

BIBLE READINGS:

Acts 20: 16-35

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Contact various members of your local church that might be able to help you with your study. You may want to interview them, then bring the material to class with you.

GOAL:

We will explore the foundations of our local church, its origin and its mission, climaxing the evening with an exploration of our local facilities.

GAY STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our local church has a rich and long heritage here in Mt. Vernon. What follows is not a sketch for you to memorize, but rather, an opportunity for you to get a broader perspective of our church.

Methodism was introduced into Mt. Vernon between 1810 and 1812, by Enoch Ellis, who preached at times in the Court House and in log cabins. Another account claims the same years, but it says that the first services were held in a log cabin, the home of Rev. Anthony Banning, which was situated on the North West corner of the public square (somewhere between where Tanaos Christian Bookstore and Mt. Vernon Personnel Service now are) .

From 1812 to 1831 the Methodists worshiped in various homes in the area, as well as in the County Court House, when it was not in use, that is! In 1831 the first church was built. It was a brick structure, but extremely simple as far as decorations or

equipment was concerned, located on the hill where Mulberry Street School now stands. This was also the first year for the church to have a Sunday School.

In 1851 a division occurred in the church, a part of the congregation going to Banning Chapel, a structure built by Rev. Banning 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 and a structure was erected. Both congregations worshiped separately until 1865, when they united and the chapel was sold with the proceeds put into a new parsonage. The church was at this time a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was remodeled at the time of the reuniting.

Where the education addition of our church now stands, there was once an old fire house. In 1916 the fire house and the stables were purchased from the city. This set the mood for many to want a new church. Finally, in 1925 a building committee was secured and construction began in March of 1926. The entire building of the church (not including the education addition) only took 1½ years! During the building of the church, services and part of the Sunday School were held in the Memorial Building. Other departments met in the Knox County Savings Bank and the Court Room of the County Court House. The Methodist Episcopal Church of Mt. Vernon was dedicated September 4, 1927.

The church is English Gothic in design and is in the form of a Latin Cross. The structure at that time also included parlors, a fellowship hall, and an educational unit, which is not the present one.

In 1939 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church approved a merger of that body with the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Protestant Church. This local church became known as Gay Street Methodist Church.

Since that time there have been several remodeling effort in our church. The major ones were:

--In 1946 a set of chimes were dedicated and played for the first time on Palm Sunday. These were the first chimes to be located in Mt. Vernon;

--In 1957-58 the nave was revamped under the pastorate of Rev. John B. Taylor, who just passed away in 1973. At that time a central altar was introduced;

--In 1961-62 extensive remodeling and expansion took place, under the pastorate of Rev. John G. Moody. This included remodeling of the fellowship hall and the educational unit, plus the addition of more classrooms, offices, and a Chapel.

In 1968 at the Uniting Conference the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethern Church were joined to form The United Methodist Church. Today our local part of this merger consists of about 1200 members, and two pastors. For a complete listing of all pastors, look at the picture in the back of the sanctuary.

The remainder of your time will be spent in discussion, a tour of our church, and a scavenger hunt. Use the back of this page for writing down additional facts.