

## History of Centenary United Methodist Church

By June Hughes, Win Grundmeier and Shirley Grundmeier. 2004

“The history of any organization or institution is necessarily that of those persons who have shaped its policies and promoted its activities, and when that organization is a Christian Church its history will be similar to that contained in the Acts of the Apostles which is a picture of Christ working through pastors, evangelists and lay persons -- all toiling together for human advancement -- whose memory should not die because of their heroic achievements and we should with diligence and great pride carry on the work so nobly begun.”

It was the knowledge of this act that promoted the writing of the Centenary Church history on the occasion of its 100-year celebration in 1954, compiled by Mrs. Harry D. Kies. (Ref.3) Ms. Kies gave as her reason for writing the history, and the present authors concur in their writing, that the present and future members may know some of the important facts of the thrilling heritage of Centenary United Methodist Church and of its development.

We read in a history written in 1902 by the Rev. Frank B. Cowgill, a pioneer Methodist minister in Minnesota and pastor at Centenary from 1901 to 1904, as follows:

“In the summer of 1853 Chauncey Hobart was sent to visit this area to establish churches. He went to Mankato, St. Peter, Traverse des Sioux, LeSueur, Henderson and Shakopee [all of which were small frontier settlements along the lower Minnesota River] holding services and arranging with landowners for lots [of land], usually 6 to 8 lots, for future Methodist Church buildings. These [lots] were to be marked on plats as soon as a recorder’s office was established.”

The preceding data were given to Rev. David Brooks, who became Presiding Elder of the Minnesota District in August or September 1853, and were thus preserved for our knowledge.

In the course of his tour, Mr. Hobart preached the first Methodist sermon in Mankato to a gathering of nearly 200 people on the first Sunday in July 1853. This service was conducted in the open air near the confluence of Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers where Sibley Park now lies (Ref.2). Chauncey Hobart was not only a pioneer resident, but one of the pre-eminent leaders of Methodism in the early history of Minnesota (Ref. 6). He was of fine, sturdy New England stock, having been born in Vermont. His parents were both teachers in Vermont, but they felt the call of the West and so pulled stakes to push on to the frontier in Illinois in 1823. Here they built a log cabin and staked their claim. Here young Chauncey grew up, educated by his parents. It was ingrained in the New England ethic that children should be educated as well as possible. In 1834 Chauncey became a Methodist and soon was licensed to preach by the Wisconsin Conference, his first charge being Davenport, Iowa.

In 1849 Chauncey was sent to St. Paul to preach and later became Presiding Elder of all of Minnesota and part of Wisconsin. We are told he was a man of inexhaustible energy, scholarly and statesmanlike. There is a glimpse of his spirit in his own Recollection (Ref. 6:).

“Preaching in our only church in St. Paul, in school houses, in hotels, private homes, barns, groves or in sawmills, any place I could get a congregation together, I declared the whole counsel of God.”

Rev. Chauncey lived 93 active, useful years. With his long, flowing, white beard and white hair, he became a beloved figure in Red Wing where he lived after retiring. It is of particular interest to us to

know that on one of his trips to Vernon Center as Presiding Elder in 1868, Rev. Chauncey Hobart baptized Mary Ellen Grannis who lived there with her family. The family later moved to Mankato where Mr. Grannis, Mary's father, engaged with George M. Palmer in a grain storage and elevator business across southern Minnesota and Dakota. The Grannis family became a great influence in our early church. Mary Ellen married the Rev. H. L. Case, and upon his retirement, returned to Mankato in 1920 where they both served devotedly. In 1954 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary here. Mary Ellen joined Centenary Church in 1887.

In September 1854, Lewis Bell was appointed Preacher-in-Charge at the new Mankato Mission. At this time the Mission embraced all the settled portions of the Territory lying on the Minnesota River above Shakopee--viz., Mankato, St. Peter, Traverse des Sioux, Kasota and Henderson. Mr. Bell would have to make a four-week circuit to cover all the preaching points of this Mission (Ref. 7). All Minnesota Territory belonged to the Wisconsin Conference, one district only in the Territory with David Brooks as Presiding Elder. There are no available records to show that any Quarterly Conference was held on the circuit of the Mankato Mission prior to September 1855.

In the summer of 1855, Mr. Bell organized his parishioners at Mankato into a class and since that time Methodism has had continuous organized existence in this city. In September of that year the Mankato Circuit which Mr. Bell had traversed was divided and the part to which Mankato belonged was assigned to Presiding Elder John Kerns. Kerns appointed J. W. Powell to the work at Mankato in October 1855. Kerns' own district now extended from St. Paul to the remotest preaching point on the Minnesota River (Ref. 6), while Mr. Powell's circuit embraced South Bend, Mankato, Eureka and Dakota.

The following persons were members of J.W. Powell's class:  
A.C. Parrott, Mr. and Mrs. D. Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Britton, Mr. and Mrs. George Clark, Mrs. Henry Shaubut, Mrs. Lewis Branson; Mr. A. C. Parrott was class leader.

No quarterly meetings appear to have been held in Mr. Powell's region until March 22 and 23, 1856, when G. M. Kilpatrick appears on the records as Presiding Elder of the region along the lower Minnesota River, including St. Paul. The records of the Quarterly conference show that Mr. Powell's receipts during the quarter had been \$40 and \$100 for the year (Ref. 6). We do not know what Mr. Powell's salary was, but it probably was not large.

John Walker Powell says in his Memoirs:

“Minnesota Valley was not settled by a lower class of people -- but by the best blood of the East who had grit and ambition enough to leave rugged New England for a new land and the preachers came along too.”

Mr. Powell took over 80 acres as his claim seven miles from Mankato on the Blue Earth River in the neighborhood of Spring Island, and it remained his focal point for 50 years while he preached all around this area. He built the first church in the city of Blue Earth. He said also:

“One winter the snow was so deep, and there were no sidewalks or means of clearing the streets, so Henry Shaubut took his team of oxen and bobsled and brought the congregation to me. I have preached all over this country and am now called a ‘Preacher-at-large.’ I was among Mankato's first preachers and I wish I had 24 more years of life to give in helping to build it.”

There was a very momentous day on August 7, 1856, when the Minnesota Conference was organized, independent of Wisconsin, and held its first session in Red Wing with 28 charter members.

Bishop Simpson was the presiding bishop. He was late since his steamboat ran aground because of low water on the Mississippi River, so Rev. Chauncey Hobart convened the meeting and Rev. John Kerns was selected Chairman. Following the Conference, Rev. John W. Powell was sent on to develop new fields of endeavor, and Rev. C. E. Kedder came to Mankato Mission, a circuit which he served for six months. When he departed, Mr. R. J. Sibley was appointed to serve as pastor for the remainder of the year.

It now required three weeks to serve all the preaching points on the Mankato circuit, which included Mankato, Glendale, Kasota, Lake Washington, Fremont, and Lake Crystal as Sabbath Day appointments, plus Georgetown on a week day. At least three of these communities have been long since defunct. At this time the Mankato class consisted of seventeen members and two probationers, Mr. W. A. Wood being class leader. William A. Wood served as Exhorter. A Board of Stewards was formed, composed of Daniel Campbell, George Goodsell and I. N. Britton. During the pastorates of C. E. Kidder and R. J. Sibley, the preacher's quarterly salary stood at \$25 plus \$24 travel expenses. Presiding Elder John Kern received \$4 per quarter:

Mission appropriation	\$18.75	From the circuit	\$2.00
Public collection	\$7.90		

So, at this early date our congregation was heavily dependent on funds from outside.

On February 28, 1857, the local class (congregation) organized a building committee; and later that year a Mission Committee of five persons was appointed by the Conference. Before 1859, no trace of a report of a Sunday School exists. In August 1857, Rev. Edras Smith was appointed Pastor of Mankato, and Kasota Mission with the added settlements of South Bend, Lake Washington and Cleveland. John Kerns continued as Presiding Elder, and the first Quarterly Conference of the year was held in Mankato on September 5.

Under the pastorate of Mr. Smith, a successful series of meetings was held, beginning January 1, 1858, in the Masonic Hall and over a store, both in what would later be the 300 block of South Front Street. Later, City Hall in this location and the log school on the site of the Union Office Building on North Broad Street housed our Sabbath meetings. Revival meetings were sometimes held in a building on Main Street which was located between two saloons (Ref. 5). Original records (Ref. 7) mention Brothers Gunn, Milnor and Kerns as having assisted in the meetings, and the following persons joined the Church as a result of them:

Keilly Williams	Solomon Hartsell	Samuel and Isabel Robertson	Olive Roe
John Quinline	Joseph, Elizabeth and Charity Younce.		

The ordinance of baptism was administered by Pastor Smith to Daniel Milnor and Katherine Britton.

The members of the first Quarterly Conference of the year 1857 - 1858 were, besides the Pastor and Presiding Elder, D. Campbell and I. N. Britton, Stewards; Brother Fowler, Leader; R. J. Sibley, Local Preacher; P. F. Milner, Local Deacon; Thomas Sterritt and Brothers Nelson & Drury were also elected Stewards (Ref. 14 & 6).

