

## HISTORY OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINERAL POINT, WISCONSIN

The First United Methodist Church of Mineral Point enjoys the distinction of being the oldest Protestant congregation in Wisconsin and, by local lore, of having erected the first Protestant church in the state. Elder Roberts, a pioneer miner-preacher, held religious services in his cabin as early **1828**. His joyous rendering of a favorite hymn, "Oh Jerusalem, My Happy Home" as he went in the early morning to get water from the spring on the south side of Fountain Street caused the settlers to name the spring "Jerusalem Fountain," a name which survives today as the name of the little park, Jerusalem Park, that marks the site of this spring. #1B

### **The first Methodist Episcopal Church – built between Commerce & Shakerag Streets.**

A group of these worshipers organized as a Methodist Episcopal congregation in **1834** and built a log church on the point of land at the junction of Shakerag and Commerce Streets, which fact is recorded in a letter written by the first Methodist Episcopal Church Presiding Elder, and a noted Methodist circuit rider of territorial times, the Rev. Alfred Brunson, and also recorded in The "History of Iowa County," published in 1881. A circuit rider is a popular term referring to the Clergy in the earliest years of the United States who were assigned to travel around specific geographic territories to minister to settlers. The Rev. Alfred Brunson's letter and article refer to this log church, located in the area of the Creamery (now Hooks Cheese factory), as "the first Methodist Episcopal Church, and the first Protestant church built in Wisconsin," and contains the following description of this little building, which was our congregation's first home. #1B, #2,#23

"The first Methodist Episcopal church and the first Protestant church in Wisconsin was erected in Mineral Point in **1834** and was built entirely of logs. I think there was not a sawed board in it except what was worked into window sash and doors. The logs were notched at the corners, chinked inside and daubed outside with clay mortar. The floor was of puncheons split out of logs and smoothed with a broad ax on the flat side, the round side being spotted to fit the sleepers. The roof was made of clapboards split out of large oak trees, the ceiling and pulpit were made from the same material. The seats were made of split logs smoothed on the flat side with wooden pegs driven into auger holes for legs. I do not remember whether the hinges on the doors were made of wood or iron. It was about 24 by 30 feet in area, and was located on the first spur or point of land that comes in from the Northwest near the foot of Commerce Street." Another source said it was a rude log cabin, some 15 or 20 rods from Abner Nichols' old hotel near the foot of Commerce Street. The Reverend's letter went to say, "I held the first quarterly conference meetings, gave the first love feast and administered the first sacrament in it in the fall of **1835**. I have a cane made out of one of the logs of that church which was presented to me in 1871 in the present Methodist Episcopal church. Alfred Brunson" The log church had been torn down and used for another building, but there were some logs left over and those were the logs used to make the canes. Some were used to help raise money for the new church. #1B pp. 171, #3 pp.3

The pamphlet, *Cornish Methodists and Emigrants* by John Rowe, 1967, tells a story of William and Lavinia Rablin. William and Lavinia Rablin are featured on two church windows in the Methodist church dedicated in memory of them. "William and Lavinia Rablin who had been married in Camborne in the spring of 1835 and had straight away left for Wisconsin. They reached Mineral Point towards the end of June that year to find conditions that are more usually attributed to the later roaring mining camps of the Pacific ..... Years after Rablin recalled making their way through a howling

wilderness and often he had to take his wife-up in his arms and carry her over the marshy places, jumping from one log stump or stepping stone to another to attend the Methodist Church meetings.” #22, #3 – pp. 871

The first class of members in the Methodist Episcopal Church were William Kendall and wife, John Wallis and wife, William Phillips and wife, Andrew Jeffrey, William Ball, Mr. Miler and wife, Mrs. S. Thomas, and James Arawakan. In **1836**, for the first time, the Conference records mentions a "Mineral Point Circuit." Before that, Mineral Point was a part of what was known as the "Iowa circuit." In that year, Rev. Richard Haney and Rev. John Rummer were appointed preachers, and the Mineral Point circuit included all of the settled country west and southwest of Madison to the western part of Lafayette County. There were probably fifteen to twenty "preaching places." In **1837** the society had increased to 30 members. The first Quarterly conference was held at Mineral Point., **December 24, 1837**. There were present Rev. Richard Haney, William Ball, William Thomas, William Kendall, Andrew Jeffrey, and William Webster. #3

