

Asbury church earth turned

Leading Methodists, South Whitehall Township officials and members of the Asbury Methodist Church congregation turned over sod yesterday in a groundbreaking ceremony marking the start of a \$1.5-million building project.

The new church, to be located on a 10.2-acre tract at the corner of Walbert Avenue and Springhouse Road in South Whitehall, will replace the one destroyed by fire Oct. 24, 1972. That church was built in 1921 and located at Hamilton and Jefferson streets in Allentown.

About 200 persons attended yesterday's ceremony. The township was represented by Manager Merritt E. Hein and Commissioner Robert E. Beam.

The Rev. Harvey Marsland of Allentown told the gathering there is a basic tendency down through the ages reflecting the need for persons of the Christian faith to build and focus their lives around an altar.

He said that God requests us to build altars to symbolize our faithfulness and our community in Christ.

Rev. Marsland is superintendent of the Allentown District of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

He turned the first shovel of ground. Next was the pastor, the Rev. Earl C. Carver.

First among those representing the congregation was Mrs. Frank Whittaker, lay leader.

The congregation included several members who were part of the congregation when the old church was built in 1921.

Construction is expected to start within several weeks, according to the Rev. Thomas J. Gallen, associate pastor.

The project was designed by Wallace and Watson Associates, E.C. Machine, Inc., is the general contractor.

The congregation is presently worshipping in the former Zion United Methodist Church at 9th and Linden Sts., Allentown.

Completion of the new building is planned for the summer of 1975.



Photo by Milton Rockmaker

The Rev. Thomas J. Gallen, associate pastor of the Asbury United Methodist Church, turns over a spadeful of earth in yesterday's groundbreaking ceremony at Walbert Avenue and Springhouse Road in South Whitehall Township. A \$1.5-million church will be built on the 10.2-acre tract.