

WI-63

1887-88

Faith Community Church  
(Old Asbury M. E. Church)  
Salisbury  
Public worship

A benchmark in the history of Methodism for Wicomico County is the founding of Asbury United Methodist Church, established in 1778 during the itinerant ministries of Freeborn Garrettson. Worshiping in private houses or barns during its earliest years, the fledgling Salisbury congregation purchased a lot from Mrs. Noah Nelms in 1801. Construction of a frame church, popularly referred to as the "Old Red Meeting House," took place shortly afterwards, and small improvements were made over the course of the following fifty years. More formally known as "Ebenezer Chapel," the red frame meeting house was replaced in 1856 with a new frame church that burned in the October 1886 fire. Within seven months following the conflagration that destroyed much of Salisbury, the Methodist Episcopal congregation, known since 1872 as Asbury, had drawn together enough funding to start construction of a new church. On July 16, 1887 the *Salisbury Advertiser* announced:

*Work has commenced this week on the new M. E. Church here. The building will be a handsome stone structure....The roof will be of slate and somewhat pyramidal in shape. Mr. E. S. Centman [Sentman] of Port Deposit has the contract for the stone work, and Mr. Geo. Downing, of Wilmington, is superintending the balance of the structure.*

The design of the church, conceived by Baltimore architect Jackson C. Gott, followed a popular architectural trend for the time in the Romanesque Revival style. The square 50' by 50' main sanctuary, covered by a broad pyramidal slate roof, was dominated on its northwest corner by the two story entrance and bell tower surmounted

by a broach spire. Executed in rusticated stone with round arched openings and corner turrets, the style was first popularized by New York architect Henry Hobson Richardson during the 1870s and 1880s. In contrast to the more traditional axial church plan with a center nave and side aisles, the new Asbury was built on a diagonal axis with the pulpit directly across from the corner entrance. The newness of the design to Salisbury encouraged comment. The May 26, 1888 issue of the *Salisbury Advertiser* stated that,

*The building is a handsome structure of Port Deposit stone, laid in red mortar. The main building is 50 x 50 ft. with a wing for a lecture room 40 x 50. The edifice is surmounted by a belfry and spire 86 ft. high. The roof is slate with copper trimmings. The main auditorium is furnished diagonally, with the pulpit in the corner opposite the main entrance, which is through the tower. Behind the pulpit is an organ chamber 14 ft. square. The interior of the building is a model of workmanship and architectural design.*

The cost of the new building reached \$25,000, which was substantially underwritten by William H. Jackson. In 1928 the Asbury congregation erected a large addition, also in stone, on the north end of the 1887 church. Relatively plain by contrast, the front door was enriched by a Gothic Revival arch. Fixed in the northwest corner is a datestone with carved numerals, "1778-1928." By the 1950s the Asbury congregation had expanded sufficiently to outgrow its North Division Street location. A new site for the congregation at the south end of Salisbury was deemed wise decision since three Methodist churches and the Presbyterian church were located within a two block area of one another in the Newtown district. The 1887 Romanesque church was sold to the Faith Community congregation, while the 1928 educational hall was acquired by the Allen Baptist congregation, which had built a Colonial Revival church next door in 1937.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Faith Community Church (Asbury M. E. Church)

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-63

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s):     Architecture  
  Religion
  
2. Geographic Orientation:        Eastern Shore
  
3. Chronological/Development Period(s):   Industrial/Urban Dominance  
  1870-1930
  
4. Resource Type(s):                Church

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common Faith Community Church

**2. Location**

street & number 219 North Division Street  not for publication

city, town Salisbury  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees of Faith Community Church

street & number 219 North Division Street telephone no.:

city, town Salisbury state and zip code MD 21801

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

date 1970  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

# 7. Description

Survey No. WI-63

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Faith Community Church, formerly Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, stands on the east side of North Division Street north of the intersection with US Route 50 in the center of Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The single-story church faces west with the principal gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in 1887-88, the single-story stone church, following an asymmetrical plan, is erected of Port Deposit granite. The main body of the church is squarish in shape and is covered by a steeply pitched pyramidal roof sheathed with slate. Rising at the northwest corner of the sanctuary block is a two-story entrance and bell tower capped by an octagonal broach spire. Extending from the southeast corner is a single-story lateral wing. Attached to the north side of the main block is a single-story gable roofed wing that joins the three-story educational building, erected in 1928, to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century church. During the mid 1950s, the Asbury Methodist congregation decided to relocate their church to a lot in south Salisbury along Camden Avenue. The 1887 building was sold to the Faith Community congregation, while the 1928 educational hall was purchased by the Allen Baptist congregation next door.

