

7PPL
History of

The Tinley Park Methodist Church

The Tinley Park United Methodist Church is the outgrowth of the uniting of two churches, each having quite a historical background.

The oldest congregation dates back to 1859 when the "New Bremen Religious Society" was organized. In 1863 this "Society" was sent the first regular pastor and it is in this year that the first Quarterly conference was held.

The years brought changes and the original small building became crowded, and in 1886 edifice known as the Orland Township Methodist Church, located on 171st street and 84th avenue was built. This church building served the congregation for 52 years until in 1938 when fire, caused by lightening, destroyed it.

The younger congregation, "Village Church" was organized in 1897. This group began as a Sunday School which was held in the local school house. For preaching services, students from Garrett Biblical Institute were invited. A small white frame building was built. It was located in the center of the village, which now is Oak Park Avenue and 173rd Pl. The group was known as "The Tinley Park Union Church."

The merger of these two church congregations, both belonging to the same conference and located in the same general area was brought about in 1939 because of the necessity for larger worshiping area. The parsonage of the Orland Township Methodist church served as the residence for the pastor.

With Rev. Lawrence Weinreich as pastor, the building plans went forward. In November, 1939 the Cornerstone was placed and the total cost of the new building was \$27,086.08. The bell from the Orland Township Methodist Church had been saved from the fire and now plans to have it recast were made.

During the next several months many Official Board meetings were

held to make decisions regarding the "new" building. The small frame church had been moved to the present location, 6875 W. 173rd Pl. It was decided to move this building back and incorporate it into the new building. Also during this year "Cottage Lenten Services" were held. p28

In the Fall of 1940, dedication plans were completed for the new building. Services were to be held for one week, beginning November 3rd. Ministers from churches in Tinley Park were invited to participate. Besides the Sunday Dedication Service, other evening services were held: Homecoming Roll Call; the dedication of Memorial Windows and Historical Pulpit. The pulpit was designed and hand-crafted by a member of the congregation. It is made of black walnut wood from the desk of the grandfather of Pastor Weinreich. The Women's Society of Christian Service conducted an evening service as did the Youth Fellowship, at which time the Communion Table and Altar Rail were dedicated. Both these items also were designed and hand-crafted and placed as a memorial.

With the completion of the new building, policy needed to be formed for the use of the Social Hall by outside groups. The rental established for the Social Hall was \$5.00 per meeting. The pastor's salary was listed as \$1200.00 per year; the custodial work was listed as \$150.00 per year; the organist was not a paid position.

During the ensuing months the Church was busy with finances and becoming acquainted with the building; its responsibilities and the arrangement of Sunday School classes within the new space available.

In the Spring of 1941, a memorial of Tower Chimes were presented. This necessitated much electrical work. Many hours were spent by members of the Official Board in meetings and work to accomplish the workability of the Chimes. Also in this year the use of "numbered and dated budget envelopes came into being.

In 1942 the church congregation welcomed Rev. R.J.L. McKelvey as pastor.

During the following six months, the congregation enjoyed a new organ; plans were made for a "new member recognition Sunday"; and the sky darkened as war had been declared.

In January, 1943, a Honor Roll Service Plaque was dedicated. The Women's Society of Christian Service held monthly dinners in the Social Hall. During the entire building process, the women of the Church were supportive in many ways, especially financially. In the Fall of 1943 plans were finalized for the incorporation of the two cemeteries. Many meetings with public officials were held to accomplish this. Also the Retired Ministers Pension Fund was established through the Conference.

The beginning of 1944, "Lasting Peace Crusade" came into being. Home visits were made to encourage members to write to their Representatives in Washington concerning our involvement in the war. During this Fall, the Building Committee presented their final report and were released.

Rev. J. Frank Anderson came to the congregation in June, 1944. The budget for the church that year was \$4500.00. Also the village of Tinley Park established a Recreation Commission and churches were asked to cooperate by sending a delegate to represent the church.

In the Spring of 1946, the Sunday School attendance grew to the point where there was "no more room in the inn." Classes were meeting all over the sanctuary, balcony, chancel, bell-tower space, hallway and small room behind the chancel. With average attendance of 225, the Official Board appointed a committee to consider "extra space."

The Bell Tower needed rebuilding and the large bell needed to be recast to be more harmoniously sounding with the small bell which had come from the "Village Church."

The inscription on the large bell reads:

1885 AD - Orland German Methodist Church -

1938 AD - merged with the Village Church -

1947 AD - Recast - Tinley Park Methodist Church

The World Service quota for the year was \$375.00. The new building was insured for \$30,000.00.

June, 1948 Rev. Fred Shandorf came to the congregation. With many young children in the congregation, it was considered feasible to have a child nursery. In the Fall of this year, a new discipline became effective. This provided for "affiliated" membership. Such members could not hold office however. Also a Methodist Men's Club came into being and evoked considerable interest.

The summer of 1949, the first three-week vacation for the pastor was listed. The supply pastor to be paid by the church. Also a small office for the pastor was arranged behind the chancel wall. During the past five years the Youth Fellowship was active both in responsibility to the congregation and also for recreation and personal growth. The Women's Society for Christian Service has been faithful with their financial support as well as service to the parsonage in keeping it in beautiful interior condition.

The first Laymen's Day was observed in February, 1950 as they conducted the morning worship service. During this Fall, the Official Board made plans to observe the 10th anniversary of the church.

