

JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Methodism in Hagerstown

1776 – In the first recorded act of Methodist preaching in Hagerstown, Francis Asbury arrived here on horseback on July 17, 1776, just 13 days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Of this visit he wrote in his journal, *“When we came to Hagerstown, it seemed as if Satan was the Chief ruler there. The people were busy drinking, swearing, drumming, etc. My mind was disburdened and most comforted after I had delivered myself from Mark 1:15 (“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, repent ye and believe the Gospel”) though it seemed to answer but little purpose with the people.”* It is reasonable to surmise that the local citizens were busy celebrating their recently announced quest for independence from England, the news of which would have taken several days to reach Hagerstown. From Asbury’s visit in 1776 until the early 1800s, area Methodists met for worship in private homes.

1805 - Around 1805 a permanent place of worship was established in “the left of a small brick building which stood on the (east) side of Jonathan Street, (north) of Washington (this lot was the future site of the old Hotel Hamilton)....The room was small, bare and dark, and had its entrance from a stairway without the building.”

1812 - In 1812, German-speaking United Brethren and English-speaking Methodists “together built a church which for 13 years they occupied in common.” One service was held by the Brethren in German and the other by the Methodists in English. An annual rent of 6 pence was paid to Jonathan Hager. This church is the site of the present-day Otterbein United Methodist Church at the northeast corner of Franklin and Locust Streets.

1825 – By 1825 the size of the Methodist congregation had increased to a point that they needed a separate and larger place to worship. So a new church was built on the first block of North Jonathan Street (site of the old Post Office). From 1825 until 1866 area Methodists worshipped in this “plain, rectangular, brick edifice of one storey.” In 1866 “it was remodeled and greatly improved in appearance and convenience. A floor was put in, making a lecture room below and an auditorium above.”

1883 – On October 23, 1883, the site of our present church “was purchased on North Potomac Street and on December 15 following, the ground was broke....The design was made by Chas. Carson, Esq., Architect of Baltimore, and the Builder was B.F. Bennett of Baltimore.... The Corner-Stone was laid August 7, 1884, at which time the name ‘St.Paul’s’ was given to the rapidly rising edifice.”

1885 – “On the 5th of April 1885, Easter Sunday, the last service was held in the old church.... The (new) Church was dedicated on Sunday, November 22, 1885.”

Building Costs:	Cost of Lot	\$ 4,350.00
	Cost of Building	32,994.86
	Cost of Excavating Lot	1,856.88
	Cost of Architect	720.00
	Cost of Furnishing, etc.	<u>4,142.74</u>
Total Cost of Original Structure		\$44,064.48

1921 – The Mollar pipe organ was installed

1935 - The sanctuary was redecorated and new flooring, lighting, and wiring were installed. Front steps were added, making a change to the appearance of the front of the church. Also, a program to replace the original windows with the current stained and painted glass windows was begun.

1954 - A large Education Wing, which reaches to the alley behind us, was added to the back of the original structure.

1963 - Another major renovation of the sanctuary took place. Updates included a new heating system, air conditioning, restoration of the windows, special lighting, rebuilding of and additions to the organ, new chancel, pews, carpet, sacristy and remodeling of the narthex.

1968 - The union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church took place. Since Hagerstown had a St. Paul's Methodist Church and a St. Paul's United Brethren Church, new names had to be chosen. St. Paul's Methodist became John Wesley United Methodist Church. St. Paul's United Brethren became Otterbein United Methodist.

Present – We strive to honor God and the vision of our forefathers by preserving this beautiful sanctuary. Since 1968 many updates have been made including new heating and air conditioning systems, installation of a new slate roof, and rebuilding of the organ. We have recently begun a campaign to raise funds to have all of our stained glass windows removed and repaired. Although there are challenges to being a “downtown church,” we continue to enjoy a vital, mission-minded congregation. We are called to make disciples for Jesus Christ through Vibrant Worship, Christian Fellowship, Spiritual Growth, Loving Service, and the Sharing of God’s Word. We invite you to join us for worship.

Please visit our website at www.jw-umc.org for the latest news and information. If you have any questions feel free to contact our office at 301-733-0391.

WE WELCOME YOU TO JOIN US FOR WORSHIP



Source: History and Records of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, 1825-1910, Hagerstown, Maryland by Mary Burgner Greenawalt