Congregational Profile

Name of Church: McConnelsville Methodist Church (Established in 1826)
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Website: www.mcconnelsvillemethodistchurch.com
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Administrative Council Chr: Jenna Jenkins
Administrative Secretary: Marsha DeWinter
Treasurer: Vicki Kuntz
SPRC Members: Todd Spence, Chr., Vicki Kuntz, Cris Shreve, Keith Spare

The McConnelsville Methodist congregation, formally established in 1826, is the oldest denomination in the town of McConnelsville, Ohio. Its history is deeply intertwined with the town's founding and a significant legacy in American hymnody. The church is famously associated with Mrs. Lelia Morris (1862–1929), who served as the congregation's organist. While at this church, she composed over 1,000 hymns. Her songs have been translated into numerous languages and remain staples in Protestant hymnals worldwide.

McConnelsville Methodist Church exists for the glory of God— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— and for the advancement of His Kingdom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Church's foundational commitment to Holy Scripture. Jesus Christ alone is the Head of this Church. Scripture is its final authority. All governance exists to strengthen ministry, not to hinder it.

The Church is a Christian congregation in the historic Wesleyan tradition. It confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and receives the Holy Scriptures as the primary and final rule of faith, doctrine, morals, and practice. This Wesleyan identity is theological and spiritual; it creates no legal, property, or connectional obligation to any denomination, conference, bishop, or outside ecclesiastical body.

Our congregation is Spirit-Filled, Joyful, and Welcoming, We follow a blended service style with a high focus on lay involvement and a casual, welcoming atmosphere, Our hospitality and outreach are growing to serve our community. The congregation is focused on a "pioneering spirit", emphasizing a mission to reach the local community and encouraging members to "move forward in faith". The church is a place where families worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

We want a full-time pastor. Our pulpit is currently vacant due to the fact that we were in a two-point charge, and the other church left the Global Methodist Church and left the two-point charge and went independent. We also chose to disaffiliate from the Global Methodist Church and become an independent Methodist/Wesleyan congregation. We are seeking a pastor who can build relationships, develop disciples, and help connect generations. Financial condition is sustainable but tight. We own a parsonage that we built in 1998 with no mortgage. This allows us to offer housing as part of our compensation package. Our congregation has a Sunday attendance of approximately 45-60 and an average age of approximately 71, we recognize the need to connect with younger generations while continuing to nurture those who have faithfully sustained this church. We seek a compassionate, collaborative pastor who can honor our heritage, equip our people for ministry, and guide thoughtful change as we reach our neighbors for Christ. We have committed lay leadership, a welcoming spirit, and meaningful community relationships upon which to build.

Mission Statement: Sharing the Love of Jesus to Transform Lives.

Statement of Faith

We believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; on the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life.

We believe that the Bible is the complete, true and Holy word of God, and has final authority over our church. We believe in one God, creator of all, holy, supreme, eternal, existing in three equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man - crucified, risen, ascended and coming again. We believe the Holy Spirit renews, blesses and empowers believers.

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, called to share Christ's love, proclaim the Gospel and make followers of Jesus. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. We believe salvation is God's gift, received through repentance and faith in Jesus, not earned by good works. Christians are called to remain in Christ, but may turn away from faith. Through sincere repentance and faith, those who fall may receive God's forgiveness and restoration.

We believe all members and guests of our church will draw closer to Christ, increase their faith, and should feel Christ's love through our church. We believe that our purpose is to make disciples for Christ. We affirm that there are only two God given genders and these are assigned at birth - male and female. We believe that holy matrimony is only between a man and a woman.

We believe there are two sacraments given us by Jesus Christ, Holy Baptism (immersion, pouring or sprinkling) and Holy Communion (observed as an open table for all who seek Jesus and desire to live in peace with God and neighbor).

