

## **Kingwood United Methodist Church to Celebrate Bicentennial**

Kingwood United Methodist Church, located at 257 Rt. 519, will be celebrating its bicentennial on October 2, 2016 with two services, displays and a lunch. Founded in June 1816 as Kingwood Methodist Episcopal Church, it is the oldest church in the Methodist tradition in Hunterdon County.

The land on which the historic Kingwood church stands was purchased by church trustees Thomas West, Joseph West, Jacob Hart, Darius Everitt, Christopher Snyder, Abraham Slaught and William Search for the sum of \$56.25. Services were held in the home of Thomas and Rachel West until the first church building was completed. The present building, erected in 1860, is actually the third church building to occupy that location.



“The Methodist Tradition on this location actually predates the 1816 founding of the church”, said Pastor Peter Mantell. “As early as 1787, Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury stood on a large rock about a quarter mile from the church to preach and deliver God’s message of love to the people of this area”.

For the last several decades, Kingwood UMC has become known throughout Hunterdon County and beyond for their Roast Beef Dinners. Longtime Kingwood member Kathy Bauer commented on these popular dinners, “People travel from all over New Jersey for one of our Roast Beef Dinners, some from as far away as Ocean County. We usually serve about 350 to 400+ dinners in a night.”

The Bicentennial Celebration will begin at 9:00 AM on October 2 with a traditional church service at which Rev. Fred Day, the General Secretary of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History will preach. Rev. Day is a former pastor of the Historic St. George’s United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, the oldest Methodist Church in continuous use in the United States. Also speaking at the 9:00 service will be Dr. Bud Meyers, the fifth-great grandson of Rev. Amos Mercelles, a pastor of the church in the 1820s. Dr. Meyers will present some fascinating family and church history. Following the 9:00 AM service, communion will be offered at the “Pulpit Rock”, the sight on which Bishop Asbury preached in 1787.

Lunch, provided by Union Barbecue of Ringoes, will be available to everyone back at the church, where displays showing the history of the church as well as special music will be available.

Rev. Mantell is excited about celebrating this milestone in the church. “Kingwood is a small church, but its members are loving people who just want to demonstrate God’s unconditional love

to our community. The history of this church is a demonstration of how important community is as so many have come here over the years to keep this church going for as long as it has. As we have been so blessed to be a part of Kingwood for two hundred years, we hope that members of the community will come celebrate with us.”

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