



THE HISTORY OF LANCASTER ALLIANCE CHURCH

The Lancaster Alliance Church is part of a world-wide denomination, which grew out of the spiritual experience and missionary vision of Dr. Albert Benjamin Simpson. As a Presbyterian minister and pastor of the prestigious Thirteenth Street Church of New York City in the mid 1800's, Dr. Simpson was impressed by the appalling spiritual needs of the immigrant hordes flooding into the port city during the latter third of the nineteenth century. He initially invited these people to worship as a part of the church, but when his congregation frowned upon this, he eventually left the church to serve the immigrants and those beyond our shores without Christ.

February 1881, was the date, and the Calcedonian Hall, New York City, the place where Dr. Simpson organized his first group of "irregulars" around a simple constitution which emphasized evangelism and the deeper life. This unique congregation came to be known as the New York Gospel Tabernacle and proclaimed the four-fold gospel of Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King.

Some of those attracted to the deeper life and missionary emphasis of the Christian and Missionary Alliance were residents of Lancaster County. When possible they traveled to New York City or Philadelphia to participate in Alliance meetings. Upon returning they shared their new-found truth and enthusiasm with neighbors and friends. These meetings for Bible study and prayer were held in many different homes, but eventually met regularly each Sunday afternoon at Cedar Home. Today this house faces the Lititz Pike immediately north of Route 30. In March 1893, a Sunday School was organized at this location. Following the Sunday School hour, a layman read a chapter from the Bible and commented upon it. Up to date prayer requests from the Alliance fields of India, China and Africa were a significant part of each service. For the convenience of those who found travel to Cedar Home difficult, simultaneous meetings were held in other homes around Lancaster County.

Large summer conferences of the Christian and Missionary Alliance were held at Rocky Springs Park during the early 1900's. Alliance people from all parts of the east would make their way here to hear Dr. Simpson preach and to give to the missionary effort. During one such week of meetings an offering \$51,000 was received – not a small amount for the early 1900's!

In 1899 the several groups meeting throughout Lancaster County united and a growing membership led to the purchase in December 1903 of a permanent church home at 237 West Chestnut Street in Lancaster. This remained their home until a move was made to a larger facility in 1957 at Wabank and Euclid Avenues. Significant church growth under the pastorate of Dr. Randall Corbin led the congregation to step out in faith and build the initial building at 210 Pitney Road in 1982. God honored this step of faith with explosive growth and in 1991 under the leadership of Pastor Steve Hammer; the present sanctuary and education wing was completed.