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Aldersgate United Methodist Church North Charleston History

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

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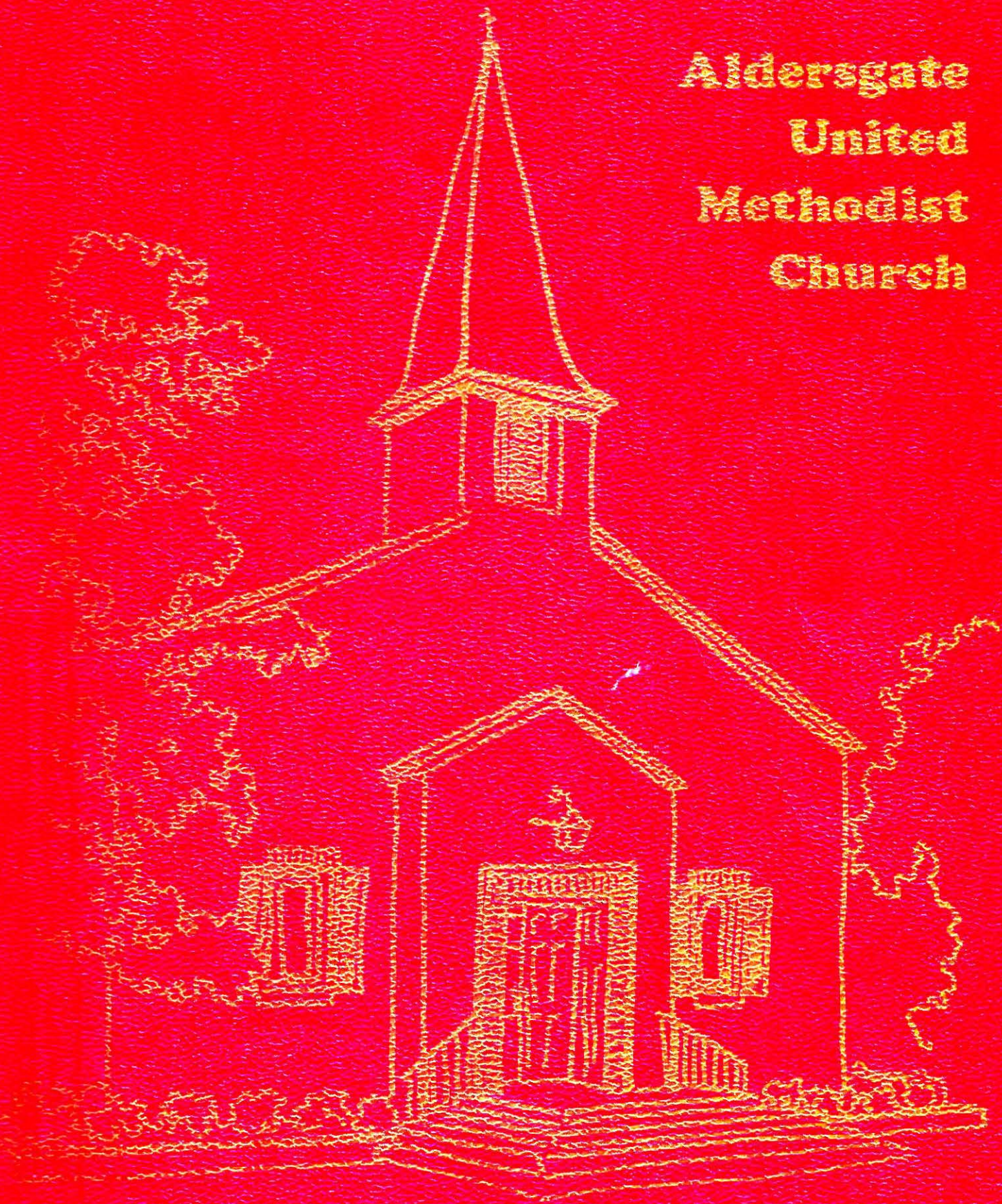
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Advent
United
Methodist
Church



1915 1916 1917 1918 1919

1996 Directory
of
Aldersgate United Methodist Church

1444 Remount Road
North Charleston, South Carolina, 29406

(803) 744-0283

This book is dedicated
in honor and memory of our founders

The Rev. Ralph O. Bates

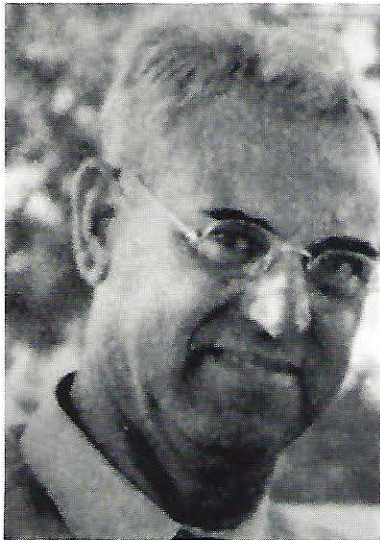
The Rev. A. McKay Brabham, Jr.

The Charter Members of Aldersgate

50th Anniversary Edition

Aldersgate United Methodist "A Written History"

The war was over. In Europe and in America the world was witnessing new beginnings. Remount Road was no exception. Rev. A. McKay Brabham, Jr. was serving the Methodist Church in North Charleston and he hired a young army veteran named Mr. Ralph Bates as pastor's assistant upon his return from Europe. Ralph's parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Bates, were members of the Methodist Church in North Charleston. Ralph worked tirelessly for the church, organizing baseball teams and other activities for the youth.



Mr. W. E. Bates



"Ma" Bates

McKay Brabham and Ralph Bates began talking about the need for new churches in the area. The W. E. Bates home was three miles from the North Charleston church, and planners thought this an ideal distance to develop a new church. They began work on Remount Road.

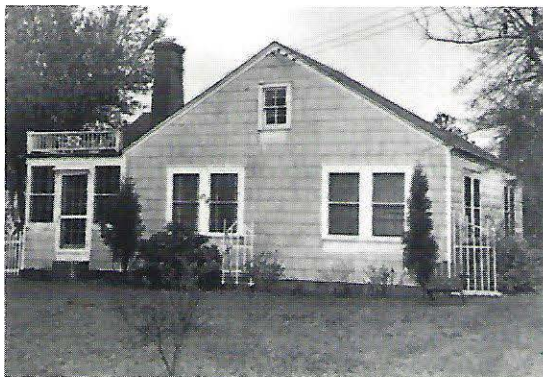
Ralph Bates visited from house to house and made a map of every home and noted if the families were interested in beginning a new church. Efforts to secure an army chapel or to rent a building had failed. The decision was made that the interested group would meet in

the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bates. Rev. Brabham would lead the worship. The Charleston Evening Post article read: "On next Sunday, March 17, 1946, a new Methodist church in the area...will have its beginnings...They will meet for Sunday School at 3:00 p.m. and preaching services at 4:00 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Bates, opposite the old prisoner-of-war camp on the Remount Road."

