program feel God's presence in their lives because of their love and care.

The growth and progress of the weekday child care programs at Highland Park reflects the excellence of their leadership through the years.

Preschool Division Younger Children's Ministry

Lillian Sills, Director, 1962-1981

Martha Beddoe, Administrative Assistant, 1969-1973

Marilyn White, Director, 1981-present

Child Development Program

Marilyn White, Director, 1973-1981

Lois Cadman, Director, 1981-1983

Connie Clemons Shanhouse, Director, 1983-1989

Sally Fifer, Director, 1989-present

Martha Beddoe, Administrative Assistant/Registrar, 1973-present

Susan Yannonne, R.N., Infant/Toddler Coordinator, 1983-1989

Bea Pietzsch, Preschool Coordinator, 1988-present

Sherry Peterson, Infant/Toddler Coordinator, 1989-present

Younger Children's Ministries

Young children have always been a very important and vital part of our church family. Our founding fathers and mothers had the insight to realize this and the foresight to plan and implement programs for the Christian Education of children.

The vision and planning of our forebears took the Younger Children's

Ministry from a Sunday School of nine children and four teachers in 1916 to a multi-faceted program ministering to 1,167 children and 87 teachers in 1990.

This growth has been made possible by persons, both lay and staff, who dreamed dreams of innovative possibilities and planned, organized and implemented creative programs. The primary focus has been “to surround each child with love,” so that the children become “established in the faith and confirmed in the way that leads to life eternal.”⁷

The innovative programming that takes place week-after-week, year-after-year does shape the character and actions of these preschool age children. Curriculum and well-trained teachers and workers are the vehicles by which the message is implanted like a seed into the hearts and minds of the children.

That is the essence of Christian education with young children — to plant seeds. Seeds are planted on Sunday mornings by teachers. Teachers often wonder if anything from their labors really catches hold in a child’s mind. One such query came during the 1960s when Adelene and Knox Oakley, Nina Dickinson, Peggy Archbold, Thelma Sartain, Fae Messersmith, Ruth MarDock, Madelle Hares and Peggy Miller were teaching. Peggy Miller was wondering how much the children would remember when her three-year-old looked at the autumn leaves and said, “God has made everything beautiful in its time.”⁸ Much to Peggy’s surprise and elation, a seed had fallen on fertile soil and taken hold.



Carl Petty enjoys teaching young children.

One teacher who has planted many seeds with young children at Highland Park is Carl Petty. He saw the need for a father-figure in the classroom in 1955, and continues to teach. Carl was honored as the Volunteer of the Month in May, 1988. A former student, Betsy Fisher, whose daughter Emily was also in his class, said,

“Carl is dependable for the kids. He has a special way of teaching - he really just loves each child.”⁹

Staff leadership played an important role in the development of programs for young children. In 1962 Lillian Seymour Sills joined the staff as director of Pre-School Children, and a program development for young children was emphasized fully. Under Lillian’s guidance and counsel, Christian education was as significant and apparent through the week as it was on Sunday mornings. She nurtured the week-day classes that James Hares began and developed a Parents Day Out program. At the same time, she recruited and trained teachers and workers for the Sunday School.

As the program grew and flourished, the need for a support group resulted in the formation of the Younger Children’s Council. This organization today consists of fifteen to twenty volunteers who plan and implement programs to further the development of young children.

Many teachers and Council members moved through the department during the twenty years Lillian tended the Younger Children’s Ministry. “The persons with whom I worked that stand out in my memory are Elaine Ward and Edie Pfautsch who were the first week-day teachers, and Council presidents, Fae Messersmith, Janie Means, Norma Adair, and Nora Graner.”¹⁰

Marilyn White was employed in August 1973 to direct the Child Development Program, which at that time still existed under the umbrella of the Younger Children’s Ministry. Continued growth brought the decision in 1981 to separate the two departments, while still maintaining a close relationship between them. At that time Marilyn White became director of the Younger Children’s Ministry. She has maintained an orderly and loving ministry to the church members she so willingly serves, frequently counseling young parents, answering questions, and working to fulfill her goal to support families.



Fresh air, sunshine, and song.

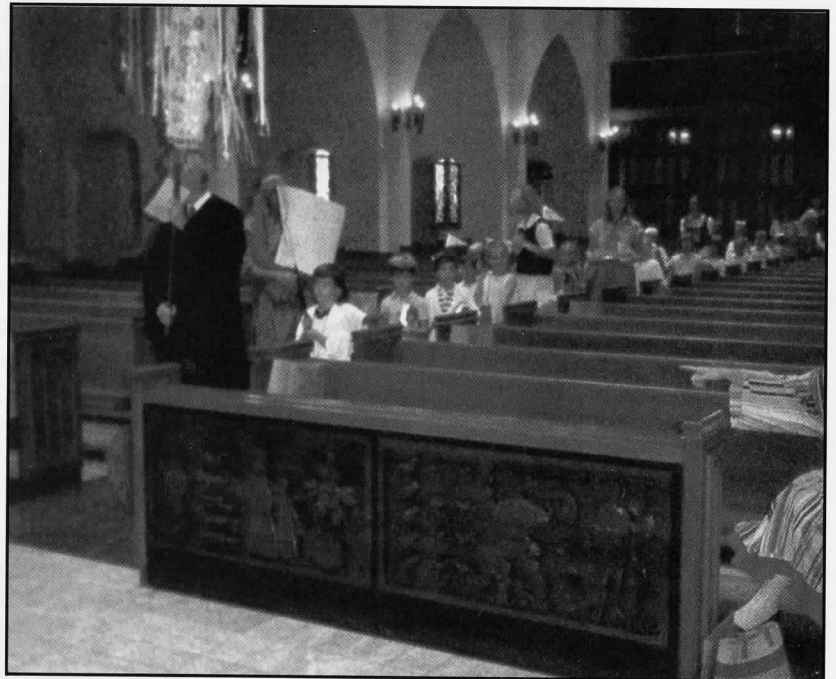


Marilyn White leads Younger Children activity.

Parent education seminars and family activities have been an important addition to the programming. During the 1980s when young parents were in fierce vocational competition, the nurturing and leadership provided by the department gave security and stability. Family activities such as the Valentine Supper, Easter Celebration and Halloween Party have become annual events. These events enable the children and their families to celebrate and have fun with friends from Sunday School.

Summer finds young children and their parents very busy. From story time at the Church Library to cooking classes on Wee Wednesdays, the activities selected meet the emotional, spiritual, and educational needs of boys and girls. One popular summer program is Vacation Bible School. This five-day program requires 80 to 90 volunteers and attracts over 250 children. In recent years VBS has been designed to focus on Jesus and the Biblical people, complete with a "Market Place," for hands-on experiences.

Children experience the sanctuary.



Vacation Bible School also provides an opportunity for all young children to go to the sanctuary. One year, in preparing her class for the worship experience, a teacher told the children they would be entering God's house and it was very important to be quiet and still. The melody of "Jesus Loves Me" was lilting from the organ and not a peep was heard from over two hundred children. The doors at the back of the sanctuary opened and Robert Hasley, clad in his all-white alb, began proceeding slowly to the altar. In the quiet hush as the song ended, Matthew Crain, sitting near the front, could not contain himself any longer. He looked around and saw Robert. "There's God!" he proclaimed. Out of the mouths of babes!

Matthew Crain exemplifies the inquisitive innocence of the young child. Younger Children's Ministry strives to set examples of Christian faith as it is described in the scriptures so that all children may grow in their understanding of God's love.

Though faces may change and programs may vary, the Younger Children's Ministry is for the young children of our church. Each program is created to support

families in their role as primary Christian educators, and to provide the best age-appropriate Christian education through Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and other activities.

Elementary Ministries

“ .and in this way you become my disciples” John 15:8

Growing disciples! That is the mission of all who have worked with elementary age boys and girls throughout the history of this church. Techniques, curriculum, and personnel have all changed, but the call to ministry has remained firm and constant.

One of the changes taking place in the 1960s across Methodism was the emphasis on educational techniques, especially teacher training. James Hares led the innovative changes at Highland Park. Observation rooms with one-way glass were built in the north wing so that teachers-in-training and parents could monitor class sessions in progress. New curriculum that was to be published in 1968 was placed on the experimental block in Grades III and IV in 1965-66, led by James Hares and Howard Grimes from SMU's Perkins School of Theology

Teacher training and parent education were two extremely important issues tackled by Barbara Hart Seikman, director of Elementary Education, 1959-1968. During those nine years Barbara and James Hares led the church in providing the best trainers available anywhere in the nation. Teachers who benefited from Barbara's concern for and attention to their needs included Ruth MarDock, Elizabeth Morrow, Gloria Dykes, Lee Branch, Ruby Dowdell, Gene and Joe O'Connell, Henrietta Slagle and Marge Bailey Gloria Dykes taught Grades V or VI from fall 1964 to 1973 with generosity of spirit and resources. She made the material so alive and interesting that children remembered her and her testimony of faith.

Layne Lauck teaches the Bible to children.



In September, 1968, Barbara Hart Seikman became assistant to the pastor, Bill Dickinson. Frances Smyth Whaley from Tulsa, Oklahoma, accepted the position of director of Elementary Ministry

Getting creative at the
Advent Workshop



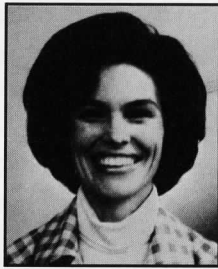
The goal of Elementary Ministry has always been to help boys and girls become aware of and grow in the knowledge and love of God today, in this present world. Changing times and the mixing of cultures have initiated different methods of teaching and the use of many varied resources. Frances continued the emphasis on teacher training. She also was sensitive to the needs of the children and established programs and activities to meet those needs. The practice of presenting Bibles to third-graders in the sanctuary began on Christian Education Sunday in 1971. Over 1,000 children have received Bibles during that nineteen-year period.

The 1990 Confirmation Class
is the largest one yet.



Other innovative programs started under Frances Whaley's direction that have survived the test of time. The Advent Workshop, designed by Frances and John Erickson, began in 1973 for elementary children and their families. It has now developed into one of the most successful on-going all church events held at Highland Park. Now called the Advent Festival, in 1989 over 500 people children, youth, and adults of all ages - played, worked, and worshipped together to prepare for Christ's coming.

Mrs. Whaley, served as elementary director for seven-and-a-half years. She commented, "One of the greatest joys of my ministry was working with the volunteers in the Elementary Ministry, and especially with the members of the Elementary Lay Council." Included among the many persons with whom she worked were Susie Henry, Mary Ann Guinn, Marge Bailey, Jean Blomquist, Pat Cheeseborough, Allie Belle Larson, Lennart Larson, Kay Peters, Mary Crook, Dot Boone, Pat and Jim McClean and Doris Moore.



Gayle Hardaway

In March, 1976, Frances Whaley retired and Gayle Hardaway became elementary director. One of the priorities facing Gayle was to design an in-depth Confirmation program for sixth-graders. In September, 1977, the Confirmation Class expanded to a nine month curriculum. The classes incorporated a variety of teaching techniques, provided field trips and mission-oriented work projects, and required that the sixth-grade students attend worship services. One of the most significant of the work projects completed by Confirmation Classes each year was to deliver, organize, and shelve the food products collected each fall through the all-church Food Drive for the Methodism's Breadbasket at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Dallas.



With the growing number of working women and the multi-faceted involvement of church members, it became harder to recruit Sunday School teachers to serve a full year. In June, 1980, the first Summer Sunday School was held. Adult classes taught one Sunday each in order to give the regular teachers a “breather.” The first Sunday the new program began, first-grader Bill Cox walked up to Tissa Baker, assistant director and stated emphatically, “When y’all get your act together around here, I’ll be back.”

Both teaching and learning the intangibles of worship are difficult, if worship is to be life-directing. In May 1981, Gayle Hardaway and Ted Campbell taught a four-week seminar on “The Teacher as Lay Minister.” On November 27, a special guide, “Children Are Welcome In The Worship Services” was given to children attending church services. This was a joint effort which integrated Worship, Music, Younger Children, and Elementary Ministry. As a supplement to the curriculum, Gayle also wrote and published a guide for teachers and parents listing age-level expectations. That guide also became a resource used by other churches in the area.

Highland Park has served as a training ground for Perkins School of Theology students. Paul Spellman spent one year working with Frances Smyth Whaley. When Perkins reinstated their Masters of Religious Education degree, in the late 1970s, Debra Smith, and later Joyce Allen Jablinski, joined the Elementary staff as interns. They provided expertise, enthusiasm and support. More recently Melinda Means and Katherine Bennett have served as assistants in Elementary, and currently Norma Greathouse is providing this leadership role.

The summer program for elementary boys and girls grew. The much-loved day camp experiences at Lake Sharon and Vacation Bible School thrived. In addition a reading club, Thursday Mini trips and arts and crafts classes were popular with child and parent. Linda Rork, Deanna Brown, Diane Green, Edwina McCaig, Larry Brady, Bob Toole, Margaret French, Alene Perkins, Linda McCabe, Carrie Chisum, Brenda Marsh, Patricia Moore, and Marty Curtis were among the Council Members who were instrumental in planning and implementing many successful programs.

Outreach projects have been important learning experiences for all elementary children. They have ranged from delivering Halloween items to children in the pediatric wing at Parkland in 1969, to collecting school supplies and filling Christmas stockings (at that time drawstring bags) made by women at Dickinson Place to give to children at Wesley Rankin Community Center in the 1970s and 1980s. Collecting money for special outreach projects has also been an important learning tool. The “Heifer Project” in 1985, Haiti medical mission in 1987, Wesley Rankin in 1988, and the Asian refugees at “Operation Storefront” in east Dallas have all been recipients of the children’s generosity.