### **Plans for a New Rock Church – Built on the corner south of DotySt. and The West side of Iowa St.**

As the population of the region increased, so did the number of Methodist worshipers grow, and by **1837**, the congregation found itself in need of a larger accommodations. In the fall of that year a small rock church was erected on the corner of Doty and the west side of Iowa, opposite the present structure. This church was dedicated early in **1838**. The Illinois Conference was petitioned for a resident minister and the Rev. John Mitchell was sent from Galena to serve the Mineral Point area. #3

In **1840** the rude plank seats were replaced with more comfortable and attractive benches. The records show that on **December 1st, 1843**, the Mineral Point Sabbath School had 56 scholars, 12 teachers and a library of 104 volumes. The first recorded meeting of the trustees was held on **June 21st, 1845**. The members were William Kendall, Joseph Hatch George Oglethorpe, Samuel Rusk, William Phillips, N. Cod, William Canyon, John Pierce, and Philip Allen Sr. During this year the basement of the church was fitted up for school purposes and was also rented as a meeting room for the Odd Fellows and Sons of Temperance. The society increased in number so rapidly that in **1845** more commodious quarters were required and under the direction of Philip Allen, Sr., an addition was added to the original rock structure. Mineral Point circuit embraced Mineral Point, Dodge ville, and Peddlers Creek, now called Linden. #3

In **1848**, during the pastorate of Rev. James G. Whitford, a revolution occurred in the congregation. One faction of the church was opposed to the purchase and use of an organ for the services. “On the first Sunday after the installation of the organ there appeared two choirs in the church, one in the back of the church that sang without use of accompaniment, the other accompanied by the organ. There was some rivalry for the singing honors and the result was that the next Sunday found the whole congregation had taken sides and a new church organization was well under way. Fifty to seventy members withdrew in disapproval over the organ music and subsequently organized the Primitive Methodist Church, later known as the Congregational Church then United Church of Christ. Not withstanding this severe check, the original congregation continued its rapid progress and within a few years fully recovered and grew as did the newly formed Primitive Methodist Church. (Capital Times 11-1-67 by Serena Nelson)” #4

In the fall of **1849**, during the pastorate of Rev. R. P. Lawson, the first parsonage was

built in the rear of the present church edifice. #3

The autobiography of the Rev. John L. Dyer (of Colorado Conference, M.E. church— Volume titled “The Snow Shoe Itinerant” pub. 1890) gives the following account of his participation in the activities of the Mineral Point Methodist Church in 1849 –

“Soon after this we went to Lost Grove, near Mineral Point, as I was still prospecting in the lead mines. I took my Church letter as an exhorter. Rev. Henry Summers, Presiding Elder, was an old friend, and helped me, as I was a stranger. Soon a way opened for me to exercise my gifts and the brethren gave me a license as a local preacher. This was in 1849. In the fall we moved to Mineral Point, so that my children could have the benefit of a good school.#5

In 1850 Rev. J. M. Snow became pastor on the Mineral Point Charge, and he had a plan by which, every four weeks, I was to preach in the old stone church in his presence. My first attempt I well remember. The time came---I announced the text ---suddenly---(I) could not utter a word. After trying for some minutes I sat down.---Although I failed often, I never so entirely failed as at that time. The next Sunday evening, in the same place, three hundred crowded the house. When I announced the text, I looked up, and every eye was on the preacher. “I suppose you all remember last Sunday night's failure; but I am not convinced that there is no preach in me yet!” This brought a smile to many a face and we set out with unusual liberty.” #5

### **Plans for the New Gothic Church**

In **1857**, the second annual conference of the West Wisconsin Methodist Episcopal Church was held here. In **1866**, during the pastorate of Rev. James Lawson, the subject of a new church was first agitated. Nothing was accomplished until **April 15, 1867**, when a committee appointed for the purpose announced that they had purchased from the common council of the city what was known as the "Brick School-house Lot." The price was \$1,000. This much being accomplished, the congregation awoke to the necessity of the hour and subscription papers were circulated. Large amounts were freely pledged and all bid fair for the splendid success. A committee consisting of Edward Hosking, James Spencely and Rev. James Lawson was appointed to superintend the erection of the edifice according to plans submitted by a Chicago Architectural firm. #3

