

**HISTORY**  
**CARROLLTON FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**1816-2016**

**"I felt my heart strangely warmed.  
I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation."**

John Wesley made this statement in 1738 after his Aldersgate Experience and for the rest of his life he proceeded to preach to anyone who would listen that "All are sinners and could be saved by grace." Wesley traveled through England leading a reform movement within the Anglican Church. Later, missionaries were sent to America and on December 24, 1784 the Baltimore Conference, the first Annual Conference, was held. Sixty Methodist lay preachers met at the Lovely Lane Meeting House in what became known as the Christmas Conference. The first action taken was to separate themselves from English Methodism and form the Methodist Episcopal Church with Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke the first bishops. These men were charged with the development of the church in America. The second action was to request that within the year all slave-holding Methodists issue a "Writ of Manumission", the formal denunciation of slavery. As a part of the Second Great Awakening, Bishop Asbury began preaching at a series of camp meetings expecting a visitation of the Holy Spirit. Following Wesley's model, the church sent out circuit riders across the land preaching and leading the congregations. Circuit riders were showing up as soon as people settled a community. Their parish was defined as:

Bounded on the east by the Alleghenies  
On the south by the Gulf of Mexico  
On the north by the Aurora Borealis, and  
On the west by the setting sun.

In our area in 1785 Rev. Wilson Lee preached at Carpenter's Fort near Rayland, Ohio and Rev. George Callahan preached to "squatters" near Hopewell. Amidst much opposition, two circuit riders preached to settlers near the burned out Ft. Steuben in 1794. The first Methodist Class Meeting was held at "Father Spragues" at Hopewell in 1796 and in 1798 the Hopewell Chapel was established. Classes at Sugar Grove, Richmond, and Wellsville were soon established. In 1803 Bishop Asbury came to the Steubenville area to preach. He returned on other occasions to preside over our Annual Conferences first held in 1813. That same year, Hollow Rock Camp, "the oldest continuing Camp Meeting in America and perhaps the world," was established and is still open today.

One winter's evening in 1816, about a dozen "Wesleyites," as they were pleased to call themselves, met at the East Main Street log home of local store owner Alexander Leslie whose house occupied a lot now covered



JOHN WESLEY



FRANCIS ASBURY



THOMAS COKE

by the offices of the Free Press Standard. They organized themselves into the class of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Centerville, Columbiana County, Ohio. Meetings were held at the homes of the members from time to time as the itinerant preacher with saddle-bags, Bible, and hymn-book could reach his appointments. The congregation was nominally in the Steubenville Circuit of the Ohio Conference, and as this "circuit" comprised about 200 miles with only two pastors, services in Centerville were rather uncertain. Early members of this congregation were Richard Elson, Charles Fawcett, Norval Brown, Alexander Leslie, and Fleming Dempster. Alexander Leslie was the father of Centerville's first postmaster and died in 1823. Richard Elson was one of the first land owners in the area and owned a farm now partly covered by West Main Street. That same year, 1816, Bishop Asbury died in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

In 1816 the early "circuit riders" were William Dixon and Burrows Westlake; in 1817, Samuel Hamilton, William Knox and Calvin Ruter, in 1818 and 1819, Cornelius Springer; and in 1820 Curtis Goddard and Cornelius Springer.

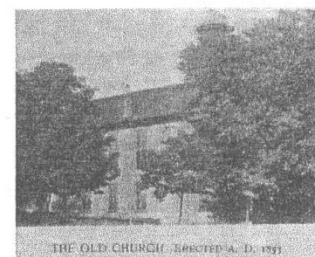
About the year 1820, the Centerville congregation acquired property at 430 West Main Street upon which for more than 80 years our church stood. Upon this lot a two story log "meeting house" was built, the upper room being used for church purposes and the lower for a school room. Continuing the names of pastors on this circuit: in 1821, John Waterman, Josiah Carr and Josiah Foster; in 1822, David Young, Burrows Westlake and James McMahan; 1823 Henry B. Bascom, who in 1823 was elected as chaplain of the U.S. Congress and Wm. Cunningham; in 1824, Wm. Stevens, Edward Taylor and Arza Brown.

