

Chronological History of Fairlington United Methodist Church

Updated October 2021

- May 15, 1943 Fairlington community opened its first unit of apartments.
- June 1943 Miss Margaret Rue, missionary on leave from China, was sent to Fairlington by the Virginia Methodist Conference to Contact Methodist families. She helped organize the church, circles and the Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS).
- October 1943 The Virginia Conference sent the Reverend Don L. Cole as pastor to Fairlington to organize a Methodist Church. During that winter, Sunday Vesper services were held each Sunday night in homes. Church bulletins were printed and distributed to all apartment units in Fairlington.
- February 5, 1944 The Organizing Conference of the Fairlington Methodist Church was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lee, 3429 South Utah St. Dr. A.P. Williams, District Superintendent, presided. The first official Board and Trustees were elected.
- February 28, 1944 A special session of the Quarterly Conference was called to petition the Court of Fairfax County for permission to borrow \$3,000. From the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Church to purchase land on Leesburg Pike.
- April 9, 1944 Easter Sunday: The first service of Fairlington United Methodist Church was held in the Fairlington Elementary School. Dr. Williams gave the sermon. The twenty-eight charter members of the church were received at this time. The first session of the church school was held at 10:00 am. The average attendance during the year was 200.
- July 21, 1944 The third Quarterly Conference of the year produced time agreements or resolutions drawn for borrowing and accepting gifts for a total cost of \$37,000 to build the church. The total cost to build the church was \$ 42,414. 97.
- August 4, 1944 Mr. H. Eugene Peacock came as the second pastor to advance building the church. Mr. Cole left in the fall.
- December 17, 1944 A ground breaking ceremony was held.
- May 1, 1945 The church corner stone was laid.
- August 26, 1945 The church was consecrated and the first service was held.
- August 29, 1945 The first organ was dedicated. It was financed through WSCS fund-raising activities.
- 1950 Plans began for expansion of the physical space. The Methodist Men's group was established.
- 1951 Two- and one-half acres of additional land were purchased from Brooking Estate.
- March 11, 1951 Dual services for both church services and church school began – 9:30 and 11:00 am.
- November 27, 1951 The first joint Thanksgiving service was held with Fairlington Presbyterian church.
- September 19, 1952 A loyalty dinner was held at Washington Lee High School.
- April 26, 1953 The ground breaking service for the new sanctuary was held.
- September 13, 1953 The ceremony for laying of the cornerstone was held. A copy of the early history of the church was sealed in the stone.

- February 21, 1954 The last Sunday morning worship service was held in the "Little Church".
- February 28, 1954 The first Sunday morning worship service was held in the new sanctuary.
- March 6, 1954 On Saturday evening the official Board held a banquet to celebrate the of the new church. The honored guests for the occasion were the Rev. and Mrs. R. Beverly Watkins, District Superintendent and Mrs. John H. Pearson, and Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lee, in whose name the church was founded February 5, 1943.
- March 7, 1954 An open house was held. That Sunday all 1200 members attended and 100 more were received into membership on the same day.
- 1954 The old sanctuary was converted into church school classrooms and office space.
- 1956 Fairlington offered space to Beth El Hebrew Congregation while their new synagogue was under construction. Met in social hall for Sabbath services. The men's group of each congregation decided to have dinners each year to commemorate their relationship which continues today.
- 1957 A parsonage at 1416 Key Drive, Alexandria was purchased.
- December 5, 1957 The Methodist Men began sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop No. 120.
- May, 1959 Plans began for a new educational building.
- May 20, 1959 A loyalty dinner was held at Wakefield High School.
- April 24, 1960 A groundbreaking ceremony for the new educational building was held in the afternoon.
- September 11, 1960 Dedication of the chapel as a memorial to V. Elizabeth Foster.
- February 4, 1961 An official Board dinner was held in the Fellowship Hall.
- February 5, 1961 The 17th anniversary of the founding of Fairlington Methodist Church was held along with the consecration of the new educational building.
- August 1961 The parsonage at 1416 Key Drive, Alexandria was sold.
- August 1961 A four-bedroom, split level house at 1317 Juliana Place, Alexandria was purchased as the new parsonage for the senior minister and his family.
- September 1967 Two rooms on the ground level of the educational wing were redecorated as a recreation area for youth. They chose the name "Blue Potato Coffee House." This preceded the Fellowship Hall.
- October 16, 1968 A charter was issued for the United Methodist Women.
- February, 1972 The Heritage room was dedicated.
- October, 1973 The Fairlington United Methodist Women became active in the downtown ministries Tele-Help project which later became known as ALIVE.
- 1974 Wesley Housing Development Corporation established an office within the FUMC building.
- March 23, 1975 An entry ramp making the sanctuary accessible to people with disabilities was dedicated.

