

Returning to our First Love

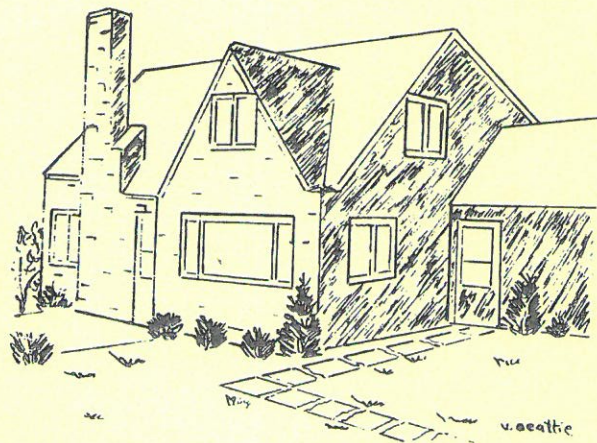
Church Planting
In the
Churches of God,
General Conference
From 1825 to the Present



Written by:
James W. Moss, Sr

Year	State	County	Church	Me	WA	Source
			1836-1840			
	Penn	Lebanon	Annville			F. p. 48
	Penn	Venango	*Barkeyville		40	F. p. 52, CA1/9/1952c, 10/10/1945
	Penn	Venango	Irwin Township			F. P. 52
	Penn	Westmoreland	*Center Bethel (Rosenberger)	168		F. p. 64, V39/6/3 p. 5, W. Pa.
	Penn	York	*Goldsboro (River Meeting)	25		F.p.52,64,CA 7/1982p.52, 10/6/19
	Penn		Bethany			F. p. 51
	Penn		Old Harmony			F. p. 52
	Penn		Stoneville			F. p. 51, V54/12/11 p. 1
			1841-1845			
	Maryland	Baltimore	Baltimore			F.p. 59, V12/p.27
	Maryland	Frederick	Pine Grove School			F. p. 59
	Maryland	Frederick	Resolution			F. p. 59, V6/p.74
	Maryland	Washington	Broadfording			F. p. 48, V49/10/1 p.3
	Maryland	Washington	Ringgold's Manor			V6/ p. 261
	Ohio	Coshoctin	White Eye	14		V6/ p. 29
	Ohio	Marion	Sandusky Pl (Shriner's)	40		V44/3/24 p. 3, F. p. 65
	Ohio	Montgomery	Hyattsville			F. p. 64
	Ohio	Wayne	Allman's			F. p. 64
	Ohio	Wayne	Moreland			Ohio p. 236
	Ohio	Wayne	*Reedsburg		15	Ohio p. 252
	Ohio		Shriner's			F. p. 65
	Penn	Adams	Gettysburg			V6/p.31
	Penn	Allegheny	Pittsburg	20		V6/p.29
	Penn	Bedford	Anderson's			F. p. 63
	Penn	Bedford	*Round Knob	8	34	F. p. 63, V7 p. 188
	Penn	Bedford	*Saxton (Puttstown)	13	102	F. p. 63, V6/p. 350
	Penn	Bedford	*Six Mile Run		54	DL
	Penn	Bedford	Woodbury			F. p. 63
	Penn	Blair	*Martinsburg		89	F. p. 63, CA6/14/1952c
	Penn	Butler	nr Butler	23		F. p. 64, V6/ p. 6
	Penn	Cambria	Grass Hill Bethel	12		F. p. 64, V12/p. 156
	Penn	Cumberland	Carlisle			F. p. 59, CA 9/8/1909 p. 10
	Penn	Cumberland	Warrington Twp.	32		F. p. 61
	Penn	Dauphin	*Highspire		78	CA 5/12/51c
	Penn	Dauphin	*Matamoras		84	CA 6/1967 p. 41
	Penn	Dauphin	Rockeyville			V8 p. 198
	Penn	Fayette	*Indian Head		184	CA 12/1968 p. 39, 11/10/1951c
	Penn	Franklin	Orrstown			F. p. 61, 74, V45/11/3 p. 1
	Penn	Franklin	Wolverine School			F. p. 61
	Penn	Huntington	Broad Top	7		V 6/p. 166
	Penn	Huntingdon	Entichen's Bridge	12		F. p. 63
	Penn	Huntingdon	*Walnut Grove		85	F. p. 115, CA4/1/1903 p.14
	Penn	Indiana	Brush Valley			F. p. 64
	Penn	Indiana	Cherry Tree	35		F. p. 64
	Penn	Juniata	Waterford	18		F. p. 63, V6p. 14
	Penn	Lancaster	Marietta	10		V9/p. 170
	Penn	Lancaster	*Rohrestown		54	V7/p. 308, F. p.161, V36/5/17 p. 2
	Penn	Perry	*Red Hill Bethel		22	F. p.63, CA 1/69 p. 43

~~Rev. H. H. H.~~
~~Rev. H. H. H.~~
~~Rev. H. H. H.~~
~~Rev. H. H. H.~~
PARSONAGE

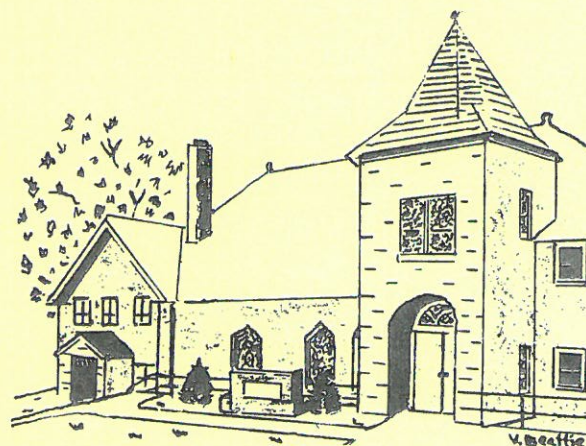


ERECTED 1960
DEDICATED April 1961

THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST
ANNUAL SESSION

WEST PENNSYLVANIA ELDERSHIP
of the
Churches of God in North America

AUGUST 12 - 16, 1964



General Theme:
"JESUS CHRIST RENEWS HIS CHURCH"
Ephesians 5:25-27

CENTER BETHEL CHURCH OF GOD
ALVERTON, PENNSYLVANIA
Host Church

Willaim D. Rodahaver, Pastor

We are happy to have you share with us here at Center Bethel as we observe our 125th Anniversary.

