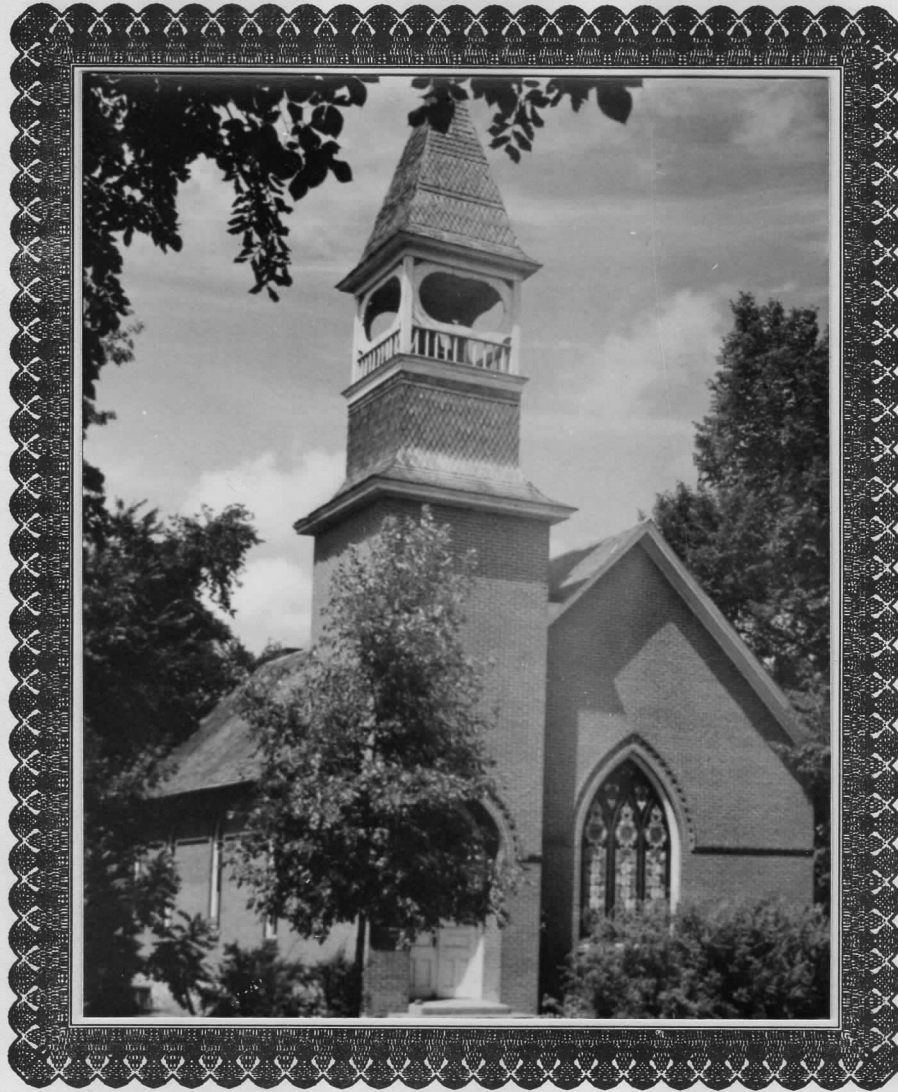


*History of Annandale
United Methodist Church*



100th Anniversary

1889 – 1989

Annandale, Minnesota

HISTORY OF THE ANNANDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(FORMERLY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH)
ANNANDALE, MINNESOTA

1889 - - - 1989

SECTION I (90th ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

HISTORY OF METHODISM
FROM JOHN BURI'S "HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH 1889-1947"
YEARS 1947-1979, Compiled for the 90th Anniversary
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN by Merle Bullock and Pat Nordberg

90th Anniversary Committee - Lloyd Rask
Church History Committee - Elwyn Nordberg, Kenneth
Rudolph, Mildred and Noble Shaddock

