

Centennial 1883

## ANSWERS TO WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW

The first Methodist society in the territory of Iowa was formed at Dubuque, May 18, 1834. The county of Polk began in 1846 when James Polk was president of the U.S.A., but the first Methodist class in Camp Township had already organized in 1845 in a log cabin home of Mr./Mrs. Elijah Canfield. "Ezra Rathburn frequently went out from Ft. Des Moines and preached for the Methodists in that settlement. The hymns were lined out by the minister and the pioneers who loved the Lord sang those old songs with an unction that inspired the minister even though his audience was not large." (Quote from Mrs. Canfield's obituary.) In Feb. 1876, in Altoona, a board of trustees was appointed to "purchase ground for a church building near Garrett Grove." The ground was purchased for \$40. The first quarterly conference was held in the new church Nov. 11, 1876. The first organ was placed in the church in 1878.

In Feb. 1927, it was voted to raise the church and build a basement. In April 1929, they voted to wire the building for electricity. The church had formerly been lighted by carbide lights with its own plant. The church ceiling was lowered and the sanctuary redecorated in 1938. In 1951 an oil burning furnace was installed; also cupboards, a sink and a drain were put in for the kitchen. At the right is a copy of the picture in the Des Moines Register announcing our 80<sup>th</sup> year celebration in 1956.



the mature tree in the picture at left.

The building has gone through many stages in its history, including taking the steeple off for safety concerns and then putting on a new one before our centennial celebration in 1976.

Vacation Bible School was started in 1959. In 1964, VBS students planted a pin oak tree in the front of the church. Notice



When it was planted, the tree was in the center of the steep driveway coming off Highway 163 into the church yard and individuals enjoyed the tree in every season for more than 40 years. Changes to the building and to the parking facilities caused change for the pin oak tree. In 2006 it was determined the tree was not healthy, so a chain saw artist created a decorated post for the church yard.

Centennial people, led by the trustees, are proactive in caring for the building and grounds. There are hundreds of hours of repair, cleaning, updating in this church.



In 1983 a building committee was appointed to develop a plan for an addition to Centennial. In 1984 a gift of land west of the church from Bill and Clara Jones was dedicated. On Sept. 29, 1985, the church at conference approved the plan. A financial drive raised \$118,000 in cash and donated labor in three years of pledges with additional funds of \$50,000 at 9.5% for 5 years from the Rotating Loan Fund of Global Ministry. The ground breaking was on Sept. 14, 1986, and the last service before the sanctuary was turned around was held Dec. 28, 1986. The consecration service with Bishop Job was held Feb. 15, 1987. The addition increased the building

to twice the size it was in 1985; four times larger than in 1927. The picture above was taken by John Rosborough from his parent's home across Highway 163, approximately a quarter of a mile away. The church enjoys the country side atmosphere; the look to and from the hilltop is amazing. Many photographers enjoy taking pictures of Centennial. The winter one to the right is a favorite; some photos have been on the cover of magazines. Other attractions on the outside include the gazebo and back deck area. A spotlight shining on the steeple lights up the cross all night; it was funded by a neighbor of the church. The parking lot is outlined with lighted lamps; flower beds and park benches help create a quiet atmosphere beneath trees. On the inside, the ceiling of the sanctuary had been lowered; then raised. For the first 110 years, the pews faced north; in 1986 the pews were turned to face south. The outside steps were left for an emergency exit, but the main entrance was moved to a ramp-like sidewalk into the northex. The focal point of the worship area in the sanctuary includes a new altar built from the wood of a 93 year old walnut tree that had to be removed when the addition was built. The altar and the "ivy" stained glass window is the backdrop for seasonal decorating.



There is a special time for a children's message during the morning worship service. It has been said that it is also a time for the adults to learn (not only the minister's message but the secrets the children share). After the children's sermon, the little ones can attend a nursery held in the basement. Care givers are volunteers from the congregation – most often members of the youth group give their time.

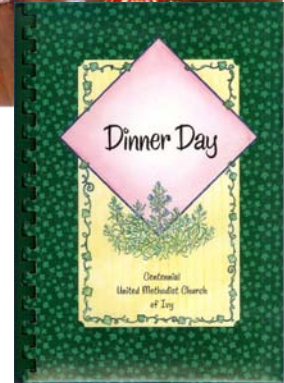
I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psalm 122:1



As a church over 130 years old, Centennial obviously has lots of traditions. Several of those include food. In 1932, the women started a pot-luck dinner on the first Sunday of every month. Dinner Day is still a favorite Sunday.



Worship services for the other Sundays in a month are followed by a treat fellowship time for the congregation.



In 2007, the mission committee published a cookbook as a fund raiser. Recipes were donated from current and past Centennial participants in dinner days – the proceeds go to local, national and international mission projects.

Food has been the center of several church fund raisers such as the annual “pie and cake auction.”



The food for sale is delicious and presented to tempt. Grandpa Jerry was excited to purchase his granddaughter’s very first pie. Former pastor Dr. Ray Martin and his wife Mary Ann outbid everyone for a special treat to take home – a special souvenir of Centennial.



Another favorite fund raiser is the “make your own Sub.” And on Rally Day each fall, hamburgers and hot dogs are cooked by the official grilling expert as a “welcome” for Sunday School. The longest lasting fund raiser is the annual UMW chili/oyster stew supper started in November, 1949.

Always the food events end with the dishwashing ritual. From young to older, groups gather to wash and talk and laugh.