The rusticated granite church is supported by a projecting stone foundation defined by a watertable. The rusticated stone, laid in semi-coursed fashion, has a reddish-brown mortar. Most of the roofs and the church spire are covered with slate. The entrance and bell tower, which marks the northwest corner of the main block, is fixed on an diagonal in relationship to the sanctuary. A large double door arched entrance features 21-panel doors topped by a multi-pane colored glass transom. Fixed at the top of the arch is a stone embossed "A.D. 1887." The second floor of the tower is pierced by a paired double arch belfry opening featuring smooth stone columns that support round arches of rusticated stones. A series of four square openings pierce the wall below the belfry arches. Above the paired arches is a series of granite modillion blocks that define the eave line of the tower. The octagonal spire is accented with small conical turrets, one on each corner. The stone turrets are capped by conical slate roofs topped by metal caps.

The west side of the sanctuary block is defined by a series of five round arched windows filled with colored glass. The series of windows is sheltered by a shed roofed extension of the pyramidal roof, and the roof is underpinned by a row of stick brackets finished with chamfered edges. Extending across the wall at the below the edge of the roof is a row of granite cornice blocks. A shed roof dormer is centered on the pyramidal roof. The front of the dormer is pierced by a series of four colored glass windows. The roof are sides are sheathed with slate. Rising atop the pyramidal roof is a pyramidal roofed cupola topped by a metal cross. Each side of the cupola has four square colored glass windows. The southwest

(Continued)





## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

Faith Community Church

(Asbury M. E. Church)

Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

corner of the sanctuary block is defined by a stone turret that is topped by a conical roof of slate. The top of the cone is capped with a metal cover and finial. The south side of the sanctuary is an asymmetrically designed wall with a series of three round arched windows sheltered by a shed-roofed extension of the pyramidal roof. Like the shed roof on the west side, it is supported by a series of stick brackets finished with chamfered edges. West (left) of the shed roof is a pair of colored windows fitted within a segmental arched opening. Below the line of the slate roof, the rusticated granite wall is defined by a row of cornice blocks. Centered on the roof is a long shed roofed dormer with four colored glass windows. Extending to the southeast on a diagonal line with the main block is a side entrance wing of rusticated stone.

The north side of the main block is largely covered by a single story gable roofed administrative and educational building built at the same time as the sanctuary block. Long shed roofed dormers pierced by colored glass windows mark the roof. A centrally located side entrance is sheltered by a shed roof portico pierced by round arched openings. The north end of the administrative wing is terminated in a parapet gable pierced by an elaborate round arched window opening filled with colored glass in leaded panes.

Attached to the north side of the 1887 church is a three-story, granite wing erected in 1928 as an expansion of the Sunday School and meeting rooms. The large ell-shaped granite addition is marked by a datestone on its northwest corner. The stone is embossed "1778-1928." Centered on the Division Street elevation is a Gothic arched entrance. The three floors are pierced by paired and single window openings. The medium pitched hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the eaves are open with the rafter ends exposed.

The interior was not seen.

*Salisbury Advertiser*, May 26, 1888

### The New Asbury Church Dedicated by Bishop Foster

The new Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, which has just been completed at a cost of \$25,000 was formally dedicated last Sunday...The dedicatory sermon was preached by Bishop Foster, of Boston...

The building, which will seat from 900 to 1000, including the lecture room, was crowded. After the services Rev. Mr. Martindale announced to the audience that there was a debt of \$8,000 resting upon the church. The taking of subscriptions was immediately begun and resulted in raising of nearly \$2,000.

The building is a handsome structure of Port Deposit stone, laid in red mortar. The main building is 50 x 50 ft. with a wing for lecture room 40 x 50. The edifice is surmounted by a belfry and spire 86 ft. high. The roof is slate with copper trimmings. The main auditorium is furnished diagonally, with the pulpit in the corner opposite the main entrance, which is through the tower. Behind the pulpit is an organ chamber 14 ft. square. The interior of the building is a model of workmanship and architectural design. Mr. Jackson C. Gott, of Baltimore, is the architect; the execution of the design has been under the charge of Mr. Geo. Downing, of Wilmington, formerly of this town. The building is of Romanesque style of architecture.

# NEW ASBURY Church Here Is Beauty And Splendor

Immediately following World War II, when service personnel were returning home and life was returning to normalcy, Asbury Methodist Church members began to think of enlarging their church facilities.

A building committee asked architects to make studies and recommendations as to how the sanctuary could be enlarged and improved. The committee soon found that all ideas and suggestions involved additional ground which could not be obtained.

