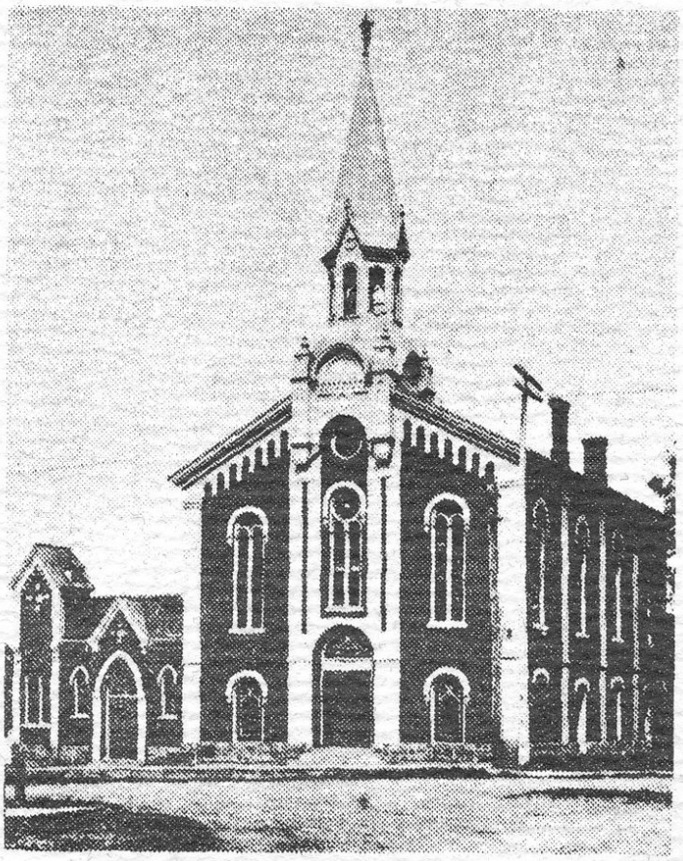
Methodism in Mason

1839-1989

1956

1855



1869

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Mason, Michigan

Sesquicentennial

1839 ★ 1989

137 years ago on a crisp fall day five families met to organize the Mason Methodist Episcopal Church Society. On November 16, 1839, they joined the Dexter Mission, which included settlements in Dexter, Stockbridge, Unadilla and Mason, none of which had a church building.

In 1839 the Mason Mission represented the extreme northern outpost of Methodism in Michigan. Trustees for our first Mission Society were: Isaac Finch, Peter Lowe, Jason Packard, Valorous Meeker and Garrett Dubois who were appointed according to the Methodist Discipline "for the purpose of holding a preacher's house and the appurtinances thereunto belonging," certified by the Michigan Conference, Marshall District.

At this time only seven families lived in the village of Mason. There were, however, several families who had homesteaded land in what is now Aurelius, Vevay and Alaiedon townships who worshiped with us.

We were called a Mission Church because we were served by a Methodist Circuit rider from Dexter. Our church families gathered in homes each Sunday and worshiped. The Circuit Rider came at least once a month to lead a service.

In the 1830's and 1840's the appointment of circuit riders was necessarily indefinite, because there were so few natural boundaries by which a mission could be marked. At the time of the Annual Conference each preacher would receive his "charge" for the next year. His parish might consist of an area described as Dexter Trail S. (an Indian made trail) Huron River E. to the Hogsback W. (the U.S. largest Esker) located west of Mason, to the confluence of the Sycamore and Grand Rivers.

He would then mount his horse, place his Bible, a few hymnals, some conference pamphlets and a change of clothing in his saddle bag and stop at each settlement for a service, tend the sick, and conduct weddings and funerals. He was usually gone from home 6 weeks.

The Circuit Rider did not travel to a church because there were none in 1840 beyond the Detroit area. He might find at his first stop word of another settlement which was desirous of a preacher and he would go there.

This type of preaching continued in Mason until 1842. In that year, according to records on file in the Ingham County Court House, one Methodist preacher was assigned to Ingham County on a circuit basis but he was to live in Mason.

MASON'S FIRST SCHOOL BUILDING

SITE OF FIRST CHURCH SERVICES IN MASON

Thomas Wakelin was the first Ingham County Circuit preacher. The mission purchased land on Oak Street for a parsonage which Preacher Wakelin said he "built with my own hands and some help of the parishoners."

Mason Methodists worshiped in the members' homes for a year, then used the newly built one room school (at Jefferson and Columbia) until the first court house was completed in September of 1840 at a cost of $325. By this time the Baptists were organized and used the School as a meeting place also.

Almost all of the early settlers who came to the Mason area were from New York State and most of them were first or second generation English. They were good farmers with enough money to homestead 40 acres. A Homesteader seldom bought more than 40 acres because in his life time he and his family could not clear more land than this. They left New York State because so much of that area was mountains and untillable. They had heard that there were vast areas of flat, rich land west of the City of Detroit covered with fine forests from which they could build their homes.

These settlers came here from New York via the newly dug Erie Canal and Lake Erie to Detroit, where a federal Land Office had been set up in 1816. By 1822 there was also one in Monroe, Michigan. One had only to present himself to one of these land offices to receive permission to Homestead, with prices varying from 50 cents to $2 per acre.

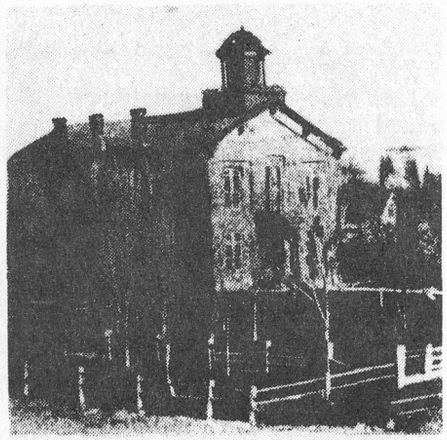
Charles Noble, a land speculator, came into Mason from Monroe in 1836 and bought 7/8 of what is now the City of Mason for $2,200 He sent Lewis Lacey here in that year to build and operate a sawmill and clear the area so that it could be sold for individual dwellings and business places. Mr. Lacey was the first permanent resident of the village.

Ephriam Danforth of Monroe was the Noble Land Company representative here and he was one of the original 7 members of our Mission. (Only the men were listed as members.)

Ingham County grew so rapidly that by 1843 it was necessary to build a new Courthouse on the present Courthouse Square.