It was in November of 1838, that the Pennsylvania Eldership appointed John Hickernell and E. West to the "Pittsburgh Mission". This mission included five counties; Allegheny, Westmoreland, Beaver, Butler and Venango. Hickernell's circuit covered 270 miles. J. Keller was his co-laborer in Westmoreland County.

Evangelistic services were held in 1838 in the C. Landis School house (near Hawkeye) where 12 persons were converted and a church organized. Thomas Hickernell in 1839, organized a church in the home of Henry Rosenberger in Bethany (now Ruffsedale). The church property there later was lost because of a faulty title. Between these two churches, in Stonerville (now Alverton), John Hickernell organized a church which met in the Mennonite Meeting House in 1839. A small plain house of worship was built at a cost of \$1,100 in Stoner's Grove in 1841. The church in the Landis school neighborhood was finally broken up by the removal of most of the families to Iowa, where they formed a church at Harmony. The membership having increased considerable around Stonerville, and the Stoner's Grove meeting house being centrally located, all members of the three churches combined and named the Stoner's Grove church Center Bethel.

In the spring of 1863 it was determined to erect "a more commodious house of worship." Atract of land was purchased for a "nominal sum" from "Father" Fox and "Father" Stauffer and the house errected and dedicated Sabbath, December 27, 1863. The entire cost of the land and building was \$6,600. In 1881, two rooms were added to the church, and these later (1908) were made into four rooms. In 1928, the whole building was remodeled, at a cost of \$25,000, to consist of 19 rooms and a sanctuary seating 300.

The parsonage through the years was remodeled three times. In 1959 the old building was torn down and replaced with a red brick structure having seven rooms and full basement, heated with electricity at a cost of \$30,000.

Early records show the membership was largely made up of the Stauffer, Stoner, Fox, Dillinger, Rosenberger, Loucks and Hickernell families.

From Center Bethel have sprung several other churches, among which are the Mount Pleasant Church of God in 1872 and the Church of God ar Harmony, Iowa. This latter church was the home church of Clara Landis, the first missionary sent out by our denomination to India. Solomon Fulmer, from Center Bethel helped found the Grandview Church of God. In the year 1880 the present building was erected.

The pastors who have ministered to this congregation since 1860 are as follows:

J. M. Domer	1860-1868
Peter Loucks	1868-1870
J. Hickernell	1870-1871
Peter Loucks	1871-1873
W. B. Long	1873-1874
Joseph Grimm	1874-1877
B. F. Bolton	1877-1880
R. L. Byrnes	1880-1886
W. R. Covert	1886-1890
W. H. McKlveen	1890-1892
R. L. Byrnes	1892-1898
W. J. Umstead	1898-1906
Willaim H. Guyer	1906-1912
H. R. Lobb	1912-1918
Anna Edwards	1918-1930
Eugene K. Eakin	1930-1934
Arthur E. Eakin	1934-1943
Harold S. Kinard	1943-1948
L. P. Thornton	1948-1952
J. Arnold Berg	1952-1956
J. L. Woods	1956-1959
William D. Rodahaver	1959-



Jacob M. Domer
(1830-1872)

from the photo album of Hannah (Bollinger) Snyder

1839

1939

CENTENARY
—OF—
CHURCH OF GOD

ALVERTON, PENNSYLVANIA



ARTHUR EAKIN, Pastor

NOVEMBER 14-19, 1939

REV. TENNYSON GUYER, Celina, Ohio,
Guest Speaker.

Church History

The history of the Church of God at Alverton is woven into the very beginnings of the village of Stonersville. For this is what it was called during most of the 1800's because of the acres of land owned by Stoner's all around it. The Mennonite meeting house of Stonersville was where John Winebrenner preached several years before there was a Church of God organization in the community. Winebrenner held three or four series of evangelistic meetings at other places in the community.

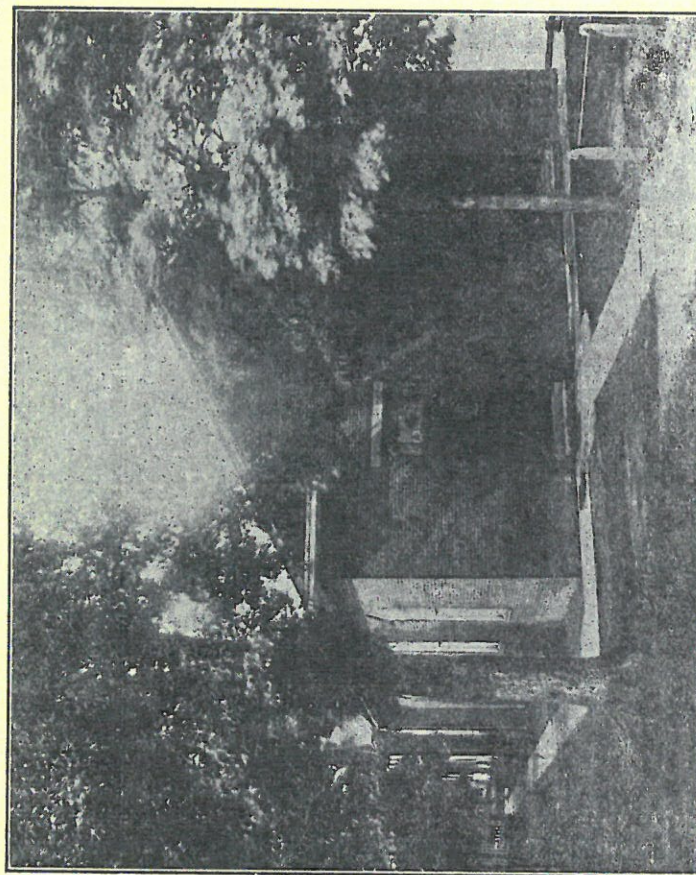
In 1839, Thomas Hickernell, a missionary from the East Pennsylvania Eldership organized a Church of God at Old Bethany in the home of Henry Rosenberg. In 1840 a plain, small house of worship was built there. In 1839, after a series of meetings were held in the Landis school house, four miles south of Stonersville, a church organization was made here. In this same year also, Jacob Keller and John Hickernell, brother of Thomas began preaching in the Mennonite meeting house at Stonersville.

Soon the meeting house at Old Bethany was lost because of a flaw in the title. The Landis church was disbanded because of removals to Iowa, yet the membership was increased around Stonersville. The Stoner Grove meeting house controlled by the Brethren in Christ was next selected for worship for awhile. In the spring of 1863 they "determined to erect a new and more commodious house of worship in a more central location." This building was dedicated in Stonersville, Sabbath Day, December 27, 1864 and was called Center Bethel.

