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QUICK LINKS

- [Event Calendar](#)
- [Meeting Schedule](#)
- [Memorial Trees](#)
- [Local Churches](#)
- [Village Government](#)
- [Village Services](#)
- [Village Regulations](#)
- [Business Directory](#)
- [Philmont Library](#)
- [Feedback](#)

► [Back to Home](#)

[Home](#) > [The Methodist Church](#)

By Charles R. Nichols

The Philmont Methodist Church - properly the Philmont United Methodist Church - had its start much like the Philmont Reformed Church, in Mellenville.

Services were first held in the Mellenville School house in 1837. By 1840, there was a solid Methodist organization at Mellenville. Two years later, the demand for a church was growing, and in 1842 the first Methodist Church in the area was built in Mellenville. It was a 34' by 48' frame structure, located across the road from the Mellenville Reformed Church, costing \$1857.



Again, following the pattern of the Reformed Church, in 1855-1856 prayer meetings were being held in the Philmont School House to accommodate the growing number of Methodist Church members.

By 1857 the small congregation could no longer use the school, and for a while met in various homes, and at one point used the Harlem Railroad freight house. It became obvious the need for a church-owned meeting place was growing.

In 1860 a Chapel was erected on the corner of Main Street and Elm Street costing \$515. For the curious who wish to locate the site, it will become obvious that in modern Philmont, Main and Elm do not intersect ! We in Philmont suffer from wandering street names, and different streets have different names at different times ! In 1860 Elm Street extended over what became, at different times, Canal Street or Mill Street and did connect with Main Street. Some have identified the corner as the 'Rion' corner, or the 'Ogden' corner. Both are suitable, but at different times. If you are not confused, you haven't been reading !! In 2007 it is the corner where the Senior Center is presently located.

The present Methodist Church building was erected in Philmont on Church Street in 1872 for a cost of \$6932 and is shown in the first photograph. The Chapel in Mellenville was taken down, and some material used in the Philmont building.

The following year, the Church disposed of the Mellenville property.

In 1879 a bell weighing 1076 lbs was purchased for \$304 and placed in the tower. Given the age without bucket trucks or motorized cranes, that must have been quite a trick !

Through the years, the congregation of the Methodist Church has been extremely active in both supporting the Church and expanding the numbers of members. The number of support groups within the church and hundreds of members both in Church and Sunday School at this time attest to their success.

One example of their activity was the publishing of a newspaper in August 1883. It was entitled 'The Enterprise' and was published by the church. Volume I, number 1 has no less than 82 paid advertisements from businesses and professional people. At this later date, it is a wonderful resource for identifying and researching commercial activity. I'm not sure if a number 2 was ever published. The publisher of the Philmont Sentinel paper was Mr. Beardsley, and noting that Mrs. Beardsley was a member of the congregation, it might be supposed there was some connection with this publication!



A Chapel and Sunday School room was added to the west side of the church in 1884, and the same year the old 1860 Chapel was sold.

The parsonage in 1890 was a rented house on Main Street, but in 1894 the Church obtained the property on the corner of Prospect and Church Streets and a parsonage was constructed for \$4728. Photograph number 1 shows the parsonage as well as the Church and was probably taken about 1905-1910.

In 1894 also the



corporate name of the Church was corrected from 'Trustees of The Methodist Episcopal Church of Mellenville' to 'Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Philmont'

By 1897 the Church Choir was moved from the loft in back of the Church to a new platform in the north east corner at the front.

1907 saw a three panel stained glass window installed in an alcove just behind the pulpit. It was donated by Judge F. B. Lindsay in memory of his wife. It was described as 38 feet of opalescent glass, and done by Colgate Art Glass Co, New York, and is still a striking bit of work.

This same year acetylene lights were installed replacing kerosene lamps.

Photograph number two shows the interior of the Church decorated for Children's Day. The absence of the three panel glass window, and the presence of the kerosene lamp chandelier indicate a date earlier than 1907.



Photograph number three shows an interior view of the Church in 2006. The three stained glass windows over the pulpit are shown, as well as the organ, and a different arrangement of pews from that in photo number two. The pipe organ was installed in 1917, stained glass memorial windows in the vestibule and sanctuary in 1925, and six more windows in the Church and Chapel in 1931.

During the years through 1972, many improvements, and refurbishings took place - new pews, painting, etc..

The centennial year for the Church, 1972 was cause for celebration at which a time capsule was buried.

The final photo was taken in 2006 and shows the Church and parsonage as they now appear.

Church services are Sunday 10:30 AM, Pastor Coddington. All are welcome.

[Back to top](#) ▲

[HISTORY ARCHIVES >](#)

