

Thomas Drummond (1806-1835)

Circuit ministers served Drummond Chapel until 1944, when Rev. Joseph DeBardi was appointed to serve as the first full-time minister.

Thomas Drummond, the minister for whom Drummond Chapel was named, was born in Manchester, England, January 27, 1806. At the age of five, Thomas accompanied his parents to New York and then to Ohio. At age 21, Thomas entered the ministry; after exercising his gifts as a local preacher for one year, he was recommended for admission into the traveling connections, and accordingly received by the Pittsburgh Conference in 1830.

Drummond's next three one-year appointments were as follows: West Wheeling District; St. Clairsville Circuit; and, Pittsburgh Station. The appointment of so young a preacher to a station of so much importance as Pittsburgh infers Thomas had not only remarkable gifts but he had made astonishing progress toward ministerial attainments. In 1833, Thomas Drummond was appointed as the first full-time minister for the station, Morgantown, Virginia, where he remained for one year "with great acceptability and usefulness".

At the Conference held in Washington, PA in July 1834, Drummond's heart was touched with the wants of the west.

Filled with a missionary zeal, he volunteered for Missouri and he was stationed at St. Louis. Drummond died there of cholera in 1835.

The only association Drummond Chapel had with Rev. Drummond was during his one-year appointment to the Morgantown Station. Rev. William Hunter, who knew Drummond and followed him in the Morgantown Station later wrote of him with high appreciation of his worth. "Drummond was able in the pulpit, faithful in pastoral visitation, diligent in the instruction of children. He by no means confined his labors to the village but he had several appointments in the country, some as many as ten miles out." Thomas Drummond, while his service was brief, left a lasting impression.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF SUMC

- 1784 Bishop Francis Asbury, the only British Methodist to remain in America during the Revolutionary War, designated the region beyond the Allegheny Mountains as "Redstone Circuit" with John Cooper and Samuel Breeze as its circuit riders.
- 1787 Morgantown became part of the Clarksburg Circuit, Baltimore Conference.
- 1850 Old Drummond Chapel was built. Sunday School classes were held only in the summer.
- 1904 Reed organ was purchased; prior to the organ, the hymn leader used a tuning fork to obtain the proper pitch to lead the congregation in singing.
- 1919 Drummond Chapel became part of a three-church circuit.
- 1922 Susan Summers was named the first woman Sunday School Superintendent.
- 1925 An 18-foot extension was added to Drummond.
- 1928 Full basement with kitchen facilities was added.
- 1944 Rev. Joseph DeBardi was named Drummond Chapel's first full-time minister.
- 1951 A three-floor building was begun; the third floor was completed in 1956.
- 1956 Worship services were moved to Cowan Hall and the "Old Chapel" became a meeting place for Children's Church Hour, with youth activities taking place in the basement.
- 1961 Fundraising began for new sanctuary.
- 1964 "Old Drummond" was moved to its present site.
- 1965 Present sanctuary was dedicated.
- 1969 First parsonage was purchased.
- 1976 Drummond Chapel had a membership of 800 with an annual budget of \$80,000.
- 1998 A narthex, elevator, administrative wing, and classrooms were completed under the campaign title "Forward Through The Ages".
- 1999 Current organ was purchased and dedicated.
- 2007 Sanctuary was remodeled.
- 2009 Suncrest UMC had a membership of 655 with an annual budget of \$540,000.

Faith, Hope and Love

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Old Drummond Church (prior to 1924)



Drummond Chapel United Methodist Church

The history of Suncrest UMC has been one of growth and change. The first church in the "Flatts" area of Morgantown was organized in 1840 by a group of settlers who used Captain Evan's log schoolhouse as a meeting place. This early church was a station of the Methodist Circuit Rider who covered an area from Fairmont to the Cheat River. The log schoolhouse, located on *Popinaw Run*, the stream that runs in front of West Virginia University's Alumni Center, was the only place where worship services were held on the north side of Morgantown during the 1840s. In 1849, Adam Echart donated one-half acre of land across the road from the log schoolhouse for a new church building. Echart's donation was made to the little congregation with the "right to worship unmolested according to the form and usages of the Methodist Church."

