The Indiana United Methodist Historical Society Newsletter

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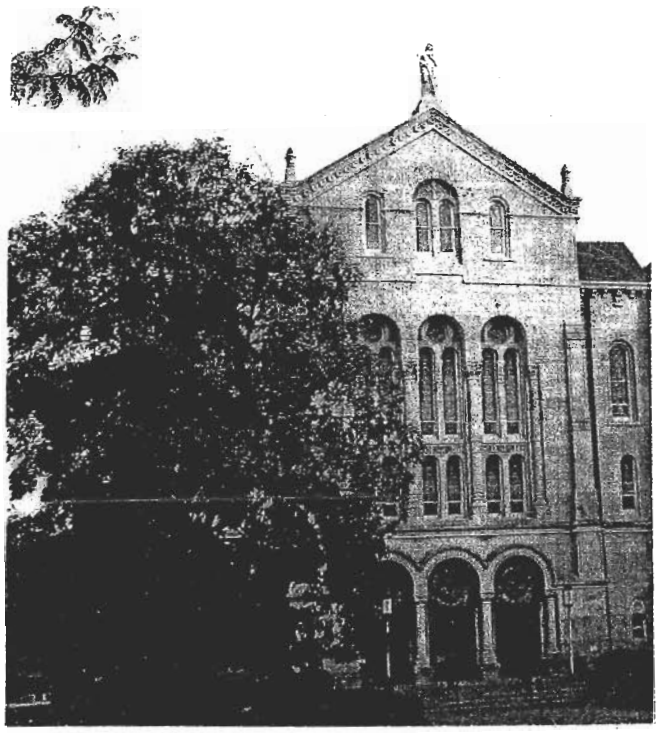
To Sit Apart No Longer



Roberts Park United Methodist Church

President John Baughman and Rev. Howard Boles reviewed the history of Roberts Park UMC at IUMHS's annual meeting on April 29, 2006. John Baughman focused on the 150th anniversary of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Roberts Park in 1856, the first general conference to be held west of the Appalachian Mountains. Representatives from England and Canada, as well as the United States, taxed the available housing of a growing city – in one instance, a single household accommodating four bishops. The conference lasted four weeks, and reporting the event filled 320 pages.

In light of the striving for equality examined by IUMHS's main speakers, it seemed fitting that the 1856 General Conference passed a bill declaring that men and women would no longer have to sit apart. A visible barrier had been removed.

In his half of the presentation, Rev. Howard Boles pointed out that Roberts Park is a mother church, having assisted in the founding of more than twelve different churches in the Indianapolis area.

Rev. Boles noted a decisive moment in Roberts Park's history. In 1896, a substantial offer was made that would have paid off the church's debt and allowed it to move one more time. The church declined and chose to remain where it stands today, "an anchor within the heart of the city." The church has, indeed, been intentional in keeping its downtown identity.

The chapel where IUMHS met for its program on Roberts Park's first floor had once been the pastor's study. The expanse outside that area, where the conferees ate, had been a lecture hall. The sanctuary on the second floor, with its excellent acoustics, has been the site of some of finest musical attractions in Indianapolis. In the basement, one of Roberts Park's dining rooms offers free meals to the homeless every Sunday afternoon, serving up to 300 persons per Sunday during the summer.

With a history that corresponds with the history of Indianapolis and Indiana, Roberts Park's membership reaches out to and through the state, drawing members from Muncie, Danville, and Franklin, Indiana. Being central to Indiana and Indiana Methodism, the church, through its pastor, felt free to say, as Rev. Boles did say to IUMHS's members, "You have come home."

Equality Not Yet Achieved

Rev. Howard Boles

"The Church finally got it right in 1956," when, at the historic Minneapolis General Conference of that year, the Church granted full clergy rights to women. Yet, Howard Boles, pastor of Roberts Park UMC, contends, "Our celebration is a misnomer. What we are really celebrating is the 50th anniversary of the ***recognition*** of the ordination of women."

