

Flanders United Methodist Church Historic Site

(no financial impact)

WHEREAS, Flanders United Methodist Church holds a unique place in the history of northwestern New Jersey as the largest preaching venue for Bishop Asbury and early Methodist circuit riders.

WHEREAS, Flanders United Methodist Church is where Francis Asbury pioneered the building of the first “Methodist House” in northwestern New Jersey and one of the earliest Methodist houses within the bounds of our conference.

WHEREAS, The building became a first of its kind and inspired Methodists to shift from household meetings, open air gatherings and services held in union churches to building churches wholly owned by Methodists, wherein Asbury initiated a new phase of congregational development.

WHEREAS, Flanders United Methodist Church had one of the largest open air meetings on June 24, 1787 to hear Asbury preach, where he remarked after preaching in the “woods” that there were nearly one thousand listeners and that he baptized a number of adults and children by immersion or sprinkling.

WHEREAS, Flanders United Methodist Church pastors included many important early Methodists leaders such as Ezekiel Cooper, Jesse Lee, William Phoebus, and Richard Swain.

WHEREAS, Flanders Methodists continued to worship in the original Meeting House until 1857 and the current Flanders United Methodist Church building is registered as a New Jersey Historic Place.

THEREFORE, Flanders United Methodist Church has a special place in northern New Jersey’s Methodist past and present, it deserves to be recognized by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference as a Conference Historic Site.

RATONALE: The original Flanders United Methodist Church was on the cutting edge of early Methodist church architecture and helped Asbury reshape how congregational development was done. The church in Flanders was the center for early Methodist growth in northwest New Jersey, and its congregation has continued to faithfully minister to the Mount Olive community since 1789.

Submitted and Presented by Rev. Bill Wilson, Chair
Commission on Archives and History

Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church Historic Site

(no financial impact)

WHEREAS, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church is one of the oldest organized Methodist Episcopal Church congregations in New Jersey at two hundred and thirty years and was part of the original Salem circuit in southern New Jersey.

WHEREAS, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church started out as the Morris River Methodist Society around 1778 during the American Civil War. Benjamin Abbott, southern New Jersey’s influential “War Time Evangelist” attends the quarterly meeting.

WHEREAS, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church is visited by Bishop Frances Asbury on September 17, 1785. He would return in the spring of 1809 to preach and confer with Dr. Benjamin Fislser about building n academy on the church grounds.

WHEREAS, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church's cemetery contains the remains of Richard Swain and his family. Swain served under Abbott and was appointed to several circuits in the New Jersey area until 1803. His leadership helped make Methodism successful in the southern New Jersey area.

WHEREAS, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church erected the first exclusive Methodist use building in 1786. The present edifice dates from 1827.

THEREFORE, As one of the most successful southern New Jersey churches whose tremendous impact upon South Jersey Methodism since 1785 deserves to be recognized by this body as a Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Historic Site.

RATIONALE: Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church has a special place in southern New Jersey's Methodist history. The fact that Francis Asbury visited twice and set in motion for an educational academy built later on the grounds gives proof to its expanding ministry and importance to Methodist work in the area. Port Elizabeth's spiritual heritage through the years includes a famous 1869 revival and strong temperance stand in 1884.

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