Jim Jewell notes in his book “**Cornish Connection in Mineral Point**”, Vol. 1 p. 65 "Colan and Richard Goldsworthy Sr., started the construction of the Methodist Episcopal Church but it turned out to be the only project they were unable to complete. The following account by William Goldsworthy I have not been able to cross reference and I was unable to find out who the eventual stone masons were. William wrote, “as a boy I helped tear down the old brick structure that occupied the site. My father and Uncle Dick laid the foundation of the church and like all their work was most substantially laid. There are stones in it that to my knowledge weighed from one to two ton. In the receptacle of the corner stone among the other souvenirs of the time is my father's portrait. The men that laid the foundation would also have built the main structure, but an old Frenchman out bid them and they knew that to compete with him would mean to them financial ruin and dishonor—and that was the fate of the Frenchman.....” #6

Forthwith the foundation was built and cornerstone laid and the work progressed rather slowly, probably because of the need to rebid the project. It was finally completed and dedicated in **1871**. The total cost was \$32,000. The church was built of durable and attractive white sandstone. The sandstone was quarried, cut into blocks and taken by horse and wagon from the local quarry to the job site. Straw was put into the wagons and placed between the stones to prevent chipping and cracking, newly quarried sandstone

being soft. The sandstone hardens over time and makes a durable structure. #7

According to “**Stone by Stone – Early Mineral Point Buildings**” by Audrey Stewart Parkinson, published in 2000, p. 113, “the Chicago architects were John C. Cochrane and George Otis Garnsey. The church features a Gothic Revival Style, asymmetrical towers and center entrance tower of front elevation, a taller north tower features a steep gable roof, corner buttresses and pointed arch door. A less ornate south tower barely extends above the roof line and features long Lancelot windows. Large pointed arch windows of stained glass lights and corner buttresses set off the pointed arch entrance.” Early pictures depict the south tower, was originally topped by a tall thin wood structure with a pointed, six sided, conical roof that covered six long, open Lancelot windows. This structure extended above the north tower. This wood structure rotted and was unsafe. Before someone was hurt it was taken down. The congregation decided not to rebuild it. #8

The annual conference was held in the new building shortly after its dedication in the fall of **1871**.

The old ME Church was sold and in the later 1870's the top floor was used for a carpenter shop by Waslev & Charles and the basement was occupied by Mrs. Tenant. On Monday March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1880 it was destroyed by fire. Mrs. Tenant was able to save her furniture and household goods. Everything was saved from the carpenter shop except two machines that were bolted to the floor. A stiff breeze carried embers from the fire to the roof of the new ME church and the roofs of Trinity church and rectory. Frank Hoare tied a rope to his feet, and was let down the steep roof where he tore off shingles and put out the fire on the ME Church. Trinity church and the Rectory fires were easier to put out. The basement of the old ME church was saved and a house was built on it. The stone work of the basement is beautiful. Katherine Whitford has seen the charred stringers of the the old church in the present basement. #9

From 1856 to 1879, Mineral Point was the conference headquarters for the Mineral Point District. It meant that they had two Methodist preachers assigned to Mineral Point. One to the church and the other to the District.

During the fall of **1880**, the old parsonage was sold and the Nancolas house was purchased. It was located near the public square. The Sabbath School at this time had reached a membership of over 200 with 22 classes and the church membership was over 250. In **1887** the annual conference was again held in the church. In **1900** the church membership of 255 was nearly the same, but the Sunday School membership had increased to 300. During that period the second parsonage was sold and a third one bought on High Street, which in turn was disposed of and another purchased on Washington Street. The latter was sold in 1912 to Mr. Sidney Sheppard.

From 1880 to 1900 the Sabbath School maintained a membership of over two hundred students with 22 classes in all, and a church membership of 250 parishioners.

## **A PIPE ORGAN**

In **1904**, during the pastorate of W.W. Hurd, a pipe organ was purchased costing with the necessary changes, something over \$2000. The pipe organ was purchased from a Chicago theater. It was located by the Hutchinson family. #14 (Lois Knudson & Marilyn Owens) It was made by Lyon and Healy. The pipe organ was set up in front of the large

group of stained glass windows on the east side of the church, which at that time was the back of the sanctuary. This organ was known as a tracker organ. These organs were fantastic in that the controls were similar to an old fashioned type writer with wooden parts to control which pipes sounded. They were easily tuned, and maintained, even to this day. #10 Sadly after this organ was purchased a few more members left, but the church continued to grow in membership.

In about **1907** an addition to the present church building was planned, with a rear entrance. A primary room and basement for the furnace was added at the same time. The rear entrance involved a set of stairs leading from the south side of the present day kitchen up to one landing with a square corner and another set of stairs to another landing and several more steps up to the sanctuary level. A hole was then cut through the middle of the sandstone wall to allow entrance into the sanctuary.

