

Methodism was introduced into Mount Vernon between 1810 and 1812 by Enoch Ellis, who preached at times in the County Court House and in log cabins. The first M.E. Church was a frame built in 1831, on the hill where the High School now stands, and the first Sabbath School was started in the same year. Unfortunately these years are obscure and we have no historical records; though perhaps no other church in the county had a more interesting history between 1810 and 1831 than this church.

The early pioneer preachers encountered many hardships of travel and living conditions. From 1800 to 1816 the annual salary of a traveling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church was \$80.00, plus traveling expenses, with another \$80 paid in case of a wife plus minor allowances for children. Pastoral tenure was limited by the 1804 General Conference to two years. No wonder it came to be said there were three classes of people: Men, women, and preachers!

In these early years the Methodist worshiped in cabins about town, and also the Court House. In 1831 the first church was built, in the site now occupied by the high school building.

In 1851 a division occurred in the Church, a part of the congregation going to Banning Chapel on Sandusky Street. Both congregations built new Churches during 1852-1853, and at this time the site on the corner of Gay and Chestnut Streets was purchased. In 1852 the first church on our present site was built, under the pastorate of the Rev. Joseph Kennedy. The two congregations worshipped separately until 1865, when they united and the chapel was sold with the proceeds put into a parsonage. The first church on the present site was remodeled in 1886, during the pastorate of the Rev. J.S. Reager.

In 1831 the first Sunday School was organized, with William Burgess as the first Superintendent. William Harris, afterwards Bishop Harris, was an earnest worker in the school. The old engine house adjoining the church was purchased from the city October 2, 1916, during the pastorate of the Rev. Foster Anderson.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Arthur Mink, considerable agitation for a new church was carried on. On March, 1926, the contract was let for the present English Gothic design Church and the church was dedicated on September 4, 1927, under the pastorate of the Rev. Reinhart F. Mayer. In 1939 the General Conference approved the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church and we were now known as the Gay Street Methodist Church.

In 1957-58 the Nave was revamped somewhat under the pastorate of the Rev. John B. Taylor, with a center Altar introduced. Extensive remodeling and expansion followed in 1961-62 under the pastorate of the Rev. John G. Moody, with the remodeling of the fellowship hall and educational unit and a new addition containing a Chapel, Church offices and Classrooms. The Building Committee held its first meeting on December 1, 1960, and the awarding of construction bids occurred on December 20, 1961, with Mr. Dennis Gallogly as Chairman. Construction was started in January, 1962, and consecration Services were held October 7 to 10, 1962.

The Church has been vigorous over the years, with a known record of twelve persons entering into full-time Christian service. They include: Dr. Giora Wysner, J. Carlton Babbs, William Lockard, Glenn Lockard, Robert Baker, Rodney Vernon, Charles Gill, David Misicka, Stanley Wallace, Merlen Levering, Della Ashbaugh and Ardella Newton.

Our present membership, as of December 31, is 1,324. Our members are faithful and active, as reflected in the work and witness of the church and its many organizations. They have served, too, in leadership roles in the District and Conference of the Methodist Church.

Thus we build upon the heritage of the past, looking forward to larger service for today and tomorrow!

The following have served as pastors of the Methodist Episcopal Church, since 1939 the Methodist Church: