

METHODIST HERITAGE WALKING TOUR OF DOWNTOWN LANCASTER, PA



1. Start at the monument in the middle of Penn Square (Centre Square)
The earliest know Methodist preaching in the City of Lancaster occurred June 3, 1772 when Rev. Joseph Pilmoor preached to a small congregation in the old courthouse. This courthouse stood in the center of Penn Square on the site of today's Soldiers and Sailors Monument until it was razed in

1853. In 1777, Continental Congress met here on Sept. 27, making the building our nation's capitol for one day.

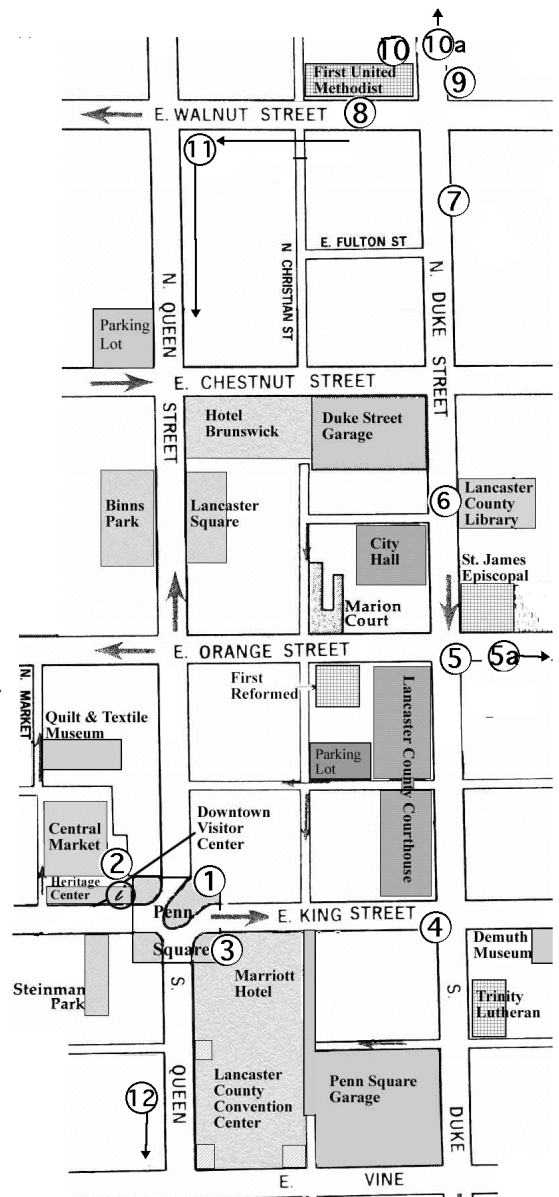
2. Move across Queen St. to the Central Market

Today's market house was built in 1889. Earlier market stalls were on this site, and under the Masonic Lodge (part of today's Heritage Center museum). The Lodge was built in 1798 on air rights over the market. Old City Hall (now the Visitor's Center) was built about 1785. Until 1812, this building was Pennsylvania's capitol. In 1803 Henry Boehm made an attempt to bring Methodism into the city when he preached from a butcher's block in the market. It's recorded that a rowdy came out of Slough's Tavern (see #3) with a brick-bat to assault the preacher. Boehm bravely stood his ground and the assailant retreated. Boehm then sang:

*Glory, honor, praise and power;
Be unto the Lamb forever;
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer;
Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!*

3. Return to the entrance of the Marriot, site of Slough's White Swan Tavern

While still on the square take time to read the various historical markers noted many significant sites. The bank in the southwest quadrant is a site of religious significance. Joseph Simon, a Jewish trader lived on the site. Around 1740 worship services were held here making it one of the oldest Jewish worship sites in America



The White Swan



In 1807, Boehm was translating *The Methodist Discipline* in German for the use of the German residents of the area. He was in Lancaster to examine the printer's proofs. Later he wrote of the visit in his *Reminiscences*:

"After I had read them, and was about to return home, it commenced raining hard, and I put up a public house where I had often stopped. The Lutherans were there in great numbers to draw a lottery, the proceeds of which were to finish a church steeple. A crowd had come together to see who was fortunate enough to obtain a prize. Feeling no interest in the result of the drawing, and annoyed by the noise and confusion of the people, I left the public house and took a walk through Lancaster to while away the time."