The sanctuary that first faced west with three arched designs on the west wall (side toward the parsonage) was then reversed to face east (the direction it does now) to accommodate the new pipe organ, choir loft, alter, and kneeling rail. The pews were reversed and the floor built with a decline, higher in the west, lower as it went east toward the organ, alter and lecterns. There was such a large choir that members would split with one half going up the southeast stairs and the other half going up the southwest stairs to enter the choir loft in the now front of the church. The cost was estimated as \$3000, and Rev. S.A. Bender was pastor. #14 Interview with Mary Jane Rideout

In **1912** during the pastorate of Rev. A B. Bouquard, the interior of the church was decorated at the cost of \$1,200 and the new parsonage was built at a cost of \$5,000. In this pastorate many new members were added, and the church led the district in the number of Northwestern Christian Advocates taken with 39 subscribers. In September of this year the church entertained the West Wisconsin Conference. Bishop Quale presided and preached on Sunday from an open car, one of the few in town, on the lawn of the J.W. Hutchinson home in the north part of town. #3

**1924** was the year that First United Methodist Church observed its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its beginnings with Rev. J. E. Cooke as pastor. Rev. H. A. Studebaker, a Beloit Congregational pastor, gave the address on Sunday evening in the Municipal Building. Ten years later, **1934**, marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original congregations beginnings in the small log building. Rev. C.E. Budron was the pastor. A banquet was served, the history of the church was read, followed by a public service at which Bishop J. Ralph Magee was the principal speaker. In the same year, **1934**, the church entertained annual conference. #7

In **1942** the church sanctuary was redecorated, exterior wood work was painted, rest rooms were furnished and other repairs were made. In **1943** Mineral Point Church, again entertained the annual conference, during the pastorate of Rev. Fred Smith. On **November 16, 1944**, the church celebrated its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary. An historical pageant was presented and there were special services. #7

During the pastorate of the Rev. Herbert Thompson, **1953-1956**, extensive repairs and changes were made, including kitchen modernization. A large dining room and kitchen on the same level as the entrance hall has been created by raising the level of the dining room floor. There were four floor levels previously. The entire floor is being covered with Flex-O-Tile. A new larger doorway was cut in the west wall of the sanctuary after installation of a suitable concrete approach from the west. Many windows were refinished with new stained glass. Estimated cost of these improvements was \$35,000. #3

An article in the “**Democrat Tribune**” published **January 26<sup>th</sup> 1956**, stated “A new entrance on the west gave direct access to the sanctuary which could only be reached preciously by a winding staircase. A new fireproof furnace room has been built with a new chimney and a new oil unit for the old furnace. There will also be a new youth room and family chapel when the work is completed and considerable landscaping will be done around the new entrance. Schaack & Reed are the contractors doing all the remodeling and construction work while the electrical wiring is being done by Cline Electric. Weiler and Strang, Madison, are the architects. Rev. Herbert H. Thompson has been with the Mineral Point Methodist church for the past three years. The Rev. and Mrs. Thompson and an active church congregation are to be complimented on the outstanding improvement they are making in their church.” #12

In **1962** during the pastorate of the Rev. Wesley C. Hunter, we observed more changes. Difficult decisions were made and it was decided that the pipe organ should be rebuilt. The pipes were removed to the attic and set up above the altar area. The choir and organ console was placed on the south side of the church near the front. The floor of the sanctuary was made level instead of slanted from west to east. Rev. Hunter had to break a tie vote on making the floor level. (Democrat Tribune -Dec. 1961) The pews were rebuilt to allow for a center aisle and aisles on the outside walls. New woodwork was put on the lower walls to cover the wainscoting. The East entrance was changed, a staircase was removed from the northeast tower and replaced with a sacristy and minister's study. An outdoor carillon and chimes were added at a total cost of about \$30,000. The architectural firm was Gausewitz & Asso. Of Madison. Bob Knudson's brother Donald worked on the project. #13

In **1967** the “Oldest Protestant Congregation set 100<sup>th</sup> Year Rites at Point” (**Capital Times** article by Serena Nelson 11-1-1967). “The laying of a church cornerstone was a rousing affair in Mineral Point 100 years ago, local Methodist researchers found as they looked for material to use in their anniversary commemoration.” The cornerstone for the present Methodist Church was laid on **June 24, 1867** with the Masons from lodges in Mineral Point, Darlington, Platteville and Mifflin participating. Accounts report that almost 300 Masons started the ceremony by marching from the Masonic hall to the site of the church with Tischel's Union Band leading the way. The band played during the ceremonies and then led the way to Lenahan's hall where the ladies served a dinner. #4

The **1967** service included 15 masons from the 125-year-old Mineral Point Masonic Lodge No.1 who participated in the re-enactment of a ceremony performed in 1867. The ceremony included scattering kernels of corn on the cornerstone as an emblem of plenty, pouring wine on it as an emblem of joy and gladness, and pouring oil on it as an emblem of peace. The square, level and plumb were used to test the worthiness of the cornerstone. #15

The ceremony also included the singing of two hymns, sung at the ceremony 100 years ago, words of which we found in a newspaper account of the event. They were adapted to well-known old hymn tunes by Mrs. George Kielland, music director of the church. One of them, “We meet upon the Level and we part upon the Square” and sung to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. #15

Following the reenactment of the original cornerstone laying, a symbolic cornerstone of 1967 was laid to initiate a four-year program of historic remembrance and awakening to the possibilities of the future which will culminate with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the church in 1971. #15

Masons who participated included Harry A. Speich, Merle Freymiller, James Ritter,

Howard Tyrer, Kenneth Salmon, John T. Harker, Clifford Kliebenstein, Leonard Poad, Edward Tersilliger, I. Dalven Julian, John Davisson, Tom Adams, Robert Brown, Arthur Benson and Harvey Clauer. #15

The 1967 cornerstone was laid by James Middagh, lay leader and Ellen Brown, a confirmant. #15

Rev. Donald Frank, pastor of the church delivered his message on “Re-building for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” He contrasted 1967 with 1867 when “The moon was for lovers, planting corn and hunting coon, instead of for exploration. In projecting the place of the church in the next 100 years, he said the emphasis must be changed from structures to people and flexibility.” #15

### **The Parish of the Hills**

On June 15, **1970**, a new organization, uniting six long established Methodist congregations in southwestern Wisconsin, was formed. Named **Parish of the Hills** in honor of the scenic area it served, it was a co-operative parish that was a unique form of Town and Country Ministry. Each congregation retained its individual identity, was responsible for its own building upkeep, Sunday School, and general program, while sharing the expense of the staff, their residences, and the cost of a central office. Sunday worship services were conducted on a rotating basis by the two full time pastors and the student minister who served the parish. #16

The six churches involved in this Larger Parish concept ranged in membership from 45 to three hundred fifty persons. They included two open country, rural churches, Bethel and Willow Springs, three village churches, Linden, Rewey, and Waldwick, and the Mineral Point United Methodist Church. The first Director of the Parish was Rev. Donald Frank, who was the pastor of Mineral Point and Willow Springs churches at the time of the organization. Rev. Barry Watson was appointed as the assistant pastor and Eugene Orr, a theological student, served as the student pastor. #16

In June, **1972**, Rev. Frank was appointed to the United Methodist Church at Brookfield and Rev. Kendall Anderson was appointed in his place. In **1973**, Rev. Francis C. St. Amant was named Director and he and his family resided in Mineral Point. The new organization was to work as a group serving the spiritual needs of the rural community giving the churches courage to go forward and the incentive to work to overcome any problems by sharing Christian love and understanding. #16

In **1974** the First United Methodist Church of Mineral Point celebrated their 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary (from the first log building 1834-1974). #16

In **1983** Rev. Kellen was appointed as our pastor. In **1984** the church celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1834-1984) during the regular Sunday services with Bishop Marjorie S. Mathews addressing the sermon. Several of the church's former ministers were in attendance including Rev. David Kellen (1983 to present), Rev. Donald Frank (1966-72), Rev. Christine Bethke (1978-80), Rev. Richard O'Neal (1981-Present), Rev. Herbert Thompson (1953-56), Rev. Harvey Schall (1963-66) Rev. Wesley Hunter (1956-63), and Rev. Fred Smith (1942-45).

In **1995**, Rev. David Seaton was appointed to our charge. The congregation continued to grow in discipleship as we sought to strengthen our Christian Education and our outreach ministries. We supported our youth as they joined forces with the other youth groups in Mineral Point and headed all across the country on mission trips, rolling up their sleeves

and becoming the body of Christ through their labors of love.

