

THE CHURCHES OF DELAWARE

by

FRANK R. ZEBLEY

Author of "Along the Brandywine"



*A history, in brief, of the nearly 900 churches
and former churches in Delaware as
located by the Author.*

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The rectory was built in 1884 on land donated by Mrs. Susan H. Fidler, on June 9, 1883. In 1885, the church was greatly improved.

The chancel window was a gift of the Rev. A. G. Cummins. A new organ was also installed. In 1890-91, a silver communion service was presented as a memorial. During the years 1896-98, six memorial windows and a brass altar cross were unveiled. Major improvements were made in 1902 including a cloister connecting the chapel and the church.

The restored church was reopened on Thurs., Apr. 3, 1902, by Bishop Leighton Coleman. The Bishop conducted a service of benediction at which time he blessed the new altar. Assisting in the services were Archdeacon George C. Hall and the Revs. C. Dexter Weeden, M. L. Poffenberger, W. J. Wilkie, W. J. Hamilton, W. H. Groff and G. Valerie Gilreath, the rector.

On May 12, 1907, Bishop Coleman blessed a peal of four bells in memory of the Rev. Alex. G. Cummins which had been presented by Morris L. Clothier of Philadelphia. In 1908, a pulpit, in memory of Bishop Coleman was installed. On Dec. 8, 1912, Bishop Frederick J. Kinsman dedicated a new organ. The church was redecorated in 1924-25.

The Presbyterian Church at Smyrna. At the southern edge of Smyrna, close to the Municipal Bathing Beach is an old cemetery on what is known as "Holy Hill." This was the site of the Duck Creek Presbyterian Church, presumably built in 1733.

On Feb. 11, 1748, Thomas James, for five shillings, donated to Jacob Allee, Wm. Cahoon and Wm. White, trustees, 42 perches of land on Holy Hill for the use of the Presbyterians. There is no mention in the deed of a church having been built.

Upon the death of the Rev. John Miller, in 1791, the congregation dwindled and it was 1818 before the church was repaired and interest rekindled. In 1846, a church building on Mt. Vernon Street, was purchased from the Methodist Protestants. The old church on Holy Hill was abandoned although the graveyard is still well maintained. The oldest tombstone that the writer could find is over the grave of Jacob Peterson who died on Nov. 11, 1782. Former Governor John Clark, who died on Aug. 14, 1821, is buried here under a flat slab. A new church bell was first used on July 28, 1854.

The present site on Commerce St. was purchased on Feb. 22, 1883, from Geo. C. Simpson and J. S. Huffington. The corner-stone of the present church was laid on Tues., June 26, 1883. It was dedicated on Apr. 6, 1884, by Dr. Mutchmore, the Rev. C. Collins and the Rev. J. T. Umstead, the pastor. A new "Delaware State" organ, manufactured in Wilmington, was used for the first time. The pastor offered a dedicatory prayer previous to the sermon by Dr. Mutchmore. There were many gifts including one from the Ladies' Mite Society and from one of the boys' Sunday School classes.

Built of serpentine stone, so popular at that time, it is one of Smyrna's land-marks. On Mar. 1, 1896, a lot of land was purchased upon which the present manse was built in 1897.

St. Polycarp's R. C. Church at Smyrna. About 1863, the Roman Catholics of Smyrna began holding meetings in private homes under the leadership of Father Dailey of New Castle. At that time there were about six families attending the meetings.

On Wed., Oct. 21, 1868, Father Dailey organized a Sunday School in Odd Fellow's Hall. On Oct. 31, 1868, a lot between Railroad Ave. and Methodist St., was purchased for \$400.00. An effort to purchase the Presbyterian