

History of Christ UM Church 1805 – 2005

Beginnings

We drive our cars up and down the roads of our community rarely, if ever, realizing that we stand upon the shoulders of giants. Their work before us paved the way for our presence now.

Once what we now call Pennsylvania Route 16 was a mass of trees reaching to the sky. There were glades where deer fed, bison roamed and limestone caves were inhabited by wolves. Generations of Native Americans also lived off the bounty of the land. Even now one occasionally finds a flint arrow point or stone axe head surfacing in the springtime after a heavy rain.

Then was heard the sound of horse teams, wagon wheels and the echo of steel axes upon the hardwoods. Settlers came from the east and, before that, from distant European and African shores. Logs were turned into houses and houses into homes for little families seeking their Garden of Eden.

Soldiers came as well. Natives in war paint, Englishmen and Scots in Redcoats and colonial pioneers clad in buckskin traveled the roads now paved over and studded with light poles and power lines and, following them, more families seeking opportunity and a good life in this lush and verdant valley.

An innumerable host of families have called Waynesboro home since those early days. Centuries later, families are still coming to this community, seeking a life and a livelihood. There is opportunity to be had, jobs and careers to be found, a pleasant climate that accents the four seasons and great natural beauty.

John Wallace came around 1749 or 1750, settling on the property that is now a part of the Waynesboro High School. He envisioned a thriving community and passed that vision on to his son, John Wallace, Jr. John Wallace Jr. created a plan for a town he wanted to name, Waynesburg. He petitioned for a charter, named the town in honor of the General he served under in the Revolution, Gen. Anthony Wayne, and laid out the first lots in town in 1797. The town was later named Waynesboro, because there already was a Waynesburg in the western part of Pennsylvania.

As the village became a town, blacksmiths, merchants, farmers and artisans came to the community. John Bourns, an early settler and blacksmith, understood the need for spiritual nurture and sought to encourage the formation of churches to offer spiritual sustenance to the community. He helped to build the log-meeting house that still survives on East Main Street.

Much of what we enjoy--or even take for granted--is ours because of those who came before us. Their names are rarely mentioned now: the Renfrew sisters, John Wallace, Sr. and John Wallace, Jr., John Bourns, Nathaniel Wilson, Jacob Gruber and many others. Their legacy is our community. And this is the story of just one part of that legacy, the people of the Christ United Methodist Church.

The Times

Frances Asbury was the first elected Bishop of what was then called the Methodist Episcopal Church. Native to England and disciples by Methodism's founder, the Rev. John Wesley, Asbury was sent to the American colonies in 1771. He was a born organizer who could put action into words. It has been said of Asbury that he was "*organized to beat the devil.*"

Following the Revolutionary War, Wesley sent two emissaries, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Coke, to convene a conference where American Methodism could be structured. At the Christmas Conference of 1784, Asbury was consecrated as a Bishop and given Episcopal responsibilities. Asbury was an administrator, an evangelist, a teacher, a pastor to the pastors and a shepherd to the people. He typifies the kind of gutsy and courageous spirit found in the newly formed nation.

Asbury understood this nation as few others did. He was able to see the amazing potential in this land and understood what it would take to develop it. Seeking out the kinds of persons with the calling and gifts needed, Asbury drew a large group of daring, adventurous young men to become circuit riders. They were Methodism's cavalry, endlessly riding throughout the region on horseback. Two of these young men were Charles Burgoon and Jacob Gruber.

Burgoon was appointed by Asbury to organize groups of people into Methodist Societies wherever it was possible. Burgoon came to Franklin County in 1795 and began his work of preaching, offering the sacraments and forming groups of 10 or 12 people into Methodist societies.

What a different place Franklin County was back then! Old Indian paths formed a network of roads. There were few newspapers and hard currency to buy a newspaper was scarce. George Washington was president. The Whiskey Rebellion was fomenting in Pennsylvania counties to the west. But there was opportunity everywhere.

Land was plentiful, rich and inexpensive. Anyone willing to do the hard work of clearing the land, plowing the fertile soil and tending their crops would find a rewarding life. Still, life was Spartan at best. Everything was labor intensive. Machinery that would ease the backbreaking toil of agriculture was still a long way off. Medicine was nearly non-existent. Sickness and disablement were common and crippling. But there was a "can-do" spirit that the early pioneers of our area seemed to possess in abundance.

From atop his horse, Burgoon organized societies in Chambersburg, Ft. Loudon, Shippensburg, Newville and Carlisle in addition to places throughout Washington County, Maryland. He preached wherever there was a welcome, including here in Waynesboro. Burgoon preached the Methodist message of love for God and for neighbor. Jacob Gruber joined him in ministry in 1802. They traveled extensively throughout the region, having no fixed residence, but living out of doors for weeks at a time and in homes of those who offered shelter from the elements.