Between **1995** and **2001** many new woodworking memorial projects were commissioned and completed. Frank and Marilyn Trevarrow, Loa VanMetre, Evelyn Hunter and the Gladys Fitsimmons family requested that Bob Knudson build in order of the names a baptism font, the desk and storage unit in the secretaries office, and the desk and bookshelf in the pastors office. Stop in and take a look at Bob Knudson's woodworking skills. (information from Bob & Lois Knudson – 2016) #14

In **2000**, Rev. Barbara Gist Cook was appointed to serve our congregation and she brought with her a passion for mission and ministry beyond our borders and throughout the world. In **2004**, when she was appointed to serve at Lancaster United Methodist Church, Pastor Jean Schmidt was appointed to lead us in ministry. It was during this time that the congregation began to plan for the restoration of our stained glass windows with Jim Middagh leading the capital campaign to begin with and Diane Palzkill taking over the reins of the fund drive and restoration work part way through. The basement windows were all finished except for one and as of now, there are only 6 sanctuary windows left to be re-leaded. (Marilyn Owens, 2016) #14

During the summer of 2005 Frank Trevarrow built the roof over the back entrance at the top of the cement staircase. Ray VanMetre repaired the roof over the windows facing the church. (information from Marilyn Trevarrow & Ray VanMetre interview – 2016) #14

Judith Logue Clayton wrote for the Mineral Point Historical Society news letter, fall 2009, “To dispute the old saw and then some, lightning struck the grand old church on Doty Street three times in **2005**. Damage to the building's electric systems and its organ was severe; but, perhaps the worst loss was the destruction of the great Celtic cross that had adorned the center tower.” Rev. Jean Schmidt was the pastor at that time. #17

**May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006** “The Democrat Tribune”, editor, Ryan Billingham goes on to tell about the Celtic Cross. “Last Saturday, in beautiful spring weather, a new cross was installed on the high peak of the 150 year old United Methodist Church building, filling a gap in Mineral Point's skyline created by a bolt of lightning a year ago. #19

Former Mineral Point resident John M. Ehle designed and constructed the new cross. Ehle owns Amchad Enterprises, LLC in Verona, a construction firm which specializes in restorations. It was a two week process to design the cross which Ehle based off of a period picture of the church which showed the original cross from ground level. The cross is made from wood he found in Indiana at an old foundry pattern store. The wood is a rare 100 year old clear redwood that exhibits rich graining and is naturally resistant to weathering. #19

The cross is in the celtic style, which is circular. It is the third cross to inhabit the church's high peak and the closest to the building's original. The last cross, which was struck by lightning in fall of 2005, sits in the church's garage in pieces. The garage has since burned. The hardest problem was attaching the new 70 pound cross to the peak of the central tower. Mel Johnson described the new Celtic cross as “a very beautiful cross, about 5 feet high and 3 feet across with a lot of decorative carving.” (Mineral Point Historical Society fall 2009 news letter) #19

Brad Ladow, owner of Brad's construction, and Denny McKernan installed the cross in a process that ended up taking 6 hours.” McCutchin Crane service donated the crane and operator. #16

## **PIPE DREAMS – Restoring the pipe organ to the sanctuary**

Remember, earlier in this history, in 1904 a used organ was purchased and placed in front of the very tall stained window at the back of the sanctuary at that time. In 1961, the church's congregation decided to modernize its sanctuary, which in part meant, moving the 1904 pipe organ to the attic. In 2006, it was decided that the organ should be returned to its original place as a focal point of the sanctuary.

In **2006**, Rev. Mary Anne Conklin was appointed to serve the congregation as we continue to seek ways in which we can grow in faith and in ministry. Also, in early 2006 Todd and Marilyn Owens drove to Beaver Dam to bring back a lovely oak wood organ pipe frame from a Lutheran Church that was remodeling their sanctuary. This, along with a signed contract with Mr. Larry Marowski was the beginning of the organ restoration project that had been the dream of many within our congregation for over 25 years. The desire was to bring the pipe organ back downstairs and restore it to its original splendor, and as of February 2006, it was no longer a dream. The restoration project, appropriately named “Pipe Dreams” has been ongoing since that time and is currently in the finalization stages with hopes of a dedication service by Christmas 2009.

