

A Brief History of Wilmington Presbyterian Church

Who We Are Now Is Who We Were Before

Wilmington Presbyterian Church was founded on **September 30, 1823**, when the Rev. David Montfort and eight other members gathered in a private home to establish a congregation. At that time, the church was known as **Sharon Presbyterian Church** and was affiliated with the **West Union Presbytery**.

Over the course of its history, the congregation relocated several times and constructed four church buildings. Each transition reflected the congregation's continuing growth, changing needs, and commitment to future generations.

History of Church Buildings

- 1823 – The Rev. David Montfort and eight members organized the congregation as Sharon Presbyterian Church under the West Union Presbytery.
- 1830 – The congregation constructed its first church building and became known as the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, affiliated with the Chillicothe Presbytery.
- 1891 – The second church building was constructed, and the congregation became known as First Presbyterian Church, affiliated with the Cincinnati Presbytery.
 - 1959 – The church became known again as the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, under the Scioto Presbytery.
- 1965 – The congregation constructed its third church building and became affiliated with the Miami Presbytery.
- 2000 – The congregation constructed its fourth church building, which continues to serve the church and community today.

Throughout its history, the congregation relocated five times and constructed four church buildings. Each building reflected the architectural character and vision of its time. These transitions demonstrate a longstanding congregational culture of foresight, innovation, and faith in the future. Rather than focusing only on the needs of the present generation, members repeatedly invested in facilities and ministries that would serve generations yet to come.

Home Church of General James Denver

Wilmington Presbyterian Church has a significant historical connection with **General James Denver**, after whom Denver, Colorado, was named.

After his family moved to Ohio in 1832, his parents became members of this congregation. Members of the Denver family were baptized here, and funeral services for

members of the family were also conducted through the church. Members of the Denver family are buried at Sugar Grove Cemetery, reflecting the family's deep and lasting connection to the congregation and the Wilmington community.

A Vision for Education

From its founding in 1823, Wilmington Presbyterian Church placed a strong emphasis on education and intellectual development. Over the generations, members of the congregation contributed to American society as educators, legal professionals, business leaders, and public officials.

At one point in the church's history, local judges and attorneys also used church facilities for professional gatherings and meetings. This tradition reflects the congregation's historic understanding that Christian faith should encourage education, responsible citizenship, and service to the wider community.

A Church for Its Community

Wilmington Presbyterian Church has sought to be not only a place of worship but also a welcoming presence within the wider community.

The congregation maintains its church building and surrounding gardens with great care. This commitment is not simply for the sake of outward beauty. Rather, it reflects the church's desire to contribute positively to the community and to create a place that neighbors and visitors may enjoy.

The beauty of the church grounds therefore represents a broader commitment to hospitality, community engagement, and responsible stewardship.

Clear Leadership and Shared Ministry

Wilmington Presbyterian Church believes that a healthy congregation depends upon clear leadership, shared responsibility, and faithful service.

Church leaders are encouraged to understand and faithfully fulfill their respective responsibilities while working together for the health and mission of the congregation. At the same time, every member is encouraged to recognize his or her calling to ministry. Through prayer, the study of Scripture, and active participation in the life of the church, the congregation seeks to equip each person to serve faithfully and to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ.