

175 Anniversary of MUMC

Let me paint the backdrop of 1841:

There were only 24 states in the union, which most of them were east of the Mississippi River. The western future U.S. was still territorial under British, French, or Mexican occupation. Slavery was becoming a critical issue and our nation was just recovering from the Great Depression:

A Tree was Planted in Morrisville!

In 1771, a Methodist preacher named Captain Webb of the British Army, laid the groundwork when during a trip from NY to Philly, he traveled by ferry from Trenton to visit Morrisville. The next year, Francis Asbury preached in Morrisville also after a Trenton visit and “preached to many people”. He would later become the first Bishop of American Methodism.

Sixteen years later in 1788, Morrisville was part of the Bristol Circuit, which included all of Bucks County. Yet another 30 years passed and a Methodist Class meeting was formed in Morrisville in 1818. This had little success. But 20 years later in 1830, Methodist Circuit Riders began holding meetings here.

Sixty years had passed since Captain Webb’s preaching and the spiritual ground was ready for planting. Our Church’s seed was planted in 1841. With the help of a Methodist pastor, Pastor Whitecar from Trenton, and Joseph Adams acting as the leader, they organized a Methodist Class in Morrisville.

In 3 years, Morrisville was placed on the Attleborough (Langhorne) Circuit by the Philadelphia Conference. With this event Morrisville Methodist officially became the first Christian church and the oldest church in Morrisville.

In 1850, the parishners purchased a lot for \$150 on N. Pennsylvania Avenue. The church building committee broke ground the following year. A wooden building was constructed and completed by 1854 which cost \$3000.

Growth continued enough to build a second church sanctuary at the cost of \$6000 in 1890. These 2 structures still stand today as the first Baptist Church in lower Morrisville, just south of Burn’s Pharmacy.

In 1889, under Pastor Thomas Naylor's spiritual leadership, the church continued to grow by organizing The Epworth League. This was the precursor to the Youth and Young Adult fellowships.

Our Tree continued to grow through the evidence of needing more room. So in 1952 an educational building was constructed costing \$46,000. Shortly thereafter our congregation had grown to the point of needing to transplant to a new location for added space. Ten years later, in 1962, an architect was engaged to design our present sanctuary and fellowship hall after paying off the purchase of the new property.

Our final church service at the N. Pennsylvania location was a combined service with the new owner, the Baptist congregation, on July 28, 1963. The following week we held our first worship service at our present location in the fellowship hall. Then in December, the congregation worshiped in the sanctuary for the first time. The total cost of the 5 ½ acre property, 130 car parking area, church school facilities, fellowship hall and 400 seat sanctuary was \$360,000.

Within 5 years our roots deepened in Morrisville as our membership exceeded 700 warranting an associate pastor to be added to the staff in 1968, to mainly minister to the youth and elementary children.

Expansion of our facility was needed again. By 1972 a capital building project was accepted to build an addition connecting the sanctuary to the educational building. This included the nursery, library, multipurpose room, extra lavatories, associate pastor office, and the parsonage at 477 Hamilton Blvd. The estimated cost was \$325,000.

Through the remaining 44 years, we became "United Methodists" merging with the EUB's. Our congregation built a second parsonage, has sold the first one, and has upgraded our facility as needed. This site has been a worship, meeting and mission center to the community. Our former youth chorale presented Christian musicals which they took on multi-state tours. The youth have traveled on mission trips for Appalachian Service Project and Habitat for Humanity. In recent years, the adults have also traveled to needy places for mission trips. We minister to the homeless, have aided fire victims and cancer patients, provide space for the Red Cross blood bank, helped house the homeless shelter before the permanent Levittown location was secured, provide food through our food closet

and the newly formed backpack center, and are getting ready for the Family Promise program.

Besides our worship and education programs, we provide meeting space to the Montessori school and community groups such as AA, NA, and the girl and boy scouts. We are now spreading our roots by the new promise of the youth center's future.

These final words are taken from our 150th Anniversary bulletin:

The last words of JOHN WESLEY, the founder of Methodism, "The best of all is, God is with us", are words that apply not only to the past history of our congregation but also point to the future with confidence and faith as we emerge as God's people in a new day.

Yes, The Tree that was planted in Morrisville in 1841 never ceased growing. Its leaves and branches covered that great era of American history marked by the Civil War; the firm establishing of the United States as a major nation in the world; the horror and tragedy of two World Wars; and the great Depression between those wars; and many wars since then.

Our roots are deepening, our leaves and branches are spreading as we minister to the present day needs of Morrisville and its surrounding neighbors. "[The Maple](#)" is the official newsletter of the Morrisville United Methodist Church. It is thus a living Church with a magnificent past and a brilliant future. With your help many more branches may be added.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!