

# Northminster Church History

## 1851-Present



- 1798- John Carlyle Steward moves from New Castle, Delaware to a plot of land he bought between the Shenango River and Neshannock Creek and begins to lay out a town named after the one he left in Delaware.
- 1804- Crawford White moves to the area after receiving “donation lands” for his father’s service in the Revolutionary War.
- 1825- New Castle Becomes a borough
- 1838- James D. White, son of Crawford, completes the first iron works in the city called the “Cosala.” His father’s lumber mill would eventually bankrupt him, but he did much for the economic growth of the growing area.
- 1841- Joseph S. White, son of James White, marries Adaline Pollock. He is very outspoken about the abolition of slavery, saying that it is not just a political issue but also a religious one. His brick home on the northwest corner of Grant Street and Jefferson Street became an important stop on the underground railroad. He was considered the “conductor” for this part of the railroad.
- 1845- The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church approves a statement that “domestic slavery in the circumstances in which it exists in the southern portion of this country is no bar to Christian communion.” This angers those who oppose slavery.
- 1850- President Millard Filmore signs the Fugitive Slave Law required citizens to assist slave-owners in recovering their slaves.
- 1850- Joseph S. White and four others write a letter to the session at New Castle Presbyterian Church (now First Church) asking the church to withdraw from the denomination and form a new church. The church elects not to do so.
- 1851- Rev. George Gordon from the Free Presbyterian Church of Mercer met with those who were considering starting their own congregation and they chose to start a church in the Free Presbyterian Church.
- 1851- The Free Presbyterian Church of New Castle was formed April 24 and accepted into the denomination on May 2.
- 1853- Rev. A.B. Bradford became the first pastor of the new church, though he was never installed. He was hired under an annual contract as a stated supply for a salary of \$800 a year.
- 1854- The congregation bought lot number twenty-two at the northeast corner of the Public Square for \$2,450.
- 1858- An economic panic from the previous year caught up with the building project, and work on the new building was temporarily halted.

- 1859- The first property was finished. The meeting hall, and over time the whole building, was called White Hall in honor of James. D. White. The building would continue to be a financial struggle for the church, which tried to reduce debt and pay bills.
- *1861-1865- The Civil War.*
- 1867- The new congregation joined the New Castle Reformed Presbyterian Church for a series of evangelistic meetings, with the secondary hope that the church could potentially merge. In April, the Reformed Presbyterian Church T. Wylie was elected as the Free Church's first installed pastor, with an annual salary of \$1,000. The members of the reformed congregation joined.
- 1867- The two churches came together in the New School Presbyterian Church. The church would now be called the New School Presbyterian Church of New Castle.
- 1869- New Castle becomes a city.
- 1869- The Old School and the New School factions of the Presbyterian Church met in Pittsburgh and reunited. Northminster would now be a part of its third denomination—The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.
- *1876- Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone*
- 1887- The trustees were given authority to sell the church building if an advantageous deal could be found. It never was.
- 1892- The church decided to remodel the old building.
- 1893- The Courant (newspaper) writes on August 16, 1893: "The Second Presbyterian Church, formerly known as White Hall, is rapidly nearing completion, and when completed will make one of the finest and coziest churches in the city." This title, Second Presbyterian, was never officially held by the church but was a common nickname, apparently even in the paper.
- The Courant reported that "the New Second Presbyterian Church" was building at the head of Mill Street. This is where Trinity Episcopal Church now sits. But the church changed their mind. Instead, they updated White Hall in the same location on the diamond downtown.
- 1894- The Old Central Church was completed as a renovation of the now unrecognizable White Hall.
- 1894- The New School Presbyterian Church of New Castle, known locally as the Second Presbyterian Church, changed their name. Because the New School-Old School division was no more and the numbering of churches in the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian Denominations was getting confusing, they decided to be called Central Presbyterian Church.
- 1899- The Third United Presbyterian Church was organized July 13, 1899, by a commission appointed by Beacon Valley Presbytery, and held its first meetings in a store room on Lathrop Street.
- 1901- The organ was beyond repair and the church could only use a rented piano. They were still making payments on the renovation and could not afford a new organ. In February, Mrs.

I.B. Griffith, without telling the session or the congregation, wrote to Andrew Carnegie of Pittsburgh, PA and asked if he could provide Central Church with a new organ. She did not hear anything until June when Mr. Mayer, who supervised the installation of Carnegie organs, came to the church to measure and to see what could be arranged. In August, a letter arrived informing Mrs. Griffith that an organ would be given to the church, though it would take quite a while until it could be done. The trustees unanimously accepted this gift.

