

HISTORY of CHURCH HILL

United Methodist Church



Our congregation was first organized about 1821 as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Church Hill. On the land that is still occupied by the church, a meeting house was built in 1851 and used until 1873, when it was sold to Liberty Township and served as a town hall until 1923.

A modern wooden church was built on this site in 1873. The building included a high steeple and belfry, which suffered damage in 1918 when the steeple was struck by lightning and destroyed. Extensive work was done to the church in the next few years, and it served the community through many years of change in the area.

It is assumed that the name of the church was changed to Church Hill Methodist Church in 1939 when the word Episcopal was dropped from all Methodist churches. The Rev. W.N. Roberts was pastor at this time.

The church was served by circuit preachers. In 1951-52 the church finally became a station, with its own pastor, Rev. Reuben Rader, who also served the Coalburg Church. Church Hill Methodist still required missionary aid for paying the pastor and church maintenance until 1962.

After a tornado struck the Church Hill area on February 25, 1956, the decision was made to replace the wooden structure that had fallen into disrepair. Thus, for two years the congregation met at Liberty School. Meetings, dinners, and other gatherings were held in members' homes, the parsonage, and school rooms, until a new building was erected and then consecrated on November 8, 1959. Rev. A.W. Almgren was the pastor at this time.

The congregation soon outgrew this building and broke ground for an addition on April 17, 1966. This second building program added to the educational wing, extended the Fellowship Hall to a seating capacity of 350, and included a large kitchen facility. This unit was consecrated on February 26, 1967. The Rev. John Buchanan was pastor during this program.

In February, 1968, Grace Evangelical United Brethren Church and Belmont Methodist Church voted to merge with Church Hill. The new congregation became Church Hill United Methodist Church. Their first worship together was on Sunday, March 3, 1968. This merger brought to Church Hill United Methodist Church some very dedicated Christians, and we have often had reason to be thankful for their many contributions to our church life.

In April, 1985, a Building Study Committee was formed to consider the possibility of a building program. They studied, consulted, interviewed, and made a decision to recommend preliminary plans. A Building Committee then worked with the architect to prepare plans for the building and financing. The Rev. Dr. Charles Yoost was pastor at this time.

The final plans were approved and the building program was started. The present sanctuary was built in 1986 and consecrated on May 17, 1987. This was a very emotional service as we met first in Fellowship Hall where we had been worshipping for years, and we physically moved various items as a congregation into the new sanctuary. The service was very inspiring. Thirty years of putting those chairs up and down had come to an end!

The present Sanctuary that was built in 1987 has three giant supporting beams that join at the Altar. These symbolize the joining of the three congregations into one, strong, united body.

In the year 2000 a Capital Improvement Committee was formed under the leadership of Rev. Larry Marshall. The improvements that were made included: new windows for the east side of the educational building, an elevator, air conditioning of the entire educational building, remodeling the choir loft adding one row, building the sound room and altar supply room, new ceilings in the educational building hallways, retiling the steps and foyer, equipping the sound room, and purchasing upholstered chairs for the rear of the sanctuary.

“Pray that God will help us become effective as a congregation in telling people who are spiritually hungry where they can find bread for their souls...in Christ, who is the bread of heaven.” Quote from Rev. David Gilbert, Senior Pastor, Church Hill United Methodist Church.

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