Additions to this building have made great changes. In the spring of 1881 the church decided to "modernize the building and enlarge it by the addition of a cross section in the rear, 44 by 24 feet at a cost of \$2,319. R. L. Byrnes was the pastor. This addition had its usefulness doubled during the pastorate of William Harris Guyer, 1906-1912 when an upstairs floor was put in to accommodate more Sunday School classes.

Then came the automobile, the improved road. The

congregation felt the need for more facilities for religious education and a more worship inspiring auditorium. During the pastorate of Rev. Anna Edwards Hov-
erter, 1918-1930, \$25,000 was invested to make for us the building of 1939.



CENTENARY OF CENTER BETHEL CHURCH AT ALVERTON

The Centenary of the Center Bethel Church of God in Alverton West Pennsylvania was fittingly observed with a weeks special services November 14th to 19th. Rev Tennyson Guyer of Celina Ohio was the guest speaker.

Jacob Keller and John Hickerneil began preaching in Stonerville conducting services in the Mennonite meeting house. A series of meetings held in the Landes school house about 4 miles South of Sto e

Old Bethany - Henry Rosenberg

CENTENARY

1839-1939

CHURCH OF GOD

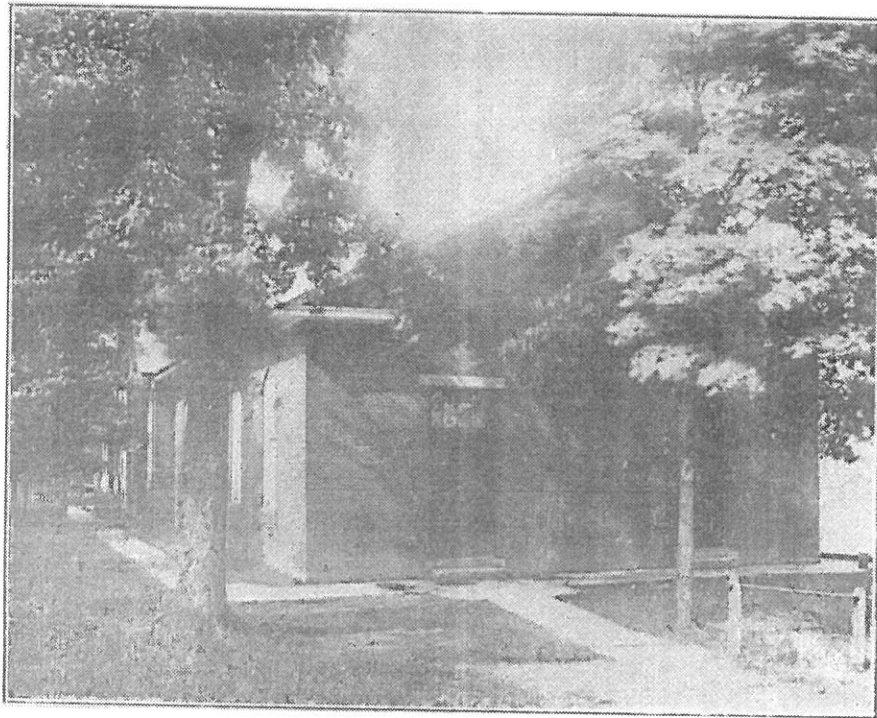
CENTER BETHEL — ALVERTON, PA.

Nov. 14, 7:30 P. M.	Our young people in charge.
Nov. 15, 7:30 P. M.	For our own church members.
Nov. 16, 7:30 P. M.	Churches of God within driving distances.
Nov. 17, 7:30 P. M.	Alverton, Township, and other churches.
Sunday, Nov. 19	Three special services.

Guest speaker, Rev. Tennyson Guyer of Celina, Ohio.

A collection of pictures, clippings, and old church papers will be on exhibit.

Plan to come and bring your friends for fellowship, reminiscences, gift program.
If unable to come, send greetings.



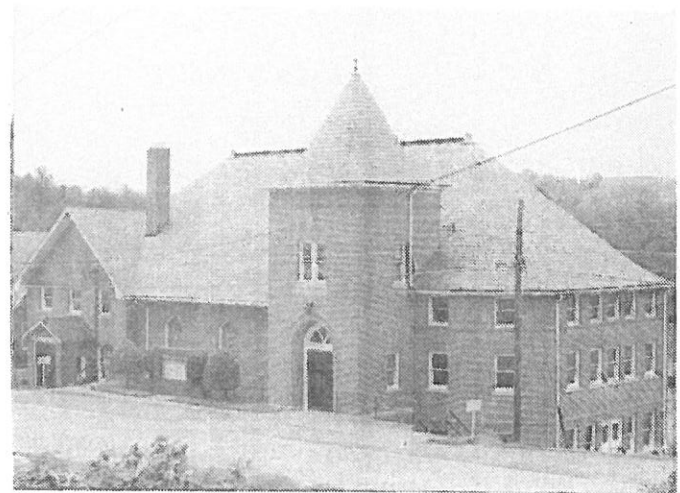
HERITAGE DAY PLANNING COMMITTEE

KEITH SOLOMON
PEGGY BAKER
JOAN McBETH
DONNA OTTENBERG

JAMES F. LOUCKS
BONNIE CREE
HELEN DUNCAN
GEORGE S. FOX

**150TH ANNIVERSARY
CHURCHES OF GOD
GENERAL CONFERENCE
HERITAGE SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 9, 1975**

**1825
TO
1975**



**W
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**CENTER BETHEL
CHURCH OF GOD
ALVERTON, PA.
FOUNDED 1839**

**PASTOR
WILLIAM D. RODAHAVER**

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CENTER BETHEL CHURCH OF GOD
ALVERTON, PENNSYLVANIA

COMPILED BY MISS PEARL DePRIEST IN OCTOBER
1962 FROM CHURCH MINUTES, THE WRITINGS OF
REV. PETER LOUCKS AND J. LYMAN LOUCKS.

IN NOVEMBER OF 1838 THE PENNSYLVANIA ELDERSHIP
APPOINTED JOHN HICKERNELL AND E. WEST TO THE
"PITTSBURGH MISSION." THIS MISSION INCLUDED
FIVE COUNTIES: ALLEGHENY, WESTMORELAND, BEAVER,
BUTLER, AND VENANGO. HICKERNELL'S CIRCUIT
COVERED TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY MILES. J. KELLER
WAS HIS CO-LABORER IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY.