The Methodist Society of Mason worshipped in this court house located on the village square for 12 years.

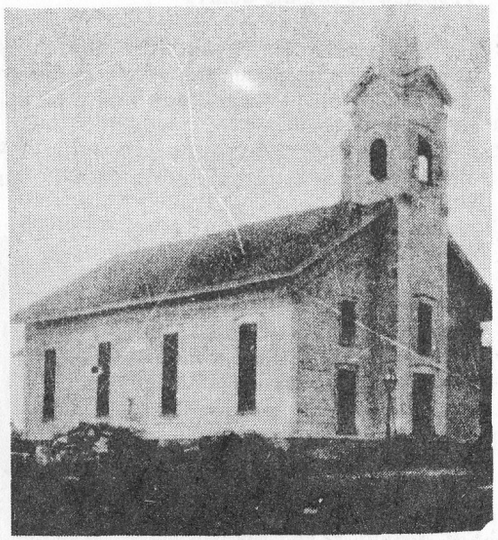
E. B. Danforth and Joab Page, both of whom were connected with the Noble Land Co. of Monroe, and Dr. Minos McRoberts, the county's first Doctor, were members of the Methodist Episicopal Church Mission. They were the leaders of a movement to build a church.



COURT HOUSE

An early copy of the Ingham County News said that "the membership suffered much embarassment on account of the small number of our congregation and the lack of means of its members."

They did complete a church building in 1855. It was 30 x 50 feet long and faced Ash Street on our present church property, at a cost of $2600. Dr. McRobert and Joab Page assumed $600 of the final indebtedness, which sum they generously donated later to the church.



This was a small church and its sanctuary was simply but tastefully furnished by the gifts of individual families and memorials.

By 1856, 27 families were members of the church and the annual budget was $1,000. They were very proud to have built the first Methodist Church in Ingham County.

An interesting side light on ownership of the land on which our first church was built was discovered as this history was being written. For most of this century records show that we owned lots 8 and 9 but we had no deed for lot 7 on which the first church was built. When the present church was built a lawyer was consulted and L. R. White, Glen Coon and Oren Hall made a deposition that this land had been used by our church for 100 years and while we did not have a deed we could assume possession.

A serious search of the Register of Deeds office this year uncovered the fact that in 1861, six years after the church was built, Joab and Abigail Page, for the sum of $75., sold us the lot. It was duly registered in the County Courthouse but it had been misfiled in the 1861 Liber, so today for the first time in 122 years we have in our possession a copy of the deed to the land on which we have built 3 churches.

The interesting comment here on early legal procedures is that a church was built on land not owned by that church. The property was purchased 6 years after the completion of the church.

The Trustees who served during the building period were Joab Page, Whitney Smith, Garrett Dubois, Jacob Dubois and Alanzo Douglas.

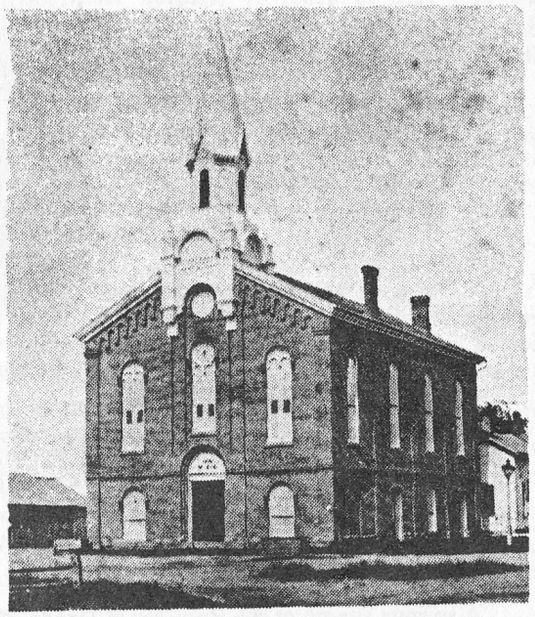
By 1860 there were three churches in the Village of Mason: Methodist Episcopal, Baptist and Presbyterian. The town was small. Probably the population was near 1,000.

Methodism in Mason grew and prospered until July 4, 1865 when lightning destroyed the church and all its contents. The congregation was so disheartened by their loss that no successful effort to rebuild was made until 1867. In that 2 year period the membership worshiped once again in the Court House.

The Civil War, tight money and national uncertainties were doubtless responsible for the delay.

The decision to rebuild the church was reached at a full meeting of the congregation but when the vote was taken Peter Lowe, chairman, announced that only male persons of full age would be allowed to vote.

$3,500 was raised and the cornerstone of the new church was laid in 1867. When the building was completed in 1869 it was paid for. Many of you remember the beautiful memorial windows for Dr. Minos McRobert, Col. L. H. Ives, Rev. W. Doust, Dr. W.W. Root, Rev. L.F. Coy, Mrs. M.A. Hopkins, Rev. Louis Delamater, Mrs. O. Pease, Epworth League and Junior League.



The Board of Trustees in 1867 was made up of the following: Dr. Minos McRobert, Peter Lowe, S.P. Stroud, W.W. Root and A.B. Rose.

Stewards were L. H. Ives, W. W. Root and A. B. Rose, with Dr. McRoberts, S. P. Stroud and W. W. Root acting as a Building Committee. This lovely church served Mason Methodists well for almost 100 years.

With the steady influx of settlers from the east, Mason grew rapidly and by 1879 the church records state proudly that "we had an average Sunday School attendance of 109 with collections of $1.24 being common."

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1865. This organization was always local in the 19th century. The members assumed the duties of keeping up the parsonage and helping the minister.

The Ladies Aid was a strong arm of our church in the 19th century. Mrs. Ida Torrance served as President for many years in the early part of this century

In 1886 the Women's Foreign Missionary Society was formed in Mason. Miss Jennie Hines and Mrs. Freeland were early leaders. The National Methodist Foreign Missions magazine was titled The Heathen Woman's Friend. Mrs. A. G. Ball. Mrs. A. L. Vanderlook, Mrs. James Coy and Mrs. Louis DeLamater, the minister's wife, were charter members.

1880 saw the organization of the Woman's Home Missionary Society here. A good Methodist woman in Mason was a member of both mission societies of the Ladies Aid. Mrs. L. R. White served as leader for many years. Often the two Missionary Societies met together. An old record book says that both Societies met together on October 7, 1897 at the home of Louesa Kiehm.