Women have been doing ministry since Mary Magdalene was selected by Jesus to be the first human being to proclaim his resurrection. "Jesus looked beyond gender to entrust the most important message of his ministry."

Most of the disciples having fled, the Bible reverses the practice of identifying women by their actions and by place and now specifically names them. Yet, after the glorious Resurrection, women returned to being known by what they did – serving small groups, becoming missionaries, teaching Sunday School – fulfilling a calling without an official sanction from the General Church.

The ministering work of women was exemplified by John Wesley's mother. Susanna Wesley's small-group work, Rev. Boles contends, provided the model for class meetings, which have so effectively been employed within the Methodist Church. Teaching a congregation and preaching in her husband's absence, Susanna Wesley drew the ire of the local curate, a man who could not attract so many.

It is hardly surprising John Wesley authorized Sarah Crosby to preach in 1761 and acknowledged in a letter to Mary Bosanquet her right to preach the Gospel.

The Minneapolis General Conference of 1956 officially recognized what women had been conscientiously doing unofficially for almost 2000 years.

Rev. Boles' second thesis was that the Church must become a prophetic voice for how things should be, rather than an "acquiescing voice saying, 'that's just how things are'." As a student of the civil rights movement, Rev. Boles knows that silence only maintains the status quo.

Rev. Boles knows that true equality has not yet been fully achieved. Females are still restrained by rigid, lingering preconceptions of their "proper role." As a concerned father, Rev. Boles asked his fifth-grade daughter what musical instrument she wanted to play in the school orchestra. She wanted to play the drums, but someone had told her, "Girls don't play drums. Only boys play drums." Rev. Boles assured her she could play drums.

Across the Protestant denominations, women clergy still struggle for acceptance. They have greater difficulty finding employment, are more likely to be part-time, and are too frequently paid less for equal work.

"We have a long way to go before we can celebrate full equality in ordination and ministry." The Church should mirror "the beloved community which Jesus proclaimed," not our society with its faults and prejudices. Boles reminded IUMHS's members, "Where anyone suffers, all suffer. When anyone is set free, all become free.."

Why Not a Drummer?

Rev. Jean Brindel

The Rev. Jean Brindel reported an experience comparable to that encountered by Rev. Howard Boles' young daughter. In childhood, Jean Brindel proclaimed her desire to be a pastor. A friend informed her that only men are preachers – Jean Brindel's "Only boys play drums" moment. When Jean responded by saying, "Then what can I do?" she was informed she could be a missionary or work with the choir or Sunday School. Jean then said, "Oh!" and moved on to her first goal.

Given her ancestry, a person would expect Rev. Jean Brindel to make history in 1977 by becoming the first woman to be ordained by the North Indiana Conference. She follows in the footsteps of Amanda Way, the first woman licensed to preach in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, a woman who, after being licensed by her uncle's Farmland Church in 1875, so followed her passion to preach that when the Cincinnati General Conference of 1877 voted to lift that license Amanda returned to her ancestral Society of Friends, where she was allowed to preach. Amanda Way's great grandparents were Jean Brindel's great great grandparents. Rev. John Moorman, Amanda's uncle and pastor of that forward-looking Farmland Church, was Jean Brindel's great uncle. Amanda Way, who was also the State President of the Temperance League in her time, smashed many whiskey barrels in Winchester, Indiana. She was just as forceful as the first president of the Indiana Suffrage movement. Such an ancestry had to assert itself in Jean Brindel.

Rev. Brindel retraced several points made by Howard Boles. She reinforced the point that Mary Magdalene was personally selected by Jesus to proclaim the Resurrection. As Rev. Brindel puts the matter, "If that's not ordination, I don't know what is."

