THE CHURCHES OF DELAWARE

by

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

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The church was remodeled, after which a reopening service was held on Sept. 12, 1937, by Dist. Supt. E. C. Hallman and the Rev. Louis Dennis, the pastor. The church bell hangs at the rear of the church on a framework of galvanized pipe. This is the only arrangement of this kind that the writer has seen in Delaware. There is a large graveyard, the tombstones dating back to 1862. In August of each year a home-coming is held here and many sons and daughters of Concord return for a visit.

Mt. Calvary A. M. E. Church at Concord was built in 1872. Trustees were elected on Oct. 10, 1874. Additional land was purchased on June 9, 1893, from Wm. Graham. The church was rebuilt in 1894 and in 1921. Land was donated to the church on Aug. 4, 1903, by Eliza Jane Stuart and on Feb. 1, 1922 by Joshua A. Ellegood.

Gethsemane Methodist Church (M.P.). This church is located at Reliance, formerly known as Johnson's Crossroads. The first church was built, in 1835, on land granted by Tyrus Phillips. A half-acre of land was donated, on Nov. 13, 1850, by Tyrus S. Phillips. A new church was built in 1851. It was incorporated on Feb. 17, 1853. A third church was built in 1872. It had two stories and the second floor was used for a lodge room. An opening service was held on Nov. 17, 1872. This building was dedicated in 1889. The parsonage lot was purchased on Feb. 15, 1890 from Geo. H. Huston.

When the Rev. Thomas Wheeler was assigned to Gethsemane Church, he seriously objected to any part of a church building being used for secular purposes. He enlisted so many followers that a fourth church, the present one, was erected, in 1904, with no lodge room. This church was dedicated, in 1905, by the Rev. Thomas Wheeler. Extensive renovations were made in 1941, including the installation of electric lighting. There is a social-hall beside the church.

Bethel Methodist Church (M.E.) is located one mile north of Oak Grove on the western boundary line of Delaware. On Oct. 23, 1780, White Brown donated one acre of land, a part of his holdings called "Canaan," to Humphreys Brown, Wm. Ross, John Flowers, Henry Smith, Thos. Lyton, A. S. Hitch, Thos. White and Edward White, trustees. They agreed to erect "a preaching-house for the use of Methodist preachers or the friendly clergy of the Church of England." The chapel was built in 1781 and was called "Brown's Chapel."

Lemuel Davis, a local-preacher, and Jacob Kinder are credited with assisting in the building of the chapel and their descendants have ever since been numbered among the leading members of the church. The Rev. Mr. Davis was known for his popularity and for the large number of marriages that he performed. At one of these, the groom failed to give Mr. Davis any compensation. About one month later the minister met the man and remarked pleasantly to him: "You did not think to present me with anything for the service I rendered you recently." The groom replied with great emotion: "Mr. Davis, if you will unmarry me, I will pay you double."

The building was of frame construction with galleries on three sides and was not fully completed until 1806. On Mar. 5, 1807, it was incorporated as "Bethel Church." More land was purchased on Oct. 11, 1871, from John W. Twiford. The present church was built in 1894. Land was secured from James A. Lowe on July 22, 1920. A large, well-kept cemetery adjoins the church. The oldest tombstone is over the grave of Mary Davis, who died on Mar. 8, 1815. A short distance south of Bethel Church on the road to Oak

Grove an original Mason and Dixon boundary stone can be seen close to the side of the road.

Wesley Methodist Church (M.E.) is located three miles s. w. of Atlanta. This congregation was organized in the local schoolhouse. On Nov. 18, 1861, a half-acre church site was donated by Henry Little. The deed stipulated that the building should also be used as a day-school for the white children of School District No. 138. A small church was built and it was called "Little's Chapel." A half-acre of land was donated on June 1, 1882, by Wm. W. Dashiell. A new church was erected in 1882 and it has a particularly pleasing background of trees. The dedication services were held on Sept. 23, 1883 and were conducted by the Revs. W. Underwood and J. B. Mann.

The district schoolhouse was donated to Wesley Church by the Seaford Special School District on Dec. 5, 1930. It is located to the rear of the church, facing on another road and has been converted into an attractive social-hall.

Bethel Methodist Church (M.E.) at Bethel was originally called "Sailor's Bethel." Bethel, known as Lewisville until 1880, was quite a seafaring village with several shipyards and many sea captains. The church was organized in 1852 and a building was erected in 1855. A new church was built in 1884 and it was dedicated by the Rev. J. B. Quigg. The church was incorporated on Oct. 12, 1887. The present church was dedicated in February, 1895. The old church is now on the farm of J. Garfield Moore. The church was incorporated on Oct. 20, 1932. There is a large graveyard, the tombstones of which date back to 1814.

St. John's M. P. Church, at Bethel, was built in 1858. The present building was erected in 1884. Jonathan Moore, upon his death in 1890, bequeathed a half-acre of land adjoining the church property as a parsonage site. The old church is now on the farm of J. Garfield Moore. Services were discontinued in 1902. The building was then purchased by the Ladies' Aid Society of Bethel M. E. Church and converted into a social-hall. The adjoining graveyard is still used for interments.

Mt. Lebanon Methodist Church (M.P.) at Portsville. Portsville Chapel and Academy was organized in 1832 and a frame building for church and school purposes was erected about one-half mile west of the present site. This church site was secured from James H. Phillips on Apr. 30, 1832 and the deed was executed on Feb. 21, 1834.

The present church was built, in 1868, on land donated by James W. Phillips and the name "Mt. Lebanon" was adopted. Land in the village was secured on Feb. 4, 1869, from Isaac G. Phillips and on Aug. 1, 1874, from Jesse Wright. The church was incorporated on Jan. 21, 1911. It was rebuilt in 1920 and again in 1935. There is a small graveyard, the earliest tombstones of which are dated 1875.

Mt. Calvary M. E. Church, colored, at Portsville. On Sept. 6, 1861, Samuel Spencer donated 15 perches of land, s. w. of Portsville as a church site. This church was known locally as "Spencer's Chapel." On Mar. 10, 1900, they purchased the old Dist. No. 162 school property on the southern edge of Portsville and moved the church building to this site.

Woodland Methodist Church (M.E.) is located beside the broad Nanticoke River at Woodland, which was known for many years as "Cannon's