The membership name book of our church (1860-1900) has many nteresting stories to tell.

After the name of John---there is a penned notation that his name was removed from the church rolls without a letter (which was a strong punishment). In faded pencil there was this notation: "and he was bad, too."

Another member left the church and the explanatory word was "backslider." Still the name of another defector from the membership is followed by the cryptic notation "he never came to prayer meeting or class meeting!"

.One of the strong arms of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the 19th century was Class Meeting. All of the truly faithful appeared on Sunday morning one hour before the Church service and had a Bible study, testimonial meeting and prayer services which strengthened the dedication of the faithful. This Class meeting was really a "time apart". It was always led by a layman and the minister was not necessarily present. It was primarily a men's group until 1910.

Baptism has always been an important Methodist rite. It was interesting to note that until 1910 many baptisms were by total immersion in the Red Cedar or Grand Rivers.

In 1880 our church membership rose to 200. Mason had become the hub of a rich farm community and also an industrial center. A list of the businesses found in an early Mason Atlas lists them:

1 grocery store
2 flouring mills
2 stove and heading mills
2 saw mills
1 bending works
1 manufactury of Bent Stone Boats
1 foundry
3 carriage factories
1 buffalo robe factory (hides were purchased in Montana, processed here---5,000 blankets sold each year)
1 wind mill factory.

Albert Vandercook was active in our church school in 1860-1870.

Charles Van Slyke, a Mason photographer, was superintendent of the Sunday School in 1880.

Our church records show the names of many members in the 19th century whose descendants are still active in Mason Methodism. A.G.and Fannie Ball,Hubert and Ward Bullen, Joseph Bullen, John Hemans, Lucius and Elizabeth Ives, Walter and Sadie Ketchum, Louesa Kiehm, Edward and Jessie Langley, Frank Millbury, A. Vandercook, Alvin and Mae Petty, W. W. and Laura Root and Lenah Peck are representative of that 1875-1900 membership.

The Epworth League Hall was added to the church proper in 1892. There was an obvious attempt by the church members to make the addition and the church

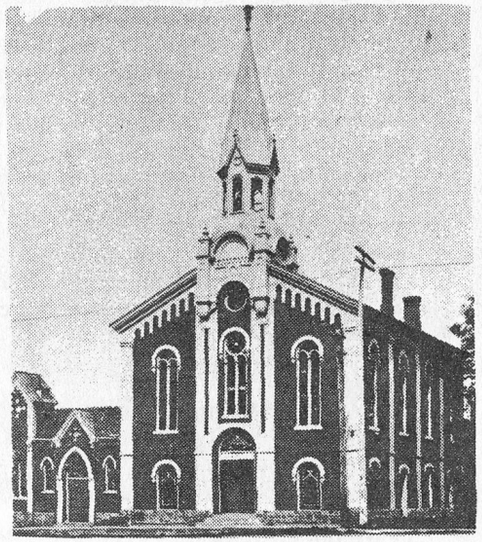
architectually compatible. They repeated the vaulted windows that were reminiscent of early English churches. The beauty of our second church was for 90 years a landmark.

Almost nothing is on record about why this addition was made except that we do know the Epworth League movement was gaining impetus in the Methodist churches of America during this period, and we can assume that the building of Epworth Hall was an effort on the part of the church to provide space for the youth.

Mrs. Lucius White often mentioned that our church had a large and active group of teenagers in the 1890's. Early records show that Jean McDonald (Ball) was President of the Epworth League group in 1905.

An extensive repair and redecoration program took place in 1910. The church records say that a sum not to exceed $3,000 should be spent. This amount bought new pews, pulpit furniture and seats for the gallery.

Active members of the church at this time were the Ward Bullens, Dorr Cady's, L.R. Whites, Walter Ketchums, George Kelloggs, Walter Kinseys, Ethel Laxtin and Alice Laylin, the Clifford Pettys, the Roysters and Riggs, Earl Salsburys, Fred Searls, D.E. Watts, Mrs. W.H. Taylor, Elizabeth and Florence Miller, Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Howlett, Mrs. Ed Doane, Mrs. Pearl Rayner, Jennie and Ed Hines.



Twenty years later in 1930 the church was presented with a splendid Pipe Organ, a gift of the Mizpah Class of which Mrs. D. E. Watts had for 30 years been the teacher. Coral Neely was chairman of the committee to purchase the organ. The committee knew that they could not afford a new organ so they contacted a reputable firm and asked them to buy and assemble one in the church. The finally assembled organ was a combination of old and new. The basic component was a Clough and Warren instrument bought by the St. John's Catholic Church of Jackson in 1890 and used there 40 years. To this was added several new ranks and a new console. The result was a beautiful addition to our church services.

A new parsonage was purchased adjoining the church in 1920, facing Ash Street directly in back of the church.

The depression years saw our members struggling to keep their church programs alive. Grace Hamilton, Vera Taylor, Margaret Beebe and Clara Dickman were the leaders in a Bake sale held once a week in the Everett Smith Meat Market on Jefferson street. The money they earned was often used to pay the minister, buy coal for the furnace or meet another crisis situation.

We have always been a missionary church and in the 1930's we had a children's Mission group. Dorothy Marshall for many years had charge of the King's Guards and the Little Light Bearers. The Teen age girls--the Queen Esther's, were organized by Mrs. David Medcoff and Mrs. L. R. White.

In this same period Mrs. Ruth Dart saw a need to involve babies and pre-schoolers and their mothers in the church. The parties were to be held twice a year. The program had a Missions approach with pictures and speakers who presented the needs of the children around the world. Mite-boxes for gift offerings served to encourage regular giving. Their involvement here led them naturally into the Sunday school and the church. This program still continues with Mrs. Mysie Perkins and Mrs. Ruth Dart. It is the only such program in Michigan Methodism, and it's impact on the church and the community has been immeasureable.

Our Sunday school has always been a strong arm of the church. A few of the leaders through the years have been Walter Root, Langley Rayner, E. A. Densmore, L. C. Otis, Glen Coon and Ruie Post.

A highlight in Mason Methodism was our 100th anniversary. An elaborate all day Centennial Service was held on November 28, 1939.

The three year period 1947-1950 was a time of church improvement. The parishioners, led by W. F. Dart, installed a new heating system, kitchen, bathrooms, new floors in all of the basement and completely redecorated the church, on a budget of $13,000 for materials only. All labor was contributed by men of the church. Rev. Henry Liddicoat was pastor during this period.

