



1862



1900

# ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS



1960

1967

**A History of the Grand Avenue  
United Methodist Church of  
Port Washington, Wisconsin**

**ONE HUNDRED**  
**FIFTY YEARS**

**A History of the Grand Avenue  
United Methodist Church  
In  
Port Washington, Wisconsin**

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**By  
Marguerite Veh Lueptow**

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## PREFACE

I literally grew up in The Evangelical Church and later in the Evangelical United Brethren Church. My father was the editor of the young people's magazine for the denomination and we lived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where the Evangelical Press was located. Many of the denomination officials were located in Harrisburg, and this gave me the opportunity to witness history being made right before my eyes. The location where the founders established the denomination is not too far from Harrisburg, so many times my parents would take me to see this area. A love for the history of the church was developed in me and for over more than 50 years specifically for my home church of Grand Ave. United Methodist Church.

I owe a great debt of thanks and appreciation for the preservation of the Grand Avenue Church history to Freda Matthies and Alma Maechtle. Their mimeographed 1966 church history book has been the backbone for developing this edition. They also saved newspaper articles and other clippings in a scrapbook. A scrapbook from Ruth Knoespel has been of tremendous value in preserving the church history. The advent of the computer made it possible to put the 1966 church history book on the church web site. This was done in 2005 by Jan Young. Several of the pictures in this edition have been contributed by individual members of the congregation. I specifically thank Larry Maechtle, Doris Maechtle, Helen Maechtle, Sue Merrill, George Maechtle, Rev. Verlin Wandry and Rev. Arv Arveson for their pictures.

I owe a very special thanks to my husband Wayne. Without his constant encouragement in the writing of the text, the placement of pictures, the mechanics of the computer and locating a suitable printer this project would not have gotten done in time for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It is my desire that you find this recorded history not only interesting but also inspirational. May the faith of these early church pioneers lead you on your journey of faith in God and in Jesus Christ, and Grand Ave. United Methodist Church.

*Marguerite Veh Lueptow*

## PASTOR'S LETTER

The Anniversary committee is proud to offer this 150 year history of the Grand Avenue congregation. You will find in this book some updated information along with some new stories describing the key events and people that have helped to build and preserve our Lord's mission; a mission that is ours today. The committee would like to express its deepest thanks and appreciation to Wayne and Marguerite Lueptow for their tireless teamwork in writing and assembling this book.

The theme for our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year is  
Honor the Past  
Celebrate the Present  
Envision the Future

We honor the cloud of witnesses who have run the race of faith before us looking to Jesus who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Their love of the Lord, their commitment and their courage has been a source of inspiration to us and has paved the way for us to continue Christ's work in Port Washington and the surrounding communities.

We celebrate the present by using the gifts and graces with which we have been blessed to continue to share God's message of love and bring His healing presence to our present time.

We envision the future as we seek to continue to discern where God desires to lead us. The vision we are following is one, which we hope and pray will bring to Grand Avenue, a new generation of worshipers who need the Lord and who will answer the Lord's call to serve Him.

As we continue on the road that leads ahead let the words of an anthem be our guiding light:

"O may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave  
Lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey  
O may all who come behind us find us faithful  
(From "Find Us Faithful")

I've been truly humbled by the thought of all the pastors who have served before me, and feel privileged to be part of this ongoing work of Christ.

Pastor *David Guse*



# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER ONE

### 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY CHURCHES OF PORT WASHINGTON

#### METHODIST

In 1843 a small group of Methodists met in private homes, then in the first schoolhouse located on Jackson Street, to conduct their worship services. In 1851 they built a church on East Washington Street. The church was well attended and attracted people of other denominations whose churches were not represented here. The actual membership in 1877 was 40. Port Washington being primarily a German settlement with German speaking churches being organized, the Methodist Church, whose full program was carried out in the English language found it ever harder to continue the work. The congregation was dissolved in 1912. The building was sold to the Knights of Columbus. The Port Washington Savings & Loan purchased the property and tore the church down to make way for a drive-in facility. Today the building and property is the site of the drive-in bank of Associated Bank.

#### PRESBYTERIAN

In 1845 the Presbyterians started services in the same little schoolhouse on Jackson Street. They organized the following year. In 1854 they built a church on a lot donated by Barnum and Blake. This lot was located at 201 North Milwaukee St. This building was destroyed by fire on Feb. 8, 1978 after being used as an auto body shop and warehouse.

#### CATHOLIC

In 1847 the Catholic Church started with three families. Two years later, a small church for 12 families was built on "Light House" hill, which is the site of the present St. Mary's Catholic Church. The present structure was built in 1882 for \$70,000 and had a seating capacity for 1200.

#### BAPTIST

In 1848 a Baptist minister held services in the "Arcade" for a short time, but no record was kept of their activities. The "Arcade" was located from 205 to 211 North Franklin Street.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

### EPISCOPAL

The first meeting of Episcopalians was at the "Union House." The ladies solicited money for a church building. They had a sizable amount collected which they had turned over to a brick manufacturer who failed to deliver the goods and the money was lost. However, a church was erected on Wisconsin Street on a lot donated by O. A. Wastrous and John Bostwick in 1849. After the congregation ceased to function, the building was moved one block west to Milwaukee Street. It was then remodeled into a two family dwelling.

### EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED FRIEDENS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

In 1852 the Evangelical and Reformed Church was organized. They too met in the little old school house. The Port Washington School District built a school on this property which in the 1950's became a Vocational School. Today this is the site of the Port Washington Police Department.

### EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHERN / UNITED METHODIST

In 1857 *Die Evangelische Gemeinschaft*, now known as the Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, was organized. The first meeting places were in homes, but later on the congregation met in the same little schoolhouse, which was the only school in Port Washington for several years. In 1862 a brick church was built on the corner of Jackson and Milwaukee Streets.

### CONGREGATIONAL

The first Congregational Church, the United Church of Christ, was organized in 1891. The lot was donated by Fred Dennet, who to a great extent was instrumental in bringing this denomination to Port Washington. The church is the original building with additions and is located at 131 North Webster Street.

### ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN

In 1898 the first Lutheran Church was organized using the former Presbyterian Church for their meeting place. John Ballbach, Sr. bought the building and gave it to the congregation. A church was built on the corner of Webster and Foster Streets. The congregation relocated in 2005 to the west side of the city on Freeman Dr.

These are the churches which were established in the same time frame as Grand Ave. Church. Since 1900 many more churches have been established in the Port Washington area.



# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BEGINNINGS 1846 - 1898

#### BEGINNING OF OUR DENOMINATION

The beginning of the Evangelical Church takes us back to the year 1800 when the founder of the Evangelical Association Jacob Albright, a tile maker by trade, heard the gospel and was gloriously saved. His newfound joy led him to preach wherever opportunity presented itself. The organization of the first church took place at Kleinfeltersville, Pennsylvania.

Not more than ten miles from the home of Jacob Albright, in Lancaster County Pennsylvania, Rev. Phillip Otterbein of the Reformed Church, while listening to Martin Boehm a Mennonite preacher, was so carried away by the spirit of brotherhood, that he clasped the hand of the preacher and said in German "We are Brethren". Thereupon the first United Brethren Church was organized in Mannheim, Pennsylvania in 1767.

Both denominations began their work among the Pennsylvania Germans. Both possessed great missionary zeal and determination to win the unsaved for Christ. About one hundred fifty years later these two denominations, being of like mind and spirit, merged into one body. Thus, in 1946, the Evangelical United Brethren Church came into being. The combined strength and effort brought the church into every state of the union and the church looked with pride on the fact that the sun never sets on missionary efforts around the world. The union of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and Methodist Church took place in 1968.

In 1836 Milwaukee had a population of 215. The population of Port Washington at that time was only slightly smaller. It was believed by some that Port Washington might become the "Big City." However, Milwaukee had a better harbor and in 1840 the population had grown to 1800. This rapid growth was due largely to the great German migration into this territory in quest of better opportunities.

Among these early pioneers of Wisconsin were families who were members of the Evangelical Association in New York and Pennsylvania. Pioneer pastors followed their flock for hundreds of miles through the unknown wilderness and at the risk of their lives to bring spiritual food to them. Since the work of the denomination was carried on mainly in German, this territory seemed to be the logical setting for missionary efforts and Christian work. The church came to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and also to Wisconsin, just four years after Wisconsin became a territory.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

### BEGINNINGS IN WISCONSIN

In 1840, Rev. J. Lutz was sent by the Illinois conference to explore the possibility for missionary work in Wisconsin. His report to the Conference five months later was favorable. He knew the address of a family from Pennsylvania who had been members of the Evangelical Association and had located in what is now Granville. This was the James Martin family, who had come from Warren, Pennsylvania to Granville in Milwaukee County in 1838.

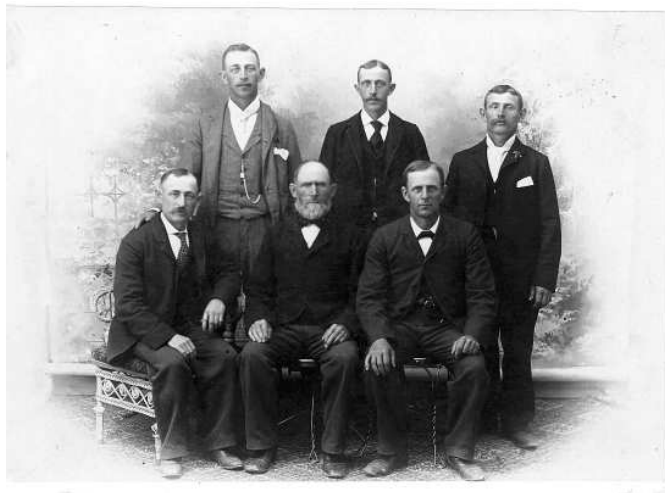
Rev. Lutz stayed two weeks in the Martin home. Relatives and neighbors were invited to the services. A ten-year-old girl who was living in the Martin home as a helper received the Lord as her Savior. She was the first convert of the Evangelical Association in Wisconsin. She later married and became Mrs. Adam Peter, great-grandmother of Iva Mae Peter Maechtle.

Although a church was not built at Granville at this time, the Church of the Good Hope was built in 1958 on or very near the James Martin farm. However, from this small beginning at Granville, the work spread to Greenfield, Menominee Falls, Colgate, Richfield, and Germantown. Sunday Schools were started by Rev. Huert at Oak Creek, Greenfield, and Granville.

### BEGINNING AT PORT WASHINGTON

The first preacher who held services in Port Washington was Rev. J. G. Miller. He was appointed by the Illinois Conference to serve the Winnebago Mission. His field of labor extended from the Menomonee Falls circuit, north through Washington, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Calumet, Outagamie, Waupaca and Shawano counties. From Calumet County he made a missionary journey to Green Bay, Two Rivers, Sheboygan and also Port Washington. Here, in 1846, he preached the first Protestant sermon ever preached in the German language in Port Washington.

In 1853 the ministers Christian Lintner and Oswald Ragatz came from Menomonee Falls and made Port Washington a regular appointment. It was during that year also that the first souls were led to Christ. They were the Nehf brothers William, John and Leonard and their wives. Twenty souls were led to Christ during these meetings and became the nucleus of this congregation. The Nehf brothers had come from Wuerttemberg, Germany in 1843.



William Nehf and Sons

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

According to Charles Nehf, who passed away in 1963 at the age of 91, and was the son of William Nehf, the families were Lutheran, but were not satisfied with their spiritual status. They were deeply inspired by this new doctrine and embraced it readily.

As nearly as can be ascertained the following families comprised the charter membership list:

William Nehf	Charles Graf	George Solto
Matteus Nehf	Phillip Werking	Fred Kerner
Henry Nehf	Henry Maechtle	Jacob Keller
Leonard Nehf	Fred Wirtwein	
Phillip Eimermann	Herman Dose	

This list was obtained by Mrs. Emma Werking Soehnlein in 1911 a few years before her father passed away. Mrs. Soehnlein was the granddaughter of Phillip Werking, Sr. a charter member. There are no membership records prior to 1873. At that time the Port Washington church had 64 members.