Committee members were Avery W. Hall, John W. Downing

Sr., W. N. Jackson Sr., W. H. Jackson II, O. W. Dashiell, Thomas C. Roe, George P. Chandler, Everett Hearn, S. Norman Holland Sr., Miss Dorothy Mitchell, and Mrs. Eugene Messick.

The Peninsula Methodist Conference, too, was beginning to think of moving Methodist churches to the outskirts of the city instead of having three large churches clustered in one section of Salisbury in a short five-block area.

IN THE EARLY 1950's a study of Methodism in Salisbury was

made and resulted in the decision that two of the three large downtown churches should move, one to the south end of the city and another to the east.

After many meetings and much thought, Asbury voted to move to an 11-acre site on Camden Ave. Ext. which had been purchased for \$63,000. In 1955, interviews with architects began and many meetings were held in which members expressed their opinions and views. On April 11, 1956, a contract was signed with Harold E. Wagoner, a Philadelphia architect.

Asburians agreed on a modified brick and marble colonial design with alternates to omit the chapel and a new Fellowship Hall. The committee began to work on the selection of a heating and lighting system and the proper place to put the new organ.

April of 1959 found the committee working on problems such as the type boiler and fuel to be used, where to air condition and where not to, what colors to use in the interior, and the type of furnishings. By the end of the year, many meetings had been held and plans had been approved and arrangements for bids and financing made.

In March of 1960, J. Roland Dashiell and Sons Co. of Salisbury had submitted the lowest bid for the new church in the amount of \$1,307,660. That was still too high and figures were cut, plans modified and omissions allowed for. It took nearly a year to do this. A final figure of \$921,259 was agreed upon on Feb. 14, 1962.

EVERYTHING FROM good acoustical equipment to pleasing colors for the walls in a variety of shades, pew cushions, and other

attractive furnishings in the colonial style had been checked.

There was much enthusiasm for a three lancet leaf gold window to be in the rear of the chancel with 15 colored medallions depicting the life of Christ and the history of Methodism, its founder, John Wesley, and the early circuit riders who brought Methodism to the Eastern Shore. Honor was to be paid to Freeborn Garretson who brought the new religion to Salisbury, and to Francis Asbury for whom the church is named.

Many members felt that in addition to the window designed by the architect, they would want the old memorial windows and plaques to be a part of the new church. They decided to have a memorial corridor alongside the sanctuary and to take the name plates from memorial windows, the complete Shepherd and Flock and the Railroad Windows and mount them in Memorial Corridor. The corridor was to be lighted so they could easily be seen.

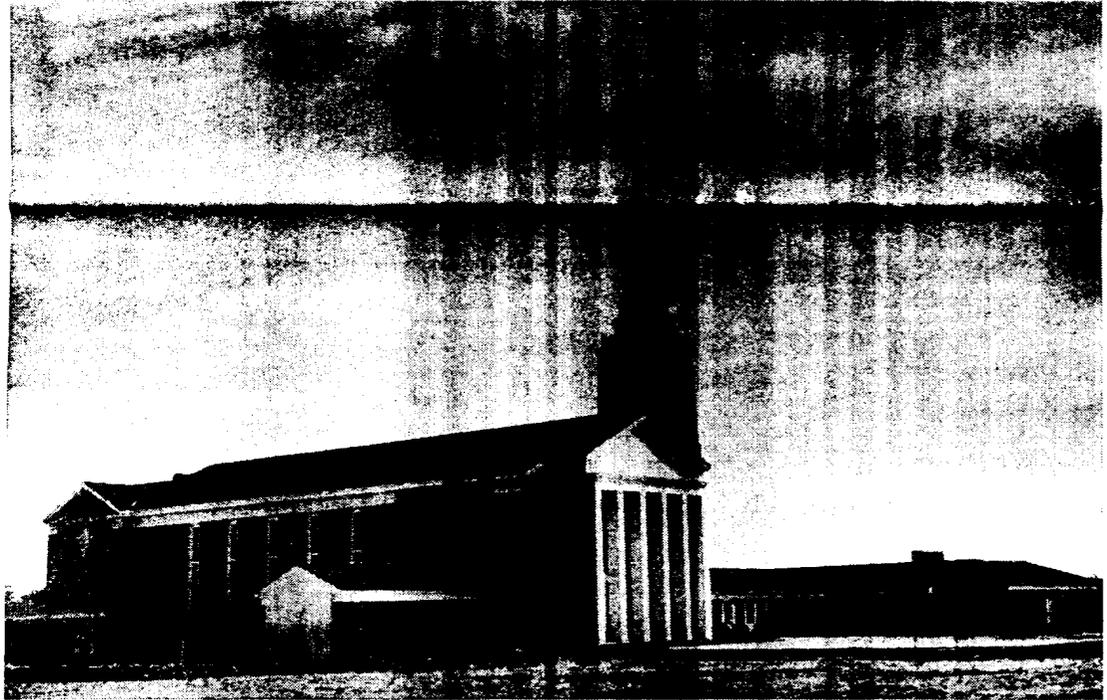
THE ST. FRANCIS of Assisi windows they decided to store and use in the chapel when it is built.

