

History of Old Stone Presbyterian Church

In 1783, the Rev. John McCue arrived in the Greenbrier Valley and established three Presbyterian congregations – Spring Creek at Renick, Good Hope at Union, and the Camp Union Church at Lewisburg. These churches are the mother churches of the Presbyterian denomination in central and southern West Virginia.

The first church – Camp Union – was built as a log structure about one mile west of Lewisburg. By 1794, the log church had burned. The second pastor, Benjamin Grigsby with the strong support of John and Agatha Stuart, provided the leadership for the construction of the stone sanctuary (1796) in which the Church still worships today.

The Lewisburg Church, originally Camp Union, struggled in the early 19th century, following the departure of Rev. Grigsby. In 1809, John McElhenney, a young pastor arrived to serve the Union and Lewisburg congregations. Known for his energetic leadership, McElhenney preached the gospel and established numerous churches across western Virginia, created the Lewisburg Academy (1812), and provided the leadership for a strong Presbyterian presence in the Greenbrier Valley. He served the Union Church for twenty years and the Lewisburg Church for 62 years, in addition to his duties at the Academy.

In the late 19th century, the Academy became the twin institutions called the Lewisburg Female Seminary and the Greenbrier Presbyterial School. While by the end of the first quarter of the 20th century neither institution was legally connected to the Presbyterian Church, both continued a close relationship with the Lewisburg congregation, officially the Old Stone Church (1920) until they closed in 1972. Although the schools so closely associated with the Church graduated their last students in 1972, the campuses have continued as the location of the New River Community and Technical College and the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Today, the Old Stone Church continues its commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, early childhood education, and its outreach to the community.