THEY HELD A SERIES OF MEETINGS IN 1838 IN
THE C. LANDIS SCHOOLHOUSE (NEAR HAWKEYE) WHERE
TWELVE PERSONS WERE CONVERTED AND A CHURCH
ORGANIZED. THOMAS HICKERNELL, IN 1839 ORGANIZED
A CHURCH IN THE HOME OF HENRY ROSENBERGER IN
BETHANY (NOW RUFFSDALE). THE CHURCH PROPERTY
THERE LATER WAS LOST BECAUSE OF A FAMILY TITLE.
BETWEEN THESE TWO CHURCHES IN STONERVILLE
(ALVERTON), JOHN HICKERNELL ORGANIZED A CHURCH
WHICH MET IN THE MENNONITE MEETING HOUSE IN
1839. A SMALL PLAIN HOUSE OF WORSHIP WAS BUILT
AT A COST OF \$1,100 IN STONER'S GROVE IN 1841.
THE CHURCH IN THE LANDIS SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD WAS
FINALLY BROKEN UP BY THE REMOVAL OF MOST OF THE
FAMILIES TO IOWA, WHERE THEY FORMED THE CHURCH
AT HARMONY. THE MEMBERSHIP HAVING INCREASED
CONSIDERABLY AROUND STONERVILLE, THE STONER'S
GROVE MEETING HOUSE BEING CENTRALLY LOCATED,
ALL MEMBERS OF THE THREE CHURCHES COMBINED AND
NAMED THE STONER'S GROVE CHURCH CENTER BETHEL.

IN THE SPRING OF 1863 IT WAS DETERMINED TO
ERECT "A MORE COMODIOUS HOUSE OF WORSHIP."
A TRACT OF LAND WAS PURCHASED FOR A "NOMINAL
SUM" FROM "FATHER" FOX AND "FATHER" STAUFFER
THE HOUSE BEING ERECTED AND DEDICATED SABBATH,
DECEMBER 27, 1863. THE ENTIRE COST OF THE LAND
AND BUILDING WAS \$6,600. IN 1881, TWO ROOMS

WERE ADDED TO THE CHURCH AND THESE LATER (1908) WERE MADE INTO FOUR ROOMS. IN 1928, THE WHOLE BUILDING WAS REMODELED, AT THE COST OF \$25,000, WITH NINETEEN ROOMS AND A SANCTUARY SEATING 400.

THE PARSONAGE WAS REMODELED THREE TIMES. IN 1959 IT WAS TORN DOWN AND REPLACED WITH A RED BRICK STRUCTURE WITH SEVEN ROOMS AND FULL BASEMENT, HEATED WITH ELECTRICITY AT A COST OF \$30,000.

EARLY RECORDS SHOW THE MEMBERSHIP WAS LARGELY MADE UP OF THE STAUFFER, STONER, FOX, DILLINGER, ROSENBERGER, LOUCKS, AND HICKERNELL FAMILIES.

FROM CENTER BETHEL HAVE SPRUNG SEVERAL OTHER CHURCHES AMONG WHICH ARE THE MT. PLEASANT CHURCH OF GOD IN 1872 AND THE CHURCH OF GOD AT HARMONY, IOWA. THIS LATTER CHURCH WAS THE HOME CHURCH OF CLARA LANDIS, THE FIRST MISSIONARY SENT OUT BY OUR DENOMINATION TO INDIA. SOLOMON FULMER FROM CENTER BETHEL HELPED FOUND THE GRANDVIEW CHURCH OF GOD. THE BUILDING AT GRANDVIEW WAS BUILT IN 1880.

1954-1957

IN JULY OF 1954 A WURLITZER ORGAN WAS INSTALLED IN THE CHURCH.

A BRASS CROSS AND CANDLE HOLDER WERE ADDED TO THE CHANCEL BY AN ANONYMOUS GIVER. THE RECRUITER SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, WHICH BEGAN IN JANUARY OF 1955, GAVE TWO BRASS VASES FOR ALTAR FLOWERS.

THE WHITE SATIN EMBROIDERED ALTAR CLOTH, FRINGED IN GOLD, WAS PLACED UNDERNEATH THESE SYMBOLS OF OUR FAITH IN MEMORY OF DONNIE MYERS. THEY WERE DEDICATED IN APRIL OF 1955.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1955 THE RED FLOOR COVERING WAS PURCHASED BY THE LADIES BIBLE CLASS.

A LITERATURE RACK WAS PLACED IN THE REAR OF THE SANCTUARY.

EXTENDED CHURCH SERVICE FOR THE CHILDREN BEGAN DURING THE WINTER OF 1955-1956 FOR AGES 4-12.

1958-1959

THE CHURCH WAS REPAIRED DURING THE SPRING OF 1959 AFTER THE TERMITES WHICH CAUSED THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN EXTERMINATED.

IN JUNE OF 1959 THE OLD PARSONAGE WAS TORN DOWN TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE NEW ONE.

REV. JOHN WOODS WAS ASSIGNED TO A NEW PASTORATE AND REV. WILLIAM D. RODAHAVER WAS ASSIGNED AS OUR NEW MINISTER.

The Center Bethel Church of God Celebrates 165th Anniversary

by Diane Byers, used with permission of *The Independent Observer*

The year was 1863. The Civil War saw the Union turning the tide in their favor by defeating the Confederacy in Gettysburg. A man by the name of Abraham Lincoln expressed democratic ideals in his Gettysburg Address. Settlers were heading West in covered wagons, dreaming of a new life in a new land. And in a tiny town in Pennsylvania, a new church was erected and dedicated on December 27th.

The town was Stonerville, now Alverton, and since the Stoner's Grove Meeting House was centrally located between three smaller churches in Hawkeye, Bethany, now Ruffsedale, and Stonerville, all members of the three churches combined and named the new church Center Bethel.

The beginnings of the church actually came long before the church building was erected. In 1839, ministers from Eastern Pennsylvania visited the area in their missionary tours and readily found a stopping place to preach. It was at this time that John Hickernell organized a small church, which worshipped in private dwellings. As membership increased, so did the need for a new building.

Hickernell led the way in establishing the ground work for this new church and served as pastor in 1870. Another name familiar to area residents was Peter Loucks, who served as pastor from 1868 to 1870; then, again, from 1871 to 1873.