Between 1950 and 1955 the number of children in our church school doubled. The membership of the church had grown to such an extent that the facilities were totally inadequate and the membership believed that we must meet the challenge. Reverend Raymond Norton was instructed to contact the Board of Missions for fundraising help and Dr. Alexander Stewart was sent to direct a building campaign.

The following Building Fund Committee was selected: Melvin Stroud, Ben Weaver, Mrs. Frank Rathburn, Mrs. Leland Austin, Ray Perkins, Marcus Hanna, Arthur Zickgraf, Oren Hall Robert Leonard, Frank Nethaway, Ray Neff, Lynn Bullen, Wilbert Cummings, Robert Dorscha, Rex Stribley, Robert Walker, Elmer Schofield, William F. Dart, and Glen Dunn Jr.

During the last half of January a successful building campaign was conducted and pledges totaling $90,000 were secured. In July the firm of Manson, Carver Associates were engaged to present alternate plans for an Educational Unit or a Sanctuary with Educational Unit beneath. In February, 1956, the quarterly conference voted to build a new Sanctuary, with rooms for Nursery, Beginners and Primary Department below.

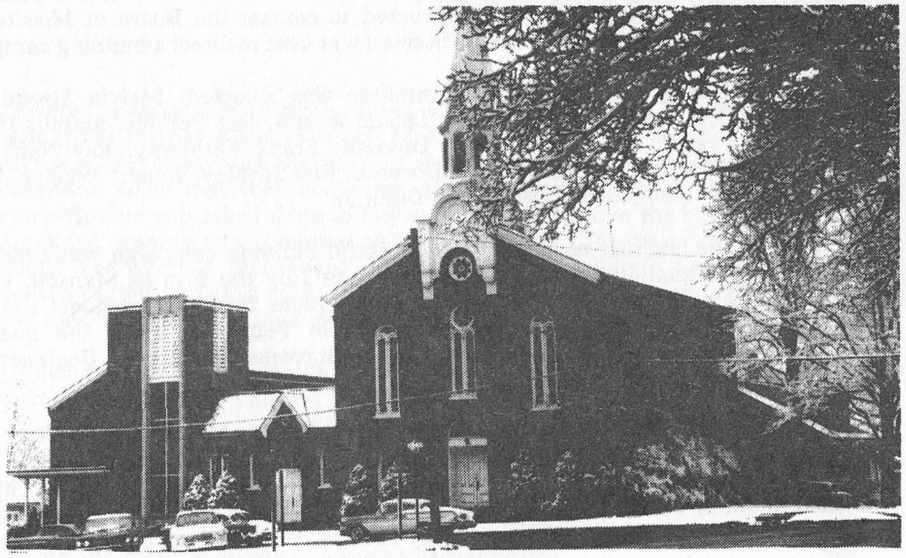
The building committee appointed was: Lynn Bullen, Mrs. Wayne Bullen, Mrs. Abe Cohn, Glen Coon, William Dart, Glen Dunn Jr., Ray Neff, Rex Stribley, Mrs. Louis Stid, and Arthur Zickgraf. The permanent Building Fund Committee charged with finances was to be: Wayne Bullen, V. C. Burgess, Wilbert Cummings, Joe Dean, Glen Dunn, Frank Nethaway, Ray Perkins, Hugh Silsby, and Melvin Stroud.

In July 1955, a ground breaking ceremony was held.

The laying of the cornerstone was a part of the Sunday Service on September 16, 1955. The new Sanctuary was built directly adjoining the historic old church on the north. The old church continued to stand with the Sanctuary and Epworth Hall divided into Sunday School rooms. The cost of the new church, of brick, block and cut stone, including pews and furnishings was $120,000.

An electric organ was placed in the new sanctuary by Glen Coon as a memorial in 1957. In 1959 it was decided that the original Pipe Organ in the old church could be enlarged, repaired and moved into the new church. Mrs. Louis Stid was chairman of a committee to raise funds for this purpose. On May 24, 1959, the original Clough and Warren Organ, completely rebuilt and with 10 new ranks was dedicated. The total cost of the project was $8,100, all of which was given in form of memorials and gifts.

The church was formally consecrated to the Glory of God and the use of the people on Sunday, March 31, 1957. Bishop Marshall Reed was the speaker at this impressive service.



When the plans were drawn for the Sanctuary in 1956, the building committee had asked the architect for drawings for an Educational Unit which would complete our church plan. We had not dared hope that this second phase of our building program could be attempted for several years, although our classroom needs were becoming urgent, when the First Methodist Church of Mason was named beneficiary in the Will of George Duell, with a substantial legacy. With this unexpected and wonderful gift, the minister, Rev. E. L. Sutcliffe, and the congregation set in motion plans for building the much needed Educational and Social unit. On February 6, 1962, a building committee was appointed consisting of: Glen Dunn, Frank Nethaway, Glenn Oesterle, John Princing, W. F. Dart, Arthur Zickgraf, Lynn Bullen, Winston Dancer, Claude Cady, Ray Perkins, Elmer Schofield, Glen Coon, Mrs. Louis Stid, and Mrs. Abe Cohn.

The final plans for the new unit called for 13,143 sq. ft. of floor space at a total cost of $131,341.

The parsonage was razed to make room for the new building, so in 1964 a new parsonage on Hall Blvd. was purchased.

The Educational and Social unit was completed in January, 1963. A Sunday was set aside for an Open House so that all of the church membership might enjoy tours of the completed structure. Members of all the Mason churches were especially invited to join us on this Special Day.

Our church has always been a working church. When we found ourselves in 1963 with a beautiful new church facility completed and with no financial problems, it would have been understandable if the church had rested on its laurels. This didn't happen.

There were many social needs in the decade of 1960-1970s in which the church membership quickly became involved.

One of the first such projects was the Dolman-Delacato patterning for brain damaged children which was housed in our church. This was a program which needed dozens of workers and our church women were very active in it. Linda Pulver was area chairman.

Under the strong leadership of Rev. Keith Hayes who came to us in 1967, our Christian community outreach programs have multiplied many times. One of the first of these was the Day Care Center which had its inception in our church. We provided workers and financial aid and for a time had the Day Care Center in our Education Building. It became a community project and eventually was able to buy its own facility. It continues to fill a very real need in the community.

