



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Westminster Presbyterian Congregation Celebrating 125 Years of Faithfulness

Westminster Presbyterian Church's 125th anniversary celebration is about faithfulness -- not only on the part of generations of families who have called the local congregation home, but also about God's faithfulness in seeing this family of Christians through 125 years of growth and challenges.

Along with being a nostalgic observance and opportunity for reflection, Westminster members and Pastor David Cook are hoping that the event will also launch another 125 years of faithful service to God and God's blessings on the people of Westminster.

According to genealogy buff Jim Sterrett, who delved into the church's history as part of the anniversary celebration preparation, Westminster's history actually begins long before 1875, when a group traveled to Philadelphia to purchase land on which to build a church. The first log church was built at Glebe [along Swamp Road, outside of Mifflintown], with construction halted as a result of skirmishes with the local Indians. In 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War, construction was completed and

On July 11, 1879, the church building at the corner of Main and North streets was damaged by a tornado and rendered unfit for use. On August 5, the Mifflintown congregation decided to lease the Doughmann property on Washington Avenue and erected a chapel.

Rev. L.Y. Hays was the pastor when the present church building was constructed, at a cost of \$17,000. A dedication service was held January 23, 1887, at which time Rev. Hays "presented the question of the extinguishment of the church debt," which stood at \$2,400.

According to newspaper accounts of the time, under Rev. Hays' skillful presentation, the questioned subscriptions [donations] rolled in so quickly that within a half hour the debt was paid off.

On the Thursday evening preceding the dedication service, the church's organ committee held a recital to introduce the church's magnificent new pipe organ into service. A basic admission fee of 50 cents was charged, with reserved seats going for 75 cents. Recital performers included a quartet of singers and an

with a service Friday, September 29, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Among those participating will be Pastor Cook and former pastor Louise Reynolds, along with several of the church's officers. Elder Russ Gobeille will share the church's history, and Elder Nonine Cranston will lead a hymn sing. Other special music will be provided by a chamber trio.

A Saturday evening service, from 7:00 to 8:30, will include music by the Shirk Quartet and other musical selections, the recognition of church generations, a hymn sing and a display of church memorabilia. Those attending are invited to wear old-fashioned garb. Refreshments will be served following the service.

Friday and Saturday celebrations lead up to the big day on Sunday, when worship will begin one-half hour earlier than usual, at 10:00 a.m. [with no Sunday school]. Sis Stump and Ruth Welsh will perform a piano-organ duet and other special music will be provided by vocalist Vic Primak, Rev. and Mrs. David Miller, Joy Shirk and Ben Marasco.

Pastor Cook will serve his first communion to the congregation dur-