In 1805, Nathaniel Wilson and his wife Phoebe, along with their twin daughters, Margaret and Hannah, requested that a Methodist Society be formed in Waynesboro. Jacob Gruber was personally appointed by Bishop Francis Asbury to organize the group and so became the founding pastor. They met in the Wilson's home and also used the log meeting house, which still stands on the hill in downtown Waynesboro.

The early Methodists were known for three things: their spirited worship, their disciplined study and application of the Bible and a sincere commitment to aid those in need. John was taught that that, if Christians would love God, they must first love their neighbor. He instilled in Methodism the desire to meet the practical needs of the sick, the poor, the imprisoned, the widowed and orphaned. He encouraged the organization of schools and places of higher education. Above all, Wesley was a staunch advocate for the abolition of slavery and counseled the Methodists in America to oppose it at every opportunity.

This message was preached by Methodists at camp meetings each summer and at the mid-winter revival meetings that were held for the community. Methodists have a long history of cooperation with other church bodies and often pooled their resources together with neighboring churches to host camp meetings and revivals. Such meetings generally resulted in an increase in interest in the churches and members were added to the rolls.

Jacob Gruber

We do not have detailed records of Jacob Gruber's activities in Waynesboro, but we know that he was a dyed-in-the-wool Methodist by his adherence to being plainspoken but clear about his mission. He was based here in Waynesboro, but was busy traveling throughout this part of the county and in Washington County. He organized societies in every little village and hamlet, including Rouzerville.

A man of his times, Gruber was a spare man, wiry and slight of stature, and extremely plainspoken. He was unmarried when he was pastor here in Waynesboro and gave 100% of his time to his ministry. He was deeply convinced of the grace of God for all persons, including those in slavery. Gruber was a strong voice for abolition and, some years later, when he was the presiding elder of the Methodist Societies in the area, he became the focal point of a controversy that established a constitutional principal.

Gruber had preached at a Quarterly Conference at a church near Williamsport, Maryland at which slaves as well as their white masters and others were present. In the course of his preaching, he gave a rousing denunciation of slavery. He held forth that the slaves were kept in dire poverty, treated worse than draft animals and kept from receiving some of life's basic necessities. Such was a perversion of the truth and against the Gospel because it took the very life away from those for whom Christ gave his life.

This was not well received by the slaveholders present. A small group swore out a complaint against Gruber, after which he was indicted under a Maryland law for inciting slaves to riot. When Gruber returned to Williamsport for the next Quarterly Conference, he was summarily

arrested and jailed. Several Methodist families posted bail for him, but he was obligated to go to trial.

A young lawyer, Roger B. Taney, who later became the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was called upon to defend Gruber in the Frederick, Maryland County Court. He argued the case before the Court in March of 1819 on the grounds that there was no evidence to indicate that Gruber intended to incite a slave rebellion. He also upheld Gruber's right on the grounds of the first amendment. But he went beyond the simple right of free speech in arguing the case. He also gave the reasons why Gruber opposed slavery and its many cruelties, and then asserted his own view, saying:

"We are prepared to maintain the same principles [as Gruber], and to use, if necessary, the same language here, in the temple of justice and in the presence of those who are the ministers of the law. A hard necessity, indeed, compels us to endure the evil of slavery for a time. It was imposed upon us by another nation while we were yet in a state of colonial vassalage. It cannot be easily or suddenly removed. Yet, while it continues, it is a blot on our national character, and every real lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will effectually, though it must be gradually, wiped away, and earnestly looks for the means by which this necessary object may be best attained."

Taney won the case. Gruber was acquitted and a constitutional principle for religious expression was created. Of course, the issue would later divide the nation and cause untold suffering for more than a century beyond that.

The First Church Building.

The small group of Methodists met weekly for study and prayer together and when their circuit-riding pastor was present, they met for worship and the sacraments. They met in homes or at the log meeting house. By 1826, they outgrew their accommodations as their numbers increased. They petitioned to become a chartered congregation and to purchase ground for a building and a cemetery.

The Trustees of the Church located a parcel of ground on the corner of what is now Second and Church streets. It was known then as "Lot No. 57." The ground cost \$80.00 and was purchased from Henry and Susanna Stoner Smith. The names of the trustees were: George Coughran, Hugh Logan, James Reilly, Daniel Sherfy, Henry Smith, James Smith, Michael Stoner and Nathaniel Wilson. The first burial took place before the building was begun. The building was, however, constructed in 1827 and was in service for 30 years.

As one looks back to see what was going on in the United States at this era, you can see the convergence of many streams of ideas, events and personalities. Andrew Jackson was about to become president of the United States. Westward expansion was looming large. Europe was sending forth waves of immigrants. Horace Mann was promoting the concept of public education, where students would be taught to value what it meant to possess freedom in a

democracy. Railroads were on the rise and the technological advances of the day were about to set in motion a rapid industrialization in what was a sleepy agricultural community.