The women of our church saw a need for a special Jail Ministry. One day each week several people go to the Women's Division of the County Jail where they teach sewing, knitting and other crafts. This has been an active program for five years. Mrs. Valerie Mulvaney and Mrs. Claudia Ireland have been leaders for this project.

For several years we have opened our church to the Migrant Workers Clinic sponsored by the State. One day a week during the summer months migrant families from three counties come here for medical care, innoculation and nutritional help. Members of our church act as hosts.

The Methodist Church has an extensive Clothing Bank open to any needy persons. It has for several years been managed by Mrs. Erma Owen. The migrant

workers are free to use this facility whenever they are in the vicinity. It is also available to any family in the community.

We have a special Hunger project this year in which we have total involvement in the church school and our church families. Mrs. Pat Harvey has served as chairperson.

The United Methodist Women keep an active file on the homebound in our membership and call and do necessary tasks for them. They also visit the people in the Ingham County Extended Care Facility who have no families, and remember them at birthday and holiday time.

The membership in our church has grown to 650 active, caring members.

Our budget in 1977 was $89,000, $15,378 of which went to Mission giving. This was over and above our conference apportionment.

We have been richly blessed over the last 138 years with countless people who have given selflessly to make the church a part of the "Church Triumphant." They represent the Christians of the church at work. They are our "endless line of splendor."

With this great heritage, it is our prayer that our church may continue it's outreach of love and concern.

Phyllis Stid
Church Historian

1978 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1989

In 1978, a protective coating was placed on the outside of the church windows at a cost of $7,366.99 to help conserve fuel. The value of our church buildings, equipment and land has now reached $749,966, and the parsonage $72,182. For local church programs, including church school, we spent $15,061. Current operating expenses were $34,823.

Our church was a leading contributor in the Lansing District in reaching our goal for hunger. We continued support of our Vietnamese gentleman, Mai VanHuynh.

Approximately 42 books, plus several paperback books for children, were added to our church library.

Plans were continued for hiring an Associate Pastor.

Our White Christmas program served 160 Mason area people, funded entirely by gifts and donations from the congregation.

For the second year, we held a Christmas Eve candle-lighting service at 11:00 p.m., and this became a yearly tradition.

1979 was the fourteenth year under the leadership of Rev. Keith Hayes.

In June we welcomed our first Associate Pastor, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Wessman, along with his wife, Leslie, and son, Dai. The storeroom off the kitchen and large social hall was remodeled into a two-room office for the Associate Pastor and a secretary. A part-time secretary was added to the staff.

We participated in the ecumenical "Tuesday School" (a one day per week after-school program to augment our Sunday church school) with an average of thirty-seven Methodist children.

For several years, we have had a group of family campers who spent a weekend at Lakeview Camp. In 1979 they erected a wooden cross in the worship center on the lake shore. This was in memory of four former family campers who had died during the year: Betty Brail, Wilmot (Mac) McDowell, Melvin Stroud and Joe Dean.

We were designated a "Six Star Church" in Advance Special giving for the year. An extra mission project, the sending of sweaters to India, was coordinated by former missionaries, Mr. & Mrs. Harold Humble, our Mission Work Area Chairpersons.

A "Hunger Pot" was placed in the Narthex the last Sunday of each month, netting $1,871.42. We also continued the clothing bank, the jail ministry and the summer Migrant Medical Clinic.

The Chancel choir and handbell choir were under the direction of Ruben Droscha. The children's choirs were under the direction of Lois Whipple.

1980 was a year of transition. Keith Hayes, our pastor for fourteen years, retired in June. Rev. George R. Grettenberger and his wife, Diane, were welcomed in June. Our total membership stands at 666.

Our church raised $635.55 for the Greater Lansing Area CROP Walk.

This has been a good year in the adult education area. Bible studies continue on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening.

The 200th birthday of the Sunday Church School was observed in October. During the children's sermon, Phyllis Baisch portrayed Susannah Wesley. A decorated anniversary cake has shared by the congregation during the coffee hour.

Several outstanding workshops and a support group were instituted and conducted by Bob and Leslie Wessman.

The Administrative Board authorized a number of constructive improvements. Circulating ceiling fans were installed in the sanctuary and large social room, earphone outlets were placed in two rear pews, and plans were made for construction of a ramp for the handicapped at the office entrance on the south side of the church. The Parsonage Selection Committee was authorized to draw up plans for a two story parsonage to be constructed on the church-owned vacant lot adjacent to the present parsonage on Hall Blvd.

A Methodist Men's breakfast group was organized for fellowship and service.

The Christmas season was highlighted by the "Hanging of the Greens (a tradition that began in 1973), an inspirational Christmas Eve candle-lighting service, and the Living Nativity pageant by our church youth. We also continued to share through our "White Christmas" outreach program.

A second worship service was added in March, 1981, with worship at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. In September the time was changed to 9:30 & 11:00 a.m. with church school at 11:00. The church van, which was purchased in 1977, has been driven many miles, taking our youth to camp and all our people to a wide range of conference and district activities.

A Maundy Thursday Passover Supper was held for the first time, featuring the kinds of food typical in the time of Jesus. This was followed by the 24-Hour Prayer Vigil in the chapel, which has been an active part of the Lenten program for many years. It was established by Mrs. Doris Austin several years ago when she was chairman of the Evangelism Committee.

Roger & Sharon Nelson, Co-chairpersons of our Social Concerns Committee, inaugurated "April Invitational" to obtain workers for the many continuing programs of the church, such as Jail Ministry, Migrant Clinic, White Christmas, Mitten Tree, Clothing Bank and others.

Our Associate Pastor, Robert Wessman, was ordained as an Elder at Annual Conference in Albion in June.

A new parsonage was built for an approximate cost of $80,000 on the lot which we owned at 616 Hall Blvd. The pastor, George Grettenberger and family, moved into the new parsonage during October. An Open House was held in early December. The parsonage at 610 Hall Blvd. was sold for $60,000.

Other construction was a ramp built from the circle drive on Ash Street to the office entrance door. A restroom at the south end of the office corridor was remodeled to accommodate a wheel-chair. The parking lot was re-coated and a sidewalk built along the west side.

In 1982, one of our members, Mrs. Jane Shapley, was recommended by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to the Church Conference and District, as a candidate for Christian Ministry, a first for our church. She is attending Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Chicago.

We have continued our family camp-outs, and fourteen of our adults served as counselors at Albright Camp when Bob Wessman was Dean. Forty-three youth attended summer camp and 158 Methodists participated in Ecumenical Vacation Church School.