SECTION II CENTENNIAL EDITION, 1889-1989

MESSAGE BY PASTOR MARK JOHNSON
SOME OF OUR CHURCH ACTIVITIES
LOOKING BACK
PASTORS AND THEIR YEARS OF SERVICE
EXCERPTS FROM 'LADIES AID SOCIETY' RECORDS, ETC.
REMODELING AND NEW FELLOWSHIP HALL By Ken Engler
OPEN TO GOD'S FUTURE

100th Anniversary Committee Co-Chaired by Elwyn
Nordberg and Mildred Shaddock
Committee: Pastor Mark Johnson, Lucy Bahr,
Janet McGinnis, Marguerite Magnuson, Ada
Dawson, Lorayne Ponsford, Lucille Rachie

Book Committee: Mildred Shaddock, Ada Dawson
Cover photo and others by Elwyn Nordberg

In preparation for a 90th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Methodist Church, Annandale, Pastor George Toschak appointed several committees; Elwyn Nordberg, Kenneth Rudolph, Mildred and Nobel Shadduck were delegated to write a history of the church.

A history of the church wouldn't seem complete without a short history of the worldwide Methodist church. The founding Westley family is traced back in the Encyclopedia Britannica over 800 years. They were a titled family and many of them studied both theology and medicine. At an early date, they showed an inclination for non-conformity. We have the great grandfather of John Westley being ejected from the Church of England in 1662 and thereafter, having been educated as a doctor as well as in theology, gained his living as a doctor. His son, John Westley, grandfather of the founder of Methodism, was born in 1636 and studied in Inhall, Oxford, where he was a proficient scholar in Oriental languages and Oliver Cromwell's Triers approved him as a minister at Dorset in 1658. In 1661, he was committed to prison for refusing to use the Book of Common Prayer. He was ejected from the administration in 1662, as his father had been. His son, Matthew, was a surgeon in London. Another son, Samuel, was trained in London for the non-conforming ministry, but changed his views and decided to conform to the church of England and entered Exeter College in Oxford. He was the first one to drop the "t" from his name, calling himself Wesley instead of Westley. He had 19 children, 8 of whom died in infancy. In 1705, he was confined in Lincoln castle for a debt. Two-thirds of his parsonage was destroyed by fire in 1702 and the balance in 1709. He tried to rebuild the rectory, but his resources were so heavily strained that 13 years later it was only half finished.

He wrote a "Life of Christ" in verse in 1693, The History of the Old and New Testament in verse in 1701, and Disertations on the Book of Job in 1735.

Samuel Wesley, the oldest son, followed in his father's footsteps and was a finished classical scholar and poet. He was never reconciled to the Methodism of his brother John and Charles. He published books of poems in 1736 and reached a second edition in 1743.

Charles was the 18th child and he was saved by his nurse in the fire that burned the rectory of his fathers. He became a King's Scholar and the captain of the school at Westminster in 1725 and made a friend of the Earl of Mansfield by fighting battles on his behalf. He was not a good student at first. He lost his first 12 months at Oxford, in "diversions", but all of a sudden he changed his mind and decided to be a serious student of theology. This led to a young gentleman in Christ church to exclaim "Here's a new set of Methodists sprung up" and the name quickly spread through the university and Oxford Methodism began its course. He was ordained in 1735 and went with his brother to Georgia as Secretary to Colonel, afterwards General Oglethorpe, the Governor. Charles wrote over 6,500 hymns and they vary greatly in merit. He has been cited, "taking quantity and quality" into consideration, to be the "greatest hymn writer of all ages". He and John differed in that he didn't believe that his brother had the right to ordain others as ministers and he refused to be buried in a graveyard, at City Road because the ground there was unconsecrated.

John Wesley, his brother, was born June 17, 1703 as the 15th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. He was, on the Duke of Buckingham's nomination, given a scholarship and was a pupil at Charterhouse and went on to Oxford with an annual allowance of 40 pounds as a Charterhouse scholar. His diaries have been kept and are still in existence where he wrote down what he did and what he read. He was ordained Deacon, on September 19, 1725 and admitted to a priest's orders on September 22, 1728. He was capable of having a good time because he read the plays and attended the village fairs and he shot plovers and enjoyed dancing with his sisters. He was appointed a Greek lecturer and moderator at Oxford. He then became more or less a recluse, studying a great deal of the time and finally met every evening with a few friends. This little society is probably the start of the Methodist churches as we know it now. The small group read the Greek Testament and the classics, fasted on Wednesday and Friday, received the Lord's Supper every week and brought all of their life under review.