As interest grew, so did the need for a site for the new church. Twelve Methodist laymen in Charleston donated \$50 each to purchase three acres of land on Remount Road where the church is now located. Later, Mrs. Ellie Vroome donated another 1½ acres for playground area in the back. The thinking was that the church property would be used for building a church, and to use the

grounds for a community playground instead of cemetery space. (During the afternoon of the 4th Anniversary Day celebration, three of the acres were dedicated for use as a community playground that was under the supervision of Mr. Danny Jones of Cooper River Parks and Playground Department.)

The congregation moved out of the Bates' home as spring-time permitted them to gain visibility by meeting outside at the site of the new church. Men cleared a space near the road with equipment lent to them by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. They built a platform and a pulpit. And the people



The Bates' Home

came. Records show that 33 persons signed the membership roll when the church was chartered on April 28, 1946.

Mr. B. E. McLaurin, a member of the Methodist Church of North Charleston, hauled a piano in a pick-up truck to the site every Sunday afternoon so the congregation could have music. Later, a smaller field organ was used. By late April, the afternoon open-air services were becoming warmer, and with a low-country summer fast approaching, the decision was made to build a tabernacle.

The new tabernacle was to be constructed farther away from the street. It was built with materials donated by Mr. W. W. Hutto of St. George, and constructed by church members and friends. There was a roof, but no walls, and the earthen floor was covered with straw. The labor



"The sky was our roof ... it did not rain." Mrs. Louise Rhea

for the benches was donated by Mr. B. E. McLaurin, bringing the total cost of the structure to \$137.

The Tabernacle was wonderful! By June 6, the work was completed and the new organ was in place. The church was on its way. And the people came.

Before the congregation moved their services to The Tabernacle, many who drove by on Remount Road were inspired to do great things in their own churches, seeing the little congregation who so desperately wanted a church of their own. Rev. Brabham told the story of Mr. Red Price, who was a member at First Baptist in Charleston, and their struggle with improvement costs. He said their congregation was inspired by the determination of the little Remount Road congregation.

The Tabernacle was used for Vacation Bible School that summer, held July 8-19. It was used through the fall for worship and for Sunday School. Mr. S. R. Sheider served as first Sunday School superintendent.

Along with his work at the Methodist Church of North Charleston, Rev. Brabham met weekly with members of the new church. They would come together in the early evening, have prayer, and then visit with prospective members in the area. From this effort, the congregation grew. The new church was also encouraged by Rev. Carlisle Smith, who was serving Cherokee Place Methodist. There were many "lay-



"The Tabernacle"

founders" of the new church from the Methodist congregations of Cherokee and North Charleston.

One member wrote later of the early church, "The young church was an evangelistic group, visiting newcomers to the community and encouraging friends and neighbors to join with them. Nothing seemed impossible."

"We still have to decide on a name for our church," wrote Rev. Brabham in a weekly newsletter mailed to members in May of 1946. The Charleston Methodist District Superintendent, The Rev. Dr. Homer L. F. Shuler, had suggested St. Barnabas Methodist from the Book of Acts where Barnabas is shown to be the influence that saved the Apostle Paul for the church. He also suggested the name Port City Methodist as it is located between the airport and the port terminal. "It would stand as the Methodist Church in South Carolina carrying the name symbolic of South Carolina's one important port of entry."

Eight years earlier (1938) Methodists had celebrated the bi-centennial of John Wesley's heart-warming Aldersgate Street experience. It was on the minds of all Methodists, and was the theme of the summer's Vacation Bible School lessons.

On June 18, in the newsletter for the church, "RAMBLIN'S ON THE REMOUNT ROAD," Rev. Brabham invited the congregation to "come prepared to suggest and vote for the name which you want the church to have. This will be a part of our business this Sunday."

On Sunday, June 23, 1946, the name of "Aldersgate" was suggested by the young people of the church. The name received the most votes, and from that day forward, the Methodist Church on Remount Road became known as Aldersgate Methodist Church -- a name shared by only two other churches in South Carolina, one in Greenville and one in Sumter.

In October 1946, Rev. Shuler appointed a young student pastor, John Quantock Crumbly, to serve Aldersgate. Mr. Crumbly had indicated that he would become a Methodist after he finished seminary. On April 9, 1946 the Women's Society of Christian Service, (later known as United Methodist Women), was formed at Aldersgate. Mrs. Rutilla Salvo served as the first president of the Aldersgate W.S.C.S., and each of the 14 charter members held an office. The W.S.C.S. supported the growth of the new church by feeding the workers, holding prayer meetings, organizing fund raisers, and even selling bricks! They served the church as teachers, choir members, evangelists, and visitors, and instilled in their children a proper way to love, maintain, and sustain the new church. (Some of their children are still in our active membership.)

The Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) was established for the church at this time. Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bates served as first youth counselors. The activities were for young people aged 12-24. They had cook-outs, Bible studies, and a youth choir. They actively participated in sub-district work and met regularly at 7:30 on Sunday evenings. Their church school teacher was Mr. Robert Reid. Aldersgate sponsored Boy Scout Troop # 71 with Mr. H. Vereen Smith serving as scoutmaster.

During March of 1947, the church voted to purchase the Port Park Army Section B Chapel "with all its fittings and furnishings" from the War Assets Administration. Some members even mortgaged their homes to help make the purchase. The chapel was located about two blocks west of the Aldersgate site. Plans were made to move it down Remount Road. A one-day moving permit was acquired. A moving crew was contracted and the big day came....and the big day went. For four days the crew struggled with getting the little chapel down Remount Road. Traffic had to be rerouted, and the crew camped on the Aldersgate site



The Sanctuary "ON" Remount Road

during this time. But on the 4th day..... "Praise the Lord. Our church is home on our lot!" said Louise Rhea, years later when compiling the church scrapbook pictures. A barbecue was held that evening to celebrate.

In June of 1947, John Crumbly decided he would not become a Methodist but chose to return to the Episcopal church, and Rev. Brabham was again pastor of Aldersgate. In November of 1947 Rev. Dallas L. Mackey was appointed as pastor of the Aldersgate and Midland Park charge. He held the first service in the new sanctuary on November 27, 1947. On Aldersgate Day, May 24, 1948, a special service was held at 8:45 in the evening to commemorate the 312th anniversary of "the heart-warming experience." The sermon was entitled "The Warm Heart." It was under Rev. Mackey's leadership that the congregation began fund raising for extensive improvements to new sanctuary, including brick veneer and paved walk-ways.

