

Promise City Methodist

by
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The history of the Methodist Church in and near Promise City, Iowa, dates back to 1857 when John Dowels settled about two miles west of the town at the Nip and Tuck school site. They were Methodists and it was not long until they had preaching. Mr. Dowels opened his home to Rev. Shinn and Delay and others came and preached and held protracted meetings.

The next summer they built a slab house and held Sunday School and church in the old slab school house. Rev. Hartley Bracewell and G.P. Bennett with the above two mentioned were "circuit rider" preachers, who carried their belongings, Bible and sermons in a saddle bag, and stayed among the good people.

In the winter of 1879-1880, Rev. C.W. Brewer of the Seymour charge held a protracted meeting in the Promise City Presbyterian church. On February 27, 1880, the Promise City class of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of the Seymour charge, Chariton district, Des Moines conference, was organized with the following members.

Albert Edgington, Sarah Edgington, Joseph Clark, Elizabeth Clark, Stephen P. Shingle, Margaret Shingle, Willis Kerr, Hadasha Kerr, Thomas S. Howland, A.H. Baughman, Lizzie Baughman, Ellen Baughman, S.P. Baughman, Lydia Baughman, E.P. Huffman, M.E. Huffman, Robert Aitken, Callip Aitken, Mary C. Baylor, Ella Wilcox, Stephen Mason, C.A. Sager, Eliza E. Sager, Ida B. Kinser, John Gaines, Lavina Gaines, J.W. Forsythe, Sarah Forsythe, C.R. Noble, Eliza Noble, Rosa Mason, Anette Kirkpatrick, Mrs. J.B. Hanna, Madaria Davis, William Johnson, Margaret Johnson, Call McMurry, G.L. McMurry, Ebenezer VanDorn, and Isabella VanDorn.

In the summer of 1881 the Presbyterians erected a

new church and they invited the Methodist to share their new home, which they did until 1887. It was at this time that the Presbyterian church was offered for sale and it was sold to the Methodists for \$250.00. It was a very cold day in Dec. of 1887 when they dedicated their first Methodist church in Promise City, all free of debt.

Promise City was put on the Harvard charge 1882 where it remained for a short time, then annexed to Seymour again. In 1893 it was on the Harvard charge again. The head of the charge was returned to Promise City in 1896. There was Kniffin, Bollman Chapel and Bethlehem on this charge. Kniffin and Bollman Chapel closed soon after. From 1936 to 1943 the Promise City and Jerome (in Appanoose co.) were on the same charge with the Pastor living at Promise City. Since 1943 the church has been on the Seymour charge.

In 1908 Mrs. Julia Conner passed away and left \$100.00 to be used in building a new church. In 1909 they decided to build. The contract was let for the new building on April 10, 1910 and the cornerstone was laid in May 1910.

Mr. O.A. Houghland of Chariton was the architect and drew the plans of the unique building, patterned after Ancient-Greek or synagogogue architectural design, adding here and there a touch of the modern.

The exterior walls are of dark red pressed flint brick surmounted in the center of the roof by an oval dome directly over the center of the main room. The interior walls are frescoed in beautiful colors. Leaded art glass memorial windows costing \$300.00 each were purchased from Bowman Glass Co. of Des Moines, Ia., adding a beautiful and sacred addition. A very unusual building costing \$7300.00

The beautiful Dedication services were held Sunday February 12, 1911, and the services were conducted by Pres. Edwin A. Schell of Wesleyan University of Mt. Pleasant, assisted by Rev. C.W. Bren a former pastor. Rev. Nickle of Bethlehem charge and Rev. Win Matsler of the Christian church here. Over \$4000.00 were raised on dedication day. The bell from the old church was erected upon the new church in 1912 and hitchracks were built at a cost of \$50.

In the middle twenties a daughter was born, their first child to the Rev. G.A. Lanes. This was a memorable event since she was the first and only child born to a pastor and wife while they lived in the Promise City parsonage. She was named Clarice.

In 1914-15 a revival meeting conducted by Rev. Copeland lasted for four weeks with 140 additions and conversions.

The Ladies Aid hold annual Thanksgiving dinners, God portion sales, and do many other interesting things to help. They also have an Epworth League.

A list of the pastors serving the church; C.W. Brewer—1879-1881; Wm. H. Shipman—1881-82; Throckmorton—1882-3; R.W. Matheney—1883-85; John Harnard 1885; J.H. Hard—7 mo. 1888; C.D. Fawcet— 1886-88; J.E. Mathaney—1888-93; S.L. Culner—1893-95; E. Newland—1895-7; F.M. Jackson—1897-8; A.E. Buriff—1898-1900; S.T. Wenter—1900-1; Geo. W. Guthrie—1901-3; E.E. Hunt—1902-3; I.P. Kelley—1903-4; Fred. T. Stevenson—1904-5; Benjamin R. VanDyke—1905-8; J.A. Bramson—1908-9; C.E. Bennett—1909-11; H.E. Copeland—1911-13; G.W. Hall—1913-17; W.E. Shugg—1917-19; R.W. Meeker—1919-22; M.T. Butterfield —1922-23; W.F. Lane—1923-25; H.A. Cottrill—1925-26; S.P. Trostle—1926-27; G.L. Hufstader—1927-28; P.L. Brown—1928-29; K.E. Nesbitt—1929-32; R.C. Buchanan—1933-36; F.B. Harris—1936-38; J.E. McClellan—1938-40; H.B. Fay—1940-43; W.W. Watson—1943-47; E.C. Sears—1947-50; Franklin Knouse—1950-53; Wayne

Hoehns—1953-56; J.C. Turner—1956-7-8; Gerold B. Noland—1959-60-1-2; Harry Lees—1964-5-6; Lowel Drake and Mrs. Drake—1968; Joseph Ricks—1971-2.

Long time services go to C.A. Sager who was steward for 54 years from 1884. J.A. Smith was Sunday School Superintendent for 27 years, and received a gift of a large Morris chair in appreciation. Brother R.A.E. Sharp was Sunday School Supl. for 30 years, a trustee and church treasurer for many years and a lay delegate also for many years. A Memorial gift honoring him for his excellent work was song book racks to be used on the seats in the church auditorium. Mr. Sharp had handed out the song books and bulletins to each one as they entered the church. Upon hearing of his death many children asked "Who will hand us our song books". Wm. Baughman was a member for 70 years and an official 60 years.

The history was taken from the complete history written for the Centennial of the church in 1957, and this following song was their Centennial Hymn, sung to the tune of "Stand Up For Jesus".

1. One hundred years have passed since
Our fathers prairie bound,
Came west with hopes undaunted
And made this hallowed ground.
They tarried by the river
Then later at the fort
Built on the Rock of Ages
Let us their faith exhort.
2. One hundred years the faithful
Worshipped with prayer and song,
With love and faith abiding
To make God's Kingdom strong.
O Christians of Promise City
The world needs you and me
Stand up, stand up, be faithful
With lives of loyalty.