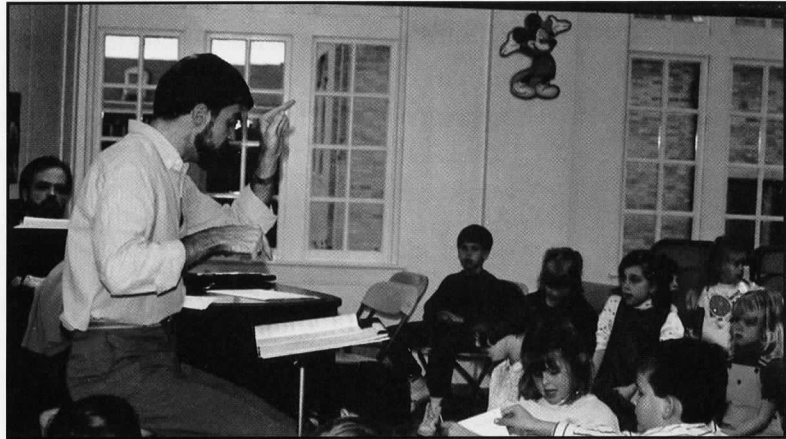


Tissa Baker

Tissa Baker, then the assistant, became director of Elementary Ministry when Dr. Farrell asked Gayle Hardaway to start the Leadership Development program in 1983. Tissa developed a recreational program for children utilizing the newly completed Biggers Building. She also instilled in the children a keen appreciation for art.

Assisting with the many programs were: Ann Boswell, Lisa Turner, Betty Mims, Barbara Dorff, Suzanne Edgar, Susan Baier and Pat Ellis, among others. Two women who kept the Sunday morning program alive and vibrant for years were Marie Solberg and Virginia Herndon.

Noah's Arts
train young singers.



In September, 1987, Mark Unkenholz of the Music Ministry and Sharon Yancey, then director of Elementary Ministry, began a mid-week enrichment program called Noah's Arts. This activity enticed 140 students to get on stage and sing about Noah or attend a recreational program. In November, 1987, they sang for worship services, for the UMW, and for folks at the train station at Six Flags. Others who also helped include Carolyn Lewis, Margie Bankhead, Rita Clinton, Kay Quisenberry, Melinda Means, and Elaine Friedman.

Because of changes occurring in the public schools, Grade VI moved to Youth Ministry in the summer of 1989. Elaine Friedrich became director in August, 1988. According to Elaine, the overall aim of Elementary Ministry during the children's five elementary years is to build strong foundations in each child's life that will see him or her through the later teenage years and on into adulthood. The four goals in this five year span are to: 1) make disciples of the children; 2) make disciples of the parents; 3) strengthen the family relationships; 4) develop additional leadership skills among the adults. These goals are accomplished by focusing on the four areas of personal growth: social, physical, intellectual, and spiritual.



In a Halloween party mood.

In all areas of Elementary Christian education, worship, teaching, outreach, and service, there is a deep appreciation today for assistance from volunteers and support people. Their commitment to our children is an important part of the Great Commission recorded in Matt. 28:20, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

Youth Ministries

Since Highland Park was organized, the teenage years have called for a special dedication and creativity, in order to channel the boundless energies and idealism of youth toward the church’s goals. Many of yesterday’s youth in this church have become today’s church leaders, and many others have gone on to other places of service around the country and the world.

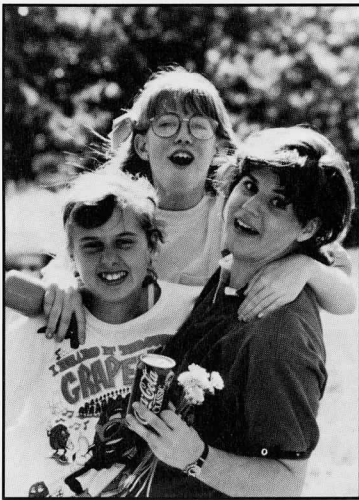
Shortly after the congregation moved from the Little Brown Church to the newly completed sanctuary and education building, Margaret Todd sponsored a teenage group, the Hi-League. These young students, not yet eligible for the Epworth League, were “enthusiastic about taking their place in active participation in church affairs, following the example of their parents.”

Since those early growing years of the congregation, the youth have continually had a rightful part in the total life and ministry of the congregation, and have found unique ways to express their dedication and faith, whether in worship, study, fellowship or service. Today their basic focus is much the same, with fundraisers, banquets, choir, drama and special musical productions, Bible studies, outreach activities, mission work both locally and far afield, and the spiritual nurture of their own group with retreats and special occasions.

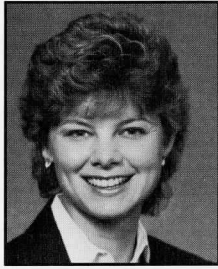
In its beginnings, “youth” spanned the ages beyond the elementary grades to the time one was considered a young adult (after college). This has been redefined and redrawn many times over the years, and currently our youth ministry encompasses new sixth graders (who spend the whole school year in a nine-month Confirmation Class study), and seventh through twelfth grades. Those young persons beyond high school attend University Ministry or a young adult class.

The thrust of Youth Ministry continues as: 1) it is real ministry to and with real young people. We live in a highly mobile society, and there is a wide diversity of backgrounds and schools, as well as many demands and pressures on our youth. The competition of the church with many other factors in society calls for involving youth in experiencing real ministry in the fellowship of others as together they grow in faith. 2) Youth Ministry is a whole ministry to the whole person, working with them where they are — at different levels in maturity, in faith, and in wrestling with the tough issues of their teen lives, as they move toward becoming adult Christians.

Adult leadership, role modeling, companionship and guidance have always been an integral part of the growth of Youth Ministry at Highland Park. The dedication and involvement of many adult lay leaders have done much to undergird the continuing growth and development in this area. Countless snack suppers, picnics and party trays have been prepared by willing and loving hands. Parents and other adults have used their special skills and talents to foster the youth’s ties to the church during these difficult years, when so many relationships are called into question. “Stars For A Night” in recent years has recognized the efforts of all these dedicated folks.

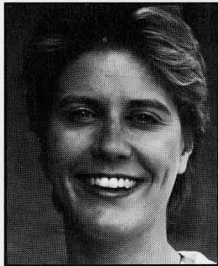


Enjoying good friends



Cheryl Rude

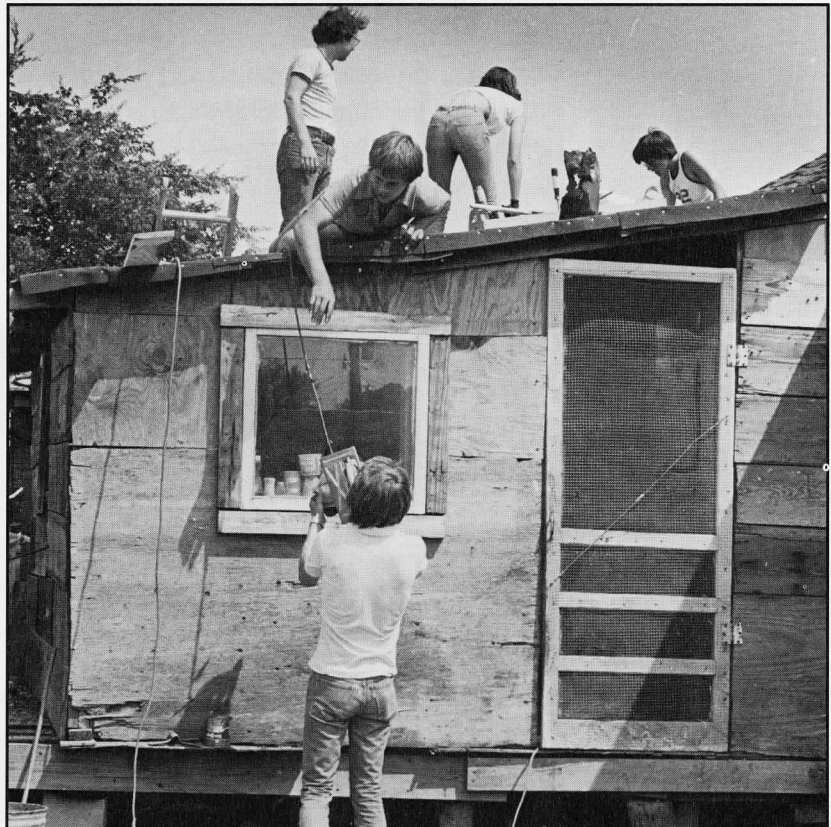
Staff leaders have also made a significant difference in the lives of so many of our youth through the decades. Elvin Geiser came to Highland Park as the first full-time youth director in 1952, and many others have followed in his footsteps to assist in guiding our youth program. These include Jerry Dellaney, Neil Winslow, Virginia Henry, Bill Steel, Ben Hines, Ron DeVillier, Jerry Canada, Phil Smith, Gilbert Zyzniewski, Fred Kandeler, Billy Boyd Smith, Jim Dorff, Barbara Langley Dorff, Eston Williams, Patsy Quested, Steve Matthew, Pat Crownover, Jan Hancock, Steve Davis, Randy Crownover, Ann Bledsoe, Charles Stokes, Laurie Coffman, Bob Williams, Don Holmes, Tammy Benedict Swengle, Joyce Jablinski, Susan Wilke, Rodney Aist, Lisa Reed, Leigh Walker, Cheryl Rude, and Jim Maase.



Susan Wilke

Youth Ministry has always been activities oriented, so the youth could “find their niche,” get involved and spread their wings. In the late 1930s the Altar Players offered a dramatic outlet for their energies, as well as the special Youth Week activities and ongoing church school classes. In 1939 we are recorded as having the largest Sea Scouting Troop in Dallas, with several boats on White Rock Lake. Scouting has long been a part of working with youth, and numerous individuals have received their God and Country awards through service at Highland Park.

Outreach and help to others, whether across town or across the nation, have been a continual theme of youth ministry activities. By 1940 our youth from the Young People’s Department were helping the children in West Dallas and the Mexican Mission at Christmas time. In the 1960s youth were involved in “Project Read” and later “Project Friend,” tutoring children in south and west Dallas. Restoration and repair have also been the focus as youth have helped refurbish and renew homes in Oak Cliff and camp facilities in Arkansas. They have also traveled



Youth help families
in Oak Cliff.

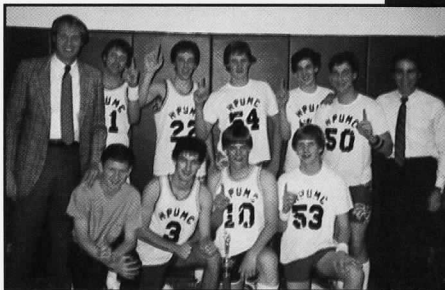
to Appalachia several times and the poverty-ridden parts of the Bahamas and Puerto Rico to serve in witness and mission. In addition, the “Mystery Ramble” trips of the 1960s and 1970s often had an outreach purpose, taking the participants some years to Alaska and Hawaii to serve others. Some youth also shared in a family trip to the Holy Land in 1984.

Each of these outreach projects took funding, and the youth spent many weeks just raising money to be able to perform the mission. Pancake Panorama has for years been a source of funding that the whole congregation could enjoy and participate in, along with the more recent “Swishin’ For Missions.” Youth choir fund-raisers have included “A Touch of Class” dinner theaters and Singing Valentines.

More than just a
Touch of Class



Youth curriculum through the years has addressed the needs and issues of the youth themselves, and in so doing has always centered in study of the Scriptures as the guide for their maturing Christian lives. Special studies have served to emphasize this in the last number of years, through Bible Breakfasts, Disciple Now weekends, Covenant Groups, and currently Disciple II. There are also special studies on preparation for college as graduating seniors are recognized, and the significance of the church and one’s membership in it. Though more formal classroom discussion takes place on Sunday mornings at both the 9:30 and 11:00 class hours, the evening sessions of UMYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship) and special gatherings through the week provide a diversity of settings to work through issues together.



Biggers and youth produce a winning team.

Encouraging others to
'Celebrate Life'



Involvement in sports is part of the life of teenagers, and the church for years has had youth teams in church league basketball, softball, and, for a time, bowling. Informal recreation time and time together are also important, and the opening of “The Corner” downstairs in the Activities Building in 1971 took note of this fact. The place for youth to be together informally has moved around in the church, as in 1974 we saw the redecoration of Calvin Lounge (room 341), and in 1978 the third floor of the Activities Building redone to become a Youth Center. When the Biggers Building opened its doors in 1983, the youth were among the first to put it to steady use.

How youth love to communicate! From the original 1944 “Lighted Cross” youth newsletter until now, they have shared the news and views of their unique world with each other. Other newsletters have included “Koinonia” during the 1970s and 1980s, and “Vision” in 1989

Music, both vocal and instrumental, is a special language for youth, and the choir programs through the years have developed the talents of many of our youth. Youth bell choirs offered a different musical option for some. Contemporary religious music and a flair for the dramatic were combined as the youth musicals, “Lightshine,” “The Witness” and “Celebrate Life” have been presented to the whole Highland Park congregation in morning worship in recent years.

Recreation, sports, food, fellowship, music, and worship are some of the ingredients in bringing and keeping youth together. Retreats at Lake Sharon helped to bring all these aspects together. In addition to regular retreats there, special Easter Sunrise services were held each year in the early 1960s. In the 1970s we saw “Youth Sunday” each year when the youth took responsibility for leading a Sunday morning sanctuary worship service, from conducting to ushering. Beginning in 1988, the youth have sponsored for the whole church an Easter Sunrise service in the Garden.

Youth Ministry is integral to the total ministry of our church. It involves young persons in real ministry that is uniquely theirs, and prepares them to receive the church that will one day be their inheritance.



Dallas and Virginia Biggers
Family Activities Center

Dallas and Virginia Biggers Family Activities Center

The Biggers Family Activities Center is located at the corner of Hillcrest and Normandy. Once the site of two duplexes, Highland Park Church saw potential for that property, made the purchase and, in 1983, opened the now popular Biggers Building.

