



BOEHM'S CHURCH, Part I

Describing the property

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Whitpain Township's oldest church, Boehm's Church (pronounced Beam's), was built in 1747.


The church with its Georgian-inspired architecture is located at the corner of the Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike and Plymouth Road near the Blue Bell Inn. Its congregation is part of the United Church of Christ, and it hosts two additional congregations. Originally the congregation was German Reformed, founded in 1740 by the many German settlers who came to our area to escape religious persecution in Europe.

Pastor John Philip Boehm, who owned a 200-acre farm nearby, purchased the original one and one-half acres. Today the property covers almost ten acres. The congregation added a schoolhouse in 1760, the first school in Whitpain Township. In 1817, the group replaced the original stone church, using the original foundation; then in 1834, they tore down the school and replaced it with a sexton's house. The leadership enlarged the church in 1903, installed the (recently refurbished) stained-glass windows in 1911, and added a community room in 1970.

The church with its lovely steeple sits next to an old cemetery. During the American Revolution, Patriot troops used the church as a hospital, and several veterans are buried there. The cemetery is open to the public, and each December, community leaders and a color guard, dressed in period uniforms, lay a wreath at the grave of the conflict's unknown soldiers.

The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, not just because of its age and its connection to the American Revolution, but because of its connection to Benjamin Franklin and to its famous founder. Next month's issue of the *Stroll* will explain.

The author, Carol Kalos, is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Its mission is to promote and preserve the history and historic resources of Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township. Its two local history museums, the Franklinville School and the 1895 School, are open by appointment: Please contact info@WValleyHS.org



Making Patients Smile For Over 37 Years
Two Board-Certified Prosthodontists
A Full-Service Practice
All-Ceramic Crowns • Digital Dentistry
Single Tooth & Full Dental Implants
Complete Esthetic Makeovers

Pi Dental Center
 Glenn Wolfinger DMD FACP
 Robert Slauch DDS MDSc FACP
 467 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 201
 Fort Washington, PA 19034
 215-646-6334 • pidentalcenter.com