Financing was described by the pastor, the Rev. J. Robert Mackey, as tougher than the design planning but finally, the committee made arrangements to borrow \$400,000 from the Salisbury National Bank, the First National Bank of Baltimore, and the Savings Bank of Baltimore. The loan is to be repaid in 15 years in monthly payments of \$3,376 at an interest rate of 6 per cent.

Cushwa over-size brick was chosen with the grape vine joint specified. The best acoustical arrangements were made.

The color scheme of the architect was approved by Miss Dorothy Mitchell, local artist and a member of the church. A cathedral or cherry red was chosen for the carpet on the marble floor of the sanctuary with pew cushions of rose beige velvet. The windows of the sanctuary are narrow and of clear glass and white fluted columns are at intervals along the walls.

Columns on the front of the (See CHURCH, Page 4)



Spire 155 feet high and marble columns grace new Asbury Methodist Church.

## Asbury History Dates Back 185 Years

It was Nov. 11, 1778. The Revolutionary War was in full progress and Washington's troops at Valley Forge were suffering from cold and hunger.

Freeborn Garretson, 26, one of the first native Methodist preachers, was riding from Broad Creek, Somerset County, to Salisbury, also Somerset County, to preach at the invitation of Mrs. Noah Nelms, wife of a prominent Salisbury merchant.

Mrs. Nelms had heard the young preacher when she visited

friends in Delaware and her enthusiasm for his preaching prompted her to invite him to her home to speak to her friends.

BUT "THESE new Methodists" had enemies everywhere they tried to spread their religion and the sheriff was sent to take Mr. Garretson to jail. The sheriff was prevailed upon to release his prisoner and he went on to his next assignment.

This meeting marked the beginnings of the Methodist Society

and Asbury Methodist Church of Salisbury.

The new church group did not have smooth sailing. Opposition grew in some sections and when the young preacher returned to Salisbury the next year, a group of the so-called "best people" rallied and sent spies to hear him and to discover the best time to seize the circuit rider. One of the spies was so thrilled with the talk that he wept, returned to his friends, and dared them to touch the speaker.

After this event, there was little opposition to Methodism. William James associated himself with the new religion and he and Mrs. Nelms were undoubtedly the first Methodists in Salisbury.

THE METHODIST Society met at the home of George Parker, now known as Leonard's Mill, between Asbury and Delmar, in the parlor in winter and in the barn across the road in the summer.

The society purchased a lot "in the vicinity of Salisbury," since Salisbury did not then extend to the church property, from Mrs. Nelms for \$50 to be paid in installments and in 1801 built the first church. This is the property on which Asbury Church has stood for 162 years. The small red frame building was known as the Old Red Meeting House.

In 1818, the chapel was plastered and a stove installed. This meeting house was occupied until 1856 when a new frame church

was built on the site of the new stone church at a cost of \$3,500. The old meeting house was torn down and a small church school building put up and used as a temporary postoffice until the fire of 1886. The church school was built from materials from the old meeting house.

In 1887, the present stone church was built and has given 86 years of continuous service.

THE DEED to the property (See HISTORY, Page 9)

