NEW FIRST METHODIST CHURCH WAS BUILT IN 1932
Gothic-inspired, it cost $750,000.

Methodism Appeared In 182

‘Prayer Meetings’ Popular

By MARY BARN
Staff Writer

Birmingham’s earliest in a bul-
ness was brought with them—along
with stamina and the willingness
to work—a deep yearning for
spiritual development.

An itinerant circuit rider preach-
ing in the Will’s Log tavern
brought Methodism to Birmingham
in 1819. The Baptist Church
struggled for its birth in 1833, only
to dissolve in 1849. The first
Presbyterian congregation began
the church of Deacon Elijah Fish (now
the Benedict farm on N. Woodward) in
1831.

This sets the stage for the early
beginnings of the three oldest con-
gerations in Birmingham.

IN 1822 Dr. Ezra-Park Parke start-
ed holding Sunday prayer meetings
for the Methodists at his home. In
1837 Rev. William Paine of the
Ohio Conference formed the first
group of Birmingham worshippers
into a society.

The first official church structure
in “First Hill” was the Methodist
church at the corner of Merrill and
Bates streets, built in 1832. Fin-
nanced by Stephen Chatfield and
Michael Blumberg, the congrega-
tion numbered 31 by 1834.

The frame building was torn
down in 1896 after having served
as church, library and town hall.

During the Civil War period,
Birmingham was the only place in
the district to maintain a Sunday
school continuously. The average
church visitor—attendance num-
bering about 65, and the pastor
receiving $600 annually.

The second church, a land-
mark torn down in 1931, was built
in 1871 at a cost of $20,000 and
dedicated in 1872. While church
men hauled stone, brick and wood
to complete the structure, the
women came along to cook the
meals.

A new parsonage was built on
the site in 1877. In 1884 the Wom-

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one years after the founding of the Methodist
Church.

One of their earliest houses of
worship was known as the Hotel.
A Presbyterian church was
founded in 1873. While church
men hauled stone, brick and wood
to complete the structure, the
women came along to cook the
meals.

A new parsonage was built on
the site in 1877. In 1884 the Wom-

en church, located on the south side of E. Maple,
was $2,500 including furnishings.

To defray construction costs, the
$22,000 was raised at $30 to
$44 each and "sold" at public auc-
tion.

DURING THIS time the church
was served by the Rev. S. H. Hill,
who in addition to his clerical
duties, organized and taught a
"Select School.

The Sunday of the parish were very
interested in world betterment.

Through their Women’s Foreign
Missionary Society organized
in 1777, they set up a scholarship to
aid students in the mission
fields of Persia.

Becoming of the church’s growing
activities through the years, a new

CHURCH WOMEN SPEARHEAD COMMUNITY-WIDE PROJECTS

By MARY ELLEN MEAD
Staff Writer

The role of Birmingham women in
today’s churches is a vital and
ever-increasing force, frequently
making up a majority of the
members in the community at
large by projects geared to city-wide,
county-wide, and even national
in scope and size.

Such things as nursery schools,
church socials, and church-wide
without, as in Town Hall; study
groups, local social service work;
missions—these, and much more—
are embraced by our church
women, as in the case of the
Birmingham church’s efforts in
援助 of Birmingham’s four square
miles.

As FAR BACK as 1911, Mrs.
John Martin, wife of the First
Methodist Church’s pastor, saw
"unity" as the answer to the prob-
lems of community help from
women, and it was then that
the Birmingham Council of Church
Women (now United Church Wom-
en) was born.

Mrs. Frank W. Johnson became
the council’s first president, her
official family included Mrs. H.
D. Harris, vice president, Mrs. E.
C. Ertrickson, treasurer, and char-
member. Mrs. J. Yaeger H. Stites,
Stites, P. G. Oden and Mrs. R. H. Peck
Purpose of the group then, and
now, was to "unite church women
in their allegiance to their Lord
and Saviour, Jesus Christ, through
a program looking to their integra-
tion in the world and work of the
church and to the building of a
world, Christian community."

CURRENTLY, 14 protestant
churches from the Birmingham
area are in the council. Any church
belonging to the Michigan and Na-
tional Council of Churches is eli-
Table and invited to membership, but
this does not eliminate individuals
from joining.

The present group, under the
presidency of Mrs. John Vander-
Roost, is sponsoring, locally,
the Birmingham Peace March, the
Re-
tarded Children’s (international)
Sunday School at the First
Baptist Church and, state-wide,
the Protestant Foundation for In-
er Race Relations and the Inter-
national Student Christian Fellow-
ship of Michigan and the Michigan
Migrant Ministry.