

A Brief History of Grace Church

The present Grace United Methodist Church, grew out of a settlement beside the Muskingum River called Westbourne. A circuit rider served the log cabin tavern-hostel once a week, riding from Wheeling, West Virginia. Gradually he became tired of serving a congregation in a tavern so a building grew out of a log church near the river. This evolved into a brick building in the 1860's. And because the church was near the river and that near two busy railroad tracks, the need grew for a quieter location. A plot of land was purchased from a family named Train in the north of the growing town of Zanesville. When the post office was established in Westbourne, the area was a part of the Zane Trace and thus the address became Zanes Town.

So from loud trains near a river to land purchased from Trains, the Second Street Episcopal Church in 1903 became Grace Church. The funds for the new church grew out of a congregation, dominated by men, who pledged for its building. Soon it became obvious that the final finishing touches of construction could not be met so the finance-construction committee resigned. Out of this grew the Tenth Legion, a group of women led by Mary Townsend, who pledged the final funds for the new church. Their names are enshrined in tablets on the south wall of the sanctuary. It must be remembered that women in 1900 did not work and raising these funds was a great sacrifice. The stained glass, pews, and inside decorations were all part of their contributions.

Over the years the organ, communion table, chapel, and remodeling of the entire building in 1959 have made Grace a show place for religion in southern Ohio. The flood of 2013 exposed some of the construction details in the historical room, off the sanctuary, and ceiling of the Fellowship Hall. So it is to the present congregation falls the great responsibility of maintaining this structure and the growth of the Methodist Church in the downtown of Zanesville.

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