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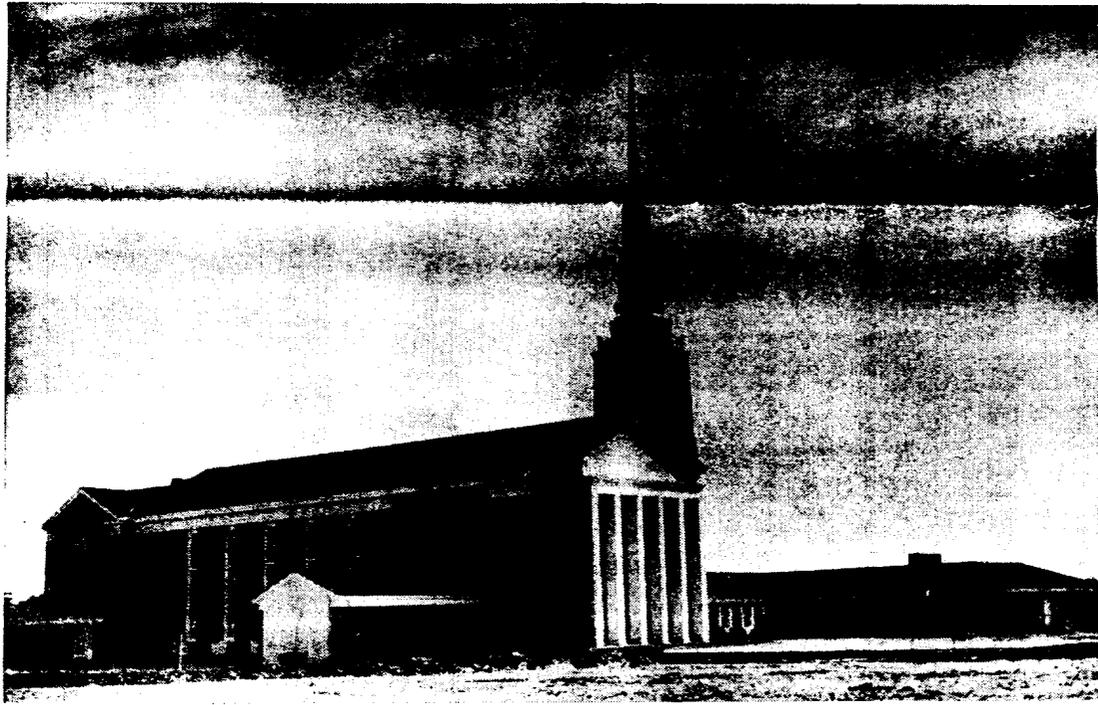
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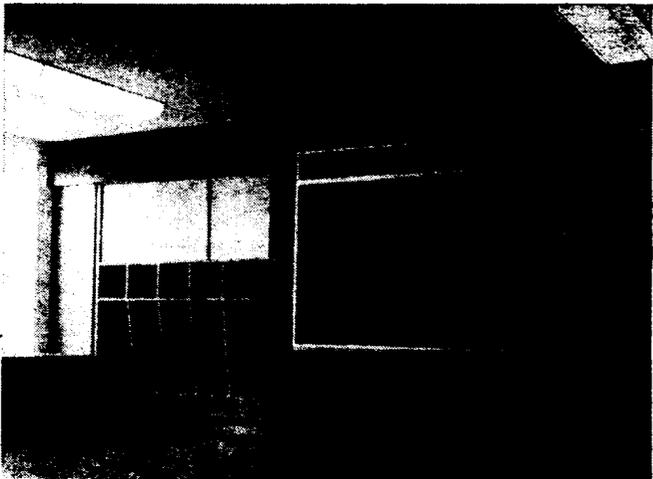
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WI-63



Class rooms are spacious with chalk boards, shelves, and plenty of closet space. In each room, a movie screen is attached to the wall.

Continued From Page One

**HISTORY**

dated Aug. 22, 1807, called the church the Methodist Episcopal Ebenezer Chapel. On Sept. 11, 1872, the church was incorporated as the Asbury Methodist Church of Salisbury.

The new church was built of Port Deposit granite and a new parsonage was also built and donated to the church by William H. Jackson who had contributed generously to the new church. The parsonage on N. Division St. is still in use.

Other noteworthy facts about the church are a revival which began in 1823 and lasted for two years, stirring up a good deal of

religious fervor and the first Sunday school which was organized in 1837 and met at 2 p.m. on Sundays. A Monday night class was organized and David Vance was leader from 1823 to 1862 when he died. Mr. Vance had won national prominence as a leader against slavery and as head of a temperance movement.

THE SOCIAL and educational building, Fellowship Hall, came into being in 1928 when Mr. Jackson matched every \$100 contribution with a \$40 contribution. The cost of the building and furnishings amounted to \$102,000. Asbury's Fellowship Hall provided the first church-centered teen-age recreation center for the

youth of the county and for service personnel in nearby Chincoteague. It has housed many civic activities including Girl Scout hobby shows, exhibits, dramatic and musical entertainments, and similar functions. The building was dedicated on Oct. 21, 1928 when a \$10,000 subscription was made to the church.

In 1947, the church had grown so large that parking had become a problem and a parking lot on Garrettsen Place, across from the church, was purchased for the use of members. The next year, the present minister, the Rev. J. Robert Mackey, came to the church which has grown steadily through the years to its present membership of 1506.

