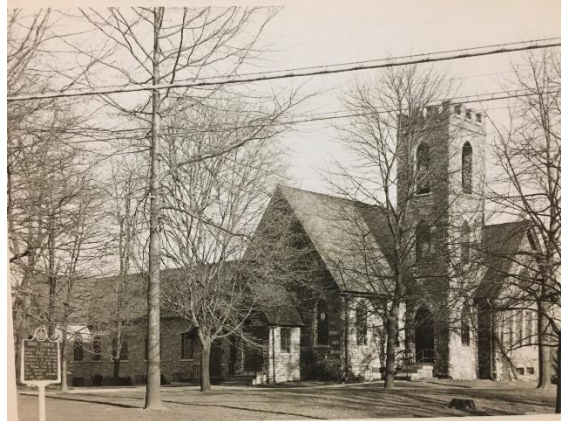




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Derry Church Celebrates 300th Anniversary



HERSHEY, Pa. – May 28, 2024 – In celebration of its 300th anniversary, Derry Presbyterian Church invites the community to celebrate and commemorate through a series of events and activities being held throughout 2024. The church is located at the corner of Mansion and East Derry Roads in Hershey.

Derry Presbyterian Church was established in 1724 as a result of Presbyterian Scots Irish people leaving their home in Northern Ireland and emigrating to the American colonies. Many settled in the Pennsylvania frontier. Derry's earliest members gathered near a freshwater spring for worship under the oak trees. The landscape was important to the settlers, as it gave them needed resources. The church was named in honor of Derry, (Northern) Ireland, their homeland. After Milton Hershey built his chocolate factory here, the community of Derry Church became known as Hershey.

Of particular historical significance is the Session House, built in 1732. To preserve the building, Milton Hershey had it enclosed by a glass structure in 1929. The Session House served the church and local community in a variety of purposes, including as a meeting place for church officials, a classroom, a lending library, and as a community post office.

“Three hundred years of existence is a significant historic milestone in the central Pennsylvania area,” said Pam Whitenack, chair, Derry Presbyterian 300th Anniversary Committee. “We encourage the community to celebrate with us and invite them to several commemorative events we’re holding throughout the year.”



The church's 2024 Arts Alive concert season is featured in the celebration. Upcoming events include:

- 7 pm Friday, June 7 – Tim Zimmerman and the King's Brass



Derry Church

PRESBYTERIAN (USA)

- 4 pm Sunday, October 6 – Thomas Pandolfi, pianist
- 4 pm Sunday, November 3 – Silver, Wood & Ivory
- 3 pm Sunday, December 8 – Christmas concert featuring Derry Church's Sanctuary Choir, Derry Ringers and orchestra.

With music an important part of its worship and outreach, the church commissioned a hymn, "In Jesus Christ There Is a New Creation" by noted hymn writer and composer David Gambrell, set to *Londonderry Aire*, a traditional Irish tune. This hymn premiered in March at an Arts Alive Hymn Festival and will be sung in worship services throughout 2024.



The year-long celebration also features events and educational opportunities to learn more about Presbyterian history and Derry Church's past, with church gatherings, special mission projects, and on Sunday, September 22, a rededication of the historic church cemetery, which was established in 1734.

The Reverend David Latimer will be the guest speaker at a homecoming service at 10:30 am Sunday, September 22. Latimer is pastor emeritus of First Presbyterian Church, Londonderry, Northern

Ireland, the area from which Derry Church's earliest members emigrated in the early 1700s. Worship will include the rededication of the historic cemetery. The First Pennsylvania Regiment, dressed in period uniforms of General George Washington's Pennsylvania Riflemen of 1775-1777, will lead the congregation to the cemetery. The cemetery has recently undergone a major restoration project. Two of Derry's earliest pastors, Reverend William Bertram (1732-1746) and Reverend John Roan (1746-1775) are buried here along with frontiersmen and Revolutionary soldiers.

As it carries out its mission to serve others and share its resources, Derry Church is supporting two community projects. Church members have contributed \$50,000 towards the construction of a tiny house that will house a homeless veteran in Harrisburg. Additionally, the congregation is committed to raising \$50,000 for the construction of a new classroom for Logos Academy in Harrisburg. Logos Academy is an independent Christ-centered school for all Harrisburg children, regardless of faith or financial means.

For more information on Derry Presbyterian Church, its history and its 300th anniversary celebration, visit www.derrypres.org.



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