

1826



2026

FOUND FAITHFUL AT MULBERRY & FIRST

Celebrating 200 years at Mulberry Street United Methodist Church



APRIL 26, 2026

Welcome to Mulberry Street UMC!

200 years of mission and ministry at the intersection of Mulberry Street and First Street in downtown Macon – what an accomplishment! But it is not an accomplishment of our own making. It is the work of God, building us up into the church, and equipping us for the task at hand.

For many years, our church has understood its mission to be “Sharing the heart of God from the heart of downtown Macon.” We’ve been in different sanctuaries along the way. Our congregation has been larger at times and smaller at other times. Countless sermons have been preached, Sunday School classes taught, offerings taken up, marvelous choir anthems prepared, beautiful organ pieces shared, and innumerable acts of mission and ministry to our world.

We celebrate all that is past as we come into our Bicentennial year of 2026. God has done mighty things in us and through our church. What a gift Mulberry Street UMC has been to our community and beyond. My grandfather, Methodist pastor Dr. James C. Varnell, once wrote these words: “Christ would have us to be grateful for the past, to rejoice in the present, and then put on the whole armor of God for our triumphant march into the future.”

Indeed, we know and believe that God is not finished with us yet. There are still many more chapters to be written of the Mulberry Street church. We continue that work here and now. We work to proclaim Christ, to love one another, to grow in faith, and to serve the world. As we continue that faithful work, God will continue his work of building up the church, for the expansion of God’s kingdom of love here on earth. And praise God that we get to be a part of it!

Rev. Jack Varnell

Senior Pastor, Mulberry Street United Methodist Church

A DAY OF CELEBRATION

Schedule of Events

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP

Celebrating 200 years of Mulberry through prayer, song and worship

11:00 am – 12:00 noon in the Sanctuary

CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

Everyone is invited to lunch immediately following the service

Food will be served in the Fellowship Hall
Children's area is in the Courtyard



The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and in Celebration of the Bicentennial of Mulberry Street United Methodist Church.

**Please rise in body and/or in spirit.*

Bold Type indicates congregational participation

Connect with us

Please fill out a Connection Card found in the back of the pew if you are visiting with us, would like to sign up for upcoming events, have a prayer request, or need to update your contact information.

We invite you to visit us at

mulberrymethodist.org.

Stay updated on the Mulberry community by subscribing to our weekly newsletter!

Visit bit.ly/mul-news to sign up.

Our 11:00 a.m. worship service is livestreamed on Facebook & YouTube.

Giving

You can make your offering to God by visiting **mulberrymethodist.org/give** or by scanning the QR code, which will take you directly to our church's secure giving website.



Accessibility

Hearing Assistive devices are available and can be found in the narthex by the usher station. Please ask an usher for assistance locating them.



THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Entrance & Praise

Opening Voluntary Excerpts from “Partita on *Crucifer*” Daniel McIntosh
I. Fanfare
II. Musette
III. Meditation
IV. Processional
Arranged by Charles Callahan (1951-2023)

Welcome Rev. Jack Varnell

Greeting & Call to Worship Rev. Varnell

One: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Today we celebrate God’s faithfulness in this sacred place.
We come with grateful hearts to worship the living God.

We stand on the foundation laid by generations of Mulberry’s faithful saints.
We rejoice in all that God has done and is continuing to do.

With great expectation and hope, we now turn to the future:
**May we be found faithful, proclaiming Christ, growing in our faith,
and serving the world with joy!**

* Opening Hymn No. 159 *Lift High the Cross* CRUCIFER

* Affirmation of Faith *The Apostle’s Creed* Rev. Payton Stone

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into
heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from
thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen.**

* Gloria Patri GREATOREX

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be;
world without end. Amen.**

*Children 5th grade and under are invited to leave for Godly Play at this time.
Children may be picked up on the 2nd Floor in the Godly Play classroom after the service.*

Proclamation & Response

Litany

Rev. Varnell

One: For those whose faith, courage, and Christian conviction
and whose diligent effort and financial sacrifice
resulted in the building of Mulberry Street Church:

All: We thank you, O God.

