

#6 Caseville United Methodist Church

6490 Main Street, Caseville, MI

For more than 150 years, the 70-foot gothic steeple of the early Methodist Episcopal Church of Caseville has stood as a sentinel landmark over the waters of Saginaw Bay. This beautiful place of worship was organized on September 26, 1868 under the laws of the State of Michigan by a circuit riding preacher, Joseph B. Varnum. Initial church services were held in the wooden school house located in Caseville, but in 1874 the new church building was constructed at a cost of \$4,279. At that time, Francis Crawford, a prominent local businessman, donated the land and half of the money needed for construction. Former U.S. President William McKinley's mother attended the Caseville church while living in the area. A women's group known as the "Ladies Aid Society" was soon organized and became active in the Church in 1880, followed shortly thereafter by the start of a Sunday School program. Early settlers, William and Maria Gwinn, were the initial Sunday School teachers. The Gwinn family played prominent roles in local Methodist history, both in the Caseville Methodist Church and the Hayes Methodist Church, a country church located just a few miles Southeast of Caseville. Founding families of the Methodist Church, such as the Henrys, McBride's Cilcs, Duftys, Kretschmers, Wiecherts, Woodworths, Webers, McLeans, and Stockmeyers' among many others, celebrated life's happiest and most solemn occasions under the spire of this building.

The Caseville United Methodist church was initially organized as a Methodist Episcopal Church and then transitioned simply to a Methodist Church. Changing times during the 1970s saw a merger between the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren congregations which created the current church now known as the "Caseville United Methodist Church". Due to deterioration, the Church's iconic steeple was replaced with an exact replica in 1972 at a cost of \$28,000. Since early days of photography this Church is one of the most photographed buildings in the State of Michigan. You will find the likeness of its towering steeple on souvenir post cards printed throughout many decades. In fact, these postcards are still commonly found for sale on the eBay website today. As you cruise or stroll down Caseville's Main Street passing by the Church, you will note a historical marker designating the Church as a "Michigan Historical Site" by the Michigan Historical Commission.

In the thoughtful words of Dr. Harry Fox, son of a founding member of the Church, "This is my Church ... guard her well, for she is the most precious treasure Caseville has. . . her spire has pointed the way to the river's mouth for the mariner... her sanctuary has pointed the way for the souls of her people to the throne of God."

References: Caseville Centennial Book, History of Caseville by Mary Cobb Langley, Marie Kiel article, Caseville United Methodist Church Records



Methodist Church, Caseville, Mich.



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