Loucks was passionate in his dedication to the church. He prepared a church history in 1870 where, in speaking of the membership, he said, "During all this time at certain periods, the church had its ebbs and flows, sometimes her fiery creeds were such as to almost extinguish its visibility and cool the ardor of its friends, but still God owned and blessed the labors of His servants and added to the number of the saved."

Early records show the membership was largely made up of the Stauffer, Stoner, Fox, Dillinger, Rosenberger, Loucks and Hickernell families. This church served as a "mother" church to the Mt. Pleasant Church of God, the Grandview Church of God, and the Church of God at Harmony, Iowa. From the Church of God in Harmony came the first missionary to be sent out from the Churches of God.

Interestingly, the site of the church has never changed. Although the building has had several additions and extensive remodeling over the years, the original building remains intact. It used to be located at ground level, but over the years, the street has been raised so that the original front doors are not at the level they were once.

Pastor Lee Kline, the current church pastor, explained that the clock had been placed in front of the church to keep the parishioners from missing the streetcar that used to stop at the railroad tracks in the back of the building. He also noted

that when the church was first built, there were cornfields behind it.

Jimmy Loucks, 98 years old, is the oldest member of the church. He has done a lot for the church, even at one time digging out the ground by hand for one of the additions.

Gladys Grimm, wife of former pastor Wendell Grimm, spoke of her mother who attended the church as a baby in 1907 and was married in 1932, by Reverend Anna Edwards Hoverter, in the Harrisburg, PA area. The Grimms' son, Bob, served as Youth and Family Life Coordinator before going to the Kittanning Church of God as pastor.

Ida Hickernell, a descendent of John Hickernell, was a long-time Scottsdale school teacher who passed away at the age of 100. A former pastor, William Guyer (serving from 1906 to 1912), had a son who became the

Lt. Governor of Ohio.

J. Lyman Loucks, at one time a Pennsylvania senator, was a member at Center Bethel. Lyman's eldest son, Dr. Harold Loucks worked for the Rockefeller Foundation and served as a medical doctor in China. His sister, Grace Loucks Elliott, was a leader in the YWCA and served in various places around the world. The youngest child, Emerson Loucks, was a principal at the East Huntingdon High School in Alverton.

Anna Edwards was the first female to serve as pastor, at least in this area. She was there from 1918-1930. The longest serving pastor was Bill Rodahaver, now serving in Uniontown, who was there from 1959-1979.

In a joint effort by church members, an anniversary celebration

was planned for an October weekend. On Saturday there was a fellowship dinner followed by musical entertainment by Amos and Cookie Mazzant.

On Sunday, instead of having the usual two services, the congregation came together for a 10:00 A.M. service with guest speaker Pastor Wayne Boyer, Director of the Churches of God.

Pastor Kline says, "This church has a lot of potential, more than the people here realize. Center Bethel is very community oriented. They are a great group of people with a lot of talent. I just can't say enough about them."

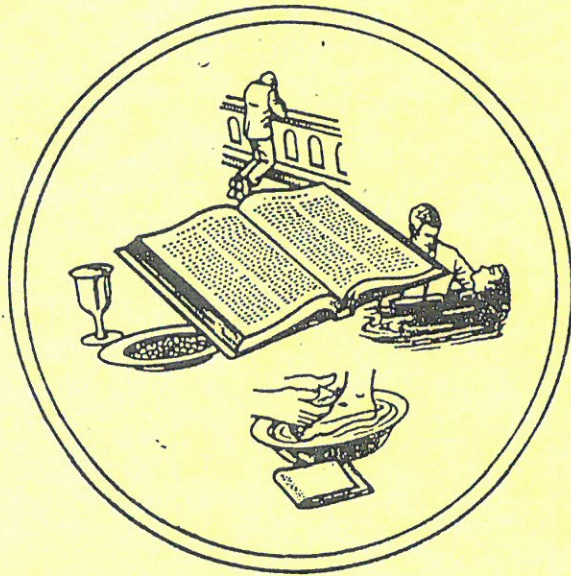
Generations of dedicated and determined members have built a strong foundation. While celebrating our rich history, we look forward to a solid and promising future. **A**

CHURCHES OF GOD
General Conference
Archives/Museum

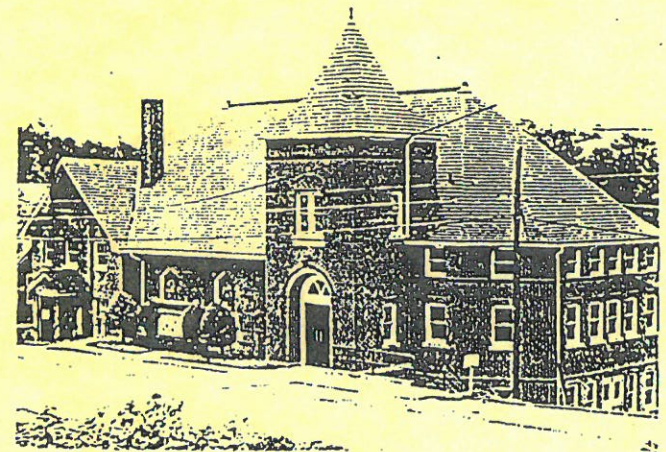
160 YEARS

CENTER BETHEL CHURCH OF GOD

1839 - 1999



This history was compiled by
Lizabeth Schomer for her
Girl Scout Gold Award, 1999.



The first school building in the area was built by the directors of East Huntington Township in 1860. It was a one-room building and was used until the borough was incorporated. The next two school buildings were built because of the rapid growth of the area. The first, in March of 1878, was a four-room building. The second, built in the summer of 1889, was a ten room brick building.

