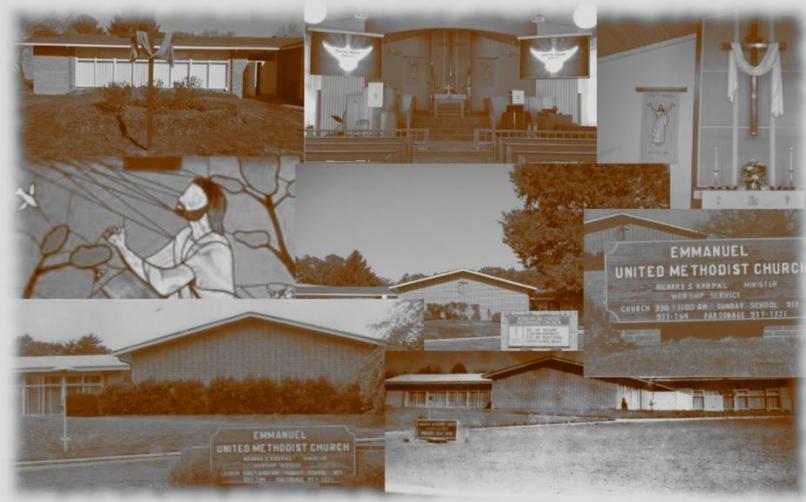


The History of Emmanuel UMC



In June 1836, Evan and Verlinda Beall Shaw sold one acre of land to five Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church (\$5 a person) for the purpose of building a structure for worship. This land was part of the Shaw plantation, located in Beltsville. The church was named Ebenezer Meeting House and stood at the northeast corner of the intersection of what is now Gunpowder Road and Powder

Mill Road. The late Miss Susie Beall recorded in her writings the following: “The church building was a small log structure with a gallery across the rear of the church. The plantation slaves sat in the gallery which was reached by an outside ladder. A small graveyard surrounded the church. Some stones were still standing after 1900. The cemetery contained whites of the community and slaves. The congregation was led by Circuit Riders and later by the father of Marcellus Roby.”

Today this land belongs to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and about a dozen graves are marked only by field stones.

From 1842 to 1848, Ebenezer was part of the Bladensburg Circuit. Ebenezer and more than a dozen other churches were probably part of the Bladensburg Circuit before 1842.

Evan Shaw’s will, dated January 1857, stated that his slaves were to be freed and were to inherit his plantation at his and his wife’s death. Mr. Shaw died in 1858 and his wife, Verlinda, died a few years later.

Land records from 1866 show that the slaves sold 100 acres of the plantation, and in 1877 they sold the remaining acres. This included the one acre of land where Ebenezer Meeting House stood and the surrounding cemetery. No record has been found showing that the Baltimore Conference has ever claimed the one-acre purchased by the trustees in 1836.

In the 1860s, a new church, Worthington Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church South, was built about one and a quarter miles east of Ebenezer Meeting House.

In 1869, Reverend William McDonald was appointed, and the church was partially completed. This first church, of brick construction, was called Worthington Chapel, M.E.C., South. It was finally completed in 1874, while Reverend Samuel Haddaway was the pastor. In 1892, while Eldridge V. Register was the pastor in Beltsville, Worthington Chapel was torn down, and a larger church was built in a more accessible location on Prince George's Avenue. Much of the old material of Worthington Chapel was used in the building of the new church. In

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November 1893, the new church renamed Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church, South was completed and dedicated.

In 1939, with the unification of the Methodist Protestant, Methodist Episcopal, and Methodist Episcopal, South, the name of the church became Emmanuel Methodist Church.

By the late 1800s, the Beltsville Circuit had included, from time to time, Four Corners (Marvin), Layhill, Colesville, Whitfield, Magruders School House, Laurel (South), and Branchville. It was not until the pastorate of Wilber Wilson in June 1950 that Beltsville and Branchville (College Park United Methodist Church) each became a station. In March 1953, a new parsonage was purchased at 11305 Cedar Lane for \$18,750.

In May 1957, the Board of Trustees took an option on 4.068 acres of land on Cedar Lane to build a new church. In December 1957, the land was purchased for \$16,000. Plans for the new church included a complex of three buildings. The first building was to contain a multi-purpose room, lounge, kitchen, and offices. The second building was to be an Education Building, and the third was to be the sanctuary.

The first building was completed in January 1961 for \$160,640. The first worship service was held January 22, 1961. The first building of the newly located church contained a multi-purpose room, which was used for worship services, Sunday School classes, and many social activities. The pews from the old church were moved into this room but were not attached to the floor, to allow them to be moved for the many activities. The building also contained a lounge, a large kitchen, and a large room in the southwest wing, which was used for the primary grades of the Sunday School. Other Sunday School classes were held in the lounge, kitchen, and boiler room.

A groundbreaking service for an Education Building was held on October 17, 1965. The cost of this building was \$175,075. It contained 11 classrooms, a lounge, library, and nursery. Following the merger of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren in 1968, the church was renamed Emmanuel United Methodist Church.

In the late 1970s, several surveys of the congregation revealed that the majority agreed that the building of a separate sanctuary was not feasible in the foreseeable future. During 1979-1980, the multi-purpose room was renovated and became the sanctuary.

In 2009, the church added its first stained glass window, which overlooks Todd's Terrace from the East side of the sanctuary.

With appreciation to the Committee on Records and History, this history reflects excerpts from its booklet, "150 Years of Methodism in Beltsville, Maryland."