Mr. Smith was succeeded as Pastor of Mankato Mission by T. S. Gunn for only a few months, and he was succeeded in spring 1859 by B. Y. Coffin. Coffin had been at the Winnebago Agency on the site of present St. Clair. "He is remembered as a very fervent, effective preacher, powerful in evangelistic work and of beautiful spirit" (Ref.3). He was educated at Purdue University, Indiana, and came to Minnesota for his health. He rendered a great service in connection with the Indian Agency and School. With the outbreak of the Dakota Conflict of 1862 he served as a soldier participating in

the Battle of New Ulm. Though he preached a great deal, he did not join the Minnesota Conference until 1867. After retiring, Mr. Coffin lived in Carnden Place, Minneapolis, where he died in 1890.

The Quarterly Conference Record shows that for the year 1859, the Preacher was paid \$159.25 and the Presiding Elder \$7.50 from the Mankato Mission. Receipts to the Mission apparently amounted to \$46.91 per quarter, a deficit of \$448 accumulating for the year. The estimated allowance per year for Preacher and Presiding Elder was \$400. For the first time a Sunday School report appears (in May 1859): Officers and Teachers – 12 Scholars - 50.

A library containing 200 books is mentioned. There was one Bible class.

In the fall of 1860, Rev. John Kerns, who had been Presiding Elder for some time, became Pastor at Mankato for a year. Tradition says that this prominent leader was a strong preacher of the old-fashioned kind, taxing both lung and fist in the earnestness of his expostulations, and backing up his pulpit work in the homes of his members with fervent prayers (Ref. 3).

The records are not clear as to when or why the name Centenary became associated with the Church in Mankato (Ref. 5). In the early years of its history the church is referred to as “M. E. Church of Mankato.” The official name of the denomination at the time was the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the 1860’s, American Methodists were celebrating the centennial of Methodist work on this continent during the Great Awakening. As a part of the Centennial celebration, financial campaigns were launched for the building of new churches and educational facilities. Money was borrowed from the Methodist Church Extension Fund for the building of the first Methodist Church structure, which was started in 1866. It is entirely likely that the name “Centenary” was adopted at the time in honor of the American Methodist centennial observance.

In autumn 1861, John Kerns was succeeded by A. G. Smith for a single year as Pastor, he being followed by L. A. Chubbuck for one year. These were exciting, and somewhat uncertain times in this frontier region, especially with the great Dakota Conflict of 1862 and the Great Skedaddle of settlers from the blazing frontier. Mr. Chubbuck was followed as pastor by Thomas Day, who served Centenary for two years. Mr. Day was an Englishman who had been trained for a business career in the firm of Samuel Budget. Mr. Day was very systematic and careful in his attention to all details of parish work, and it was in his time that a lot was secured upon which the Methodist church now stands. While the old church records (Ref. 7) show a fairly good increase of membership through conversions and confession of faith, the large number by letter in the first ten years of the Church’s existence indicates the large immigration of people into this frontier community.

Next year’s spring Quarterly Conference report for the Sunday School revealed eleven teachers and an upsurge in scholars to seventy. The Library seems to have dropped to 100 books, but \$14 was raised to replenish the holdings. Through the year 1860 we were dealing with a financial picture of \$439.41, and a balanced budget. By the end of the year the Library holdings were back up to 200 books and the Sunday School had twelve teachers. Rev. J. Kerns, Pastor, had applied for, and was granted, a release to join the land office in St. Peter. Smith replaced him as Pastor – an interesting change of vocation for Kerns. The year 1862 was a difficult one for much of this area. It apparently affected the Church economy adversely as well; we had expenses in autumn of that year of \$126.50, and receipts of \$24.50. We were accustomed at the time to a quarterly Missionary appropriation of \$50.

When the Indian War situation had settled down by 1863, funds were secured for paying the Presiding Elder \$13 and the Pastor \$60 per quarter. A committee was formed to raise the Pastor’s annual salary to \$475 plus allowance for moving Rev. Thomas Day’s goods here from Red Wing.

During Rev. Day's pastorate, a lot was secured in the Warren Addition for \$500 upon which our church now stands. The neighborhood was heavily wooded and stony then, but church members cut the timber and cleared the wood, stumps and stones away. Brothers Hall and Hotaling were appointed to secure the title to the lot from Mr. Thomas D. Warren, the owner. Four hundred dollars were paid in cash donations and \$100 by friends of the Pastor.

Members of the Church met in April 1864 to complete the organization of the Sunday School. John Hall was chosen as Superintendent; Charles E. Slocum, Secretary and Librarian. The Quarterly Conference records show the Sunday School had three male teachers and nine female; eighteen boys were enrolled and 55 girls. The Library now contained 241 books, 32 singing books and eight testaments. The pastor was paid \$475 in 1864 and the rent, sexton, light and wood cost ran \$124. Energy for light must have come from oil or kerosene. Fifty dollars was paid on Missionary appropriations. The church ladies held a festival and raised \$69.13, but the Church faced a deficit at the end of the year.

In 1865, the Reverend David Tice came to us as Pastor for two years. Next year in 1866, the foundation of the new church was dug and the basement soon finished off for use. Much of the work was done by volunteer labor from the Church membership as there was little money available at the time. One recording secretary put the matter quite cleverly: "A floor was put in, and a sort of roof put over the top to keep out the snow and the rain, and put a mortgage on top of that, but we were a pleased and happy people to have a church home." Gone were the days of having to pay rent at City Hall for a meeting place. An early Methodist women's society is indicated by a notice appearing in the July 14, 1866, issue of Mankato Weekly Record (Ref. 15): "Mite Society (a Biblical reference, no doubt) -- The ladies of the Methodist E. Church will hold their next Mite Society meeting at the City Hall, on Wednesday evening, the 18th inst. Ice Cream and other refreshments may be expected."

We hear about the common struggle between institutions of higher learning and the towns in which they are located -- struggles of Town and Gown. But the new teacher-training institution, Mankato Normal School (now Minnesota State University, Mankato), got off to a great relationship with the people of Mankato thanks largely to the generosity and thoughtfulness of the members of Centenary Methodist Church. The State Legislature had established a Normal School at Winona initially, then chose to locate a second institution at Mankato in 1867. The School administration intended to open the College in autumn term of 1868, but work had lagged on construction of the second story of the building on the corner of Main and Front Streets. Here was to have been the site of Mankato Normal School. The School administration cast about in search of temporary quarters appropriate for its over 50 new students. Centenary Methodist had a large basement which would be adequate for a college of 50 or so students. Mankato Normal appealed to Centenary to rent the basement during week days as a campus until its permanent quarters could be finished. So, Church and College worked well together. Principal George M. Gage and 55 enrolled students moved in on October 7, 1868.

Rev. E.R. Lathrop followed Mr. Tice for two years. He was remembered as a man of unusual ability, information and logical power (Ref. 14). Lathrop's report in the last year of his Pastorate showed a Sunday School of 174 scholars and a library of 320 books. It is interesting to note that in the absence of a Public Library our church tried to supply reading material for its people in keeping with John Wesley's practice of carrying literature about in his saddlebags for his own use and distribution among the people (Ref. 6). There was an upsurge in the membership of the Sunday School during the late 1860's. The Quarterly Conference Record for 1867 notes sixteen teachers and officers and 130 scholars. The figures rose next year to 22 officers and teachers and 140 scholars. Three Bible classes now existed, with 22 attendance. The Church generously donated 50 of its older Library books to the

school at Red Jacket Mills (at present Red Jacket Bridges). In 1868, \$100 was provided for new books for our Library. We really tried very hard to pay the Pastor something resembling a decent salary (for the time). \$1200 was projected annually. Alas, the poor Pastor had to do with about 2/3 of this projection. The Presiding Elder's pay was projected at \$75 per annum.

One of the most peculiar notices appeared in the February 1, 1868, issue of Mankato Weekly Record:

“Sale of M.E. Church --The Sheriff has advertised to sell the Methodist E. Church of this village, under an execution. The sale is advertised to take place on the 16th of March, and the amount of claim \$232.47.

We hope, for the good name of our village, that this sale will not be permitted to take place, and if it is not within the means of the trustees to meet the claim, that our business men will generously subscribe the amount. Some means should be devised to meet this emergency. Who will lead off?” It is puzzling, to say the least, that such a drastic course should have been contemplated. No subsequent bit of information seems to exist concerning the immediate outcome.

S.G. Gale became Pastor a year later in 1869. He negotiated a loan from the Church Extension Society which allowed for the completing of the superstructure of the Church building. Central Methodist Episcopal Church of Winona presented Mankato Methodist Episcopal Church with the pulpit, Bible and chandeliers which were used throughout the life of the Church building. Mr. Gale was remembered as “a man of gentle spirit and ingratiating manners, who attended faithfully to pastoral work, and manifested a deep interest in the family life of his parish, and who was an acceptable preacher.” (Ref. 14). The Church was at the time considered to be in a prosperous condition spiritually, though carrying a considerable debt.

Mankato Weekly Record on May 28, 1870, states this regarding the new building. “The Methodist Church is beginning to assume very much more the appearance of a church externally than it did a few months ago. With a new roof, handsome cornice, well painted, its appearance is greatly improved. It will be one of the best looking churches in the city when completed which will be in a few weeks.”