Virginia and Dallas Biggers, married in 1928 by Umphrey Lee, were actively involved in the church. A farm boy from Fannin County that had turned into a big city attorney, Dallas Biggers considered the church to be the place to accumulate funds from his common stock investments and set up an account at the church. During the years from the early 1950s to 1980, that account grew

His son, John C. Biggers, remembers that his parents had given much thought to what could be done with the accumulated funds that would be of lasting benefit to the church. Leighton Farrell visited with them about building a facility that would meet the recreational needs of the church and community, and they agreed.

On one of the last trips Dallas Biggers made to the hospital before his death March 9, 1983, he demonstrated his enthusiasm for the project by asking to be taken by the building site so he could check its progress. The dedication and official opening was March 20, 1983. Mr Biggers died without knowing the building would be named the Dallas and Virginia Biggers Family Activities Center, honoring both him and his wife of 55 years.

The way the building has been managed and operated has changed over the years with the maturing of the church program of activities. Originally programming at Biggers was provided through the age level staff and lay councils. Early managers included Tammy Benedict Swengle, Mark Haines, Sue Brenchley, and Scott Moore. From there the program grew and developed, and in October, 1989, Matthew Wolcott became the director of Recreation Ministry. A Recreation Work Area was formed with Mike Walters as chairperson. Members of that Work Area included Sara Smith, Ellen McNeill, David Lott, Kevin Shea, and Chris Cullen.

Activities bustle during a given week with basketball, both informal and league play for all ages, roller skating, volleyball, and indoor soccer. The Elementary program, Noah's Arts, also meets there. Youth activities abound throughout the week, starting with UMYF on Sunday evenings.

There's always something going on at Noah's Arts.



Whether it's Sunday School classes on Sunday mornings, basketball tournaments that raise money for missions, or a haven for weary youth groups to spend the night on their way through Dallas, the Biggers Building is a living memorial to a couple who gave themselves to God.

Looking toward the future, excitement is stirring for the many possibilities of ministry through recreation available to our members. Director Matt Wolcott

says, "It is our prayer that this facility and our efforts and programs will be used to honor and glorify God."¹¹

University Ministries

Adjacent to the college campus, and with its history so entwined with SMU, Highland Park has from the beginning been interested in sharing its ministry with university students.

In the ensuing years the church and university each drew on the other's resources to grow and prosper. Under the leadership of Umphrey Lee and later L. F. Sensabaugh, a strong ministry to and with university students developed. In the years following World War II the students' interest waned in the church, and in the early 1960's Dr. Dickinson sought to recapture the student emphasis in the church's life.

In 1972 Leighton Farrell came to Highland Park and set some priorities for developing ministries that would reawaken the church's historic interest in college age young people. He assigned Billy Boyd Smith to focus on a newly combined area of Singles and University Ministry, and charged him with the responsibility of developing programs that would once again attract young adults to the church.

Under this new direction, both the Singles and university classes flourished. As Bill Smith laid the groundwork for the new Singles ministry to grow and develop, he knew that critical to its ultimate success would be a network of dedicated and active laypersons who would work with these young persons as class sponsors. Frank and Pat Ottmers agreed to sponsor the University Class, and they graciously hosted the students in their homes, recruited new class members and generally encouraged the class' development.

Pat found Mrs. Douglas Forbes to assist with these college and university students as they began to meet together. Josephine Forbes "went the second mile" in assisting with the students. The individuals who would later emerge as the Becomers Class first came together as a "group" at a winter retreat in Colorado when 38 students plus leaders took time to find their common purpose and mission. Led by Chuck Cox, then an intern from Perkins assigned to Highland Park for the year, the group gained a clarity and focus that was soon to emerge as the University Class. Mrs. Forbes offered her farm in far north Dallas county as a "retreat" destination for weekends in order that the group might grow and develop. Lyndy Ottmers, Don McCall, Ben Coleman, and Martha and Robert Pickens as well as others also offered significant leadership in those all-important building years, as the class grew and prospered.

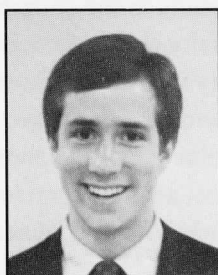
After several years the University program had grown to such an extent that it was necessary to divide it from the Single Adult ministry. Robert Halsey, a former Highland Park Perkins intern and assistant in the University/Singles area, was appointed as the University Ministry pastor. Under Robert's guiding hand, the university department became even more attuned to the students and their needs.

Soon the word spread on campus about the group at Highland Park. Each fall as freshman students came to SMU, they were welcomed to a new "home church" by the campus. Robert also initiated an "Adopt-a-Student" program, matching freshman students with Highland Park families so they could get a home-cooked meal on occasion, and a place to visit off campus, easing the transition to college life. There was a wide variety of fellowship activities and worship opportunities through the week as well as on Sunday.

Robert Hasley has plenty of help in University Ministries.



To encourage students in mission, the Covenant Community was launched. College students were involved in a ten-week experience of living in a covenant community during the summer while working full-time in one of the church-sponsored agencies in Dallas. Options included Wesley-Rankin Community Center, East Dallas Cooperative Parish, Deaf Action Center, Dickinson Place or Methodism's Breadbasket. The leadership committee for this program included Dick Rubottom, chairman, Robert Hasley, Vandi Glade, Will Finnin, Kenneth McIntosh and Dennis Roberts.

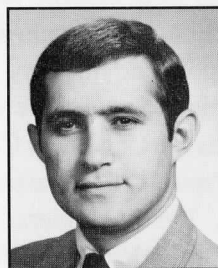


Jim Carter

In 1986 Robert left Highland Park to start a new United Methodist church in Plano, and Tom McKnight came to direct the program for the next twelve months, before returning to a ministry in Ireland. Jim Carter became the University director in May, 1987, and the program continued to develop. As Jim moved to pastoral care in June, 1990, Eric Folkerth took the reigns of both the Singles Ministry and University Ministry, which was combined once more.

Singles Ministries

The Highland Park Singles ministry, so much a part of this church's life and work in the past two decades, was not always so. It began as a separate and unique ministry to the singles across Dallas in 1974 when Leighton Farrell pinpointed two areas of greatest need in the church's ministries: 1) the area of younger children, to draw new young families into our congregation, and 2) with singles, providing a new emphasis and focus of ministry with young adults.



Bill Smith

With this second goal in mind, he asked Billy Boyd Smith to create and head up this new Singles/university ministry. As Bill considered this new assignment, he quickly saw that university students and young working singles did not have the same ministry needs. He worked toward the goal of each group having its own unique identity in our church's life.

Robert Hasley, who as an intern was finishing his D. Min. degree at Perkins, worked with Bill in the combined effort of ministering to the singles and university students. As each matured, the University became a separate department with Robert leading it, and Bill continued to shepherd the Singles. Under Bill's leadership the ministry of the church with singles has flourished through the years. New classes have been started to accommodate the changing needs that singles have had as they have been part of our church family.

The dramatic growth of the Singles ministry at Highland Park reflects changing family structures in life today and in church life as well. Singles classes at Highland Park now continue to offer a wide variety of settings in which to find a place of fellowship, learning and growing.¹²

Becomers Class

The TNT class had been drawing singles from across Dallas for a number of years, with C. E. (Red) and Virginia Orr sponsoring this group, and providing both continuity and caring leadership. From this nucleus of active singles in the church, three classes were formed from the TNT class, each meeting at 11:00, the Dialogue, the Explorers, and the revamped TNT class. To attract singles in their early 20's, a new Becomers Class was started. Singles secretary Demeris Wheeler always offered a friendly smile and helping hand as the singles activities increased. Beth and Jim Kelly offered themselves as a sponsoring couple for the Becomers class, and their guiding hand offered the group a warm welcome and continuity as the months and years passed.

Professor Dick Murray from the Perkins faculty taught the new class for the first four months, providing a firm footing for these singles to grow in faith. He used Keith Miller's book, "The Becomers," and the class took its name from this formative experience. Effective leadership and much improved publicity made the class grow quickly, and soon there were meetings in homes, Bible studies, sports leagues and share groups sprouting up, and average crowds of over 300 in attendance on Sunday mornings. As the numbers grew, additional staff persons were needed and Charles Carnahan and later Vandi Glade became singles assistants.

In time, many of the singles have gotten engaged and married, and so the Becomers Class indirectly helped create many other married adult classes as well. (The Celebrations and the Cornerstone classes, being two such classes of the couples who met in Singles ministry, have now joined other existing couples classes.) The Singles Bible Study Class was soon formed, and later other Singles classes. Agape, New Dimensions, Pathways, Sojourners, Crossroads, Pursuits and Gateway Each of these had a unique reason for forming, and drew those persons who responded to the call that they gave. Such was the New Dimensions Class, which formed for those singles who had moved on a bit in their careers. As the singles also sought smaller, more personal subgroups, there developed a wide variety of mid-week activities as well as their primary Sunday group. The singles have also continued to involve themselves in leadership roles across the church.

By the mid-80s the Becomers Class had grown to the point of having several hundred in attendance each Sunday morning. For many of the singles involved, it was the social and religious center of their lives. With new classes being formed from



Becomers travel a long way to help others.



Becomers donate a BIG gift to help others.

its roster, more recently it has become a normal size church school class once more. The same interest in sharing their Christian lives and experiences together still remains, however, and the class members are continuing in study, outreach and service, as well as fellowship, enjoying their time together.

Agape Class

The Agape Class came into being in November 1981, bringing together those singles in their mid 30s to early 50s. Choosing as their class symbol the rainbow, this group looked forward to the new horizons before them. The class name, Agape, is the Biblical Greek word for Love — man's Christian love in response to God's love for mankind.

Diana Long was elected the first class president. Under her leadership the class grew quickly and by February 1983, the class was celebrating having one hundred members. By 1984 their outreach as a class was in full swing, and they focused their attention on East Dallas Cooperative Parish, helping and supporting that ministry in a number of ways. Other benevolence projects have included toys at Christmas and collecting clothing for others.

As with singles of all ages, fellowship is important to the class, and many social activities knit the class together. And in addition to the Sunday morning class settings, study and learning have come through retreats and special studies.

Crossroads

Organized in March 1990, the Crossroads class is oriented toward those singles in their 20s and early 30s who want serious Bible study. Sharon Yates served as the founder and organizer of the class, which is still small, but slowly growing.

Meeting at 11:00 in an informal setting, there is opportunity for each person to participate in the discussion. Because the class is small, they have not felt a need yet for electing class officers. Others on the steering committee of the class are Jim Ewer, Jim Lacy, Gayla Rickard, and Kim Thiessen.

Dialogue Class

The Dialogue Class was organized in September of 1970 from the 35-up age group of the Becomers Class. Clarence Guittard and Floyd Norman taught the group the Methodist Church *Discipline* for four to six Sundays. Larry Handley was the first president. Jane Webb Welch was membership secretary and Laura Tallichet Williamson served as treasurer.

The class organized with charter and committees at Laura Tallichet's home on St. John's and had their first party at her home in December 1970. The class grew quickly with fine programs, hard-working committees and good leadership. Larry Handley and Barney Waltz invited many men and women to join the class. Many interesting studies and activities added focus and zest, and kept attendance high. Dinner "out" each Wednesday evening at various restaurants was one of the weekly activities, and a social each month was a highlight. Many of the class members served on various committees and planned the Sunday speakers. The class would enjoy an evening on an area lake once a year, and a retreat at Lake Sharon.

Gateway Class

A product of the final decade of the 20th century is the new Gateway Class of Highland Park. The class for single adults, 30 and up, met for the first time January 7, 1990, in the south lounge of Biggers at 9:30 a.m. The class name comes from a

prayer on the chapel door of Acton Burnell, Shrewsbury, England. Written circa 1264 A.D., the prayer is.

Oh God, make the door of this House wide enough to receive all those who need human love and a Heavenly Father's care; and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hatred; smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children and straying feet, but rugged enough to turn back the tempter's power. Make it, our Father, the gateway of thine eternal and everlasting Kingdom for the sake of thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The aim of Gateway is to provide a varied format of religious education, studying Christianity, Methodism, Biblical precepts and traditions, and religions of the world. The early meeting hour of 9:30 is to provide a class for single parents while their children are in Sunday school at that hour, to enable those in retail businesses to get to work by 11:30 a.m., and to permit members to attend church together at 11 a.m. Those members not having to get to work often lunch together on Sundays. One or more social activities per month are also held.

The class has five committees—program, membership, publicity, treasury, and social. A service committee is planned. The Class Council, composed of co-presidents, committee chairs, and selected members-at-large, meets monthly and is open to all class members.

Founding members are Charles Eugene "Gene" Allison, Jo Harwood, Donna Bicknell, Olivia Blessing, Jeffrey "Jeff" Bontrager and Kenneth "Ken" Feagins. Helping to organize were Bill Smith, director of the Single Adult Ministry, and Demeris Wheeler, Singles secretary. The class hopes to grow in number and spirit in providing opportunities for worship and fellowship for single adults.

New Dimensions Class

The New Dimensions Class was organized in the spring of 1983 and first convened July 10. Each Sunday in August 150 or more gathered in Zwingli Lounge (room 322). Class founders felt that such sustained high attendance in a space with nearly equally high room temperatures must mean the New Dimensions Class was doing something right.

From inception, the New Dimensions Class sought to create an atmosphere that fosters significant personal and spiritual growth. Founding members shared a common interest in the creation of a stronger bond among members than that previously experienced in other settings. This strengthening has been achieved with greater emphasis on spiritual focus through the selection of class speakers and topics. Weekly activities, as well, have been developed to provide opportunity for greater growth, fellowship, stewardship and community service.