Rev. Brindel pointed out that Susanna Wesley took her husband's pulpit when he was in London. Rev. Brindel then updated the record, introducing the name of Rev. Ellen Studley of Mishawaka, the first woman ordained in the Northwest Conference under Bishop Raines in 1956. "She was known as a great preacher." Rev. Brindel added, too, the name of Rev. Gusta Robinett of Columbia City, Indiana, the first woman in the world to be appointed to the position of district superintendent

Women have been doing ministry since the Resurrection. Indiana, particularly, has been a hotbed for women in ministry. "Every woman in this [meeting] room does ministry," Brindel told the audience members. Then, expanding her encouragement to an egalitarian scope matching the beloved community Jesus proclaimed, Rev. Jean Brindel closed by saying, "Women and young men should look at ministry [as a vocation]." That statement opened the floor to discussion by the conferees.

Continuing to Make It Happen

If the reader desires to keep open opportunities for women clergy, the North Indiana Conference offers a way to both honor the lifework of a clergywoman (to remember her name) and continue educational events and resources for those still building their careers.

To celebrate the gift of the ordination of women, the "I Remember Her Name" Scholarship Fund has been established. Donations may be mailed to the North Indiana Conference United Methodist Church, "I Remember Her Name" Scholarship, P.O. Box 869, Marion, Indiana 46952-0869. Make checks payable to: North Indiana Conference, "I Remember Her Name" Scholarship.

Historical Map Proposed

Opening the business session of the 2006 annual meeting of IUMHS, President John Baughman announced that the society is now incorporated under its new name of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society. President Baughman stated he would next like to set it up so that contributions to the society would be tax-free. Mr. Baughman issued a call to any Methodist lawyer who would be willing to help in pursuing tax exemption for gifts to the society.

Throughout the meeting, President Baughman urged activating the membership and the organization. "We need a liaison with what's out there. The women's society has historians. And we need to form a liaison with churches celebrating anniversaries. There are contacts to be made!" Additionally, President Baughman stressed, "We need to offer more than two newsletters a year and one annual meeting."

As if in answer to his own remonstrance, under new business Dr. Baughman introduced the idea of producing a map of Methodist historical sites located throughout Indiana. The motion for creating a committee to produce such a map was vigorously approved.

During the meeting, Bill Bartelt introduced a slate of officers selected for 2006-2007. These nominees were approved by the membership. The officers for the current year are:

President – John Baughman
Vice-president – James Gentry
Secretary – Phil Williams
Treasurer – Lois Shelton
Membership chairperson – Donna Dyer

Our Record Keepers

Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism opened September 14, 1951, under the direction of Worth M. Tippy, its archivist, and A. W. Crandall, his assistant. The archives occupied a single room in the Administration Building of DePauw University. Initially, the entire collection comprised all the materials from the (Methodist) Indiana Conference Archives and also some material from the North Indiana and Northwest Indiana Conferences.

In 1956, the archives moved to two rooms in East College on the DePauw campus; and the following year Eleanor Cammack was made their director. Two years later, in 1959, the archives moved to the basement of the Roy O. West Library, placing them, literally and figuratively, under the library's direction.

In the "vault," older and more valuable materials were kept under lock and key. These materials included early quarterly conference minutes; early membership, marriage, and death records of circuits and stations; the original conference journals of the ME Church, as well as those for all the Indiana conferences of that church; and the earliest records of Indiana Asbury University (DePauw University).

As the reputation of the archives grew under Worth M. Tippy, Eleanor Cammack, and her successors, David Olson, David Horn and Wesley Wilson, so too did the acquisitions, enlarging to include the diaries and notebooks of circuit riders and the papers of past presidents of Indiana Asbury University.

The archives moved briefly to temporary quarters in 1986, when Roy O. West Library was being renovated, then returned to spacious new quarters on the second floor of the library. A redesigned reading room for researchers opened, now well lighted and quite user friendly. A separate work area for staff with a dark room and microfilm copying facility enlarged the archivist's professional capabilities.

Adapted from "Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism," Historical Bulletin Insert No. 53, prepared for the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Bicentennial Coordinating Committee and the Indiana United Methodist Bicentennial, 2000-2001, by John R. Riggs, Archives Researcher, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism.