A young Irish student went and visited them one time and reported that there was great work to be done among the prisoners and the group of friends that John Wesley had collected around him agreed to visit the castle twice a week and look after the sick. His life became more ascetic. He rose at 4:00 in the morning, lived on 28 pounds a year, gave away the remainder of his income. He was quoted as saying, "I preach much, but saw no fruit of my labor". In the years 1729 to 1734, he said "he was laying deeper foundation of repentance and he saw a little fruit". From 1734 to 1738, he said "I saw more fruit of my preaching". He was quoted as saying in 1775, "the Methodists at Oxford were all one body and as it were, one soul; zealous for the religion of the

Bible, of the Primitive Church, and in consequence of the Church of England; as they believed it to come nearer the scriptural and primitive plan than any other national church upon earth".

The number of Oxford Methodists was small and probably never exceeded 25. John was sent out by the society of the Propagation of the Gospel and hoped to labor as a missionary among the Indians when he went to Georgia in 1775. He had very many interesting conversations with them, but the mission was found to be impractical

It was on Wednesday, May 24, 1738, after he had returned to England, when he went to a society meeting in Aldersgate Street, where Luther's "Preface to the Epistle to the Romans" was being read. About a quarter before 9:00, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, he said, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, long for salvation; and as assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and most active intellects in England is the true source of the English Methodism. "According to the history of England in the 18th century, the little society which was formed at that time was divided into little bands of 5 to 10 persons who spoke freely and plainly to each other. The bands united in a conference every Wednesday evening in a society which continued to grow. They found all the world against them and Wesley advised them to strengthen one another and talk together as often as they could and then he tried to visit them in their homes. He found the task beyond him and therefore invited them to meet with him on Thursday evenings. They had trouble, however, and about 25 men and 48 women left and cast in their slot with the society at the Foundry, a new group. In 1739, the centenary of Methodism recognized this as a start of the Methodist church, because they celebrated the first centenary of Methodism in 1839. To establish a meeting place, it was suggested that each member give a penny a week and Captain Foy, who was a member, said when it was urged that some do more than this, he replied, "Then put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself." Others followed his example and were called leaders. Wesley saw that here was the means he needed to watch over his flock. The leaders thus became a body of lay pastors. Those under their care became the members and formed a class. Those who wished to enter the society must have "a desire for salvation "by doing no harm; and by doing good of every possible sort; by attending upon all the means of grace." By 1742, Methodism began to spread and many societies were formed outside of London. In August, 1747, Wesley paid his first visit to Ireland where he had such success that he gave more that 6 years of his life to

the country and crossed the Irish Channel 42 times. He also paid 22 visits to Scotland. In October, 1768, a Methodist Chapel was founded in New York.

A church historian has labeled Wesley's Journal "the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned by man." He generally travelled about 5,000 miles a year and preached 15 sermons a week. His books and writings brought profits of about 1400 pounds a year and he established a lending fund that did much to relieve the debtors who had been thrown into prison. He opened dispensaries in London and in Bristol and was always keenly interested in medicine. His visits everywhere constituted a holiday where he went. He preached his last sermon September 23, 1791 and wrote his last letter urging Wilberforce to carry on his crusade against the slave trade. He died in his 89th year.

As heretofore indicated, on February 4, 1736, John Wesley, with his brother Charles, embarked on a sailing boat, the "Simmonds", for Georgia. Charles acted as Secretary for Governor Oglethorpe. It would be nice to say that was the start of Methodism in America but such was not the case. John had come to evangelize among the Indians, but his stay was rather short and troubled. He decided that the Indians were not natural subjects for conversion and that they were poor subject for the gospel.