In 1826 the Steubenville District was transferred to the new Pittsburgh Conference. In 1827 the Leesburg circuit of the West Wheeling District was formed and Centerville became a part of this circuit. The half dozen churches of what now was called the Carrollton charge was established and a resident pastor was supplied. Continuing with the pastors listed were Asby Pool and Thomas Taylor in 1826 and in 1827 Wm. Knox and Peter McGowan. In 1828, no pastors for Leesburg circuit were listed in the Conference minutes, but the membership of the circuit was stated to be "602 whites and 4 colored."

In 1829 the Leesburg circuit was transferred to the Canton District, Pittsburgh Conference, with William Swazey as Presiding Elder and Wm. Knox as pastor. In 1833 the Carrollton church was again placed in the Steubenville District, Pittsburgh Conference, and remained in the Leesburg circuit with Wesley Browning as Presiding Elder and David C. Merriman as pastor in charge. In 1834 David C. and J.C. Merriman were pastors; in 1835-1837 Peter Green, James Blake, and Dennis Goddard; in 1838 Joshua Monroe was Presiding Elder with John W. Minor and Thomas Thompson pastors of this circuit. In 1839 Simon Elliott was Presiding Elder with Patrick K. McCue and Thomas Thompson as pastors.



East Maine Street



430 W. MAIN ST.

In 1841 this congregation demolished the log church and school house and built a one-story brick church. This brick church answered the purpose until 1853, when under the pastorate of Rev. Daniel P. Mitchell, a large brick church was erected. Rev. Mitchell designed the church, Armstrong Bothwell did the stone work on the building, and William and George Woodward made the brick and laid them in the walls. This church was dedicated in 1854 under Rev. Mitchell's pastorate. The total cost was about \$1000 with the Woodwards receiving between \$300-\$400 for their work. It was dedicated free of debt. The cupola and bell were added about ten years later. From 1848 till 1868 the pastor of our charge lived in a parsonage at 219 Second Street SW. The 1853 church was replaced in 1871 with another one story brick built by Isaac Jackson and used until the current building was constructed in 1900 on South Lisbon Street. The materials from that one story brick were recycled to build the brick carriage house that today sits on the back of the lot 430 W. Main Street. From 1882 until 1912 the parsonage was located at 451 West Main Street then it was sold at auction for \$2,825. The congregation rented this structure for about a year until the present parsonage at 251 South Lisbon Street was completed in 1913 being built for the sum of \$3500.

By the end of the 19th century, the congregation had outgrown its facilities and a building committee was formed. Thomas J. Saltsman, George S. Tinlin, George J. Butler, R.E. McDonald, Dr. J.R. Williams, and C.A. Tope agreed to serve on that committee. The 50 by 97 foot brick Romanesque style building was topped with a 69 foot high bell tower. Seating capacity was 700, but it was advertised that it could expand to seat 2000 by utilizing other rooms in the structure. Entering through the front doors, the main sanctuary was 440 foot square, not including the choir area and the balcony that would seat 76. Rolled doors on the east side opened to a 23 by 24 foot Sunday School room. There was a separate entrance that opened to the choir robe room from the northwest and a 15 by 32 foot prayer room just east of the main auditorium was used by the Epworth Leagues. The windows were beautiful art glass set and cut by Bryant Brothers of Columbus. The principle window was a copy of Hoffman's famous "Ascension of Christ."

The building committee reported that the church lot and interest was \$954, \$432.93 for excavation and drainage, \$10,740 for construction and heating, \$320 for the architect, glass and frescoing \$800, \$245.60 for lighting, \$1,197.20 for furniture and \$392.24 for carpets, \$141.08 for grading and paving, \$130 for insurance, and \$68.56 incidentals. Total cost was \$15,421.61. Resources available included \$800 received from the sale of the old church lot, \$8,863.60 from subscription, and \$1,156.44 paid by the Ladies' Aid Society. The old pews were sold to the Mt. Olivet Church of Christ for \$100.