In the summer of 1850, a 30-foot x 24-foot frame building was erected. This structure sat on the site of the present sanctuary. The name "Drummond Chapel" was chosen to honor a popular young minister, Thomas Drummond, who was stationed in Morgantown in 1830. Drummond, born in England in 1806, served the Morgantown church for only one year, before heading west to St. Louis, where he died within a year. Drummond Chapel became part of the Western Virginia Conference in 1848; other churches included Palatine (Fairmont), Rock Forge, Pierpont and Zion (Cheat Lake).

After construction of Drummond Chapel in 1850, as many as 100 people attended services. Little information is available on the first 70 years of the church. The building was well cared for, and in 1924, members graded and fenced the lawn, installed cement sidewalks, and replaced the 1904 organ with a new piano. By the end of 1925, an 18-foot extension was added to enlarge the building. From 1925 to 1928, Sunday School attendance nearly doubled. A full basement was added to Old Drummond, which provided needed classroom, dining and kitchen facilities.

As attendance grew, the congregation decided to increase their support in order to pay the salary of a full-time minister. After nearly 90 years of being part of a circuit, Drummond Chapel acquired its first full-time minister, Rev. Joseph DeBardi, in 1944.

Under Rev. DeBardi's leadership, Drummond Chapel started the planning that led to the building that we have today. In 1951, plans were drawn for a three-floor educational building. Financing was restricted, so the building was completed in phases. The first floor was completed in 1952, the second in 1954, and the top floor added in 1956. Memorial gifts provided funds that were necessary to complete two sections of the new building. Daisy Cowan's donation in memory of her husband was used to complete the fellowship room, named Cowan Hall, and Mr. and Mrs. C.H. Hartley financed the interior of Hartley Chapel in memory of their daughter, Marjorie.

Old Drummond was moved to its current site in 1964. One year later in April 1965, the new sanctuary was dedicated. "Old Drummond Chapel," now adorned with blue and gold awnings, is currently used for college and youth ministries.



Trinity UMC (in the early 1990's)

Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity United Methodist Church was part of another denomination, the Evangelical United Brethren, before 1968, when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren united to become the United Methodist Church.

In 1953, the West Virginia Conference Trustees of the Evangelical United Brethren purchased 3.8 acres of land on Burroughs Street. The first Local Conference was organized and conducted by the first pastor, Rev. Walter Cain, in the Suncrest Grade School in July 1954, with the first Sunday School sessions beginning in September 1954. Groundbreaking services were conducted, and construction of the church building began in the fall of 1954.

A large educational unit, chapel, and parsonage were erected on the Burroughs Street property between 1954 and 1956. The first worship service was conducted in the chapel on Easter Sunday, 1955.

In 1956, Rev. Lejeune Lewis was sent to Trinity Evangelical United Brethren Church to give pastoral leadership to a steadily growing Sunday School and church worship service.

Many improvements were made to the

facilities over a period of 43 years, including an exterior brick veneer, addition of a shower house, and kitchen remodeling. After the merger of the three congregations, the Trinity property was sold in 2008 and the church building was demolished for a housing development. Funds from the sale of the Trinity property were dedicated to the construction of a Family Life Center at Suncrest.



Star City Church (in 1951)

Star City United Methodist Church

Star City United Methodist Church was organized in 1906 on the second floor of the Star City Elementary School. In 1915, a congregation was established by E.J. Heller, a West Virginia University student. Out of this group, a church grew. A building for the Star City Episcopal Methodists was dedicated in 1916. In 1928, the church was raised from its foundation and a basement was added. In 1947, the facility was modernized and expanded. The former Star City United Methodist Church is now home to the Morgantown 'Meals on Wheels'.

Three-To-One Merger

In 1994, the transition to merge Star City, Trinity, and Drummond Chapel resulted in the Suncrest Extended Cooperative Ministries, served by two pastors, Rev. Ron McCauley and Rev. William Kinsey. In 1999 the three congregations voted to become one church.



Suncrest United Methodist Church (2009)