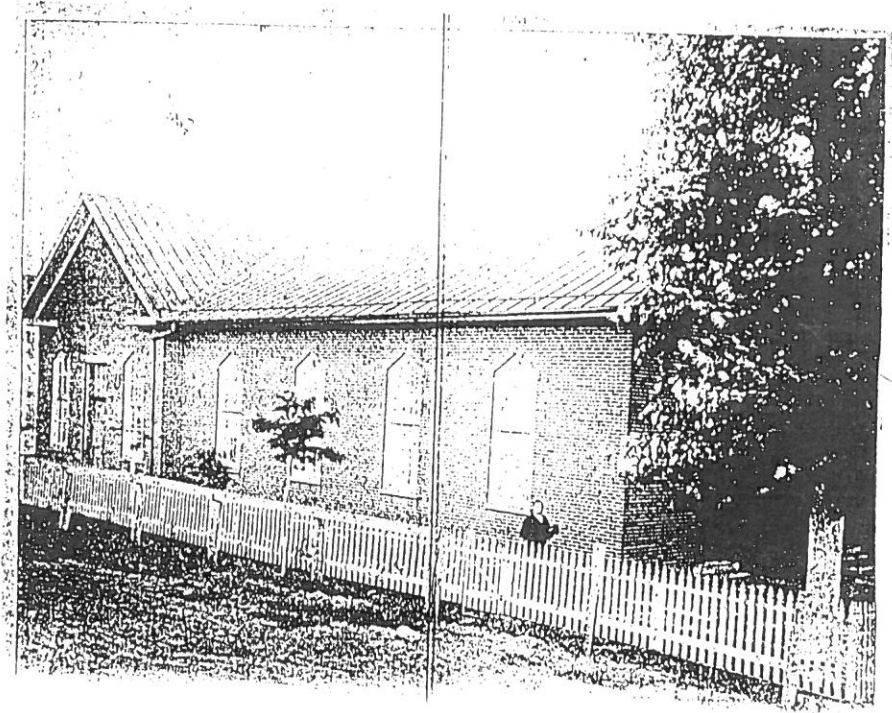
Rev. J.B. Leason organized the first church in Scottdale in July of 1873. It was the Trinity Reformed Church. Next Rev. John McMillian in 1874 organized the Presbyterian Church. The United Brethern Church was also founded that year. This church was organized in connection with the Mt. Pleasant branch. A Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1884, and was said to be one of the nicest churches in Westmoreland County. The Mennonite congregation, which had originally worshipped at Alverton and Pennsville, was organized in Scottdale in 1893. The Baptist church was organized in 1895 by Rev. T. Hughes.

Mennonites first settled the town of Stonerville, now known as Alverton, during the 1790's. While most of them were from the eastern counties in Pennsylvania there were those that had recently come to America from Europe. The very first Mennonite settler in this area was George Mumma. It was during the year 1794 that he purchased a large plot of land just north of where Scottdale is now. It is also known that several new families came into the area in 1797. These families included that of Martin Overholt. In 1799 another prominent settler came into the area. This settler was Christian Stoner whose family and descendants lived in the area of present day Alverton. In the year 1800 another large family of Overholts came into the area and they founded the village of West Overton. One of the other prominent settlers in the area was Peter Loucks who owned most of the land that the town of Scottdale now covers.

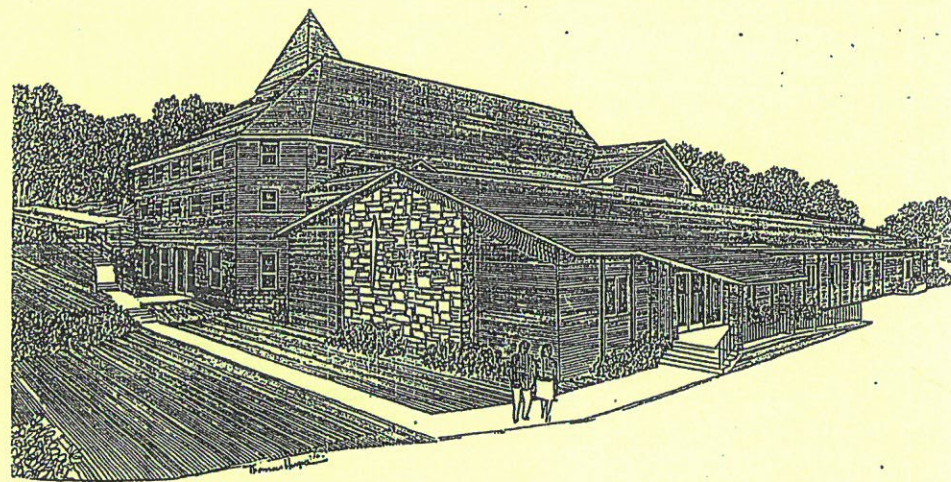
Since there were so many of the Mennonite settlers in such a close proximity they decided that they wanted to have a church house of their own. So, in March of 1799 the trustees purchased the first plot of land in Stonerville. The trustees also bought a plot of ground to use as a burial ground at that time. The church building was erected in the year 1800. The church grew for many years under the guidance of Bishop David Funk. Around the year 1850 the church reached its peak of membership and then it slowly began to decline. The end of the church in Stonerville (Alverton) came into view when a new building was built in Scottdale in 1893. But, they did hold services in Alverton every four weeks until the end of 1898.

The first appearance of the Church of God in and around Alverton was in 1838 when the Pennsylvania Eldership appointed John Hickernell and E. West to the "Pittsburgh Mission." There were five counties included in this circuit totaling two hundred and seventy miles. These counties were: Allegheny, Westmoreland, Beaver,

Butler and Venango. The churches began in 1838 when a meeting house was started in the C. Landis schoolhouse, near Hawkeye. At this church there were twelve people converted. Another church was organized in 1839 by Thomas Hickernell in the home of Henry Rosenburger in Bethany, now Ruffsedale. Between the two churches in Alverton, John Hickernell organized a church which met in the Mennonite Meeting House in 1839. In 1841 a new, plain house of worship was built in Stoner's Grove at a cost of \$1,100.



CENTER BETHEL
CHURCH OF GOD
ALVERTON, PA.

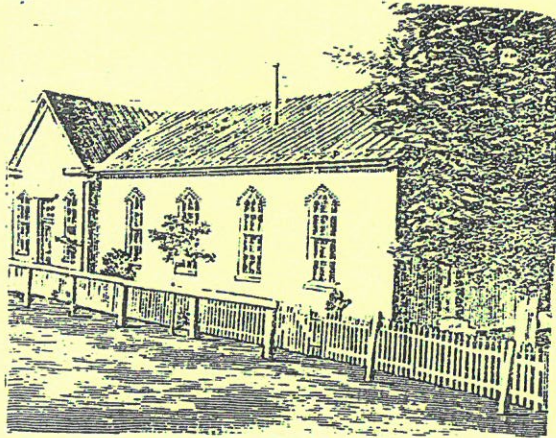


HOMECOMING & DEDICATION

OCTOBER 19, 1986

148 YEARS IN HIS SERVICE

1839 - 1986



CHURCH HISTORY

The history of the Church of God in Alverton is woven into the very beginning of the village of Stonersville (now Alverton). The Mennonite Meeting House was where John Winebrenner preached several years before there was a Church of God organized in the community.

