

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The foundation of the present congregation was laid in 1831, under the superintendence of Rev. J. G. Sanson. At that time a class of persons was formed at the house of John Lucas, three miles west of the borough of Indiana. Samuel Douglas, John Lucas, Polly Lucas, Mrs. Coulter, Mrs. Stewart and Samuel Douglas were appointed elders.

The society continued to meet at the above named place for several years, holding an official connection with the Conemaugh and Cambria mission. In 1832, in accordance with the itinerate plan, Rev. Wm. Butt was appointed to the charge of the mission, with Rev. John Coil as his assistant. In February, 1834, a quarterly meeting was held in the United Presbyterian Church, in the borough, at which time considerable religious interest was manifested and a number added to the church. In the summer of 1834 the mission was divided and a new circuit formed to be called Indian, with Rev. Thomas Thompson for its pastor. He was succeeded in 1835, by Rev. Ellis St. Worthington, whose term of service expired in the summer of 1836.

Preaching service had generally been held in the old court house, but several families of Methodist persuasion having located here in the years 1837-8, it was deemed advisable to build a church, and a meeting was called for the purpose of taking the matter into consideration, at which the following persons were present: Rev. John Coil, pastor of the circuit, A. C. Hall, Wm. L. Fenton, Robert Craig and several others whose names have been forgotten. A building committee was appointed consisting of Robert Craig, Edward Nixon, John Lucas and William Fenton. The lot was purchased from the executors of Thomas Sutton for \$50. The carpenter work was done by W. H. Coleman. The building was completed in 1841, and the first sermon was preached by Rev. D. B. Campbell. Rev. J. R. Means was the next pastor sent by conference to the place.

From the summer of 1836 to July, 1843, embracing a period of about seven years, the congregation was favored successively with the services of Revs. G. D. Kinnear, Harvey Bradshaw, Simon Elliott, John Coil, Isaac McCluskey, David Gordon, John L. Williams, James M. Graham, Joseph Shaw, Caleb Foster and David S. Welling.

At the session of the Pittsburgh annual conference in July, 1843, Rev. J. G. Sanson was appointed presiding elder, and Rev. A. G. Gallaher preacher in charge, with Rev. R. G. White for his colleague. The latter succeeded to the office of senior preacher in the following year, having for his colleague, Rev. R. W. Barnes.

From 1845 to 1852, the following ministers named are recorded in connection with the congregation, viz: John White, George Cranage, Edward B. Griffith, M. L. Weekly, Daniel A. Haines, Joseph Woodruff, D. B. D. Coleman, Joseph Shaw, Hugh Montgomery, D. B. Campbell, James R. Means and A. J. Lane.

In 1853, the congregations of Indiana and Homer were struck off, and constituted a separate charge. Rev. Joseph Horner was appointed pastor, and about thirty persons were added to the church during his ministry.

He was succeeded the following year by Rev. T. J. Higgins, his successor being Rev. H. L. Chapman.

In May 1857, Rev. J. S. Bracken was appointed to this charge. After the expiration of two years he was succeeded by Rev. S. Burt. The dates of appointment of the successive ministers have been as follows: 1861, M. W. Dallas; 1867, J. B. Uber; 1869, A. B. Leonard; 1871, M. B. Pugh; 1872, M. J. Sleffy; 1875, John A. Danks; and September, 1877, the present pastor, Homer J. Smith.

In the 1833 the official board consisted of the following laymen, viz: James Wakefield, John Wakefield, John M. Trego, Henry Baker, Jonathan Doughty, Thomas Laird, William Dickey, Samuel Douglass, William Bracken and F. Lydie: Samuel Douglass represented Indiana.

In 1843, we find the following additional names in the official list for Indiana: William L. Fenton, John Lucas and A. C. Hall.

In 1859, the board comprised the following names: Edward Nixon, James E. Coulter, William H. Coleman, Joseph Shepard, William C. Boyle, James Fenton and Joshua Shepard. There were one hundred and fifty members, including probationers, in communion with the church. Also a flourishing Sabbath school of eighty scholars and teachers was connected with the congregation.

The congregation for several years had no house for the public worship of their own, but occupied the Court House until 1839, when the erection of the edifice now known as the Armory Hall was commenced. The building was completed in the following year.

The *Register* of November 27, 1859, says: "The church is located at the west end of Water street. It is 40 by 55 feet, and has fifty-six pews on its floor. It has neither bell or portico, but silently stands its own

representative until it shall go the way of all the earth. The brick and stone work was done by William brown, of Blairsville; the carpenter work by Capt. James Sloan, of this borough; and the plastering by a stranger.

