Concord United Methodist Church

This property was set aside for worship in 1858 when the town began. At an organizing meeting, Mrs. Sarah Holroyd was asked to come up with a name for the new church. She supposedly said, "This church is where all denominations shall worship together in harmony, sweet fellowship and concord."

The name was applied to both the church, and the town. In 1872 it also became the name of the institution down the street now known as Concord University.

The town's name changed to Athens in 1896 because the United States Post Office Department said there was another Concord, West Virginia, and it didn't want the mail to get mixed up. Athens was selected as the new name because the ancient city in Greece was known as a place of higher education.

You are standing in the third church building to occupy this site. It was built in 1905, or 118 years ago. Additions were added to the back in later years. This includes Anderson Hall, where meals are held for both the church community and others who wish to use the building.

The church has also been used for community functions. It's a meeting place for **VINE & BRANCHES, a campus ministry** reaching out to Concord students. The church also hosts the Athens Lions Club twice a month, and a yoga group that meets weekly.

The metal cross in front of the pulpit was, according to legend, welded decades ago in Princeton by an employee of the Virginian Rail Line and donated to our church.

The front corner of the church building is a self-contained 24-Hour Prayer Room. It is available to anyone, year-round.

The back corner of the churchyard is a Community Garden, open to anyone who needs the produce it yields. It is planted each spring by congregation members Sheila and David Mann as a gift to the Athens community.

[Stained-glass window explanations on other side of this sheet.]

The Stained-Glass Windows

The stained glass windows in the sanctuary include a number of symbols.

• The window "in memory of David and Hester Martin" has a C and E at the top surrounded by olive branches. That stands for Christian Endeavour, especially active in British Methodism in the 1800s.

• The window "in memory of Benj and Nancy Fanning" has an open Bible and a lily, a symbol of resurrection power.

• The large east window includes three circles, with the "eye of God," the anchor cross, and a Bible and a lily.

• The window "in memory of William and Sarah Reynolds" has a sheaf of wheat and a sickle, for harvesting.

• The window above the entryway door includes a fleur-de-lis pattern, meant to refer to the Trinity. The C and E is also present there.

• On the west side (to the left as you enter from the front doors) is a depiction of a broken column. This is often a reference to "the loss of a strong pillar of support." A commentary on the windows said, "It is not surprising that the families of Benjamin Fanning and Rev. S.R. Wheeler revered their memory by placing the image of the broken column in our windows … ."

• The large window includes a descending dove holding a sprig of olive.

• The window "in memory of William and Sarah Holroyd" commemorates one of our founding families, associated with our church for more than 120 years.

• The circular window behind the pulpit includes a crown to represent Christ's kingdom.

• The windows in the Anchor Room at the back of the sanctuary were dedicated to a couple of organizations apparently from Concord State Normal School, the American Literary Society and The Philomathean Literary Society.

[Brief history of the church on other side of this sheet.]