4. Follow Boehm's likely path. Walk 1 block east on E. King St.

At the corner of Duke St., look to the south to see the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity Lutheran (built in 1767) and the steeple that was added in 1794 and paid for by lotteries. You can visit the church see the original statues of the four apostles that were on the steeple, and later replaced with new statues. Also note the “new” courthouse (1852). First Methodist worship services were held here during a building renovation in 1874-75. Annual Conference met here in 1883.

5. Continue on Boehm’s path by walking north on Duke St.

Walk along the east side of the street and read some of the historical markers on the buildings opposite the Courthouse. Pause at the intersection of Orange St. St. James Episcopal is on the corner. Visit the courtyard to learn about numerous Colonial figures. One half block the right you will see First Presbyterian where President James Buchanan worshiped. Methodists also held worship services in First Presbyterian during a post-fire rebuilding of First Methodist around 1950. One half block left is First Reformed (U.C.C.) While all of the churches predate the Methodist church in Lancaster, only Trinity’s still worships in the same building that stood in 1807.

5a. For a longer walk, go east on Orange St.

See First Presbyterian and many Colonial period homes. In the middle of the second block, stop at the corner of Jefferson St. Here are markers on the homes of Revolutionary War diarist Christopher Marshall and Timothy Matlack, the clerk chosen by the Continental Congress to inscribe *The Declaration of Independence*. One of the buildings on the corner (we aren’t sure which one) was the home of Mrs. Maria Louisa White. While waiting for the completion of a new church building First Methodist met here around 1841. Worship took place in a large second floor “upper room” in this former inn in 1841. Family tradition has it the George Washington used the room during a visit to Lancaster.

6. Continue north to the public library on the right.

In 1807 this site was the home of Philip Benedict. Boehm continued to write:

“While going along the street I met with a woman who had been a member of the Methodist Church in Germantown. She told me there was a man by the name of Philip Benedict in Lancaster who had been awakened at a camp-meeting, and he and his wife were seeking the Lord, and she advised me to call and see them, telling me where they lived. I went to the house, pointed them to Jesus, and prayed with them. As I was about leaving, they said: “O that we could have Methodist preaching in Lancaster!” I told them they could have it. So I left an appointment to preach at his house. In a little while I formed a class of six members - Philip Benedict and his wife, and four others. This was the nucleus of the society which remained permanent. I am thankful that I had the honor of planting the tree of Methodism in that city.”

This site is where the first Methodist church began in Lancaster.

7. Continue north on Duke St.

Pause just before Walnut St. opposite 238-40 N. Duke (law offices of Haggerty & Silverman). This is the site of First Methodist’s second building (1842-1892). The present building was erected in 1892 when the old church was razed. Old photographs reveal the concrete posts and iron railing, and the balconies at the rear of the building to the right and rear of the old church were present when the church was here. In 1885 Dr. & Mrs. Henry Appenzeller went from this church to become the first Methodist missionaries to Korea.



First Methodist Episcopal, 1842-92

8. Continue north to the corner, cross Duke St. and proceed west on Walnut St.

Today’s First United Methodist was consecrated in 1892. The original building extended from the corner to just past the handicapped ramp. Additions in 1967 and 2005 extended the building to the corner of Christian St. Note some of the black stains at the top of the steeple. These remain from a fire that gutted the building in 1946. After that fire the church fathers debated joining the post-war move to suburbs.

After much deliberation they determined the church's mission was to remain a city church, a mission that has been renewed at several times since.