The town's first bank, the Waynesboro Savings Fund Society, was established on March 5, 1853. The Geiser Manufacturing was founded in 1855 by Peter Geiser at Smithsburg, Maryland, to manufacture threshing machines. In 1860, the company moved to Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, on land that was purchased from a competitor, George Frick. Waynesboro was a microcosm of what was going on in the nation. The community grew and the Methodist Episcopal Church grew with it. The industrialization of Waynesboro would set the pace for a promising future to come.

Spiritual expression was finding a very American face during this era. We see this clearly in the Oneida Society and among the Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, the Shakers, the Amana Community and the Red Bank (NJ) Commune. Close by in Quincy Township was the Snow Hill Cloister. Political ideas were being tried in the experiment of Jacksonian democracy. Henry Thoreau was writing his journal at Walden Pond. Robert E. Lee was a cadet at West Point Military Academy and Abraham Lincoln was splitting logs in Kentucky. Boys were being born into families who would later send them off to war.

The Waynesboro Methodist Episcopal Church grew and was a steady influence in the community. By 1857, the congregation realized it had need of a more spacious structure. The Trustees of the congregation convened and in short order voted to build a new church home on their present grounds. The bid of David Stoner of \$3,500.00 plus old materials was accepted and Rev. John H.C. Dosh, pastor, signed the contract on May 4, 1857. The building was finished in the latter part of the year.

The new church building was a white, two-story structure with its worship space located on the second floor and seating for approximately 200 persons. The educational and meeting space was located on the first floor. It featured large windows for natural light and the pictures that still exist show a practical and appealing floor plan. The vestibule was frescoed and a feature unique to the times was a receptacle bearing a sign, "*please leave your tobacco here.*" Church and Sunday School attendance averaged above 170 persons each Sunday. As the congregation gathered week after week, events that would change their lives no doubt were reflected in the sermons, studies and conversation that took place within their church home.

The War Between the States

Political unrest was fomenting for long years between the North and the South. The distinctively American ability to find a lasting compromise was seemingly lost in the halls of the Congress and Senate as well as in the media. President James Buchanan from nearby Mercersburg, and the only Pennsylvanian ever elected to the U.S. presidency, seemed unable to stop the move toward civil war. And when it came in 1861, Pennsylvania played an important role in preserving the Union.

Pennsylvania's industrial enterprise and natural resources were essential factors in the economic strength of the northern cause. Its railroad system, iron and steel industry, and agricultural wealth were vital to the war effort. Waynesboro was a crossroads for men and material going to war.

Southern forces invaded Pennsylvania three times by way of the Cumberland Valley, a natural highway from Virginia to the North, and came right through Waynesboro on several occasions. As the “*keystone state*,” Pennsylvania shielded the other northeastern states from the direct effects of the war. Through its four grueling years, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sent more than 350,000 of her sons to war and untold numbers of her daughters to service on the U.S. Sanitary Commission as nurses, as telegraphers in the military telegraphic service, as stenographers to the Army and in a host of other roles. Waynesboro sent her sons and daughters forth, too, including some from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The war came right to Waynesboro’s doors in a direct way during the battle of Antietam in September of 1862, again during late June and early July of 1863 as the armies collided at the town of Gettysburg, some 19 miles away. For fifteen days, Confederate troops occupied the town of Waynesboro and vicinity. It is said that General Robert E. Lee rode through Waynesboro on retreat to the Potomac River, following the battles at Gettysburg. The war came to town yet again in July of 1864 as Southern troops moved through the area, burned Chambersburg to the north and occupied Emmitsburg to the southeast.

Church members from Waynesboro’s Methodist Episcopal Church banded together, made bandages, knit stockings and other garments for the troops in the field and those recuperating from their injuries. Some went directly to the field to help care for the huge numbers of injured soldiers following the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. Everyone in the community was affected in some way by the devastating realities of the first modern war, which brought the fighting right to the populace.

Following the Civil War, a time of peace and prosperity blossomed in the north. The Geiser Manufacturing Company was making phenomenal advances in farming technology with the production of steam engines that powered threshing machines and other farm machinery. Further impetus to industrial growth came in 1879, when the Geiser Manufacturing Company, looking for engines to power its machinery, bought the steam engine works of Lancaster County’s Landis brothers, Abraham B. and Franklin F. Landis.

The Landis brothers moved to Waynesboro to work for Geiser, and the ingenious designs they developed there led them to start their own factory manufacturing grinding and boring machines in 1890. Landis Tool came out of that company in 1897, and Landis Machine followed in 1903. Machine shops and machinists and their families came to the community and many joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. The church, along with the other churches of Waynesboro, became a focal point in the spiritual and social life of the community.