Wesleyan Heritage
The Church embraces its Wesleyan heritage, including salvation by grace through faith, sanctification, scriptural holiness, Christian perfection understood as perfect love, accountability within community, personal and social holiness, and faithful stewardship. These doctrines are faithful expressions of biblical Christianity, not replacements for Scripture.

Biblical Authority
Holy Scripture is the supreme written authority for all doctrine, worship, ministry, morals, governance, and spiritual practice of this Church. No ministry, teaching, or decision shall knowingly contradict the clear teaching of Scripture.

Administrative Board
Is the governing fiduciary body of the Church, holding general authority over governance, oversight, and temporal administration except for powers expressly reserved to the Congregational Meeting.

Church Foundational History

- **Land Donation (1817):** General Robert McConnel, the founder of McConnelsville, donated the land for the Methodists' use shortly after settlers arrived in the area.
- **Formal Establishment (1826):** The Methodist Episcopal congregation was officially chartered nearly a decade after the land donation (1817).

- **Evolution of Structures:**

  1836: A stone building was constructed to serve the growing congregation.
  1860: The current church building was completed, replacing the original stone structure.
  1970: A two-story educational wing was added.
  1998: A new parsonage (third) was built.

- **Denominational Shift:** Historically known as Trinity United Methodist Church. On July 1, 2022 Grace UMC merged with Trinity UMC becoming McConnelsville UMC. The congregation split from the United Methodist Church, affiliated with the Global Methodist Church, and recently disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church. The church has chosen to be an independent church maintaining its Wesleyan Heritage. The church recently had its 200th Bicentennial Anniversary celebration (September 6, 2026).

McConnelsville Methodist Church is committed to a vision of joining God in a journey of **bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people**. They strive to help each person reflect the character of Christ.

Their vision and mission include:

- **Passionately Worshipping:** Gathering to be ignited by the Holy Spirit rather than performing a service, aiming for a warm-hearted, Jesus-loving, and Spirit-inspired environment.
- **Extravagantly Loving:** Demonstrating God's love to their neighbors and focusing on those who are most vulnerable.
- **Boldly Witnessing:** Sharing the transformative message of the Gospel with courage in their community of McConnelsville.
- **A "Pioneering Spirit":** The church focuses on "moving again" rather than merely maintaining, taking risks to share the Gospel, and planting seeds in their local mission field.

Key Community Outreach & Spiritual Support:

- **Welcoming Atmosphere/Accessibility Improvements:** The church renovated its entrance to include a new access area and a handicap-accessible ramp to better serve community members with mobility challenges. The improvements reflect a mission to ensure everyone feels "right at home".
- **Digital Outreach:** The church maintains a presence on Facebook, Instagram, and the WWW offering encouraging messages and community updates.
- **Feed the Teams Program:** The women of the church prepare a meal for each Morgan High School sports team throughout the year.
- **Operation Christmas Child:** Shoebox Ministry
- **Youth Team Fundraising:** Various groups use the church parking lot to raise funds.
- **Participate in local village events as a church:** Heritage Day, 4th of July Festival, etc.
- **AA/NA/TOPS:** Provide space for weekly meetings.

- **Small Group Ministry**: The church hosts an **Adult Sunday School class** at 10:00 AM in Morris Hall that is open to couples and singles of all ages. The group focuses on sharing, praying, and supporting one another through both joyful and difficult times.
- **Inclusive Worship**: During the 9:00 AM blended worship service, we provide **"worship bags"** containing sensory toys and quiet activities specifically for children to enhance their experience and help families feel welcome. Children's Sunday School is offered during the worship service.
- **Open Fellowship**: The church maintains a complimentary **Coffee Bar** with water and snacks available before and after services to foster community connection in a casual environment.
- **Weekly Bible Study**: Tuesdays at 2:30 pm in Morris Hall.
- **Recently hosted one night of a "Revival in the Hills"**: This was a four day revival hosted by five different churches county-wide with Scott Shipman, the "Disaster Pastor".