The formal organization of the church occurred in 1857 under the ministry of Rev. Henry Huelster, who served the church from Sheboygan. During his ministry a wonderful revival took place, at which forty souls were converted and joined the church. Rev. Fritsche a Wisconsin conference historian stated that "the church was building up."

### WISCONSIN CONFERENCE

In 1856 the work in Wisconsin had grown to the extent that it was deemed advisable to separate from the Illinois Conference. That year the Wisconsin Conference came into being, with the first conference held at Helenville near Jefferson. This church is no longer being used for services, but has become one of the shrines of our denomination. The fields were indeed ripe for harvest, but the laborers were few. Often one minister and an assistant served a dozen or more churches. These circuit riders did all their traveling on horseback. Consequently some of the preaching places were visited only a few times a year. For a number of years the Port Washington church was shifted back and forth between the Sheboygan circuit and the Menomonee Falls circuit. This continued until 1884.

### CLASSES

Because of transportation difficulties, preaching "classes" were started in various parts of Ozaukee and Washington counties. The Phillip Eimermann family lived near highway 57, on what is now called East Hawthorne Drive. Here, Rev. Fritsche says, "we had a very active class". It was at a camp meeting in the Eimermann woods where Grandfather John Maechtle and his son John found Christ as their Savior, as they

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

stopped to listen to the singing on the way home from the Lutheran church one-quarter mile west.

The Eimermann family soon moved closer to Port Washington, and this class later became known as the Maechtle Class. Mrs. Helen Siewert, who passed away in 1963 at the age of 92, was the granddaughter of Phillip Eimermann. Her mother Christina married into the Laubenstein family. They lived near Fredonia and belonged to the Maechtle Class, as did the Teuscher and Voge families. There were so many Maechtle's in the Port Washington Class that it was often referred to as the "Maechtle Class."

The Rintelmann class included the Boehms, Papes, Martins, and Nortwigs. There also was a class at Cedarburg. It was near the restored covered bridge. The Schumanns, Batzigs, and Fischers belonged to this class.

The class at Jackson, which remained active until 1906, showed signs of promise regarding the building of a church. The Sydow, Wilke, Ninke, Zimdars, and Gottbehiet families belonged to this group. Later on, they were joined by the Weber and Schultz and Borchardt families. Grandfather and Grandmother Schultz later moved to Port Washington and became very active in that church. They were the grandparents of Ed Runkel, Sr. who was a life long member of Grand Ave. Church.

Preaching services were also conducted at Port Ulaio and Blank's schoolhouse in Lakefield. No congregation was ever organized in any of these locations, perhaps due to the fact that there was a lot of shifting of population, especially among the farm folk. Traveling on highways became better and some were able to join the group in Port Washington.

### FIRST CHURCH BUILDING



1862 Church

The first meeting places for the faithful little group at Port Washington were in the family homes. Later they met in the little old schoolhouse, which was located on the site of the former Wisconsin Street School and High School, which in the 1940's and 1950's served as a library and vocational school. Today this is the site of the Port Washington Police Department and Port Washington Fire Department. Rev. Fritsche reported that many a blessed revival was held in this little schoolhouse, which was the first school house in Port Washington.

In 1862, during the ministry of L. Buehler, a church was erected on the corner of Jackson and Milwaukee Streets. True to Port Washington tradition, the church

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

was built on a high hill on a very small plot of ground. The hill was steep and walking hazardous on cold stormy days.

The church was a neat little brick building without a basement. A basement was not needed as heating was done with a huge wood-burning stove. Furnishings were simple. The pulpit and the altar rail were made by the Barth Mfg. Co. of Port Washington, which was located on the present site of the Jadair Co. at 235 Grand Ave. The communion table was a plain substantial hardwood table, used by many for a worship center and devotional purposes.

Freda Matthies wrote:

How well we remember the partitioned pews on both sides of the center aisle. Parents with small children or daring young couples occupied seats on either side of the partition, which was intended to separate the sexes.

The brick for the building was made of Port Washington bluff clay, and was 1 1/2 X 4 X 8" in size, and the building was constructed solidly and well. It had a plaque above the door inscribed *Evangelische Gemeinschaft 1862*.

In 1904 this church was sold to the Catholic Knights for \$600. They, in turn, sold it to the Port Washington School Board to be used for a manual training shop prior to 1926. This explains why the sign in the picture of the 1862 church reads "High School".

Church administration a century and a half ago was comparatively simple. Records, with the exception of Sunday School, were not kept or not preserved, until 1865, when W. Horn was pastor of this congregation. The three trustees and the pastor constituted the official board.

### INCORPORATION

It was August 18<sup>th</sup> 1865 when the church was incorporated. The document was signed by Wm Horn, Minister, John Koch, Assistant Minister and secretary, and by trustees Henry Maechtle, Charles Graf, George Solto, in the presence of Judge E. S. Turner.

The above date is also the first record we have of a trustee meeting. For many years one trustee was elected each year to hold office for three years, which was according to the original Articles of Incorporation. However, at present there are ten trustees with a limit of three 3-year terms of office.

The first record book available is the trustee book. On the first page of the book is a warning to anyone who might be so unfortunate as to lose the book. The penalty is

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\$500! This all-important little book was used for secretary reports of annual meetings until 1959.

The Quarterly Conference book dates back to 1896, when Rev. F. Siewert was pastor. Numerous and interesting facts are hidden among these pages. Shortly before the turn of the century, the pastor's salary was increased from \$100 a year to \$500 per year.



Buggy wheel of Rev. F. Siewert on Historical Wall

Grand Avenue was still considered a mission church, so one-half of this salary was paid by the congregation, and the other half was paid by the conference. Salaries were raised by free will gifts, which could consist of money, food such as a side of pork or beef, butter, or whatever the farmers had more of than money. They could also include *Hafer* (oats) for the horse.

It was also during this period that the first organ was purchased. Charles Nehf tells how his Uncle Andre, who lived in Terre Haute, Indiana, during a visit, was disturbed by the fact that these people were still singing *Aus die Faust* without an instrument. He promptly donated \$20 toward an organ fund. This amount was matched by Charles. Rev. Siewert, Martha Runkel, and Tillie Boehm were appointed to collect the rest. Out of \$112.60 collected the organ was bought. The \$8.00 left over was used to purchase the songbooks, *Gebet und Dank Lieder*. Mrs. Charles Nehf was the first organist in this congregation.

# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SECOND CHURCH 1899 - 1959

#### NEW LOCATION

In 1891 the budget had reached an all-time high. The congregation now seemed ready to expand. What faith these pioneers possessed!

In 1898, Rev. W. Kolander served this church for one year. However, this was a memorable year. The little congregation on Jackson Street felt that they had outgrown their small church and voted to expand. At the 1899 conference session the minister asked permission to buy property for a new church and parsonage site. This was granted. That year, Rev. Kolander, with the sanction of Rev. Fritsche, Presiding Elder, bought an acre of land on Grand Avenue for \$1000. Although there were not enough votes at the annual meeting in favor of going ahead with the building project that year, the following year it was decided to buy the acre of land from Rev. Kolander.

At conference time in 1899, Rev. A. F. Wendorf was stationed here and served until 1903. That year the parsonage was built for \$1500. The foundation of the building was constructed by William Runkel. Charles and Herman Nehf, who built a great many homes in and around Port Washington, were the builders of the parsonage.

The lot purchased for the Grand Avenue Church property was rather unique in form. The north side, facing Grand Avenue was more than 12 feet below the level of the street. The rear or south end of the lot was a high gravel hill. There was one advantage, it was unnecessary to excavate for the buildings.

The church was constructed in 1900 at a cost of \$5500, by C. A. Christiansen from Milwaukee, the son-in-law of Rev. Fritsche. He built a great many churches along the same line, or Akron style, which was then the contemporary modern church architecture. There is no record of plans and specifications. Apparently Mr. Christiansen was trusted to build wisely.



1900 Parsonage and Church

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The church was dedicated by Bishop Horn, Rev. John Nickel, Presiding Elder, and Rev. A. F. Wendorf, pastor.

Much volunteer labor was expended on the part of some of the men of the church to fill in and around the buildings. For forty days, men worked to scrape and haul gravel from the hill to fill up the front yard and to put topsoil on the gravel fill. Judging from the lush growth of maple trees on the lawn, the job must have been done well.

Later on, horse sheds were built on the remaining gravel hill to the rear of the church. The church deed was dated 1899. In 1907, when the Northern Transit Interurban Railroad Line was built through the city, the Company took a portion of the church property on the south side and in exchange gave the church the lot east of the parsonage.

In 1904 a special offering was taken to liquidate the church debt. Remarkably enough, with the help of the Ladies Aid and Young People's Organization, it was paid off within four years.

### CHURCH NAME CHANGED

The name of the church has been changed a number of times. It was first known as *Ozaukee Mission*, then *Evangelische Gemeindschftt*. During the Second World War, when it seemed to be unpatriotic to be associated with anything pertaining to German, a new sign was made and placed over the old one. The church adopted the name of *The Grand Avenue Evangelical United Brethren Church* or *Grand Avenue E. U. B. Church* at the time of the 1946 union. The merger with the Methodist Church in 1968 once again changed the name to *Grand Avenue United Methodist Church*.



Bishop George E. Epp

### YEARS OF GROWTH

In 1903 Rev. Kern came to serve the local church and the class at Jackson. Due to the fact that his wife had recently passed away leaving three-year-old Lorenz, who was living with the Christian Epp family in Sheboygan, he asked permission for the Epp family to live with him at Port Washington. This request was happily granted. It was this church that recommended Bishop George Epp, the son of the family, to the Christian ministry. These were the years of enthusiasm and growth. Catechetical classes were well attended, Sunday school and young people's organization flourished with the help of the parsonage family. After a year of ill health, Rev. Kern passed away in 1904 during the Conference session at Prairie du Sac.



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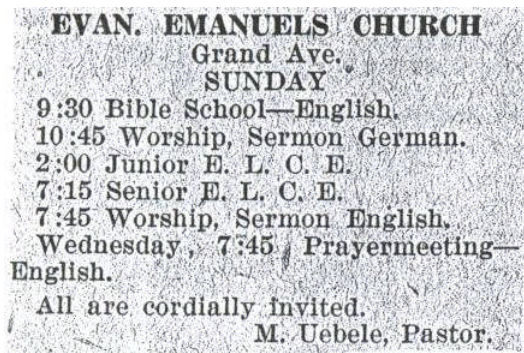
Rev. Matt Wittenwyler, a retired minister, then came to serve Port Washington in 1906 and remained until 1911. Then his wife passed away and it was no longer possible for him to continue to live alone at the parsonage with a grandson Cyril Wittenwyler, who had made his home with them. Therefore, he resigned before the next session of Conference.

Rev. Fred Nickel came to replace Rev. Wittenwyler. The first English services were held in the church during his ministry. That year the church received its first piano. The first Sunday School Bible Class was organized at that time. However, Rev. Nickel stayed here only one year.

In 1912 Rev. Fritsche, who had also been retired for some time, became pastor of this congregation. He had served Port Washington in 1860 to 1862, so he did not come as a stranger. During his pastorate the interior of the church was redecorated.

A concrete floor was laid in the church basement, and kitchen and dining room facilities were installed. Rev. Fritsche remained here until 1918 when he retired to Texas to complete writing the History of the Evangelical Church.

The Rev. Mike Uebele family served this church from 1918 to 1925. Beside the parents, their children, Roy, Clara, Mae, Paul, and Lloyd were a great help in putting new life into this congregation. The minister's salary now was \$900 per year. Two dollars and sixty cents per member was paid to conference each year. Some parsonage repairs were made at that time, such as cement floor in the basement.



**EVAN. EMANUELS CHURCH**  
Grand Ave.  
SUNDAY  
9:30 Bible School—English.  
10:45 Worship, Sermon German.  
2:00 Junior E. L. C. E.  
7:15 Senior E. L. C. E.  
7:45 Worship, Sermon English.  
Wednesday, 7:45 Prayermeeting—  
English.  
All are cordially invited.  
M. Uebele, Pastor.