"a full procession of clergywomen"

As the Clergywomen's Consultation began this summer in Chicago, we found ourselves singing once more: "I can feel it, feel the movement. The women must be gathering."

What is it about the Clergywomen's Consultation that fills the soul and re-energizes ministry? How is it that an every four-year event can sustain the spirit in such a way that the moment it draws to a close I am already anticipating the next one?

A wise young probationary member from the Detroit Conference answered those questions in part when she told the more than 1,500 gathered at the 2006 International Clergywomen's Consultation that in order to do ministry you have to see yourself in ministry. Then, she peered into the congregation to observe that, in this setting, she was seeing herself.

Like many around me, I turned to look at the other women gathered around. This is it, I thought; this is the connection that I long for -- the connection that comes once every four years. I am worshipping with my peers, those who truly are my peers. Women who have heard and heeded God's call on their lives, who have struggled to make their voices heard, who have discovered the exquisite joys and intense sorrows of ministry were turning to face God as one. It was full of spontaneous energy, laughter and tears. Every moment was, well, a moment.

There were moments of pride for women who have paved the way – a full procession of clergywomen ordained in the first 20 years. There were moments of joy for women who follow them – a strong contingent of newer clergywomen rounding out and surrounding those of us who have been at it for some time.

There were moments of anguish for women who did not enter ordained ministry – unknown and unnamed, women who were told that there is no place for clergywomen in ministry.

It was not long into the first worship service before every breath was an inhaling of gratitude for clergywomen who have shown us the way and an exhaling of grief for others who could not find their way. The gathering and the women were transformed.

I still feel it – the movement of clergywomen around me. This year, the 50th year of our right to be ordained as full clergy members in the United Methodist Church, I am moved, transformed, humble and proud. Moved to be a part of a long, courageous line of women. Transformed by the promise of the women who are filling our church. Humble to be serving with clergy sisters and brothers who have been obedient to God's call. Proud to be a clergywoman.

Thanks be to God for those who have gone before us, for those who are with us and for those yet to come. Thanks be to God for clergywomen everywhere!