Among the class founders and first members were Claire Anderson, Laurel Arnold, Jan Blankenship, Brad Crumpecker, Michael Glenn, John King, Jane (McIntosh) Kleid, John McLaughlin, Sue (Ranier) McLaughlin, Russ Miller, Raleigh Newsam, Toni (Raymond) Newsam, Connie (Clemons) Shanhouse, Tracy Stewart, John Toliver, Cathy Wells and Cecilia Young. Many of these were members of a steering committee which guided and served the class in its operations and planning for the duration of the first three months or more. With the blessing and support of the Singles Minister, Bill Smith, programming assistant Charles Carnahan and with the inestimable efforts of Singles Secretary, Demeris Wheeler, the New Dimensions Class continued to grow



Inviting others to the Gateway Class.

Following a move to the Reynolds room downstairs in the Activities Building, the election of the first president signaled that the class “had arrived.” Sue (Ranier) McLaughlin ably served for a term of six months plus as President, leading the class through its first anniversary in 1984. The New Dimensions Class presidents to follow served with the benefit of a complete Council and its committees. In chronological order, those members next serving as president were: Brad Crumpecker, John Toliver, Ann (Dillard) Weger, Toni (Raymond) Newsam, Raleigh Newsam, Margaret Haenel, Merrilyn Lovelady, Dick Kingsley, Jo Harwood and Merrilyn Lovelady, Olivia Blessing, and Michael Glenn.

One benevolent project that has enjoyed widespread member participation has been the Austin Street Shelter program. Initially, New Dimensions Class prepared and served sandwiches to 175 to 200 residents at the downtown Dallas shelter for the homeless. As the project matured, not only has a clothing drive been incorporated, but meals have become more complete and are now served hot! Under the leadership of Jody Lyke, Wynne Pauly, Sandy Chase, Dick Kingsley, Susie Starnes and Linda Sherrill, the program has grown to include participation from four Singles classes. Austin Street now enjoys the continued financial support from the Highland Park congregation.

New Dimensions class members have rendered service not only to the community, but to the church as well. Through the Leadership Development Work Area, the skills, experience and expertise of class members have born fruit through many hours of voluntary service.

(Editor’s Note: the class has disbanded and members have moved on to other classes.)

Pursuits Class

The Pursuits Class was established in the 1985 for young singles—recent college graduates or others in their early-to-mid twenties—wanting to meet at 9:30 a.m. Sunday Founding members were Kenny Dickson, Mark Haines, Ellen Hudson, Vandi Glade, Edgar Dibble, Lauri Fleming Lueder, Susan Cox, Elizabeth Hamilton, Linda Green, Sandy Long, Lori Moody, John Truett. Lay sponsors are Boyce and Patricia “Pat” Farrar, and Bill Smith and Vandi Glade were sponsor ministers.

The young singles in this class declare themselves in pursuit of many things: Biblical and spiritual development, careers, personal growth, and relationships. The class curriculum, with emphasis on scriptural and church related topics, is designed to help members “better understand ourselves, our friends, and our environment.” Speakers come from outside occasionally, but members research topics and lead the majority of lessons.



In service to the church, class members participate in Leadership Development, Administrative Board, on committees, councils, and as Sunday School, youth, and Disciple leaders. In service to the community, the class helps at the Austin Street Shelter and regularly collects food, clothes, and toys for Methodism's Breadbasket and the Wesley-Rankin Community Center. Fellowship is celebrated

with a lunch the first Sunday of each month, spur-of-the-moment get-togethers, and an annual Christmas party

One of the goals of the class, which meets in the Biggers Building, is to provide opportunities for people to draw closer to Christ and the church through Christian study, fellowship, and example.

Bible Study

Since the church began, the study of the Scriptures has been central to the Christian education endeavor at all age levels. Whether preached from the pulpit or taught in the classes, the Bible and its message continue to be the norm by which the preaching and teaching are measured. The rich resource of faculty members from Perkins School of Theology has offered a continued opportunity to explore the Bible in depth.

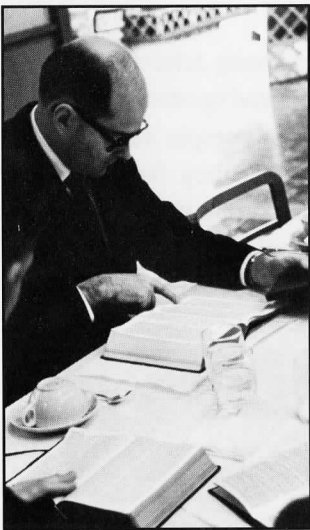
As the congregation grew larger, new attempts at bringing a basic level of understanding about the Scriptures became a continuing concern. In order to offer a deeper level of biblical literacy to the whole congregation, special mid-week training was created. The Layman's School of Religion began in 1963 and lasted several years. It included several courses on the Bible, as well as other topics. Special annual emphases, such as the Rejebian Sermons in the spring and the Francis Lectures in the fall, created renewed interest in the study of the Scriptures. The Thursday Morning Bible Classes have for years provided an opportunity for in-depth weekly study on single books of both the Old and New Testaments. The Men's Bible Breakfasts met for a number of years to begin the business day once a week with Bible study. For young children and elementary ages, Vacation Bible School continues to offer a significant block of time to involve the children in biblical truths.

In the 1970s new attempts began to bring significant Bible teaching to the breadth of our congregation. First the Bible Telecourse was introduced as a part of a cooperative venture across our denomination. Shortly thereafter, the series of films by Edward Bauman on the Life and Teachings of Jesus were broadcast on local television to provide the opportunity to involve the Dallas viewing audience in serious Bible study. A copy of these films was given to become part of the resources of our church library.

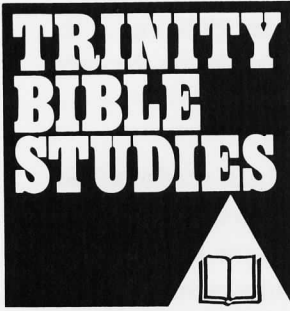
Toward the end of 1973, Dr. Farrell brought Frank Warden to the Highland Park staff with dual responsibilities for which he was uniquely qualified, that of director of evangelism and Bible studies. Initially the task of adult Bible study was addressed by presenting the Bethel Bible series in our congregation. Frank did this for two years and met with much success, having the largest such class in the nation in the Bethel program.

However, the Bethel format did not fit well into the other midweek educational opportunities presented in the ten-week fall and spring School for Creative Living, and with the exception of some UMW circles, the Bethel program was discontinued in 1976. Frank experimented with success with a "Walk Through the Bible" series, which presented the participants with an overview of the facts of the Bible, knowing that this was the first step to a deeper level of understanding. While this was going on he was developing a new study series which was unveiled in 1978 to a responsive congregation.

It was called Trinity Bible Studies, and was advertised as "All you wanted to know about the Bible, but didn't know how to ask." Written by Frank especially



Studying God's Word



Symbol of
Trinity Bible Studies

for members of this congregation, it met an enthusiastic welcome as almost 300 adults responded, committing themselves to weeks of intensive Bible study. New courses were developed and eventually there were ten courses of ten weeks each, covering every word of the Bible, with universal themes drawing all the books and segments together. Rather than employing the historical-critical approach of a seminary, the classes sought to teach name, dates, places and events as a working background for one's faith, with the motto, "Know what the Bible says as a basis for what it means." The name "Trinity" referred to the "facts, meaning, and application" approach of each biblical concept.

Within a year other churches were asking for copies of the Trinity Bible Studies, and a memorial gift from Mrs. Travis Wallace made the first publishing effort possible. Within five years Trinity Bible Studies had grown to such an extent that Frank left the Highland Park staff to devote full time to managing and developing the study series, along with the youth version, "Choose Life." Trinity Bible Studies is now being used around the world, having been translated into Spanish, Korean, Kanarese, and French, with plans for a Mandarin Chinese version and a Russian version in the early 1990s. All non-English versions have been donated to agents in those countries, and the Choose Life versions have been donated to prisons across the United States, and to the Armed Forces. In all, more than 20,000 churches have taught these Studies, which are always billed as a program "written for one church in Dallas, Highland Park United Methodist Church."

In the last few years the United Methodist denomination has developed a series of intensive Bible study materials, called "Disciple." Both in 1989 and 1990 congregational participation in this latest effort in the study of God's Word has been very rewarding. There continues to be a real need and desire for teaching and understanding the Bible throughout our congregation.

A Y A Class

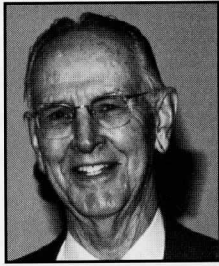
One Sunday evening in October 1942, eight or nine young adults from Highland Park Methodist Church, accompanied by their teachers and sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Allen, drove to Flag Pole Hill for a wiener roast and vesper service. After their outing, they gathered at their sponsors' home where they formally organized the Allen Young Adult Class (AYA). Included in this group were Mary Mildred Simpson Van Zant, Agnes Simpson Dean, Bob Schloniger, Alice Mills Stovall, Ethel Pearl Mitchell, Andy Swarthout, Virginia Stone, Tom Sanders, and Juanita "Nita" Leathers.¹³



AYA Class

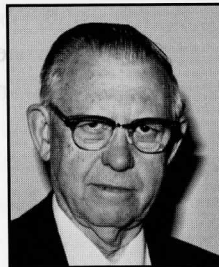
Shortly after this occasion, Fred Allen was transferred to another city, and the class found itself casting about for a new teacher and sponsor. When someone recommended a “country boy who had been lured to the big city partly by a large law firm and partly by his desire to get an earlier delivery of the Dallas Morning News,” the AYA Class received one of its greatest blessings—Margaret and Fred Porter. They adopted the orphaned class and became its sponsors and teachers.¹⁴

The AYA Class was the fourth adult class to be organized at Highland Park. For many years it generously welcomed and nurtured all young adults, singles and couples alike, who poured into the church after World War II. Today the class is open to couples and singles over fifty-five years of age. Members jokingly say that the name now stands for “Are Ye Able,” but those who know the history of its long service and commitment to the church, know that the key to the AYA Class is to be found in the hymn’s refrain: “Lord we are able, our spirits are thine.”



Robert "Bob" Dillard

Robert L. “Bob” Dillard, Bible scholar and prominent Methodist layman, teaches the class today, as he has for over thirty years. He and wife, Dundee, have been members of the class almost since it formed in 1942. Helen Gibson and Virginia Hunt, both outstanding in their presentations, assist Bob with the teaching. In an interview concerning his lifetime of service to Highland Park Methodist, Bob was asked to pinpoint one of his happiest experiences at the church. He replied, “I would have to say that my teaching experience with AYA is really the great thing in my life at the church. AYA is my love.”¹⁵



Martin Reese

Class members considered the establishment of the AYA Class Foundation in January 1984 as their proudest achievement. Martin Reese, originated the idea for the fund and has administered it with a governing board since its inception. Its purpose is to provide financial assistance to worthy men and women preparing themselves for professional careers in various fields of religious endeavor in the United Methodist Church. Foundation funds come from special gifts, bequests, and memorials that total today more than \$38,000. Grants totaling \$17,050 have been used so far to help students in religious study. The AYA Class Foundation will exist in perpetuity, even if the Class ceases to exist, in which case the fund will be administered by the church.¹⁶

Although the AYA Class looks forward to two big events each year, a Christmas Party and an installation banquet each August, one of the strong and compelling events in the life of this class is a monthly covered dish dinner and business meeting.

Presidents who have served the AYA Class are, 1942-Mary Mildred Simpson Van Zant; 1943-unknown; 1944-Larry Stokes and Mary Mildred Simpson Van Zant; 1945-Alice Mills Stovall; 1946-Gary Mills; 1947-Bob Dillard; 1948-Robert J. “Bob” LaPrade; 1949-Loren Miller; 1950-Kiel Boone; 1951-Mac Clapp; 1951-52-Jack Siddons; 1952-53-Jim Addison; 1953-54-John Anderson; 1954-55-George French-Vivian Wood; 1955-56-Jerry Hinshaw; 1956-57-George Belew; 1957-58-Fred Brock; 1958-59-John Brannam; 1959-60-Ted Robertson; 1960-61-Peter Bernays; 1961-62-James Wiley; 1963-64-John Anderson; 1964-65-James “Jim” Bussard; 1965-66-Oliver Thomas; 1966-67-Martha Strother; 1967-68-Maurice Wood; 1968-69-John Brannam; 1969-70-Oliver Thomas; 1970-71-Doyle Granberry; 1971-72-Harold Hunter; 1972-73-Ed Robertson; 1973-74-A. Y. Edwards; 1974-75-Harry Holmes; 1975-76-Arch Gibson; 1976-77-Helen Gibson; 1977-78-

Martin Reese; 1978-79-Lucille Blankenbaker; 1979-80-Hibernia "Bernie" Turbeville; 1980-81-Arch Gibson; 1981-82-Jimmie Fay Reese; 1982-83-Richard "Dick" Landers; 1983-84-Ford Hall; 1984-85-Ed Robertson; 1985-86-Betty Landers; 1986-87-A. Y Edwards; 1987-88-Farrell Evans; 1988-89-Tolbert M. "Tib" Dalton; 1989-90-Elizabeth Alexander

Bible Discussion Class

The Bible Discussion Class began in 1951, oddly enough at a bridge table. Four friends were discussing the lecture-style Sunday school class to which they all belonged. Each expressed a desire for a more systematic Bible study

The four—Ida Black, Jean Johnston, Hazel Fowler (later Mrs. R. F Nicholson), and Lera Powell—acted. They contacted six friends—Lois Armstrong, Iva Harrington, Agnes Hyer, Lillie Mitchell, Mrs. W.H. Penland, and Lola Williams—and the ten met with the church's director of Christian education, Olive Smith, to lay plans for the Women's Bible Study Class. They defined the purpose of their class as "attaining Christian fellowship through study, discussion, and helping the less fortunate."

Under the leadership of Beulah Carrell, the class met for the first time August 5, 1951 in a third floor room of the Activities Building. Heat quickly drove them down to a second floor lounge and then to the adjoining Music room, where they met for the next ten years, keeping summer cool with an electric fan.