There were 47 members in the Senior Young People's Alliance and 30 in the Junior League. A complete transition from German to English was made in 1923. The Cradle Roll was started in 1920. Also the first lay delegate, Ben Lucas, was appointed to go to Conference. By 1920 the minister received \$1350 salary and Conference apportionments were \$356.

### PERIODICALS

The church publications at this time were numerous. The German ones were *Der Botschafter*, *Evangelisches Magazine*, *Missions Bote* and *Kinderfreund*. The English publications were *Evangelical Messenger*, *Evangelical Herald*, *Missionary Messenger* and *Sunday School Messenger*, and the youth publications *The Crusader* later named *Builders*.

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### FORWARD MOVEMENT

In 1923 the Forward Movement program was launched with prayer group meetings for each separate committee. This was a post-war program designed to induce all members of the church to act on the various committees. The purpose was to create a deeper spiritual life within the church. The project proved to be a great blessing to this congregation. Financially it was also a great success.

When Rev. Gassman came to serve this field in 1925, the membership was 125. Bible study was held in connection with midweek prayer meetings. Very effective Easter sunrise services were held here during his ministry. His decorator's touch was most artistic, and helped to inspire reverence in so many special programs. He retired in Port Washington six years later.

In 1931, Rev. George Nickell was stationed to Port Washington. That year also Rev. Fred Siewert retired and moved to Port Washington, where he passed away a few years later. That year an evangelistic meeting was held during Holy Week, which climaxed in a beautiful sunrise service.

In 1932 this church celebrated its 75th anniversary. Rev. Charles Bender, Conference Superintendent, assisted in these services. A building fund was established by the Ladies Aid and Missionary Society. The initial sum was \$41.60. However this fund grew to a sizeable amount, enough to equip the kitchen and fellowship hall in the basement of the church. One thousand dollars of this amount was a bequest from the Ed Lamprecht estate.

The church had a four-week revival meeting about this same time. Young and old alike received Christ as their Savior or renewed their allegiance to Him. The membership had increased to 138 persons over 18 years of age.

### INPROVEMENTS

The church received a great deal of attention during Rev. Nickell's ministry. The Four Square Class partitioned off a room for their Sunday school class in the basement. However, they soon had to relinquish it in favor of the kindergarten class. A new financial system using envelopes was inaugurated in 1931. The church was re-roofed. The east hall door of the vestibule was closed up and the steps removed. New gutters were installed and it was voted to remove the tower, but upon careful consideration it was deemed better to re-nail and paint the shingles and repair the foundation of the tower. A new hardwood floor was laid in the church and walls were redecorated.

In 1936 Rev. George Zellmer came to serve this field. Repairs continued with changing of wiring in the basement and fireproofing of the furnace room to lower insurance. In May 1942 Rev. Orlando Hayne was stationed to Port Washington. He remained here only one year, since he felt a call to enlist in the service of his country as a Chaplain.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

During his time of service here a stoker was installed at the cost of \$300. A Building Fund and Organ Fund had been established by the church by this time. The organ fund was raised entirely by individual donations. The church at long last became self-supporting. The 85th anniversary was observed that year also.

Rev. Charles Rota came to Port Washington in 1943 as the pastor. The Gleaners Sunday School class was granted permission to remodel the parsonage kitchen. The Hammond organ was purchased for \$1800. The church walls were covered with NuWood. Stained glass windows were given as memorials from the Henry Maechtle, John Bertschinger,



Chancel with new furniture in 1949

George Maechtle, Herman Teuscher, Fred Siewert, John Laubenstein, and Ed Lamprecht families and the Ladies Aid. The vestibule windows were donated by the Gust Lueptow and Ervin Werking families. Chimes were added to the organ in memory of Kenneth Maechtle.

In 1948 Rev. Gordon Bender became pastor here. The long-discussed exit door was placed in the southwest corner of the

sanctuary. The church basement was remodeled so it could be used for the Primary Department of the Sunday School. This was done at a cost of about \$2200. An altar was given to the Sunday School by the Harold Knoespel family in memory of their son David. The Gust Lueptows donated the pulpit in the sanctuary, the Stallmans and the Knoespels the altar, Mrs. Donnabauer the pulpit benches and the L. A. Laubensteins the baptismal font.

Rev. Peter Retzlaff was assigned in 1953 to serve Port Washington. In 1957 Grand Avenue Church celebrated its Centennial with Bishop Harold Heininger, Bishop George Epp, son of the congregation, and Rev. John Bartel, Superintendent of the Eastern District, as guest speakers. It was a rare privilege indeed to meet so many old and new friends and to be able to recall history as it was made through the last 100 years. The second and third oldest members received roses from Rev. Retzlaff. They were Charles Neff of Oak Park, Ill. and Mrs. Helen Siewert of Port Washington. William Large, the oldest member, was in the Becker Nursing Home of Port Washington.

# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE THIRD CHURCH 1960 - 1993

#### EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

A Century Club had been formed for the purpose of raising money to build an Educational Unit. By 1955 more than \$30,000 had been raised. It was decided that all savings from the various organizations should flow into the Building Fund. A goal of \$72,000 was set. A three phase plan was adopted. It provided that an educational unit be built, to be followed sometime later with a new sanctuary. The third phase was replacing the parsonage.

During the pastorate of Rev. Leslie Pardun 1959-61 a thorough study of the needs of the congregation was begun. A new Educational Unit was constructed east of the church and behind the parsonage property at the cost of \$86,000 under the supervision of architects Satre and Senescal. On May 31, 1959 the congregation observed groundbreaking services for the new Educational Unit. Cornerstone laying occurred August 23, 1959. Members of the building committee were: Merton W. Lueptow, Chairman, Wilfred Maechtle, John Bell, Harold Knoespel, Mrs. Catherine Sinkular and Ed Runkel, Sr. The unit was completed and dedicated in May 1960 by Bishop Emeritus George E. Epp. This building provided much-needed facilities for the Sunday School and included a fellowship hall with stage, a large modern kitchen, a pastor's study and a heating plant.

Rev. Verlin Wandry became pastor in the fall of 1961 upon the resignation of Rev. Al Ebert, who had been appointed that year by the annual conference. Following much study concerning the condition of the church structure and of the needs of the congregation, it was voted in 1964 to build a new sanctuary on approximately the same site as the original building on Grand Avenue, which had served the congregation for 65 years.

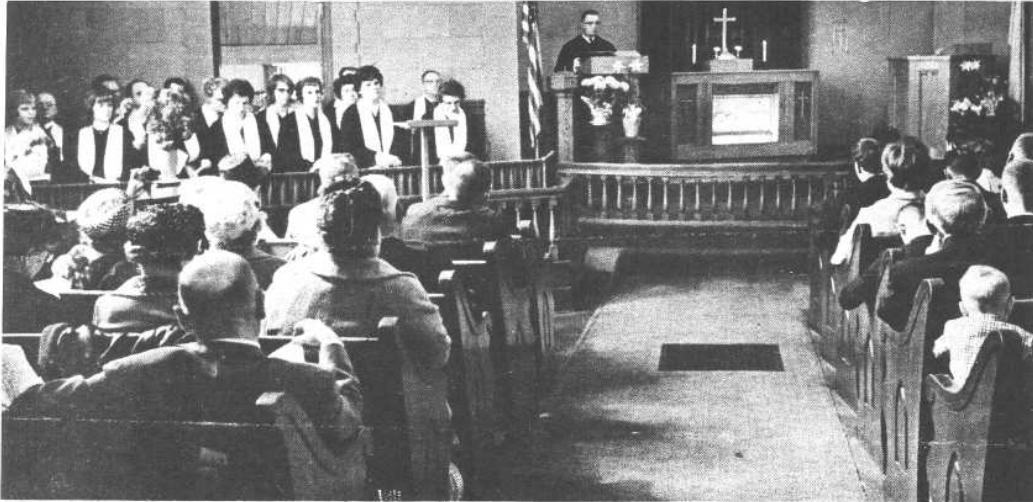
The study started in 1959 included plans for the erection of a new sanctuary and a new parsonage. The first pre-planning committee meeting was held on April 17, 1963 with Rev. Verlin Wandrey presiding. Those on the committee were Elmer Buehler, Denneth Franzke, Harold Knoespel, Mrs. Lou Ross, and Earl Veldboom. At a later meeting, Mr. Alfred H. Siewert, of Alfred H. Siewert & Associated Architects, Ltd., Milwaukee, was chosen as the architect for the sanctuary.

#### NEW CHURCH SANCTUARY

The Council of Administration on September 5, 1963 appointed an 11 member Building Committee. Each building committee member served as a chairperson of an individual

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

committee as follows: Merton W. Lueptow, Chairman; Earl Veldboom, Vice Chairman; Mrs. Lou Ross, Secretary; Mrs. Marguerite Lueptow, administration; Wesley Soerens, finance; Derwin Neerhoff, fellowship; Tilford Fenney, survey; Edward Freier, Jr., Christian education; Albert Harrer, Harold Knoespel, construction; and Gilbert Liebenstein, worship. Wilfred Maechtle had been chosen by the congregation as Building Fund Treasurer.



AN OVERFLOW CROWD of members and visitors filled the Grand Avenue Evangelical United Brethren church Sunday, Apr. 24, for the final service to be held in the building. Work has begun to demolish the building to make way for a new larger edifice. Bishop Emeritus George Edward Epp, Riverside, Ill. preached the final sermon, followed by a dinner in the fellowship hall.

Ozaukee Press April 28, 1966

Photo by Vern Arendt

Rev. Robert A. Boettcher was assigned to serve Grand Ave. Church by the Annual Conference session in 1965. The last service in the old sanctuary, built in 1900, was conducted by Rev. Boettcher on April 24, 1966. Bishop Emeritus George E. Epp preached the sermon. Demolition of the building began the middle of May and was completed in a day and a half. Bringing down the steeple caused a few anxious moments. When the workmen tugged on a cable attached to the steeple the structure started to fall just as planned. But then, instead of falling neatly to the ground, it caught on the peak of the roof of the old church building and teetered there, seeming to take perfect aim for the Werking Dairy next door. Finally, the pointy tip was pulled down and the steeple crashed to the ground with several feet to spare.

Ground breaking for the \$155,000 sanctuary was after the morning worship service on May 22, 1966. Worship services during this time of building were held in the Fellowship Hall. Construction by General Contractor Gahan & Sons, Inc., of Port Washington, started on May 27, 1966 with the pouring of the footings.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The Cornerstone Laying Ceremony on August 21, 1966 was forced indoors due to heavy rain. Conference Superintendent Herbert E. Zebarth preached the sermon for the cornerstone laying ceremony. The steel box of the old church cornerstone was opened to find the mementos and documents put there in 1900 were all written in German. Both the 1900 and 1966 cornerstones were laid in the east outside brick wall on August 26, 1966. The new 2200 pound church steeple was raised and placed on April 13, 1967.



Cornerstone Laying Ceremony August 1966

Although not all the appointments had been installed, the first service was held on April 23, 1967, exactly one year after the concluding service in the old sanctuary. The service of transition began in the Fellowship Hall with the Call to Worship and Invocation. During the singing of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers", which was the last hymn to be sung in the old structure, the congregation left the

Fellowship Hall and proceeded to the new sanctuary building. Bishop Harold R. Heininger officiated at the 3 p.m. dedication service with a dinner following for members and guests. Several other celebration events took place including the observance of the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church.

### PARSONAGE

The third part of the long range plans developed in 1959 was the parsonage. The new church building completed in 1967, was designed to wrap around the parsonage, which was located where the front lawn and bell tower is now. Although well worn, the parsonage continued to be useable while the church was paying off the building mortgage. In 1976 the decision was made to replace and remove the old parsonage since it was costing a great deal to maintain and was making it difficult for the congregation to attract the good pastors because it was on a noisy main street. A parsonage committee was appointed with Wayne R. Lueptow, chairman, Howard Douville, Doyn Grill, Harold Knoespel, Marc Eernisse, Monroe Maechtle, Alma Maechtle, Dan Jesse, Lee VanCamp, Ray Cleer and Emily Cleer. A house was purchased at 1028 Fairview Dr. in Port Washington at the cost of \$54,000. Rev. Lee Downs and family were the first to occupy this new home.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

During the summer of 1980 Monroe Maechtle, Jr. and James Siewert proceeded to tear down the old parsonage. People of the congregation were permitted to go through the house for anything they wished to have from the house. Monroe Maechtle wanted to save the hard wood flooring. It is noted in an old scrapbook that "we will miss seeing the old church parsonage of 1899, but are glad that a son of one of the members of the church was able to have the privilege of doing this job and it also saved the church the cost of having it torn down." The removal of the parsonage and the new lawn improved the appearance of the church.

