

Welcome to Barratt's Chapel

Built in 1780 on land donated by Philip Barratt, the High Sheriff of Kent County, Barratt's Chapel is the oldest surviving church building in the United States built for Methodist worship. With a seating capacity far exceeding the needs of a local congregation, the Chapel was intended from the first to provide a meeting place for Methodists from all over the Delmarva Peninsula.

Here on November 14, 1784, Francis Asbury, the leader of American Methodists, met Thomas Coke, recently arrived from England as John Wesley's personal emissary. The two men laid plans for the organization of what would become the Methodist Episcopal Church. Also at this meeting the sacrament of communion was celebrated for the first time anywhere by an ordained Methodist preacher with the approval of Wesley. This act of worship was a symbolic declaration that from this point on the Methodist Movement in America would take its own course independent of the Church of England. With this act Methodism became the first truly American-born denomination, therefore Barratt's Chapel became known as the "Birthplace of American Methodism".

Barratt's Chapel is a Heritage Landmark of The United Methodist Church, and is maintained and operated as a ministry of the Commission on Archives and History of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. In addition to the historic Chapel, the complex includes a museum of Methodism on the Delmarva Peninsula, a research library on Methodist history, the archives of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference, and a reconstructed 18th century Vestry.

The facilities are open to the public for tours and research on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Appointments can be arranged for other times by contacting Barb Duffin, the curator of the Museum, at 302-335-5544 or barratts@aol.com.