



**Trinity Presbyterian Church was officially organized in 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, the first church in the small town of Reeseville (later named Berwyn). The founding members were local farmers, artisans, and their families, predominately Scotch-Irish, who had settled here and longed for a place of worship in the community.**

**The first pastor was the Rev. John McLeod, Philadelphia District Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. He had recently taken up residence on a nearby farm and gave the site for the church building from his land, laying out the intersecting streets as well. Rev. McLeod became the first minister, serving as “stated supply” until 1864.**

When the first church building was dedicated, the village numbered only about ten houses. The rise of the railroad and the consequent influx of new residents led to surprising growth by 1890. Now a larger church was needed and a grander church was a possibility. The pastor, the Rev. Thomas Jefferson Aiken, as a young man had earlier served the church and now returned to lead this project.

The cornerstone for the new church, dedicated in 1892, was laid precisely thirty years after the cornerstone was placed for the first church. Today we gather to worship in this same building with a sense of pride. The Presbyterian Historical Society has recognized its historic uniqueness by including it in the American Presbyterian Historic Sites Register.

Under Rev. Aiken, the church sponsored a mission Sabbath School in Paoli whose numbers grew to become the present Paoli Presbyterian Church in 1899. Long pastorates were in vogue during the early years of the twentieth century. The Rev. Dr. J. Charles Levengood preached at Trinity from 1912 to 1940.

Following World War II, the church removed its cemetery from the corner of Berwyn and Waterloo avenues into the Great Valley Presbyterian churchyard. On the Berwyn site, the Rev. John H. Scott presided over building of a large hall, separate classrooms, a church kitchen, and a pastor's study, all completed in 1954.

Two decades of suburban growth and development culminated in the erection of a new two-story Christian education wing dedicated in 1973, during the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Robert W. Bohl. The facility provided space for broadened and enriched church educational programs, the weekday nursery school, and evening use by church and community groups.

A memorable opportunity to serve was presented in 1975 when Trinity sheltered 83 refugees, many of them orphans, fleeing the collapse of South Vietnam. For over two weeks they were housed, fed, clothed, and provided medical care while arrangements were made to match community resources with human needs. Freedoms Foundation honored Trinity and selected Rev. Bohl to receive its Humanitarian Activities Award. Subsequently, two smaller groups of Vietnamese refugees were settled and cared for in Berwyn by the church.

In the final two decades of the twentieth century, Trinity Presbyterian Church, as most other churches in the nation, was seriously affected by the growing decline of spiritual morality in America. The religious breakdown of church ministry in general and rising secular influences in our society led to significant church membership loss, including substantial losses at Trinity. As a result, excess capacity of Trinity facilities to serve a dwindling congregation during this time became a major concern.

To counter this challenge, Trinity, over a period of years, expanded the utilization of its educational wing (nursery school) for financial benefit through rental income. Alcoholics Anonymous chapters began conducting weekly evening seminars, and programs that appealed to new church members met with some success. A Praise Band was organized to enhance the musical offerings of Sunday morning worship services. A dance ensemble was also added to worship in a new and creative way. To meet the age of growing modern technology development in churches around the country, Trinity began to video record Sunday services. These recordings now appear on Comcast Cable TV Channel 2 five times weekly to increase the church's visibility and perception throughout the Main Line, PA community. All of these developments have occurred under the enlightened ministry and guidance of Trinity's previous minister, Reverend Jay Wilkins.

On the cover of the church worship bulletin, the mission statement reads "...a family community of faith and fellowship. We are called to passionately answer the call of God by sharing with all people the Good News of Jesus Christ, growing in a relationship with Christ and with one another, and dedicating our church to serve in His name." This is the past, present, and future history of a resilient Trinity Presbyterian Church of Berwyn.