Through its tradition of social ministry, provisions for the poor and homeless, the widowed, sick and orphaned were made by members of the church. The women were encouraged to join the Women’s Christian Temperance Union to crusade against the devastating ills caused by alcoholism. Members of the church foreswore all use of alcohol including the use of communion wine. Another Methodist, by the name of James Welch in New York state, was busy perfecting the preservation and bottling of grape juice for use by churches as a substitute for wine.

The congregation sought for ways to care for their children and youth and so adults were recruited and trained to serve as Sunday School teachers and small group leaders. An Epworth League was formed in 1891 to offer a youth ministry to the teens of the church and community. Children's Day was a regular event each year and pictures still exist that show an extravagantly decorated sanctuary festooned with flowers and décor that celebrated the role of children in the congregation.

As a new century dawned, the need for a larger church building was again before the congregation. The trustees met and quickly concurred that a new church building was needed that would allow the congregation to go forward in their ministry. A building committee was formed and members recruited to lead it. Members included Alvin M. Foltz, Ezekiel Elden, F. Jesse Beard, William E. Bender, John G. Corbett, Aaron H. Deardorff, John H. Deardorff, D. Singer Geiser, A. Welty Rauthrauff, Val Smith, Americus E. Waynant and the Rev. George N. Hoke, pastor.

In late 1900, the former church was demolished and the work on the new building begun. The trustees of the cemetery received permission to disband and the graves were removed to various other cemeteries in the area. The former parsonage, which stood on the site now occupied by the Lockstamphor Funeral home, was sold and a new parsonage was erected beside the new church building on the Second Street side. This building still stands and serves as educational space for the congregation.

The building and furnishings cost a little over \$25,000.00—a large sum of money at that time for a modest congregation to raise considering that the average salary of a working family at that time was less than \$1,200.00 per year. The congregation gave sacrificially and with a vision for the future.

The new church building was dedicated on October 27, 1901, by Bishop C.C. McCabe. The Rev. George Hoke also gave an address. Again, an increase in interest in the church was felt and more members received. As the community grew, the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church lived, worked, played, educated their children and added to the good of the Waynesboro by their love for God and neighbor.

The Biederwolf Revival

In the fall of 1913, the well-known evangelist, William Edward Biederwolf (1867-1939), was preaching a revival in nearby Chambersburg. The Rev. T. S. Wilcox, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Waynesboro, felt that the churches of Waynesboro should unite and invite the Rev. Biederwolf to preach a series here. The clergy from a great number of Waynesboro churches met in agreement and extended an invitation. Biederwolf and his team accepted and set aside a date in early January of 1914 to preach a mid-winter revival series. Participating churches included the First United Brethren Church, the First Lutheran Church, The Church of the Brethren, the Presbyterian Church, the First Christian Church, and of course, the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Wilcox was an astute organizer and saw the potential in this event. His steering committee raised funds and purchased the wooden tabernacle constructed for the revival in Chambersburg and volunteers procured it and erected the structure at the rear of the Snider Avenue School. Stoves and chairs were borrowed from the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company. Opening day was set for January 4, 1914.

Prior to the meetings, a great deal of criticism was voiced about the upcoming event. It became the focus of conversation throughout the community. It was feared that the opposition would have a negative effect upon the meetings. Quite the opposite proved to be the case. Instead of hosting a two-week series, it became a five-week event. The Biederwolf revival had a dramatic effect upon the spiritual life of the congregation. Meetings were held in various shops and factories for workers and the area plants enthusiastically encouraged attendance. Cottage prayer meetings were also held all over the community.

An incident took place during this time that vividly underscored the need for faith in the community. During a routine arrest of a drunken man, Police Officer William Daywalt of the Waynesboro Police Department was shot and killed as the man resisted the officer's attempts to get him under control. The community was deeply shocked and saddened by this tragic event and it drew yet more people to attend the Biederwolf meetings.

More than 171,000 persons were in attendance and at the close of the revival some 2,700 persons had professed a confession of faith. Members from area churches combined to form a 200-voice choir, and dozens of others served as volunteer staff for the five-week event. It proved to be a decisive spiritual experience for a community that would soon face the realities of a world war.

For the community, a great two-fold benefit was theirs. Not only had there been a sincere turn to faith and to the positive outgrowth such profession enjoins, but the community also benefited as the suggestion from Rev. Biederwolf was heeded that a YMCA be organized in Waynesboro. A substantial rally was held later that year at the high school auditorium and over \$25,000.00 was raised to begin the work. The YMCA, now in its second building, continues to serve the Waynesboro community.

For the Methodist Episcopal Church of Waynesboro, the fruit of the meetings was realized as Pastor Wilcox received **210** persons as members of the church in an evening service. Barely an eye was dry as people stood along the altar rail, in the aisles and in among the pews while the pastor led them in their vows of faith and fidelity to Christ and to the Wesleyan way of faith. That truly was an unforgettable evening. As late as 1951, over 200 persons on the church rolls reported that they were members because of the Biederwolf revival of 1914.