For those who labored with mind and hand
to design and construct this sanctuary
that Christian people might worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:

We thank you, O God.

For all those servants of God who have led your people in worship here,
who have preached your word from this pulpit, and
who have administered the sacraments to waiting and believing hearts:

We thank you, O God.

For all those who have come to this place seeking you,
and who, in worshipping you in spirit and truth, have found you:

We thank you, O God.

For those who have brought their children here for Christian baptism,
for those who have pledged their love to one another at this holy altar,
and for those who in Christian faith and trust have here parted with loved
ones and committed them to your love and care:

We thank you, O God.

For all those who have here confessed their faith in Jesus Christ,
have shared in the life and witness of the Church
and committed themselves to the Christian life:

We thank you, O God.

For sins that have been confessed and forgiven here,
for burdens that have been made easier to carry,
for distressed and troubled hearts
that have known peace that passes all understanding,
and for lives that have been inspired to new heights of love and care:

We thank you, O God.

**For all your goodness and love revealed to us in this house of worship,
we praise you and we thank you, O God. Amen.**

Litany from Mulberry's 175th Celebration Service, June 3, 2001

Anthem

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
arr. Mack Wilberg

The Ainsworth Choir

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit; let us find the promised rest;
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above.
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in the;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

- *Charles Wesley*

Introduction of Bishop Dease

Rev. Jeff Cook

Sermon

“The Mulberry Way”

Bishop Robin Dease

Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 8:1-5 (*Pew Bible pg 145*)

Bishop Dease

“The entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase and go in and occupy the land that the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. The clothes on your back did not wear out, and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know, then, in your heart that, as a parent disciplines a child, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

This is the word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Stone

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering of our Tithes & Gifts

*You can make your offering to God online by visiting mulberrymethodist.org/give
or in the offering plate.*

Offertory

One Thing Have I Asked
by Terre Johnson

The Ainsworth Choir

One thing have I asked of the Lord,
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
I sing with all my heart for joy to the living God!

I shall dwell in the house of the Lord,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

- *Psalms 27:4, 84:1-2, 23:6*

* Doxology

OLD 100TH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sending Forth

* Closing Hymn No. 102

Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET

* Benediction & Sending Forth

Rev. Varnell
Bishop Dease

Closing Voluntary

Organ Symphony No. 5 in F minor
Op. 42, No. 1
V. Toccata
by Charles-Marie Widor (1870-1933)

Cam Bishop

Ringling of the Mulberry Church Bell

Cater, Kyle, Cater & James Starling

As you exit, the newly-restored church bell will ring for the first time in many years!



Service Participants

Bishop Robin Dease

Episcopal Leader of the South Georgia Conference

Rev. Jack Varnell

Senior Pastor

Rev. Payton Stone

Associate Pastor

Rev. Jeff Cook

District Superintendent

Elisa Reece

Director of Family Ministries

Dr. Terre Johnson

Director of Music

Daniel McIntosh

Organ

Cam Bishop

Organ

The Ainsworth Choir

Henry Carter

Crucifer

Caroline Dent

Candle Lighter

Kate Evans

Candle Lighter

William Little

Trumpet 1

Chace Crowell

Trumpet 2

About Our Worship

The bicentennial celebration of the Ainsworth Choir has included specially selected anthems each week of the year. For the two Sundays since Easter, former Organist and Music Director Cam Bishop was asked to help choose anthems that she remembered being favorites of the choir during her long tenure. For today's Bicentennial Service, the choir has chosen a setting of the Charles Wesley hymn, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." Its appropriateness as a Wesley hymn is obvious, but it is also chosen for its final verse's relevance: "Finish, then, thy new creation." This exciting arrangement was composed for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir by its conductor, Mack Wilberg. During today's Offertory, the choir will sing Terre Johnson's composition, "One Thing Have I Asked." This anthem was published this year and is dedicated to Cam Bishop. Its references to Psalms 23, 27 and 84 make it particularly appropriate for the day.