Based on the McConnelsville Methodist Church's mission to foster a welcoming, faith-filled community, key strengths include a strong focus on inclusive hospitality, a commitment to compassionate service and outreach, and a firm, Bible-based theological foundation.

Effective pastoral leadership for McConnelsville Methodist Church congregation requires a shepherd's heart, strong theological alignment with Wesleyan doctrine, and proactive leadership, focusing on personal holiness and community witness. Key qualities include scriptural fluency, empathetic counseling, and servant leadership, fostering spiritual maturity and navigating change within the community.

Key Characteristics & Qualities of Pastoral Leadership

- **Theological & Spiritual Depth:** Wesleyan theological knowledge with a focus on guiding personal holiness.
- **Shepherding & Empathy:** A compassionate shepherd who actively cares for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the flock.
- **Servant Leadership & Integrity:** Demonstrates spiritual maturity, integrity, and healthy pastoral boundaries.
- **Adaptability & Vision:** Ability to handle diverse, changing needs and lead growth-focused initiatives.
- **Relationship Building:** Skilled at developing strong, trusting relationships with staff, volunteers, and the community.

Functions of Pastoral Leadership

- **Preaching & Teaching:** Delivering doctrinally sound sermons and organizing in-depth Bible studies.
- **Pastoral Care:** Visiting members in need, providing emotional support, and offering pastoral counseling.

- **Spiritual Formation:** Nurturing a community focused on the Great Commission through evangelical outreach and discipleship.
- **Administration & Management:** Overseeing church programs, managing staff/volunteers, and ensuring orderly administration of church affairs.
- **Sacramental Leadership:** Conducting holy baptism, Holy Communion, weddings, and funerals.

Meeting Specific Congregational Needs

- **Community Engagement:** Actively working to connect the church with the broader McConnelsville community to fulfill its local mission.
- **Discipleship & Growth:** Cultivating a culture of mature faith and personal spiritual growth.
- **Stewardship of Tradition:** Honoring traditional Wesleyan/Methodist tenets while embracing the future.

McConnelsville, Ohio, is a small, rural county seat (population ~1,600) in Morgan County (population ~13,500), characterized by a tight-knit community, higher-than-average poverty (16.6%), and significant needs for social support. Opportunities for ministry include tackling food insecurity, expanding childcare, addressing poverty, and supporting an aging population. Key needs include employment/income assistance, childcare access, healthcare access, food security, and housing assistance. Opportunities for developing ministry programs that address mental health, addiction support, or support for the elderly. Programs focused on child support, safe spaces, and assisting struggling families are needed. With an aging population, ministries focused on isolation, elder care, and fixed-income assistance are important.

Geographic Areas & Community Profile

- **Location:** Situated along the Muskingum River, acting as the county seat of Morgan County.
- **Character:** Small-town, rural environment where the community is tightly integrated, often centered around local schools and churches.
- **Recognition:** The town was named one of Ohio Magazine's Best Hometowns.
- **Transportation:** Most households own vehicles (avg. 2), with 72.8% driving alone to work, although 13.4% work from home.
- **Recreation Areas:** Rich in natural beauty, including Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area, Burr Oak State Park, Jesse Owens State Park, Muskingum River State Park (hand-operated locks), and Wolf Creek Wildlife Area.
- **Industries:** Strong agricultural foundation, with growing opportunities in manufacturing, tourism, and small business development.
- **Economic Factors:** 2025 unemployment rate around 5.7%. Over 78% homeownership rate.
- **Proximity to Cities:** It sits about 21 miles southeast of Zanesville and 26 miles northwest of Marietta, making larger shopping and amenities accessible while retaining a quiet rural setting.

Community Needs & Mission Opportunities

- **Basic Needs & Food Security:** Hunger and economic insecurity are high-priority needs, driven by inflation and employment challenges.
- **Support for Vulnerable Populations:** Needs include supporting aging residents and families living in poverty.
- **Infrastructure & Health:** Opportunities exist to address infrastructure needs (water/sewer) and high rates of health challenges.

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