



Rockland United Methodist Church Today-Chapel Ave

The picture to the left was found in the church office, labeled "Old Church". This was the original Jonestown United Evangelical Church renamed to the Trinity Church of Rockland in 1920.

The Church body later built a new church at 8971 Chapel Avenue in Ellicott City, Maryland 21043. It was dedicated on March 19, 1961. At that time it was called, Rockland Evangelical United Brethren Church. Now the Church is called Rockland United Methodist Church.

The following Pages, 197 and 198 were copied from the book "1850 - 2001 Howard County Maryland Profiles of Faith".

Jonestown United Evangelical Church

HISTORY OF ROCKLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rockland United Methodist Church began as a congregation of the United Evangelical Church. Rev. C. E. Redecker, the pastor of the Hebbville church, decided that the area could support a small class. This class of eight members held its first meeting on November 9, 1900 in the home of Wesley Tucker. The community was called Jonestown in those days. Just a month later the first preaching service was held in the local schoolhouse, and a week later the Sunday School was organized with 45 members. Throughout much of the church's early history, the Sunday School often was larger than the congregation meeting for Sunday worship services.

At the same time the church was getting on its feet, there was discussion about building a church building while securing the appointment of a pastor. In late 1900, the congregation purchased the lot containing an abandoned log church that had belonged to the Methodists, located on Frederick Road (now Old Rogers Avenue). The cornerstone was laid on January 6, 1901 and the church was dedicated by the bishop on June 2, 1901. The building cost \$1,300. Preaching services were held on Sunday afternoons, presided over by Rev. Redecker. Called Jonestown United Evangelical Church, it was linked as a two-point charge with Rev. Redecker's other church in Hebbville.

A procession of pastors served the church over the next few decades, some of whom stayed for just a single year. The Sunday School averaged 103 scholars, while Sunday afternoon worship attracted some 36 members.

The church in Jonestown grew and improved over the years, adding such conveniences as electric lights in 1912 and steam heat in 1914. The pastor's salary at that time was \$800 per year, with Jonestown's share being \$200.

The church's name became "Rockland" in 1920, and shortly thereafter was changed to "Trinity Church of Rockland." As the area grew, the Annual Conference saw the need to make some additional changes and Trinity was separated from its historic link with Hebbville and joined with Alberton Church. The Alberton Church is still standing. The town of Alberton was renamed Daniels around 1943, and the Daniels church changed its name accordingly; it now is known as Gary Memorial United Methodist Church and is one of the few remnants of Daniels after Hurricane Agnes struck in 1971. The membership of Rockland Trinity was 68 at the time of this change.

Numerous improvements were made to the church over the years, including oil heat, a parking lot, carpet, exterior painting, an organ, an enlarged kitchen, repairs to the foundation, new

floors and ceilings, and so on, but the membership rose to 78. In 1948 the United Evangelical Church merged with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ to form the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church. The church's Youth Fellowship was begun the following year. Reading the various printed histories over the years reveals much praise of team leaders, Sunday School officers, members, leaders, and pastors. The church was faithful in supplying Christian education and worship opportunities to the community.

The church faced a challenge in 1958 when the State told the church that a new highway was going to be built and that it was going to require the acquisition of much of the church's property. The church was given one year to find another place to worship following the actual sale of the property to the State for the construction of I-70. The realignment of Rogers Avenue to its present location likewise would bypass the original church structure. Some changes would have to be made. After some lively discussion, a site was located on Old Frederick Road, approved by the Board, and purchased in June of 1959. At the time, Old Frederick Road remained the main thoroughfare in the area. Ground breaking for the new (and present) church building took place on February 28, 1960, and the first worship service was held on December 18, 1960. The church was now called Rockland Trinity EUB Church and it was part of the Daniels-Rockland Charge under the pastoral leadership of Rev. J. K. Bamer.

Rev. Bamer had been a driving force behind many improvements and Christian service projects since arriving at the Daniels-Rockland Charge in 1953, and he already had helped the congregation become accustomed to tackling large projects based on the faith that God would bless their efforts. Thus the entire process culminating in the construction of the new building was handled quickly and efficiently, a remarkable feat considering the magnitude of the project for a church Rockland's size. Church membership grew very rapidly under Rev. Bamer's pastorate, and membership reached 170 by the end of 1960. The present church parsonage was begun in 1961 as well, and was completed the following year.

Rockland's growth justified its becoming a separate church apart from the Daniels church. This was approved by the Annual Conference in 1962. Rev. Bamer elected to seek another appointment rather than to choose whether he would serve either Rockland or Daniels, and Rev. Percy Brown was appointed to serve the newly "independent" Rockland EUB Church. Rockland continued to grow rapidly throughout the 1960's.

In 1968 the EUB church agreed to a merger with the Methodist Church, meaning that Rockland became "Rockland United Methodist Church," which it remains today as part of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference.

Including Rev. Brown, only six pastors have served Rockland since 1962, aiding church continuity and the expansion of its educational, missional, and evangelical programs. Growth was especially strong in the 1980's and 1990's as Rev. Donald Smith worked to expand the church's evangelism into the rapidly-growing Ellicott City area. Rockland's congregation welcomed many new members during this time as it continued to branch out into other areas of Christian education and service.

Following Rev. Smith's retirement and Rev. Scott Schuler's arrival in July of 1997, Rockland continues to actively support the Upper Room Emmaus community, three Girl Scout/Brownie troops, Cub Scouts, Christian music instruction, Parents Without Partners, and numerous Bible and topical studies for people of all age groups. The church also supports two large and expanding missions (one in Henderson, Kentucky dealing with the problems of Appalachia, the other in Costa Rica), Bea Gaddy's efforts amongst the poor in Baltimore, the Christian Women's Thrift Shop, the Christian Coalition, Promise Keepers, Howard County Prison Ministries, World Vision, Regeneration, Pastors Pray, Praise in the Pavilion, and four prayer groups. In addition, Rockland now hosts the Korean Methodist Church, serving the Korean community beginning in December of 1997.

Rockland continues to praise the Lord by sharing His compassionate love with all people. We stand firm as committed Christians by seeking ways to serve those in need, whether it be materially, physically, emotionally, or spiritually.