Three thousand bricks were donated by Mr. W. W. Hutto, and 500 each were given by 4 other local Methodists. In the summer of 1948, workers assembled the scaffolding and the brickwork began. An additional lot was donated just east of the sanctuary and plans were made to obtain a parsonage. A huge celebration and service of thanksgiving was held on Thanksgiving Day, 1948.

In February of 1949, Joe L. Moore and Associates, developers of the Port Park area (former army camp area), donated to the church, a large building that had been used by the army during the war. In March, it was brought down Remount Road and placed at the back of the property. Moore-Hunt Hall was redesigned to house six Sunday School classes and an assembly hall that was also used as a recreation room. The interior was refinished with sheetrock and new lighting and a new gas heating system was added. The Tabernacle, which the church had out-grown, was razed and the wood used to build a kitchen in the new annex. The W.S.C.S. purchased a large commercial gas range for the kitchen.



Moore - Hunt Hall

In 1949 the choir was organized under the direction of Mrs. Dallas Mackey. They purchased choir robes and in a unified effort, the Choir and the Young Adult Class bought a Minshall-Estey organ for the Sanctuary. Rev. Mackey spoke on WTMA radio on Sunday mornings at 8:15. By 1950, church enrollment was 248.

In 1950, because Aldersgate was on a charge with Midland Park, the new parsonage committee was composed of members from both churches. Some worked seeking a suitable parsonage, some worked on acquiring furnishings, and others worked on raising funds to make it all possible. (Rumor has it that the two congregations differed in opinion on the style furnishings they felt were appropriate for the new parsonage.) Agreements were finally reached, funds were raised, and by 1951 the land just east of the Sanctuary was purchased for a parsonage site jointly with Midland Park.

In 1951 the third of the church's former army buildings arrived in the same manner as its predecessors. Down Remount Road it came. By the 1950's, the workers were "old hands" at this, and another building was placed on the church property without recorded incident. Upon the death of Rev. Shuler, the church wrote a note of sympathy to Mrs. Shuler notifying her that the church had decided to name the new building for her husband and the Bates Family. The Shuler-Bates Building would be used for the next 23 years. The October 10, 1951 minutes of the Board of Stewards reads, "The doors for the front of the church have been ordered, \$80 or less." It was estimated that the congregation had less than \$20,000 invested in its entire plant, including land acquisition. In 1951,



Shuler - Bates Building

O. M. Hays reported in the Charleston News and Courier, "Probably no church anywhere has grown faster than Aldersgate and in five years time been able to provide the congregation and Sunday School with ample housing at so small a cost...Aldersgate is truly a great drama of church progress."

On January 8, 1952, a kindergarten was opened at the church. In March, Dr. Bernard Poole from College of Charleston spoke at the anniversary service. The Board of Stewards voted that the Shuler-Bates Building would be a "no smoking area." In July the Board of Stewards was changed to the Official Board by

plans formulated in San Francisco at the General Conference. In November of 1952, the older youth first funded and published a monthly newsletter called THE WARM HEART. Rev. Mackey was given another appointment and Rev. Ralph Bigelow served Aldersgate until March 1953. In March, Rev. Richard E. Signious was assigned until he returned to Emory University to complete his ministerial training on June 10, 1953. Rev. C. L. Woodard was District Superintendent.

On June 14, 1953, Rev. Eben Taylor came to Aldersgate. (Rev. Taylor's father had been a Methodist Minister serving Asbury Methodist Church in Charleston.) He and his wife Martha were the first pastoral family to live in the parsonage. In August the W.S.C.S. hosted luncheons every Friday to buy a dining room suit for the parsonage. In October Mr. Tommy Jones was organist. In November the church began financing THE WARM HEART. In August 1954, a new electronic organ was dedicated in the sanctuary and the W.S.C.S. was placed in charge of the S+H Green

Stamps that came with the organ. In October the Grand Chapter of SC Order of the Eastern Star donated a piano to the church.

In August 1954, the Trustees of Midland Park expressed a desire to withdraw from the continuation of the purchase of the lot just east of the sanctuary and the parsonage. It was decided Aldersgate would reimburse them \$2,000, the amount they had contributed toward the project.

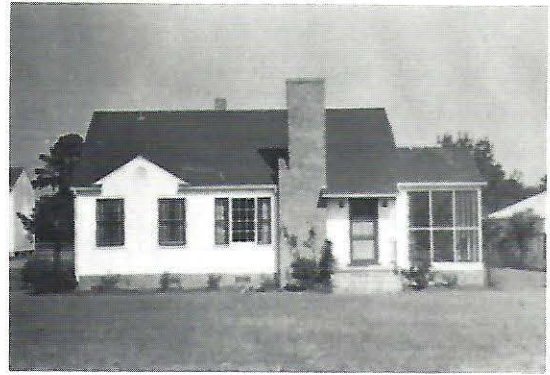
In December Mr. Roper, was hired as organist, but in February of 1955 the Official Board met and passed the motion concerning Mr. Roper, that "the trial period be terminated due to the fact that he came only to one rehearsal and never at any time attended services." In April Mrs. Seymore was hired to do janitorial work at \$32 per month and her helper, Calvin, was to receive 75¢ per hour. In June the board discussed the possibility of "lowering the steeple a few feet to comply with insurance regulations." A new District Superintendent was appointed in 1955, Rev. G. S. Duffie. In June 1955, the Aldersgate softball team placed 2nd in the league, and in a show of support for the evening service, the Official Board served as its choir. There was still no phone installed at the church, but in October 1955, Mrs. Eunice Hoff was hired to work as secretary from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday-Friday, and the W.S.C.S. provided office equipment. Mr. Jerry Nichols was choir director.

