

Recommendation

Asbury United Methodist Church, Warren County, Historic Site

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church holds a unique place in the history of Northwestern New Jersey as an important preaching site for Bishop Asbury and early Methodist circuit riders.

Whereas Asbury Methodists were the first to organize a class meeting in 1792 in the area and second to build a church. Bishop Asbury made his first visit to the site in the same year. His last visit came in 1811.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church is the place where the first town in the United States of America was named for the Bishop. The name change, from Hall’s Mills to Asbury, took place in 1796 on the occasion of Bishop Asbury laying the cornerstone of the first Methodist church built in Northwestern New Jersey (“West Jersey Circuit”). The one acre land for the church was purchased for 15 pounds. Bishop Asbury was present for the event. He would return many times to preach and minister to Asbury Methodists.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church’s most historically significant member was Colonel William McCullough, a Methodist layperson who arrived in Hall’s Mills in 1784, whose friendship with Bishop Asbury began with Asbury’s first visit in 1786 and who became the driving force behind the town’s name change to Asbury. McCullough’s impact extended far from the Methodist Episcopal Church as a legislator, judge and business man in the development of Asbury’s industrial economy, and to the creation of both the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church and the Flanders Methodist Episcopal Church in Flanders, NJ.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church is part of the National Parks Service national registered historic places called Asbury Historic District. The designation recognizes Asbury Church as one of the significant 19th century architectural gems that make up the district.

Rationale: Asbury United Methodist Church has a special place in Northwestern New Jersey’s Methodist past. Whether it was the first town in the nation to be named after Bishop Asbury, recognition of its classic 19th century style church architecture or Asbury’s Church’s continued witness for 230 years, Asbury’s unique contribution to both New Jersey Methodism and Warren and Hunterdon counties society in its immediate parish area places Asbury as a treasure amongst Greater New Jersey United Methodism.

Therefore be it resolved that as one of the most unique and influential larger circuits in early Northwestern New Jersey, Asbury be recognized by this body as a Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Historic Site.

Respectively Submitted and Presenter of Recommendation: Reverend Bill Wilson, Chair of Commission on Archives and History

Recommendation

Drew Theological School Historic Site

Whereas Drew Theological School has had a profound effect on the history of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, United Methodism and the world Methodist movement and its alumni are trained in a leadership style that is spiritually transformative, rooted in social justice and nurtures healing ministries.

Whereas Drew Theological School became United Methodism’s first solely post-baccalaureate seminary, the first such school created by General Conference, initially offered free tuition (due to a founding gift given by Daniel Drew and his continued financial support for the seminary until his financial demise) and collected one of the greatest theological libraries in the world.

Recommendations to the 2016 Annual Conference

1 **Whereas** Drew Theological School has always maintained strong organizational ties to the New Jersey
2 Conferences, from its original embrace as the “Conference Seminary” of the Newark Annual Conference, from
3 hosting a total of thirty-six Newark and Northern New Jersey Annual Conference sessions on its grounds
4 between 1949 to 1998 and from seating the Resident Bishop of the New Jersey Episcopal Area on its Board of
5 Trustees throughout the seminary’s and later university’s history.

6 **Whereas** Drew Theological School has provided a premier faculty to train future church leaders, which included
7 those professors who would become known as The Great Five: Henry Anson Buttz, John Miley, George Richard
8 Crooks, Samuel Foster Upham and James Strong, and also many other New Jersey Methodists, who would serve
9 on the faculty with great distinction through the school’s history. Buttz exemplified these New Jersey faculty
10 connections, as he served as pastor of several small congregations within the Newark Annual Conference, and
11 also the Morristown Methodist Church, before becoming a Drew professor and seminary president, who served
12 the institution for over fifty years.

13 **Whereas** Drew Theological School has faithfully served the conference by preparing New Jersey Methodist
14 students for lay and ordained ministry throughout its history. Three Methodist students from New Jersey
15 (George Miller of Warrenville, Charles Coit Cokefair of Bloomfield and Grover Ruckman of New Providence) were
16 members of the Theological School’s first class in 1867.

17 **Whereas** notable New Jersey Drew graduates have included such ministers as William Warren Sweet (Class of
18 1906), Boston University president and historian; Elbert M. Conover (Class of 1913), Methodist Episcopal
19 minister and the denomination’s inspirational neo-gothic church architect; plus missionary Maud Keister Jensen
20 (Classes of 1943, 1945 and 1978), who was the first woman ordained in the Methodist Church.

21 **Whereas** Drew Theological School also became the first seminary to accept women in a full Bachelor of Divinity
22 Degree program in the fall of 1919, was the first seminary to create a faculty spot for a Christian sociologist
23 following the adoption of the Social Creed by General Conference, and has graduated more Methodist bishops
24 than any other United Methodist seminary.

25 **Rationale:** Drew Theological School’s place in the history of New Jersey United Methodism cannot be
26 overstated. From its inception Drew has trained Methodist leaders for our annual conference and those around
27 the world. Because of its commitment to high quality faculty and dedication to the denomination’s mission,
28 Drew has led the way in making United Methodism strong in its diversity and committed to deep spirituality
29 with social justice, which has made the seminary a light unto the nations by which New Jersey Methodists
30 continue to directly benefit in its local churches, mission projects and surrounding communities. The unique role
31 and place Drew Theological School in New Jersey Methodism is unquestioned.

32 **Therefore be it resolved** that the Theological School at Drew University be recognized by the Greater New
33 Jersey Annual Conference as one of its historic sites.

34 Respectively Submitted and Presenter of Recommendation: Reverend Bill Wilson, Chair of Commission on
35 Archives and History

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