

## From modest beginnings, a strong church grew

Although the appearance of the Trucksville United Methodist Church, the "white church on the hill," has changed several times during the past 150 years, its friendly country church atmosphere hasn't.

The original Methodist class founded by Jacob Rice grew very quickly as the Back Mountain was settled and became part of the Wyoming Circuit.

The Rev. George Peck, an influential Methodist church figure and author of five books on Methodism and local history, was appointed to the circuit in 1818.

Fall camp meetings on Rice's land, which would eventually become the site of the church buildings, began in September, 1825, and were so successful that nearly 250 attendees, many of whom had come on foot or horseback, asked to join the church at the first meeting.

Trucksville Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Luzerne County filed its charter in 1844 and built the

first church on land donated by Jacob Rice.

The 30 x 40-foot white building with four columns and two doors in front had a horse shed with a hitching rail along one side and a white picket fence along the road.

Hand-hewn wooden pews, the pulpit and a large wood-burning stove dominated the interior.

In 1906, the cellar was excavated and foundations rebuilt to accommodate a central heating plant and rooms for church organizations to meet.

A new front entrance and belfry were also added to the building, which was extended and its interior completely refurbished.

A fire January 3, 1910 destroyed the building. Until the new church was built, the congregation met in the Trucksville Grade School on Oak St., now the site of Trucksville Manor.

Mrs. W. L. Conyngham and her sons, John N. and William H., offered to donate a new

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Remodeled with a new belfry and expanded basement, the church, rededicated in 1906-1907, was destroyed by a fire January 3, 1910.

# We're proud to salute the first 150 years of the "White Church on the Hill" Trucksville United Methodist Church



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## Sesquicentennial events

The Trucksville United Methodist Church, celebrating its 150th anniversary, has hosted a number of commemorative events leading up to Sesquicentennial Week, October 9-16.

• Heritage Sunday, April 24  
• The Sesquicentennial Book, "A History of Trucksville United Methodist Church 1844-1994" by Louise Schooley Hazelhine was dedicated at the 11 a.m. worship service. The guest pastor was the Rev. Wesley R. Crompton, whose father was pastor at Trucksville from 1931-36. His grandfather had preached at the dedication of the new building in 1911.

• Confirmation Sunday, May 22 (Pentecost)  
The confirmation class was received into the membership of the church at the worship service, at which Rev. Wesley Crompton, Rev. Bruce Cleasby and Rev. Donald Anderson, three ministers ordained at Trucksville, were also honored.

• Recognition of former pastors  
Eight former pastors joined the Trucksville congregation during the summer and early fall. Rev. Bruce Cleasby, July 17; Rev. Donald A. Anderson, July 24; Rev. Robert E. Ger-

mond, September 11; Rev. John R. Topolewski, September 18; Rev. Thomas A. Clemow, September 25; Rev. Charles F. Gommer, Jr., October 2 and Rev. H. James Shilaber and Rev. Arthur B. Mayo, October 9.

Rev. Shilaber and Rev. Mayo will assist Rev. Charles Naugle at the 11 a.m. worship service.

A reception to honor "Old-Timers" of the church, those who have been members for at least 50 years, will be held at 2:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Evening Vespers will include the choir of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, to commemorate Trucksville's long-time close relationship with St. Stephen's, whose choir and organists participated in the dedication services in 1911 for the new building, in 1932 for the new organ donated by the Conyngham family and in 1988 for the organ rededication.

• October 11  
The United Methodist Women will gather to celebrate its ministries through the church's history.  
• October 12-13  
A historical display featuring the Trucksville United Methodist Church Pictorial



Special guests who visited Trucksville United Methodist Church on Heritage Sunday, April 24, were, front row: Senator Charles Lemmond, Margaret Rice Goodwin, Nadine Rice Bennett and Louise Schooley Hazelhine; back row: John N. Conyngham, district superintendent Rev. James Baker, Wyoming Historical and Geological Society director Mary Ruth Kelly, Gary Crompton and Jill Crompton.

Album Quilt will be open to the public in the fellowship hall from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.  
A pictorial history of the church, the quilt features blocks depicting special historical events, hand-crafted by many willing hands from the church and the community.  
• October 14  
The Sesquicentennial Dinner Celebration will be held at the Pitston Convention Center with music provided by the Orpheus Choral Society. The reception will begin at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
• October 15  
A delightful event from the church's past, the "Thumb Wedding" will be presented by the children of the church. The public is invited to the play and the reception to follow.

Material for this article was provided by Barbara Glowatch

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Trucksville United Methodist Church

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