

MOREHEAD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Morehead, Kentucky



The Morehead United Methodist Church as it appears today. Construction began on this structure in 1925 and was completed in 1928 under the supervision of Rev. C. R. Thomas. The building occupies most of the land given to the church by William and Sarah Cooper on May 17, 1892. In the back and connected to the sanctuary of the church is the educational building built 1956. Many think the opera seats in the balcony were the same seats that were used in the old wooden church built in the same location in 1896.

The steeple was dedicated to the memory of Glenn Lane, member and former Trustee, by his wife, Vera and their children. Lane was Citizen's Bank president and chairman of the Board.

Morehead Methodist Received First Real Estate 100 years ago.

by Reuel Buchanan

1992 - Kentucky is celebrating its 200th anniversary as a Commonwealth and the Morehead United Methodist Church is celebrating its 100th anniversary as a landowner.

On "the 17th day of May in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-Two," according to a deed in the Rowan County Courthouse, Wm. Cooper and Sarah M. Cooper deeded to the "Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America, county of Rowan, state of Kentucky a lot on the north side of West Main Street . . . for the consideration of the sum of "one dollar" lawful money of the United States of America to be paid by the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church Rowan Mission Middlebrough District, Kentucky Annual Conference." The deed further states "is not to be used or sold for any purpose other than to build a church house."

The Kentucky Conference held in Paris, KY., 1861 established a Morehead Mission charge. Appointed to that charge was J. T. Smith. Morehead was in the Irvine District that year, and W. W. Chamberlain was presiding elder.

Rev. J. J. Dickey, D.D., recorded in his diary in 1876 "early history of Methodism was an army of local preachers who wrought well in the pioneer field." You will not find many local church appointments recorded in Kentucky Conference Journals of the Methodist Church. Very few names of

appointees to Morehead and Rowan County will be found in the Kentucky Conference Journals until 1873.

A correction deed to the Main Street property had to be made 24 March, 1894 by the Coopers. This deed was made to "Warren Alderson, William Cooper and James E. Clarke, trustees of the M. E. Church, South, at Morehead Rowan County Kentucky." The consideration was \$65.00 and "shall be kept, used and maintained and disposed of as a place of divine worship for use of the minister and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, subject to the discipline usage and ministerial appointment of said church as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference of said church and the Annual Conference within whose bounds said premises are situated." James E. Clarke, lawyer, head of the law firm Clarke and Son; William Cooper, operator of the planing mill in Morehead; and Warren Alderson, a merchant and building contractor, were trustees.

Church histories appearing in the Rowan County News (1956) indicate that early religious services were held in the Rowan County Court House until a Union Church was erected where the First Christian Church is now located.

The Historical and Progress edition of the Rowan County News (1956) states that the first Methodist Church was built under the leadership of Rev. James E. Wright. Bishop Roy Short, in his Kentucky History of Methodism, also lists Wright as organizing a bank as well as being president of a school.

The first building (1896) was a frame structure, with two towers on the front corners of the church, and, according to Eldon Evans, the pews were "opera seats."

This building was replaced in 1926 by the brick structure which now houses the congregation, under the leadership of Rev. J. R. Thomas. After the building was completed, A. R. Perkins was appointed to the church, and his main responsibility, besides being pastor and minister, was to furnish the new church.

In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, merged with the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church to become The Methodist Church. At this time Methodism had just under 12 million members.

The United Methodist Church came about in 1969 when The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren merged. The 1991 Kentucky Conference Journal listed the membership of the Morehead United Methodist Church as 532.

Forty-three pastors have been appointed to Morehead in the past 100 years, with the average appointment just over two years. Several pastors in recent years have been appointed for more than four years. Rev. William E. Parker was appointed to Morehead charge in 1989 and says ". . .The Morehead United Methodist Church will grow at a moderate rate in membership . . . increase in ministries both to the congregation and the people of the community."

During this growth, the local church has been connected with 12 other Methodist churches: Mt. Pisgah, Pine Grove, Pine Springs, Hogtown, Epperhart Schoolhouse, Owingsville, Frenchburg, Olympia, West Liberty, Soldier, Farmers and Bluestone.

In 1956, the need came about for a new educational building. Rev. Donald Durham was pastor when this addition was planned.

Rev. David Sageser organized the Methodist Student Movement on the campus at Morehead Normal School. Sageser became executive for Campus Life of the National Council of Churches.

The parsonage was attached to an entrance from the Chancel. One of Sageser's stories--first Sunday he was pastor of the church he arose and was going to get the morning paper and discovered Drew Evans, Sr., sitting on his couch. Fortunately, he had come to inquire if the salary was large enough. Evans was a trustee and a substantial supporter. Sageser said it was good to have a layman with that kind of interest.

Adding the educational rooms also added four pews for the congregation.

In the late 50's, James V. Heidenger, III became youth director. Today Heidenger, a Southern Illinois native, is Executive Director of "Good News," a conservative group within the membership of The United Methodist Church. All American

basketball player for the University of Kentucky Ed Beck held a meeting here.

The Morehead church is probably one of the few churches that had the privilege of having a husband and wife team serve as delegates to a General Conference: John Will and Dorothy Holbrook had that privilege. Dorothy was president of the Conference Woman's Society of Christian Service, and her husband was elected an alternate lay delegate. When the elected delegate was unable to attend, John Will was tapped to take that responsibility.

The Morehead church has furnished many laity to fill District, Annual, Jurisdictional and General Conference committees. Many of its pastors have been conference secretaries, presiding elders or district superintendents.

The Morehead church has hosted eight Annual Conferences presided over by four different bishops. Rev. Glenn L. Courts, a former pastor, served as conference secretary and is presently Maysville District Superintendent.

A long-range plan recently was voted on by the Administrative Board. The plan is to improve membership, bring more into the Fellowship of God and Jesus Christ through the Sunday School, to improve the facilities for the handicapped and increase the number of rooms for our pre-school activity.

J. D. Reeder, chairperson of the Administrative Board, says "As a result of prayer and our response to what we

believe to be God's will and grace revealed in Christ and with the strength of the Holy Spirit, the Morehead United Methodist Church looks forward to the accomplishment of these goals."

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