On Monday June 16, the time consuming restoration process began with a deconcentration service for the current church. Then, 650 organ pipes were hauled from the attic down three flights of very steep steps. The organ made by Lyon & Healey of Chicago is the only one of its kind remaining in the state. Twenty-seven of the pipes were painted - decorated with ornate gold leaf trim. In addition to the large undertaking of reassembling and rebuilding some of the pipes, a great deal of repair and restoration work also had to be completed. #20

Fast forward to **2010**. The organ restoration project took longer than expected. There was a significant amount of restoration that needed to be done to the actual sanctuary as well as a large amount of carpentry work, including the removal of four rows of pews in the front of the church. The removal of the pews allowed for the pulpit to be moved closer to the congregation creating a more intimate feel. The large window needed restoration, and the whole front area had to be rebuilt to accommodate the choir, alter, and pulpit area. The work on the sanctuary was completed by Bruce Geissbuhler Building and Design, Inc. of Darlington, WI Two beautiful new lecterns were made and donated by Bob Knudson. (information from Bob & Lois Knudson - 2016)

A re-dedication ceremony took place on Sunday, June 27, 2010, and the organ received new life. Dr. David Bohn, a Wisconsin native, and celebrated organist helped to rededicate the restored organ. #20

In **2003**, Rev Rodney Gist, Pastor Barb Gist Cook's father, donated a necklace to the Methodist Church. Rev. Gist had been given the necklace by Rev. Wesley Hunter from the Wounded Knee Confrontation in 1973. Bob Knudson framed the necklace and Rev. Hunter's book, Wounded Knee Revisited (1973) The Second Confrontation, Published by Wesley Hunter, Richland County Publishers, 1990. The framed pair and an explanation are located at the front entrance to the fellowship hall of the church. #21

During the summer of 2003 our trustees took off the rotted back entry and under the leadership of Frank Trevor built a much nicer one – completed in late October for a

cost of \$2,260 of which Frank donated his labor (\$480) = \$1780. Collections taken exceeded the amount needed. The church was opened to the community with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Bloodmobile, Rescue Squad, Spaghetti Supper, Souper Quilter's (who donated a queen – size quilt for the Silent Auction Raffle). A Pasty supper was served to a tour group this past summer. The membership for this year was 150. #21

Mary Ann Conklin left us to take a charge in Northern Wisconsin and Leanne Rose came to us in 2012. We had to say good bye to Leanne and the conference sent us Rebecca Henke from 2013 to 2015. #21

The parsonage garage caught fire and burned in 2013. The Trustees decided to replace the garage and storage area. Scott Owens was contracted to replace the structure. #19

In 2013 the trustees decided that we had to start tuck pointing the church. Dave Chambers, a local stone worker, contracted to do the most needed tuck pointing. Tuck pointing stops water from penetrating the rock walls. The sandstone buildings were made with an outer layer and an inner layer of stone and a sand mortar between the two layers. To maintain the building one must keep the water from getting between the rock inner and outer layers. Water as we know freezes and forces the rocks apart, causing the building to deteriorate and in the end fall apart. Tuck pointing is necessary to maintain a rock building.

2013 and 2015 brought a need to repair the roof in the north addition. New gutters were put on to change some of the flow of the water away from the church. #21

Rebecca Henke left us to lead a Christian Youth Group at a church near Green Bay.

In **2015**, Pastor Gerhardt Miller was assigned to the First United Methodist Church of Mineral Point. He leads us with a mighty, “Can I have an AMEN?” AMEN! Pastor Miller has an uncanny way of remembering everyone’s name. He is devoted to bringing people to Christ.

The Mineral Point Historical Society and the Mineral Point Chamber of Commerce planned an extensive city-wide open house, called “50 Open Doors – Mineral Point”. The First United Methodist Church was one of 50 buildings on the National Registrar of Historical Places open to the public in Mineral Point on **May 14, 2016**. Members have volunteered to be present to welcome visitors and cookies will be served. #19

For the past 182 years Methodist ministries and congregational opportunities have been presented. We continue the time honored traditions of our brothers and sisters in faith as we gather each year for pasty bakes, steak and chicken suppers, brats on the point, meat pie suppers, quilting days, bridal and hat shows, serving Cornish teas, and pot luck meals honoring our pastors. We show off our building but the real meaning of our congregation is to continue as a community of faith, to seek ways in which we can live, give, and love beyond all expectations as we reach out to share the Good News of our Lord and Savior within our community and our world. (Mary Ann Conklin – 2009)

The center of all programs of the church is to bring persons into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives, and to nurture the religious faith of our families. Everyone is important to God, and to his Church. This Church exists not just to be a institution in the community, but to meet the spiritual needs of God's children. To be

good Christian stewards we pledge our loyalty to Christ and his Church by our attendance, our prayers, our gifts, and our service...We cannot neglect any one of these areas and be good Christian stewards. (Rev. Wesley C. Hunter – May 31, 1963)