In 1839 Thomas Hickernell organized a Church of God at Old Bethany and in 1840 a small plain house of worship was built there. The present church was built in 1863 in a more central location. It was dedicated December 27, 1863, and called Center Bethel.

Additions to this building were made in 1881 at a cost of \$2,319., then an upstairs floor was built to accomodate more Sunday School classes from 1906 to 1911. During the years of 1918 to 1930, \$25,000 was invested to make the present building of 1939.

The present Fellowship addition was contracted by Neil Corry Construction and architect, Edgar Neff, of our church, and 12 people on the Building Committee.

We praise God for all the great things He's done for us!

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Pastor Frederick Bauer, Pastor, Clinton, Breakneck, Buchanan Circuit, White, Pa.

Pastor Larry White, Pastor Mt. Pleasant Church of God, and President, Churches of God, General Conference

Pastor Glenn Beatty, Latrobe, Pa., Conference Coordinator, West Penn Conference

Pastor Charles Carl, Latrobe, Pa., Pastor Latrobe Church of God, and President of West Penn Conference

Neil Corry Construction, Horseheads, NY, General Contractor

George Fox, Alverton, Pa., Chairman of Building Committee, and Trustee

Frederick Dugger, Secretary of Building Committee, and Elder

Dr. Richard Wilkin, Findlay, Ohio, Churches of God General Conference Administrator, pastor of pastors and church leader, pastored for 18 years, teacher for 6 years, church Administrator for 16 years, retiring on December 31, 1986

Dr. Arthur Eakin, Findlay, Ohio, Born in Indian Head, Pa., pastored in West Penn Conference until 1975, Conference Administrator for Ohio Conference until 1985, now retired. Pastor at Alverton for 9 years.

Edgar Neff, Alverton, Pa., Architect, Financial Statistical Clerk of Sunday School

James Loucks, Scottdale, Pa., Life Trustee, Sunday School Teacher, member at Alverton for 43 years

Center Bethel Church at Alverton Will Celebrate Centenary; Special Services to Begin on November 14

Rev. Tennyson Guyer
Of Celina, Ohio, to Be
Guest Speaker.

FIRST FORMED AT OLD BETHANY

ALVERTON, Nov. 3.—The centenary of the Center Bethel Church of God at Alverton will be observed with special services November 14 to 19. Rev. Tennyson Guyer of Celina, Ohio, will be the guest speaker.

The Church of God in the Alverton community was first organized in Old Bethany. Another group of people organized a church a few years later in what was called the Landis settlement, south of Alverton. Most of the families in the latter group moved to Iowa and due to fact many of the people from both groups lived in Alverton, or Stonerville as it was then called, as it was in the center of both communities, the church was organized and transplanted to Stonerville and called Center Bethel. Preaching services were conducted first in Mepponite meeting house, then later in the Stoner Grove meeting house controlled by the Brethren in Christ.

In 1863 "a new and more commodious house of worship" was dedicated, in the month of December. Thus it is a little more than 75 years since dedication of this building. In 1881 the building was modernized with an addition of a Sunday school room under the pastorate of Rev. R. L. Byrnes. In 1928 under the pastorate of Rev. Anna Edwards, now Mrs. G. H. Hoverter, the building was again remodeled and made suitable for the present needs and presentable as modern building. From this church has started the Church of God at Mount Pleasant and also three or four organizations in the state of Iowa through the group from the Landis community. The first missionary to India from the Churches of God in North America was Miss Clara Landis, a descendant of one of the families moving from this community. Numerous other persons influenced by this church are in responsible positions in Christian work throughout the world, including a member of the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation Hospital in Peiping, China, who is a son of the church.

CHURCH TO MARK CENTENNIAL



Center Bethel Church of God at Alverton of which Rev. Arthur E. Aiken is pastor will celebrate its 100th anniversary with special services from November 14 to 19.

The interior of the building on the main floor has been repainted in preparation for the centenary and the church hymnals rebound in excellent condition. The General Eldership of the Churches of God in North America will meet with the Alverton church in June of 1963. There is a present membership of two hundred. Rev. Arthur E. Aiken is the pastor.

EUGENE EAKIN—Professor Theological Department, Findlay College.

ADAM S. FOX FAMILY—Amos Fox, minister of the gospel.

Charles T. Fox, teacher, Dean, acting President, Findlay College.

Charles Fox chose as his life's helpmate a member of Center Bethel Church of God, Emma Stoner, who has rendered valuable service to Findlay College in its various activities and as a member of the college church.

DANIEL B. STONER—Trustee of Barkeyville Academy; a daughter, who became the helpmate of W. R. Covert, a son, Loucks Stoner, a teacher, Barkeyville Academy; another son, E. L. Stoner, graduate Findlay College, for seven years supervising principal of the Scottdale public schools.

JOHN S. STONER FAMILY—All loyal supporters of Center Bethel Church and all activities of the church at large.

HENSELS—For a long number of years custodians of the church and Sabbath School funds, teachers and oversight of the Intermediate department of the Sabbath School, and active in general work of the church.

Center Bethel Church of God extends its influence in the home, community, business, legislative halls, states, India and China.

These recitals demonstrate the important part and place the church has in helping each of us to live the type of life God offers us here on earth.

1863—Center Bethel Church of God at Work, Alverton, Pennsylvania—1941

Mr. J. L. Loucks

*Former Member Pennsylvania Legislature
Alverton, Pennsylvania*

The success attained has depended on how the membership used the foundation laid by God for the establishment of His Church here on earth, loyalty to the home, community, church, their Creator and Benefactor.

Space will not permit of detailed information, so that given should not be regarded as special notice of individual achievements over others equally worthy.

EQUIPMENT—In 1864 it consisted of a one-room building with two stoves for heat. In 1881 two additional rooms were added, with another stove. In 1908 these two became four, and in 1928 the entire building was remodeled, with nineteen separate rooms, furnace heating, electric lighting (auditorium indirect), rest rooms.

The parsonage was remodeled three times, providing modern conveniences, the cost of the building and equipment was approximately \$37,000.

During these years the enrollment on the Church Record was approximately 1,150. In 1872 the membership of Center Bethel Church of God was divided, a portion being transferred to aid in establishing a Church of God at Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, more convenient to their residence. Solomon Fulmer changed his membership to aid in establishing a Church of God at Grandview.

