**History of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church**

BMPC was organized by 13 women and 3 men in 1873, when our land adjacent to the Bryn Mawr Hotel (now The Baldwin School) was purchased from the Pennsylvania Railroad.  Our first building was a modest, green-stone chapel on the site of our current Sanctuary. Our second building, a brownstone church at the site of our current Chapel, was completed in 1886 to seat 500.

The vision of our congregation was apparent in 1927, when the present Sanctuary was built to seat 1,200—double the size of the congregation of that time.  According to the report of the New Church Building Committee, the Sanctuary was built to “conform to the Gothic tradition, suited to the academic atmosphere of Bryn Mawr.” The old brownstone church stood next to the new Sanctuary until 1940, when its foundation and three walls became the framework of our Chapel.  Three treasured Tiffany windows from the brownstone church enhance the Chapel’s north section, which follows the lines of the Old Sunday School building, built in 1894.

Our congregation has been committed to mission and outreach since the late 1800s, when BMPC became the first Presbyterian church in America to directly maintain its own foreign missionaries.  Among them was Dr. William Wanless, who established a hospital in Miraj, India, that exists to this day as a thriving medical center. Our commitment to the city and churches of Philadelphia was formalized with an Urban-Suburban Partnership in 1998, the year of our 125th anniversary, and many of our current outreach efforts support Presbytery of Philadelphia ministries.

Converse House, named for BMPC elder John Heman Converse, was built in 1911 as the manse for our third pastor, The Rev. Dr. Andrew Mutch, who came from Scotland with his family. This building was our senior pastor’s home until 1958 and the location of our church offices until 1990, when our Ministries Center was completed, incorporating a gym and Activities Building constructed in the 1960s. Our Fine Arts offices, church library and reading room, and The Middleton Center for Pastoral Care and Counseling are located in Converse House today.

Our Education Building, built in 1931 on the east end of our campus, provides space for hundreds of children for Sunday School. The Education Building is also the home of our Weekday Pre-School and our tutoring program, which pairs suburban youth and North Philadelphia elementary school children. On the opposite side of our Sanctuary, the Ministries Center is open seven days a week as a place for youth and adults to plan activities, learn about faith, enjoy fellowship, and share resources through service to others.

In the 1970s, our first full-time Director of Music and Fine Arts was hired, and an expanded program of music, art and drama took shape. Our tradition of excellence in worship music continues through our internationally-recognized Sanctuary Choir and Choir School, and handbell choirs, concerts, and art exhibits enrich our lives and express our faith.

BMPC continues to be a place that brings people together in the interest of mutual understanding... leading us away from ourselves and into the mainstream of the Word of God. Today, with renovated buildings and a new organ, carillon, and church spire, we look forward to vibrant Christian ministry in the 21st century.