



Toughkenamon United Presbyterian Church

From Ann Hagerty's Book "Once Upon A Time in New Garden Township"



The church circa early 1900s.

Photo: New Garden Historical Commission

In the Fall of 1875, a group of earnest Christian people felt the need for a Sunday School in the Village and met on November 30 for the purpose of starting one. A few days later, 72 people congregated in one of the rooms of the wheelwright shop to signal the organization of a Sunday School open to all, irrespective of denomination, and not affiliated with any church. The next year, William R. Bingham, Pastor of Avondale Presbyterian Church, and Rev. John B. Randall of Lincoln University held preaching services every two weeks. Ground was broken for a Chapel in October 1876, and the builder, Isaac Larkin, was paid \$2141.34 for his work when the building was completed in

May of the following year. After Larkin was paid, 90¢ remained in the building fund which was used to install hitching posts in front of the Church. The Sunday School met in its own house of worship for the first time on June 3, 1877.

The Presbytery named it "The Toughkenamon Mission" in 1885, and it was made a part of Unionville Church. This Sunday School and Mission Church were the forerunners of today's Church. Under the leadership of Rev. E. A. McLaury, the Presbytery was petitioned for a separate Church, independent of Unionville. As a result, the "Toughkenamon Presbyterian Church" was formally organized on April 23, 1888, and ministers came to the village to live and work. The Church began with thirteen members. Three were ruling Elders: Milton Strahorn, J. Edwin Humes, and James M. Yeatman. The other original members were: Rebecca P. Humes, Heannah G. Lacklin, Anna M. Strahorn, Mary J. Strahorn, Emma J. Scott, Maggie McKay, Lizzie M. Pierce, Lizzie Jeanes, Sarah Hughes, and Margaret Strahorn. When Rev. McLaury left the next year, Church membership had increased to 22. Rev. James McLeod followed him and served until ill health forced him to retire, and a succession of ministers ensued.

The oldest organization within the Church is the Women's Missionary Society dating from 1880, when it was known as the Toughkenamon Mission Band. Mrs. Sara L. Scott, a church member from almost its beginning, long talked of a manse. Failing to get any response from the Church, Mrs. Scott at the age of 80, started her own Manse Fund in the name of the Church. She stitched and sold apron upon apron, and when she passed away in June 1959 at age 89, there was \$2294.83 in the Fund. The down payment on the Manse stands as a perpetual memorial to her.



The church today 2015. Visit: www.tkpchurch.com

Photo: New Garden Historical Commission