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White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church stands atop a gentle hill overlooking the Kirkwood Highway (Delaware 2).' It is a tall, well-proportioned two-story brick structure, nearly as tall (about 40') as it is wide (45'), with a relatively short (63') axis. These proportions create an impression of firmness and strength. The tall windows of the second floor emphasize the vertical lines of the structure. A belt course and pilasters in the brickwork form vertical insets for the windows. Corner pilasters run the full height of the walls and visually support the architrave above. The pilasters on the side walls extend only from the belt course to the architrave, emphasizing the importance of the second story. A tall first-floor doorway extends into the line of the second story.

The interior is arranged in a fashion that was typical of large Delaware churches of the period, with Sunday school below and auditorium above.

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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	🔀 18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	🔀 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applical	ole and Known) 1855		
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropriat	e)	
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A community of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians was gathering for worship at White Clay Creek as early as 1709. In 1722 the Presbytery of New Castle ordered three ministers to serve the Presbyterians in that area. Within a year the congregation was sufficiently established to provide a meeting place for the Presbytery, which took the opportunity to rebuke the minister, Robert Laing, for washing in the creek on the Lord's Day. The Rev. Thomas Craighead was appointed first regular pastor there in 1724.

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The Rev. Charles Tennent, who assumed the pastorate in <u>1737</u>, saw the White Clay congregation through a critical period marked by preaching of George Whitefield and the resultant schism of 1741. Whitefield, a famous revivalist, visited Wilmington and White Clay several times. On a December Sunday in 1739, he preached to ten thousand people(by his count)assembled in the rain. An estimate of eight thousand appeared in the Boston <u>News Letter</u>.A crowd of three tnousand heard Whitefield in May of the following year. White Clay again was the scene of a meeting in November of 1740.

Whitefield deepened a rift between the "Old Side" conservative ministers who emphasized a minister's formal education, and the "New Side," who demanded an emotional crisis of conversion, supported by enthusiastic spiritualism. Charles Tennent followed the "New Side," as might have been expected of a son of Rev. William Tennent, Sr., whose "Log College" was the predecessor of Princeton University. Clergy educated in European universities frowned on the ministers coming out of the native "Log College."

In 1752, Tennent's supporters purchased the present church site, where a church was built, and replaced in 1785. The present structure, built in 1855, is the third on this property.

The schism in the local Presbyterian Church continued until May 29, 1759, when the Presbytery again met as a whole.

Captain Robert Kirkwood, a hero of the Revolutionary War, lived on the farm across the road from the church.

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7.5 Minute Series United States Geological Survey Topographic Map, Newark East 1956,