- 1900- On February 8, 1900, the first building for Third Presbyterian Church was dedicated.
- 1902- In December, the organ was installed with no expense to the congregation whatsoever.
- 1906- Third Presbyterian church adds an auditorium
- 1907- The Chapman Evangelistic campaign came to New Castle.
- 1909- Individual communion cups are used for the first time
- 1910- The Billy Sunday Campaign happened in New Castle from September 18 to October 30. This as a big awakening for the city.
- 1911- Conflict arises between Rev. Francis Reese and an elder, with a number of people taking sides. More than 200 people leave the church.
- *1914-1918- World War I*
- 1918- The flu epidemic closed the church for weeks
- 1927- The building of Third Presbyterian Church is completed
- 1939- Third Presbyterian Church holds a series of special evangelistic services and many new members were received into the church while others increase their commitment to the ministry of the church.
- *1939-1945- World War 2*
- 1948- The church updates the “Singing Tower and Illuminated Cross”
- 1949- March 20- the Old Central building catches on fire and is completely destroyed
- 1949- the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Third Presbyterian Church was celebrated. The manse is built at Third Presbyterian as well.
- *1950-1953- Korean War*
- 1951- May 6, the Northminster cornerstone is laid
- 1952- Worship services begin in the new building
- 1953- Church adds pews, communion table, and pulpit furniture.
- 1956- Northminster hires their first full-time secretary
- 1957- The Northminster manse is completed
- 1958- The Presbyterians and the United Presbyterians merged to become the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. Central changes its name to Northminster United Presbyterian Church.
- 1958- Decision was made to complete the education wing of the church, which was not done until then.
- 1960- The Alice M. Sterling Memorial Library was established. It was one of the first church libraries in the county and one of the largest for years.
- *1963- President John F. Kennedy is assassinated*

- 1968- *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated*
- 1969- The Rose Window was given as an anonymous gift.
- 1973- The Mortgage was burned as the church's building debt from the building and the education wing completion were satisfied.
- 1975- Northminster began producing large Christmas experiences. First was "The Joy and Sharing of Christmas," then starting in 1982 "Let's go to Bethlehem."
- 1975- Coffee hour was instituted
- 1976- Northminster received a gift of a four-octave set of Schulmerich English handbells.
- 1977- The choir loft, which used to be only on the sides, is expanded.
- 1980- June 15, the newly formed clown ministry led their first full length worship service
- 1983- The United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the US merge to form the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- *1991- Operation Desert Storm*
- 1992- Northminster presents "Where Jesus Walked," an experience for Lent.
- 1993- A Long Range Planning Committee is formed to work with new pastor Andrew Jillson to identify the church's mission for the future.
- 1995- The first book sale is held at Third Presbyterian Church
- 1996- Andrew Jillson leads a mission trip to Sudan on behalf of the Shenango Presbytery and in partnership with the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.
- 2000- Known as the "Year of the Organ." The church fundraised to have the organ repaired and renovated.
- 2000- Nut rolls begin at Third Presbyterian Church
- 2000- The playground, which was build up since 1993, was dedicated to the memory of Robby Green who was a child of the church who died of meningitis.
- 2001- Northminster celebrates 150 years
- *2001- September 11*
- 2002- The elevator is put in
- 2003- The portico is built on the front of the church
- 2012- Parlor is renovated
- 2017- Third Presbyterian Church closes its doors. Much of the membership is transferred to Northminster. Rev. Andrew Jillson retires after 24 years at Northminster.
- 2018- Pastor Jordan Rimmer is installed
- 2020- A global pandemic forces church online and then to drive-in services. The church's basement and conference room are renovated.
- 2021- On December 5, the church gathers in the social hall for a Northminster Gala. The festivities include a Christmas celebration, dedicating the social hall, celebrating 170 years of ministry and 70 years at the Northminster Building.
- 2022- The chapel at the back of the sanctuary is redone and renamed the Central Café. The Northminster Park is begun with a gazebo and a playground.

### Northminster Names

The Free Presbyterian Church of New Castle- 1851-1867  
The New School Presbyterian Church of New Castle- 1867-1894  
The Second Presbyterian Church- Unofficial Nickname in the 1800s  
The Church is sometimes referred to by the name of the building “White Hall”  
Central Presbyterian Church- 1894-1958  
Northminster United Presbyterian Church- 1958-Present

### Northminster Properties and Locations

Brick School House on South Jefferson Street  
Reformed Presbyterian Church at the East end of South Street  
White Hall- 1859  
Old Central- 1893  
Northminster- 1952

### Third Properties and Locations

Store Room on Lathrop Street 1899  
First Building 1900  
Added Auditorium 1906  
New Building 1927

### Northminster Denominations

Free Presbyterian Church- 1851-1867  
New School Presbyterian Church- 1867-1869  
Presbyterian Church in the United States of America 1869-1958  
United Presbyterian Church in the USA- 1958-1983  
Presbyterian Church (USA)- 1983-Present

### Northminster Senior Ministers

George Gordon- Organizing 1851  
A.B. Bradford- 1853-1867  
W.T. Wylie- 1867-1869  
B.M. Kerr- 1871-1872  
M.H. Calkins- 1873-1899  
Samuel H. Moore- 1899-1906  
Aurthur B. McCormick- 1907-1914  
Samuel M.F. Nesbitt- 1914-1919  
Francis Edward Reese- 1919-1925  
Charles B. Wingerd- 1926-1939  
Robert Meade Patterson- 1939-1951  
Henry B. Strock, Jr.- 1952-1960  
John W. Sloat- 1961- 1992  
Andrew Jillson- 1993-2017  
Jordan Rimmer- 2018-Present

