

Advent Tour of Homes
December 6, 2008
The Background of Westminster Presbyterian Church
1765 – 2008

Presbyterians have been worshipping in this part of Pennsylvania for a long time. The first records of Presbyterian worship refer to the Cedar Spring congregation, located some two miles north of the Juniata River. As time passed and the needs of the church changed we have worshipped in a number of different buildings.

Our first houses of worship were log structures. Time and decay have taken their toll so that today we cannot locate those structures. The first permanent building was known as the old stone church. It was located in the corner of the Westminster Cemetery at Main and North Streets. Today if you visit that corner of the cemetery you probably can make out the outline of parts of the foundation from that place of worship. The Pennsylvania legislature assisted in the building of the stone church by authorizing a lottery with the proceeds to finance construction. However, the lottery was never held, though apparently a few of the lottery tickets are still in existence.

By 1840 the congregation had erected "the old brick church" across from the cemetery and on the same street corner. We worshipped there until 1879. That building has gone through some remarkable modifications and today is a large two family structure.

The decade of 1875 to about 1885 was a time of great turmoil for our congregation which led to the construction and dedication of our present building in January 1887.

As the Presbyterian population increased, especially near the Juniata River, the Presbyterian congregation of Cedar Spring decided to worship in two locations, one just outside of McAlisterville and the one in the corner of the cemetery. However, both places of worship were governed by a single Session. Because of the distance involved the pastor could only preach on Sunday in one of the two buildings. Our church had the legal name of "The Presbyterian Congregation of Cedar Spring comprising the congregations of Mifflin and Lost Creek."

In 1875 the Mifflintown worshippers petitioned the Presbytery of Huntingdon to split the church into two congregations, the Mifflintown Presbyterian Church and the