In Feb 1956, money was being raised for a new sign which could be read coming from both directions on Remount and for bricking around the church steps. Curbing was placed around the sides for azalea beds. In March of 1956, Aldersgate celebrated its tenth anniversary. Mrs. Bates



Rev. Eben Taylor

presented a picture for the Shuler-Bates Building of the late Mr. Bates, who had died in June of 1955. In May of 1956 the minister preached on segregation and the Methodist Church stand on this matter. He wrote in the bulletin that his purpose was to make "clarifications." That same month, by recommendation of the Pastor, the Official Board passed a policy that the church not sell anything for profit within the community for income, but to rely upon the "love and generosity of the people." Also in May, Mr. DuBose Robertson, who served North Charleston Methodist too, began directing the music at Aldersgate. Mrs. Jerry Nichols was organist. In June the congregation had to chose between a 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. service. In July Rev. Taylor's daughter was born. The final payment was made on the new organ, and the church held a tithing campaign. In November new aluminum screens were placed over the windows in the sanctuary and a new sign was placed out front. The new church secretary was Mrs. Lundy Stein. Mr. M. L. Mulkey replaced



Our first parsonage



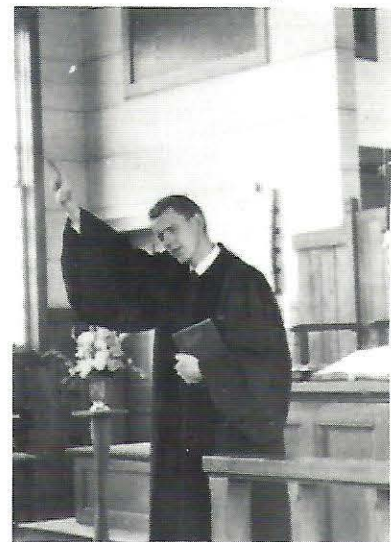
Aldersgate Methodist Church - 1956

Mrs. Nichols and Mr. Robertson as organist and choir director and Noel Cook assumed Mr. Mukkey's duties when he retired. In December two silver candlesticks were given to the church in memory of Mr. S. E. Keyser and two silver flower vases were given in memory of Mrs. Virginia Hardy. That Christmas, a bell was found in the furnace room by John Dawsey, Ralph Harbeson, Murrell Adams and Coleman Knight. They placed it in the steeple. Mr. Calvin Moultrie was the groundskeeper. Rev. Taylor helped establish Cub Scout Troop #479 in March 1957. The record book shows that during his four years at Aldersgate Rev. Taylor officiated 37 weddings and 124 baptisms, and 205 new members joined the

church. In the May 23, 1957 issue of the Methodist Advocate, Rev. Taylor submitted an article about Aldersgate, stating how the church raised \$2,100 to donate towards starting another Methodist church in the North Area of Charleston.

In September 1957, Aldersgate's non-profit bulk-mail permit # 1033 was acquired and in October a new mimeograph machine was purchased. In November 1957 the W.S.C.S. set the fourth Tuesday on the church calendar as their General Meeting date. Mr. Henry Smith and Mr. Claude Murray were thanked in the newsletter for coming before Sunday services to light the heaters in the Sunday School buildings.

On August 23, 1957, The Rev. George W. Whitaker, Jr. was appointed as pastor. He helped establish Boy Scout Troop # 479 in November of 1958. His salary was \$ 5,000, the secretary's was \$2,600, and the Director of Music was paid \$1,300. *Upper Rooms* cost \$75 per year. The total budget was \$ 25,940 for Aldersgate Church that year. It was during this time that the need for a larger educational facility became apparent. The goal was to build a facility to house adults' and children's church school classes and to



Rev. George Whitaker

home a kindergarten. It was also to provide a meeting place for Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, and other groups deserving of the church's support. The estimated cost was \$70,000. It would be valued at over \$200,000.00, be of "brick, concrete and metal," and would "be air-conditioned throughout," according to the Hanahan News. In December, the Official Board authorized the establishment of a building fund for new construction. In January 1958, Mrs. Louise Rhea led the Aldersgate "Mothers March" against polio and the church held a Wesleyan Hymn Festival on the evening of the 16th, Aldersgate's 12th anniversary. Methodist hymnals sold for \$2.10 each and the W.S.C.S. membership was 83. The church newsletter was called CHURCH TIDINGS and in April, the driveway around the church was made one-way "for the safety of our children."

In May, Mrs. Betty Black became the new secretary. The church library opened on Sunday evening, June 8, 1958. The silver cross was donated to the church in memory of Mrs. Virginia Hardy. In June, keeping the 9 a.m. service was preferred over the 11 a.m. The Lou Bates Circle was named in July. Also in 1958, a Sunday School class for young adults called the Asbury Fellowship Class was formed and steel steps for the Shuler-Bates Building were donated by West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. There being a need for new Methodist churches in the area, the "New Church Club" was formed. Members pledged \$10 per year for five years.

In January 1959, Mr. Jones became choir director and Mrs. Jackie Dawsey was the secretary. In October Mrs. Moser became the organist and choir director. In August, young Louis Jamison, ministerial student at Wofford, preached to his proud home church. In September, Hurricane Gracie came to Charleston and took 50% of the sanctuary shingles with her. Trees were uprooted and the Eagle Scouts and the Whitaker children cleaned the churchyard. Mr. Dennis Ulmer led the work crew replacing the shingles. It was decided that a cross was needed on the steeple. Mr. John Dawsey made one of copper approximately 24 inches high. It was grounded and has been atop the Aldersgate steeple ever since.

Rev. Whitaker led the campaign for funding the new building. (According to the North Charleston Banner, all the existing buildings were to be "torn down.") By 1960 the average attendance in Sunday School was 325 and an average of 230 attended the morning worship. The congregation had grown to a membership of 560. The \$70,000 goal was met with \$5,000 to spare. A new address machine was bought to correspond with everyone more easily. Dirt was hauled in that year to add "feet above the water level." and the Asbury class helped. In February the Wesley Class bought stepping stones placed from the Shuler-Bates Building to the sanctuary. Mrs. Chatfield was the organist in 1960. In August the congregation voted on whether to hold service at 9 or 11 and Mr. H. F. Harding, chairman of the Music Committee, announced the hiring of Mrs. Barbara Belding as Director of Music. Charge conference was held August 28, and plans for the new building were voted on. In November the trim on the sanctuary was painted white and the question arose: Shall we paint the front doors red (a symbol of Protestantism)? It was decided there would be "less confusion" if they were painted white.

Construction for the new educational building was scheduled to begin in November 1960. At this time Mr. William Arms was serving as the chairman of the Official Board and Mr. R. T. Poston was Lay Leader.

In June of 1961, Rev. William A. Horne was appointed to the church. The July 2 bulletin read, "We welcome The Rev. and Mrs. William A. Horne, and their daughter, Phyllis Ann, trusting they will find at this church the spirit of Christian love and helpful cooperation which this congregation has shown in years past." Rev. Horne was born on James Island, grew up in North Charleston, and under his leadership an entire church plant was built at Indian Field. A reception was held in their honor at 6:30 in the evening.