For a great many years afterwards, a Biederwolf Sunday School class named in honor of the evangelist met each Sunday continuing the tradition of educating people for Christian formation. In addition, the church was able to purchase and install a Moeller pipe organ from the Moeller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. The Moeller organ, now updated and refurbished, continues to inspire the congregation in music week after week.

The Ministry of the Laity

Methodism began as a lay movement within the Church of England. Its hallmark was the dedicated study and practical application of Scripture by the laity into their daily life, work and play. Methodism has always been concerned with how a person is spiritually formed and in what ways their spiritual formation finds expression. As the twentieth century unfolded, it would bring about tremendous shifts in technology, science, education, medicine, politics and social changes on a worldwide scale. The people of Christ Church demonstrated that unique spirit in Methodism by finding a wide variety of ways in which they have reached out to their community in love and compassion. Informed by the study of the Bible and the writings of John Wesley, the people of the church found it a natural consequence of their faith to reach out to others in need.

In 1917, Woodrow Wilson was president of the 48 United States as Europe was locked in a grinding and devastating world war. As armies tore apart the pride of Europe in wave after wave of destruction, the United States was drawn into the conflict. Every city, town and village in America was involved. From here in Waynesboro, many would be drafted and would serve in the United States military forces, including 52 sons and 2 daughters from Christ Church. They served in a variety of ways and, thankfully, all returned home safely.

For its part, the congregation prayed, looked after families left behind, sent caring letters and packages to those serving overseas, not only from among its congregation, but from the community as well. Quilts and comforters were stitched together to be used in hospitals here at home and abroad for soldiers recovering from their wounds. The Women's Missionary Society purchased Liberty Bonds to aid the war effort. Those serving the Waynesboro community as Home Guards were met in the night by church members bearing hot coffee and something to eat as a way of honoring their service. When the men and women returned home from war, prayers of thanksgiving were earnestly prayed within the sanctuary.

Immediately following the war, the world again faced calamity as the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918-1919 swept across the world, including here in Central Pennsylvania. Again, the members of the church were called upon to share the work of mercy in caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the widowed and orphaned, and preaching hope at all times.

The congregation was very active in sharing ministry with other congregations. The records show that there was a great deal of cooperation with the other churches in Waynesboro and often a sharing of service for special occasions such as Lenten and Thanksgiving services. Methodism by its nature has always been at the forefront of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. The members of Christ continue to support this tradition.

Although the church building was only less than a quarter century old, when the Rev. Edward L. Eslinger was appointed as pastor in 1923, the church was found to be needing a great deal of attention. The inside of the building needed a fresh coat of paint. The heating system was already antiquated, the roof had several leaks, leaving water-damaged walls and ceiling. The carpets were threadbare and by an account left by the trustees of the church, things looked shabby. The congregation and pastor entered into great discussions over the need and the congregation was plainly unwilling to take upon itself the debt that such repairs would require.

The situation seemed to be at an impasse until the women of the church stood up and encouraged the church by giving of their little to the great need before them. They offered their hands and hearts in response to the need. They volunteered to make soups and jelly and sell them to repair the church. It was their courage to stand and their willingness to work that carried the day. And from this effort, the congregation took heart and, by early fall of 1923, pledges were raised and the work begun. The reward for the faith and vision of these women was that the building was renovated beyond the initial expectations and all debt was paid by the following year. And it was not long before interest in the church was evident in the community and Pastor Eslinger received so many new members that several new classes for children and adults were formed.

The decade of the 1920's proved to be a time of great growth spiritually and numerically for the church. And, from that time onward –and it continues to be a strong feature in the leadership of the laity in the church— attention to the material needs of the church building for the purpose of maintaining an attractive and welcoming environment is just an ongoing part of our work at Christ Church.

During the years of the Great Depression, Waynesboro was hit as hard as any community in America. But it was also a time of renewed interest in faith. Again, the women of the church organized something that has now become a regular feature in the church –Children's Vacation Bible Schools. Efforts were made to contact the children of the neighborhood and provide food for their bodies as well as for their souls. Many of these children, who are from the generation that author and broadcaster Tom Brokaw has called, "America's Greatest Generation," learned lessons in faith and values that later would sustain them during the Second World War and into that time of prosperity that has been unequalled in America's history.

Still, the Women's Missionary Society managed to raise funds through jelly and soup sales and church suppers to provide funds to missionaries on the field in far-flung corners of the globe. Some of their soup and jelly, as our records show, were given away to those hard pressed to put food on their tables. Scholarships for students were given in this time of economic hardship. Clothes were collected, mended and taken to the Methodist Children's Home in Mechanicsburg for use by the children residing there. The church was a place of much activity for the good of the community as well as for the congregation.