Methodism rose in America in the 1760's under the leadership of unofficial lay preachers. Most of them had been exposed to Wesley's preaching in England and Ireland. Some British preachers came to America. They were established in Virginia, Philadelphia and New York at an early date. One Thomas Webb has been mentioned as the founder of America Methodism. He came to America with English General Braddock's forces in 1775.

Before the Revolution, Methodist societies had been developing in all the thirteen colonies and they were part of the Anglican Communion. The early Methodists received the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Anglican churches. The Anglicans, in some instances, considered the Methodists as part of their own fold, but, in the end, American Methodism left the established Anglican Church. It wasn't long, however, when church buildings became necessary. The Methodists were fortunate in having some financially able people who made large subscriptions. Many of the Methodist preachers who had studied under Wesley in England and came to America left when the Revolutionary War started. Some escaped to Canada, other to Nova Scotia. One of those who was determined to stay was Francis Asbury. Although beset with ill health and throat infections, he traveled a circuit of 300 miles to 600 miles every ninety days and preached many sermons and performed marriages, baptisms and presided over funerals wherever he happened to be. Inexperienced American preachers took over and carried on the work. It seems all of them were acquainted with Asbury. It was to him that the Methodist Church in America owes a great debt. Wesley, of course, was deeply affected by the Revolution. Dr. Samuel Johnson, a noted literary man whose works are prescribed English study today, wrote "Taxation is no tyranny" and said Americans were a race of convicts who should be thankful for us to allow them anything short of hanging. Wesley seemed to be impressed by Johnson's argument. He said to be peace makers and to be loving and tender to all but to addict yourself to no party, say no word against one or the other side. He did, however, write to Lord North, the Prime Minister, urging conciliation saying, "I cannot avoid thinking that thieves and oppressed people ask for nothing more than their legal rights; above all, force should not be employed against the colonists." At least he was not afraid to face up to an unpopular issue but he did take the side that England had a right to tax their colonies.

Maryland and other states required everyone to take an oath that they owed no loyalty to the King of England. This, some of the Methodist ministers refused to do and some were jailed.

In the end the American Revolution led to a separate Methodist Church in the United States. Of the representatives of John Wesley who had been sent to the United States ten of whom were appointed missionaries in the minutes of the British Conference, the only one to survive in America was Francis Asbury. He traveled up and down the country from North Carolina to New York and seemed to be the only person to hold the church together. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina all increased their membership during the period after the Revolutionary War. As might be expected, Asbury was chosen to preside over the American Conferences. Asbury's greatest contribution to the structure of the new church was made in his refusal to concur in any plan to organize the Methodist Church in America that did not rest on the vote of the preacher. By this simple act, the status of the Conference (later became the General Conference of the new church) was established. This act made the General Conference the governing body of the American Church. It was in September, 1784, that John Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as Deacons and Thomas Coke as Superintendent. Asbury, Whatcoat, Vasey and Coke were the four founding fathers of the Methodist Church in America. About a month after George Washington's inauguration as President, Asbury and Coke were received with dignity by the President and the presented him with formal congratulations and assurance of loyalty to the Constitution. This healed, in some respects, the feeling that the church had not been loyal to the colonies during the war. The next thing that came up causing great concern in the church was the issue of slavery. A Christmas Conference in the Methodist Church was held and provided sweeping new rulings: that within twelve months all Methodists should free their slaves. By the early 1800's the advocacy of temperance had been a movement associated with Methodism.

The question of wealth was always a great concern. Asbury had been a son of a poor gardener and had earned his living with his own hands. However, Coke had inherited a comfortable fortune and had a degree of law from Oxford. Coke maintained that his money did not stand in the way of his soul's welfare by giving it all away in the promotions of the missions so dear to his heart. Asbury, on the other hand, was determined to prevent his preachers from staying long in cities and living like gentlemen. He said, when men become rich, they sometimes forget they are Methodists. He didn't want expensive houses of worship because the rich would be necessary to them and would want to govern them. He concluded that this would be "farewell to the method of discipline, if not for the doctrine too." He was sure that he did not want anyone to feel uncomfortable at a Methodist meeting because of his dress and they all held a strong belief that vanity and extravagance were wrong per se and the Methodist Christmas Conference declared, "give no tickets to any until they left off superfluous ornaments." The discipline was stern also and ministers were told to "avoid all lightness, jesting and foolish talking." One leader suggested it was out of the character for a minister to laugh.

