

Steeped in history



Bob Gay/The Dominion Post

Located on a hilltop on Mt. Zion Road outside of Fairmont, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church is one of the oldest churches in the area. It was founded in 1829 and has held services in this building since 1875.

Mt. Zion congregation founded in 1829

MORE PICTURES of Mount Zion United Methodist Church. **Page 4-A.**

The Dominion Post

Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Fairmont is said to be one of the oldest churches in Marion County.

Mount Zion was founded about 1829, when Frederick VanGilder, son of Revolutionary War soldier Jacob VanGilder, began holding prayer meetings in area homes.

In 1833, Frederick and his sister Sarah bought a house in the Mount Zion community and opened it for church services and Sunday school.

In 1846, a log church was built on land donated by Frederick and the Mount Zion Cemetery was established.

The church congregation grew until the old log church — 18-by-24 feet — could not hold it. So, in 1875, a new church was built.



Many elaborate gravestones, including some with messages carved into the stones, are found in the Mt. Zion Cemetery, located beside the church. Some of the graves date to the early years of the church's existence.

Bob Gay/
The Dominion Post

Not quite 200 people gave anywhere from 10 cents to \$148.25 for a total of \$1,561.66, to build the new church. That building is 40-by-30 feet.

A bell tower was erected on the building by Clark Kincaid

and Eldora Moran, and that bell still rings every Sunday morning.

The Rev. Claude Kinty is the pastor of Mount Zion UMC.

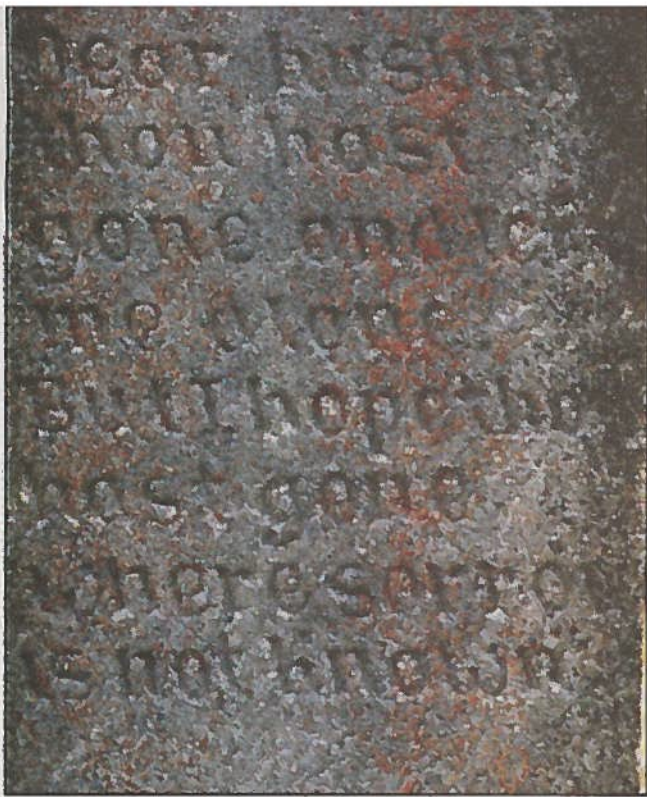
INFORMATION from Mount Zion United Methodist Church history,

MOUNT ZION



One of the oldest churches in Marion County, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church was founded in 1829 and has been holding services in the present building since 1875.