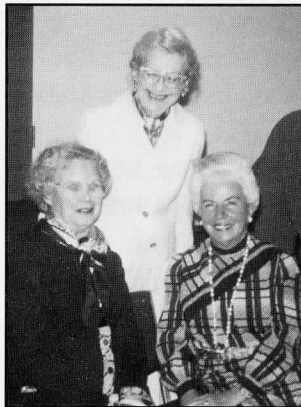
Within a month, the class had 28 charter members. By the end of the year membership was up to 43, with a goal of 50, and the name had been changed to Bible Discussion Class. The first study was the Adult Quarterly. The first project was helping a shut-in, Dora Butler, a blind woman, with both necessities and extras.

Beulah Carrell taught the first five years, and then Dr Margaret Wasson took over. Filling in during 1959-60 and 1963-64 were Eunice Brown and Lovell Baker, respectively. Class members also helped out at other times. Studies continued to be from the Adult Quarterly but also from Foundations of Christian Faith, Our Living Bible Series, Apocrypha, Adult Bible Studies, and others.

The class moved into room 153, November 19, 1961. Many furnishings were donated by members, or by memorial bequests honoring members. During the decade of 1966-76, membership grew to 75-80, with about 40 in regular attendance. Eight charter members continued to be active.

The committed Christian women who make up the membership of this class have extended help to the Salvation Army, Terrell Hospital, Methodism's Breadbasket, Highland Park Covenant Community, Lake Sharon scholarships, Haiti, Blanton Gardens, jail ministry, Flora Rodriguez in Chile, Korean religious drama group, Rose Bisubasam in India, purchasing the Bicentennial Cokesbury bell, and furnishing a room in C. C. Young Health Center.

On September 1, 1987 the Bible Discussion Class welcomed the remaining members of the Lula Rose Class to form a joint class called the Lula Rose - Bible Discussion Class. A recent class president noted that she has "never met and associated with a group of women who are as consistently well informed, tolerant, generous, and who incorporate Christianity on all levels of their daily life." The original four might be pleased to note the flowering of their idea into an enduring sisterhood of study and dedication.



Three Bible Discussion Class teachers (l. to r.)
Ruth MarDock,
Margaret Wasson,
and Betty Perot.

Charter Members of Bible Discussion Class include:

Mrs. W B. Carrell, leader, *Mrs. Robert Alexander, Mrs. S. R. Milliken, *Mrs. Matt Armstrong, Mrs. L. R. Mitchell, Mrs. L. E. Askew, *Mrs. H. Tracy Nelson, Mrs. O. I. Black, Mrs. A. J. Newton, Mrs. C. Caldwell, Mrs. John Noble, Mrs. Ben Clower, Mrs. Kurt Oppel, Mrs. R. C. Duncan, Mrs. W H. Penland, Mrs. Curtis Fenton, Mrs. C. S. Potts, *Mrs. High Fowler, (Mrs. R. F. Nicholson), *Mrs. Vance Powell, *Mrs. Harrison Griffith, *Mrs. Charles S. Shugart, Mrs. L. H. Harrington, Mrs. M. H. Smith, Mrs. Julien Hyer, Mrs. Clyde Stewart, *Mrs. Dan P. Johnston, Mrs. Charles Wells, Mrs. Charles Leddy, Mrs. Elbert Williams, Mrs. A. Y. Zadik. (*Members of the class in 1976)

Bible Study Class

The Bible Study Class was formed in February, 1976, by Singles minister, Bill Smith, at the request of a group of single adults. Adele and Maurice Hatcher were sponsors and held the organizational meeting in their home. At a subsequent Sunday School meeting, the class voted to name itself "Singles Bible Class" and to use the Bible as its principal resource. During the first five years, several members were married; consequently, the class voted to include couples as well. The name was then changed to "The Bible Study Class," and has become an all-ages class. The class has been taught by well known and outstanding teachers through the years.



Bible Study Class
on retreat.

In January 1984 the class became the sponsors of the Monday Night Bible Study held at Highland Park. The class holds monthly social activities and yearly retreats. During the years the class has been engaged in many ministries, the latest (December, 1989) being providing Christmas gift packages for Central American refugee children for Global Outreach. The class members continue to focus on the Bible and to make its teachings a reality in their lives with the goal of becoming mature Christians and to serve God more effectively

Celebrations Class

The Celebrations Class was founded in December, 1980 by engaged and recently married couples from the Becomers Singles class. The charter meeting was held at the home of Tommie and W O. Mills. Other early members included Kathy and David "Dave" Adams, Mimi and Charles "Chuck" Aphorpe, Sharon and Richard Arnold, Pam and Ricky Arthur, Bobbie Stark and David Baxter, Debbie and Vern Busse, Teddi and Dale Cherry, Valli and Bruce Hale, Vicky and Gary Harris, DeeDee and Randy Hill, Debbie and Mike Jackson, Rae Lynn and Robert "Bob" Lambert, Jan and Cliff McKenzie, Melodye and Bobby Rogers, Kathy and DeWitt

Segler, Nancy and Ed Westbury Our class logo, designed by Debbie Busse, showed two doves flying side-by-side surrounded by a circle. We incorporated the class slogan from the Becomers, "Through faith we celebrate our lives," into our name.

We marked 1981 as the year of the wedding, when many of us were married by Bill Smith, minister to Singles. Gaily-wrapped gifts regularly appeared at the Sunday morning class on the third floor of the Activities Building. The first Sunday night each month became our "Evening with Friends" potluck tradition.

Our first big service project was the "Celebrations in Cooking" cookbook. Valli credits Melodye Rogers with the idea, Debbie Busse was the illustrator, and Teddi Cherry edited and organized the project. Valli's parents, the Fletchalls, printed the books (in Iowa) at cost, allowing us to net \$3,000 for the Deaf Action Center. We made the presentation to Elizabeth and John Criswell during a Sunday potluck, but the Criswells had to judge ten batches of chili first!

The summer of 1983 was hot, especially for those who helped Bobbie Stark open the Agape Clinic in the basement of Grace UMC. Vern Busse designed the space and Mike Jackson helped build the cabinets. Melody and Lane Kramer and David Baxter painted the area. Class members served on the Clinic Board, and in the Clinic through the years. William "Bill" Winkelmann even persuaded his Rotary Club to donate an air conditioner!

The year 1984 was the year of the baby shower The Harrises heralded the boom in December of 1983. That same month we had a great Christmas party at the Westburys' house, where Nancy was complaining that she was growing out of her maternity clothes at only four months. Well, by year's end we had fifteen new "members," including two Westburys!

Texas' Sesquicentennial was in 1986, and to commemorate it we undertook a tree planting project at Lake Sharon. David Baxter and Douglas "Doug" Reinelt chose twenty Red Oaks and twenty Crepe Myrtles, and Kathy Adams organized a bulb planting as well. Gary Harris arranged for the plaque that we placed in the ground.



Class presidents have included 1981 Kathy and DeWitt Segler, 1982: Bobbie Stark and David Baxter, 1983 Spring: Helen and Dennis Crowe, Fall. Debbie and Thomas "Tom" Marsh, 1984 Spring: Diana and Bill Winkelmann, Fall. Lyn and Jeb Blount, 1985 Spring: Cindy and Steven "Steve" Manchester, Fall. Jeanne and Doug Reinelt, 1986 Spring: Carol and Mark Wood, Fall. Melody and Lane Kramer,

1987 Spring: Vicky and Gary Harris, Fall. Debbie and Edwin "Ed" Rowland, 1988 Spring: Nancy and Mark Kimsey, Fall. Pam and Ricky Arthur, 1989: Bobbie Stark and David Baxter and Susan and Roger Baier, 1990: Melody and Lane Kramer

Discovery Class

The Discovery Class was organized by Jan McClendon with the help of Marilyn Bozell, director of Adult Ministry, as a response to the need for a couples' class in their 40 to 50s. Anne and Joe Foor agreed to act as sponsors. Joe and other guest speakers conducted lessons from the Bible and on contemporary issues to lead off the initial year's study

The first class meeting was held on September 10, 1989. First-year officers are Jane and Al McClendon, Candee and Jim Keen, Sandra "Sandy" and David Welch, Becky and Robert Heiser, and Janie and Bobby Douglass.

The class has around forty members on the roll, with an average attendance each Sunday of about twenty. Activities outside class have included Dutch treat family dinners after church, pot-luck dinners with study of Joseph Campbell and *The Power of Myth*, and an all-day family outing to cut Christmas trees for members and for some of the agencies served by the church. The class is striving to increase membership and become involved in church service projects.

Fellowship Class

The Fellowship class was organized in the spring of 1986 as an offshoot from the Grassroots Class. The opportunity to form the new class came when Dudley Dancer suggested that the Grassroots class was nearing capacity, a new class should be created. In September, 1986, Don and Fran Jackson became the new sponsors and teachers for the class. The group has grown from a group of thirty-five or so to the present average attendance of ninety people each Sunday. The membership currently stands at 120. The major focus of the Fellowship Class is a combination of God and family, marriage, spiritual growth and better understanding of the Bible.



Fellowship Class

Special class projects undertaken to help others include a blanket drive for the Vietnamese families of EDCP; rebuilding the playground facility at one of the EDCP churches; Christmas caroling at Blanton Gardens and Dickinson Place; volunteer hours for the Ronald McDonald House Train Exhibit; adopting a special needs family and supporting them financially and spiritually

Participation at the church includes service as Administrative Board Members, UMW officers and members, Sunday School teachers, Leadership Development interviewers, Vacation Bible School teachers, nursery workers, Young Children

Council members, Choir members, Interfaith Job Council members, and Young Married Council members.

The goals for the future of our class are to grow together in our Christian faith as we go through all the ups and downs of life; to expand each member's knowledge about the Bible and its teaching; to support one another in Christian service inside and outside of Highland Park, and to help each of us give glory to God and let Christ live through us.

The annual Christmas social is a special time of great fun. The first social was held at Claire and Talmage Boston's home with lots of singing. The second at Miriam and Tim Pugliese's home had horse-drawn carriage rides and a pianist playing Christmas music. The third Christmas Social was at Kay and Duncan Fulton's home. The food table was beautiful and delicious with lots of good conversation. Everyone brought an unwrapped toy for EDCP. The 1989 social was held at Beth and Steve Ross's home with a White Elephant exchange for our members and an unwrapped toy for EDCP.

Class Presidents have been 1986 Claire & Talmage Boston; 1987 Kay and Duncan Fulton; 1988 Carolyn and Tom Spurgeon; 1989 Carolyn and Ron Kalteyer.

Fifty Fifty Class

For sixty-four years, 1927-1991, the Fifty Fifty Class has met on Sunday mornings to worship, enjoy inspirational messages from dedicated teachers, and participate in Christian service. During that time, the class has had a way of making history. Its very formation was a "first." Not only was it the first couples class at Highland Park, it was one of the first in the city of Dallas!

The class was organized on the third Sunday of September, 1927, with a charter membership of only six couples. Their meeting place, the balcony of the sanctuary, had several drawbacks. Each Sunday members had to climb long stairs to their "classroom," sit on hard benches, sing heartily without benefit of a piano, then hurry out to make room for early arrivals at the church service. The class soon outgrew the balcony, eventually reaching its peak in the mid-1960s when membership showed 200 couples on the roster. By that time they were meeting in the Great Hall of the Activities Building. The Charter couples were Dorothy and Sam Dickinson, Dorothy and Gordon Gay, Lorine and Ogden Kidd, the Wade Russells, the Charles Powells, and Helen and Bob Brown.¹⁷

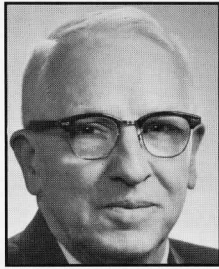
Before they were even five years old, the Fifty Fifty Class made history again. In the midst of the Depression in 1931 the church suggested that they raise \$90 for the Christmas Offering. Some of the young couples were still paying on their college education, and most were counting every penny. One member of the class, who seemed to be in better financial position than the others, offered to match whatever the class raised. "It wasn't easy," wrote class historian Ogden Kidd, "but you can bet the Fifty Fifty Class collected his \$90." Not only had they met their quota, they had doubled it, much to the amazement of the church office.

Social service projects have always held a place of special importance in the life of this group. The class made history again in 1939 when they came to the rescue of Georgia Bates by establishing the West Dallas Milk Fund. From 1939-1976, they contributed between \$50,000 and \$60,000 to this fund.

The Fifty Fifty Class credits its success to the excellent teachers it has had through the years, many of them associated with SMU. One of these, Wesley C.



Fellowship Class members build EDCP playground equipment.



Wesley Davis

Davis, taught the class for twenty-three years (1935-1957) and was especially beloved. Class members still treasure the memories of his inspirational lessons and the example of his Christian life. The Wesley C. Davis Memorial Endowment Scholarship Fund, which now exceeds \$122,353, was established as a lasting tribute to his memory in November 1975. Its income is committed to the Perkins School of Theology, SMU, for as long as the school endures. Since the first Davis scholar was named in September 1979, twenty-eight have been benefactors from the income of \$59,940.

A second fund honors the memory of another teacher, T Lee Miller, who was Administrator of the C. C. Young Home for many years. In 1976, nearly \$20,000 in this fund was spent on furnishing a room in the Miller wing. These two memorial funds are part of over fourteen other projects that have engaged the Fifty Fifty Class in the past ten years.