The loan for the new parsonage at 616 Hall Blvd. was completely paid off by the Trustees on March 15. They will be repaid without interest as building fund contributions are received.

A Memorial Service to celebrate the life of our former beloved pastor, Keith L. Hayes, was held in our sanctuary on Tuesday, May 25, 1982. Keith died at Cedar Springs, Michigan on May 20. To be involved with Keith, in death as in life, was a significant experience for each of us. In his honor a Scholarship Fund has been established with the interest to be awarded each year to a member of this church. His wife, Mary, returned to Mason to live.

In 1983 our financial assets totaled $1,443,896.

Our "Bread for Bread" sale to make extra money for missions was a big success.

We held an Ash Wednesday service for the first time.

After their April breakfast, the Methodist Men helped complete the landscaping at the new parsonage.

A church picnic was held in May, followed by a tree planting ceremony at the Keith L. Hayes Memorial Park on Columbia Street, in his memory. (This park was built by the City of Mason).

A special Charge Conference was held on December 18 for the purpose of approving Louis Grettenberger (son of George and Diane) as a candidate for the ministry.

1984 marked the 200th year of American Methodism. Three special celebrations were held during the year to commemorate this.

The first was a potluck dinner featuring "old fashioned" dishes of food, and those in attendance wore period clothing. The movie "John Wesley" was shown. The second celebration was on Heritage Sunday when about 400 people were present for worship, a potluck dinner and program honoring 145 years of our local church history. Those who joined our church during our first 100 years (prior to 1939) were special guests.

The third celebration was on Christmas Sunday, when we concluded the year with a special "John Wesley" type worship service.

In June a farewell reception for the Robert Wessman family was held as Bob had been assigned to the United Methodist Church in Caledonia, Michigan.

We welcomed our new Associate Pastor, Donald Ferris, and his wife, Jill, at a potluck dinner on June 17th. Don is a recent graduate of Garrett Evangelical Seminary in Chicago. A second parsonage was purchased for our Associate Pastor at 830 Roosevelt Street (Wessman's had purchased their own home while in Mason).

A new Bishop, The Rev. Judith Craig, was appointed to our West Michigan Conference.

During this past year sound-proofing panels were installed by member volunteers on the sides and ceiling of the social room to help reduce noise problems.

Ten new books were added to our church library, including *"What To Do with One Hundred Years"* written by Avis Jean Ball (Anna Jean Schwarzwaelder) who has been a member of this church for many years.

Rev. Grettenberger toured Central America with a group from West Michigan Conference.

E. Lenton Sutcliffe, who was our pastor from 1958 to 1966, died May 4, 1984. His funeral service was held at the United Methodist Church in Albion. His wife, Erma, survives.

"Spring 85" was an innovation of small neighborhood groups in which participants expressed their likes and dislikes regarding this church. This culminated in an all-day retreat for the entire congregation at Youth Haven Ranch in Rives Junction, Michigan. Much good came from this.

One of our members, Jane Shapley, was ordained as a Deacon in June. Her son, Dean, also a member of this church, was recommended as a candidate for the ministry.

Our Methodist Men's group became more active.

Several seminars were held, including "Growth after Loss and Divorce".

Mason's first CROP Walk was held in October with many of our members participating.

On two weekends in May of 1986, several of our church men and women staged a work project at Lake Louise Camp, under the leadership of United Methodist Men. They put down 10,000 feet of underground wiring, as well as installing electrical service in thirteen buildings.

Donald Ferris was ordained an Elder in the West Michigan Conference in June.

Under the direction of the Evangelism Committee the Prayer Chain was re-organized to function at 10:00 each morning and evening to offer prayers for those in special need. There has been a prayer chain in our church for many years. It began perhaps in the 1950's under the leadership of Doris Austin. The present chain is a list of persons who are called for intercessory prayer when there is an immediate or urgent need. Each person in turn calls the next person on the list. Those needing prayers are posted on the board outside the church office, so that others may know and participate in the prayers.

A new boiler was installed in September. The cost was covered with pledges and an insurance settlement.

The Evangelism Work Area originated "DU CUM", a monthly adult fellowship to develop fellowship among church members, and this remains an active group.

New pictorial directories (in color), were available during April, 1987.

The Trustees purchased a computer and printer for the church office, using memorial funds. The church secretary, Ina Lyon, attended instructional classes on the operation of the units at Lansing Community College.

During the week of May 11, our church was featured on Mason radio station WUNN. Rev. Grettenberger gave devotions and one of our youth and one of our shut-ins was featured each day at 2:00 p.m.

At Annual Conference on June 12, Louis Grettenberger was ordained as a Deacon, and Jane Shapley was ordained as an Elder.

Claudia Ireland, who was nominated by the Administrative Board, received one of the Michigan 150 First Lady awards. This was a State of Michigan Sesquicentennial program recognizing community service contributions. Claudia was honored for her involvement with our jail ministry project for the past 15 years as well as many other community activities.

On November 15th the United Methodist Women sponsored a potluck dinner and baby shower for Rev. Don Ferris and his wife, Jill.

Our church received a Mission recognition certificate for Six Star Giving to Missions totaling $11,069.41. Also received was a World Hunger citation and certificate of appreciation for contributing an average of $11.25 per member. Three boxes of sweaters (39) were sent to India.

The Alice L. Jewett Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by her family following her death in 1988, with interest awarded yearly to one of our members.

A Lenten Study program, "Life Begins with Christ" by Alan Walker, was held on six afternoon and evenings during Lent. Lucile Silsby led the study on Thursday afternoons and Marshall Wood led a group on Thursday evenings. This successful venture led to additional Bible study classes during the year.

Our United Methodist Men held a work camp at Lake Louise in April to install parking lot lights at the new lodge, and other needed repairs were made. Proceeds from the Ox Roast in May were used to defray costs of the work project.

Dean Shapley was ordained as a Deacon at the Annual Conference in June. He will be serving a year's internship in upstate New York during the coming year. Jane Shapley, who has been serving as Associate Pastor at First United Methodist in Kalamazoo, is now pastor at Oakdale United Methodist Church in Grand Rapids.