The YMCA met at the Methodist Church on Monday evenings to transact important business in 1870 (Ref. 12). President of YMCA at the time was Professor G. M. Gage, Principal of Mankato Normal School. At this early stage in its existence, Mankato YMCA had no building which it owned. Somewhat later YMCA located on South Front Street. The YMCA building at corner of Second and Cherry, across from Centenary, was built in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In 1870 Centenary had a children's class which met every Saturday at 3 pm. Also, a children's prayer meeting met on Sunday after Sunday School. A subscription of \$1900 was raised to furnish the interior of the Church (Ref. 7). The contract for this improvement was immediately let. The Sunday School continued in a healthy spiritual condition. Average attendance here was 94 in 1870 and 109 in 1871. Also in 1871 Centenary entertained the Minnesota Conference for the first time.

After Rev. S.A. Gale's departure, Rev. J.R. Creighton served a two-year period followed by James Door for two years. The spacious facilities at Centenary allowed for the staging of the oratorio

“Esther” by the Mankato Musical Association on May 7 and 8, 1872. The quality of the performance, according to Mankato Free Press, gave evidence that Mankato had a number of people well versed in music at the time. By mid-1873, mention is made in the Church records of Thursday night prayer meeting. At this time the local church maintained the following Disciplinary Committees:

Missions	Parsonage & Furniture
Sunday School	Church Music
Tracts	Estimating Pastor’s Salary
Church extension	Estimating Funds for Conference Claimants
Church Records	

The 1874 Church budget looked like this: (Ref. 7)

Pastor Salary	\$1000
Presiding Elder Claim	\$130
Rent	\$200
Moving (of new pastor?)	\$35

The year 1875 brought a Pastor long to be remembered at Centenary: Rev. Thomas McClary, for a three-year term. It is fortunate for the Church that this able person came to us, especially since these were trying times with the great financial panic in the mid-1870’s coupled with the several successive years of devastating grasshopper plagues in which crops in Minnesota were sometimes swept clean by these insects. But no previous pastor seems to have commanded the attention of the entire community as did this witty speaker (Ref. 3). He was dramatic and poetically imaginative, highly emotional and he filled the little church to overflowing. Often the police were required to keep the crowds in order. He delivered temperance sermons to great crowds in the streets and conducted a great revival resulting in many new members. But, alas he did not reduce the debt on the Church. In fact, during the last year of McClary’s Pastorate (1878), a reunion was held in the Church on a Friday evening to raise money to meet the pastor’s salary.

A portion of Pastor McClary’s final report to the Church, delivered on September 15, 1878, is reproduced here. It gives a good picture of the state of affairs at Centenary at the time.

“The year has been one of prosperity, though times have been hard, and there has been much to interfere with church work. Our congregations have been good, our social meetings fairly attended, and the spirituality of the church is on the increase. We have unity -- there are no contentions or divisions among us, and we realize that it is good and pleasant for brethren thus to dwell together.” “Our Sunday School has been prosperous under the superintendency of Gardiner Darr, who has given much faithful instruction. We have been very fortunate in securing for that position one so indefatigable in labor, thorough in knowledge and skillful in teaching.” “Many of the teachers cannot be too highly commended for their punctuality and earnestness. Some of the stewards and trustees are deserving of special mention for their devotion to the interests of the church.” “We have endeavored to be true to the temperance cause, because we know that intemperance is the great foe of man, a hindrance to the prayers of the Christian faith. We have this year received on probation 34 persons who professed saving faith in Christ. Of these, 14 have been received into full membership: 16 removed with certificates: 3 discontinued, and 6 remain on probation: 13 have been baptized. During the three years we have received on probation 237; baptized 130. Of these, 127 have received into full membership; 52 have removed with certificates; now on probation 11. We have received into the Church by letter during the three years, 88; and have dismissed by letter, full members, 104; probationers, 52; total; 156. So there have been received into membership of the Church 330, and dismissed 156. Leaving us now a membership of 299. Of these members some 14 are absent and wish to continue their relation.” “The expenses for the Church during the year have been as follows

Pastor’s Salary -----\$1200

Presiding Elder's Salary -----	\$65
Salary of Sexton -----	\$156
Improvements & Repairs -----	\$57
Wood & Lights -----	\$90
Interest -----	\$300
Sunday School -----	\$98
Benevolent Purposes -----	\$116
Incidentals -----	\$35

The expenses have been met by general subscriptions, collections, socials, special contributions, and by the Young Peoples' Literary Society; and during the three years we have raised an amount not far from \$7000. This considering the hard times and the local scourge of grasshoppers, is commendable. You have done nobly, and nearly all of the membership has contributed -- by each doing a little, all do much. Our relations with the other churches have been pleasant. It is good to be associated with such excellent men as their pastor's men who are catholic, zealous and able."

William Shannon, who became a great pastor and administrator and later served in the Northern Conference, recalls the record of Thomas McClary. "He came to us as a boy preacher 19 years old. Like the pioneer teachers he was obliged to board around. The early settlers were all poor. My father's house in Mankato was always a stopping place for the preachers and Rev. McClary was a welcome guest. He rode a little Indian pony. Many a time I have seen him start out in early morn after sharing our humble meal of mush and milk for supper the night before and johnnycake and molasses for breakfast, the principal items of our diet in those days. In later years I learned from him that many days he went without any noon meal because he didn't have the heart to ask his people to share a third meal with him."

"Later generations knew Thomas McClary well, not only as a most successful pastor and Presiding Elder but widely known as a popular lecturer. He brought laughter and sunshine to thousands of people in every part of the country by his famous lecture 'Missions of Mirth'".

1878 found J.H. Macomber with us for one year. He reported the Church to be in good condition but burdened with a mortgage of \$7000 and paying 10% interest. There were active literary societies for young people, forerunners of the Epworth League. Our Church membership ran 250 and the Pastor's salary was set at \$1000. Whether this was fully paid is an open question.

At this time the Methodist Hymnal was adopted as standard for the Methodist Church for the first time and the use of envelopes for offerings was instituted. The presiding elder was paid \$90 this year and the Pastor \$40 for moving expenses. Pastor Macomber said in his final report: "None of the benevolent collections have been taken except for the Bishop. I think there should be a revival in that direction, a quickening of conscience as to the claims of God's cause upon our means. We earnestly pray that God may send his financial help and when our debts are paid, I shall look for a glorious outpouring of the spirit."

In the fall of 1879, Presiding Elder J. W. Martin found a young graduate of the Conference course and Martin had confidence that this young man could raise the debt on the Church (Ref. 3). And young Rev. Charles W. Savidge believed it too. So he came saying he would pay off the debt if he had to saw wood to do it. He was young and unmarried and could live cheaply, he said. Savidge surprised everybody by the success he had in securing contributions, even though the Church debt had grown from \$4000 to \$6000. A report of the Secretary in the Quarterly Conference records says of him: "Either he had a sublime faith or colossal nerve." But Savidge came and laid his plans. Calling a mass meeting, he gave all who could walk red tags and sent them out to sell tags for at least one dollar -- then no one could say they had paid, unless they had a red tag. Their slogan was "show your tag or put

up your dollar.” Two thousand dollars was raised in this manner and the Methodists were given credit for originating Tag Day. Unbelievable as it seems, young Savidge raised the debt and the Church was dedicated for the third time free from debt. Savidge’s response to the endeavor was, “All praise to the courageous pioneers. Glory be and Hallelujah!”

Rev. Charles Savidge, in a letter written to Centenary on the occasion of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, says, “The dear faces and names of some of the members are so vividly before me, Brother Trask, D.L. Clements and wife, O.R. Mather, Lizzie George, Henry Wilcox and wife, Mother Hammett and family, Father and Mother Crost, Mrs. Sarah Allen, W.D. Tompkins and family, Sister Shannon, one of the holiest women I ever met, Brother Washburn and wife, she was such a spiritual power. There was many a shout and amen in those days when Mother Shannon and Father Washburn got woke up. Also, O.R. Beebe, Owen Mendahall, Brother Tenny and wife, Brother Sterling and wife, Gardiner Darr and family. Gardiner, Superintendent of Sunday School, was a real artist with the crayon. Mr. Mc Veigh was a great Sunday School teacher, Major Clarks, and Ida and Sadie Mc Kinney. Oh! The sweet memory of those good friends is wonderful.”

Rev. J. W. Martin came in 1882 for one year, followed by Rev. A. W. Edwards for one year. Rev. Edwards wrote, upon leaving Mankato, that there “were a goodly number of earnest, intelligent, loyal laity trying to bring order out of chaos, especially in financial matters, that I found many members living outside the rules of the church and one of the greatest barriers in the way of progress here was the lack of unity and harmony among the members.” The Church budget for the year of Martin’s Pastorate was \$2239.90.