### FUND RAISING

The congregation was served by Rev. Thomas O. Garnhart, 1969-1974, and Rev. Duane E. Andrus, 1974-1976. Rev. Lee Downs was appointed pastor in 1976 and served until 1979. The "route riders" and "trail bosses" of Grand Ave. Church successfully completed the Pony Express stewardship campaign in Nov. 1978. Rev. Downs and Marguerite Lueptow, general manager of the campaign, felt that the Pony Express theme of the stewardship campaign sparked enthusiasm among all members, both young and old, and resulted in the congregation working together for a common purpose.

The Administrative Board, in early 1980, voted to pay off the church mortgage prior to the due date. The theme for the special giving was "Be the First on Your Block to Buy a Piece of the Rock." The Finance Committee sent out a letter to members in May 1980. The letter read as follows:

Your Golden Opportunity has arrived! At the request of the Administrative Board, the Finance Committee has been asked to retire the mortgage on the church early. This is being done in order that your regular weekly offering can be used to meet our ongoing needs. The mortgage has been divided into 100 pieces which have been mounted on rocks and are being offered for your donation of \$100.00 or more. Be the first on the block to get a piece of the rock!

Pieces of the mortgage were glued on rocks from the shores of Lake Michigan and sold. It was a successful project and the mortgage was paid off in Sept. 1980.

### BELL TOWER

At the time of the razing of the old 1900 church in April of 1966, the congregation could not afford a tower for the church bell. Plans for the new church did not incorporate using the bell. Church member Edward Liebenstein volunteered to store the bell in his barn until plans were developed and funds raised for a bell tower. He didn't know it would take 16 years before this project would be undertaken. When Earl Matthies, husband of Freda Matthies died Sept. 13, 1964, she started a fund for a church tower with a donation in his name.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Grand Ave. Church was served by Rev. Claude W. Bartlett from 1979 to 1983. The 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Grand Ave. Church was celebrated on Oct. 3, 1982. The dedication of the Bell Tower/Bulletin Board was the highlight of this anniversary observance. The Tower was dedicated in honor of Freda Matthies, who died in June 1982 at the age of 90. Thirteen other church members were also honored for their service to the church, and those financial contributions made the bell tower possible. They were: Earl Matthies, Dr. Milton Siewert, Selma Maechtle, Rev. and Mrs. Fred J. Siewert, John Bertschinger, Herman Teuscher, Elizabeth Moldenhauer, Marian Clark, L. A. Laubenstein, Lloyd Franzke, Erwin Werking, and Melvin Werking.

Bishop Marjorie Matthews preached at the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration worship service. The Service of Dedication was held out of doors by the new tower. She and



Memorial Bell Tower

Rev. Richard Hinkelman, District Superintendent, conducted the Service of Dedication of the Memorial Bell Tower/Bulletin. Rev. Milton Siewert, grandson of a former early minister, gave a history of the bell tower/bulletin board memorial. Frank and Jane Dauner, daughter of Freda Matthies, sang at the ceremony. Helium filled balloons were released by the Sunday School children. Messages asking for prayers for peace were in the balloons which were carried aloft on this sunny

day. The 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festivities were concluded with an "Afternoon Program of Music and Reminiscence". This informal program involved several musical numbers presented by church members, and previous pastors "reminisced" about their pastorate to Grand Ave. Church.

### CELEBRATING METHODISM

In June 1983 Rev. Arv (Arthur) Arveson was appointed pastor of Grand Ave. Church, and he served until June of 1989. Several events took place during Rev. Arveson's pastorate which had an effect on the history of the congregation.

Grand Ave. Church observed the 200<sup>th</sup> year of Methodism in the United States on Oct. 21, 1984. Rev. Arveson, dressed in a costume of the 1700's circuit rider preacher, rode on a horse from Park St. along Grand Ave. to the church. Debbie Decker, owner of the horse and church member, escorted the pastor and horse. As he approached



## History of the Grand Avenue Church

the church before the 10 o'clock a.m. worship service, members of the congregation, some dressed in costumes of the era, greeted him in the rain.

### THE FIRE

The night of March 11, 1984 will forever be remembered in the history of Grand Ave. Church. A wire nut that shorted out a screw holding up a recessed light fixture started a fire which was discovered about 9 p.m. by a policeman on routine patrol. The fire and extremely heavy smoke caused the \$180,000 damage to the narthex, back wall of the sanctuary, and balcony floor. Fortunately the beautiful stained glass sanctuary windows were not damaged, but three smaller stained windows were damaged in the narthex area.

A letter dated March 13<sup>th</sup> was sent by Rev. Arveson to all of the members to explain the situation. Part of the letter reads as follows:



Rev. Arveson as 1700 Circuit Rider



Fire fighters examining burned out Narthex

“We will hold Wednesday evening Lenten services and Sunday morning services in the Fellowship Hall for several weeks. Sunday School will also meet as usual. Our hope is to be back in the sanctuary on Easter morning.”

“Your response to this crisis has been overwhelming. People were already here on Monday morning to begin cleaning up. The offers of help and use of facilities throughout the community

have been most gracious. However, I want to lift up and celebrate your response to this time of need. Your prayers for the church, your work, your time and talents have been given most graciously. Your witness to each other and to the community has been inspiring. In the midst of

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

difficulty and crisis the church of Jesus Christ has always made its strongest witness. 'I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.' Romans 1:8"

A letter to the Ozaukee Press newspaper thanking the community, Port Washington Fire Department, and the next door Dari Haus for serving coffee, was published.

Easter service on April 22, 1984, was especially joyous for the congregation as worship was resumed in the sanctuary. The Service of Rededication was held July 1, 1984. Rev. Richard Hinkelman, District Superintendent, preached. The Port Washington Fire Department presented the pastor and congregation a "slightly used" fire fighter's helmet to serve "as a reminder to the congregation to continue to practice good fire prevention technique." Marc Eernisse was Fire Chief at the time and also a member of the church.

### OUT REACH

The Port Washington-Saukville Association of Churches started a Family Center Program in the spring of 1985. The group met every Tuesday morning at Grand Ave. Church for several years. The purpose of this Family Center was to look for ways to strengthen the family, and to provide assistance before problems arose.

The members of the congregation in June 1985 were each given "seed money" which was to be increased by their talents. Many inventive ways to raise money were found. One member raised chickens and sold eggs, another held a patio party, while others



CHURCH BUYS PROPERTY: The Shell service station and garage on W. Grand ave., Port Washington, has been sold to the Grand Ave. Ev. United Brethren church, effective at once. Purchase price was not disclosed. Ray Wohlford, church official, said they plan no changes

for the present. He said the property was acquired from Jos. H. Biever, E. Prospect st., Port Washington, for possible future expansion. The place formerly was operated by the Swatek Bros., but has been idle for several months. Fred Schukmecht photo

Property east of the church in 1966

created crafts and made baked good which they sold. "A Midsummer's Night Musical" was held by Rev. Arv Arveson and family, with others helping, to raise money. The money raised was for World Service Missions.

The congregation, in July of 1966, purchased the Shell Oil Co. buildings immediately east of the church, thus providing parking space for parishioners in the large yard of the garage. The building itself was retained

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

as a rental property for many years, providing income needed to offset the mortgage expense. In 1988 the Port Washington Fire Dept. burned these buildings as a training exercise. The old underground gas storage tanks were carefully removed and the entire property was developed for parking.

### CHOIR AND NEW ORGAN

Grand Ave. Church had a large adult choir by about 1948. Mr. George Ahlswede was the director of the 24 member choir. Marge Liebenstein was the organist. The choir sat in the front of the church facing out to the congregation. When Mr. Ahlswede retired, Marge Liebenstein took over as both organist and director.

The choir reached its height under the leadership of Carol Garnhart, wife of Rev. Tom Garnhart. Handel's "The Messiah" was sung under her direction and the choir gave an excellent performance of this difficult music! The choir was directed several years by Bob Triebold after the Garnhart's left this pastorate. Mary Ellon Berkley restarted the choir in 1987 and continued until 2005. Ann Celeen Dohms, organist, now directs the choir.



Organist Sue Merrill, committee and donors  
at new organ dedication

The Rev. Neil Piepenburg assumed his duties as pastor in June 1989. He served as minister until June of 1993. During this time it became obvious that a new organ was very much needed. An Organ Research Committee was established of Mary Ellon Berkley, Ruth Knoespel, Phyllis Kraft, Sue Merrill, Ed Schmidt and Neil Piepenburg. The committee selected a Rodgers Cambridge Organ. The organ is a comprehensive two-manual instrument with 49 speaking stops

and 12 couplers. The organ was dedicated as a memorial on October 11, 1992 to Raymond and Helen Veh, Merton W. Lueptow, Carol Lueptow, and in honor of Betty Lueptow, given by Wayne and Marguerite Veh Lueptow, Merton D. Lueptow and Betty Lueptow. Harold and Ruth Knoespel contributed the installation of the chancel antiphonal speakers.

Freda Matthies played the organ many times before the 1960's. Ruth Knoespel was organist in the late 1960's and 1970's. Sue Merrill served as organist for 24 years until her retirement in 2000. Helen Maechtle and Janet Laubenstein were excellent substitute organists for the church. Beginning in 2000 Ann Celeen Dohms and Carole Griffiths have served the church as organists.

# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER FIVE

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION

#### JUGEND BUND 1896

The Young People's Alliance of the Emmanuel Church at Port Washington was organized in 1896 when Rev. Fred Siewert was pastor.

The constitution of this organization was studied by the young people before subscribing to its full program. The following became charter members:

Rev. Fred Siewert	Verena Maechtle	Edward Runkel
Charles Nehf	George Wilke	William Gurn
Martha Runkel	Ellen Boehn	Edward Fox, Jr.
Otelia Boehm	Henry Wagner	William Nehf, Honorary member.
Will Maechtle	Benjamin Lucas	

The first officers, elected for a six-month period, were President, Rev. Siewert; Vice President, Martha Runkel; Secretary, Otelia Boehm; Corresponding Secretary, Ben Lucas; Treasurer, Ellen Boehm.

Regular Sunday night meetings were held and a business meeting once a month, both characterized by inspiring programs. There were prayer and testimony meetings, a question box, debates and literary programs. Dues were five cents a month. Two years later a program of missionary contributions was established which continued throughout the history of the Young People's work.

Edward Maechtle became the first organist for the Alliance. Martha Runkel was the first delegate sent to the state convention at Racine. A normal (training) class was started to train Sunday School teachers. By 1900 there were 34 members in this organization, only one of whom was a charter member.

Throughout the years this group purchased *Gebet und Dank Lieder*, the current Young People's songbook and one of our own denominational publications.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE-1909

In 1909 the Alliance had 44 members. A fine missionary spirit was evident. The missionary treasurer reported \$68.38 in the treasury, largely contributions by members paying two cents a week toward missions. The Wisconsin Conference was at that time

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

sponsoring the Northland Mission, located in the Butternut area. This was the Home Missions project to which the Alliance contributed regularly. It is recorded that one year, after a spirited pink and white bag contest was held which resulted in \$100 for each side, the entire amount was sent to the Northland Mission.

The Alliance also contributed regularly to the Lomira Camp Ground project and to the Science Hall of North Central College at Naperville, Illinois. An Easter missionary program was held to add to the interest and the financial status of the Alliance.



Y. P. A. Picnic 1918

In 1910 the first mention is made of a Labor Day picnic to be held in Wegner's woods. This became an annual event for many years to come. The same year a regular study book was used to carry on missionary education at the monthly meetings. That year \$3.02 was sent to Iron River, which was a part of the Northland Mission, to help buy a bell for the church.