On Feb 21, 1961 Aldersgate Methodist Men were chartered. They met at 6:30 for a barbecue chicken supper. The newly-formed club collected bottles and scrap iron as a fund-raiser. In April 1961 Mrs. Virginia May was hired as church secretary. In June, the W.S.C.S. gave a silver punch bowl and ladle to the church and Sunday School was held at Hanahan High School because the Shuler-Bates Building was scheduled to be moved farther back on the lot, but heavy rains delayed the moving until mid July. Tuesday August 1, the Official Board voted to install window air-conditioning units in the offices and the Sanctuary. Four were donated and the rest were purchased with donations from the congregation. Total cost: \$1,909.96. Members were asked to be patient as different settings were tried and tested each week. That year the church commended Charleston Retail Merchants Association for their stand concerning operating their businesses on Sundays.



Rev. and Mrs. Bill Horne

In September a Civil Defense group was formed and met in the Shuler-Bates Building. Their purpose was to learn about civil defense "which, of course, covers fire hazards, storm emergencies, as well as those problems created by atomic attack." On October 15, a young minister named Herbert Floyd addressed the congregation about his missionary work in Cuba.

Aldersgate was still eagerly awaiting the construction of the new educational facility. A bid of \$177,817.00 was received from the Canady Construction Company of Charleston in December of 1961. A church conference was held on Christmas Eve, 1961 and the church voted unanimously to approve the building committee recommendation to borrow \$ 150,000 from Home Federal Savings and Loan Company to begin construction. The ground breaking took place on January 21, 1962 at 2:30 in the afternoon. Among those attending were Rev. Horne and the congregation, friends of the church, Ralph Bates, former minister Dallas Mackey, the District Superintendent Dr. Wallace Fridy, and Bishop Paul Hardin.



Ground Breaking for the New Educational building.

During construction, church life went on as usual. Again in March, Sunday School classes had to be canceled due to mud and impossible driving conditions near the Shuler-Bates Building. Aldersgate's Mr. L. O. Trussell was elected first president of the newly-formed Hanahan Exchange Club. Cokesbury hymnals were ordered during January, Aldersgate Day was celebrated in May, babies were baptized, weddings were held, and the people came.

The new building would cost \$165,000, \$150,000 which was borrowed in May to be repaid at \$ 1,225 per month. Mr. Daniel H. Ergle was hired as organist and choir director in May 1962. A piano for the new educational building was "purchased" by our W.S.C.S. for 200 Top Value Trading Stamps, which were "available at Red & White." A chair fund was established to receive donations toward furnishing the new Educational Building. Cost was to be about \$ 3,000. The furniture was delivered in February 13, 1963.

Work continued on the new building and was completed in 1963. On Sunday, February 10, 1963, "One of the happiest milestones in the history of Aldersgate Methodist Church was reached,"

according to a newspaper account. The Rev. Thomas Kimmerlin, Charleston District Superintendent, officially opened the new building. Former pastors, former members, friends of the church, Mr. Leroy Parrott (the architect) and Harry Kent representing the Canady Construction Company, were on hand that day along with happy Aldersgate members who had invested so many months of dreaming, hoping, praying, planning, and working. Rev. George Whitaker was guest speaker for the day. His sermon topic was, "The Kind of Church God Wants in Today's World." Rev. Eben Taylor delivered a brief meditation at the morning worship service and in the evening, Mr. Robert Booth, representing the Woodsmen of the World, presented the Boy Scouts with a new 50-star flag for the church. In June, Mrs. Louise Jernigan was hired as church secretary.

On November 22, 1963, Rev. Home was in Raeford, North Carolina conducting a revival. Morning worship had been averaging 275. On Sunday morning, November 24, 357 people attended worship.

Rev. Louis Jamison, new Methodist minister and son of Aldersgate, preached for his home church on August 9, 1964. Hurricane Dora postponed Kindergarten classes from opening for the 1964-65 session on September 9, until Friday, September 11.

On July 23, 1964 a representative from Nu-Idea School Supply came to show the congregation selections of new church pews. Money for 28 pews was pledged by church families at \$100 each, (plus 3% sales tax).

The new pews were ordered in November 1964 and by Sunday, January 10, 1965, the needed \$3,000 had been received. During the following week they were installed and used for the first time for services held January 17, 1965. The new pews were dedicated at 3 p.m. by Rev. Eben Taylor at the 19th Anniversary Celebration held March 21, 1965, followed by dinner on the grounds. Twenty-three charter members were still active members of Aldersgate, and the membership had grown to 688.



... And the people came!



Rev. F. Carlisle Smith

In 1965, Rev. Fleming Carlisle Smith was appointed as pastor to Aldersgate Church. He and Mrs. Smith worked tirelessly in the area of church nursery improvements. Mrs. Smith worked in the three-year-old class. On Sunday, June 27, the quarterly conference authorized the borrowing of \$4,000 by the trustees to proceed with the purchase of a new parsonage or to repair the existing one. Some objected to having a parsonage away from the sanctuary. It was suggested that a new home could be built on the back property. The motion to authorize the money was passed, 52 for, and 29 against.

On Sunday, July 4, 1965, the Committee on Location and Purchasing of a New Parsonage approved a home on Rembert Drive, Belvedere Estates in Hanahan. The Smiths moved into the new parsonage in 1965. That year the W.S.C.S. hosted a fellowship hour once a month for new members. Palm Sunday evening, a group of 25 children were received into membership on profession of faith. Average attendance for Sunday evening services was 140.

In 1966 the W.S.C.S. sent 100 yards of material to the Christian women in Vietnam, baked cookies for the USO in December, and kept a nursery for "shopping mothers" on Friday mornings. One of the church's mission projects was a donation to help the new Goose Creek Methodist Church. A goal for the church was to purchase a tape recorder to replay the

sermons to the sick and homebound. The pastor's salary was \$6,900. A major goal of the Commission on Social Concerns was to have a bill introduced to strictly enforce the Sunday Blue Laws.

In 1967 the Methodist Men's projects included paying for shrubbery and paving sidewalks. Dennis Ulmer was president. MYF had 20 active members. Communion was held once a month, the organist and music director was Miss Melle Blattner, and the charge conference reported the greatest need of the church was to know how to live with our fellow man, and how to care for the poor.

In June of 1967, Rev. Walter Jesse Smoak was appointed to Aldersgate. He and his wife Eva had been serving in St. George. It was during his pastorate in Dallas, Texas in 1968, that the Methodist Church united with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, forming the United Methodist Church. The new church called for new ways, fresh insights, and redirection of program and emphasis on every level of its structure. The warm-hearted Methodist church on Remount Road became Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

In May of 1969, Homecoming was held at the beginning of Family Week and a church history was distributed to the members. Rev. Horne was guest speaker. A new directory was made for the church, as so many house numbers were changed in the growing community. In July, a new Methodist Hymnal sold for \$3. In August, the church softball team was awarded the Team Sportsmanship Trophy, and in September and October the youth challenged the adults to an attendance contest for the evening service. The youth were the victors. At Thanksgiving a special offering was received for Laurel Bay UMC and St. Andrews by the Sea UMC near Hilton Head.