Keep up with us online!



Stay updated on the Mulberry community by subscribing to our weekly newsletter!

To sign up, visit bit.ly/mulnews or scan the QR code.

You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube at [@MulberryMethodist](https://www.instagram.com/MulberryMethodist)

Visit our website at mulberrymethodist.org for our calendar, service recordings, newsletter archives, and more!

PASTORS OF MULBERRY

1826	Thomas Gardner	1891-92	Stephen S. Sweet
1827	Thomas Darley	1892	Warren Columbus Black
1828	Charles Hardy	1893-96	Alonzo Monk
1829-30	Ignatius Alphonso Few	1896-1900	William Washington Pinson
1831-32	Benjamin Pope	1900-05	William Newman Ainsworth
1833	Archelus Hughes Mitchell	1905-09	Thomas David Ellis
1834	John Fletcher Weathersby	1909-12	James Edward Wray
1835	John Wesley Talley	1912-16	William Newman Ainsworth
1836-37	Alexander Speer	1916-22	Thomas David Ellis
1838	Willis Dickinson Matthews	1922	William Fletcher
1839	Elijah Sinclair	1922-26	Walter Anthony
1840	John Patterson Duncan	1926-30	Charles Ruch Jenkins
1841	Alfred Turner Mann	1930-32	Walter Anthony
1842	George Foster Pierce	1932	Carl C. Gregory
1843	Samuel Anthony	1933-37	Edmund Francis Cook
1844	James Blanton Payne	1937-42	George Stoves
1845	Samuel Anthony	1942-46	Silas Johnson
1846-47	William Monroe Crumley	1946-51	Melvin Eugene Peavy
1948	Gadwell Jefferson Pearce	1951-54	Anthony Hearn
1849-50	Walter Richardson Branham	1954-64	Leonard Hill Cochran
1851	James Ezekiel Evens	1964-69	Frank Lewis Robertson
1852	Samuel Anthony	1969-76	C. W. Hancock
1853-54	Eustace Willoughby Speer	1976-83	William H. Hurdle
1854	Oscar Penn Fitzgerald (<i>Associate</i>	1983-87	V. L. Daughtery
1855	<i>Pastor</i>)	1987-91	Vance Mathis
1856	James Wooten Hinton	1991-95	James Pennell
1856-57	George Golfin Nowlan MacDonell	1995-2007	M. Creede Hinshaw
1858	James Ezekiel Evans	2007	Craig Rikard
1859-60	Jesse Boring	2008	Sam Lamback (<i>Interim</i>)
1861	Harwell Hodges Parks	2008-2011	Tommy Martin
1862-63	Alfred Turner Mann	2011-2015	Tommy Mason
1864	James Ezekiel Evans	2015-2018	Jimmy Towson
1865	Eustace Willoughby Speer	2018-2020	Matt Woodbery
1866-69	Edmund Pendleton Birch	2020	M. Creede Hinshaw (<i>Interim</i>)
1870	Joseph Stanton Key	2020-2021	Nita Crump
1871-74	Robert B. Lester	2021-2022	M. Creede Hinshaw, Tommy Martin & Marcus Tripp
1875	James Orson Branch		
1876	Patrick Arminius Wright		
1877-78	Cosby Williamson Smith	2022-2024	Ted Goshorn
1879-82	George Golfin Nowlan MacDonell	2024	Jay Harris (<i>Interim</i>)
1883	Joseph Stanton Key	2024-	Jack Varnell
1884-87	James Wooten Hinton		
1888-90	James Osgood Andrew Cook		
1891	Thomas Rogers Kendall		
	John Porter McFerrin		

HIGHLIGHTS OF MULBERRY HISTORY

1826

Before the church had a roof, Reverend Thomas Gardner and 16 members organized a Methodist Society, meeting in the local courthouse. Later in 1826, the South Carolina Conference, then including Georgia, sent as the first regular pastor of Mulberry Street Methodist Church, the Reverend Thomas Darley.