WE ARE VERY PROUD  
TO HAVE TAKEN  
PART IN THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF  
THE NEW ASBURY  
METHODIST CHURCH

**WOOD RICHARDSON  
AND SON**

Furnishing The Shore For 35-Years With The Finest In Roofing And Sheet Metal Work.

CLEMWOOD STREET

SALISBURY, MD.

WE . . .  
ARE PLEASED  
TO HAVE FURNISHED  
THE LOVELY CARPET  
FOR THE BEAUTIFUL NEW  
ASBURY CHURCH

. . . I  
AM ESPECIALLY  
PLEASED TO HAVE  
BEEN CHOSEN TO LAY THE  
BEAUTIFUL CARPETING FOR THE  
NEW ASBURY METHODIST CHURCH



## 8.1 SIGNIFICANCE

Faith Community Church (Asbury M. E. Church)  
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

a popular architectural trend for the time in the Romanesque Revival style. The square 50' by 50' main sanctuary, covered by a broad pyramidal slate roof, was dominated on its northwest corner by the two story entrance and bell tower surmounted by a broach spire. Executed in rusticated stone with round arched openings and corner turrets, the style was first popularized by New York architect Henry Hobson Richardson during the 1870s and 1880s. In contrast to the more traditional axial church plan with a center nave and side aisles, the new Asbury was built on a diagonal axis with the pulpit directly across from the corner entrance. The newness of the design to Salisbury encouraged comment. The May 26, 1888 issue of the *Salisbury Advertiser* stated that,

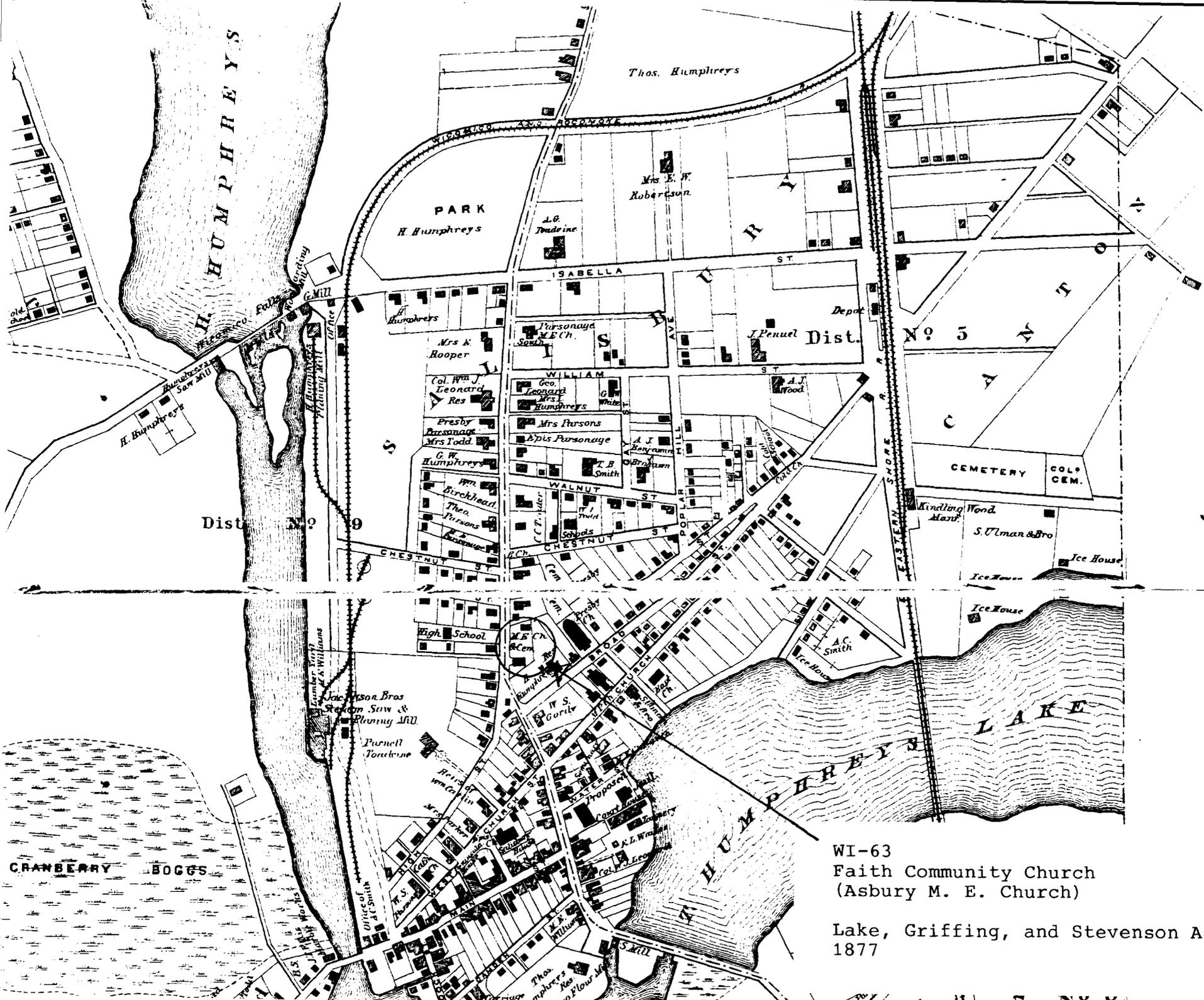
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<sup>4</sup> *Salisbury Advertiser*, May 26, 1888.

