

## **ARLINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*Here stood Arlington Presbyterian Church. As the Columbia Pike community around it evolved during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church – built in 1930 and recognized along Columbia Pike for its landmark steeple – was a cornerstone of vision, community and faith.*



The Arlington Presbyterian Church story began at the turn of the century when residents of Alcova and Columbia Pike had to travel two miles north to reach the nearest Presbyterian church. The vicinity was initially served by Sunday school classes taught in the home, until a mission church was established. In 1908 the Presbytery of Washington DC established the new independent church, whose first buildings were destroyed by a 1924 fire. Church elders Walter Handy and Thomas DeLashmutt were prominent Arlington County residents who were instrumental in constructing the 1930 church that stood until 2017. Designed in the Colonial Revival style, the Arlington Presbyterian Church building was constructed in three phases. The original sanctuary was framed with walls of un-coursed stone and covered with a front gable roof; its cornerstone was laid using the same trowel George Washington used to lay the cornerstone of the United States Capitol. By 1940, the Arlington population had greatly increased, as had the congregation, leading to a stone addition and remodeled steeple in 1949, and a brick child care wing in 1960.

Through the decades, the congregation was at the forefront of thought and action in a variety of social agendas from women's rights to the resettlement of refugees; the church buildings were a center of the community. Erected in 2019 on the site of the Church, Gilliam Place was named in honor of Ronda A. Gilliam, who was a Church elder and its first African American member, and who established the Church's longest running mission, a clothing bank. In February 1970, the Church began providing clothes to the area's needy, and in that first month supplied 47 children with 459 pieces of clothing; clothing bank operations continue to this day. In 2008, the Church celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Church property was sold in 2016, and the buildings were demolished in 2017.

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