The first bulletin for January in 1970 showed the Christian year in liturgical colors. Green for Kingdome and Epiphany, red for the Pentecost season, white for Eastertide and Christmastide, and purple for Advent and the Lenten season. Rev. George Whitaker was District Superintendent. That summer saw a well-attended Bible School, 15 attended Youth Rally at Annual Conference, the church provided assistance with heat and paid a medical bill for some in the community. A school bus was purchased for the kindergarten. The 25th Anniversary Celebration was held on March 21, 1971.

In June 1971, Aldersgate welcomed Rev. Thomas J. Matthews as pastor. Many new programs were begun. He hired Aldersgate's first Christian Education Director, Mrs. Charles Joye. He also grouped the church families into nine geographical areas with captains and co-captains. The families could be kept in close contact. In the summer of 1972 a youth worker was hired and Mr. Carlisle Thigpen assumed the duties of grounds-keeper. An earlier Sunday service was added, attended by nearly 100, and 200 were attending at 11. Seventy members had been added to the roll. The Shuler-Bates Building was renovated downstairs, and the kitchen and recreation hall were completed. The educational building was used by Kadis Learning Center as a school for hyperactive children. Much repair work was done to the sanctuary and the garage at the parsonage was renovated into a den. The church office was equipped with an offset press, mimeograph machine, adding machine, stencil maker and a paper cutter. The 1972 pledges totaled \$ 102,733. The membership grew from 815 to 881 during Rev. Matthews' pastorate. Mrs. Betty Black served as church secretary. The church property was used by AA, the scouts, basketball and baseball teams. A "We Care Mission" and a Lay Witness program were initiated.



Rev. Walter J. Smoak

In 1973 Mrs. Louise Rhea led the Silver Thread Club for our senior citizens and those in the community. Rev. Matthews reported that these things were a vital part of our church becoming a "Ministering Servant Church."

In June of 1974, Rev. Phil M. Jones was appointed to Aldersgate. Rev. Jones wrote to his congregation, "We have ties with every other United Methodist Church. We have a link with everything that is being done across the world in the name of our great church. We have a part in all her ministries and programs because we support them. Let us be proud of our great church. I am proud to be a United Methodist Christian. I am especially grateful too, for the privilege of being a United Methodist minister, and to have the opportunity of serving people such as you are." Morning worship attendance climbed to nearly 300, with 125 average attendance in the evening.

During Rev. Jones' leadership, the church won a battle to prevent the establishment of a liquor business very near the church. On April 23, 1975, he received 73 members into the congregation, many on profession of faith. In November 1975, Mrs. Georgiana McNaughton was hired as organist and music director. In 1976 a children's sermon was added to the morning service, new red carpet was installed in the sanctuary, and the walls were painted off-white. The round stained-glass window depicting Christ at Gethsemene was installed and a baptismal font was donated by the Dewaine Meador Family. The United Methodist Women made a contribution toward restoration of the Wesley Chapel in London. Mrs. Rhea led the Silver Threads in their meetings, held monthly.

In March 1977, the Conference asked for each church to hold a Claflin College Challenge among its members, pledging support. Aldersgate was asked for \$10,943 over a three-year period.



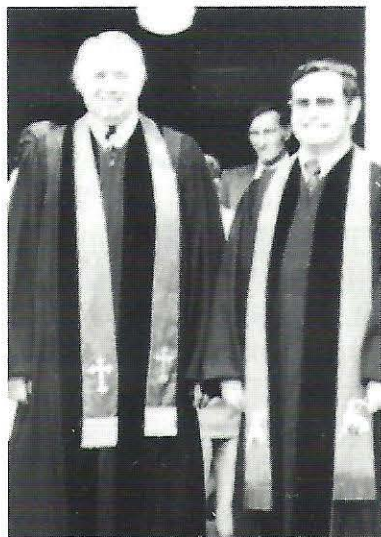
Rev. Phil Jones with Mrs. Bates



Seventy-three joined the church on April 23, 1975

The church accepted the challenge. In April of 1977, Mrs. W. E. Bates died and she was remembered at charge conference as "the mother of our church and [we] express thanks to God for her and the lasting contribution that she made to the beginning and on-going of the church."

In September 1977, the Board voted to install central heat and air in the Shuler-Bates Building. The newly-appointed District Superintendent was Rev. James Alewine. In November, 1977, the congregation gave Rev. Jones and his wife, Gloria, a trip to the Holy Lands (Israel, Italy, and Greece) to commemorate their 25th Wedding Anniversary. Average church school attendance was 155 and Aldersgate Paid 100% apportionments. On May 30, 1978, Gary Hyndman, a son of Aldersgate Church, was ordained to the ministry at Bethel Church in Spartanburg. At Annual Conference, Rev. Jones was appointed to Bethel Church in Charleston.



**Rev. Bill Horne and
Rev. Herbert Floyd**

In June of 1978 Rev. Herbert C. Floyd became pastor at Aldersgate. He had been serving Macedonia Church in Mullins. Rev. Floyd worked with the Family Life committee and "get acquainted" meetings were scheduled and held for the entire membership of the church. The purpose was to get to know names and exchange ideas for a more effective ministry. Mrs. Betty Black and Mrs. Bernice Groover served as church secretaries with volunteer help from Mrs. Virginia Chinnis. Mrs. Jean Smith published a monthly newsletter. By 1979 the pastor's salary was \$17,560 and apportionments were \$22,724. Rev. Floyd reported to the charge conference "many have become involved in the life and mission of the church through its extended ministries, including the early morning worship....Almost weekly new families are joining our church...I am happy that our young Homebuilders class has more than doubled in size."

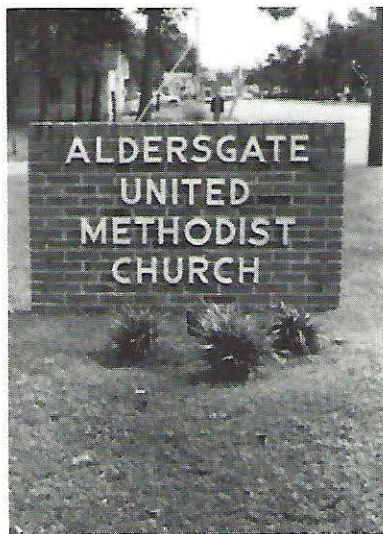
In 1980 the PPRC parsonage committee added a china cabinet to the dining room. There were three services each Sunday and fellowship after the early service in the Shuler-Bates Building. The Christian Homebuilders class donated 150 cartons of milk to Oak Grove Orphanage. The Asbury class purchased a 16mm camera and a mailbox for the church. The choir entertained at Driftwood Nursing Home, taking refreshments.