Dec 23, 1826

The Georgia Legislature and Governor Troup granted one acre at the corner of Mulberry and First Streets for the Methodist Episcopal Church.

1827–1828

The congregation built a 16x40 foot wooden structure, the first house of worship of any denomination in Macon.

1829

Mulberry became a station church under Dr. Ignatius Few, a former lawyer who also founded the Sunday School and later became the first President of Emory University.

1831

The first annual Georgia Conference was held here, earning the church its enduring nickname: the Mother of Georgia Methodism.

1840

The name was officially changed to Mulberry Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1849, the original wooden church was rolled to the back of the lot to make way for a new brick building in the Greek Revival style, featuring large columns and a spacious gallery.

1882

Having outgrown the second building, the church erected a third structure in the Gothic style. This expansion involved a significant bonded debt.

1887

Dr. William E. Burke began a missionary career in China that spanned 56 years, marking the start of Mulberry's long history of international outreach to countries such as China, Cuba, and across Africa.

1890

Fifty members transferred from Mulberry to reorganize Vineville Methodist Church as a separate congregation.

1892

A faction attempted to move the church to College Hill. After a vote "taken amid sobs," the congregation decided unanimously to remain at its historic downtown location.

1926-1928

To celebrate its centennial, the church raised funds for a new educational building and a total sanctuary remodel. The 1882 brick was faced with limestone and matching bell towers were added, creating the Gothic appearance seen today.

1929

Mrs. Edith Stetson Coleman and Mr. Eugene Stetson donated a cathedral organ in memory of their mother, Mrs. Eugenia Pate Stetson. That same year, Mr. James Hyde Porter began a history of significant financial gifts to the church.

1939

The South Georgia Conference of the M. E. Church, South, met this year in Mulberry and dissolved itself. Immediately thereafter, it became the first South Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church since the 1844 separation, following the Kansas City Uniting Conference of 1939.

1944

The Trustees of Mulberry were incorporated, establishing the Wortham Fund and the Samuel S. Dunlap Memorial Fund to manage the church's endowments.

1945

Following the Great Depression, the church had settled its construction bonds for 50 cents on the dollar in 1937. However, a "Golden Rule Committee" was formed this year to pay back the remaining balance in full, fulfilling what the congregation felt was a moral obligation.

1951-1960

A decade of growth added the Taylor-Stevens Chapel, a music department, a youth center, and a dining hall seating 400. The sanctuary was renovated with a new pipe organ and two stained-glass windows in the rear.

1965

A fire destroyed the sanctuary in 1965, though the stained-glass windows were miraculously spared. The sanctuary was redesigned by church member and renowned architect Ella Mae League and reopened in 1968.

1982

Macon Outreach at Mulberry was established in the former Mulberry Youth Center. The ministry continues to provide daily hot meals, clothing, and pantry staples to the Macon community.

2002

Following its 175th anniversary, Mulberry completed a \$7 million renovation. This project converted the attic into classrooms, updated the kitchen and fellowship hall, and added a daycare center in the original church parlor.

2021

The Sanctuary was updated with a new audio/visual system that allows our Worship services to be livestreamed online for those who cannot join in person.

2025

Macon Volunteer Clinic, one of Mulberry's community partners, rented & renovated a building on Walnut Street owned by Mulberry. The new facility allowed MVC to expand the medical services they provide to the uninsured within the greater Macon community.

Sources for this sketch are the 1926 Centennial address of Mr. O. A. Park, Minutes of Boards of Steward, and the 1926 brochure of Mulberry's history, and personal interviews.

Church Historian Carolyn Dominy



Mulberry Street
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*Sharing the heart of God from the heart
of Downtown Macon*

719 Mulberry Street · 478.745.8601
mulberrymethodist.org
Office Hours M-Th 8:30am - 5pm