The Church Record states that an article appeared in THE CHURCH ADVOCATE mentioning members of Center Bethel Church who moved to other states and suggesting that this ought to be placed on the Church Record. "She has furnished the material out of which not only the church at Harmony, Iowa, was established, but also a number of other churches in western states." It may be of interest to add that from one of these churches came Miss Landes, missionary to India.

During these years Center Bethel Church has shown its loyalty to the West Pennsylvania and General Eldership, missionary and educational interests, furnished Findlay College with 15 students, 10 graduated and over 15 public school teachers.

Since 1860 fifteen ministers have served as pastors of Center Bethel Church: Domer, 8 years; Loucks, 4; Hickernell, 1; Long, 1; Grimm, 1; Bolton, 3; Byrnes, 12; Covert, 4; McElveen, 2; Umstead, 8; Guyer, 6; Lobb, 6; Edwards, 12; Eugene Eakin, 4; Arthur Eakin, 6. Additional service rendered by these pastors:

LOUCKS—Active at work as a member of the church, he aided in preaching, was Editor of *Workman Quarterly*, an advocate of public schools, church Bible Schools, church educational institutions, to aid in lifting up the morale of the people. Near the close of his life he tried to interest the General Eldership in joining with taking over the Classical Scientific Institute at Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, that had become financially embarrassed, but failed to get favorable action, so decided to give the institution what help he could personally and in interesting others to do the same, the result of which was the institution continued to function and three of his children were graduated. Two of these he placed in colleges maintained by other denominations, but prior to their graduation his life's work on earth came to an end, leaving the desire of his heart unfinished. To meet this loss another of his sons lined up with the mother to aid in maintaining the home, cultivating the farm, their only resource from which to provide the funds necessary to aid the other children through college.

Erastus was graduated from Rochester University, taught public school, Barkeyville Academy, Findlay College, a daughter a missionary in India.

Elmer was graduated from Rochester University, taught public school, Barkeyville Academy, then entered the ministry as his life's work.

Etta, a teacher at Barkeyville Academy, and Colfax College till death.

The mother spent the last nine years of her life with part of her body paralyzed. Her helpmate realized the need of a helpmate to face life's problems, and the choice made was a member of the Church of God at Barkeyville, Pennsylvania; Sarah J. Hunsberger, who for fifty-two years loyally did her part. Their offspring were a daughter and two sons, who from childhood were brought under the influence of the Church of God, public schools and Findlay College, resulting in their becoming members of the church, active workers in all its departments.

Grace, active in Y. W. C. A. activities, public speaker, now president of general organization, author and co-author of books.

Harold, surgeon for over seventeen years at Peiping Union Medical College, Peiping, China, now head of the institution; instructor in training natives for medical service, active church worker, Center Bethel in China.

Emerson devotes his time in aiding in the training of youth in public schools at State Teachers' College.

The father, with a few exceptions, caused by the common ills of life, has always been found in the Lord's house on the Lord's day, taking an active part in all the activities of the church, which has given opportunity to render service in every official position in all the departments of the church work and has opened the way for similar service in a large number of community and public projects.

HICKERNELL—Active as member of church, aided in the preaching, ministerial service and general work of the church at large. His son, Beecher, went to the mountains where a Church of God was located at Kingwood, Pennsylvania, to secure his life's helpmate, Mary Ellen Shultz, who became a member of Center Bethel Church in 1885, and for 54 years has been one of its outstanding members, taking an active part in all church work, prayer meetings, Endeavor Society, Bible School departments, public worship, all special activities, the missionary society, where she has spent much time, keeping together a group of women, who, with herself, made quilts, other garments, to secure the funds needed to help maintain the church, contributions to the Elderships, college, missions, general work of the church at large.

Her residence for a long number of years was at Bethany, over two miles distant from the church, and for some years past on the hillside at Alverton. During all these years, with the few exceptions caused by the ills of life and insurmountable weather conditions, she has always been found present to take her part and place, a record that has few equals in service for the Christ and her fellow-man.

She is the mother of Ida Hickernell, who is also a member of Center Bethel Church, taking an active part in all church activities, graduate of Findlay College, high school teacher. Another son, a graduate of Findlay College, is active in business.

WILLIAM HARRIS GUYER—President of Findlay College, two sons, James and Tennyson, ministers. James, teacher at Findlay College; Tennyson, author of books.

The Alverton Church of God . . .

. . . IS A CHURCH OF THE COMMUNITY appealing to everyone regardless of their background.

. . . is a family church in which one of our aims is to build strong Christian homes.

. . . is dedicated to the task of sharing the Christian faith and the love of God with others.

. . . seeks a balance of worship, study, service and fellowship.

. . . is a church of the people. We claim no perfection for the church or its members. However, as a people we strive to live in the Spirit of Christ to the best of our ability.

. . . recognizes our purpose to be far above the promotion of a particular denominational doctrine.

. . . is affiliated with Findlay College in Findlay, Ohio, Camp Sunrise Mountain at Markleysburg, Pa. and Grove Manor Home in Grove City, Pa. We support missions in India, Bangladesh, Haiti and among the American Indians.

. . . invites you to come and get acquainted and share with us in worship.

We Believe . . .

. . . the Bible to be the divinely inspired Word of God which relates His working with men in history.

. . . there is one God eternally existent in three persons, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

. . . in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His miraculous birth, the vicarious sacrifice, the resurrection and the ascension, and His return.

. . . the Christian Church consists of all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for their salvation, and have committed themselves to practice the teachings of Christ in their everyday life.

. . . the Christian life calls for daily growth in grace and truth and expressing the love of Christ in relationship to all men.

. . . in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and in everlasting rewards and punishments.

If You . . .

. . . are not active in any local church, we welcome you to our church.

. . . have any questions about the church, any personal concerns or problems you would like to discuss, you are welcome to call the church at any time.

Pastoral Services . . .

Preaching
Counseling
Leadership
Funerals
Weddings
Communion
Baptisms

Home and Hospital Visitation

Services are given to any and all who are in need of the help of our pastor.

The services of the church are not limited to the registered members. If you have need of a pastor, we invite you to call . . . 887-8259.

From Whence We Came . . .

. . . The Alverton Church of God is affiliated with the Churches of God, General Conference. We are of the Reformed tradition (not pentecostal). Our founder, the Rev. John Winebrenner, was ordained by the General Synod of the German Reformed Church and organized the first congregation of the Churches of God in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1825.

. . . the local congregation began organizing in 1839 and met for many years in the Mennonite Meeting House located where the old red brick High School presently stands.