<sup>5</sup> Hallman, p. 344.



WI-63  
Faith Community Church  
(Asbury M. E. Church)

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas  
1877

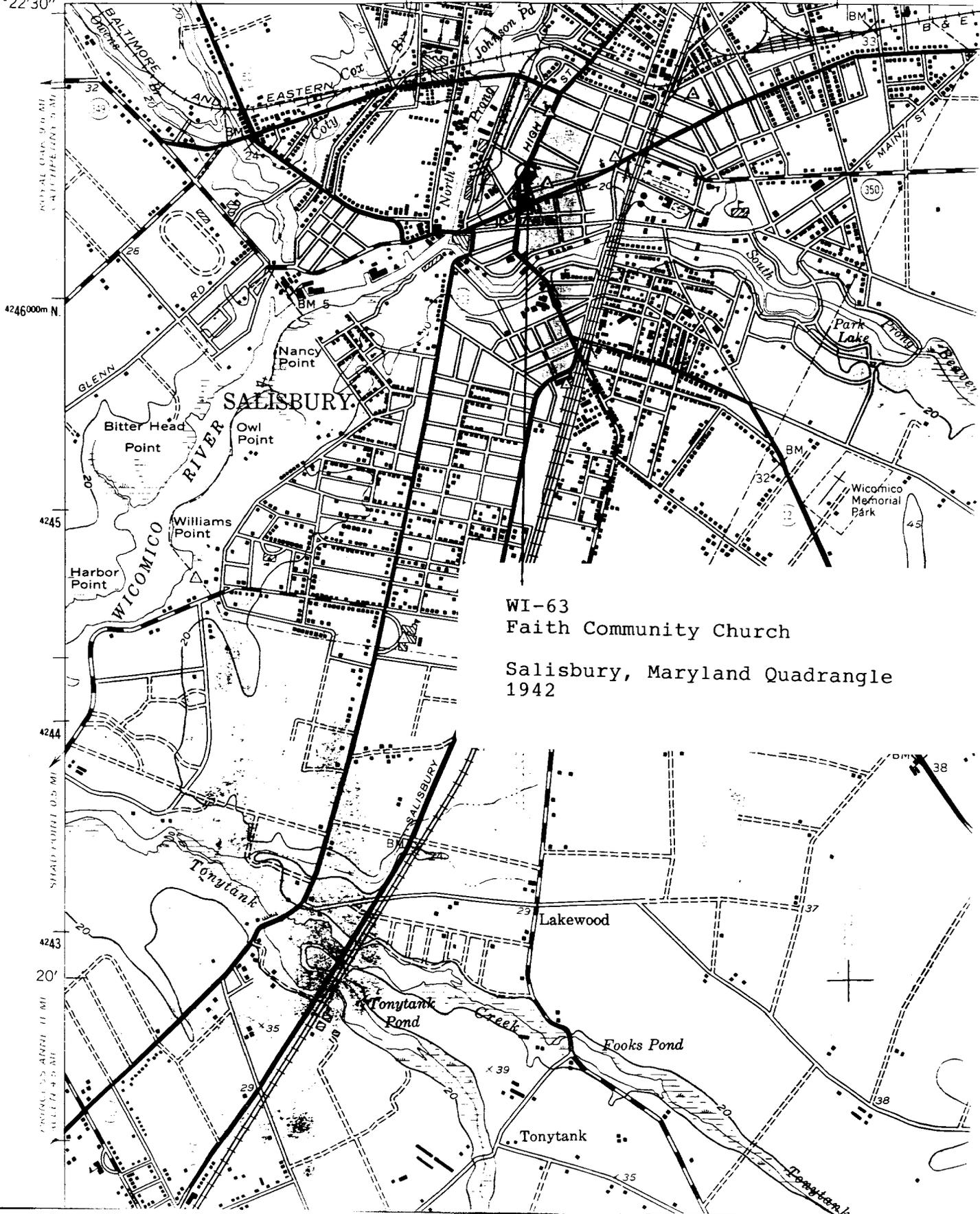
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5860 1 NW  
(HEBRON)