Our Administrative Board and the Presbyterian Church Session voted to hold three joint worship services in July, instead of the usual 8-week Union services which had been a tradition for over 40 years. The first service, on July 3, was a very special service on the east Courthouse lawn (an estimated 250 attended). Following the service a brunch (prepared and served by members of both churches) was served in our dining room and halls, which were attractive with red, white and blue decorations. Group singing of patriotic songs followed. Many asked for this successful venture, under the leadership of Wendy Pulver and Valerie Mulvany, to be held again next year.

On Sunday evening, November 20, families came to share a time of praise and thanksgiving to God. On Thanksgiving Sunday our people brought paper products as well as cans and packages of common food to share with special families in need.

Cherry Zanger coordinated "White Christmas", another long-time tradition of our church, again this year. We provided clothing and toys for needy families and financial aid for specific agencies, (REO, MERCI, CADA, Potter Park Outreach, Angel Flight), baby clothes for Operation Stork, and slippers and stationery for the women at the Ingham County Jail). Gifts that were chosen were wrapped in white and placed on tables during the worship service. Two Christmas Eve services were held this year - at 7:30 and 11:00. The Christmas Day service was at 10:30.

United Methodist Women divided the balance of their fund raisers, after camp fees were paid, as follows: $500 each to Harvest House, Homebound Meals and Sparrow Fairview Drug Center. Under the supervision of Irene Pratt, our women dressed 50 dolls for the Salvation Army to give to children at Christmas.

Work was begun to repair water damage (due to a roof leak) in the two main chests of the pipe organ. (see 1989 activities for detailed organ history.)

The Administrative Board approved a policy for bequests. In keeping with this policy, the Trustees have sent $10,500 of the Gladys Wade bequest to our Conference Treasurer for mission projects.

Eunice Hunt, a handicapped shut-in member for many years, left one third of her estate to the United Methodist Women. They voted to use these funds for the purchase of a wheelchair to be used when needed in our building. Any remaining funds were to be used to insulate the choir loft and redecorate the front of the Sanctuary as needed after insulating the north wall.

At the close of worship on Sunday, February 26, 1989, Rev. Ferris announced that he has been re-appointed by Bishop Judith Craig to the Frankfort/Elberta United Methodist Churches in the Traverse City area, effective April 1. A farewell dinner honoring Don, Jill and Andy Ferris was held on his last Sunday with us.

Two additional programs were added to our usual Lenten observances in 1989. The Chancel Choir presented a Cantata, *"From Glory to Glory"*. Rev. George Stangroom, an outstanding British Methodist preacher, was with us for a preaching mission during Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday service and continued through four nightly special services. His theme was *"Amazing Love...How Can It Be?"* His vivid biblical preaching, his use of hymnody and poetry, and English accent endeared him to many.

Four hundred new hymnals were ordered with members given the opportunity to purchase one or more in honor or memory of a loved one.

The April Invitational gave our people opportunity to volunteer for activity in the following groups: Clothing Bank, Harvest House (Lansing Street Ministry), Heartwood School (ministers to mentally and autistic impaired persons 3-25 years of age), Home Delivered Meals, Hospice, Jail Ministry, MERCI, Migrant Medical Clinic, Pax Christi (Peace of Christ), REO (Rural Emergency Outreach), and Sparrow Treatment Center (Drug Rehabilitation).

Louis Grettenberger was ordained as an Elder, and Gary Bondarenko (Paul and Dawn's son) was ordained as a Deacon at Annual Conference in Albion in June. Dean Shapley, former member of this church, completed his internship in New York and is completing his studies at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Four Methodist Men traveled to Lake Louise Camp this spring for a work project. Verle Lamphere installed handicap facilities in the bathrooms, with Ron Bullen installing the necessary electrical wiring. Norm Hatt and Don Jacot made needed carpenter repairs and other miscellaneous work. These projects were financed by the men's Ox Roast and the Harvest Dinner, a joint project with United Methodist Women with all proceeds for Lake Louise.

Mason Ecumenical Vacation Church School used "Marketplace" as their theme again this year, where children experienced the dress, occupations and events of bible times by "living" in tents according to "tribes".

After consulting with architect Wesley Webb, plans were finalized to begin the Sanctuary Refurbishing project in June. Chairman of the project was Normand Hatt. Working with him were a committee of Kathy Aldering, Marjorie Bohl, Bill Graves, George Grettenberger, Brian Hankey, Dennis Howe and Valerie Mulvany. During the refurbishing of the Sanctuary we worshipped in the social room from June 18th through July 23rd.

The second annual Methodist-Presbyterian Independence Day celebration on the courthouse lawn was held Sunday, July 2, followed by Brunch in our dining room. The next two Sundays of combined worship services were held in the Presbyterian Church due to our refurbishing project.

Rev. Grettenberger was asked to lead a three week work camp to Bolivia in June 1989. He is one of the few Spanish speaking pastors of the Annual Conference and is a former missionary. Volunteers worked on a church in the lowland area of Eastern Bolivia. It is a primitive country, but it was an opportunity to work in a third world country and contribute to the church there. Rev. Lloyd Hansen, a retired pastor in our church, was a volunteer on this mission.

Rev. Grettenberger was assigned to the Jackson Calvary United Methodist Church, which serves the northern suburbs of Jackson, effective July 1. George and Diane have enriched all our lives for nine years, both as pastor and friend, and we will miss them. A Sunday dinner for all was held to wish them farewell and success in their new challenge.

On July 1, Rev. Verne Summers and his wife, Dawn, joined us as the new Senior Pastor family. Rev. Summers has served a number of churches in the Conference, starting in 1966, most recently at Okemos Community Church, and prior to that thirteen years in Charlotte United Methodist Church.

Our new Associate Pastor family is Rev. Charles Hodges, his wife, Debra, and son, Jonathan. Rev. Hodges has a B.B.A. from Grand Valley State University. He attended Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and completed his Master's degree at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. He comes well prepared to lead our ministry with youth.

Neighborhood groups were scheduled to meet in area homes to help members become better acquainted with our new pastors, as well as other Methodist families in their area. Youth were invited to the Summers' home on a Sunday evening in August to give them an opportunity to get acquainted with our new pastors.

Improvements in the Sanctuary were completed and a celebration was held August 6th when we worshipped for the first time in our newly refurbished Sanctuary and dedicated our new hymnals. The enlargement of the choir loft, insulation on the north walls, white plaster walls, a new communion rail, new carpeting, chandeliers, and other improvements, resulted in a pleasing, warm and inspiring place to worship. Our rebuilt organ and chimes, played by our organist, Ruben Droscha, helped us to feel God's presence during this service. Our most special thanks goes to Normand Hatt, who served as Chairman of the refurbishing committee and supervised the entire project from beginning to end. Norm and his wife, Laurene, along with over seventy other church members, spent countless hours working on this undertaking by donating their time and skills. We also appreciate the fine work done by Lamphere Brothers Builders, for their expertise in design and finishing, and their conscientious attention to details. The total cost of the project was $56,472.05.