### Third Presbyterian Church Senior Ministers

Thomas Lincoln Rose 1899-1905  
John Elmer Campbell 1905-1920  
Samuel Bruce Copeland 1920-1935  
Chester T.R. Yeates 1935-1940  
Clarence R. Thayer 1941-1946  
J. Paul Graham 1946-1955  
Cuyler Neil Ferguson 1955-1971  
John Philip Freshley 1972-1978  
Robert Andrew Veitch 1979-1983  
Hendrik J.H. Bossers 1984-2000  
Doug Hughes- 2003-2011  
Mike Spicuzza- 2011-2014

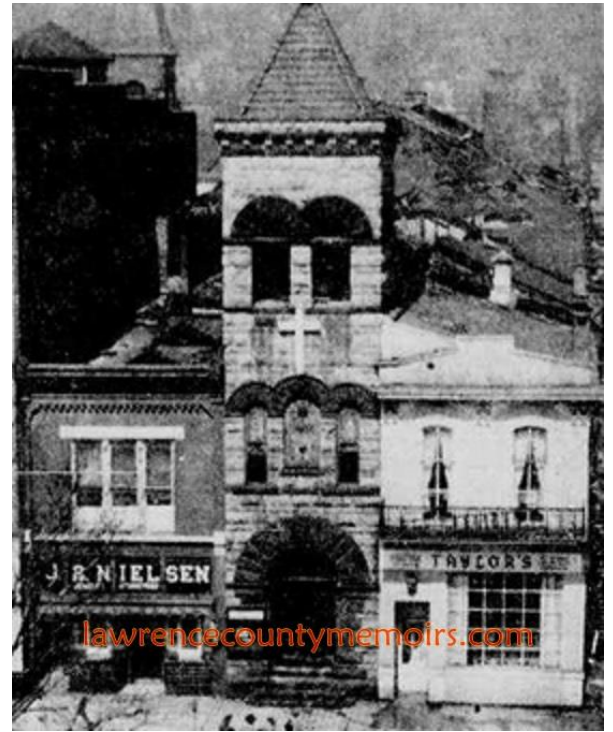
## The Rose Window: “Christ and the Christian”

- The central symbol is a budding cross, representing the resurrection.
- The smaller green cross in the center of the window with clusters of grapes represent Jesus as the true vine and the sacrament of communion.
- The two crosses hold the death and resurrection of Jesus together, with the resurrection outshining the death.
- There are thorns toward the middle representing Jesus’ crown of thorns.
- The four cornered rose is a symbol of Christ’s sacrificial love reaching out to the four corners of the world.
- The larger rose on the outside has 8 smaller roses in it representing the 8 Beatitudes.
- Under each rose is a palm branch representing the peace that would come if the world followed the teachings of Jesus.
- The outside wavy blue lines represent the Water of Life offered to us by Christ.





lawrencememoirs.com



lawrencememoirs.com



Public Square, looking East, New Castle, Pa.



AFTER THE FIRE — 1949

NEW CASTLE NEWS

NEW CASTLE, PA., SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 1949 — 22 PAGES

NEW CASTLE NEWS

# HISTORIC CHURCH BURNS

Central Church On Public Square Catted By Fire

Picture Shows Ruins Of Church As Wall Demolition Starts

Western Allies Outlaw Soviet Mark in Berlin

French Local Elections Show Communist Upset

Conjecture On Next U.N. Step On Atlantic Pact

Government Of China May Be Moved To Canton

Senate Approval Is Forecast For Atlantic Pact

Pyramid Clubs Are Banned

Arthur Munnister

DEATH RECORD

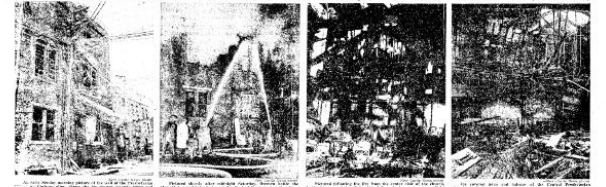
Inside Today's News

PA. INFLUENZA OBSERVES

Daily Weather Report

Picture Shows Ruins Of Church As Wall Demolition Starts

Pictures Taken During And After Blaze That Destroyed Downtown Church Early Sunday



Front page of the New Castle News on the day following the fire



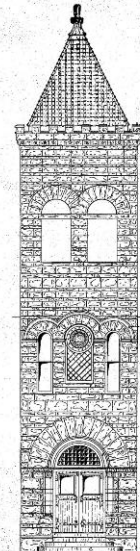
**TO DEDICATE NEW CHURCH SUNDAY**  
**Dr. Montgomery Of Muskingum To Make Address**

*New Castle News Saturday Oct 15, 1927*

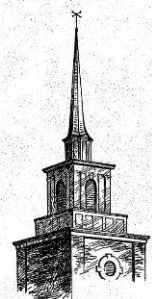
**TWELVE DECADES**  
 THE STORY OF NORTHMINSTER  
 UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**1851 - 1971**



**WHITE HALL**  
1859



**OLD CENTRAL**  
1893



**NORTHMINSTER**  
1952