The faithfulness of people in small and seemingly insignificant tasks is what keeps communities together. The people of what was then called the Methodist Episcopal Church of Waynesboro accomplished a great deal simply by being faithful to the tasks before them. Their faithfulness in loving God and neighbor in practical ways has touched so many lives along the way and continues to do so.

In 1939 the congregation had a name change. The Methodist Episcopal Church became simply "The Methodist Church" with the merger of the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South uniting together with the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the reuniting of a "family" long separated by past differences. The merger strengthened the united church bodies and prepared them to have a greater reach during the trial by fire of the Second World War.

The War Years

The Women's Home Missionary Society was renamed the "Women's Society of Christian Service" following the merger of the three Methodist denominations. The "WSCS", as it was called, met on Tuesday, December 9, 1941 in the Biederwolf Room at the church. Pearl Harbor had been bombed only two days before. On Monday, December 8th, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. Germany had declared war on the United States that very day. While the emotions and sentiments are not recorded in recording secretary Katherine Hassler's notes of the meeting, one could well imagine the conversations that took place that night.

The women sang Christmas hymns, collected an offering and resolved to send cards to all the shut-ins. Officers for the new year were nominated and voted in. A drama was presented by Mrs. Victor McKelvey and her committee and Mrs. Carroll Wagner sang, "Sleep Holy Babe." The women of the WSCS also voted to send Christmas packages to all the men of the church already serving in the armed forces. Of course, the war was the talk of the evening and it would occupy the congregation and community for the next three and one half years.

Waynesboro's homes emptied of men and boys volunteering or being drafted for the military services. In all, over 130 men and at least 6 women from the Methodist Church of Waynesboro served in the military during the Second World War. Six of her sons were killed in action. They are: N. Diffenderfer, Charles Engle, Joseph A. Gunder, Lt. Glenn R. Henicle, Robert Resseguie, and L. Shindledecker. Their names appear on the plaque honoring our soldiers at the Church Street entrance.

As representatives of the Western Union Telegraph Company knocked on the doors where the families of these fallen heroes lived, the pastor and members of the church gathered near to provide comfort and care. This took place not only in the homes of church members, but wherever this sad news came calling in the community.

Meanwhile children, teens and adults wrote letters to the men and women serving overseas. Moneys were raised to provide aid to refugees. Scrap metal was collected for recycling and sacrifices were made by everybody for the common good. Some church members staffed USO canteens, such as the ones at Ft. Ritchie and at Letterkenny Army Depot.

Items for "ditty bags" for the soldiers were collected, put together and shipped out to troops on a regular basis. They contained items such as a handkerchief, a bar of soap, a pencil, a can of peanuts, hard candy, a roll of Lifesavers and personal notes from those who packed the items. Church members also baked cookies by the dozens and sent them to where the young men of the church were in training to share with their fellows. Each year Christmas boxes were made and shipped to the men of the community serving in the Army, Navy, Marines and Army Air Force. Those who received these gifts were surely encouraged and cheered on in their long and dangerous tasks.

Meanwhile, the women of the church and community alike took the places of their husbands, sons and brothers in the shops and factories. They worked long hours at hard work at the Landis Tool Company and the Landis Machine shop, at the Frick Company and at Fairchild Aircraft in Hagerstown and in dozens of other factories and businesses in the community. Each Sunday, the congregation gathered faithfully in prayer and worship with their families, led by the Rev. Bart Crites, experienced a commonality of fellowship and purpose as never before.

At last in May and then in August of 1945, the long years of war were over and the boys, now men, began to come home. Waynesboro and the world had changed and would continue to change. The years that followed would become a time of growth and renewed service to God and neighbor at the Methodist church of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania.

Changes, Changes, Changes

The end of World War II brought millions of young servicemen back to America to pick up their lives and start new families in new homes with new jobs. With energy never before experienced, American industry expanded to meet peacetime needs. Americans began buying goods not available during the war, which created corporate expansion and millions of new jobs. Growth was taking place everywhere. The baby boom was underway and the rise of America's middleclass was meteoric. And for churches everywhere, a "golden-age" of church growth was taking shape that brought expansion and energy in ways no one could have imagined.

Those who had endured the hard years of the war wanted to return home to peace and prosperity. They wanted a good job, a good marriage, a little family and they wanted to get on with the business of living. The G.I. Bill offered many benefits, including a college education to those willing to do the work necessary. Opportunity for a good life abounded in Waynesboro. The factories worked round the clock and the jobs are generally very good and paid well.

The face of war changed those who had served. They embraced faith as a vital value and joined the church when they returned. The Methodist Church of Waynesboro had reached out in many ways to the men and women in their military service and now that they were back, they brought their energy and talent to church. Of course, the pastors of that time, the Rev. Bart Crites and Rev. Elbert Wilson were kept constantly busy with additional weddings and baptisms as well as caring for their typical pastoral duties.