Delegates were regularly sent to both State and District conventions. The cost of sending a delegate to Lomira in the good old days of tent lodging was \$2.80.

Freda Matthies reminisces:

“How well we remember some of those rainy nights when the water came rushing in under the tent, soaking up the bedding and the few clothes we had to wear! But that did not keep us from going again the next year and enjoying every bit of it. We also notice that after the girls' dormitory and the boys' *schaftstall*, as they chose to call their dorm, was erected, the price went up to \$10.00. What an improvement that was!”

In 1912 it was deemed necessary to make a language change due to the fact that there were members who did not understand the German language. A new constitution was written. The officers resigned and were re-elected to function under the new constitution, which was subscribed to by 37 members. Under the new order there were five departments, namely: Christian Work, Literary and Social Culture, Sympathy and Relief, Sobriety and Morality, and Missions. Every member served on one of these committees and a report was expected at every meeting.

In 1913 the Alliance helped to remodel the church basement. With the help of a bazaar, which netted \$93.43, they appropriated \$150.00 towards the basement project. In later

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

years \$50.00 was given toward a Sunday School piano, \$10.00 for the Children's Temple in Lomira, \$10.00 for two tables for the basement, and \$100.00 for parsonage improvements. They helped the Sunday School and Ladies Aid with the purchase of new lights for the church.

The Study Book for 1913 was "Dawn of China". Rally Day was observed by the Alliance for the first time in 1913, and "Old Folks Day" in October. There is no hint as to how the latter was observed.

In 1914 the church was in need of redecoration. The Y. P. A. (Young People's Alliance) voted to pay for this providing the trustees were not taking over the project. In either case, the Alliance voted to aid financially. A bazaar was held on Memorial Day for the purpose of raising money. The amount cleared was \$66.97, which made the down payment. By working just a little harder to swell the treasury the debt was paid a year later, thanks to Rev. Fritsche, who did a little collecting of his own and handed in \$80.00 to help the cause.

The Junior Alliance was started in 1915 with fourteen members. This was the forerunner of the Mission Band and the Boys and Girls Fellowship. The Junior Alliance became potential membership recruits for the Senior Society, the only requirement being that they give a little speech telling why they desired to join. However, this was done by very few and the plan was soon dropped.

Not to be outdone by other organizations, the Alliance enjoyed many social events such as Valentine parties, box socials, Halloween parties, sleigh ride parties and Washington's birthday suppers which were greatly enjoyed by all. Mention must be made also of progressive suppers on New Year's Eve, which culminated in a Watch Night Service.

### EVANGELICAL LEAGUE OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR

In the year of 1922 the EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION united with the UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH and it became necessary to make various adjustments in all the organizations to complete this union to the satisfaction of all concerned. The name chosen for the young people's organization was EVANGELICAL LEAGUE OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

In 1926 the pastor Rev. Gassman felt that it would be better to have Bible study in place of the League meetings, so the organization was dropped. However, his plan did not work out so well, and just a year later the League was organized again with 39 members. It was then decided to meet every third Sunday night for regular meetings followed by a short business meeting. The League functioned until December 1930 when, for lack of interest, the organization once more suffered demise.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Up to 1930, the League members ranged in age all the way from 14 to 50 years. In 1933 a new League was organized with young people of high school and college age. The two committees that characterized this new organization were Dept. of Christian Work and Dept. of Literary and Social Culture. The first officers were Pres. Esther Liebenstein; Vice Pres. Ruth Stallman; Secretary, Mary Runkel; and Treasurer, Helen Maechtle. They met every third Tuesday of the month until 1942 when, during the pastorate of Rev. Hayne, it was voted to have the League take charge of two Sunday night services a month. On the other two Sunday nights, regular evening services were conducted.

### YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The YF meetings were held in the homes beginning with a devotion, then a topic of study, mission study, recreation and refreshments. The youth group worked to raise money for the building fund and missions by car washes, paper drives, ice cream socials, calendar sales and offering their personal services. They also had clothing drives for overseas missions. The meetings under Rev. Bender became quite lively with jalopy raids, roller-skating, beach parties, baseball games, caroling and many a real spooky Halloween party. A momentous time of spiritual uplift was had when the youth of the church went on a weekend retreat at Camp Lucerne.



Youth Fellowship 1957

Merton and Carol Lueptow were the YF leaders in the late 1950's and 1960's. Then Ray and Emily Cleer led the group for several years. Since the 1990's the youth group has been called the 505 Club and Pete and Vicki Szpara have been the leaders. They attend Youth Clusters, go tobogganing, roller skating, have seasonal parties, take charge of the Sunrise Service at Easter, and go on summer picnics. These young people still carry on the mission work, contributing toward our missions, and

have good Christian socializing at their meetings.

### THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR LEAGUE

The CEL was organized at the home of Harvey Maechtle in 1943 under the pastorate of Rev. Rota who felt the church needed an "older youth" organization. Meetings were held monthly beginning with devotions, leading into a timely topic of lively (sometimes quite heated) discussions. Games were played and refreshments served that were limited to one food and a drink because the hostesses tried to outdo each other with their "culinary delights." This organization grew and became the lifeblood of the

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

church, trying to raise money for the building fund, for the education unit and trying to improve the old church. Some of the fun loving money raising projects were a black-face Minstrel Show in 1951, a Slave Auction in 1953 (people sold their personal services to the highest bidder), a Spring Fair, three one act comedies, a night of hymn singing and many other activities. In 1954 they contributed \$200 to the building fund. They also purchased a gold altar cross, a dorsal and velour altar rail draperies, a foyer rug, coat rack and guest book. The group painted the Sunday School rooms in the old church and the furniture. They started the nursery during the church services and supplied the mothers to tend the little children.

Many a happy time was had at the socials held and some of the events were looked upon as quite "gay" by the older folk, but those that belonged to the group were just young in spirit. Rev. Rota will always remember the beach party when all his clothes were tied in knots and who will forget the time Rev. Bender set up a tape recorder in the room where the girls were talking and played the conversation back to them and their spouses. What red faces there were! Christian fun and fellowship abounded at these meetings.

### COUPLES CLUB-ADULT FELLOWSHIP

In 1958 the group was re-activated into what was called the Couples Club. It was re-organized at the Merton and Carol Lueptow home under the direction of Rev. Pardun. This organization had an active social and service program at monthly meetings in the homes for Christian fellowship. The group changed its name to Adult Fellowship so that single persons could feel welcomed. About the mid 1990's this organization began to meet only to go out to dinner and now only meets occasionally.



# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER SIX

### WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

#### THE LADIES AID

The Ladies Aid Society was organized September 27, 1900 by Rev. Wendorf. Twenty-four ladies manifested their willingness to become charter members. However, at the end of the year the membership had grown to 40. The charter members were:

Emma Wendorf	Mother Maechtle	Mother Schultz
Sophie Boehn	Martha Runkel	Sophie Nehf
Emma Kuhn	Mother Solto	Bertha Bertschinger
Mother Runkel	Otelia Maechtle	Mother Nehf
Louisa Lucas	Mother Setzer	

It was voted to have dues amounting to 10¢ a month. It was also voted to serve only bread, butter and coffee or kuchen and coffee. A 50-cent fine was to be imposed upon anyone breaking this rule. The first officers were: President Emma Wendorf; Vice President Emma Kuhn; Secretary Louisa Lucas; Treasurer Otelia Maechtle.

Two months later this little group paid part of the interest on the 1900 church indebtedness. Later on they apparently assumed this entire responsibility. Later, finding that they had \$15.35 left after the first interest payment, they voted to buy carpeting for the chancel. This red carpet graced the chancel for many years. The entire cost was \$14.30. At the end of the first year the receipts were \$131.22. Disbursements amounted to \$119.23. Money was raised by making and selling quilts, aprons and pictures beside money donations given out of their meager living. In 1903 Ice Cream Socials made their debut. The Aid that year paid for papering the parsonage. A precedence followed by the Aid for many years to come was that of keeping the parsonage in good repair. In 1904 plans were made by the congregation to liquidate the church debt. That year the Aid voted to have a "Fair", to help raise money. This was really an undertaking! Since there were no facilities whatsoever in the church basement, the parsonage had to be used for this purpose.

The Epp family, who then lived in the parsonage, cleared out several rooms, which were used to display all the quilts, rugs, aprons and fancy work donated by the ladies of the church. The net receipts amounted to \$113.90. The Aid also paid \$40.00 toward installing electric lighting in the church. That year also, the first mention is made of donations to Missions. \$5.00 was given for Wisconsin missions and \$5.00 to Flat Rock

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Orphanage. This also was continued until a Missionary Society was organized. The Italian Mission in Milwaukee also received support.

The church family was small. The death of one member was felt keenly by all. It was voted to send a \$5.00 floral piece in memory of a departed member. This practice kept up for many years. Furthermore, it was voted to purchase black crepe to decorate the altar rail for funerals. Badges were worn by the members who lined the walks as the funeral procession entered into the church.

In 1907, after the death of Rev. Kern, the Epp family moved to Milwaukee. Mrs. Epp had been a very efficient Aid Secretary for three years. Four years later the Runkel family moved to Michigan, leaving the ranks of the active members rather depleted. Still the work went on. Missionary donations now were \$19.00 a year. Many of the younger ladies of the church had joined the Aid by 1915. They brought with them new life and spirit. The church basement had recently been remodeled to include kitchen, dining room and washroom facilities. While most of the meetings continued to be in homes, it was convenient to entertain the Aid at the church. It was voted to have a program at each meeting. Once a year a special program to which all the ladies of the Church were invited, was given. This proved successful. In 1917 the first committee was appointed to make sick calls and general visitations. This practice was also to continue for many years.

In 1920 Rev. Uebele was requested to draw up a constitution for the Ladies Aid. The membership roll had reached an all time high of 34. Appreciating the improved facilities in the church basement, the ladies continued to furnish the basement kitchen by purchasing an oil stove and a sink. The dishes that were used were the old picnic dishes that dated back to the turn of the century. These were in use for many years to come. The ladies also bought a baptismal bowl, offering baskets, and paid freight on Sunday School chairs.

In future years the ladies successfully worked out a little scheme. Being optimistic for the future of the church, their plans for improvements was approved by the Church Council. The Men's Sunday School Class usually did the work while the ladies helped to finance the project. This was true in 1923 when the Aid felt it necessary to remodel the basement again, this time so that the whole area could be utilized. The kitchen was to be moved to the extreme south wall. Furnaces had to be moved to the west wall. Washrooms were to be placed under the tower (which had an unusually thick wall), and doors had to be cut into it. Six windows were added to give more light. The good men of the church did all this very hard work for their ladies. Later the ladies offered to finance the repair of the furnaces. They asked advice and permission of the Church Council. Again the men's class took on the project and the ladies shared the expense.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The money raised from a bazaar, which the Aid sponsored, was used to install a furnace in the parsonage. The small bedroom on the second floor was to be used for a bathroom. There is no record to show how this project was financed.

The Aid purchased the first gas stove for the church in 1927. Many a ton of coal was bought by the Aid for the church especially during the depression days. The newly remodeled basement made it possible to entertain not only the Ladies Aid, but to serve dinners as well. The first public dinner on record was in 1926. The charges for this chicken supper were: Adults 50¢ a plate, children 35¢. The next year the Sunday School and E. L. C. E. Conventions were entertained.

The first mention of a family supper was in 1928. This was the forerunner of the Harvest Festival that was observed in the fall of the year. After the supper the playlet "Sewing for the Heathen" was given by some of the members. Some of the other humorous plays given by the Aid were "No Men Wanted" and "How the Story Grew." There were, however, numerous playlets given which were of a spiritual nature designed to promote missionary interest and deepen spiritual life.

For many years the Aid donated money or canned goods to the Monroe Hospital. Later funds were given to the Deaconess Hospital in Chicago. To raise money for such purposes, a Sunshine Fund was started. This fund, which was started in 1924, was used to buy fruit, flowers, and cards for the members when ill. It also helped to bring cheer to others who were not members of the Aid. Visiting committees were very active. There were as many as 59 sick calls reported in one month.

### THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

On March 20, 1921, at 2:30 P.M. a number of ladies of the Emanuel church at Port Washington, Wisconsin met to organize, if possible, a Women's Missionary Society of the Wisconsin Branch.

The meeting was called to order by the Pastor, Rev. M. Uebele, who opened the meeting with devotional exercises. The constitution as offered by the General Women's Missionary Society was explained and after informal discussion was accepted by the following ladies:

Edna Maechtle  
Freda Eimmermann  
Helena Uebele  
Clara Uebele  
Alma Muehlberg  
Tillie Meyer

Flora Endhoft  
Emma Liebenstein  
Lydia Stallman  
Selma Maechtle  
Freda Matthies  
Meta Teuscher

Selma Voge  
Bertha Laubenstein  
Mrs. A. C. Vollbrecht  
Mrs. Geo. Maechtle  
Mrs. Fred Wegner

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

After the adoption of the constitution, the election of officers took place with these results:

President	Tillie Meyer
Vice President	Edna Maechtle
Secretary	Selma Maechtle
Corresponding Secretary	Clara Uebele
Treasurer	Freda Eimermann

A motion was made and carried to meet the last Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m., to carry on Mission study and pay dues.

The roll call at the second meeting showed thirteen out of seventeen members present. A delegate was appointed to attend the State Convention at Juda. Thereafter the Society was always represented at State Conventions.

The primary purpose for this organization being mission study and offerings, it was remarkable to note the large number of books that were studied by this group and the amount of money they raised. Mission money flowed into the general fund and the Wisconsin Mission project in Northern Wisconsin received a fair share. State dues at that time amounted to 10¢ a member. The group bought stock in the Lomira Camp Grounds at \$10 per share. The newly remodeled campgrounds made it possible for all conventions to be held at Lomira. Previously it could be used only for Sunday School and Young Peoples Conventions.

Thankoffering and the Day of Prayer were observed each year. Day of Prayer changed its name to "Denominational Day of Prayer" after the merger with the United Brethren Church. This is not to be confused with the "World Day of Prayer".

Shortly after the organization of the Women's Missionary Society, a number of their most interested and active members moved out of town. This was keenly felt by the organization. Since all W. M. S. members were also members of the Ladies Aid, it was believed that the work would be greatly simplified if the two societies would join forces and work for missions as well as for our local needs. Unification took place in August 1928, making this Society one of the first Unified Societies in the State.

### LADIES AID AND WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY UNIFIED

The two women's organizations voted to unite into one body after due consideration in August 1928. The officers of the Ladies Aid remained in office and a Missionary Treasurer and Correspondence Secretary were added to the list of officers.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Since all missionary monies flowed into the General Missions fund, a contingent fund was started to provide for materials used to carry on the work of missions. The W.M.S. also had a building fund to which the members regularly contributed. The former aid general fund was still used for local purposes, but \$50.00 was donated out of this fund for missions. The December meetings were for many years characterized by "bring your own lunch" or pot luck. There was no limit on food for it was the Christmas party. The election of officers followed. Tenure of office was unknown. Bertha Laubenstein no doubt holds the record for being Secretary from 1920 - 1930.

The month of February was "Birthday" month for all. Members celebrated by bringing their Lincoln pennies. This offering was earmarked for Kentucky missions. They shared in the institution of "The Chair of Missions" at the Theological Seminary at Naperville, Illinois as well as many other projects of lasting value.

In 1932 before the beginning of revival meetings, the membership was divided into groups that met in homes for prayer, and then went out by twos to call on shut-ins and prospective members. This proved to be a blessed experience to all who participated. To deepen missionary interest and the spiritual life of the individual member, the General Society advocated the reading of books, which were of a missionary, stewardship and spiritual nature. Oratorical contests were held to stimulate interest. In 1934 the W. M. S. began to sponsor the Mission Band by appointing a Mission Band Secretary. This organization had been known as the Junior League and had been sponsored by the E. L. C. E. (Evangelical League of Christian Endeavor). Once each year the Mission Band was asked to put on a program for the Ladies group.

Throughout the years, the Aid side of the organization worked to earn money. It was done by bazaars, ice cream socials, and selling various articles. An interesting project was the White Elephant Basket with its good food and surprise gift.

The Building Fund was started in 1935 with a memorial gift of \$50.00 contributed by Mrs. Helen Siewert in memory of Rev. Fred Siewert. \$1000 was added to this fund by Edward Lamprecht in memory of his wife, Mary. It was not until 1949 that intensive efforts were being made to swell the building fund. A total of \$2,053.00 was given by the Ladies Aid for the building of a new Fellowship Hall. Besides furnishing the kitchen with electrical appliances, dishes and silver ware, many of the tables and all the drapery and the blinds were furnished by these ladies.

The Women's Society of World Service, as it was called since the merger with the "United Brethren in Christ," functioned under the Unified Plan. There were three Circles that met monthly. A general meeting of all the Circle members was held quarterly in the Fellowship Hall. All monies earned by various methods were used for local purposes, while all missionary giving was done through free will offerings.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

### AWESOME WOMEN

The United Methodist Women missionary society was dissolved in the late 1980's. This was due to the fact that so many women worked full time and did not want to attend evening meetings. Of the several circle groups that were part of the United Methodist Women, only the Mary circle continued to meet. Mary Young was the leader of this older woman's group who met in the afternoon once a month.

In 2003, however, several women decided that there was a strong need for fellowship among the church women. Under the leadership of Mary Kae Geittmann, with Barbara Jones and Ermine DeYarman the Awesome Women's group was conceived. This is an all-church woman's group meeting four times during the year. The fall meeting has developed into a retreat weekend, followed with a Christmas party in December and informal meetings in March and June.



A - Ageless

W - Women

E - Enjoying

S - Social

O - Outings

M - Meetings

E - Events

Awesome Women 2006

# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

#### TEACHING THE CHILDREN

Only forty three years after the birth of our denomination, and sixty three years after Robert Raikes started the first Sunday School in Gloucester, England, the first Sunday School was organized in the territory of Wisconsin, 1843.

Matthias Hauert, born in Alsace, came as a young man to Pennsylvania, being under the influence of the gospel in the Evangelische Gemeinschaft, where he found Christ as his Savior. Impelled to enter the Christian ministry, he served in the Pennsylvania and Ohio conferences; from there he was stationed to serve the West Milwaukee Mission. Actually the city of Milwaukee was yet untouched by our missionary efforts, but the adjacent territory of Lake, Greenfield, Menominee Falls, Granville, Germantown, Richfield and Racine had established Sunday Schools.

The first Sunday Schools started by Rev. Hauert were located at Oak Creek, Greenfield and on the James Martin farm at Granville. Since the work in Port Washington originated from Granville, it was no wonder that a Sunday School was started the same year that the Church was organized in 1857. The record book, which dates back to 1857, is scarcely legible, but on the inside cover of this book we find these significant words written by the first Superintendent, Charley Grafe. *Lerne Ehren Hailand Erkennen in Deiner Yugend, so Wert es Dir Wohl Gehen ouf Erden, wann du ihm in Herten Oufnehmst und Benoest.* The translation being, "Acknowledge the Savior in your youth and all will be well with you on earth, if you receive Him in your heart and enjoy His presence." On this note the Sunday School in Port Washington was organized.

The lowly beginning of the Sunday School is evidenced by the first financial report. They bought all their materials for \$5.48. This included German ABC books, beginners, and intermediate and advanced. It was to be remembered that as a part of Sunday School instruction, learning to read German was a very important part of the curriculum.

Various catechisms were purchased. The ministers were not able to conduct catechism classes because they served a dozen or more congregations. Therefore instruction had to be given during Sunday School class. The literature list also included five songbooks. A sample of these books will be found in the historical collection. A number of books were purchased to be given as awards for memorizing Bible verses on blue and red tickets.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

But more verses than tickets were memorized. The records show that as many as sixty Bible verses were committed to memory. In one case the minister's son had a number of chapters memorized.

It is interesting to note who the first teachers and their pupils were. There were three boy's classes and one girl's class.

Class #1 Henry Maechtle, Teacher Vallentine Schratz Carl Feister Philip Knoegele Christian Maechtle Joachim Dose	Class #4, Johann Dose, Teacher August Kuehler Johann Schmust Johann Ziemendorf
Class #2 Henry Nehf, Teacher Fred Hengfus Peter Schausz William Runkel Philip Runkel John Runkel	Class #3, Katherina Schneider, Teacher Louisa Hengfus Auguste Jahn Paulina Runkel Katherine Maechtle

In 1860 an adult Bible class was started. The teacher was George Solto. Some of the other early teachers in the Sunday School were Gottlieb Knelling, Henry Dose, Fred Hengfus, Louisa Hengfus and Jacobina Winwein. In 1868 there was a membership of 85 officers, teachers and pupils. Expenses were met by assessing each member 25¢ or more per year. The next year, awards for memory work consisted of money ranging from five to fifteen cents. The children decided to give this money to missions, thus starting an interest in missions. We praise God for the faithful work done by these pioneers of the faith.

The next record book starts January 1, 1872. This book has secretary and treasurer's reports as well as the election returns. In reading the reports during this period of time, one gets the impression that the work was rather shaky at times. Attendance dropped down to thirty or less. Starting in 1894 a gradual increase in interest and attendance was visible. Memory work resumed with rewards. Classes for the younger children were started and it seems that younger men and women took over as officers and teachers.

A new recording system that was more efficient was started in 1901. The new officers were: Supt. Henry Laubenstein, Asst. Supt. Ben Lucas, Secy. Ed Runkel, Treas. George Maechtle, Librarian John Schuknecht. The teachers were as follows: Dora Maechtle (Runkel), Paulina Maechtle, Martha Runkel, George Kuhn, Carolina Maechtle, Emma Wendorf, Ben Lucas, George Maechtle, George Solto and Rev. Wendorf. It was about this time that the secretary, Mr. Schuknecht, met with a tragic accident while working in the mill located near the site of the electric building on Grand Avenue. The church lost a



## History of the Grand Avenue Church

faithful and willing worker. Monroe Maechtle, Sr. recalls that Rev. Wendorf saying in his sermon, "He is giving his report in heaven today."

For a short time a missionary offering was taken every Sunday. However, this was discontinued after some time, but \$5.00 was taken out of the treasury annually and donated to missions.

In March 1901 it was voted to raise money to buy a new organ for the Sunday School. Each member was to bring "birthday" money each time they had a birthday. The congregation had just moved into the new church and to have a room to be used exclusively for Sunday School purposes was indeed considered quite a luxury and they needed an instrument to accompany the hearty singing that the group was noted for. *Die Silverklange*, which contained many new gospel songs, was used at that time.

Money raised for an organ amounted to \$38.25. It is not clear whether this was enough to purchase the organ or not, but the purchase was made and it served the Sunday School well for many years. The Sunday School pupils helped to pay the church debt as well as other improvements about the church property. Even though money was not plentiful in those days, the Lord's house came first.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNICS



Arriving in style at the Sunday School picnic in Maechtle's Woods

From 1900 to 1950 the Sunday School held a picnic on the Fourth of July. This was a great family day. These picnics were held in various places for many years. The George Maechtle woods were used, one half mile east of Highway K on East Hawthorne Drive.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church



Eating watermelon at Sunday School picnic

Picnickers were treated to a hayride to and from the picnic. The old fashioned family picnic was complete with one long table that seated from 75 to 100 happy people. A lot of delicious food was consumed at these occasions, bowls of potato salad, 35 lbs. of wieners, and gallons and gallons of home made ice cream that was made the night before. This ice cream, fruit, pop, peanuts and lemonade was sold at the

refreshment stand. These picnics not only provided good family fun, but also helped to swell the Sunday School treasury, so that each year's end found a comfortable balance that in 1910 had reached an all time high of \$109.59. That year the Sunday School paid for wiring the parsonage with electric lights.

The Sunday School lost, through death, two of its youthful workers. Both had been Sunday School Superintendents. They were Albert Voge who passed away in 1914 and Henry Solto in 1917.

The *Kinderfreund*, a church publication, was the Sunday paper and it was read by the whole family although it was a children's publication. In 1912 the *Sunday School Messenger* replaced the *Kinderfreund*, and for some years to come, both papers were used and enjoyed by all.