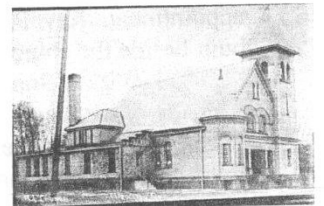
On September 9, 1900 with Rev. Albert W. Gruber as pastor, the dedication service for the new church building was held. Rev. Samuel Young Kennedy, the oldest of the former pastors, preached the last sermon in the old



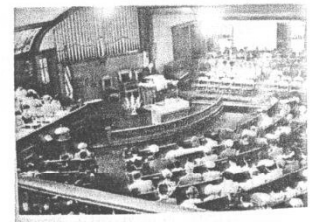
BUILDING RECYCLED



SALTSMAN, TINLIN, BUTLER  
McDONALD, WILLIAMS, TOPE



1901



ORIGINAL INTERIOR



REV. ALBERT GRUBER

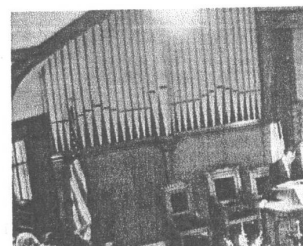
building on September 2 and Bishop W. H. Ninde of Detroit preached the first service in the new building. He chose for his text Psalm 69:9. *"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."* There was an afternoon service with various speakers and an evening service with Dr. A.B. Riker, President of Mt. Union College, delivering the message. An effort to raise the balance of the debt was made. Within thirty minutes \$3500 was subscribed and \$500 given by the Ladies' Aid Society. The Stockon family gave \$1700 as did Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Cummings and their son-in-law, James B. Fiedler. The entire indebtedness was covered by the end of the day with about \$200 to spare.

A sixteen pipe, two manual Hillgreen-Lane pipe organ was installed in the sanctuary in 1902 with Mary (Tope) Stewart as organist. Sara Vasbinder became the organist in 1910 and loyally played the music until February 1959. It was recorded that the organ was operated by a water pressure pump. Care had to be taken in turning on the water so the pressure would not break through and rupture a series of diaphragms.

The Carrollton Circuit embraced Pleasant Hill, Baxter's Ridge, and Green Hill, but in 1913 Carrollton was made a "station" with but one appointment. Rev. Parren U. Hawkins was the pastor. A new parsonage was built beside the church in 1915.

Four new Sunday School rooms and a church parlor were added to the east side of the church in 1927 under the pastorate of Rev. Willis S. Rowe. The dedication service was held on January 2 with Bishop Theodore S. Henderson of Cincinnati delivering the sermon. The real estate mortgage of \$23,393 was cancelled on December 1938.

In 1959 under the pastorate of Rev. Henry Sedlacek, the pipe organ was replaced with a large two manual Allen electronic organ costing \$10,271. Our Boy Scout Troop tore out the old organ at a Monday night meeting. Mr. Philip Hodel played the dedication service. Mr. Leland Smith told the story that he was the assistant organist at the time to Miss Sarah Vasbinder who had been the organist for 49 years. Once the new Allen was installed she called him on the phone and announced that she was resigning and he would be the new organist. He was the only organist at our church for that instrument. Mary (Tope) Stewart (1900-10), Sara Vasbinder (1910-1957), Leland Smith (1957-1992), and Mary Lou Berg (1992-2001) have been the church organists. In 1985 the organ was replaced with a three manual Allen Digital Computer organ at a cost of \$61,035. Among the fund raisers for the new organ were the "Organ-ized Cooking" cookbook in which church members submitted their favorite recipes and bags of beans to make Mrs. Dorothy Saltsman's delicious Multi-bean soup. Unable to hire a full time organist, Carla Hively, Karen Speedy, Ellyn Dunlap and Samuel Atkinson have played the Steinway piano for the last few years along with our Praise Band supplying instrumental music for worship. The church ordered a set of twenty-five Schulmerich Handbells, G4-G6, in April of 1978 for the price of \$1455.55 plus tax. These bells are played by high school and adult bell ringers periodically.



PIPES OF  
1902 ORGAN



LELAND SMITH AT  
ALLEN ORGAN  
1959



1985 DIGITAL  
ALLEN ORGAN

Our services have been enriched with years of excellent choirs that have brought the message of the gospel in music. Our adult Chancel Choir has had wonderful singers under the direction of talented directors. Over the last sixty years, Roy Estep (1951-1952), Ethel Davidson (early 1950's), John H. Shaffer (1959-1994) and Molly Winters (1994-present) have been the directors. Junior choirs and praise choirs have been led by Wilma Vasbinder, Leona Haugh, Cindy Roof, Dixie Smith, Janice Baldwin, Carla Hively, Molly Winters, and Marcia Folk, all providing opportunities for many people of all ages to sing to the Lord.