In 1884 our church building was just eighteen years old, and our congregation was thirty years old. It was common practice in that time for the Conference to send pastors to churches for short periods and then move them on. Such was the case with C. W. Edwards, who arrived in 1883 and served for only one year. Prior to his departure in 1884, Pastor Edwards wrote of his year in Mankato, and those writings, taken from our Church record, give us a taste of what it was like to be a member of Centenary in the late 1800’s. He writes: “This pastor came to the charge in October 1883 and entered upon his work wholly ignorant of the history of the church which for many years has been one of discord and strife. I found a list of members on paper numbering about 250 and began the work of looking for them without any clue to their residences. Many of them cannot be found, having left the city and state years ago. And many of those who have been found are living in open violation of the rules of the church with no pretensions of even common morality. Among the membership are a goodly number of earnest, intelligent, loyal Methodists. The church has been improved to the amount of over \$300. The audience room has been carpeted and calcimined and the seats and woodwork varnished. The church has paid for all purposes this year \$2239.80. The greatest barrier in the way of progress in this church is the lack of unison among its members, and I fear the elements are so diverse that they will not harmonize.” And with that not-so-positive analysis, Rev. Edwards departed Mankato. Rev. J.C. Ogle came as Pastor in 1884. He was remembered as a man of considerable physical stature, rather imposing in appearance with a friendly, warm nature. He preached good sermons, systematic and thoughtfully edifying. To the people (Ref. 6), Ogle was very helpful in the building of the first parsonage that Centenary put up in 1886. Rev. Hair, from 1886-1887, was remembered by his parishioners as a scholarly, studious man with decided literary instincts. He possessed an unusually large personal library. Gracious in bearing and genial in conversation, he was remembered as being most efficient in the pulpit.

Next came Rev. R. M. Carter in 1887, followed by Rev. F.M. Rule who served from 1888 to 1893. He had the distinction of having served the longest pastorate at Centenary in the history of the Church

up to that time. He was very popular with his own parishioners and with the public in general. Rev. J.F. Stout's pastorate (1893-1895) was marked by another great revival, which held the attention of the people, and crowded the altar of the Church every night for many weeks. He was later Presiding Elder of the Mankato District and made his home in Mankato. Two other Centenary pastors of the 1890's left very favorable impressions on the congregation. Mr. Cleveland was remembered as a man of exquisite literary taste and ability, a great scholar and brilliant preacher. J.M. Driver was a preacher whose education, versatility, and oratorical genius produced crowded houses in every church he served. He was fully recognized and frankly acknowledged in every conference in which he was a member (Ref. 6). The choir loft and Pastor's study were added in 1889 during the Pastorate of F. M. Rule. John Merritt Driver seems to have been very musical as well. He did some composing, including a piece called "Memory of Minnesota". The choir loft was usually filled with young people on Sunday morning.

The Mankato Free press reported on February 12, 1894, that the Methodist Church was crowded again on the previous night, and it was necessary to bring in extra chairs. At the conclusion of the services, twenty or more persons came forward and united with the Church, making 170 since the revival commenced. The Free Press congratulated Pastor J.F. Stout for his efforts. "This is undoubtedly the most signal success in its way ever met with by a minister in the city." The Church was so crowded at every meeting that it would soon become necessary to enlarge the building. The plan at this date was to put on a new front and side, bringing the building out to the sidewalks on Second and Cherry Streets. The Free Press stated it would be glad to see this improvement made. It is perhaps well to explore the nature of this revival in greater detail. From the Free Press in February or March 1894, we read: "On the first day of January commenced at Centenary M. E. Church a revival meeting which has developed a wonderful interest, and had yielded splendid results. The meetings have been entirely in the hands of the pastor Rev. J.F. Stout, assisted by members of the church, and by Dr. John Stafford, Presiding Elder, who on four different occasions gave his services and preached to the delight of the people. The series opened with a watch night meeting on New Year's Eve at which seven people indicated a desire to seek Christ. From this time the services have continued without interruption, until last night when the meetings closed in a service of great power. After the first two weeks it was necessary to move from the basement to the audience room of the church in which the services were held to the last. The congregations have been large and on several occasions large numbers have been compelled to go away for lack of accommodations. There have been two jubilees held, the first over the first hundred converts, and the second two weeks later, over two hundred and eighty. There have been the following marked features showing the power in the services: the number of old people conveyed, the large numbers of heads of families, over a hundred in all, the host of young men and women, considerably over a hundred, the depth of conviction, the clearness of conversion, the eagerness of testimony, and the absence of excitement. The church itself has been greatly quickened and has seconded the pastor in every way. A revival chorus of the young people of the church has done excellent service. Miss Eldred and Miss Sourensen have given their services at the organ. Miss Esther Grannis sang several solos and all have helped to bring about the splendid success. The services yesterday were all that could be expected. The church was packed, many being unable to find admittance. The interest was deep, and during the day, three came out for Christ and four joined the church, making during the series 317 conversions and 235 accessions. On the whole, this series has done great good in Mankato and has had the prayers and sympathies of the best people in all denominations."

In October 1888, the Church Board authorized some needed patching of the church roof and repair of the basement windows. The Pastor's salary for the year (Rev. F.M. Rule) amounted to \$1200 and Presiding Elder G. Hair's claim was \$100. We were paying \$300 in rent and pastor moving expenses



were budgeted at \$18. The Sunday School report shows 112 scholars, fifteen years and older. The Society of Christian Endeavor was active at Centenary.

Pastor's report for early 1889 indicated the Sunday School to be in a prosperous condition with an increase in not only number of members but also in their interest. By May the numbers reached 200. The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was now thoroughly organized and its fifty active members were doing very effective things. An increase was reported in attendance at prayer meetings. Plans were being made for yet another church revival. The Church Board authorized a campaign to raise \$4000 in the spring 1889 in order to repair and extend the church building. Bids were submitted by May.

By autumn of 1889, a children's class at Sunday School was organized. Somewhat perplexing is the statement (Ref. 17). "The numbers [in Sunday School] are not very large nor the meetings very enthusiastic." No follow-up to this dire analysis ensued in the minutes. Centenary's Christ End Society now had a branch of its Lookout Committee working among students at Mankato Normal School.

In spring 1890, the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, Epworth League Chapter 1666 contained a total of 85 members; average attendance was exceptional at 85. The Church spent \$43 on new hymnals. The Board authorized the purchase of small stoves for the small rooms in the Church. The Pastor's salary for the year stood at \$1200. Presiding Elder claimed \$100 and the Bishop received \$10. \$325 was set aside for Church improvement. Centenary's indebtedness amounted to \$1,100.

In 1891 the Board acted to admit members of the Junior League into the church in "full connection" upon recommendation of the Pastor. The Board ordered a subscription be taken to pay off the indebtedness on the Parsonage amounting to about \$1000, payable by September 3, 1891. Town gas, a locally manufactured fuel, was now being used at Centenary for lighting. Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor, Epworth League had 94 members, but average attendance stood at a lamentable 58. The Junior League's 58 members (ages 7-15) showed an average attendance of 25. A branch of the Junior League was started in North Mankato with six members. The North Mankato community had begun c. 1885.

In January 1892, a committee of ladies of the church was charged with finding a music leader and organist. The organ was a hand pump type. The Church budget for 1892;

Pastor Salary-----	\$1500
Presiding Elder claim-----	\$100
Episcopal fund -----	\$15
Interest & Maintenance-----	\$485
Total-----	\$2100

In January 1893, the Church Board authorized the purchase of part of a lot to the south of the Church at a cost of \$1000. The Pastor's study was furnished with a separate space heater, and in December 1893, a ton of soft coal was purchased to fuel this heater. Centenary worked with the City in September 1894 to put in curbing along Cherry and South Second Streets. Sidewalks in that era were wooden boardwalk. These too had to be replaced fairly often.

On January 8, 1895, Centenary decided to purchase the Marsh property in North Mankato for a site on which to build a mission chapel. On March 4, the church borrowed \$200 to secure the lot. By May we were seeking subscriptions to buy lumber to build the mission. Members of Centenary living in North Mankato and Belgrade Township had asked Centenary to build the chapel in North Mankato for the purpose of holding Sunday School and for social meetings, but they desired to remain in affiliation with the mother church.

Centenary Official Board authorized the employment of a choir for the church. In October 1895, it became necessary for our church to borrow \$200 for two months at 8% interest in order to pay the deficit in Pastor's salary. The budget for the year 1897 was finally adopted by the Official Board after much debate. It totaled \$2000, after an item for church music of \$150 had to be stricken. Funds were still quite tight. In May 1897, the Ladies League of Centenary provided \$100 to be applied to the church debt.

Did you know that there were two other Methodist churches in the immediate Mankato area besides Centenary in the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century? Of course, you know about Belgrade United Methodist and it was common for the various ethnic, immigrant groups to form their own congregation. Language and social custom were powerful factors, even in religion. This happened in Mankato with Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists. The other two Methodist congregations in Mankato were German and Swedish.

The German Methodist Church organized in 1873 under Rev. C. J. Jahn as Pastor. Their church building was erected in 1877 on the corner of Spring and North Broad Streets. The dedication of the church building followed on May 18, 1879 as cited in Mankato Review of May 20, 1879: "Church Dedication. On Sunday last, the German Methodist Episcopal Church of this city, built largely through the efforts of Rev. Mr. Schulte, Presiding Elder, was dedicated with appropriate services. The morning services were in German and the afternoon in English, both largely attended -- the latter conducted by Rev. J. Krehbiel, who delivered an effective sermon in regard to the saving power of the gospel.