The church grew rapidly and by 1844 there were more Methodist church members than all other denominations combined. Higher education was not required. The circuit-riding evangelist was an American phenomenon. Abraham Lincoln, when he was a circuit-riding attorney, recounted an experience he had with a Methodist minister. He and other lawyers were much concerned whether or not they could cross the Sagamon River. They met the parson at a hotel. Knowing he had considerable experience in the route they all intended to take, Lincoln asked if he thought the river too swift to cross. The parson's reply was "one rule he had in life was not to cross any river until he got to it."

The slavery issue was not one that disappeared and ultimately resulted in splitting of the Methodist Church into north and south divisions.

Methodism came to Minnesota in various ways. Possibly the life of one of the first pastors was typical. William McKinley, born in Scotland in 1834, came to Minnesota in 1855 after teaching in Hanover, Illinois. He landed at Read's Landing on April 13 and with a companion started hiking overland to Faribault, a distance of about 60 miles over present highways. His city bred companion gave out and McKinley had to carry his luggage. There was no trail but the land was mostly rolling prairie. Snow was still on the north slopes and as evening approached, they were concerned because neither had a match to build a fire if they could find wood. Just at dark they met a family who were building a log cabin. They enjoyed one of the finest meals of their life composed of saleratus biscuits and bacon. They spread straw on the floor of the roofless cabin and spent the night looking up at the stars. McKinley's aching bones kept him awake. They had walked 30 miles but the next day made only 12, rested on Sunday and made it to Faribault the 5th day. There they found only one good house, that of Colonel Faribault, and twenty or thirty small shacks.

He spent some time looking around and finally made a claim on the edge of the Big Woods, three miles south of Northfield. He hauled one loan of boards from Hastings by ox team, which took four days, and they had to suffice for floor and roof of the log cabin he was building.

As soon as he got settled, he joined with others and obtained a doctor who had some experience in preaching to hold services at a home. On the second week the doctor complained of a headache and urged McKinley to take over. His first sermon seemed to please the people and after several Sundays a man who had walked ten miles and waded the Cannon River getting wet up to his neck came up and said, "Bless the Lord, I have found the place and a preacher." This man had been a sailor and had traveled widely, had a good voice and helped immensely, especially when he was joined by the local saloon keeper. With the encouragement from these two, McKinley continued his Sunday services.

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That winter, detained in Hastings by a snowstorm, he was invited to preach in the Presbyterian Church where for the first time wearing a borrowed coat he conducted services in a house of worship. In a short time he was asked to be the pastor for a congregation where some at least were Methodists. As a young preacher on trial, he was invited to the Annual Conference in 1856 in the Chapel of Hamline University which was then located in Red Wing.

He was sent back to Northfield and that winter had eight preaching places. One day he started about noon for Berdan's on the Cannon Falls circuit. The snow was so deep he had to leave his horse. He got lost and walked until ten o'clock through knee-deep snow. When he finally got to the watch-meeting, he rested a while and then preached a sermon, though two sermons had been given before his arrival. McKinley wrote later, "Our meeting closed at midnight in a blaze of glory, with penitents crying for pardon and saved souls rejoicing in mercy found; and I felt more than compensated for the toil and trial of my arduous trip."

McKinley went on to serve two years as Chaplain during the Civil War and served the church well for 47 years.

At the same time there were several dozen other pioneer ministers serving their communities in Minnesota and they, no doubt, had similar experiences documented. Methodism in the early days was a stern business and one minister suggested it was unseemly for a minister to show any levity or ever be observed laughing.

Perhaps the rapid growth of the church was due more to the fact that a layman could, if religiously oriented, become a Methodist minister by demonstrating ability to give a sermon and serve as a group leader without a theological education.

Annandale is more fortunate than most churches in having one of its original founders write a complete and interesting history of the Methodist Church from its beginning. Here it is just as John H. Buri, one of the original pioneers of Annandale, wrote it.