In 1968 a major building project costing \$211,781 provided an additional 4,400 square feet to the existing building. Added to the east side was a wing holding five new Sunday School rooms. The remodeling of the church office area, the moving of the pastor's study, the refurbishing of the remaining Sunday School rooms, and the modernization of the kitchen were accomplished to prepare the building for the future. A new heating system was also installed. The sanctuary was remodeled by changing the altar area, moving the choir to the east side of the sanctuary into the former Sunday school room, installing carpet and new pews, and building the "cloud" ceiling to modernize the appearance while adding better lighting and sound. Rev. Richard Swogger was the pastor, John Stevens was the Chairman of Trustees, and Dr. George Rankin was the chairman of the building committee which consisted of William Allmon, Joe Blazer, Mrs. John Beck, Mrs. Wayne Karns, Jack Lumley, J.P. McFadden, Bertha Magee, Tom Richards, John Saltsman, and Mrs. Frank Wagner. Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony representing the youth were Billy Saltsman and Jennifer Guess.

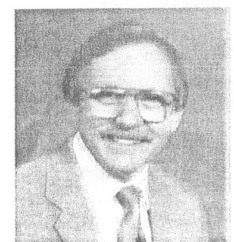
At the time little did we know that this building remodeling was in preparation for a exciting period of spiritual growth under Rev. William Ury and Rev. Rodney Buchanan. With the sudden death of Rev. Henry Holyoak in the summer of 1975, the East Ohio Conference had to make a non-traditional appointment of Rev. Ury as our pastor. He and his family had just returned to the U.S. from the mission field in Taiwan. When he came, he preached to us as if we were new Christians, teaching the Scriptures, and encouraging Bible studies in our homes. Many times as he preached Mrs. Ury illustrated the sermon in chalk drawings. Her painted murals decorated our church walls in many rooms. Their five young adult children were active in bringing the youth into our church. All aspects of our ministry saw wonderful growth, including the Sunday School program. The 8:30 worship service, which had been only a summer service, now met year round offering an alternative style of worship to the traditional 10:30 service. New choirs were started and contemporary music was used at the early service. Rev. Ury hosted a large number of missionaries to our services to witness of the life changing power that all can receive when one surrenders his life to Jesus. After five years, the conference appointed Rev. Rodney J. Buchanan to continue this ministry. He encouraged the active ministry of Bible study and the Wesley tradition of community involvement. A food pantry, a parish nurse program, and the Aldersgate Cooperative Parish were formed. Under



GROUNDBREAKING  
FOR 1968 ADDITION



REV. WILLIAM URY



REV. BUCHANAN

these two ministers, our congregation spiritually participated in the life of the church both locally and in mission outreach around the world.

In 1986 Rev. Rod Buchanan proposed that our church start a community-wide youth ministry that would provide a safe place for young people to go and learn about Jesus, an informal place removed from the church where teenagers could be with friends. In 1987 under the leadership of a Youth Advisory committee, Rev. Buchanan, and the first director, Dave Nelson, the ministry grew rapidly first in the church basement then moved to the lower level of the Winters Dental Office on Lisbon Street. In 1991 the ministry purchased the former "Tabernacle Building" on McCook Avenue for \$40,000 and with the help of volunteer labor renovated it as a permanent location. Initially for high school age, it later opened its programs for those of the junior high age and provided after-school activities of basketball, ping pong, pool, study areas, dodgeball, Wii games, and board games. Youth directors that have served are Dave Nelson, Chris Stratton, Andy Willingham, Bill Abrahams, Marc Dunlap, Jon Hutchison, Seth Filburn, and Justin Garner.

2014 saw a new ministry effort, a third service, designed to attract un-churched and de-churched people. An associate pastor, Kimberly Arbaugh, was appointed by the bishop and "The Bridge" was launched. It was to meet apart from the current location and use contemporary worship ideas. A location was found at the fairgrounds in the Rosebud Mining complex and services were started in May of 2015.