The Methodist Church is built in Charles and John Wesley's beliefs. 254 years ago, Charles Wesley penned the lines to the hymn we know as "A Charge to Keep I Have." For the past 182 years, our forefathers and fore mothers in faith have diligently lived into that commission. Our prayer is that the next 182 years of ministry at First United Methodist church, Mineral Point, Wisconsin be as rich and abundantly full of opportunities in building the Kingdom of God as the past have been. And may the Holy Spirit bless and empower each and every one of us as we seek to live into our faith and share God's grace with all whom we encounter. (Mary Ann Conklin – 2009)

The Love of Jesus  
is not found in a building  
is not found in the mortar  
is not found in the brass  
is not found in the windows  
but is found in the hearts of the people. (Pastor Gehard Miller - 2016)

John Wesley (1703 – 1791) penned these "How To" tips or doing the right thing in tough times. The Anglican cleric John Wesley was the founder of the movement called Methodism, and he came up with a pretty good list of "action items:"

**“Do all the good you can.  
By all the means you can.  
In all the ways you can.  
In all the places you can.  
At all the times you can.  
To all the people you can.  
As long as ever you can.”**

**5-8-2016**

Compiled by: Elisabeth Springer

Edited by: Ross Pollock

Technical contributions by : Mary L. Knudson

## References

- 1A Compiled by the workers of the writers' Program of The Work Project Administration in the State of Wisconsin (1941) The Story of Mineral Point, 1827-1941 (pp. 29) Mineral Point Historical Society 1979
- &
- 1B George Fiedler The singing of Jerusalem My Happy Home, Mineral Point a History Mineral Point Historical Society :& Iowa County-Democrat Tribune (1962) pp. 25 ME church's beginnings pp.170-174
- 2 History of Iowa County Wisconsin Western Historical Company. Chicago, Ill. 1881
- 3 History of the Church 1834-1984 150 year anniversary, Information from church records
- 4 Serena Nelson, Correspondent Capital Times 11-1-1967
- 5 John L. Dyer, The Snow Shoe Itinerant, of the Colorado Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church (1890) Classic Reprint Forgotten Books.com
- 6 Jim Jewell Cornish Connection in Mineral Point, Vol I (2012)
- 7 Pastor Fred M. Smith History of the Church, Souvenir Booklet 1834-1944 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
11-16-1944
- 8 Audrey Stewart Parkinson, Stone by Stone – Early Mineral Point Buildings (2000) pp.113
- 9 Fire in Mineral Point, Mineral Point Tribune Thursday, 3-11-1880
- 10 Internet Query – What are Tracker organs 4-16-2016
- 11 Methodist beginnings date back to 1830's Democrat Tribune 3-12-1984 pp.3
- 12 The Methodist Church gets a New Look Democrat Tribune Jan 26, 1956 pp. 1
- 13 First Methodist Church – Church News Democrat Tribune December 1961
- 14 Interviews: Bob & Lois Knudson, Marilyn Owens, Mary Jane Rideout, Marilyn Trevarrow, Ray Van Metre, Katherine Whitford, Marilyn Owens
- 15 Donald Frank Centennial Observance and Notes Identical to ritual used 100 years ago 11-19-1967 (Mineral Point Room Files)
- 16 Parish of the Hills – Born to Serve a church directory 1974
- 17 Judith Logue Clayton, An Important Anniversary, Mineral Point Historical Society Late fall 2009
- 18 Ryan Billingham – Editor, Methodist church Replaces Damaged Cross, Democrat Tribune Thursday, May 25, 2006
- 19 Joyelle Doye – Editor, Cleaning Out The Attic: Restoring the First United Methodist Church  
Pipe Organ, Democrat Tribune Thursday June 26, 2008
- 20 Joyelle Doye – Editor, Church Organ to be dedicated Sunday at FUMC, Democrat Tribune Thursday, June 27, 2010
- 21 Church Records: 1834-2016
- 22 John Rowe, Cornish Methodists And Emigrants, The Cornish Methodist Historical Association \_\_\_\_ Publication...No. 11, 1967 pp. 6-7
- 23 Rev. Alfred Brunson, A Western Pioneer, or incidents of the life and times of Rev. Alfred Brunson, A.M.,E.E., Embracing a period of over seventy Years. Written by Himself. Vol II. Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden. New York: Phillips & Hunt. 1879.

History of  
First United Methodist Church  
Mineral Point, Wisconsin

Compiled By

Elisabeth Springer

Technical Contributions by

Mary Knutson

February 26, 2018

History of First United Methodist Church  
Mineral Point, Wisconsin