Sunday School picnic 1911

As years went on, the penny, nickel and dime donated by each pupil went to many special projects.

On Christmas Eve each child looked forward to receiving the paper sack of hard candy, a juicy orange and some peanuts. In 1948 the Sunday School modernized by giving the pupils a box of Brach's chocolates.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

When it was noted that some of the Sunday School pupils could not attend the Lomira Youth Camp, it was voted to pay half of their fees so many more could experience this Christian Camp life.

In 1944 the Sunday School gave \$400 towards the remodeling of the parsonage and also had the parsonage insulated for \$283.00. The first guest register in the foyer of the church was donated by the Sunday School in 1953.

With the growing needs of the Sunday School, an educational unit was built in 1959. Folding chairs, tables and room dividers were purchased for use by the pupils.

In 1959 the Couples Class became quite bold and organized a "Koffe Klatch" class which met in the kitchen. While filling their stomachs with delicious bakery goods and coffee, they tried to solve their every day problems by discussing them in the light of the Christian way of living by the Bible.

For many years the singing in the adult department was led by Earl Matthies. Watching the joy expressed while he sang was always an inspiration to all who sang the morning hymns. Down through the years the Sunday School has grown both spiritually and physically. Many, many devoted Christians have given much of their time and Biblical knowledge to the little ones as well as to the adults. Many changes in teaching techniques have taken place, but the actual learning of the Saving Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has remained the same in 1966 or 2007 as it was in 1857 when it was written in the old Sunday School book: ACKNOWLEDGE THE SAVIOUR IN YOUR YOUTH, AND ALL WILL BE WELL WITH YOU ON THE EARTH.

### THE GLEANERS CLASS



Christian Workers

Adult Sunday School classes dated back to the start of the church. As early as 1860, mention is made of an adult Bible class. The first organized class was in 1913, during the ministry of Rev. Fred Nickel. This class was known as the Willing Workers and both young men and women were members of the class.

Nine years later in 1921, a ladies Sunday School class that was taught by Clara Uebele Schlender, was organized. The purpose of this organization was to meet socially, but also to render services

whenever possible. The name "Gleaners" was adopted. The motto was "REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST."

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Dues were set at 5¢ a month, but even at the first meeting concern was directed to the needs of others. Members started by making tray cloths for the Monroe Hospital. Throughout the years, boxes of clothing were sent to the Flat Rock Orphanage and the Red Bird Mission. Soon after the start of the Gleaners they adopted the World Bank Project to which they contributed every month. At Christmas time the Bank was opened and the contents sent to home and foreign missions. Birthday monies were brought at each meeting to help swell the treasury. Soon a "Sunshine Fund" was started to be used for cards, flowers, fruit and gifts to members who were ill. This was a service for the entire church family. Baby showers and wedding showers were planned by the Gleaner women.

The Gleaners made their largest contributions toward the church property. To mention a few: a sizable donation toward the installation of a new furnace in the parsonage, a storm door and storm windows as well as a complete kitchen remodeling job.

The class purchased vines to plant on the church wall, helped to pay for choir robes, the American and Christian flags, a mimeograph and typewriter. They paid for painting the outside woodwork of the church. This was all done for \$49.79. Thanks to Rev. George Nickel who did most of the house painting.

The next large project was to purchase new carpeting for the sanctuary. The total cost of the carpeting was \$885.50. One hundred dollars was donated by the Youth Fellowship. A large share of the balance was given as donations by individual Gleaner members. A vacuum cleaner was also purchased to keep the carpeting clean. The Gleaners also helped the Four Square Class financially to install new hardwood floors in the church and paid \$132.00 for painting the basement walls and ceiling.

Many unique projects were employed to raise money. There was the "Sunshiny and Cloudy Day Contest." Bertha Laubenstein and Lenore Maechtle were the referees. Losing side was to entertain the winning side. When the fateful day came and the penny bags were opened the Sunshine side had \$6.60 and the Cloudy side had \$6.67. Seeing that the Lord had sent the same amount of sunny days as rainy days - both groups were very happy. The result was that each group entertained the other and everyone was pleased.

For another contest small aprons were made with huge pockets and were handed to each member. The pockets were to be filled with a penny for each inch of waistline, height and weight. This added a tidy sum to the treasury. Their best source of income was the sale of all occasion greeting cards, which usually netted several hundred dollars. They often had silent auctions of home bakery at their meetings and many a white elephant sale. The Gleaner ladies were always known for their generosity.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The church building fund was started, and all monies except that earmarked for missions, flowed into this worthy fund. By 1951 it was reported the \$1,752.75 had been turned over to the building fund. After the erection of the new Education Unit, the Gleaners purchased several tables and kitchen cutlery.

A part of the policy of the Gleaner organization was to promote a social atmosphere among the ladies of the church. This was done in many ways. Freda Matthies writes in the original historical book about the Gleaners:

For many years each member had a Sunshine Pal. This was a secret pal and at the Pal Party in December we found out who was our Secret Pal. Who can ever forget all the pleasant evenings we spent entertaining the Men's Four Square Class and they in turn entertaining us most royally. The Bratwurst Fries on the lake bluff or in some ones backyard, or the grand entertainment we received in the old church basement. We, Gleaners, entertained the men in a variety of ways, such as a Birthday Party for all on February 22nd, and an April Fool party in April. Our Halloween parties were full of fun and we served their Father and Son Banquets and they returned by serving our Mother and Daughter Banquets, we cooked the meal first.

The Gleaners usually had a summer outing either at the Siewert cottage on Lake Michigan or at the Wohlford home. Many a delicious brat and wiener was cooked out and eaten at the Siewerts and such exciting games as volley ball and crochet were played. The moon over the lake made it seem so romantic and on cool nights the heat from the old stove felt so good.

Again Freda Matthies writes about the Gleaners:

At the Wohlford home a hobo picnic was held with grub and all the hobo trimmings. Our grub was cooked in tin cans and we were all dressed the part. Quite a few of the gals looked like they had just come from under a boxcar. We had a ball. Another party was a Gypsy Party and we dressed the part and some of us looked quite gay. Our dinner was cooked in a big iron caldron and tasted delicious.

Monthly social meetings were always held in the homes. Refreshments were pot luck for many years, until on one particular meeting when our menu consisted of cookies and PICKLES, we decided to have the hostess furnish the refreshments which were to consist of coffee and sandwiches only, (sandwiches being anything the hostess cared to "sandwich in").

In September 1949 the Gleaners met at the Wohlford home for a Back to School Party. All members came as elementary school girls and we used our maiden names. Margaret Blessing (Greathouse) rang the old school bell. Louise Gabries (Ross) was the teacher. Meta Teuscher (Laubenstein)

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

had the children sing "Wonderful Words of Life." We then took up the business of the day (some of it was monkey business). Little Margaret Blessing got sat in the corner with a dunce cap put on her head. The history lesson was read by Virginia Glas (Heiser). She also had the highest score in the spelling bee. Freda Maehtle (Matthies) gave the reading lesson and knew most of the words. While we were studying maps in geography, Mary's Little Lamb (belonging to Wohlfords) came to school. Esther Liebenstein (Rose) got a high score with only two maps wrong. The art lesson came next with Hattie Hoppe being the best artist. Rhythm was our business in the music lesson and as there was a little time before the bell was to ring, Lenore Reinke (Maehtle) gave us another reading lesson. It was something about the Little Raindrops and a Rill. The cutest pupil was Gladys Marquardt (Siewert) and the naughtiest pupil was Margaret Blessing (Greathouse). Lola Fahr (Wohlford) treated all the pupils to bubble gum and stick candy and our picture was taken at the Wohlford studio. The most model pupil award was given to Lillian Umbright (Lueptow). We received a nice Thank You Note from Paul and Jean Runkel for the wedding gift sent to them by the Gleaners.

The devotional programs were always well prepared with each member taking a turn. The aim was to foster spiritual enrichment as to discuss the problems of the day. The group studied books that were of a timely nature, such as: The Book of Romans, Fifty Women of the New Testament, In His Steps, and the book The Woman Beautiful. In 1961 the Gleaners celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary by honoring past presidents. In the year following, a motion was made to consolidate with the Women's Society of World Service as recommended by the General Conference of Women's Society. We, the members of the Gleaner Class, felt reluctant to bid adieu to an organization which had brought so much enrichment into our lives and given us so many opportunities for service in the building of God's Kingdom here on earth. We pray that our united effort may not only strengthen each one of us individually, but be ever more faithful in witnessing for our Lord and Master.

### FOUR SQUARE CLASS

The Four Square Men's Sunday School Class was organized in 1932 when Rev. George Nickel was pastor. The motto the class adopted was, "FORWARD."

In looking over the records this class kept, one could say that they were the Men's Aid of the church. They did so much to keep the church in repair and add new features wherever needed. One of their first projects was to partition off the northwest corner of the basement to be used for their Sunday School classroom. However, soon after they started to enjoy the room, the kindergarten class was in need of more room space and

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

they graciously relinquished it in favor of the children. The room was later carpeted and painted in bright colors to make it quite attractive to the children.

The next project that the class undertook was to put new hardwood flooring in the sanctuary. A total of \$458.00 was received from the members of the class for this purpose. The total cost of the floor after finishing was \$334.59. The remaining money was used for painting the basement walls. Many a smaller project was undertaken. The German sign above the front door of the church was covered by a new sign that read "Grand Avenue Evangelical United Brethren Church" at a cost of \$20.00.

Choir robes were first discussed by the Four Square Class. They paid a good share toward the cost of these robes, as well as one half of the cost of the cabinet used to store the gowns. In 1941 a typewriter was purchased for the church office and a lectern made by Mr. Stieg was donated to the church by the class. The outdoor bulletin board on the church lawn was kept in repair and a time clock was added to the sign.

For many years the pastor was the teacher of the class. Later on there were times when the members took turns teaching. George Ahlswede, Harold Knoespel, Paul Runkel and Bob Triebold were some of the regular teachers.

Presidents were L. A. Laubenstein, Merton W. Lueptow, Paul James, Ray Wohlford and Harold Knoespel. Ed Lamprecht and Merton W. Lueptow served as Secretaries. Earl Matthies served as Treasurer for 14 years, or the entire existence of the class. Varied and interesting programs were carried out at the monthly meetings, such as the "History of Christianity", "Church History and Community History" were discussed, the latter by Col. A. D. Bolens, who became a member of the class. Rev. Hayne spoke of his experiences in Canada and discussed the life of Martin Neumiller. This organization did not neglect the social angle. Many a pound of bratwurst was broiled on the open grate to entertain the Ladies of the Gleaner Sunday School Class. The men proved to be wonderful hosts at all times, even though in a spirit of retaliation the ladies were tied to a bench and were served wieners and buns which were scarcely two and one half inches in length, while the men sat opposite on a bench eating their six inch wieners. Yet a good time was had by all.

# History of the Grand Avenue Church

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### NEW DIRECTIONS 1993 - 2007

#### FAMILY ACTIVITY CENTER

In June of 1993 Rev. Robert Gossett became pastor. At this time the Holt Restaurant, formerly the Werking Dairy, then the Dari Haus, was put on the market for sale. This



Former restaurant

property on the westside of the church was purchased in early 1997 for the purchase price of \$275,000. A down payment of \$100,000 was donated by Wayne and Marguerite Lueptow. Members of the congregation cleared out the restaurant equipment, and the building was named the United Methodist Family Activity Center. The 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church was celebrated on Sun. October 19, 1997 along with the dedication of the Family Activity Center building. Rev. Velma Smith, Superintendent of Metropolitan North District of the United

Methodist Church was the preacher for the occasion. This property has also provided extra parking for the congregation. Three days a week the building was used by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for drivers licensing until May 2007.