Participants on
the Bus Trip

The couples who were drawn to the class through the years found a lively spirit of fun and fellowship and a deep well-spring of Christian faith. In fact, "Food, Fellowship, and Fun might be a very good slogan for this class,"¹⁸ wrote Marguerite Lord, whose own spirit of fun more than matches that of the class. It is hard to imagine any group enjoying themselves more. Their first Annual Retreat in 1932 consisted of thirty-four couples and seventeen children. "We prepared our own food and slept out in the open on Army cots that the members brought with them. The sporting thing to do was not to sleep, nor let anyone else sleep. At two o'clock in the morning, someone slipped a turkey in bed with a couple. Two hours later . . . someone hit a croquet ball that traveled underneath the cots in which we were sleeping."¹⁹

On the occasion of their fortieth anniversary in 1967, the class produced a play, "The Mild, Mild West," a take-off on the popular television series Gunsmoke. The production was "Supervised and Directed by Everybody in the Cast." Among forty-three stars in the cast and crew were the following. Miss Kitty—Marguerite Lord; Matt—T. C. "Buddy" Garrett; Hildy—Myrna McKinley; Doc—Malcolm Bowers; Lester—Richard "Dick" Beyea; Prospector—Charles "Charlie" Sherrill, Prunella—Mary Jane Dickson; and Dirty Dave McGrew—Henry D. Akin.

The Fifty Fifty Class celebrated its sixtieth anniversary by moving to a new classroom, Zwingli Auditorium, on the third floor of the main building. Their invitation to all members included the note, "No steps. Two elevators!"

Old Father Time keeps knocking—our active roll is now 112. The average attendance is sixty-one. (A remarkable number for a sixty year old class.) "We have had honeymoons, children, grandchildren, and even some great grandchildren, but the faith, the spirit, the enthusiasm, the interest, and love for our class, our church,

and our fellowmen are the same now as in 1927 ”²⁰ For the blessings the Fifty Fifty Class has brought to Highland Park United Methodist Church through the years, we can only add, Amen.

The Presidents of the Fifty Fifty Class have been 1927-Gordon Gay; 1928-Sam Dickinson; 1929-Ben W Wiseman; 1930-A. W Foscue, Jr., 1931-32—Marvin Weeks; 1933-Beverly Roberts and W T Westmoreland; 1934-W Ogden Kidd; 1935-36—Lacy Goostree; 1937-Leslie Johnson; 1938-S. Joyner Cole; 1939-David Pfeiffer; 1940-Herbert Marshall; 1941-C. T Watson; 1942-Wallace Wheelis; 1943-Charles L. “Charlie” Beale; 1944-Reuben Ellis; 1945-Gordon Warren; 1946-Dayton Clewell, 1947 W R. “Bill” Lovejoy; 1948-Luther Sharp; 1949-Kenneth “Ken” Mitchell; 1950-John Claunch; 1951-Earl Taylor; 1952-Powell Gibson; 1953-J Newton Holt; 1954-Virginia and Malcolm Bowers; 1955-Mary and Ray Souder; 1956-Ethel and Emory Roderick; 1957-Judy and Harold Chapman; 1958-Ruth and Richard H. “Dick” Mighell, 1959-Mae and Cal Newberry; 1960-Vivian and Ralph Innes; 1961-Ruby and Harry Shytles; 1962-Frances and Dee Holder; 1963-Reba and Robert Lackey; 1964-Catherine and Henry D. Akin; 1965-Josephine and Ferral Smith; 1966-Leona and George Harmon; 1967-Ollye Lee and Morris Appell, 1968-Juanita and J Murrell Bennett; 1969-Grace and M. T Green; 1970-Opal and Cecil E. Bassett; 1971-Doris and Robert L. Johnson; 1972-Betty and M. S. “Doc” Moore; 1973-Clovis and James F Gibbs; 1974-Audrey and Paul G Peurifoy; 1975-Velma and Herman G. Williams; 1976-Millie and Wilbur Stanley; 1977-Martha and J W Pierce; 1978-Sammie and Frank Williams; 1979-Cloe and Wayne Casey; 1980-Marie and Herbert Hervey; 1981 Velma and James Johnson; 1982-Mary Edith and R. F “Randy” Duggan, Jr., 1983-Elizabeth and Rodney Fletcher; 1984-Clarice Taylor; 1985-Clair and John Claunch; 1986-Clovis Gibbs; 1987 Virginia Bowers; 1988-Grace Green; 1989-Mary Kathryn Gibson; 1990-Wanda Farris.

Good News Class

Formed in the fall of 1972 with four mid-20’s age couples, the Good News class has grown and aged to over 50 couples primarily in the 30’ and 40’s age group. The class format includes speakers from a variety of religious backgrounds who teach short series of lessons with emphasis on scriptural roots. In addition to guest speakers, class members teach about one fourth of the year’s lessons. Class members also share an annual spiritual retreat to Lake Sharon.



Good News
at Lake Sharon

Outside the Sunday morning meetings, the class has emphasized service in group activities from its earliest days by providing work crews for projects at Dickinson Place, Wesley Rankin Community Center and others, as well as adopting needy families. In the early 80's a service chaircouple was added to the list of class officers to enable the class to approach service in a more systematic way. The group has donated as much as \$2,000 in a year to projects, which are selected by class vote. Some of those include Wesley Rankin Community Center, East Dallas Cooperative Parish, Deaf Action Center, and Restart, as well as a scholarship at Perkins School of Theology.

Monthly socials further encourage fellowship among class members. Some favorites include "Dinner for Eight" and informal game nights at class members' homes. One occasion when the whole class participates together is the annual Christmas party when class members enjoy favorite traditions, such as the white elephant gift exchange. Several familiar gifts return year after year to be greeted like old friends.

In the early 80's the class instituted care groups to offer support for individual needs. With approximately eight families per group, one couple serves as care group leader. The leader alerts other group members, as well as the class president, when someone in the group needs assistance. This method allows a quicker response and an effective way of meeting members' needs, including anything from child care to food to emergency transportation to prayers.

Good News class members also fill positions of church leadership including positions on the Finance Committee, Nominations and Personnel Committee, Board of Trustees, Administrative Board as well as Lay members to Annual Conference.

Leadership in the Good News class is shared by hard working class officers elected annually. Members who have served as class presidents are Joe and Susan Allen, Philip and Margie Bankhead, Joe and Carla Byrom, Rick and Nancy Christy, Rita and Cleve Clinton, Phil and Cindy Crouse, Jim and Carol Gallman, Randy and Marybeth Hess, Steve and Vickie Hooker, Dick and Janet Lewis, Gene and Martha Lovering, Ed and Carol Marlar, Ken and Ellen McNeill, David and Lora Oswalt, John and Charmian Reap, Frank and Linda Roby, Del and Lane Threadgill, and Dan and Nancy Young.

Grassroots Class

The Grassroots Class began meeting the first Sunday in May 1983, at 9:30 a.m. on the second floor of the Biggers Building. This new class was formed in response to the church's need for an additional young married adult Sunday school class. The founding five couples were Debbie and Jon Alspaw, Jenine and David Burgett, Patty and Mark Morrison, Sharon and Joseph "Joe" Sholden and Becky and David Wilson. Of the founding couples and initial visitors to the new class, several are still active members today, including Debbie and Jon Alspaw, Phyllis and Gary Grant, Alicia and Steve Harris, Mary Alice and Glen Heckman, Trissie and Phillip "Phil" Osborn and Sharon and Joe Sholden. The couples were brought together in Christian fellowship by church staff members Robert Hasley and Gayle and Royce Hardaway and strong friendships that had developed among members who had grown up in Highland Park.

In their attempt to name the class, the members formed an immediate fondness for the name Grassroots, stemming from the fact that most of the couples

were attempting to plant grass at their homes. Each Sunday morning they discussed their progress before class began. It seemed as though they were nurturing their class as they were treating their lawns — long-term success would come only with plenty of tender loving care.

The class enjoys a variety of lesson topics including Christian living, family issues, work issues and of course the Bible. They place a high priority on helping others. Wesley-Rankin has been the most popular benevolent program over the years. Others include supporting a Campus Crusade missionary, delivering Meals-On-Wheels, and assisting a retired SMU professor

Class members serve the church in a variety of areas, including positions on the Administrative Board and related committees, as Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School leaders, Young Married Adult Council members, United Methodist Women's Circle members, Methodist Men's Club members, Highland Park Clothes Bank donors and Annual Blood Drive donors.

Some of the all-time favorite parties of the Grassroots class include the annual Christmas parties where members exchange Christmas ornaments and white elephant gifts, annual 4th of July parties at Phyllis and Gary Grant's house, monthly potluck dinners at couple's homes, and biannual weekend retreats at various Methodist camp sites, including Lake Sharon.

The class experienced a major turning point in March 1986. Dudley Dancer approached the class about starting another young married adult Sunday School class. Several Grassroots members volunteered to form the Fellowship Class. Both classes have grown and flourished. The Grassroots class is stronger now than ever before, with a membership of forty-three couples.

Class Presidents have included Debbie and Jon Alspaw, Phyllis and Gary Grant, Teri and Bron Praslicka, Cheryl and James "Bennett" Morgan, Trissie and Phil Osborn, Sharon and Robert "Bob" VanAmburgh, Becky and David Wilson, and Kathy and Jim Adams.

Living Bible Class

A twelve-week course on the Life of Christ brought together the first members of the Living Bible Class. The group wanted to continue when the study was done. Ken Neff, a Perkins School of Theology student, had taught the course, beginning February 10, 1974. But Ken was graduating and leaving for another church. With this in mind, class members Merriet Lewis and Hilda Blair began talks with Frank Warden and Patsy Qusted, director of program ministries, on possibly forming a permanent class.

Several socials and meetings were held through the summer to finalize plans, and officers were elected at a covered dish supper August 9 at Dorothy and Frank Warden's house. The Living Bible Class name was chosen, and Frank was made sponsor, remaining in that position until moving to Arkansas in June, 1985.

The organizing officers were Jennifer and Rusty Moore, president; Merriet Lewis and John Hall, vice president; Suzanne and Barry Harrington, secretary; Linda and Robert Pate, treasurer; Trisha and Gary Moore, social chairman; Hilda and Lyle Blair, greeters.

The class very quickly moved to larger quarters, then outgrew its room again and moved to Zwingli Lounge. During these early years the spirit of camaraderie flourished. A warm feeling of fellowship grew within the class as members attended

social events and worked together on benevolent projects. Many firsts are remembered: The first class picnic held after Sunday School in Caruth Park, October 20, 1974; the first Christmas party at Janet and Sam Burford's house; a home Bible study in June, 1975 at Hilda and Lyle Blair's house; and our first class retreat in August 1975 at Lake Sharon, with Zola Levitt teaching on prophecy

In 1981, some class members, desiring a lesson format with still more in-depth Bible study, formed The Word Class. As a smaller group again, the class yielded the large room to a class who needed the extra space, and moved to the beautiful environment of Cox Parlor. With the departure of Frank Warden, the class set out to find another special person to be the class sponsor. Herman Cook, pastoral care minister, filled that role until his departure in 1988, when he retired and moved to Arkansas.

Originally, the teachers planned their lessons on a monthly rotating basis. As of May, 1990, the class has retained a continuing teacher—Lanny Tanten. The desire to live out their lives as Christ would have them do brought the group together in 1974. It continues to motivate their fellowship today. A bond of caring friendships has seen the Living Bible Class members through their difficult times as well as their celebrations. The class members are striving to live out the commandment of Jesus found in John 15:12, "that you love one another as I have loved you."

Lula Rose Class

It all began in 1923 when Mrs. Lula Jones Rose invited nineteen young married women to her home for the purpose of organizing a new class. The new class was named "The Gleaners" until 1931, when the name was changed to the Lula Rose Class. This class existed until 1987 when it combined with the Bible Discussion Class.



Lula Rose

During the last twenty five years the class met each Sunday for discussion and Bible study of the International Lesson Series. Names of teachers include: Mrs. George Coatney, Pearl Wallace Chappel, Chester Chatham, Mrs. B. E. Seale, Mrs. W. B. Carrell, Mr. James Binion, Miss Elise Johnson, Beatrice Gervers, Nancy Cluck and Mary Longworth. The class song was "How Great Thou Art," and the class flower, Red Rose. The class motto was from Proverbs 31:20, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

The monthly social was held on the third Tuesday of each month when an outstanding speaker was invited to speak on an inspirational and interesting subject. Until about 1951, when renovation of the church was completed, socials were held in the homes of the members. Beginning in 1951 the class met in Cox Chapel Parlor, until September 1987 when it merged with the Bible Discussion Class.

The value of a Sunday School class is measured by the service it is able to render to others whose needs are greater than our own. Throughout the years benevolences have included: a milk fund for needy families; parties for Terrell State Hospital patients on the first Monday of each month; clothing, food, bus fare, school supplies, eye glasses and dentures for the retarded as well as Thanksgiving baskets. The class also helped to build the Memorial Chapel at Blanton Gardens.

In 1963 we celebrated our fortieth anniversary with a tea. In 1964 Mrs. Martha Tibbs saw the need of financial aid to student nurses, and started the fund later known as the Martha Tibbs Nurses Scholarship Fund, for the purpose of buying uniforms, shoes and books. Contributions to the fund continued until 1987.

The Lula Rose Class has performed a great ministry for its members, for the church, and for others through Christian fellowship, a strong teaching program, and an extensive program of mission and benevolent services.

Men's Bible Class

The Men's Bible Class has had a rich history, one as old as the church itself. Originally organized as the "Brotherhood Class" in 1917 1918, its goal was to provide a class for all the men of the church. Because the Bible was at the center of its teaching, it soon changed the name to the "Men's Bible Class." In its ranks were many of the saints of our early church family who were also leading Dallas citizens. Among its many distinguished teachers was Umphrey Lee, who taught this class when he became pastor. After teaching the class at 9:30, he would proceed to the sanctuary to preach the 11:00 service.



Men's Bible Class

When the new buildings were completed in 1950, and all the adult classes were moving into new quarters, the Methodist Men went to the revamped room 145, which served them well for many years. As the class got older, they moved on the second floor to 243, and finally merged with the Fifty-Fifty Class in the 1980s.

In order to help Perkins theology students with completing their education, the class established scholarships through the years. The first scholarship honored O. F. Sensabaugh, who was one of the class' members and also presiding elder when the church was founded. In 1971, the class established a scholarship in memory of Julien C. Hyer, who taught the class for many years.