In 1981 Rev. Roy Stockman was District Superintendent and during September an effort was made by visitation teams to visit every member of our church family. Rev. Floyd's report to the charge conference: "The membership feel we have a warm and friendly church, -- that we are a model church in terms of involving people in the life and mission of the church. The elected leadership take their responsibilities seriously, and give unselfishly of their time, talent, and money for God's work." Also in 1981, Mrs. Laura Chaplin was hired as church secretary and Mr. Carl Easterling as custodian.

In June 1982, Rev. Roy Leonard Owens was appointed to Aldersgate Church. He had started his ministry while a student at Wofford College with six rural churches in three counties. He met his wife Rachel (his "assistant preacher") while serving at the Kelton Charge in Union County. Adult Sunday School classes donated \$1,250 for the new church sign in front of the church. They hosted the Seaman's Club often. Coffee hour was discontinued. The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts were re-chartered. A copier fund and a fund for new speakers for the Shuler-Bates Building were established.

In the summer of 1983 an intoxicated sailor broke into the Shuler-Bates Building and accidentally set it afire. He was rescued as the flame alerted the custodian, and the fire department

arrived promptly. The custodian was badly hurt helping the fire fighters. The building was damaged beyond repair and was removed at no cost to the church. Plans were made to renovate the Educational Building to include a social hall and kitchen at a cost of \$62,000. By 1983 the social hall and kitchen work was underway. The roof was replaced on the educational building. The parking lot and all driveways were paved. A new addressing machine was added in the church office.



Our sign on Remount Road in the 1980's

Aldersgate's Salvo Street house was renovated. Money borrowed was to be repaid using rent income. The John Dawsey Family donated cushions for the choir loft chairs, Christian Homebuilders painted nursery furniture and the Asbury Class donated carpet for it. An architect was paid \$1,750, a bill which had gone unpaid due to a misunderstanding for work done several years earlier on preliminary plans for the new proposed front on the church. Aldersgate donated its lighted lawn sign to Goose Creek United Methodist Church.

In 1984 the world was celebrating the Bicentennial of Methodism. On January 15 Rev. Horne visited Aldersgate and the new social hall and kitchen in the building completed during his pastorate. Fifteen days later, he died of a heart attack in Greenville. During the summer, Aldersgate hosted Summer Fun Days to assist working parents with child care for their children grades 1st - 6th. Average attendance was 27 children per day. Average attendance for UMYF was 19. The youth visited the congregation during the stewardship campaign to assist in getting pledges. \$90,464.24 was

pledged. The Lenten offering was divided among five funds, including contributions for St. James United Methodist Church, a new church in Goose Creek, and Rural Mission on Johns Island. The social hall and kitchen were completed. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Smith were instrumental in making recommendations and doing work for the finest kitchen facility in any church. Ladies exercise classes were held in the new social hall. New lights were put in the downstairs hallway and the church office was remodeled. Rev. Roy Stockman was District Superintendent.

On February 12, Rev. Owens spoke to the congregation about stained glass windows for the sanctuary. By mid-week the 10 large windows at \$1,400 each had been pledged. Later the eight smaller windows were pledged at \$500 each. Mr. David Smith, Aldersgate member, designed the windows and his



United Methodist Women working in the new kitchen

business, Charlestowne Glass, received the contract to make and install them. On Sunday, September 9, the new windows and social hall were dedicated. The windows depict "The Nativity", "In The Temple", "The Sermon on the Mount", "Jairus' Daughter", "Martha and Mary", "Jesus and the Children", "The Good Shepherd", "The Last Supper", "The Crucifixion", and "The Resurrection." The small window by the entrance ramp represents communion, with the Bread and Cup. Rev. Owens said, "the other small windows may be said to symbolize the Christian life. As windows can be beautiful when they let the sunlight pour through them, so human life can be radiant and rich with Christian grace when the light of Jesus Christ shines through." A new piano, valued at \$1,990 was purchased for the social hall. The UMW published a cookbook and donated \$500

towards its purchase. The balance was paid with memorial gifts. Church membership was 811 at the end of 1984.

In 1985 a scholarship fund was established for Aldersgate's Annette Coker at Candler School of Theology. In March, ladies of the church began work on the Chrismons for use during Advent. In May an IBM computer was purchased for the church office from Charleston Business Systems. On May 26 the Administrative Board voted to buy a pipe organ and do some renovations to the sanctuary (heat/air, new front doors, and ceiling fans and pews in the balcony where army chapel pews remained). In June, Rev. Thomas Brittain became Charleston District Superintendent after Rev. Stockman suffered a heart attack. UMYF averaged 30-40 each week. St. James UMC was given another \$500. The church did printing work for them, Goose Creek UMC, and Midland Park UMC. "This is a great church and has wonderful people in it", Rev. Owens reported to the 1985 Charge Conference.

On Easter Sunday in 1986, the last service in the sanctuary was held until mid-August. Volunteers came Easter night to move furniture to the social hall so services could be held there until the sanctuary renovations were completed. A total \$138,973 was spent on the entire renovation. The loan was to be repaid in full on May 20, 1996. The church pantry gave out over \$1,000 worth of food. Wesley Memorial Church was destroyed by fire in the spring and Aldersgate gave a donation for renovation. An extensive membership audit was done during Rev. Owens' pastorate and found the number of full members to be 500-550. Rev. Owens retired from the ministry on June 3, 1987. The social hall was dedicated in his honor, and by action of the Administrative Board was named Roy Owens Hall.

In June 1987, Rev. Larry W. Rodeffer was appointed to Aldersgate. Rev. Rodeffer along with his wife Janice, were effective in children's ministry, developing a children's choir and having a children's moments each week at Sunday services. Red choir robes were purchased for the children.

Through the PPRC, "Pastoral Coffees" were organized as a way of visiting with members on Thursday evenings. These coffees provided avenues for sharing dreams for the church. In November, at the 41st Anniversary celebration, Rev. Eben Taylor was guest pastor. Rev. Rodeffer recorded messages for callers on the "Good News Prayer Line," reached by calling the second line to the church. A church brochure was made and distributed.

On March 26 and 27, 1988 Mr. Fletcher Carter met with church members for a week-end of strategic planing for the church. The board voted to include 100% apportionments in the budget. In April, Mrs. Sue Stello was hired as church secretary. Worship services were begun for the first Sunday evening of each month. Guest ministers, especially former Aldersgate members, were invited to preach at these services. Every summer, youth singing groups were hosted, staying in homes, and eating at the church for the Charleston leg of their performance.