The energy of those young men and women who had served during the war years was channeled into an incredible array of activities in the community as well as in the churches and synagogues across the United States. Here in Waynesboro, those young men and women began Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops in the Methodist Church. They coached softball, Little League and Midget Football teams. They taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes. They chaperoned the Methodist Youth Fellowship outings and organized yearly Sunday School picnics.

The members of the church have also left an important mark on the community. Returning home from the war, the late Max Wynkoop had a dream that Waynesboro's youth would have the best

ball fields and teams for their youth. Max used his quiet personality and his passion for this dream to pull together a number of others, including Ray Long, to organize and secure land just east of Clayton Avenue, to create a wonderful place where kids have enjoyed sports for over a half-century. Even though he had no children of his own, he coached Little League teams for decades and had a profound impact on the lives of many youth of the community.

Ardie Winters, now 90 years old, returned from the war with a Purple Heart and just wanted to do whatever he could to help others have a good life in a community that cares. Ardie has served in a wide variety of ways from being a Town Councilman, to making pancakes at the Lion's Club community breakfasts year after year. Many other church members did similar and quiet acts of service to the church and community. They continue to do so as their way of loving God and neighbor.

Christian education has always been an important priority of the congregation. A need to create additional meeting space for educational purposes was met in 1956, when the church built the Educational Building. Constructed and finished in 1957 at a cost of \$90,000.00 the building was an impetus to additional growth.

The Church also sponsored a congregation in Cuba and sent their pastor, Rev. L. Elbert Wilson, to help lay the cornerstone. It is our understanding that the church in Cuba has survived for this past 50 years and meets weekly for worship.

The members of the Methodist Church of Waynesboro also had to grow in new directions as the nation also had to expand its understandings of race relations, gender equality and religious diversity. It was not always easy; often not everyone understood their direction of the times or why the nation and the Waynesboro community with it, was experiencing so many, seemingly radical changes. Discussions of these topics were regularly heard in the various classes and at time, from the pulpit. These were the years of the Civil Rights struggle, the feminist movement, the age of Rock 'n' Roll and of course, the television. Each change brought new challenges and new ways of seeing the world. These issues were not always easily addressed, but they were the topics of discussion in the Sanctuary and classroom. Social issues in our day continue to be items of dialogue at Christ Church.

Another change of name occurred in 1968, when the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church. The Methodist Church in Waynesboro was now joined by sister church, Faith United Methodist Church. A name change was necessary and so the church was named, "**Christ United Methodist Church**" by a congregational vote. Relations between both congregations have always been excellent, together the congregations of Faith United Methodist Church and Christ United Methodist Church have continued to share in ministering to the community in a variety of ways and share many friendships between the two church families.

Of some note is the ministry of Rev. Carl L. Buterbaugh. Carl and Nancy Buterbaugh came to Christ Church under appointment by Bishop Herman Kabenick in 1971. Carl was and is a faithful pastor to the church and community. He holds the record for the longest pastorate in our

history, serving from 1971 to 1988. Carl is the Pastor Emeritus at Christ Church, frequently helping out at all times. He and Nancy are beloved by the church family.

In 1990, through the efforts of the Waynesboro Area Fellowship of Churches and the Waynesboro Human Services Agency, Christ Church became the home of the Lunch Place. The Lunch Place serves a hot meal at noontime five days a week throughout the year to anyone and everyone. . Since its first meal was served in 1990, almost 150,000 persons have had a nutritious and appetizing meal through the Lunch Place Ministry. The congregation shares a deep commitment to hosting this ministry and in the past two years, has created a Thursday evening meal, which is shared with the members of the church and community together.

Back in 1988, the church's Council on Ministries adopted "Stewardship" as the theme for the year. During a brainstorming session. John Eier suggested that we weren't being very good stewards of our Educational Building, allowing it to stand vacant for all but 4 hours a week. The possibility of using it as a child care center was raised and a study committee was appointed. In 1989 presentations were made to the church members, recommending that the church move forward and establish a child care center. The membership of the church voted in agreement.

Under the leadership of Rev. Roger H. Mentzer and a team of church members including, Herb Meininger, Dick Shook, Paul Miller, Paige Jenkins, Colleen Middour, Sue Shinn, Linda McLaughlin and Jamie Pearson, the Noah's Ark Child Care Center was brought into being. In September 1990 we opened our doors to six children, Tommy Clark, Autumn Furry, Robin Kline, Laura Rock, Meredith Schellhase and Jeremy Stine. Ms Jamie Pearson has been the founding director and oversees a staff of 20 trained and dedicated child-care workers. Every day, some 76 families take their most precious loved ones to Noah's Ark, secure in knowing that the children are loved, well-cared for and taught Christian values in a clean, wonderful, and safe atmosphere.

The center serves children from the age of six weeks through sixth grade. Our before and after school program serves Fairview Elementary School, St. Andrew's School and Summitview Elementary School. We provide transportation to and from those schools as well as full day care when schools are not in session. Licensed by the Department of Public Welfare, Noah's Ark has an exemplary file of licensing inspections, many of which have no citations for non-compliance with the state regulations.

