

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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Indian Mission Methodist Church (M.P.). Previous to 1880 the Nanticoke Indians worshipped at Harmony Church, pronounced with the accent on "mo." A new preacher was assigned to Harmony Church in the late 1870's. He was of the evangelical type and advocated that the Indians and negroes should mingle in every way, including their religious devotions. Part of the congregation was willing to do this but another group was bitterly opposed to it. The opponents withdrew from the church, in 1881, and built Johnson's Chapel, located less than a mile east of Holleyville. The one-acre church site was donated on Mar. 27, 1884, by Jesse E. Joseph. The chapel was incorporated on May 23, 1915.

In 1921, a new church was built and named "Indian Mission M. P. Church." The old chapel was moved to a farm about one-half mile south where it is used as a farm building. Indian Mission Church with its well-kept graveyard would be a credit to any race and here the Nanticoke Indians hold their religious services and their community activities. The tombstones in the graveyard date back to that of Ann W. Johnson who died on Oct. 7, 1885.

St. Georges P. E. Chapel, known locally as "The Brick Chapel," is located one and one-half miles n. e. of Indian Mission Church. On May 8, 1706, Roger Corbett donated one acre of land upon which to build "a religious place of worship." It was located in Angola Neck on the south side of Love Branch. It was subject to a yearly rental of one grain of Indian corn, if demanded. A log church was built that year.

The Rev. Wm. Becket reported that the first church was finished in December, 1719. The frame was of oak, 20 ft. by 25 ft. by 12 ft. high. The walls and roof were covered with red oak boards. There was a gallery. In 1725, the length of the building was increased by 15 ft. This church was destroyed by fire in 1792. In 1794, the present church was built of bricks burned near the church site. After ninety years service, the walls became cracked so that it was necessary to remodel the building in 1883. The height of the building was cut down, part of the galleries were removed and the entire style of architecture was changed.

In 1884, the wall in front of the church was replaced with an iron fence. In 1889-90, a new organ was presented by the Guild. In 1911, a new bell was presented and new chancel furniture was installed. The tower and porch were added in 1916. On June 25, 1916, these improvements and the bell were dedicated by Bishop Frederick J. Kinsman. The church was renovated during the summer of 1927. There is a large graveyard in which many prominent Sussex Countians are buried. There is a broken tombstone leaning against the front wall of the church. It is inscribed to the memory of Thomas Pretyman who died on Jan. 3, 1765. This is the oldest inscribed tombstone in the graveyard. Mr. Pretyman's grave is beneath the present church building.

In recent years the celebration of Rogation Rites has been resumed at St. George's Church. Rogation Days in the Episcopal Calendar are the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday preceding Ascension Day. This observance, started in the fifth century in old England, consists of prayers of intercession for a good harvest of the crops being planted. There is a tree at St. George's planted in memory of Bishop Philip Cook.

Unity Methodist Church (M.E.). On Sept. 22, 1810, Arthur Milby deeded to a board of trustees the land upon which Unity Church is built, at Fairmount. The first church was erected in 1810 and it was rebuilt in 1842. The present church was built in 1887. A homecoming service is held each year in the fall.