

## HISTORY

Presbyterianism was formally introduced into the valley by action of the first meeting of Winchester Presbytery in the Old Stone Church on Picadilly Street in Winchester, December 4, 1794. Rev. Nash Legrand was appointed to preach one Sunday each month at Powell's Fort and the Rev. William Williamson one Sunday at Millerstown (now Woodstock).

In 1801, Mr. Williamson was appointed to include Powell's Fort in his itinerary instead of Mr. Legrand. A young student named James Robinson was sent to this general district for six months also, but Powell's Fort seems gradually to have disappeared as a Presbyterian locality with the advent of Woodstock (Millerstown) as Buckton did with the growth of Strasburg. But regular preaching services were maintained in various portions of Shenandoah and Warren Counties by supply preachers who were members of Winchester Presbytery.

Dr. Archibald Alexander preached in Woodstock in 1791 and also in Strasburg, it is understood. The Rev. A. A. Shannon was there in 1817. But in June, 1822, the Rev. William Henry Foote began regular preaching in both Strasburg and Woodstock. He also had charge of the Woodstock Academy. There was but one Presbyterian in Woodstock when he first came to the county (so he wrote) and two in Strasburg, though he afterward found three scattered ones. In June, 1823 he administered the Lord's Supper in Strasburg — the first time as an English Presbyterian rite. He wrote that he had usually found German churches wherever he preached. There was no church building and he did not know what to expect, but new communicants were admitted, others from various places came, while a number of both adults and children were baptized. Then in May, 1824, a paper was circulated which resulted in the organization of the "Union Church of Shenandoah", under the discipline and according to the forms of the Presbyterian Church.

After its organization by Winchester Presbytery in 1824, this "Union Church of Shenandoah" continued its growth and activities as a union church for two years. On October 10, 1824, the first meeting of a session of the Strasburg Church was held at "Spengler Hall", the home of Captain Anthony Spengler near Strasburg. ("Spengler Hall" is now owned by Dr. John F. and Mrs. Virginia Hinkins Cadden, a great, great, great granddaughter of Captain Spengler).

Licentiate John Lodor succeeded Dr. Foote and was ordained and installed on October 22, 1825. On September 29, 1826, the union church was divided into two congregations, one at Strasburg and one at Woodstock, the reason being given that the twelve miles distance between them and the bad roads made it impossible to worship with any regularity. The two churches sent delegates to Presbytery and Synod at alternate meetings to save travel.

When in September, 1826, the union church was divided, the following persons formed the membership of the Strasburg Church:

John Russell, elder, died September 20, 1826; Philip Bussard, Margaret Bussard, Mary Cooper, Mary Dennis, Eleanor Finley, James C. Finley, Elizabeth Keller, Mary Long, Mary Rosenberger, Henry Rosenberger, Jaretta Sibert, Anthony Spengler, Catherine Spengler, Rachel Sperry, Thomas Sperry, Elizabeth Utz and John Utz.

The official announcement that Strasburg was an individual church was made on December 3, 1826, at