The property was settled in the hands of the following persons, who were appointed trustees: John Fenton, Wm. Fenton, Andrew Hall, Robert Craig and John Lucas.

The arrangements for the building the present church edifice were commenced under the pastorate of Mr. Sleffy in 1874, but the subscription was made during the administration of Mr. Danks in 1875, and the work of construction commenced that year.

The plans were prepared in the spring by J. W. Drum, architect, of Pittsburgh, and the contract awarded to J. P. Leach, of Indiana, Pa., on the 4th day of August, for the consideration of \$15,500. The cost of excavating, seating, gas fitting, &c., to be paid by the church. The lot was purchased from Mr. B. B. Tiffany for the sum of \$2,000. The corner stone was laid on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 5, 1875, the ceremony being witnessed by a large concourse of people. The ministers who participated in the ceremonies were: Rev. B. F. Brooke, D. D., of Christ Church, Pittsburgh; Rev. J. F. Core, of Greensburg; Rev. H. C. Beacom, of Johnstown; Rev. J. C. Johnson, Rev. A. P. Leonard, and Rev. John A. Danks, pastor in charge. Addresses were delivered by Dr. Brooke and Rev. Core. The corner stone is the second one in the buttress at the northeast end at the building. A box containing the following articles was placed under it: Bible, hymn book, Church Discipline, copies of all the county papers, Pittsburgh Leader, and Christian Advocate, Ladies' Repository, Church Almanac for 1875, Minutes of Pittsburgh Conference (1875), copy of the original specifications, copy of Boston Gazette printed in 1770, names of architect, contractor, trustees, building committee, stewards, officers of Sabbath school, name of pastor in charge when the project was commenced, M. J. Sleppy; name of pastor at present in charge, J. A. Danks.

The board of trustees was composed of J. B. Campbell, Geo. Rink, D. Ellis, E. C. Jamison, A. C. Boyle, T. M. Coleman, D. Mullen.

The board of stewards was: E. C. Jamison, J. H. Flude, W. R. Black, L. Keslar, jun., A. S. Cunningham, C. A. McHenry.

The building committee consisted of J. B. Campbell, D. Ellis, George Rink, D. Mullen, A. C. Boyle, W. R. Black, J. McFarland, Sarah Sansom and N. J. Lucas.

The building was completed November 1, 1876, and was dedicated Sunday, January 21, 1877, by Bishop M. Simpson, assisted by Revs. I. C. Pershing, D. D.; L. H. Bugbee, D. D.; M. J. Sleppy, J. F. Cor, J. T. Riley, George Orbin, A. H. Miller, Jno. McIntire, D. K. Stevenson, Solomon Keibler and A. C. Coleman.

The morning sermon was preached by Bishop Simpson, and made a deep and lasting impression. Dr. Pershing announced that the church cost \$20,000, \$11,000 of which had been subscribed, and that it was the intention to raise the remaining \$9,000 during the day. The subscription was started by J. B. Campbell \$1,000; the Ladies' Aid Society, \$1,000; A. S. Cunningham and John Duncan, each \$500; J. McFarland, \$400, followed by many others with smaller amounts. The service continued until two o'clock. The conference trio sang "The Mists Have Cleared Away," the congregation joined in the Doxology, and the Bishop pronounced the benediction.

Another large audience assembled at 3:30 to hear Dr. Bugbee, at which time some \$300 was subscribed. Services were again held at seven o'clock. The sermon was by Dr. Pershing, after which he announced that \$1.100 were yet needed to make up the required amount. More that this sum was raised, swelling the subscriptions of the day to \$10,500. The basket collections were \$261 additional.

A protracted service was commenced the day following dedication, which continued for some weeks, during which the Holy Spirit worked among the people, and many wanderers were brought in.

Two year's time had been given on the larger subscriptions, so that the last payment was made under the administration of Rev. H. J. Smith in 1878, at which time the church was entirely freed from debt.

The church, at this time (February, 1880), has a membership of 350, and a Sabbath school of 150. The church boards are composed of the following persons: Trustees – J. B. Campbell, D. Ellis, T. M. Coleman, George Ring, J. McFarland, Thomas Lonman, J. A. Bell. Stewards – J. McFarland, W. R. Black, A. S. Cunningham, J. B. Marshall, A. C. Boyle, C. A. McHenry, Jno. Truby, D. McLaughlin and Henry Hall.