The Ladies Aid was organized at Centennial in 1896. It was formed to provide a means of supporting the church and to help provide the necessities. It also provided for the needed fellowship of the community. In the early days some of the projects of the Ladies Aid were quilting and rug making, plus preparing food and supplies for the Methodist Hospital and Methodist Institutions. In the picture at the right, this early group posed with their canning.



Centennial's current United Methodist Women are pictured with the banner presented to them from the District for having the largest percentage of increase in their membership within the District. Their regular meetings are on the first and third Thursday of the months from September through May. Programs are provided by members, plus a business meeting and food/ fellowship for all in attendance. A couple of times a year they "oil" the church pews, they often

have religious studies during the winter months in the mornings before their meetings, and a couple of times during their year they invite the men to join them for dinner. They sponsor mission offerings, support Bidwell Riverside, and annually contribute to the In-gathering project.



Since 1949, the Centennial UMW have had a chili/oyster supper with bazaar the first weekend of November. It is their major fund raiser and it is still the goal of the group to support the church and help provide some of the necessities.

The UMW offered to cater a meal as an item for the SEP Dollars for Scholars Dinner/ Auction. The Southeast Polk School superintendent bid for

the meal and the administrative team attended the luncheon at Centennial during their retreat week in July. They were served slices of loin, tables of salad choices, and lots of homemade pie. It was a successful day – for UMW, for the SEP administration, and for scholarship funds.



The women have also catered meals for Lions clubs, the Plowmen Organization and served the luncheons for several families after funerals.

A popular event started by the UMW in 1983 is the Live Nativity Scene. Live animals are brought to pens surrounding the gazebo where the nativity scene is portrayed with real people. The date set in December for the Nativity Scene is usually one of the coldest in temperature but the evening is warm with people viewing the scene. Visitors are also welcome to come inside to tour the sanctuary and enjoy meeting with others for treats.







Throughout the history of the church, another group of individuals dedicated to supporting Centennial in every way they can, while having fun and learning, have been the youth. The MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) group in 1948 presented a picture “Jesus at the Door” for the church – it is still displayed for everyone to enjoy. The active youth group in the late 50’s helped with painting the buildings at the Camp Wesley Woods. The youth in the early 70’s started a fund raiser at Halloween for children –

“Trick or Treat for UNICEF.” Now it is organized by the Mission & Education Committees – this year the costumed youngsters raised over \$500.



For the current

youth, Easter weekend is one of their busiest. A community egg hunt takes lots of organization and eggs. The fellowship hall is crowded with lots of egg hunters from the community – divided by age – and then gathered back in the fellowship hall for treats and prizes. On Sunday morning, the youth host the Easter breakfast and are responsible for the sunrise service.

For the past few years, the youth have raised money (collecting cans, selling candles, labor for cash, etc.) to help finance a trip

to Silver Dollar City for a weekend spent with thousands of other youth attending concerts and getting to know each other.

The pic below shows those who walked in memory of Peggy Kern in the summer of 2008. Although it was a rainy day, the youth were filled with the purpose of the walk!



In 2008, spring rains caused flooding in Cedar Rapids. The youth raised money to help the youth group at Salem UMC in Cedar Rapids, and early one Sunday morning they delivered a check to the Salem youth (both youth groups in picture above).





**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HONORED**



In May, the education committee sponsors a special time for those individuals connected with the church who are graduating from high school. A special time is held during the service and fellowship time is spent honoring the grads.

Picture at Left: 2006 – Michelle Hermann, Rob Campbell, Arianna Heitmann



2007 – Allison Freel



2008 – Morgan Hammer, Paige Olgren



2005 – Jonathan Freel, Valarie Hermann, Michelle Hermann, Sarah Hermann, Stephanie Kern, Shay Bowie, Carly Johnston, Rev. Cotton

**CONFIRMATION CLASS**

Confirmation class is usually held every other year, meeting during Sunday School time.



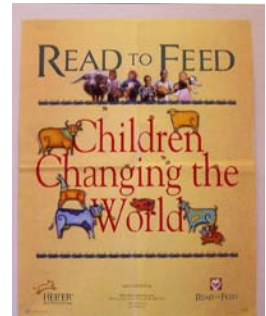
2007 – Justin Shaver, Evan Fischer, Zachary Johnston, Gunnar Methlie



The best kept secret at Centennial may be the library. Librarian Libby Hiatt has made it easy for books to be found and checked out. The three walls of books include history, easy reading, support for all ages, religious resource, etc. The room is comfortable and lends itself to small group meetings or a quiet place to enjoy a good book.



A “Read to Feed” project was organized by the Mission and Education Committees. Individuals read books. Other individuals sponsored their reading, paying an amount for each book read. The project raised \$1,000 for the Heifer Project.



Sunday School is generally held from Labor Day through Memorial Day. Attendance is honored in the fall for the previous year with the presentation of pins. Sunday School Supt. is Pat Adey; pianist Linda Carnahan.



Sunday School classes are available from 4-5 year olds through senior high in the basement education wing. An adult class, teacher Rev. Wendel, is held in the fellowship hall.



With an interest in the welfare of children everywhere, the Mission Committee established a “Breakfast Club” in 2008. Individuals from Centennial go to Trinity UMC in Des Moines on Monday from 6:30 to 8:00 a.m. to help serve breakfast to neighborhood children. Rita & Jim Denhart visit with Director Carmen Lampe-Zeitler; Larry Jordan attempts to win a checker game after breakfast.