



# UNION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*In Brookline -*



*Developing followers of Jesus who know, love, and serve God and our neighbors.*



Methodist Episcopal Union Church of 1833

## HISTORY

The abandoned public school on Lewis' Lane (now Earlington Road) between Kathmere and Strathmore Roads was used from 1913 to 1915 as The Brookline Union Sunday School. The people started a building fund for a church but decided to split the fund and start two churches, Temple Lutheran and Brookline Methodist.

Rev. Shirk, pastor of St. Andrew's Methodist Episcopal Church in Llanerch, persuaded the Philadelphia Methodist Missionary and Church Extension Society to purchase the abandoned school property to start a mission church. The first worship service was held on April 16, 1916. Rev. Joseph M. Fithian began in January 1917 with 14 members. The big event of 1919 was installation of electricity. In 1920, fund-raising was started to buy land on Brookline Blvd. to build a new church. Ground-breaking took place on March 18, 1922, and the first service was held in the new sanctuary on Thanksgiving Day, with the whole community invited. By 1927, when the first membership directory was printed the church had grown to 317 members.

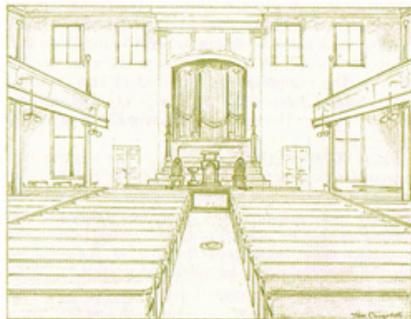
In 1945, the church was given some of the proceeds of the sale of the Union Methodist Church in Philadelphia, with the stipulation that Brookline Methodist change its name to Union Methodist Church in Brookline, to preserve the history of the Union Church which included cornerstones from 1740, 1833, and 1888. The 1740 cornerstone was from the building on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Market and Arch which was built by Benjamin Franklin for the preaching of English evangelist George Whitefield, who had been holding outdoor services in bad weather which Franklin felt was a health risk. The building was also used as a charity school to educate poor children. Benjamin Franklin became a trustee of the charity school which developed into the Philadelphia Academy and eventually became the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1769, John Wesley, founder of Methodism, sent missionaries to Philadelphia who helped start St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church at 4<sup>th</sup> and Vine Streets. In 1801, a group of members of St. George's left the church and received permission to meet in the 1740 Academy building, just two blocks away. In 1802, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania sold the building to the Methodists. The church was chartered as the Methodist Episcopal Union Church of Philadelphia. It started the first Sunday School in a Methodist Church. When the church outgrew the building, it tore down the Academy building but saved the cornerstone. Later moves to other locations in Philadelphia produced 1833 and 1888 cornerstones.



Old schoolhouse on Earlington Road, used a Brookline Methodist Episcopal church from 1916-1922 Brookline Methodist Episcopal Church, built 1922

In 1948, Union Methodist Church in Brookline built a new sanctuary with Sunday School rooms below, and an education wing was added in 1962 as the Sunday School grew. When the mortgage was paid off, a ceremony was held to light the mission lamp above the altar to remind us that we are always to be reaching out to others with the good news of the love of Jesus. When St. Andrew's Methodist Church in Llanerch closed in 2011, most of its members came to Union, connecting the circle of faith that began in 1916.



Interior of Methodist Episcopal Union Church of 1833



Methodist Episcopal Church of 1888



Brookline Methodist Episcopal Church, built 1922