

## 7/23/2018 Question of the Week

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804)—the famed British theologian, scientist, philosopher, and supporter of the French Revolution—was driven out of Birmingham, England on July 14, 1791. A few years later, he travelled to the United States and eventually settled in Northumberland County, PA. A deeply religious man, Priestley often traveled to Philadelphia, where he delivered sermons and encouraged the development of the city's (and the country's) first church of this denomination.

What church did Joseph Priestley help establish?

**Answer: The First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia**

The First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia was established in 1796. Originally located at 10th and Locust streets, the cornerstone of the present church at 21st and Chestnut streets was laid in 1885.

Joseph Priestley, though often recognized for his scientific endeavors, was an early adopter of Unitarianism in Britain. Brought up in a household that did not conform to the Church of England, Priestley was no stranger to dissent, and his political and religious beliefs often led him into trouble. The fact that he published works attacking the British government did not help his precarious position in English society. His arrival in America, however, was celebrated, and he spent the last ten years of his life in Northumberland County, where he continued his scientific work and sought to establish a religious colony.

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