

Courtdale UM Church History

- In 1884, Rev. William Kealtes organized a class that met at members' homes under the name of the Pringleville Methodist Episcopal Church. Pringleville was a small village in Kingston Township that eventually became Courtdale Borough in 1897.
- Church services moved to the town school building in 1886.
- Mr. George Courtright Sr. donated a corner lot of the Courtright Farm on the main street of the town for a church to be built.
- Construction was completed in February 1888 and the dedication was held on February 5, 1888.
- Total cost was \$2,000.
- The Sunday School was formed in 1892, and a young people's group organized and became the Epworth League in 1894.
- On January 4, 1898, George Courtright Sr. deeded a lot for the church parsonage – and it was built for \$350.
- Rev. E.N. Sabin was the first minister to occupy the parsonage. He and his family moved there in 1899.
- In 1903, our church was wired for electric lights, remodeled inside and out, and some new areas were carpeted.
- Several years later, the Kingston Coal Company mines caved, and the church and parsonage were badly damaged by the settling. Once again, church services were held in the school building until the church was again ready for occupancy. The Kingston Coal Company repaired and remodeled the church and parsonage and installed a steam heating plant.
- In 1922, the Courtdale school building needed major repairs and our church served as a school until the repairs were completed.
- The church was damaged by fire in 1925, and once again the school directors offered the school for our use. The Junior Mechanics also offered their lodge hall on Center Street for church activities.
- Our church and Sunday School attendance reached its peak in the late 1920s and the 1930s. Records show an attendance of 273 members plus 22 officers and teachers for Sunday School in 1932.
- Our 50th anniversary was celebrated in 1934 with special services, social gatherings and dinners.

- On October 10, 1939, the Courtdale Methodist Episcopal Church became known as the Courtdale Methodist Church.
- The Ladies Aid Society – which formed in 1888 – has a long history of responding to any need in the church. It was joined in the 1930s by another women’s group, the Semper Fidelis Guild. The Guild had an interest in helping the church and the community and was comprised of all women in town who wanted to join regardless of church affiliation.
- The Ladies Aid Society’s name was changed in 1940 to the Women’s Society of Christian Service and it had 54 members. In 1943, a group of young working women under the leadership of Jean Bennett organized a branch of the women’s group – the Wesleyan Service Guild – that was later chartered in 1948.
- The names and dates on the memorial stained glass windows were repainted in 1955.
- The 75th anniversary of the church was celebrated in 1959.
- On May 22, 1968, our church was renamed the Courtdale United Methodist Church.
- In the summer of 1972, our church served as a home away from home for people who were displaced by Hurricane Agnes and its subsequent flooding of the Wyoming Valley.
- On September 21, 1972, the Women’s Society of Christian Service changed its name to the United Methodist Women, eventually combining all of the church’s women’s organizations.
- The United Methodist Women funded a complete renovation of the church kitchen in 1975 and also purchased a Spinet piano for the sanctuary.
- Preparations were made in August 1976 for the youth of the borough to use the church for recreation purposes providing that parents and the police were also involved. Groups including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Brownies, and Release Time Bible Classes met here.
- Our last full-time minister, Rev. Woodrow Schmoyer, moved on to another appointment in 1977. From that time forward, we have had part time and quarter time pastors.
- Rev. Charles Mock, pastor of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Wilkes-Barre, accepted an appointment in 1979 to also

serve as our pastor. He began audio recording services in 1980 to share with shut-ins unable to attend.

- The church took a leap of faith in 1980 to spend \$8,000 to repair the roof and church steeple.
- A special service was held in June 1980 to honor Mrs. Hattie Giovanis for her many years of service as organist, choir director, youth leader, and in other church activities.
- The 100th anniversary of the church was celebrated in 1984 with various events and recognitions throughout the year – including the honoring of 50 year members: Hattie Giovanis, Mary Andrews, Eleanor Sliker, Laura Morgan, Howard Craig, Ebba Kostenbauder, Carl Carlson, Luella Jones, Sam Jones, Marshall Dodson, Muriel Sennick, Jean Bennett, Martha Reilly, Wilbur Carlson, Mildred Carlson, Elva Gaughan, Erma Martin, and Reba Hale.
- A number of improvements were made to the church properties in preparation of the 100th anniversary year.