



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN

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PRESS RELEASE

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First UMC Hosts Community Celebration in Honor of 205th Anniversary

BLAIRSTOWN, NJ – (Friday, September 9) – How does one celebrate over two centuries of ministry in the community? By inviting the community to a BIG celebration! The First United Methodist Church of Blairstown will host a community celebration (AKA big bodacious birthday bash) in honor of their 205th year of ministry at the church on Saturday, October 8, 2016 from 1-9 p.m. The celebration will include live music, chicken barbecue, children’s activities, exotic animals, and various vendors from the community.

“This faith community has been a part of the fabric of Blairstown and surrounding towns for over two hundred years,” says Rev. David Tillisch, pastor of First UMC, “that’s something we want to celebrate with our friends and neighbors.”

The church began as a Methodist Assembly in 1811. At that time they were only a small gathering of families, probably meeting in homes or schoolhouses, and served by traveling preachers called Circuit Riders. It wasn’t until 1838 that the congregation was large enough to construct a church.

“As local lore tells it,” Tillisch says, “John I. Blair wanted to build a church in Blairstown. Being a Presbyterian, he first consulted with the Newton Presbytery, but they didn’t feel a church was necessary, so he went to the Methodists, who were more than happy to build one.”

“This has caused great confusion through the years,” remarks Tillisch. “We keep missing our centennial observances by five years, because the cornerstone says 1838, but the assembling of people that started the church began in 1811.”

In 1955, a fire destroyed the second sanctuary that stood on Old Academy Dr., just across from the Blairstown Post Office. A decision was made to sell the property and relocate the church to Stillwater Road to allow for a larger facility and more parking. The current building was dedicated in 1957, and has served the community ever since.

Throughout the centuries, the people of the First UMC of Blirstown have gathered to worship, learn, and serve the people of Blirstown and the surrounding communities. They currently operate a food pantry, host various scouting and 4-H groups, and serve as an evacuation site for the elementary school. "We are always looking for new ways to partner with individuals and organizations in our community to nurture one another and meet the needs of our citizens," says Tillisch.

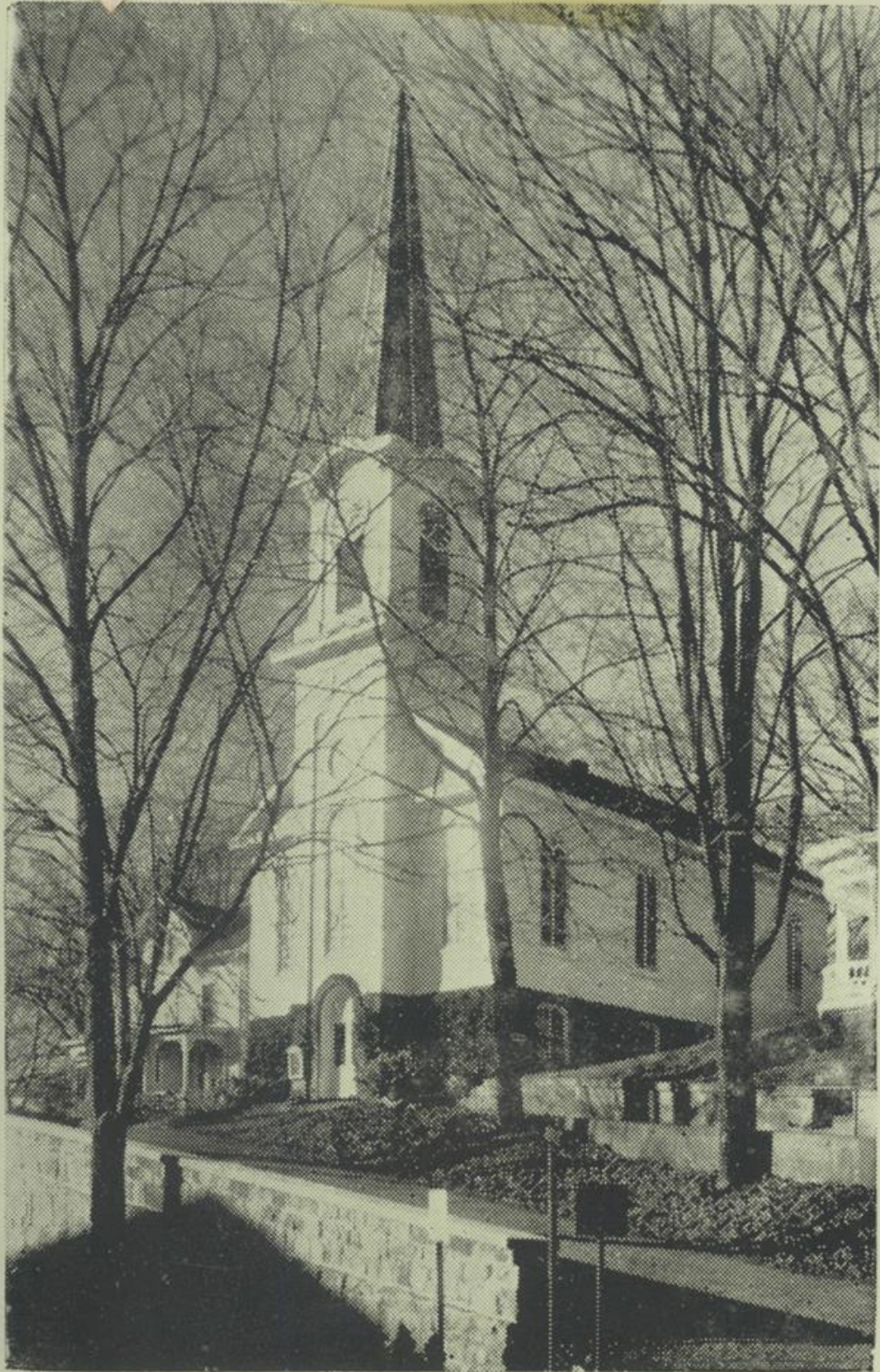
The 205th anniversary celebration is open to the public, and promises to be a fun afternoon for the entire family. Rizzo's reptile Discovery will be coming to share an exotic animal show; the Water Street band, Clinton and Blirstown UMC praise teams, and a mass choir will be providing live music; Rev. Jean McMullan from the Washington UMC will be sharing a special message; homemade barbecue chicken dinners will be available to eat in or take out from 4-7 p.m.; and many activities including a bounce house and face painting will be available for the kids.

Vendors are also invited to be a part of the festivities. 10x10 spaces are available for \$20 each. For more information, please visit the church's website at firstumcblirstown.com or call the church office at 908-362-6693.

The First United Methodist Church of Blirstown is a multi-generational community of God's children journeying together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to encourage one another in the Christian faith, grow in our relationship with God and each other through Jesus Christ, and serve as Christ's hands and feet for the people in our community. We live out this mission by nurturing our faith and relationship with God through worship, fellowship, prayer, and sacraments; serving our community and those in need through our food pantry ministry, Stephen Ministry, J.O.Y. Ministry, and other ministries of compassion; and giving voice to the marginalized and poor through acts of justice.

All are invited and welcome to join us for worship and fellowship Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.





OLD CHURCH WHICH WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1955