Monday Night and John Wesley Classes

In the same year and in the same month that America was declaring its independence from England in order to become the United States, John Wesley wrote an entry in his journal for Wednesday, July 24, 1776, affirming that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. This declaration was in response to a writer contemporary with Wesley who claimed that the author of the Bible was men who included human mistakes in the book.

The early 1980s saw a definite renewal of spiritual awareness throughout the church and a decided re-awakening of serious interest in biblical study and teaching.

Highland Park United Methodist Church members became active in local Bible studies at that time, and one of these studies moved to Highland Park to become The Monday Night Bible Class.

Montague "Monty" Mills, teacher of that Monday evening class, was regarded as a special blessing to its members and the idea was soon put forward to organize a regular Sunday School class based on the highly successful teaching format utilized by The Monday Night Bible Class. Thus was born the Sunday morning John Wesley Bible Class.



John Wesley Class officers

Two concerns plagued the founders of this new class. First and foremost was the steady decline of membership in the United Methodist Church. During the two years prior to the 75th anniversary of Highland Park United Methodist Church this national decrease in United Methodist membership was documented at over 200,000 souls. The second concern was the under-utilization of Monty Mills' gifts and dedication as a Biblical instructor at Highland Park.

Jim Addison approached Dudley Dancer, director of Adult Ministry and Leighton Farrell to discuss possibilities of a Sunday School class that addressed these concerns. Dr Farrell was most encouraging and offered the support of the church.

The next major hurdle staring at this undaunted group was space. Unlike the national trend, the number of adult classes at Highland Park was growing, creating a tremendous lack of space at the 9:30 hour on Sunday morning, especially for a prospective large class. The first planning session was in February, 1987 Present at the meeting were Elaine Harris, Mildred Cochran, Patti and Charles Bifano, Jr., Sara and William H. "Bill" Wright, Kay and Howard Day, Esther and Monty Mills, Adele and Maurice "Hatch" Hatcher, and Diann and Jim Addison. The group designated the name of the new class as the John Wesley Bible Class.

Because the class wanted the spirit of John Wesley's moral and spiritual Bible authority carried religiously by their permanent teacher, and because Monty Mills espoused and had demonstrated this teaching style, Monty was engaged as the teacher. A native of South Africa and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, Monty started the class with a two-year series on the life of Christ. His unique style coupled with his ability to bring Christ to life in his teachings saw the class grow in great numbers. With the help of his wife, Esther, he put together study guides at his home and distributed hundreds free of charge to the class.

Soon, the south lounge of the Biggers Building, their original home no longer could accommodate them. The gymnasium was secured with the agreement to protect the floor with a tarpaulin. Because both audio and video tapes were being produced, the gym provided unique challenges. New lighting had to be installed that would run parallel with the existing system but would not produce the electrical interference being recorded on the tapes. The sound amplification problem experienced several experimental arrangements before a combination was found that would meet the needs. John Simon and R. Keith Parris worked tirelessly providing technical expertise solving the lighting and sound problems.

The audio tapes were copied on high-speed copiers immediately after the teaching session each Sunday so members could take the current tape with them. A line would always form at the back of the gym as soon as the class was over and people would receive their tapes, which looked like the waiting line at the cafeteria after church.



Audiovisuals help understand Bible truths.

Sunday School classes are special because of the individuals who provide and share warmth, love and care. Many people have provided countless hours of assistance to support this class. Musical leadership has been provided by Lois and Robert "Bob" Nielson, Pat and Frank Ottmers, and Tom Egbert; Dianne Bifano Young edited the class newsletter "Wesley Circuit Writer" (named by Bob Nielson through a contest), and class socials have been hosted by Susan "Susie" and Carl Summers, Diann and Jim Addison, Virginia Houston, Judy and Dan Tomlin and Elaine Harris. These, plus the class officers and those persons who have greeted class members on Sunday mornings, have provided the caring touches that continue to make this a special class. Presidents of the John Wesley Bible class have been 1987- Jim Addison; 1988- Larry Brady; 1989- Clayton Pledger

Mr. and Mrs. Class

The Mr and Mrs. Class, first called Couples Fellowship Class, is a unique group bonded together by a special kind of fellowship that has been sustained through the years. It was brought into being on September 17, 1946, when Marshall Steel, then senior minister of the church, called several young couples together at his home for the purpose of organizing a church school class to fill the needs of young couples who were returning after World War II and settling down to family life. At that time there was no child care until children were age three on Sunday mornings, and no group to meet the needs of young couples yearning for fellowship, spiritual enrichment, and an opportunity to form new friendships within a church environment.



Early Mr. and Mrs. Class officers,
Betty Lou and Milton Gish,
and Betty and Elmer Gessell

Spearheaded by Bill Dickinson, the associate minister, the idea of a weeknight meeting was enthusiastically received by those couples for whom no baby-sitter was available on Sunday mornings. So a class was formed to meet on Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m., which was later changed to Thursday night when kitchen facilities at the church became available. Before that, each meeting was a covered dish supper, followed by hymn singing and a speaker for the evening. A baby-sitter was hired to care for the children, and — would you believe — it was none other than Mary Jane Dickson, wife of our associate minister, Ken Dickson. At that time she was Mary Jane Ramsey who was on the staff in the Children's Ministry and also attending Perkins School of Theology

The first meeting was held two weeks after the gathering at Dr Steel's with a gratifying thirty-six present, representative of some seventy-five or so couples who had joined the church and had not identified themselves with any class. To take care of the business of the class, officers were elected as follows: President Milton Gish, Vice President D. Otis Tomlin, Secretary/Treasurer Doug Poythress. We are still

blessed with the presence and guidance of Milton Gish, our first President, as well as several other members of that original group. Among those is Edward "Ed" Vinson, our inveterate song leader, who is good at announcing hymn requests from members much to their surprise!

Through the years of excellent leadership and dynamic teachers the class has grown to approximately 275 members. This includes such prominent members as the late Willis Tate, former President of SMU, Durwood Fleming, former President of Southwestern University, distinguished Bishops O. Eugene "Gene" Slater, Lance Webb, John Hardt, Jim Thomas, the late W. McFerrin Stowe, and several retired members of the clergy.

There is an upbeat feeling in this class that is hard to describe. It is something you sense that seems linked by a chain of "E's": Enthusiasm, Exuberance, Effectiveness, Educative, Emphatic, Exceptional, and plenty of Enjoyment. All these qualities have been in evidence through all the years.



The class always enjoys dinner together.

A strong tradition of great teachers.



Now that we no longer have covered dish suppers and there is no more need for baby-sitters, the conversation centers around grandchildren. This still leaves plenty of time for fellowship, caring, and service.

Our talented members are outstanding in every phase of church life, giving of themselves in total commitment to the growth and betterment of our church. In the beginning, as a way of raising money, a Round Robin bridge group was started and it still exists. Then, to increase funds, class members contrived an auction of items, made by the class members with primarily class members in attendance. The group would cook, sew, knit, hammer, paint you name it. It seems people were willing to be generous, knowing that it all went to a wide variety of needs and benevolences. For example, a loaf of Lou and Joe Strother's homemade bread sold for \$9.00.

As the class grew and members were increasingly busy with teenage children's activities and community commitments of their own, the class decided to set aside the month of October for one big drive for monetary contributions. This has proven to work very well, providing a sizeable fund which is administered by a committee of members in charge of screening needs and requests, and then presenting their findings to the class for approval.

In addition to the benevolent fund, the Molly Malone Fund was established

in 1981 with a gift from the estate of class member Molly Malone, with the request that the principal remain intact and that interest derived from it be used to help those in need or to supplement the benevolent fund.

Besides the spiritual uplift with inspirational speakers and each member's nourishment so deliciously provided by Odetta Rousseau, the fellowship is enriched by a social committee that transforms holidays and special occasions into magical times with ingenious decorations and entertainment it is a fun time!

Those members who have served the Mr and Mrs. Class as president have been 1946-1947 Betty Lou and Milton Gish; 1947 1948 Mike Morgan; Betty and Elmer Gessell, 1948-1949 Rose and Boone Macaulay; 1949-1950 Cecile and Robert "Buddy" Drake; 1950-1951 - Bernice and Albin "A. C." Raines; 1951 1952 Grace and Jack Putnam; Theta and John McLeroy; 1952-1953 Annette and Bob Lyford, Dorothy and Harry Brutsche, Althea and Harry Emigh; 1953-1954 Jean and Donald "Don" Parkinson; 1954-1955 Ryllis and George Golden; 1955-1956 Adele and Roy Cresswell, 1956-1957 Ernie and Willard "Bill" Spear; 1957 1958 - Peggy and Wesley "Arch" Archbold; 1958-1959 Lois and Jim Bowles; 1959-1960 Ann and Kiel Sterling; 1960-1961 Kay and Edward "Ed" Vinson; 1961-1962 Betty and Loren Miller; 1962-1963 Margaret and Robert J "Bob" LaPrade; 1963-1964 Emme Lou and Hubert Johnson; 1964-1965 Mary Lou and Malcolm Crow; 1965-1966 Marie and Jim Mills; 1966-1967 Kathryn and Kemp Johnson; 1967-1968 Janie and Dudley Brutsche; 1968-1969 - Jean and James "Jim" Lacy; 1969-1970 - Mary Ann and Winston "Win" Fournier; 1970-1971 - Ermance and Vahram "V Y" Rejebian; 1971 1972 Adelene and Knox Oakley; 1972-1973 Virginia and George Staton; 1973-1975 Allie Belle and Lennart Larson; 1975-1976 Virginia and S. Densel Dean; 1976-1977 Lucille and Herman Dearing; 1977 1978 Wilma and Martin O'Neal, 1978-1979 Billy Ruth and R. Richard "Dick" Rubottom, 1979-1980 Jane and Jim Makins; 1980-1981 Annette and J T "Jim" Groves; 1981 1982 Joel and Willis Tate; 1982-1983 Eva B. and Gene Slater; 1983-1984 Mary Alice and William D. "Dale" Nix; 1984-1985-Yvonne and R. R. "Bob" Gilbert; 1985-1986 Ruth and William "Bill" Moore; 1986-1987 Ruth and J Newton Holt; 1987 1988 Lynette and Elvin Geiser; 1988-1989 Lurlyn and Durwood Fleming; 1989-1990 Alicia and Ross Washam.

Roundtable Class

As its name suggests, The Roundtable Class for all ages began in 1953 with members seated about a large, round, maple table in Wyclif Lounge. The discussion format was initiated by Jo Faye and John Godbey with the aim of creating informality, simplicity and full class participation. Initially, topics discussed related primarily to needs of young couples with children. Outstanding teachers in this period were Floyd Norman and L. F Sensabaugh. Also assisting during formative years was Crawford Whaley of the church staff.

By the end of its first year, the class consisted of fifteen couples. Very soon it developed a reputation as a provider of unusual opportunities for Christian education. Many outstanding leaders brought their knowledge and experience to the class. Among these teachers were Perkins School of Theology Dean Merrimon Cunniggin; Doug Jackson, John Deschner, Albert Outler, Victor Furnish, and Bishop Lance Webb. And the Highland Park staff members who contributed were Bill Dickinson, Mary Jane and Kenneth Dickson, Grady Hardin, Georgia Bates,

James Hares, Clarence Guittard, Frank Warden, Dudley Dancer, Don Learner, and Herman Cook. Others included Monty Mills and Durwood Fleming. Notable teachers who have returned periodically include Dallas Theological Seminary faculty members—John Witmer, Craig Blasing, and Darryl Boch, and representatives of Wyclif Bible Translators and the Salvation Army

In the 1970s the Roundtable Class moved to its present location in room 145. From the beginning, service to others was a primary objective. Over almost four decades, benevolences have been varied and numerous. In addition to financial support provided to many worthy causes, hands-on activities have included painting the home of a needy person, refurbishing at Dickinson Place and Lake Sharon, and carrying cheer to shut-ins at Blanton Gardens and other locations. An annual project provides clothes and food for needy families selected by the Dallas Police Department and Wesley-Rankin.

Roundtable class members have served in almost every area of the church—choir, Administrative Board, Finance Committee, Sunday School teaching, Vacation Bible School, East Dallas Cooperative Parish, Haiti mission, elementary summer reading program, United Methodist Women, ushering, greeting, and Advent Workshop, to name a few



Roundtable Class

The class was the catalyst for a plenary four session meeting of nine denominations participating in a Consultation on Church Union—described by Albert Outler as “one of the most significant events hereabouts in 1972.” An article in the December, 1971 Methodist magazine, *Together*, by John Lovelace, pointed out that the plenary grew from a Highland Park class study on ecumenism, led by class member Richard “Dick” Perdue.

To promote fellowship, the class has held annual family retreats at Lake Sharon and many other Texas and Oklahoma sites. There are monthly socials, and for years there was an annual square dance. Get-togethers have been varied, but perhaps the most popular has been the covered-dish suppers.

Founding members still active in the class include Peggy and Samuel “Mack” Mims and Marge Morgan. Members who have served as president are 1953-Jo Faye and John Godbey; 1954-Norma and Bob Hall, 1955-Jeanne and Albert “Al” Orsinger; 1956-Esther and Robert “Bob” Whiteside; 1957-Jane and Bill Boorhem; 1958-Marge and Bill Peterson; 1959-Peggy and Mack Mims; 1960-

Evelyn and Dick Perdue; 1961-Annabeth and James P “J P” Simpson; 1962-Jeanne and Al Orsinger; 1963-Jeanne and Kirk Phillips; 1964-Marge and Neil Morgan; 1965-Elizabeth and Philip Morrow; 1966-Helen and Otto Willbanks; 1967-Conchita and Edward “Ed” Winn; 1968-Grace and Thomas “Russ” Delatour; 1969-Beverly and Wayne Bower; 1970-Marge and Neil Morgan; 1971-Evelyn and Dick Perdue; 1972-Bonnie and Bill Anderton; 1973-Helen and Otto Willbanks; 1974-Elizabeth and Philip Morrow; 1975-Peggy and Mack Mims; 1976-Betty and Tony Shepherd; 1977-Jerrie and Edward Hilliard; 1978-Audrey and Leslie Beilharz; 1979-Ray and Richard “Dick” Madison; 1980-Aliene and Thomas “Tom” Perkins; 1981-Pat and Trent Coursey; 1982-Mary Lou and Tom McMillan; 1983-Elizabeth and Philip Morrow; 1984-Evelyn and Dick Perdue; 1985-Grace and Russ Delatour; 1986-Peggy and Mack Mims; 1987-Bonnie and Bill Anderton; 1988-Helen and Otto Willbanks; 1989-Audrey and Leslie Beilharz.