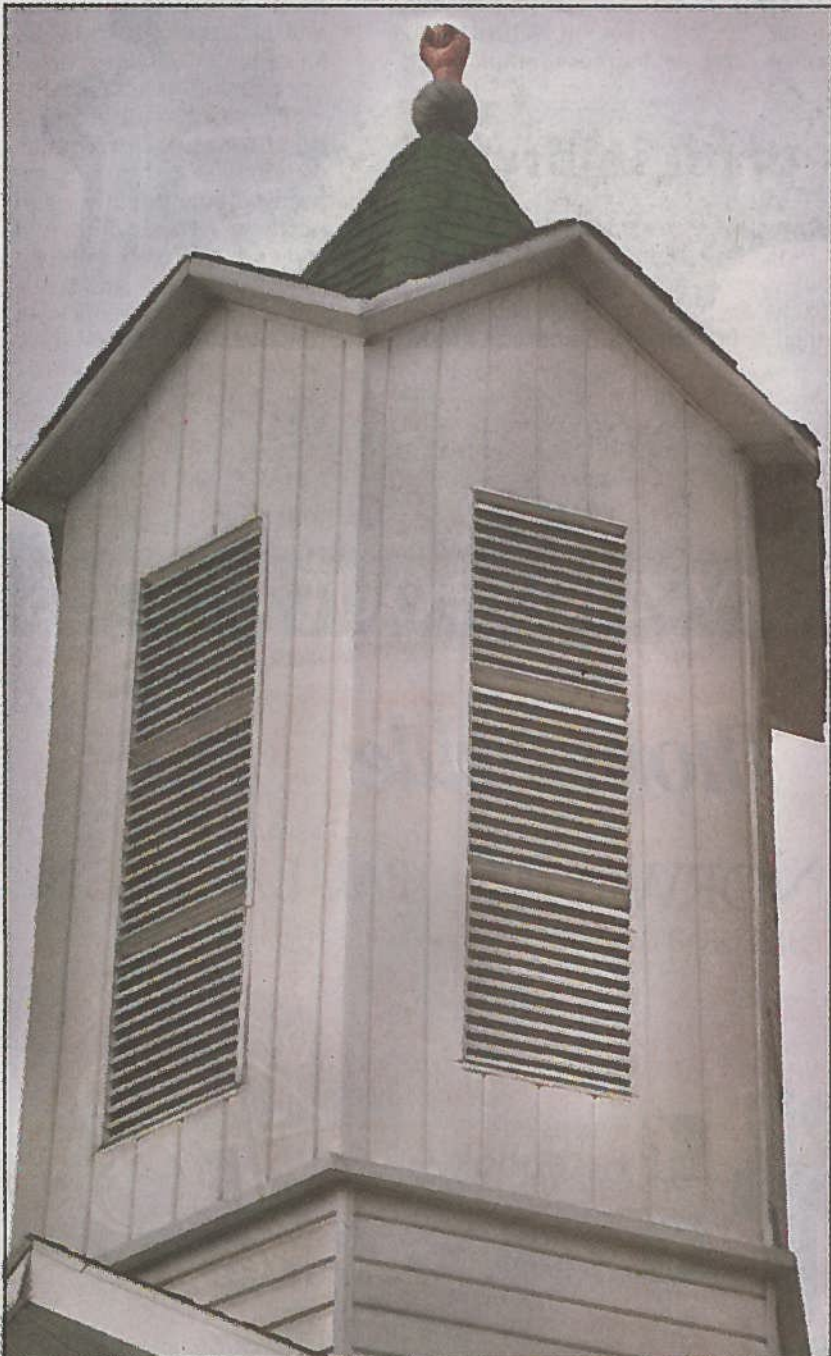
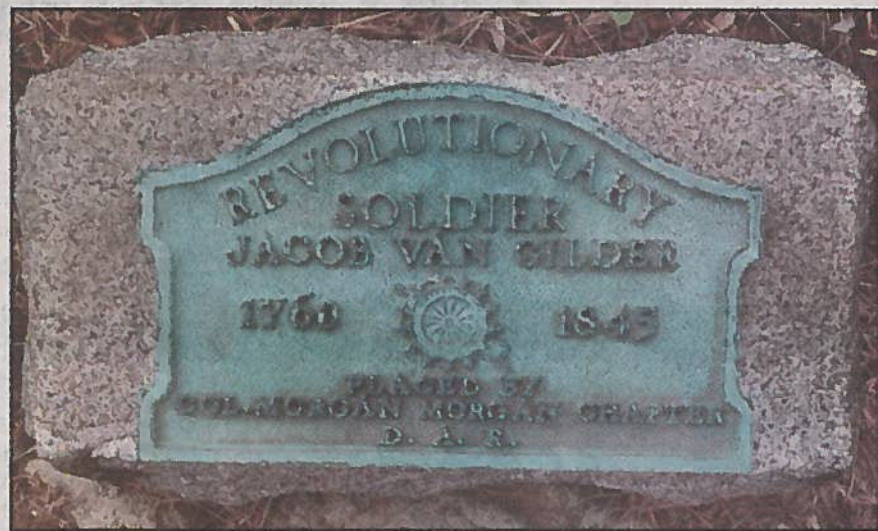
Graced with more than 150 years of history



Faded letters carved into a headstone carry the message from a grieving wife that reads "Dear husband, thou hast gone and left me alone, But I hope thou hast gone where sorrow is not known."



A stone plaque (above) attached to the front wall of the church shows the construction date of the chapel. A memorial plaque (right) placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution is attached to the gravestone of Revolutionary War soldier Jacob Van Gilder, who died in 1845.



The church's old steeple contains a bell that is rung for services every Sunday morning. A stone atop the steeple is carved into the shape of a finger pointing toward Heaven.



This heart-shaped gravestone for a 6-month-old girl is one of the many in the Mt. Zion Cemetery that have an unusual shape or elaborate carvings.