As we celebrate our 15th anniversary in service through Daycare, Laura is a senior at Waynesboro Senior High and Meredith is a Junior. All the others have graduated and moved out into the world. The two original staff members were Yvonne Yoder and Jamie Pearson. Miss Yvonne is now a teacher at Summitview Elementary School and Miss Jamie is still at Noah's Ark. We are honored by the trust that the parents of the Waynesboro area place in our childcare center and our staff works very hard to keep that trust. A board of laity from Christ Church, led by Susan Calimer, serves to guide and assist the director and her staff in their work. Susan is third generation member of Christ Church and along with her husband Jim, is raising a fourth generation with sons, Zach and Tom.

Waynesboro also has had to deal with the face of evil as the Ku Klux Klan entered the community in the early 1990's. Christ Church's pastor, Rev. Roger Mentzer, contacted the pastors and laity of the area churches to generate a Christian response to hate groups. The church people from all over the area quickly responded by the hundreds to meet this menace. The community met at St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church for prayer and then gathered on the four corners of the town square to proclaim that this community is not about hate mongering. When the KKK returned to Waynesboro shortly afterwards, they found no welcome whatsoever.

Ministerial Sons and Daughters

Christ Church has had a profound impact upon the lives of many of her sons and daughters, inspiring them and helping them to hear the call to Christian ministry and service. The congregation took seriously its responsibility to nurture vocation in its members. It started with nurturing the call of God received through baptism and included watching for the particular gifts of God that might lead toward ordination. The leadership and pastors of the church gave youth ample opportunity to participate. From confirmation classes onward, there is strong encouragement to step into leadership. Youth are invited to participate in leading worship, in doing various service projects and missions trips and growing in their knowledge of the faith. They learn about church organization and structure by serving on the Church Council and have both a voice and a vote.

While we do not have a complete listing of all the ministerial sons and daughters from Christ Church's 200 years, the names of those from our records show that over 25 people have responded to the call to serve as pastors, missionaries and educators in a variety of settings and church bodies. We are proud of each one of them as they are an extension of our ministry, too.

Meeting The Future

The character of the Christ United Methodist Church comes from our founders and is encoded like DNA in our church's personality. John Wesley who ministered in England, Francis Asbury who ministered throughout the Eastern seaboard of the United States and from Jacob Gruber, who ministered here in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Their love for God, which they insisted could only be worked out by their love for neighbor in tangible ways, is the framework for our past, the guiding principle of our present and the path forward to our future.

Our history is not so much driven by the past so much as our history invites us to receive the gift of our future. The members of Christ Church of former days have lived simple lives, unnoticed by the rest of the world, sought to work their faith out in loving acts towards neighbors near and far. The members of Christ Church today continue this tradition of caring and reaching in the name of Christ to Waynesboro and our surrounding communities. We intend to be a strong presence, living by word and example that we believe in the transforming love of God.

As this is written and published, Christ Church, along with so many churches in the Waynesboro community and in communities across America, is collecting funds for the relief work in the Gulf coast area, hit so hard by Hurricane Katrina. Every day, church members are out and about volunteering at the hospital, at nursing homes and at the Senior Center. They drive to the homes of the sick and shut-ins for Meals on Wheels. They lead Scout troops and ball teams coaching soccer, football and baseball. Church members volunteer to garden the area around the Dove sculptures by the YMCA, help in Red Cross blood drives, prepare and serve meals at the Lunch Place. They serve on community agencies like Head Start and they are volunteer fire fighters. Together, they are a loving presence shining light and hope into the community.

We are not a complacent people satisfied with our past. Our values impel us to reach further and to care in ever-greater ways. We are a biblically centered people who seek to love God and neighbor, to grow spiritually in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and to live as his faithful disciples, so that we might truly uplift and inspire one another, unselfishly love and serve all people and encourage our community to respond to God's unfailing love as seen in Jesus Christ.

A prominent part of our church architecture is the Good Shepherd window, located on the Second Street side of our building. It has graced the sanctuary and inspired us for 105 years. Moreover, it is a significant symbol of our identity and purpose. Jesus, our Good Shepherd calls all those baptized into the shepherd ministry with him. This is our mission to Waynesboro and to our world.

There is still much work for us in our congregation as well as in the community to live up to our vision. Our world is certainly very different from the one that Jacob Gruber and Nathaniel and Phoebe Wilson knew. But we believe, as they did too, that the steadfast love of God guides us through all the changes in all the days ahead. The One who created our path and calls us to it guides all the way to the future and beyond. We believe that our journey ends in his embrace, even as we believe he has called us to embrace our world with his love.

Written by Rev. Dr. A. Robert Cook in 2005 - celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Church