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| September, 1978 | In collaboration with Wesley Housing Development Corporation Fairlington UMC supported Strawbridge Square Apartments in Lincolnia, opened as rental housing for low-income families. |
| 1978 | Friends and relatives of Marie King Smith and John Edward McLean, Sr. contributed hand bells to the church. |
| January 7, 1979 | An FUMC organ fund promotional committee was appointed. |
| November 1, 1981 | Fairlington UMC became a covenant member of Bread for the World. William Schminkey was the FUMC liaison with this hunger abatement movement. He also started the St. Andrew Club. |
| August 1, 1984 | The sanctuary communion table was dedicated in memory of Jack Miller. |
| August 13, 1984 | The Holtkamp organ was installed in the main sanctuary. |
| October 1, 1984 | Karen Marquardt Gardner became the first woman Associate Minister of Fairlington United Methodist church. |
| August 24, 1986 | The sanctuary altar cross was dedicated in memory of Emily HakeL. |
| 1987 | FUMC hosted a health clinic for adolescents until the City of Alexandria could complete arrangements for a longer-range location. |
| July 2, 1987 | First youth participation in Mountain Top project in the Cumberland mountains, Tennessee. |
| July 22, 1987 | A Social Hall Renovation Task Force was appointed. |
| February 1988 | Three FUMC congregational meetings on HIV/AIDS were held: "A Theology of AIDS," by Rev James S. Petty; "How to talk with children about HIV/AIDS," by Anne Wilson, MSN; and "How will we respond to AIDS" by Rev Wendy Tate. After these meetings FUMC agreed to establish a nursery and day care center for children affected by or infected with HIV in collaboration with the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry (NOVAM) |
| November 12, 1991 | The Board of Trustees reported that the FUMC land, buildings and equipment had a value of \$4.2 million. |
| December 29, 1992 | The Social Hall renovation was completed and consecrated as "Fellowship Hall" |
| June 6, 1993 | Celebration of Fairlington's Golden Anniversary. |
| 1997 | The Open Your Hearts to Open Our Doors campaign began to make the church building more accessible to people with disabilities. Two bathrooms and several water fountains were renovated and two handicapped accessible doorways as well as a lift were installed. |
| 2013 | FUMC became a formal reconciling congregation. |
| January 2014 | The Church Council established an Exploratory Building Committee "to explore the linkage between our mission and our current facilities" including best practices for identifying and growing the congregation's strengths. |
| May, 2015 | Participation in the Bi-District 75th anniversary celebration. Fairlington submitted the following "brief": |

“Founded in February 1944, Fairlington has been a social justice advocate for more than 70 years, partnering to support the establishment of Wesley Housing Development Corporation, Strawbridge Square apartments in Lincolnia to provide low income housing, and ALIVE! and became a covenant member of Bread for the World that evolved into the St. Andrew Club to address hunger. Fairlington has sponsored a health clinic for teens, meeting and education space for children affected by HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities and for more than 35 community and multi-faith groups. In becoming a reconciling congregation in 2013 our church continues to live out its calling to welcome and serve all people.”

- July 2015 The Council approved the formation of a formal Building Committee as described in the UMC Book of Discipline (See also the full description of other activities related to this long term planning effort in a notebook titled, “Long Range Planning” in the Heritage Room.
- 2015 In consultation with the pastors and the Church Council FUMC’s Blueprint for Mission Team identified the church’s mission focus areas as Education, Worship, and Service; conducted numerous congregational conversations to identify renovation priorities; and generated and distributed a report of Congregational Input for a building renovation in May (2015).
- September 2015 Heritage Room renovation was completed.
- September 27, 2015 Long-range planning retreat to begin discussions of mission and 5 yr goals and Objectives.
- January 2016 Conducted 360 degree survey of staffing, programs, potential gaps and unrealized opportunities.
- April 2016 Church Council completed vision statement: FUMC welcomes all to a nurturing faith community that serves God by serving others.
- June 2016 Feasibility study conducted by the UMC/Wesley Development Corporation.
- August 23, 2016 FUMC begins participation in the District’s Next Level Innovation (NLI) program.
- September 2016 Council approved 5-yr goals (2017-2021):
- Nurture meaningful and diverse worship experiences to facilitate a closer relationship with God inside and outside the church walls so that Fairlington UMC more effectively responds to God’s mission for us in the world.
 - Improve outreach to neighbors within a 5-mile radius of our church through increasing communication outlets with our community and improving those already in place; looking at the overall “look” and “feel” of our communications to ensure that they are effective in welcoming those we wish to reach; and improving relationships within the church and with neighbors not yet connected to Fairlington UMC.
 - Develop and implement a Leadership Training program to equip and empower all those chosen to lead the ministries of FUMC. Impart knowledge of the United Methodist Church’s organization for carrying out the church’s mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ, and to further Fairlington’s vision of serving God by serving others.
 - Increase by (25 percent) over the next 5 years the number of members engaged in small group ministry at Fairlington UMC, wherein small gatherings of individuals meet regularly to establish welcoming and nurturing community through avenues such as conversation, prayer, and study, growing in their faith in, love of, and relationship with God.

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| September 7, 2016 | Special meeting of Trustees, Finance, Building Committee, Council and clergy to discuss the future of FUMC's facility |
| May 10, 2017 | Charge Conference to request approval to convene a formal Building Committee for the purpose of moving the church building renovation work forward. |
| May 2017 | Lemay Erickson Willcox selected as the architectural firm to lead the FUMC building renovation |
| June 10-15, 2017 | Focus groups and town hall meetings to collect Congregational input for the building renovation |
| Spring 2017 | FUMC became a Green Covenant congregation. |
| August 2017 | A men's spirituality group started meeting in members' homes. FUMC began the Habitat project in with a \$1,340 grant from Northern Virginia Audubon. In February 2020, we received a \$3,500 conservation grant from Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. |
| Spring 2017 | Established Rental Assistance Club program. |
| Summer 2019 | Narthex was redone. |
| Early 2020 | First floor of the education wing was renovated. |
| March 2020 | Online Worship begins via zoom due to Covid 19 Pandemic |
| June 2020 | Outdoor Eucharist service in Habitat began. |
| June 2020 | Chapel renovation began |
| July 2020 | A Wednesday morning men's prayer group started meeting in the Wilderness. This group continues to meet either there or in poor weather in the building. |
| July 2021 | In person worship resumes at 10:00am with covid19 safe guidelines and 8:30 morning eucharist service. |
| July 2021 | Louise Wilson's 30-year anniversary as Director of Music. |
| Late 2021 | Library renovation was completed. |
| August 2021 | Chapel Renovation was completed. |
| September 2021 | FUMC was awarded grants from Audubon Society, Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Virginia Trees Clean Water division of the Virginia Forestry Service. |