Cyndi Alte
Indianapolis

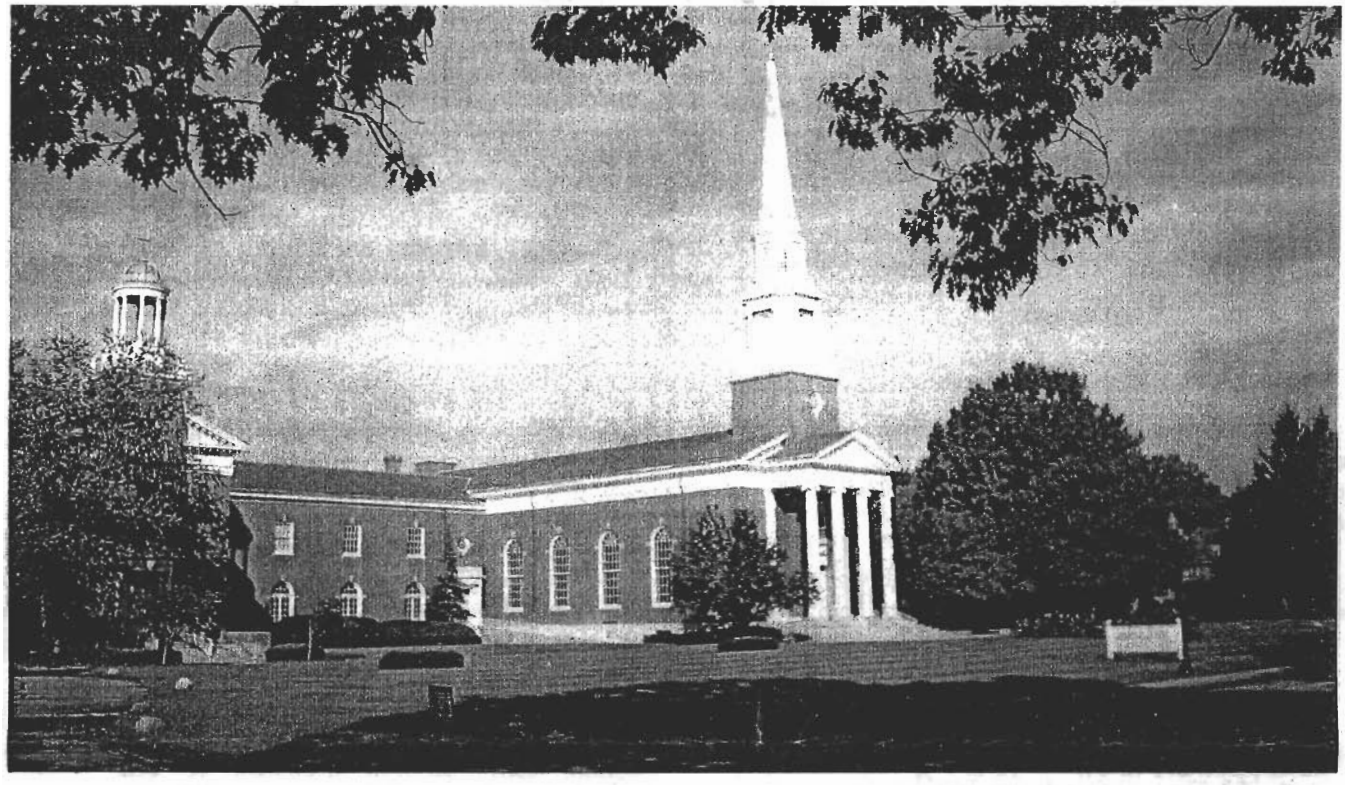
Reprinted from "Reflections on the Clergywomen's Consultation" (original title caption), letter to the editor, *Hoosier United Methodists Together*, volume 36, number 7 (September 2006), page 3.

History Can Be Heard

The first woman to receive full clergy rights from the Methodist Church can be heard. Rev. Dr. Maud Keister Jensen, a longtime missionary to Korea, expresses her thoughts about her ordination through an audio file online at http://www.gcah.org/Jensen.htm.

This audio file was prepared by the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History. Dedicating a page to Maud Keister Jensen was, according to archivist L. Dale Patterson, a way to personalize the 50th anniversary celebration of that historic vote which allowed Rev. Dr. Maud Keister Jensen's ordination.