In the Spring of 1951 the women of the church organized into a Servicemen's Guild and another Service Plaque was ordered. Up to this time the church had been heated with a coal-fired furnace. In December of this year, gas heat was authorized and the custodial service was much easier. Rev. Shandorf asked to be released from his term here to accept a charge in the area where Mrs. Shandorf had lived. Rev. James Odom

accepted the interval appointment, coming to the church in may 1952.

During the rest of 1952, much discussion was held of church expansion. The morning worship service now had a bulletin detailing the service. Bulletins were sponsored by various church members.

The budget for 1953 was approved at \$9,000.00. A Building Committee was appointed to explore possibilities and plans for an additional building with approximate cost set at \$42,000.00.

In July, 1954, Rev. Glen Ames became pastor. The Building Committee reported approval of an architect; also purchase of additional land and the cost of the building now being \$55,000.00.

Most of the next year, 1955, was consumed with progress, or the lack of it. Also of where to, and how to place the new Educational Building. Many options were open and the price now had moved up to \$65,000.00.

The Tinley Park Library opened and the church was asked to donate some books. Through recommendation of the Seminary, books were purchased and placed as a gift from the church.

In May, 1956, the congregation was given the opportunity to vote on location of the Educational Building; either to build South or East of the present structure. The cost now had moved to \$89,000.00. Also in this year a new publication was issued: "The Together Magazine" which replaced the "Christian Advocate."

Finally in Fall of 1956, the Educational Building was begun and the contract read: \$125,000.00. During this year, the per-capita membership dues to the Conference were \$5.41 for each member on our roll.

During 1957 the efforts of the congregation were of spiritual growth and progress of the new Educational Building.

Rev. Kenneth Crandall came to the congregation in July, 1958. That year Daily Vacation Bible School was started. The Methodist Sunday School literature was introduced, and the Educational building was dedicated.

In January of 1959, the church yet engaged in another building process. Remodeling of the chancel began, thus giving some extra space. The Methodist Youth Fellowship was active with 65 members, inviting youth of the area to attend. The following year, the intermediate youth group was initiated with 55 members.

April of 1960 the church had an offer of additional property with a house suitable for two apartments; price \$18,500.00. It was considered a possible purchase. The purchase was completed in the Fall; also the adjoining property became available. This item was referred to the trustees for consideration.

With the youth group becoming very active, it was thought a Youth Director was feasible. This position to be also listed as Assistant to the pastor. Rev. Norman Knight was added to the personnel in April 1961. That fall, the church rented two rooms to the Tinley Park Public School until their building addition was completed.

In January, 1962, Rev. Crandall became seriously ill and Rev. William Mace came to the congregation. ^{AS ASSOC. PASTOR} Subsequently in 1962 Rev. Mace left to assume other duties and Rev. Holmes became the Associate Pastor. Following Rev. Crandall's recovery, he took up a new challenge at another church and Rev. William Roberts became pastor in June of 1964, remaining with the congregation until 1967. Through these years the congregation functioned in a responsible way.

June of 1967 the congregation welcomed Rev. A. Wesley Jensen as pastor. New activities were begun; new ideas were explored and "life went on" in the Tinley Park Methodist Church.

In the year of 1968, the Policy Committee was at work in the revision of the church responsibilities and practices. Also Easter Sunday Worship services were held at three hours. A Maundy Thursday Venebrae Service was held; plus Good Friday Communion Service at "tables of twelve" followed by a Prayer Vigil until Easter morning. During this year, a full-time Youth Director was employed. Also one service during the summer months of July and August was begun, and the treasury of the Sunday School was merged with the Church treasury.

In the Spring of 1969, the congregation considered the purchase of additional property to the South of the Church. The decision resulted in the purchase with the following financial arrangements: Cost-\$23,500.00 at 6½% - 15 years - monthly payment \$249.00.

Rev. William Mace came to the congregation in June, 1971. A Lay Witness Mission endeavor was held which proved very fulfilling to all who participated. Remodeling of two Sunday School rooms into a Chapel was begun and became a long-term project with a cost of \$4753.00. The Christmas Card Tree project was introduced and has become an annual project.

The need for a full-time church secretary became apparent and yet another search begins for a Youth Director and Assistant Pastor with several having resigned. The budget for the year was \$64,000.00 and the Finance Committee were deeply concerned over the financial picture.

The Church Library opened in the Spring of 1975; also a Food Collection is begun as a project towards Respond Now, located in Chicago Heights. Church "markers" were placed on either end of the village and the Cluster Pulpit Exchange was begun.

The year of 1976 was a busy one as the Kitchen was remodeled; the church was tuck-pointed; repairs were made to the parking lot and painting was done in the sanctuary. The insurance on the church property has been

listed as \$798,000.00. It is apparent that the church is a very valuable piece of property physically and hopefully spiritually. New Life Mission sessions were held with a meaningful result. Ecumenical meetings have been held at Thanksgiving and Good Friday and have been well received by the community.

An important item in 1977 was the installation of Carillon Chimes which were entirely placed through many gifts from not only the congregation but people of the community. A Church Pictorial Directory was authorized as it had been five years since the last such effort was made.

No records are available for the years 1979 through 1981.

Rev. Russel Koenig came to the congregation in June, 1982.

All information was compiled from Official and Administrative Board minutes.

By Ruth Jochem
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