The building is one of the neatest in the city, free from pomp and show, and finished in excellent taste. It is brick, 32 by 52 feet, with steeple 45 feet high, the ceiling high, and the audience room is lighted with eight large windows. The seating accommodations are especially to be admired, in this regard excelling any other public building in the city. The cost of the lot, which is located on the corner of Spring and Third Streets, was \$1,000, and the building \$3,107.87. The expenses of collections and interest to date amount to \$502.92, making the entire debt incurred by the society \$4,610.79. The receipts and subscriptions during the progress of the work amounted to \$2,474.79, leaving an indebtedness of \$2,136.29. The Subscriptions of the congregation on Sunday morning amounted to the handsome sum of \$1,050, and at afternoon service, to \$160.80, a total of \$1,210.80, leaving \$925.48 not provided for. Before this is raised and the subscriptions paid in, it is estimated that an additional sum of about \$500 will be required for interest and to cover expenses of collections. The society has incurred a heavy responsibility in building the church, and its members having donated liberally, it is hoped that our citizens and business men will aid them when called upon, as they soon will be."

This building has long since disappeared from the scene in Mankato.

The Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church in Mankato was organized September 5, 1886 by Rev. J.D. Andrews. It was not until February 11, 1897, that this congregation purchased a lot on South Fourth Street, facing what is now the Blue Earth County parking lot and Nichols Office Building, between Jackson and Hickory Streets. The Church intended to erect a new house of worship that year

at a cost of \$2000. It was assumed that when the railroad tracks running down Fourth Street were removed, the location would be a very desirable one. Financial, railroad or other problems must have been more formidable than anticipated, because the church building was not completed until April 1902 at a cost of \$5,000. The April 21, 1902, issue of Mankato Free Press (Weekly) describes the church building dedication: "The new Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church on Fourth Street, between Hickory and Jackson, was formally dedicated Sunday to the purposes for which it was erected. The services were held in the afternoon and evening in the presence of a congregation that filled every seat."

Rev. John W. Swenson, of Minneapolis, Presiding Elder of the Minneapolis District, preached the dedicatory sermon in an able and interesting manner. Bishop Isaac W. Joyce of Minneapolis led the services. He had preached in the forenoon at the First M.E. Church at which time \$260 was raised to help the new church.

The new church is a handsome one of brick and stone and cost over \$5000. The congregation has been without a building for several years and had been meeting in the hall at 310 South Front Street, but after the basement of the new church was put in two or three years ago, meetings were held there.

The subscriptions received during the day footed up to \$1100, but about \$200 is still needed to complete the building and the pastor hopes to secure this within a few days. Meetings are to be held every evening this week except Saturday, and Rev. John W. Willsman of Stillwater will officiate. The pastor of the new church is Rev. Louis Johnson, and he desires to thank all who have made donations on behalf of the Church.

"The church is to be congratulated on securing so fine a building, and the best wishes of all accompany it through the future."

One can easily view this old church, now one of the very earliest of the extant churches of Mankato.

The Evangelical Church movement was founded by German Protestants who were independent of Lutheranism. Much later the Evangelical denomination merged with the United Brethren to form the EUB or Evangelical United Brethren. In quite recent times, the EUB united with the Methodists to form the United Methodist denomination.

The Evangelical Church ministered in Mankato since September 12, 1868, when First Evangelical Church of Mankato was organized (Ref. 5). Having no church home, the denomination held services, like a number of other denominations did, in the log school at the present site of Union Office Building. A new church plant, consisting of a frame building was erected at the corner of North Second and Elm Streets in 1872. This move assured the denomination a bright future in Mankato. By 1919, the prospering congregation relocated at the corner of Lafayette and North Fourth Streets in a thriving residential neighborhood. The membership at the time was 29 and that of its Sunday School 39. In 1964, nine acres were purchased just off Main Street in the Black Eagle Addition of Hilltop. The parsonage was completed by June 1966, and the new church home soon followed in construction. The old building on Fourth Street was sold to Sertoma Club of Mankato in March 1968. By the time of its centennial in 1968, EUB (the merger of Evangelical and United Brethren had occurred between 1945 and 1948) membership was 99 and the Sunday School had an enrollment of 150. A working Ladies Aid, a catechetical class of sixteen and a Teachers' Training Class of seven members indicate a

part of the inner activities of the congregation. The church voted to become self-supporting in 1967. In April 1968, the congregation voted to change the name to Hilltop United Methodist Church.

An event occurred in the Mankato District in July 1904 which meant the reestablishment of a sister church of ours. Mankato Daily Free Press carried this interesting notice in its issue of July 20, 1904. "Bishop Joyce and Rev. Benjamin Longley, of Central Park Methodist Church, will be in southern Minnesota this week to assist at an event of unusual interest to Methodists in the Mankato District, in the reopening of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Eagle Lake. The services will begin Thursday, July 21, with a sermon by Rev. Peter Clare, Presiding Elder of Mankato District, who has charge of the opening. Dr. Longley will speak Saturday evening and other Methodist pastors will preach, including Rev. John W. Powell, the pioneer of Methodism in this state. Miss Mary Coffin of St. Paul will sing at the services, July 23 and 24."

The Methodist movement in the Mankato area entered a well-established and prosperous era after its pioneer days, as it looked forward to the observance, along with the City of Mankato and the County, of its Golden Anniversary in 1904. The men's fellowship was yet to be founded, but the ladies had been very active. By 1880, the women had formed two mission societies, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Women's Home Missionary Society. By the early 1800's, church women in American Methodism saw work that needed doing. They saw people – especially women and children – hungry, poor, without education and needing doctors. So the women organized to help where they could, as well as assisted retired preachers and their widows, wives and children.

This didn't happen easily, for few women were accustomed to public speaking or working outside their homes. These were women who were probably used to gathering firewood, carrying water from the well, raising much of their own food, and making their own clothes. Yet they still felt called to help those less fortunate, "in the spirit of John Wesley". We still have some of the early books of the secretary's minutes of the meetings of the Missionary Societies. Thanks to them for their record keeping. Over the years, the name has changed and the Women's Societies are now called the United Methodist Women, the largest organized group of women in the world.

In 1903, the church women organized their Sunshine Club from their original "Sisters of Mercy" Society. Mrs. Richard Hammett was its first president. Interest in the young folk was fostered by Rev. Mr. Brown at Centenary. Aided by the spirited leadership of Miss Emma Collins of the Mankato Normal School, the recently founded Epworth League, which succeeded the earlier literary societies, grew rapidly and attracted young people from all over the city. Albert Nitzkowski was its devoted president for many years. Eventually he took groups of his Leaguers during summer months out to the smaller towns to organize and stimulate their work. It was said he had the largest Epworth League in Minnesota at one time. He also organized an employment bureau to help find jobs for his members.

Let us try to picture the pace of life as the Nineteenth Century passed into the Twentieth. Think of it! In 1894 there wasn't an automobile in Mankato. Conveyance was by animal – ox or by horse, or by steam – steamboat or railroad. And the steamboats were rapidly passing into oblivion on the Minnesota River. Entertainment, especially in summer, was furnished by the circus or carnival to mass audiences. On a somewhat higher plane, the Chautauqua movement provided entertainment and enlightenment on a cultural, educational and religious level.

Around the turn of the century, camp meetings were great events in the Methodist calendar (Ref. 3). They filled people's gregarious, as well as spiritual, needs through those days. Though there were several campgrounds in the Mankato District, none were so popular or as well attended as the Minneopa Camp meeting. The site was located about one-half mile above Minneopa Falls in a

beautiful natural amphitheater, shaded by tall oaks and maples. The railroad station was at the park and so it was easily accessible. For many years, meetings were held here for one week each June.

Plank seats for 300 people were provided, a stage was built in the side of the hill for the speakers, and small tents were pitched behind the benches. A large tent was provided for class meetings and love feasts as well as for children's meetings. Lumber wagons and buggies from miles around were parked about the grounds as the preachers shepherded their parishioners to camp meetings, where the ablest speakers of the District would exhort their audiences to repent of their sins.

Sunday was always the big day of camp meeting. It started with a love feast in the morning which included Holy Communion and testimonies. This was followed by the preaching service, a big picnic dinner and an afternoon service for children. The evening service was always the climax and a goodly number of penitents were gathered into the fold and others were greatly inspired.

Monday morning would bring the farewell love feast, after which camp was broken. Everyone on the grounds shook hands with everyone else, embraced one another with tears – Methodists were very emotional. The air would ring with hallelujahs and camp meeting was over for another year.

Pastor Driver received perhaps the most glowing write-up a newspaper has ever accorded a minister in the April 6, 1899, issue of the Mankato Review. It stated that there was perhaps no prouder and happier man in Mankato than John Merritte Driver, Pastor of Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church. It seems that the previous night we had a business meeting. From these proceedings the reporter became ecstatic over the "the thrilling triumphs, spiritual, financial and diplomatic." The Church was crowded from altar to street on the occasion of the conclusion of Pastor Driver's first year with us. The ovation given Dr. Driver when he entered the audience hall was moving.