Concluding the Story of Wesley Chapel



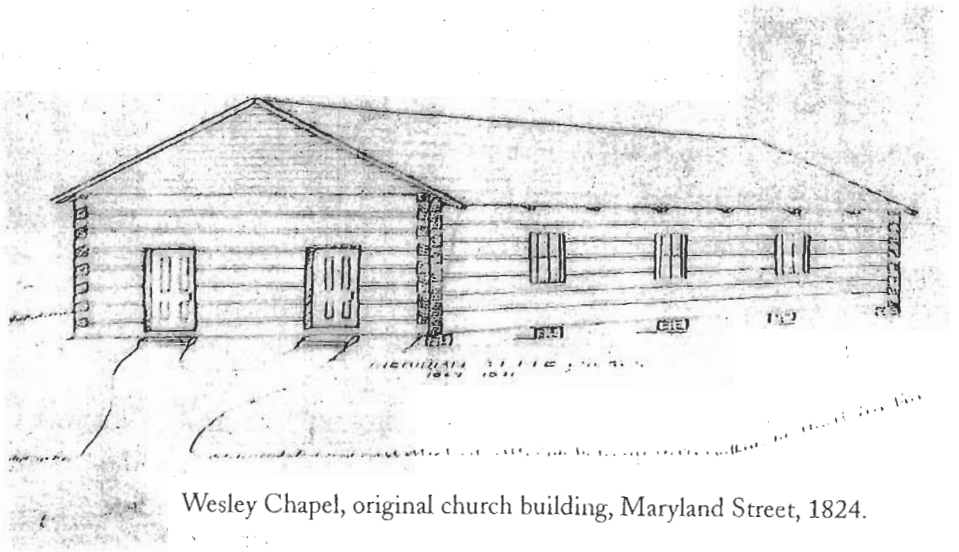
Meridian Street United Methodist Church

The second annual meeting of IUMHS will be held on April 28, 2007, at Meridian Street United Methodist Church, the other church which was born out of Wesley Chapel, the first religious congregation of any kind in the town of Indianapolis, that first church and Indianapolis having both been founded in 1821.

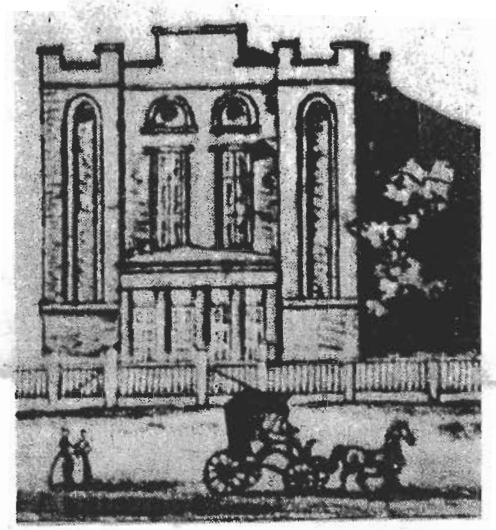
Having first met in Isaac Wilson's log cabin, the congregation of what would become Wesley Chapel established a church and school on Maryland Street in 1825. Then, in 1829, the congregation moved to what is now Monument Circle. The church took the name Wesley Chapel after 1842. The steward would blast his horn, summoning worshippers and declaring the chapel's presence to a growing city.

Changes in worship were divisive. Those who were to form Roberts Park MEC objected to instrumental music and choir singing. Those who remained with Wesley Chapel, which became Meridian Street MEC, accepted instruments and choirs. Friction was resolved by authorizing a second Methodist church, an Eastern charge, or Roberts Park, only steps away from the Western Charge, or Wesley Chapel.

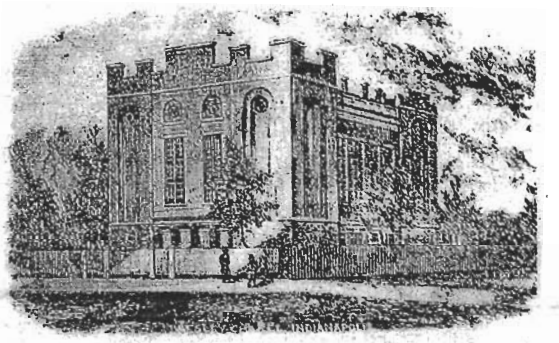
Throughout subsequent moves along Meridian Street, the street from which the church took its name in 1871, Meridian Street MEC remained fruitful and influential. As Charles E. Coffin has written, "[a]t one time this congregation included both U.S. Senators, the Vice President of the United States, the Governor of Indiana, and the Federal Judge of the District of Indiana." That governor also became a candidate for President of the United States on the Prohibitionist Party ticket. Bishops who have served at times as pastors of Meridian Street include Edward Ames, Reuben Andrus, Thomas Bowman, William Quayle, and Leroy Hodapp. Meridian Street pastors Thomas Bowman, Reuben Andrus, and Lucien Berry all became presidents of Indiana Asbury University (now DePauw University)



Wesley Chapel, original church building, Maryland Street, 1824.



The Wesley Chapel
S.W. Corner of the Circle, 1842



Second Methodist Church on the Circle, 1846–1869.

The Circle looking west on Market from Pennsylvania Street. Left to right: Wesley Chapel, Governor's Mansion, Second Presbyterian Church, Christ Church.