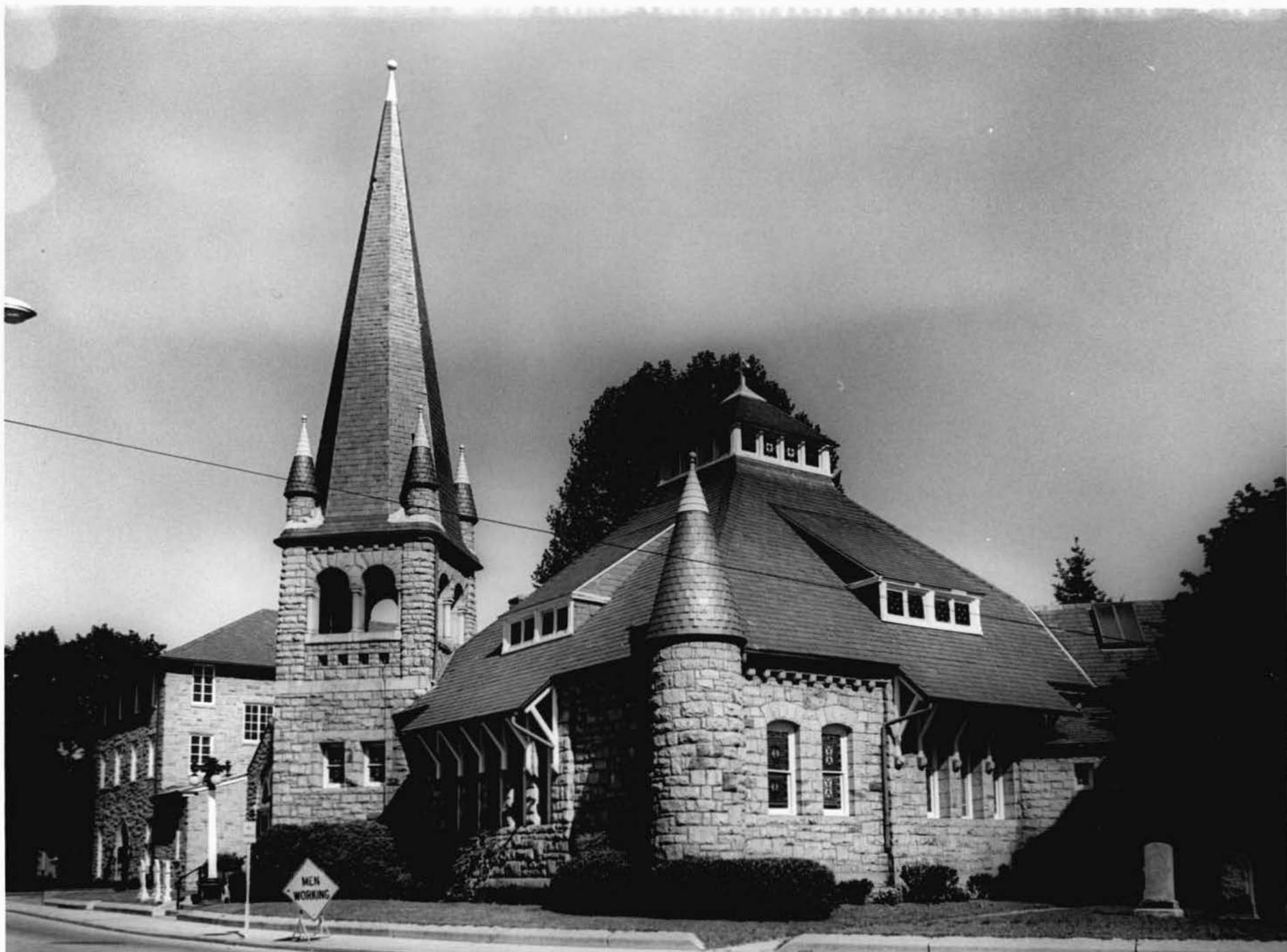
75°37'30"  
38°22'30"

447000m E

35'



WI-63  
Faith Community Church  
Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle  
1942



WI-63 Faith Community Church

W63

1972 Photo