

Milan Presbyterian Church celebrates 200 years

By CAITLIN NEARHOOD. November 3 2018, Sandusky Register



Pastor Don Loving stands inside the church at Milan Presbyterian Church on Oct. 31.



When Thomas Edison was a successful businessman he donated a light fixture to Milan Presbyterian, which hangs in the church's chapel today.

MILAN

An area church's history stretches back two centuries. Milan Presbyterian Church, at 17 E. Church St., recently celebrated its 200th anniversary. To celebrate, an organist from Heidelberg University in Tiffin performed a concert and a dinner also occurred. Memorabilia from the church's past was displayed, too. About 15-20 people attend the church's 10 a.m. Sunday worship service and pastor Don Loving has served

there for nine years.

The church's history is filled with interesting details. The stained glass windows in the church's sanctuary, for instance, connect to the village's past. They're based on designs from the Moravian Church, a European Protestant denomination that settled in the village in the early 19th century. A chapel building was constructed and donated in the 1800s, but it wasn't connected to the sanctuary until the 20th century.

Within those two centuries, it had connections with its most famous resident. As a young child, Thomas Edison was baptized in the original church, which was built in 1837. In fact, it's just down the street from his birthplace. His mother was a member of the original church, Loving said.

At about the beginning of the 20th century, when Edison was a successful businessman, he donated a light fixture to Milan Presbyterian, which hangs in the church's chapel today. Other churches across the country received similar fixtures. "I've never seen a light fixture like that," Loving said.

In its early days, the church bounced between Congregational and Presbyterian denominations until 1877 when members of both denominations agreed to officially make the church Presbyterian.

Unfortunately, the original church building burned down in 1888 and it was rebuilt soon after. The fire destroyed several buildings on the south side of Church St. (Ohio 113) and it spread to the Presbyterian church building through a bird's nest in the steeple, Loving said.

The church is still able to function, thanks to funds from centuries ago. A number of current members are related to the church's earliest members. "We wouldn't be able to do much today if our ancestors didn't put away money for the church," Loving said.

The church's organ, donated by Austin Organ company in the late 1950s in honor of the wife of the founder John Turnell Austin, who was from Milan, Loving said.

To make an impact, Milan Presbyterian Church often collaborates with St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Edison Methodist Church, among others nearby. "Part of our mission is to support people in the village," Loving said. "We try to do as much as we can with the collaboration between the local churches. Anybody that will work with us, we'll work with them."

Get to know Milan Presbyterian Church

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