Across Walnut St. the row of homes stand on the site of the original church building (1809-1839). The original building was a small brick structure that stood back from the street, surrounded by a churchyard and cemetery. When the young Society of Methodists purchased the property they had to do it secretly due to strong prejudice against them. The eastern-most home in this row was erected as the church parsonage in 1854.

Note also the historical marker commemorating the formation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Unfortunately it is misplaced as the church was around the corner from this site in 1848!

9. Return to the corner, cross both Duke and Walnut Sts. proceed north opposite the church.

Pause to read the historical markers opposite the church, in front of the buildings just north of the corner. Today's church stands on the site of army barracks built to serve the military during the French and Indian Wars. During the Revolution 1000s of Hessian soldiers captured at the Battle of Trenton were held here.

Originally this face of the Church was the main entrance. Following the fire in 1946 the main entrance was moved to Walnut St. and the chancel was reversed to face west instead of east. The large stained glass window is over the chancel. It replaced the original window which was destroyed in the fire. The porched structure to the right was originally the parsonage. Today it is part of the main building.



10. Cross Duke St. at the alleyway beside the church.

The large, elevated section of the building that is in front of you as you proceed up the driveway was added in 2005. It is a multi-function space that includes a regulation-sized basketball court. This ambitious project represents the Church's most recent commitment to city ministry as it offers programs to the community. Enter the church on the left. Follow directional signs to the Sanctuary, the Appenzeller Chapel and exhibit, and the Celebration Center (the 2nd floor gym).

10a. For a longer walk, return to Duke St. and continue north on Lancaster's "Fifth Avenue"

The next several blocks have many Victorian-era mansions. Turn right at Lemon St. (one block north of Walnut) and proceed into the Lancaster Cemetery. Bear left in the cemetery past the grave of General John Reynolds, the first officer killed at Gettysburg. In 1851 the Methodists purchased the area to the left along Lime St. This replaced the Wesleyan Cemetery that was on the site of the first church on Walnut St. Among those buried there are some of Philip Benedict's family, and the Samson family. Bonam Samson was a trustee as early as 1827. In 1889 his wife, Florella participated in the groundbreaking for the new church as the congregation's oldest member.

11. To return to the Convention Center

Retrace your steps on Duke St. Or go one block west, then south Queen St. and return through a shopping district and Binns Park. Make sure to notice architecture (mostly from the nineteenth century) and historical markers.

12. Two blocks south of Penn Square at the corner of S. Queen and Farnum Sts. is St. Paul's United Methodist. This congregation began as the Southern Mission Sunday School, one of three such outreaches of the Duke St. congregation. The original building is just east of Queen St. on Farnum. It was built by First Methodist as the German Street Chapel in 1848. (German St. became Farnum St. during World War II). The St. Paul's congregation began in this building. They built a second building that still stands just south of Farnum on Queen St. The current building was erected in 1914. The East Mission became today's Christ United Methodist. The West Mission became the Lancaster Avenue church, a congregation that disbanded in 1969. It is significant these mission projects were undertaken by the Duke St. congregation during a period of extreme financial difficulty. Their debt was so great that they were at one point threatened with a sheriff's sale. Despite the problems these Lancaster Methodists of the pre-Civil War era were dedicated to spreading the Word through their city ministry. All but one of the old buildings served these three mission churches continue to serve as churches today. Several other prominent congregations began in former buildings of the Methodist mission churches, including Lancaster Church of the Brethren, Grace Evangelical, Lancaster Seventh-Day Adventist, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Bright Side Baptist, and several Pentecostal and Mennonite congregations.



The German Street Chapel, 1848

Bethel A.M.E. Church, founded in 1817, is one of the oldest A.M.E. churches in America. It is located on Strawberry St., just off S. Queen St. about 4 blocks south of the Convention Center. This is also the site of *Living the Experience*, an interactive experience to the times of the Underground Railroad.