

Chillicothe Free Methodist Church History

The history of the Chillicothe Free Methodist Church begins in 1892 when a primitive Methodist preacher from Ludlow, MO named St. Clair came to Chillicothe and held a meeting. They built a building on the corner of Williams and Green St. In 1895, the Primitive Methodists sold the church to the Congregationalists who then moved it to Graves Street in 1896.

In 1899, W.C. Hanmer, a Free Methodist Church evangelist, came to town and the building was purchased from the Congregationalists. T.B. France served as the interim pastor until F.A. Reeves was appointed at the 1899 conference.

Additional rooms and improvements were made, but then in May of 1960, a relocation began. The new building was built at 1441 Jackson Street under the ministry of Joseph Humphrey. On August 7, 1966 the cornerstone was laid. A dedication occurred in 1968. In 1969 additional property was purchased and in 1971 construction began on an educational unit. In January 1976 the property on 1426 Webster was purchased to provide space for future planning and expansion. Pastor Donald E. Hoffman and family moved there in July. The west wing addition began in April 1979 and was completed in April 1980. About 90% of the work was done by the lay people of the church.

Between 1899 and 1973 there were around 32 different pastors. Pastor Donald E. Hoffman was the pastor of the church from 1973 to 2003. After 30 years as a full-time pastor of the church he retired and moved with his wife, Virginia, to Cameron, MO. He has been succeeded by several pastors since that time. Pastor Loren Edwards who served for one year, Pastor Jim Berlin served 4 ½ years, Pastor David Condry served 4 years and, most recently, Pastor Chris Leach served for 6 years from 2013-2019.

During the pastorate of Pastor Jim Berlin, a new parsonage was purchased on Hill Crest in Chillicothe. The old parsonage on Webster St. has been torn down.

The church has offered various programs throughout the years such as: Wednesday night kids' church under various names (CYC, CLC and now Kids' Zone); Vacation Bible School; Sunday School; Free Thanksgiving Dinner for the community; a small food pantry; Beyond the Walls program; use of the facility for local groups to meet; Men's Breakfast and Women's Bible Studies, including Women's Missions in years past.