In June 1989, The Rev. H. Samuel Johnson was appointed District Superintendent of the Charleston District. On September 21-22, 1989 Hurricane Hugo touched down on the east coast at Charleston. The threat of this level-five storm approaching forced many to evacuate. The church office closed on the 21st after printing bulletins for Sunday, moving the equipment away from the windows, and covering everything with plastic in case a window was broken. The back play area became a dry harbor for boats whose owners were seeking shelter for them away from trees. The staff left and hoped to return the next day if the storm passed by. It didn't.



*Rev. Larry Rodeffer
with the children*

The roads were impassable on the 22nd, but by the 23rd the office reopened. Many trees were lost in the back lot, roof damage occurred on all the buildings, shingles had blown from the steeple, but it was still in place! The scout hut had blown apart, pieces had flown over the educational building, struck the rear east side of the sanctuary and cracked the brick in a large section that would have to be replaced. There was very little interior damage.

There was no electricity for nearly a week, but the phone worked! It would not light up, or ring, so the receiver was picked up every two minutes and calls were received that we could catch. Calls came from all the churches whose youth had visited Aldersgate each summer, offering money and of course, ice! Our members made their way to the church to use the phone to call relatives in other towns who were concerned for them. On Sunday, September 24, the skies were cloudy, the church doors were open, and the people came. No lights, no heat, no organ music...no problem. Forty-three members were present, giving thanks to God for His protection and offering prayer for those in need, and for the difficult days to come.

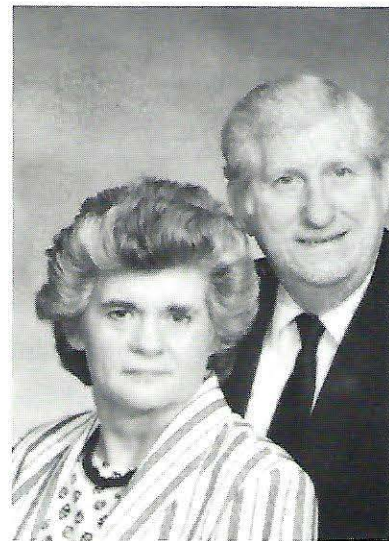
Charge Conference was held on December 5 in 1989, in conjunction with other churches, as some churches did not have places to meet. Whether we dreamed of it or not, in December of 1989, Charleston got a "white Christmas"--the first one since 1943. Seven inches of snow fell December 22nd and 23rd. Christmas Eve services were canceled, as the roads were dangerous.

Rebuilding and repairs continued into 1990. Mr. Don Cain served as chairman of the Trustees and spent many tireless hours getting things better than "back to normal." The church's service to those in need continued as well. The food pantry was reopened, the church gave funds to some in the community who had lost homes, and collections for household goods was ongoing. The Men's Club was rechartered. During the summer, Camp Meeting Sundays and special Labor Day services were held. Rev. Rodeffer held regular luncheons for the widows of the church at the parsonage in which he and Janice would prepare favorite recipes for them.

In 1991, two of the church family served in Desert Storm, Lt. Hal Hatchett and Sgt. Raymond Singleton. 616 members were on roll.

In January 1992, Rev. William (Bill) J. Vines was appointed to Aldersgate. He and his wife, Caroline, came from Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church in the upstate. Immediately Rev. Vines organized a group to seek out first-time visitors and call on them with a gift from the church and to extend a warm welcome. He designed a logo for the new shepherding program. A tithing campaign and a youth basketball team was formed. The church office was remodeled and recarpeted.

By 1993 Remount Road had changed. With this change many problems developed, but new opportunities for ministry availed themselves. After two break-ins the church installed a security system. Under Rev. Vines' leadership, the church faced the new problems and sought new types of ministry. Rev. Vines became an inspiration to the congregation as he battled cancer, and won. He missed very few Sundays, and was always just a phone call away for anyone who needed him. In March, a covered walk-way leading into the sanctuary on the east side was dedicated in memory of Mrs. H. V. (Ruby) Smith. That summer Mr. Philip Pennington, was hired as Youth Director and in August, a church van was purchased. On December 16, 1993, Rev. Roy Owens died in Spartanburg.



Rev. and Mrs. Bill Vines

On March 27, 1994, Palm Sunday, Aldersgate celebrated its 48th anniversary. The Rev. Eben Taylor was guest minister. In the summer, a 9 a.m. service was brought about, with music from the minister's guitar. This service became popular and increased attendance each Sunday. The Silver Threads group thrived under the interest and care of Bill and Caroline. Mrs. Vines served as church school teacher for the Senior High class and later for the Brabham Sunday School Class. On Sunday, March 20, Rev. F. Carlisle Smith died in Conway, SC.

A delegation of adults and youth attended the Vision 2000 rally in Columbia in April to hear of plans for the church for the 21st century. For this occasion, Mrs. Betty O'Steen designed a church banner for Aldersgate, that now hangs in the sanctuary. At charge conference 1994, the Aldersgate congregation considered the Naval Base closure. An audit revealed membership to be approximately 500 full members. The audit committee had spent months tracking each member whose name was on roll since 1946.

On March 26, 1995 Aldersgate celebrated its 49th anniversary and the paying-in-full of the renovation note borrowed in 1986. The congregation held a mortgage burning in the courtyard after services. Guest minister was Rev. Annette Coker Edwards. In June of 1995 Mrs. Georgiana McNaughton retired as music director and organist, and in December, Mr. Carlisle Thigpen retired as grounds-keeper.

In June 1995 Rev. Karin Bascom Culp was appointed as the first woman to serve as minister of Aldersgate. Rev. Culp brought to the church an enthusiasm for outreach in mission. Her philosophy, nurtured by her service in the Peace Corps, supported the idea that the church that embraces mission, both in the community and globally, grows in spirituality and consequently in all areas.

Mrs. Tranny Gartside was hired as organist and music director in July and the choir received many new members, including Mr. Mike Culp, tenor and husband of the minister. The choir held a songfest on October 29 to benefit two mission projects. Over \$800 was donated. On December 10, the Choir's Lessons on Carols brought the congregation together for one service celebrating Advent. The church hired Mr. Charles Vickers as grounds-keeper in January 1996. On March 17, 1996 Aldersgate held its 50th Anniversary Celebration. The Rev. Dr. George W. Whitaker was invited as guest minister.

And the people came.

***This church history
has been researched and compiled
by Mrs. Sue Stello.
It was written by those who
lived this history and who have
remembered and shared their stories.***