

## Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

St. John's United Methodist Church  
116 S High St  
Edinburg, VA 22824



### A brief History

In the early a group of dedicated Christians met and decided to form a Methodist congregation in Edinburg. They secured the services of a minister from the Woodstock Charge and met in the little brick Union church which stood on the brow of what became known as Marston Hill. When that building was taken down, they met in the old potter's shop, which stood on Center Street. When the United Brethren built a church, they arranged with that congregation to have services in their church on Center Street. It was during this time that there was a great revival under Dr. A. P. Hyde. Miss

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Edith Miller(1872-

1955) recalled hearing his sermon on "The Valley of Dry Bones" and the great spirit of revival and the many conversions that took place as a result.

In 1858 the Trustees of the Edinburg congregation and some Trustees from the Woodstock Church purchased a lot on the corner of Main and Piccadilly Streets, but due to the unrest in the country, building was postponed. After the Civil War, in 1868, a lot was purchased for \$290.00 on the corner of High and Piccadilly streets and the church was built.

Dedicated in 1869, the church was a two-story brick building with Sunday School and other meeting rooms on the first floor, and a sanctuary on the upper floor. The building was heated with two large stoves and lit by oil lamps. The sexton would use a long step ladder to light and extinguish the lamps before and after services. The "Amen Corner" was on one side of the sanctuary and the choir sat on the other side, accompanied by a small pump organ. The belfry held a large bell, still in use today, which called people to services.

The congregation was part of the Woodstock Circuit until 1889 when Edinburg became the head of a multi-church circuit with the Rev. O.C.Beal as minister. Our sister church, Wesley Chapel, was one of the churches on that first Edinburg Circuit. We have enjoyed a very long and fruitful association with Wesley Chapel over the years and are happy to continue to be their partners in fellowship and ministry.

Rev. Beal came to Edinburg rather unexpectedly, and there was no place for him to live, so a house on High Street owned by George E. Irvin was rented. Rev. Beal was a real hustler, and soon after he was settled in his new house, he began plans for a parsonage. In just a few months, the wagon shop of W. H. Baker, on the corner of High and Piccadilly streets, was purchased and renovated to become the new parsonage.

The congregation continued to grow and after about 50 years had need of a sanctuary and more Sunday School space. The original building was taken down and a new church built on the same site, using the cornerstone from the first church. It was dedicated on May 7, An article written about the dedication in the Edinburg Sentinel said, "The building reflects credit on the contractor, on the building committee, and rank and of the membership and friends of the church, whose response to all financial demands has been prompt and liberal." In the 1990 Miss Mabel Zirkle was asked to recall what was said when the building project was undertaken. She responded,

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"same things they say today - it's too big, we'll never fill it, and we'll never pay for it." When the building was dedicated, it was completely paid for. The total cost was \$10,110,10. Over the years, additions and improvements have made St. John's both functional and beautiful, and whenever funds have been needed, the congregation has always come through.

The original parsonage was eventually sold and the present modern brick parsonage was built in 1962 on Whissen Street, on a lot given by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dinges. It was a joint effort between St. John's and our sister church, Wesley Chapel.

The first pastor to live in the new parsonage was Rev. Linwood E. Daniel, who served from 1959-1963.

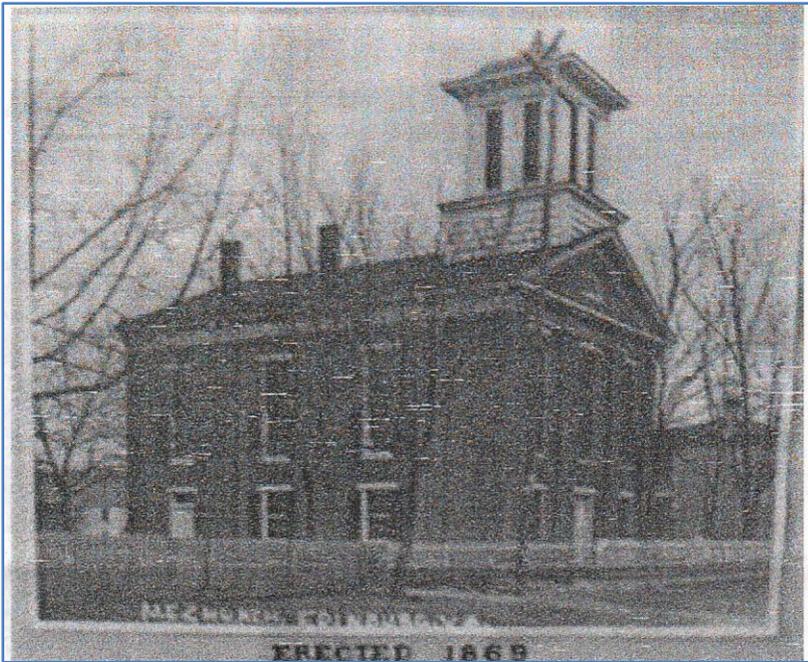
St. John's has been blessed with dedicated lay and pastoral leadership over the years. Since it's founding in 1856, it has been served by fifty-one pastors. One time member, Mrs. Sallie Coe Smith, had the distinction of having had two family members serve as pastors. Her father, Rev. H. S. Coe, served from Her brother, Rev. Benjamin Coe, served from 1952-1959. Our longest-serving pastor, Rev. Richard E. Norris, who served from 1985-1998, was also a talented musician who directed St. John's sanctuary choir as well as many community musical events.

For the past few years, St. John's has had a H.O.P.E. (Having Our People Engaged) Committee, which plans activities and opportunities for our members to be in fellowship with and service to each other and the community of Edinburg. St. John's participates in many ecumenical services and Vacation Bible School with the Edinburg Christian Church and St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Edinburg. The three churches and their pastors and congregations enjoy a good working relationship for fellowship and ministry to our community. St. John's also plays a major role in the Edinburg Time Festival each September, which is a good opportunity to acquaint the community with our church and its ministries, as well as support our town.

*Submitted by the Edinburg United Methodist Parish, August 2012*

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*The Original Church*



*The Sanctuary in 2007*

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