Reports were rendered by Trustees, Stewards, Epworth League, Sunday School, Ladies Aid Society and every other society in the Church – and each society, board and committee reported itself out of debt! Some actually reported money in the treasury. The Church Treasurer's report showed that old debts to the amount of \$1700 had been liquidated during the year, that benevolences of the Church had reached "the high water mark" and a neat little check of \$325 sent to the Missionary Society. Needed improvements, including a first-class furnace in the parsonage, were paid for. The ecstatic reporter concluded: the narrative by referring to the "gracious philanthropies, of the work for the comfort and salvation of the poor, the sick and the unfortunate, of a happy and most successful revival during the winter (conducted by the Pastor) and of a net increase in membership". Ah, those were heady times. Optimism was running high in this society.

The Rev. Frank B. Cowgill, D.D., arrived in 1901 as Pastor for Centenary and stayed until 1904. At the time he was described as a "young man of talent and great promise." It was during Cowgill's tenure here that Mankato celebrated its Golden Anniversary (1902). And Dr. Cowgill was intimately connected with the city observance, having been asked by the editors of Mankato's commemorative book, Semi-Centennial of Mankato, to write the chapter on Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church history. Cowgill's writings have been used as a major source material by the authors of the current church history. Dr. J.M. Driver, former Pastor at Centenary in 1898, gave one of the prominent addresses on the closing day of the Mankato Semi-Centennial celebration, the day referred to as Old Settler's Day and the day of the big feast. Later in 1911, Dr. F.B. Cowgill returned to the news in this area when he was chosen President of the Board of Parker College in Winnebago (Ref. 20). The Parker College property had recently been transferred to the Methodist Episcopal Church. This institution was run as a secondary school. A clipping from the Minneapolis Journal of 1912 tells us,

“Dr. Cowgill, a prominent delegate to the General Conference, has just written a poem on the wreck of the Titanic. He had also written many letters from the Orient and his poem, “Sea of Galilee,” was published in this paper. It is now issued in book form by the Methodist Book Concern and has a large sale.” Dr. Cowgill in 1912 was Minnesota’s candidate for editorship of the Northwestern Christian Advocate in Chicago.

Another Guiding Light who served as Pastor immediately after Rev. Cowgill was Rev. J.M. Brown. In 1904, Dr. Cowgill asked for a change of pastorates and the Rev. J.M. Brown of Austin succeeded him for two years. He was described as one of the “prominent young divines” in the Minnesota Conference and he proved to be a pastor of considerable ability. During Brown’s Pastorate, a very large revival was held and Centenary experienced a great spiritual uplift and awakening. Professional evangelist Ruth was here for several weeks to stimulate the organizations of the Church.

During Brown’s pastorate, Mankato entertained the Minnesota and Northern Minnesota joint conferences in September 1905, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the former conference. It was a very proud and gala week for Centenary Church. In 1906, Mr. Brown was asked to preach the Annual Conference sermon in Minneapolis at Central Park Church. It was announced that the prominent Pastor J.M. Brown had been transferred to the South Dakota Conference on October 8, and would become Pastor of the Methodist Church in Sioux Falls (Ref. 21). As Centenary passed its half-century milestone, the building erected in 1869 had become outgrown. The city had reached 10,599 persons and our Church had over 300 members, with a Sunday School of 250 (Ref. 3). At this time Bishop Joyce sent us as Pastor Rev. Peter Clare (1906-1909) who had been Presiding Elder of the Mankato District. Clare was known for his ability to organize and raise money. He was commissioned to build a new church in Mankato. Rev. Clare was an Englishman, small of stature but immense in energy and ambition, and he was devoted to the task ahead.

Clare and his devoted wife worked day and night – he preaching twice on Sunday, leading prayer meetings on Thursday and class meeting preceding church on Sunday, and, as all the pastors did, Rev. and Mrs. Clare visited on foot the members scattered about the hills and country. Clare’s great enthusiasm soon helped crystallize the people’s planning for the new building, which had gone on seemingly unguided, for a full ten years. During these years, the Minnesota River flooded frequently, uncontrolled by any dikes. A very severe flood inundated LeHillier, North Mankato and West Mankato in late spring of 1908. The aftermath was even worse than the flood itself; waters polluted by uncontrolled dumping of raw sewage into the rivers, creeks and streams by every community lying alongside them, created a serious typhoid epidemic in this area. Both Rev. and Mrs. Clare went into the homes to nurse members of their flock for weeks in a most selfless devotion.

The pathway toward building the 1907 Methodist Church was by no means broad, even and straight. Planning dated back to 1894. We follow the planning stage via a series of articles appearing in the local newspapers. On May 15, 1894 the Free Press reported the following action: “The Trustees of the Methodist Church held a meeting last night at which the question of the erection of a new church was considered. The Trustees voted to remove the old church and build in its place a handsome structure to cost about \$15,000. Architect Thayer was employed to prepare the plans, and is now at work on them. The new building is to have a frontage of 61 feet and to be 100 feet deep. It will be constructed of stone and brick, and will have a much larger capacity than the present building. The original plan of improving the church was to build an addition in front to the street, but the congregation will not now be satisfied with such a patchwork and they feel that if a new church is to be built, it can never be done so cheaply as today. Mr. Thayer states that the new church will be every bit as handsome as the new Presbyterian Church. The building is to be erected this summer, and the

members of the church are to be congratulated upon this move. They show a healthy commendable enterprise.” Thus all seemed to be in readiness in 1894.

But something was amiss, and the next planning we see came five years later in two newspaper articles from 1899. From Mankato Review of September 4, 1899: “All good people, of every faith and order, will rejoice with the Methodists over their triumph of yesterday, taking a subscription which, with what has been doubtless added today, amounts to about \$20,000. ... With a church building having from 29 to 30 separate and distinct rooms, a splendid auditorium seating 2, 250 people, pipe organ, piano, chimes of bells, and all that goes to the making of a metropolitan church, Christianity will receive a new impetus in which all the churches will share. ...The edifice itself, the largest in Blue Earth County, will be an imposing structure, adding to the cosmopolitan appearance of our city, thus increasing valuations, and the desirableness of Mankato as a place of residence.” “The faith and zeal of the Methodist friends is seen in the amounts subscribed yesterday. The Ladies’ Aid Society led off with \$5000; Dr. Andrews gave \$2,500, and the pastor, Dr. J.M. Driver, \$1,000. A goodly number gave \$500 each, among them Gen. Baker, Miss Minnie Van Blarcum, Thomas Dooley, Prof. Cox, Geo. W. Sugden, and the Epworth League. Almost a score gave from \$100 to \$250 each. Other subscriptions, though smaller, represent no less zeal, devotion and self-sacrifice, and in the aggregate, amount to a handsome sum...”

And from Mankato Free Press on September 20, 1899: “The building committee of the Methodist Episcopal church held a meeting last night and transacted considerable business. It was definitely determined to erect the new church on the location of the present one, and to put in the foundation at once and press the building as far as possible the present year. The old structure is to be removed and a hall will probably be secured for holding services during the winter.” “The new church will probably be constructed of stone and will be large enough to seat 2,250 people with a clear view of the pulpit. This will give the city a room capable of accommodating 1000 more people than any room which there is in the city at present, and one of the largest audience rooms in any church in the state. It will be such a room as will be in demand for lecture and convention purposes, and a considerable revenue may be derived from it. Particular attention is to be paid to its acoustical properties.” “Plans have not yet been prepared for the church. The present location of the church could not be improved, as it is central and on two good streets. It is better that the old building should be torn down than left to remain indefinitely, as it could hardly be classed as a thing of beauty.”

Still this highly optimistic vision for a new building did not come to fruition. By 1904 the city took a hand in the matter of building a new church, as seen from an article of Mankato Free Press, June 28, 1904: “Methodists of Mankato will erect a new house of worship. At a meeting called Monday evening, June 17, by the Ladies Aid Society, to which the official board of the church had been invited, the matter of building a new church was brought up for discussion. Dr. J.W. Andrews read a letter from the city engineer calling attention of the trustees to the unsafe condition of the building with its cracked walls and crumbling arches.” “It was decided to be unwise to expend a single dollar in repairs and various plans were discussed as to the best way to proceed with the building of a new church. It was unanimously agreed to begin at once the building of a church to cost not more than \$25,000. At a meeting of the trustees of the church held Monday evening, June 24, the action of the previous meeting was ratified, and a finance committee will immediately begin work with a subscription list. The ladies of the Methodist congregation propose to raise their share of the \$25,000 and the proceeds of the lecture to be delivered tonight by the former pastor, Dr. J.M. Driver, will be delivered to the building committee.”

