

GROVE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A BRIEF HISTORY

Grove Avenue Methodist Church considers December 1888 as its birth date. It was then that worship services were first held at the home of F.W. Otto at the corner of DuPont Street and Coleman Avenue. Out of this very humble beginning a story of faithful discipleship and dedicated Christian service began. In 1890 we received the first regular pastor of our congregation, Rev. R.B. Carrell. A public school on Linden Avenue located between Village and Wheat Streets was used as the official place of worship, until a small chapel was placed on Bond Street near Grove Avenue. On April 3, 1893 the congregation realized the official chartering of the Church by the Court of Cambria County. In 1897, with E.W. Marlatt as our officiating minister, we appeared in the records of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference as the Grove Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church.

H.H. Household became the minister in 1899. The following year construction began on our present building and the small chapel was sold to the Progressive Brethren. The new building was completed in June 1902. S.E. Winebrenner was appointed to serve Grove Avenue Church in 1903. By this time church membership had grown to 250 and Sunday school enrollment was 370. By 1912 church membership reached 425 and Sunday school enrollment reached 450.

In the fall of 1912 O.B. Emerson became our minister and the Johnstown community was suddenly under the impact of the Billy Sunday campaign. 230 members were added to our church roll. Extensive improvements were made to enlarge our facilities. In 1914 649 active members were reported. A.K. Travis (1916-1918), Rev. C.A. Hartung (1918-1922), Paul Weyand (1922-1927), and William Crawford (1927-1930) served Grove Avenue with their ministerial leadership over the following years, and Grove Avenue also experienced various building improvements and renovations.

W.L. Hogg became our minister in 1930. We robed the choir, organized the ushers and began the silent communion observance. In the spring of 1935 church attendance was averaging 400. In 1939 under the pastorate of G.R. Haden, the various branches of Methodism united, and as a result we came to be known as The Methodist Church instead of The Methodist Episcopal Church. R.P. Andrews was appointed to Grove

Avenue by the Annual Conference of 1940, and he stayed with us until 1944. During Rev. Andrew's time at Grove Avenue, most of our activities were influenced by World War II and our athletic program which included a Softball and Basketball team became a significant part of our ministry.

Kenneth P. Rutter came to serve Grove Avenue after the pastorates of Clayton Adkins (1944-1949) and G.T. Green (1949-1952). Numerous repairs were made to the church property during this time. A new chancel was installed, the organ was relocated, a ventilating system was installed, and the basement was remodeled. Over the following years Grove Avenue began to grow and expand its ministry. Scout organizations began functioning under the church's sponsorship, a "Quilters" group was formed, Methodist Women and Methodist Men groups began meeting regularly, and the Sunday school program was reorganized

In 1958 Rev. Frank Snavely was appointed pastor of Grove Avenue Methodist Church. There were 386 in attendance at the 10:45 a.m. Worship Service on his first Sunday in the Pulpit. On World Wide Communion Sunday, October 5, of that same year, it was reported that Grove Avenue had the largest attendance at a regular communion in the history of the church with 500 in attendance.

At the close of Rev. Snavely's pastorate, the membership of the church stood at 991. Rev. Howard M. Pape was assigned to Grove Avenue in June of 1962. Pape began his pastorate by sending a positive and uplifting message to the congregation. He wrote: *"I come with a sense of hope and goodwill that in the days ahead great work will be done both in and outside the church for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* Rev. Pape was appointed to another Methodist Church in 1964 and Jackson Gabany became our pastor. Rev. Gabany and those pastors that followed in Rev. Pape's footsteps came with that same sense— the sense that the hope and goodwill instilled in Grove Avenue would enable great work to be done for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Rev. J. Howard Wright was appointed to Grove Avenue in 1975; He was followed by Rev. Paul Sparrer (1985-1989), Fred Vanderhoff (1989-2000), William LaVelle (2000-2006), Edward Schoeneck (2006-2014), and Jeff Conn (2014-2016). In July of 2016, Grove Avenue welcomed our current pastor, Rev. Dirk Wooten. Since its humble beginning in 1888, Grove Avenue has been the recipient of God's many blessings and has triumphed over the various obstacles and challenges that have presented themselves. We continue our ministry for Jesus Christ with passion and perseverance.

Our current membership stands at 400 with an average attendance of 100 in our weekly Worship Service. Recently Grove Avenue has expanded its children's ministry, installed an updated projector system, engaged in Cooperative Ministry with Christ United Methodist and Park Avenue United Methodist churches, encouraged and supported many members in joining the ministry, and explored ways to reach out into the community to make servant disciples for Jesus Christ. We still enjoy sponsoring Scout organizations, our Chancel choir each Sunday, the Sunday school program, the United Methodist Women and Men meetings, various organized Bible studies, and the love and peace of Jesus Christ that exists among us. We rejoice in the work and gifts from those who came before us and those who are here with us now. We give thanks for the gift of Grove Avenue United Methodist Church and strive to uphold our mission:

*The People of Grove Avenue United Methodist Church:
Making servant disciples for Jesus Christ by introducing people to Jesus,
nurturing believers into passionate followers
and, setting followers free to serve Christ.*

PASTOR'S OF OUR CHURCH

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Robert B. Carroll | (1890-1892) | Oscar B. Emerson | (1912-1914) | George T. Green | (1949-1952) |
| Albert J. Cook | (1892-1897) | Joseph D. Brison | (1914-1916) | Kenneth P. Rutter | (1952-1958) |
| Elias W. Marlatt | (1897-1898) | Albert K. Travis | (1916-1918) | Frank I. Snively | (1958-1962) |
| Frank E. McGuire | (1898) | Charles A. Hartung | (1918-1922) | Howard M. Pope | (1962-1964) |
| Fred K. Wineman | (1898-1899) | Paul Weyand | (1922-1927) | Jackson A. Gabany | (1964-1975) |
| Harry H. Household | (1899-1900) | William Crawford | (1927-1930) | J. Howard Wright | (1975-1985) |
| Albert H. Acken | (1900-1903) | William Hogg | (1930-1935) | Paul B. Sparrer | (1985-1989) |
| Scott E. Winebrenner | (1903-1907) | Richard Andrews | (1940-1944) | Fred C. Vanderhoff | (1989-2000) |
| Elmer H. Greenlee | (1907-1912) | Clayton Adkis | (1944-1949) | William R. LaVelle | (2000-2006) |
| | | | | Edward A. Schoeneck | (2006-2014) |
| | | | | Jeffrey Conn | (2014-2016) |
| | | | | Dirk Wooten | (2016- |