New Bibles will soon be available during worship. Bible racks were provided by Jeff Lautzenheiser, James Mulvany, Bill Graves, Lawrence Burgess and Don Jacot.

United Methodist Women made a large quilt to be sold in the fall at their Quilt Show. The president, Sydney Cheney, is a very capable leader. Lucretia Goodlock will be serving on the Conference Nominating Committee in 1990.

New this fall, the TNT's (Twenties 'N Thirties) is a young adult bible study class and social group led by Jeff Fosburg.

Twenty-nine walkers participated in the annual CROP Walk in October. $2,130.50 was given by those who financially supported our walkers. Kathy Aldering is our Hunger Coordinator.

Our church will be 150 years old on November 16, 1989. Preparations began in March for the celebration of our Sesquicentennial on the weekend of November 10, 11, and 12. The committee appointed to make preparations for this special occasion were Leland Austin, June Bullen, Marian Alborell, Claudia Ireland, Janet Magsig, Valerie Mulvany, Wendy Pulver and Ina Lyon. In mid-September we were saddened by the death of Leland Austin. His daughter, Phyllis Armstrong, replaced him on the committee.

Highlights of our celebration include a public organ and choir concert on Friday evening under the direction of Ruben Droscha; a "Chicken & Biscuits Supper" on Saturday evening followed by a family oriented program; a special worship service on Sunday morning with our District Superintendent, Rev. Quincy Cooper, preaching; our Annual Church Conference; and an old-fashioned potluck dinner with time for reminiscing on Sunday afternoon.

June Bullen,
Church Historian
October, 1989

UPDATE ON CHURCH ORGAN

To have a complete up-to-date history of our pipe organ, we include here the earliest history we have record of from the booklet "Methodism in Mason 1839-1977" written by Phyllis Stid.

"In 1930 the Church was presented with a splendid pipe organ, a gift of the Mizpah Class. Coral Neely was chairman of the committee to purchase the organ. The committee knew that they could not afford a new organ, so they contacted a reputable firm and asked them to buy and assemble one in the church. The finally assembled organ was a combination of old and new. The basic component was a Clough and Warren instrument bought by the St. Johns Catholic Church of Jackson in 1890 and used there 40 years. To this was added several new ranks and a new console. The organ was not moved when our new sanctuary was completed in 1957. An electric organ was placed in the new Sanctuary by Glen Coon as a memorial.

In 1959 it was decided that the original pipe organ could be enlarged, repaired and moved into the new church. Mrs. Louis Stid was chairman of a committee to raise funds for this purpose. On May 24, 1959 the original Clough and Warren Organ, completely rebuilt and with ten new ranks, was dedicated. The total cost of the project was $8,100, all of which was given in the form of members' gifts."

In 1971 Glen and Lorna (Ball) Dunn added the chimes in memory of Jean Ball.

Work was begun in 1988 to repair water damage in the two main chests, caused by a roof leak. The roof was repaired and in 1989, White Organ Company of Lansing, assisted by Ruben, Jon and James Droscha, repaired and rebuilt some organ sections. As part of the proposed sanctuary renovation, a plan to utilize more of the potential of the existing organ mechanics was developed. Tabs on the console were replaced and seven additional stops were added. (Most of these were in existence, but had never been used; others required only additional wiring.) The cost of refurbishing the organ was $22,539.25

PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MASON

1839-1853	Rev. Jackson
	Rev. I. Bennett
	Rev. E. D. Young
	Rev. W. E. Bigelow
	Rev. D. Thomas
	Rev. T. Wakelin
	Rev. W. Fox
	Rev. S. Bessey
	Rev. I. Donelson
	Rev. J. S. Smart
	Rev. A. Allen
	Rev. Glass
	Rev. D. Curtis
	Rev. S. Calkins
1853	Rev. E. R. Hascall
	Rev. E. Brockway
1854	Rev. T. Lyon
	Rev. J. W. Kellogg
1855	Rev. F. Klump
1856-1857	Rev. A.L. Crittendon
1858-1859	Rev. N. Mount
1860	Rev. H. P. Barker
1861-1862	Rev. O. F. Chase
1863	Rev. H. O. Peck
1864-1865	Rev. L. N. Tomes
1866	Rev. F. Glass
1867	Rev. L.M. Edmonds
1868-1869	Rev. W. M. Coplin
1870-1871	Rev. Richard Pengelly
1872	Rev. William Rice
1873-1874	Rev. F. B. Bangs
1875-1876	Rev. A. A. Knappen
1877-1878	Rev. William Reily
1879	Rev. G. D. Lee
	Rev. O. D. Watkins
1880-1882	Rev. William Doust
1883	Rev. A. M. Fitch
1884-1885	Rev. F. L. McCoy
1886-1888	Rev. L. DeLamater
1889	Rev. A. D. Newton
1890	Rev. C. L. Barnhart
1891-1892	Rev. W. J. Maybee
1893-1894	Rev. G. D. Chase
1895-1896	Rev. W. H. B. Urch
1897	Rev. J. L. Buell
1898-1903	Rev. W. J. Wilson
1903-1907	Rev. N. F. Jenkins
1907-1909	Rev. J. C. Cook
1909-1914	Rev. C. L. Beebe
1914-1918	Rev. G. W. Maxwell
1918-1921	Rev. H. R. E. Quant
1921-1926	Rev. Henry Candler
1926-1931	Rev. W. R. Prescott
1931-1935	Rev. James Bancroft
1935-1938	Rev. James Bowker
1938-1941	Rev. Wesley B. Oldt
1941-1946	Rev. Claude Satterlee
1946-1951	Rev. Henry Liddicoat
1951-1958	Rev. Raymond Norton
1958-1966	Rev. E. L. Sutcliffe
1966-1980	Rev. Keith L. Hayes
1979-1984	Rev. Robert Wessman
1980-1989	Rev. Geo.Grettenberger
1984-1989	Rev. Donald Ferris
1989-	Rev. Verne C. Summers
	Rev. Charles B. Hodges