A very interesting Last Supper tableau was presented by 12 men of the church on April 9, 1998. "Meet the Disciples", a contemporary celebration of Jesus' Last Supper, was a re-enactment in which each disciple shares what he has learned from Jesus and offered glimpses of what is soon to take place. Peter was portrayed by Wayne Lau, Andrew by Joel Kraft, James by Peter Schmidt, John by Dan DeYarman, Matthew by Bob Hamann, Philip by Mike Anholt, Bartholomew by John Meins, Thomas by Roger Bain, James the Less by Mark Grams, Thaddeus by Brian McGarry



"Meet the Disciples"



## History of the Grand Avenue Church

and Simon by Kurt Benkley. Rev. Gossett portrayed Jesus. Janet Newton was narrator. Grand Ave. Church received a gift of a wagon wheel in 2003 from the estate of Dr. Milton Siewert. Milton and Gladys Siewert were life long members of the church. The wagon wheel came from the buggy used by Dr. Siewert's father, Rev. F. J. Siewert. Rev. Siewert served this Port Washington church as pastor from 1894 to 1899. A historical wall and cabinet were designed and installed with the wheel as the main focal point.

### MISSION OUT REACH



"Tree of Life" banner

Rev. Robert Gossett retired from active ministry in 2003. Rev. Dave Guse was assigned to serve Grand Ave. in June 2003. In January of 2007 Rev. Guse traveled with several other clergy from Wisconsin to visit our covenant relationship mission work in Senegal, Africa with Rev. Ndjungu. The blue and white Tree of Life cloth wall hanging was made by Samba, a Dakar artist and brought back as a gift to the church by Rev. Guse.

The congregation has always maintained a strong interest and participation in missions such as Northcott in Milwaukee, the work of Paul Webster in Zambia, Kentucky Red Bird mission and many others.

Money for the missions fund apportionment, mission budget and for mission projects has been raised in a variety of ways. The church has established 3 distinct ways over the years of raising funds for missions. The Salad Luncheon in May of each year was started in 1974. The entire community is invited, and for 33 years this has been a very successful activity and mission fund raiser. A July rummage sale, again open to the public, has brought in considerable dollars for missions. A third method for supporting missions financially is the Christmas Love Lights. Each one dollar turns on a Christmas tree light and can be given in memory or recognition of someone.

### UPDATED ROOF LINE

Necessary repair of the roof of the Educational Unit needed to be done in 2005. The trustees appointed Bob Griesmeyer as chairperson of the roof committee. The committee after studying the situation voted to have the entire roof of the educational unit rebuilt and at the same time a new roof was applied to the church sanctuary. This

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

was done at a cost of \$250,000, and the congregation is still being challenged to pay off this debt.

### THE GARDEN OF SONSHINE

The Awesome Women observed the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Grand Ave. Church on June 23, 2007 with a Mother, Daughter, Grandmother, Friend luncheon. The theme of the luncheon was "150 Years of Fashion" in keeping with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The planning committee members for this lovely and interesting event were: Phyllis Kraft, Barbara Jones, Ermine DeYarman, Kay Hamann, Sue Bares, Leesa Wendt, and Barb Aagerup.

This event concluded with Rev. Guse leading in the blessing of the new Garden of Sonshine. Leesa Wendt had the original idea to make the back entry of the church appealing after the new roof was installed. She spearheaded the formation of the garden. Vicky Spzara did the tremendous background work of physically digging, weeding and creating the brick wall. Several Awesome Women helped in the planting of the garden. Funds for this project were provided from the memorials of Dennis Merrill by his wife Susan Maechtle Merrill.



Garden of Sonshine

### THE VISION

The Administrative Board sanctioned the hiring of church consultant Rev. Dick Jones in January of 2006. A Visions Committee was formed for the purpose of evaluating the needs, purpose, program and mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> century for Grand Ave. Church. Four major points developed out of this committee. A MISSION STATEMENT and VISION STATEMENT were developed and adopted as guidelines for the congregation.

The Special Invitation Month of services to draw more first time worshippers was the second major vision statement. This is to be done twice per year with a system of visitor follow up and assimilating new people into the life of the congregation.

The Narthex of the church was the third point of development. This area is now called the "Gathering Area" as this is where the members of the congregation come and fellowship together before and after the worship service in the sanctuary. Narthex is an old word with little meaning to people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also hoped to keep this gathering area clean and inviting to people coming into the church.

## **History of the Grand Avenue Church**

The vision to increase our church staff to effectively use volunteers and facilities was the fourth point of the vision statement. The focus of this position is on three areas: Young Family Ministry Development, New Member Development, and Volunteer Development. Emily Bloedow is the first person hired to this volunteer coordination position.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

By the grace of God, we seek to love God

And to serve humanity as Christ did

### **OUR VISION IS TO CHALLENGE INDIVIDUALS TO**

Invite and Welcome new worshipers

Nurture all persons through education, creative new programs,  
And varied forms of worship and fellowship

Increase staff to more effectively use volunteers and our facilities

Emphasize direct mission work

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The history of who we are dates back as far as 1795 in Pennsylvania. Jacob Albright, a tile maker in Kleinfeldersville, PA sensed the need of the gospel for the German-speaking population. The Evangelical Association was organized by Albright in 1800. Prior to Albright was another minister by the name of Phillip Otterbein. He established in 1767 the United Brethren in Christ Church. These 2 denominations worked side by side for many years.

The Ohio Evangelical conference, in 1840, sent Rev. John Lutz to explore missionary work in Wisconsin. In 1846 J. G. Miller, Evangelical missionary, stopped at Port Washington to conduct services for the first time for a small group of Protestant Christians. Port Washington was part of the Menomonee Circuit and known as the Ozaukee Mission. The organization of the church occurred in 1857 under the ministry of Henry Huelster from Sheboygan. The name Emanuel Evangelical Church was adopted with services in German. Services were usually held in homes. The Sunday School was established in 1858 with 21 attending.

The first church building was erected on the corner of Jackson and Milwaukee Streets in 1862. Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State on Aug. 18, 1865. The first parsonage was purchased at this time, located on Wisconsin Street at the present site of the Edward Jones Investment offices. Dr. Milton Siewert, long time member of Grand Ave. Church, was born in this house in 1894 during the time that his father, F. J. Siewert, was pastor.

The congregation began to consider the erection of a larger building in 1898. The following year an acre of land was purchased on Grand Ave. The north side of the land facing Grand Ave. was 10 feet below the level of the street. The south side was a high gravel hill. It took forty days of volunteer labor on the part of the men of the church to fill in the lot with gravel from the hill. A parsonage was built in 1899 at the cost of \$1,500.00. The next year, 1900, the second church structure was built adjacent to the parsonage at the cost of \$5,648.00.

In 1903 the Epp family came from Sheboygan to Port Washington. The son, George Edward Epp, consecrated himself at the altar of the church to the Christian ministry. He married Cora Runkel, a member of this church, Sept. 3, 1907. He later became the Bishop of the Eastern area of the Evangelical Church, and this congregation deems it a great privilege to have recommended Bishop Epp to the Christian ministry.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized Sept. 1900 with 41 members, and the Women's Missionary Society was organized in 1919. A youth society was organized by Rev. F. J. Siewert in 1896, followed by the Young People's Alliance in 1919. These young people took an active interest in the Forward Movement, which was sponsored by the church at large. The budget plan of finance was introduced in 1918, and the Young People's

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

Alliance went out in teams and collected \$3,415.00 which was \$1,115.00 more than the budget called for. The Christian Endeavor replaced the Young People's Alliance in 1942.

All preaching services during this time were in the German language, with the exception of the Sunday School and young people work were in English. In 1912, however, the congregation voted to have all services conducted in the English language. At the time of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on October 20, 1932, Port Washington church was still a mission church, but a very successful congregation of 134 members. The next article will be about the second 75 years of Grand Ave. congregation and the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Grand Ave. Evangelical Church continued to grow and develop through the 1930's as a congregation. Several improvements to the property were realized in the 1940's. The Gleaners Sunday School class remodeled the parsonage kitchen. A Hammond electric organ was purchased for \$1800.00. The interior walls of the church were covered with a product called NuWood. Stained glass windows were given as memorials by a number of church families. The long desired "Exit" door was placed in the southwest corner of the sanctuary. The church basement was remodeled at a cost of \$2200.00. Several members donated new sanctuary pulpit, pulpit chairs, altar, and baptismal font.

Grand Ave. Church had a National Service Roll of Honor of 11 men fighting in WWII. During this time anything German was thought to be unpatriotic, so the Evangelische Gemeinschaft sign was replaced with Grand Ave. Evangelical Church. 1948, however, brought about the union of the Evangelical and United Brethren denominations, and the church became known as the Grand Ave. Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The Centennial of Grand Ave. was celebrated in 1959 with the return of Bishop George Epp, son of the congregation, as guest preacher. Feelings were running high that the church needed to grow. The Century Club had been formed for the purpose of raising money to build an Educational Unit. On May 31, 1959 the congregation observed ground breaking for the new Educational building at a cost of \$86,000.00. The building was completed and dedicated in May 1960.

Much study concerning the conditions of the church structure and needs of the congregation started in 1961. It was voted in 1964 to build a new sanctuary on the same site as the original church which had served the congregation for 65 years. A Building Committee was formed in Sept. 10 1963. The last service in the old sanctuary was held on April 24, 1966, and demolition of the building took place in May. The Cornerstone laying was held on Aug. 26, 1966.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

In July of 1966, the congregation purchased the Shell Oil Co. buildings immediately east of the church, thus providing parking space for parishioners in the large back yard of the garage. The building itself was retained as a rental property for many years, providing income needed to offset the mortgage expense. In 1988 the Port Washington Fire Dept. burned these buildings as a training exercise. The old underground gas storage tanks were carefully removed and the entire property was developed as parking.

Although not all the appointments had been installed, the first service was held on April 23, 1967, exactly one year after the concluding service in the old sanctuary. The service of transition began in the Fellowship Hall with the Call to Worship and Invocation. During the singing of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (which was the last to be sung in the old structure) the congregation left the Fellowship Hall and proceeded to the new building.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged together in 1968 in Dallas, TX. Our congregation thus became the Grand Ave. United Methodist Church.

Another dream of the congregation was the purchase of a new parsonage in 1976. This home is located on Fairview Dr., Port Washington. The old parsonage next to the new church was razed in 1980. This improved the appearance of the church and greatly increased the visibility from the street. A Bell Tower, using the original bell from the old 1900's church, was built on this site of the old parsonage. Dedication of the Bell Tower was Oct. 3, 1982 as part of the 125<sup>th</sup> church anniversary celebration.

A fire was discovered in the church about 9 PM on March 11, 1984 by a policeman on routine patrol. The fire was found to have been caused by an electrical short in the narthex ceiling. Heavy damage was done to the narthex and much smoke damage to the sanctuary and offices. The \$100,000.00 cost was covered by insurance and repairs were completed in the matter of months, while Sunday services were held in the Fellowship Hall.

A Cambridge 785 Rogers organ replaced the Hammond electric organ which no longer could be operated. This comprehensive two-manual organ was a gift to Grand Ave. from members of a family of the congregation. The organ was dedicated on Oct. 11, 1992.

## History of the Grand Avenue Church

The Werking Dairy property immediately west of the church was for many years a dairy store where milk and ice cream were sold. It was extensively remodeled and expanded into a full-line family restaurant and operated for a number of years, but eventually closed. In 1997 the congregation purchased the property. It has provided additional parking space. Members of the congregation cleaned out the restaurant equipment, thus making the facility usable for church activities. Three days a week, the building is used by the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation for drivers licensing.

An interesting contemporary celebration of Jesus' Last Supper was presented at the Maundy Thursday service on April 9, 1998. Twelve men of the congregation, presented each of the 12 disciples in a most meaningful and memorable service in the Fellowship Hall.

The woman's organizations of Ladies Aid and Missionary Society were dissolved since the late 1980's. This was due to so many women working full time and not wanting to attend evening meetings. In 2003, however, several women decided that there was a strong need for fellowship among the church women. Out of this need the Awesome Women's group was conceived. They are an all church woman's group meeting 4 times during the year. The fall meeting has developed into a retreat weekend, followed with a Christmas party in Dec., and informal meetings in March and June.

Necessary repair of the roof of the Educational Unit needed to be done in 2004. The entire roof was rebuilt, and at the same time a new roof was applied to the church sanctuary. This was done at a cost of \$250,000.00, and the congregation is still being challenged to pay off this debt.