



**The FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**  
in PHILADELPHIA

est. 1698

# History of First Church

1682-Today

William Penn arrives in America and founds Philadelphia.

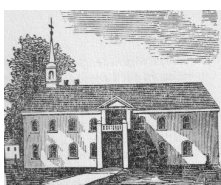
First Presbyterian Church names Jedediah Andrews as their first Minister. First Church becomes the center for the denomination in the new world.



The first Presbytery is organized in America at First Church.



Second Presbyterian is founded by members of First Church during a period of religious revival. The Old Academy (4<sup>th</sup> & Arch) serves as its first home.



The Liberty Bell arrives in Philadelphia. The crack will appear when the bell is rung in July 1776 announcing the Declaration of Independence.



Three members of First Church join others in signing the Declaration of Independence: Dr. Benjamin Rush, James Wilson, and Thomas McKean.



Buttonwood Hall is virtually destroyed by the occupying British forces who use it as a stable and burn the pews for firewood.

The Constitution Convention meets in Philadelphia and two members of First Church join the framers, proclaiming The United States of America: James Wilson and Jared Ingersoll.

Philadelphia houses the new government of the United States. John Adams and other leaders attend First Church.



Buttonwood is demolished and replaced on the site at Market Street (High Street).

First Church moves to Washington Square (7<sup>th</sup> and Spruce).



Fairmont Park opened as the largest city park in the world as Philadelphia expands westward.

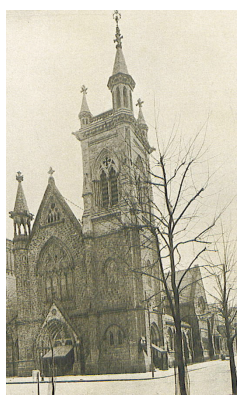
The end of the Civil War finds Philadelphia at the center of the economic boom that ensues.

Second Church completes its building at 21<sup>st</sup> and Walnut. The proposed tower is delayed due to a lack of funding and redesigned due to the the agreement not to build above William Penn's statue.

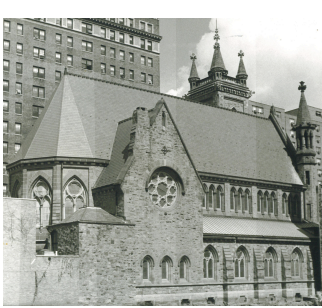


Second Church formalizes an annual concert series to provide free community access to classical and innovative music.

Second Presbyterian hires Frank Furness, perhaps Philadelphia's most recognized architect, to complete a tower for the building reminiscent of the design by H. A. Sims.



Second Church becomes a center for worship and relaxation for US troops on leave.



First and Second Presbyterian reunite at the Walnut Street location.

First Church connects its two principal buildings and further modernizes the facility.

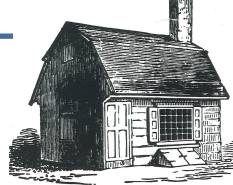
First Church undertakes a capital campaign to renovate the interior of the church hall and repair the stained glass windows of the church.

First Church establishes MANNA to provide meals to AIDS victims and helps establish Philadelphia Interfaith Action (PIA) to help the disadvantaged find political voice.

The Tercentenary campaign restores one of America's finest church organs.



1682



Francis Makemie preaches to immigrant Presbyterians gathered at the Barbadoes Store at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Chestnut.

1698

THE BARBADOES STORE, IN WHICH THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FIRST MET, 1698.

1704



First Presbyterian moves to meeting house (Buttonwood Hall) at Market and Bank Streets.

1706

"Among the Buttonwood Trees"

1734

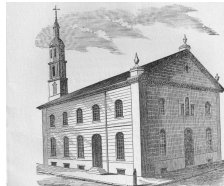
Benjamin Franklin attends First Church regularly to hear Samuel Hemphill's enlightening sermons.



1743

Among the leaders of the Great Awakening are George Whitfield and Gilbert Tennent, the first pastor of Second Church.

1750



Second Presbyterian builds their first church building (3<sup>rd</sup> and Arch).

1751

1763

The Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian Wars and Britain begins to tax the colonies. The Mason-Dixon Line is surveyed establishing the southern border of Pennsylvania.



1776

1777

The British occupy Philadelphia after defeating George Washington's army at the Battle of Brandywine.



1781

1787

The British surrender at Yorktown and Philadelphia begins to rebuild. The Articles of Confederation unite the colonies into their first form of government and select Philadelphia as the center of government.

1790

1792

The mint of the United States opens in Philadelphia – a "half dime" is the first coin minted. Elders at First Church are involved in the new undertaking.

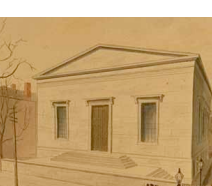


1793

1798

First Church celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

1823

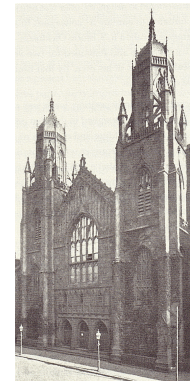


Second Presbyterian moves to 7<sup>th</sup> and Arch under the leadership of Cornelius Cuyler.

1837

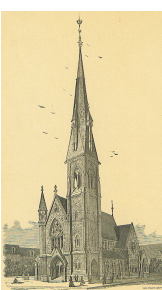
1844

Calvary Presbyterian builds at 15<sup>th</sup> and Locust by members of First and Second Presbyterian churches who cross Broad Street following the growing population.



1853

1865

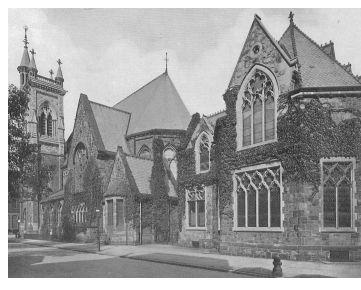


Second Church hires Henry Augustus Sims to build the first gothic revival church in Philadelphia, leading example of Victorian architecture in the United States.

1869

1872

Second Church engages leading Philadelphia architect Theophilus Chandler to build a Parish Hall on the grounds in a style complementary to the church building.



1884

1888

First Church celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

1898

1901

The Parish Hall is staffed by church volunteers to nurse sick children during the great influenza epidemic.

1919

1928

First Church and Cavalry unite and select the Cavalry Church site for worship.

1942



First Church selects Harold Waggoner to modernize the building.

1950

1954

First Church organizes a Council on Community Concerns to address inner city problems and challenges.

1955

1960

First Church sponsors the inter-generational Reading Buddies program

1968

1985



1990s

1998

First Church celebrates its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

2000s

The Missions Committee organizes teams to help rebuild communities including; Point Breeze in Philadelphia, Pearlinton, Mississippi, and Mante, Mexico.

2011

First Church launches a \$1.2 million, 3-year capital campaign "Preserving First for our Future" to refurbish its historic church building and improve accessibility for congregational activities and numerous community organizations.