The church home which so many of Centenary's older parishioners remember was designed by architect Albert Schippel and cost between \$28,000 and \$35,000. Its construction began soon after April 1907 and was complete in a remarkable short time so that the building could be dedicated on December 8 of that year. A very complete description of the proposed structure was given in the April 20, 1907, front page of the Mankato Daily Free Press. We get a good picture of the interior of the new church from this account, probably taken from Schippel's blueprints: "Basement. The basement will be ten feet in the clear and here will be located the heating and ventilating plant, coal bins, separate toilet rooms, ladies' retiring room, check room, and also five separate entrances with spacious lobbies to the principal entrances. There will be a large and spacious kitchen with all modern conveniences. The dining room will be 32 by 42 in size and the social room is 40 by 42, the two latter rooms to be connected by folding doors, which when opened will give a clear archway twenty-four feet wide and thereby throwing both rooms into one, very convenient for large social gatherings." "The entire basement will be well lighted, ventilated, and heated with steam; the floor will be hardwood laid on bevel strips bedded in a cement under-floor, except in the lobbies and toilet rooms which will be of finished cement."

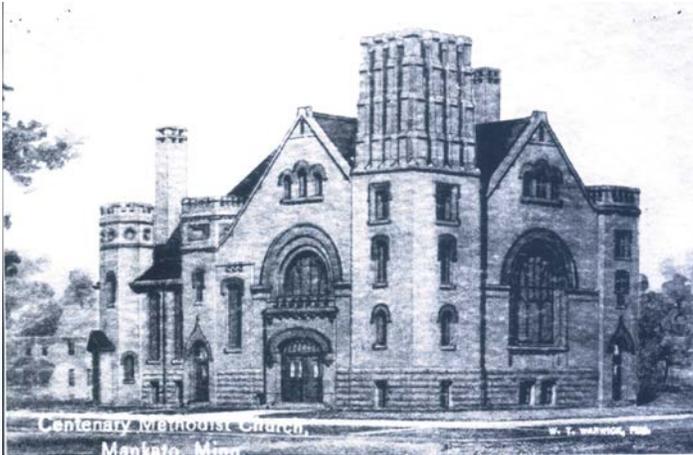
"Main Floor. The main floor contains the auditorium, which is fifty square and has inclined floor with elevated platforms for pulpit and choir, and will be twenty-six feet high in the center, with a circular dome in ceiling having a large ventilator in center, which is connected by a shaft through the roof. The main entrance will be on the Cherry Street side near Second Street, and will consist of two double doors with steps leading from vestibule to lobbies, to right and left of entrances reaching the main auditorium from two opposite sides, also from the Second Street entrance located at the southwest corner of the building. The lobbies will contain stairways leading to the basement and to the galleries, all steps and stairways being wide and easy to ascend and descend, especially for aged people and children. The main auditorium will be connected by a large and spacious chapel and Sunday School room, with eight separate classrooms, divided from the main part and will be 53 by 37 feet, and separated by a large sliding door, which, when opened, leaves an archway twenty-three feet wide by fifteen feet high. The main entrance leading to this department is from the Cherry Street side near the center of the building and the main auditorium can also be reached through this entrance."

"There will also be an entrance at the rear northeast corner tower with vestibule and stairway leading to basement, chapel and Sunday School rooms and gallery above. The pastor's study will be located next to the rear stairway and entered from the lobby. The platform of the chapel will be raised and extended into one of the classrooms to accommodate a piano; the organ chamber and choir loft can be reached from the platform; there being five exits from main floor to avoid over-crowding in any one direction of the close of the services."

Second Floor: "The second floor of the chapel and Sunday School will be about the same as the first floor, as far as the eight class-rooms are concerned. From the eight class-rooms projects the gallery six feet over, and into the chapel on three sides, giving the Sunday School sixteen separate class-rooms on three sides of the chapel. There will be a gallery ten feet wide along the Cherry Street side of the main auditorium. A future gallery is also planned over the main auditorium along the Second Street side and will extend from the Cherry Street gallery, increasing the seating capacity two hundred and fifty seats more. It is hoped that it may be possible to include this gallery in the present contract."

"The total seating capacity will be eight hundred to which may be added one hundred and fifty chairs when occasion requires. The choir contains thirty seats and can be reached from the chapel or from the main auditorium. The interior finish is to be selected red oak; the plastering is to be of stucco

and sand finish for decorating. The seats in the main auditorium will be carved pews. The main auditorium will be heated a heating plant and ventilating system. The balance of the building, including the basement, will be heated by steam. The latest ideas in church architecture have been adopted throughout and the entire interior arrangement will be all that can be desired for convenience and economy.



The interior walls will be of Mankato brick faced with pressed brick and stone trimmings; the windows are of original design in art glass and are large and handsome. The south wall will have a rose window ten feet in diameter of heavy dark art glass in the main auditorium. The building will be beautiful in design and well proportioned. The towers will be handsome in design, and lend character and dignity to the building. A second glance at the main tower reminds us that the tall spire in the modern church architecture must go, and with that the church bell too will be abandoned in

most of the new church buildings in the future.” There were three services on Dedication Sunday, December 8, 1907 (Ref. 3). They were very well attended, with standing-room-only prevailing for the evening service. The morning opened with a class meeting at 9:30, led by Professor George E. Nettleson. Dr. H.C. Hennings of the Methodist Book Concern in Cincinnati gave the morning address. His text was Acts 3:6 “Such as I have given I Thee.” At the conclusion of the morning service, a very encouraging statement was made by Pastor Peter Clare to the effect that only \$8,000 remained to be subscribed of the total building cost of \$35,000. Then the appeal of the Church Board was voiced for funds to pay the balance of \$8,000.

The response was something awesome, showing that God had touched the hearts of the assembled multitude and purses were opened. The Ladies Aid, always the great money raiser of the Church, was first to pledge \$1,000 in addition to the \$2,000 it had already pledged. The scene was very dramatic as A.J. Nelson, Church Treasurer, placed crosses over squares on a blackboard as the amounts were pledged. George W. Sugden acted as Secretary. \$7,000 was quickly raised. The remainder was raised during the afternoon service so that the building could be dedicated in the evening free from debt. Rev. S.F. Kerfoot, Presiding Elder of Mankato District, presided over the afternoon service and noted the good work accomplished by the congregation in building this great house of worship. Contributions had come through the sacrificial giving, for the most part, by the members of the congregation. Most generous of all was Dr. J.W. Andrews. Some of the pledges were made by persons outside the membership of Centenary.

The music performed at the three services was provided by four women soloists plus the Presbyterian Church Choir of Mankato, the latter singing during the afternoon service. Miss Edith Hackney of Minneapolis, Mrs. Clayton of St. Paul, Mrs. Roy Holmes and Miss Ruth Phelps of Mankato lent their voices as soloists throughout the day.

Albert Schippel, a member of Centenary Church, was the architect and J.B. Nelson member of the North Mankato Methodist Church, was the general contractor. Great credit was due to the Building Committee composed of T.C. Peart, Chairman, Dr. J.W. Andrews, C. Gable, J.A. White, George W.

Sugden, Rev. Peter Clare, and Mrs. Parmalee, President of the Ladies Aid. Many gifts were presented to the Church on Dedication Sunday (Ref. 25). "A piano donated by the Free Press Company and the Overman Music Company; pulpit by E.N. Welmer of Minneapolis, the sub-contractor who furnished the pews; a large pulpit chair by S.M. Morris, furniture dealer; two pulpit chairs by the Peart Brothers in memory of their mother, a large wall clock by the Palmer Brothers, music rack by C. Gabe; broadcloth for the swinging doors by Mr. Babcock of Hayes-Lucas Lumber Company; a new gas stove for the kitchen by the Mankato Gas and Electric Company; and an individual communion set of two hundred and twelve glasses by A.N. Dukes of Peru, Indiana (Dukes Addition in Mankato was named for him). Two beautiful memorial windows, one donated by S.H. Grannis and family in memory of their son, Sumner Lewis Grannis, who died about a year ago, and another donated by Mrs. George Bradley in memory of her late husband, add greatly to the attractiveness of the west wall of the edifice...."

The irrepressible Rev. Peter Clare and Dr. Andrews suggested to the responsive congregation that it would be desirable to have a pipe organ of suitable quality for the beautiful new church home. The request fell on fertile soil. The older church members especially remembered that the previous organ was of the bellows type and had to be operated through the physical effort of pumping by young boys from Sunday School. Sometimes these boys forgot to pump, much to the dismay of the singers and organist. Rev. Clare, always so ingenious, had miniature canes made from the oak joists of the old church which were being sold at \$1.00 a piece as memorials of the old first church.

In the evening Dr. Kerfoot gave the dedicatory address to a packed church. The music for this service was furnished by a double quartet assisted by Minnie Hubbard, wife of Jay Hubbard, on violin, and Mrs. F.W. Clayton, sister of Dr. Andrews, as soloist. Before this evening service was over, more than enough money had been pledged to cover the \$3000 cost of the new electrically-driven pipe organ.

Services were held every evening throughout the following week. On Monday, there was a lecture given by Andrew Gilles on the subject of "The New America." Tuesday night Rev. F.B. Cogwill, former Pastor and Presiding Elder of the Marshall District, spoke; on Thursday night, Rev. J.M. Brown, former Pastor and currently of Sioux Falls.

