

Wabash Historical Committee
2025—2026 Annual Report

Greetings in the name of the Lord!! I am sure that the Lord is surely pleased when we call attention to His work from the ***past 141 years of Wabash Conference*** and as we step into another moment in history as we transition into the ***“Crossroads Conference of the Free Methodist Church”***.

Our Historical Committee will faithfully continue to strive to preserve the history of what God has already done in Wabash Conference to carry the legacy forward, and look to the future in the new beginning of collecting the history of the Crossroads Conference of the Free Methodist Church.

Supt. Jen Finley writes: “ *Last summer, while spending time in the Historical Center, I came across photos from the Louisville, Kentucky church. It reminded me that our story has long been intertwined with the New South region. As we move forward, it is my hope that, even as your team potentially grows to include voices from the New South, we will one day look back and see how God has been faithfully weaving our stories together.*”

Finance Report: Balance in account as of 12/31/2024: \$ 9,390.94

Expenses: \$306.68 ~ Donations: \$1,200.00 ~ Balance 12/31/2025: \$10,284.26

New Treasurer: As of the new conference year, our committee will handle our own finances. Rev. Lou Mingous has been elected to serve as our treasurer.

At the request of our Chairperson, Rev. David Colgan, former Superintendent, Pastor and Camping Director, wrote a “masterpiece” of the 25 years of progress of Wabash Park Camp & Retreat Center dating from years 2000-2025. Along with his reflections of those 25+ years he has also prepared a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the document is preserved in the Historical Center. It is truly a work of God’s hand on those who walked the walk during those 25 years and it is shared unlike any other from one who lived it! Thank you, Rev. David Colgan!

Our committee met on April 26, 2025 and June 14, 2025 to make plans for Annual Conference, Family Camp and to follow- up on pending projects.

Annual Conference Year 2025: We displayed poster boards of unidentified pictures of past pastors and leaders. Thank you for your help in identifying most of the pictures displayed. The work continues to identify pictures from years-gone-by. Our thanks to Rev. Russ Veldman for his work in digitizing those for us.

Family Camp Year 2025: Our display of ***“Old Time Camp Memories”*** boards created much interest and brought back memories to young and old. As a reminder, we need your help in securing memories of Camp Wildwood and Family Camp. Photos can be emailed to: history@wabashconference.org

Prayer Path: Our committee sponsored a “Prayer Path” experience at Family Camp under the guidance of Rev. Roy Abbott. Participants followed a prayer guide that took them all throughout Wabash Park Camp & Retreat and saturated the camp with prayer all week long. Crosses and benches along the path were placed by volunteers prior to camp meeting. Thank you to Pastor Roy Abbott and his volunteers that faithfully worked on the project so that the camp could enjoy this prayer experience.

Coloring Contest: We sponsored a “Flat B. T. & Ellen Roberts” coloring contest for five different age levels. The participation was amazing with over 40 entries. Each participant turning in their colored page received a reward of “nostalgic” candy. Members of our committee were the judges and each winner in the five age categories received a \$5.00 canteen card! Each of the colored pages were displayed at our table on Thursday evening with a blue ribbon or a red ribbon. It was a fun event for both young and old!!

Open House: On Thursday afternoon, July 17th, an open house was held with our honored guests being “Flat B. T. Roberts and his wife, Ellen”. B. T. Roberts’, our principal founder of the Free Methodist Church, birthday is July 23rd; therefore, it only seemed fitting to celebrate his 202nd birthday. Pictures were taken and our guests enjoyed visiting the historical center asking questions and doing research. Cookies and cold lemonade were refreshing to our guests on a hot July afternoon.

Wabash Quartets: In the Thursday evening worship service, the Historical Center gave a segment on history of Wabash Quartets. From the 1940’s to 1970’s Wabash was blessed with several men’s quartets. Featured in our segment was the “Glad Tidings Quartet” who celebrated 13 years of singing the gospel in song in 1962. Paul Walker, Wally Clelland, Art Smith and Spurgeon Hodges joined with pianist, Phil Clelland to spend decades making music for Jesus. “Glad Tidings” gave glory to Jesus by singing together on two albums: “The Old Country Church” and “The Glad Tidings Quartet Sings”. It was such an honor to have Jeff Clelland, son of Wally Clelland, to give the presentation. Several members of the Clelland family were present for this special moment. Our thanks to Rev. Neal Hartzell for doing the research and writing the script with the help of Jeff Clelland, Rev. Tom Ryan and the Historical Committee.

Resource Page: Our Wabash Historical Center is now listed under “Ministries” on the Conference website. On our resource page you will find our purpose, address and email information along with a picture of our committee. Our thanks to Rev. Jeff Gammon for getting our computer and email address working properly and to Judy Kinnick for setting up our resource page. Much appreciation to both of you!

Attention Pastors: Last October, 2025, a letter from Supt. Jen Finley and our Wabash Historical Committee was emailed by Judy Kinnick to you asking each church to appoint a “local historian”. The letter was in partnership with Supt. Jen Finley. Supt. Jen writes: *“A local church historian offers invaluable support to the conference by preserving the stories and traditions that form our shared identity. By protecting documents, photos and memories, a church historian ensures that the legacy of our congregations is not lost. Instead, this vital information is used to inspire vision, celebrate milestones, and strengthen connections across generations. In times of transitions, such as our conference mergers or leadership changes, this history provides context and continuity as we honor the past and shape the future.”* Pastors, if you do not already have a dedicated person that is stepping up to fulfill this ministry opportunity, will you please consider identifying who in your congregation would fit this role. Email information to : history@wabashconference.org

On behalf of Rev. Roy Abbott, Rev. Neal Hartzell (Co-Chair), Rev. Lou Mingous, Mrs. Cathy Robling, Mrs. Iona Sewell, Ms. Kathe Turner and Rev. Russ Veldman this report is:

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Beverly Lancaster