Seekers Class

The Seekers Class, for couples and singles in their 40’s, began in 1985 under the guidance of Dudley Dancer. Helping in the organization was a steering committee which included Jane and Tommy Meaders, Carrie and Tolbert Chisum, and Janie and Richard Means.

Dudley Dancer was the original teacher for the class, which met in the Reynolds room of the Activities Building. Guest teachers, speaking on a variety of topics, have also been used.

Class members are active in the church. They serve on the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, Board of Trustees, Administrative Board, Lake Sharon Board of Trustees, and as Sunday School teachers. Their main social event of the year is a Christmas party at a member’s home. Dinner and ornament exchange are featured.

Pictured, left to right, first row: Ruth Heald, Kathryn Shuffield, Deanna Brown, Nita Smith, William “Bill” Wallace, Janie Means, Richard Means. Second row: Virginia Gregory, Mike Wylie, Jean Wylie, Denise Wallace, Betsy Weber, William “Bill” Weber. Third row: Glynn Gregory, Jack Brown, David Smith, Karen Uhr, Charles “Charlie” Shuffield, Barry Uhr.



Spectrum Class

In its sixteen-year history, from the fall of 1974 to mid-1990, The Spectrum Class has studied a wide range of topics. Members have discussed child rearing, social and intellectual issues as seen by contemporary authors, the works of C. S. Lewis, Bible studies, and other topics relating to the constant struggle between good and evil.

The Class began with a nucleus of young couples and singles who were active in Child Development teaching and MYF counseling. Since all attended 11 a.m.

Sunday services in Cox Chapel, they wanted to form a class at 9:30 when their children were in Sunday School. Even more, class members wanted spiritual and intellectual challenges, which would include a wide range of topics, lively participation and discussion. About twenty people interested in meeting these goals got together under the leadership of Ferris Norton, doctoral candidate at Perkins, and his wife, Connee. Allie Belle and Lennart Larson, a SMU professor, agreed to serve as class sponsors. Class members have also done some of their own teaching.

Always, members explored opposing points of view on whatever topics were being examined. Always, however, there was an underlying unity of spirit, since the class not only permitted but also encouraged the airing of different viewpoints as ways for learning from each other

Early class members included Kay and Mike Arp, Lucinda Wyman, Becky and John French, Nancy and Clark Williams, Marilyn White, Dana and Jackson Harkey, Virginia and Glen Gatlin, Barbara Dorff, Amy Matthew, Sharon Jackson, Georgiana and Larry Austin, Karen and Troy Murrell, Diane and Will Green, and Janet and Don Malone. Various interns and Highland Park staff members assisting were Jim Dorff, Steve Matthew, and Ron Croom.

The Larsons returned to their own class in the early 1980s, and leadership came exclusively from class members. Dana and Jackson Harkey and Diane and Will Green guided the class through this time, when a number of members moved to other cities and others left to teach or participate in different classes. New members have continued to arrive and enrich the class.

Two By Two Class

Seventeen young couples under the leadership of Natalie and H. C. Maiden, Jr., Margaret and Bob LaPrade, Dorothy Jane and George Irwin, and Donna and Holland McCarver formed a new couples class in April, 1950. The Two by Two Class was the third couples class in the history of the church, and the second to be formed as a Sunday morning class after 1927

The seventeen charter couples came to the church in the late 1940s on the wave of an unprecedented population explosion after World War II. They were young, energetic, enthusiastic people. Some were returning home to Dallas; others were moving to the city for the first time, but all were in the process of establishing careers and starting their families after the long interruption of the war years. They came to the church seeking new friends and good fellowship with other couples who shared common interests, problems, and goals.

Their arrival in the late 1940s coincided with a tremendous building program at the church. A temporary frame structure had been erected on the North parking lot to help alleviate the overcrowded conditions. It was there, while attending the AYA Class, that many of the founding couples first met. Their request to break away from one class in order to form another was a "first" at Highland Park. In one sense it was a break with the past, but in another way, it was the wave of the future. Within months, several other new classes had also been formed.

The class grew rapidly as more and more young couples arrived. In the early years they were drawn together as young parents who shared common problems in child care and training. Today the Two by Two members tend to talk more about their grandchildren. The strong bond that formed early in its history produced a caring, sharing community of believers. Today there are ninety-four couples on the roster

The first regular teacher of the class was Trent C. Root. He and his wife, Trixie, were genial and understanding, providing exactly the right leadership for this group of determined young people. Another long-time favorite teacher was Harold Boss, who often prepared lessons focusing on prayer as the central theme. Three regular teachers today are Methodist ministers. They and their wives are much loved members of the class: Drs. Margareta and John Deschner, Madele and James Hares, and Catherine and Nuell Crain. They bring the inspiration of God's Word again and again with messages of hope, faith, and Christ's love. Their lessons are supplemented by speakers from many different walks of life.

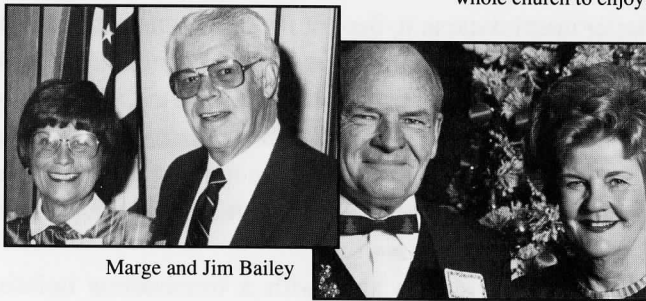


John Lewis

The laughter and fun generated in this class are evident every time they meet. Even so, Two by Two members will tell you that responding to the needs of others in Christ's name is the very foundation of their being as a Methodist group. Without fail each year the class gives to three major benevolences, the C. C. Young Home, the Methodist Children's Home in Waco, and some phase of the West Dallas Ministry. These are only three of ten or twelve benevolences selected each year for the class' support.

For forty-one years, 1950-1991, outstanding leadership and service have been a hallmark of the members of this class. They have given freely, not only of their money, but of their time and their talents. In the past decade, the Two by Two Class has raised over \$55,000 for benevolent projects. In 1987, the class established the Gloria Dykes Education Fund, honoring the memory of a member who devoted many years to teaching in the Elementary Division, and in 1990 they established the Two by Two Class Foundation as a permanent memorial to the lives and service of class members who have passed on.

In 1987 the class, under the leadership of Bob and Pat Adams, gave the church its "Hall of Apostles" next to the church library, displaying the Kenneth Wyatt set of Jesus and his disciples for the whole church to enjoy.



Marge and Jim Bailey

Margaret and Bob LaPrade



Dr. Farrell and Bob Adams dedicate the Hall of Apostles.

Two by Two members never forget a good party, and each one evokes special memories. Some recall the Biblical party in 1966 when associate pastor Ken Dickson showed up as King David. Others remember the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1975 as setting the record for the longest occasion (Saturday evening through Sunday afternoon). And there have been many others, including retreats, travel, and always a Christmas party.

Most of the members of this class today are active retirees. They enjoy traveling, good eating, grandchildren, healthy exercise, and good fellowship. Their retirement gives many of them more time to reach out to others. The participation

of Two by Two Class members in church activities today is as vital as it was when they started forty-one years ago. Between 1987 and January 1, 1990, more than 170 members answered the call to service.

Yet the years have taken their toll. There have been joys and sorrows, prosperity and hardship, success and failure, and lost loved ones to mourn. Through it all the Two by Two Class looks to the future with deep and abiding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Past presidents of the Two by Two class include 1950-51 Natalie and H. C. Maiden, Jr., 1951-52. Margaret and Bob LaPrade; 1952-53: Ann and O. Paul Corley; 1953-54: Donna and Holland McCarver; 1954-55: Joan and Bob Ford; 1955-3/56: Betty and Gene Werner; Vendetta and Millard Collins; 3-9/56: Betty and Gene Werner; 1956-57 Merle and Carl Taylor; 1957-58. Ruth and Charlie Ball; 1958-59· Betty and Max Ligon; 1959-60: Margaret and John Lewis; 1960-61 Jackie and William F "Bill" Jacoby; 1961-62. Mary Ellen and Wright Smith; 1962-63: Betty and Bob Smith; 1963-64: Pat and Henry Gilchrist; 1964-65 Alyce and Jess Adams; 1965-66: Nancy and Lloyd Gilmore; 1966-67 Mary Lou and Clarence Guittard; 1967-68: Mary Eleanor and William "Bill" Boone; 1968-69· Pat and Lyle Ozmun; 1969-70: Mossy and Tom Minner; 1970-71 Nita and Jack Harkey; 1971 72. Mary Jane and Edwin "Ed" Turner; 1972-73: Ann and Kiel Sterling; 1973-74: Mary Katherine and James "Jim" Bussard; 1974-75: Elizabeth and Samuel "Sam" Carrell, 1975-76: Mary Lou and David Behne; 1976-77· Mary and George Echerd; 1977 78. Maribelle and Harold "Hal" Leeper; 1978-79· Gloria and J Roland Dykes; 1979-80: Betty and John Savage; 1980-81 Nadine and Tom Sawyer; 1981-82. Connie and Robert "Bob" Strow; 1982-83: Dorothy and H. Mathews "Mat" Garland; 1983-84: Elizabeth and Olin Cecil, 1984-85· Franette "Fran" Barnett; 1985-86: Pat and Robert "Bob" Adams; 1986-87 Margaret and Bob LaPrade; 1987-88. Marge and James "Jim" Bailey; 1988-89· Margie and Delmar "Del" Zahniser; 1989-90: Martie and Tom Matthews.

Charter couples of the Two by Two class include Natalie and H. C. Maiden, Margaret and Bob LaPrade, Dorothy Jane and George Irwin, Donna and Holland McCarver, Sue and Frank Fisk, Nita and Jack Harkey, Martha and James "Jim" LeVelle, Janice and Marion Greve, Ann and O. Paul Corley, Jackie and Bill Jacoby, Jessamine and William M. "Bill" Younger, Nell and Wallace Barker, Martha and Herman Eastland, Rosemary and James Russell "Russ" Gilpin, Martie and Tom Matthews, Peggy and Mack Mims and Alice and Walter Spradley

Wesleyan Fellowship Class

The Wesleyan Fellowship Class celebrated a decade of existence in 1990. The class was organized March 9, 1980 for couples in the forty to sixty age bracket. The first members were Mauricia and Charles Fugitt, Peggie and Hugh King, Rosalynn and John Biggers, and Pat and Frank Ottmers. Helping with the organization were Royce Hardaway from the church staff and Nancy Cluck, professor at the University of Texas at Dallas.

The group initially met in the home of the Fugitts, who served as the first president, and then they moved to room 156. Members soon outgrew these accommodations, however, and moved again, this time to Wycliff Lounge, where they continue to meet at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday

Ted Campbell was the first class teacher, and a very popular teacher he was. He remained for several years, teaching Bible studies and the history of John Wesley

and Methodism. Other teachers have been Herman Cook of the church staff; Jerry Gilmore, lawyer and husband of former staff member Martha Gilmore; and John Tidwell, executive manager of Fair Park.

Benevolences of the class include sponsorship of Ruff House for several years, and a garage sale to benefit the Korean Medical Mission conducted by Chai and Suni Ahn, both class members.

Various members have also served on the Board of Trustees, Chairman of Administrative Board, Finance Chairman, on the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, Administrative Board, and other leadership positions across the church.

In its tenth year, the class has a roster of seventy-five. Members now include both couples and singles, and the age limit has been expanded to accommodate present and new class members.

As its name indicates, the class emphasizes fellowship. Each session begins with coffee and conversation. Frequent parties are a tradition. Party planners are Doris Curtis, Joyce McClellan, Mauricia Fugitt, Carmen McCracken, Janice "Jan" Newman, and Charlene Renner. A special birthday celebration at the home of Carmen McCracken marked the class' tenth anniversary.

Wesleyan Fellowship
1990 Class Officers
First Row (Left to Right)
Marvin Higley, Doris
Curtis, Madge Tidwell, Richard
Ceilley, Darlene Ceilley, Betty
Jacobs, Suzie Matthews, Jerry
Gilmore, Mary Jones, Mary
Catherine Dibble, Bob Jones, Hugh
King Second Row (Left to Right)
Bea Curtis, John Tidwell, Ross
Jacobs, Tom Matthews



Presidents of the Wesleyan Fellowship Class have been 1980 - Mauricia and Charles Fugitt; 1981 - Joyce and Tom McClellan; 1981 - Peggie and Hugh King; 1982 - Gene and John Mobley; 1982 - Rosanne and Warren Greene; 1983 - Doris and Ben Curtis; 1983 - Phil Stroupe; 1984 - Pat and Henry Gilchrist; 1984 - Mary Cathryn and Parkes Dibble; 1985 - Mildred and Bob Cochran; 1985 - Charlene and Fred Renner; 1986 - Betty and Rich Thomas; 1986 - Alice Ann Harrell, 1987 - Kay and Forrest Lumpkin; 1987 - Helen and David Ivy; 1988 - Carmen and Sam McCracken; 1988 - Jan and Campbell Newman; 1989 - Mary and Paul Baker; 1989 - Norma and David Nix; 1990 - Mary and Robert Jones.