In 1909 Rev. Clare was moved to a larger field of activity in St. Paul. The Free Press of October 2 says, "His going away was universally regretted by members of his church as well as the town folk for, since his coming, the church has enjoyed spiritual and financial prosperity such as it had never known before." A large reception was given the worthy couple by the church and their friends. Many beautiful gifts were presented to them including a set of sterling spoons and forks. It was gratifying to many of Clare's friends that upon his retiring from the ministry he and his wife made their home for several years in Mankato, with their daughter and husband, Dr. and Mrs. R.O. Eberhart, where they continued to make themselves felt by their religious activities.



In 1909 Rev. J.A. Jamison came to this awakened new church with fine records as a preacher. He was ably assisted by a young deaconess Miss Jessica Barnes. Her little black bonnet with its white ties was a familiar sight in the parish homes where her sweet personality brought much cheer. She later married one of the prominent members of Centenary, George W. Sugden. Mrs. Jamison was an excellent speaker and on many occasions filled the pulpit in the pastor's absence. Rev. Jamison was succeeded in 1912 by W. R. Keesey from the Mariam Park Trinity Church. He was recognized as a very strong man and had made a fine reputation both in strengthening his church and as an author of several books,

*Wm. N. Jamison*

including “Seven Modern Devils” and “The Problems of Religion.” It was reported of his first sermon in Mankato that he was at “perfect ease in addressing his large congregation speaking without notes in an easy graceful manner.”

He proved to be a very important factor in the continued growth of the church and in the city too, though many times he was in deep trouble with the saloon keepers as he spoke out very strongly on the temperance issue from the pulpit. He quickly knew his congregation, calling each by name and greeting them with a very hearty handclasp whenever he met them. Upon Rev. Keesey’s departure from Mankato, Dr. J.A. Cahoon came in 1915 and remained for an extremely happy and profitable five years. He was a very scholarly gentleman, well liked in the city and an excellent speaker. In his evening service he very often presented a good book review or a discussion of some current issue in the light of Christian principles. He filled the Church, many coming from outside the membership to hear these popular talks.

The Young People’s Forum at Centenary Methodist Sunday School, a very lively organization for both young men and young women, had the distinction of being the largest organized class in the State of Minnesota with a membership of 140. The Forum (see photo of its gathering on a brisk day in February 1914 outside the Cherry Street side of the new church) was observing its first annual membership contest banquet (held the evening of February 26, 1914) in the church dining room. The class several weeks previous had divided into two equal parts, the “Blues” and the “Reds” and engaged in a competitive membership contest. It was decided that at the close of the contest the side losing would give a dinner for the winners.



The decorations in the church parlors were in the contest colors, and pennants and flags added cohesive spirit to the teams, as can be seen from the photo. Prior to the banquet, Nellie Nitzkowski entertained the guests in the church auditorium with a number of organ selections, and when the guests repaired to the dining room below, the Mankato Commercial Orchestra furnished music during the meal. A three-course meal was served by the “Reds”, the Ladies Aid Society having gotten up the excellent meal. Rev. W.R. Keesey gave the invocation; Jay Sherk, Class President, acted as toastmaster. The lengthy program featured a variety of class songs, talks by various persons and a violin solo. Involved in the entertainment was a young Effie Conkling who later became a very prominent Instructor of Art at Mankato State Teacher’s College.

From time to time Centenary Methodist Church found itself carrying financial indebtedness over some years. These debts stemmed largely from building and remodeling projects or from installation of furnishings in the church building. At a very interesting meeting held on the evening of June 25, 1915, in the church parlors, and with an attendance of 150 persons, the principal event was the burning of the \$6,000 mortgage carried over from the completion of the church building in December 1907. The meeting was a social and business event combined. A short program, with music and addresses, preceded the main issue. Up to the autumn of 1912, the debt had been reduced to about \$4,000. With the coming of Pastor W.R. Keesey, plans were adopted for the completing the interior of the church with fresco, new carpet and other improvements, adding about \$1,000 in indebtedness. Bishop Quayle

was secured for Sunday, May 10, 1912, and in his presence pledges were secured to cover all indebtedness. These pledges were to run for two years, and the last pledge was paid up in time to finish payments on the church by the week preceding June 26, 1915.

In this debt-paying, the Ladies Aid Society of the Church had a large part, not only subscribing a large sum on the original debt, but also paying \$1,500 on this mortgage – and they did it in two years. These loyal women went on to raise a further \$500 to make possible some more aggressive church work. The congregation apparently took to heart Rev. Keeseey's sermon text, "The True Ownership of our Material Wealth". In fact, it took but fifteen minutes during the service to raise the final \$1,300.

Mankato Methodist women had effective church service work going for quite a few years through their various project-oriented groups by the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The opportunity for the Methodist men to get similarly organized came on December 21, 1915. About 50 men sat down to a banquet on Friday evening in the dining hall of Centenary Methodist Church. After partaking a delightful repast served by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the church, the men directed their attention to Professor M.W. Deputy who conducted the formalities in organizing the Men's Club.

Prime movers in this endeavor were George W. Sugden, Sr., M.W. Deputy and Charles Elliott, all of whom were elected officers of the club. It was decided to hold a monthly meeting, with a luncheon and brief program for each occasion and opportunity for fellowship in a social way. The significance of this important event may be judged from the names of the speakers who followed the election of officers: Centenary Pastor G.A. Cahoon; Warner Johnson, Pastor of North Mankato Methodist Episcopal Church, President C.H. Cooper of Mankato State Normal School; and the evening's principal speaker, President Maxwell of Winona State Normal School.

The photo, used by the newspaper Mankato Daily Review issue of Saturday, March 3, 1917, is inscribed "Young People's Forum" of Centenary Methodist Church. The picture is also described as a Sunday School class. This was the era of great youth work, the era of the Christian Endeavor among mainline Protestant denominations. The Young People's Forum was Centenary's portion of the Christian Endeavor movement, the precursor of the more modern Wesley Foundation. Displaying their banners were indeed members of the Young People's Forum, but the photo also contains quite a number of persons for whom the blush of youth had long passed on.

According to the Mankato Daily Free Press, on December 11, 1919, members of the H.O.C. Sunday School class of the Methodist Church enjoyed a sumptuous repast of roast turkey and "trimmins" in the church parlors the previous evening. The banquet and social evening were given at the close of a membership drive which was held by this class of young men of college age. A. Nitzkowski was the teacher of the H.O.C. class and it was planned to make this event an annual affair. To the H.O.C. class went the honor of being the banner class in collections for the past 37 Sundays.

The Rev. E.H. Knehans became Pastor from 1920 to 1922. He was described as an emotional preacher, sincere and extremely evangelistic in his services. He was a very enthusiastic man and was able to create an interest in remodeling the church to provide for more seating capacity which was needed because the congregation was growing quite rapidly.

The Cherry Street entrance to the church was changed to the corner of Cherry and Second Streets and the inside steps removed to make more room for pews. The balcony was widened and extended to the Second Street side of the church. These improvements came at a heavy price, not only in the collective pocket book, but also in church unity. There developed much dissension over this remodeling and many prominent families left our church to join other churches at this time. Apparently the architect of the 1907 structure, a Methodist church member, was not happy with the prospect of tinkering with his creation and he left the fold. One member likened Rev. Knehans to a prophet of old – very vigorous and preached “get right with your God” in shouting tones. This approach may not have been just the thing needed at Centenary at this time. Due to a medical operation, Pastor Knehans did not remain with us long enough to secure the payment of the old debt incurred by the remodeling and it hung over the church for many years with accruing interest.



Rev. John Hall came to Mankato in 1922 for a five year period at Centenary Methodist Church. He was a man of short stature, a deeply spiritual man, as was his entire family. His eldest son, Oliver, also became a minister. John was an extremely rigidly disciplined man whose moments were never very idly spent. He was also very fastidious. He arose at 5:30 each morning regularly to begin work on his sermon and held fast to this task until it was written and committed to memory, usually by the middle of the week, after which he devoted his time to pastoral duties. He often failed to recognize the members of his congregation on the street as he was repeating the lines of his sermon to himself. On Sunday morning when the time arrived to deliver his sermon, he carefully closed the Bible, took a step to the left of the pulpit with his hands behind him, and he looked directly at his parishioners, his eyes burning with fervor. He preached from a heart filled with the spirit of the Master. His sermons were always delivered without notes or hesitation. They were considered to be perfect compositions, almost classics and were listened to with avid interest.

The church budget for the year 1925-1926 proposed by the Finance Committee was as follows:

Pastor's Salary	\$3000 plus house rent	District Superintendent	272
Janitor	300	Conference Claimants	306
Music	600	Coal	300
Light	190	Repairs	200
Insurance	159	Religious Instruction	150
TOTAL:	\$8,662	Bishop	85
		Interest	100
		Miscellaneous	300
		Benevolences	270

The Committee thought that our church, with a membership of 550, could easily raise this amount if each member did his or her part.

Rev. J.A. Rinkel came to serve Centenary Methodist Church in September 1927 and was our able minister until 1933. He had a wife and two lovely teen age daughters. Rev. Rinkel was a very hard-working, jovial, practical minister and our church grew in membership under his guidance. The parsonage on Cherry Street was not suitable for their needs, so they lived in the S.B. Wilson home on Clark Street (now East Pleasant) until a home was purchased and remodeled at 609 South Second Street. It was a lovely, spacious home with adequate room for group meetings and Mrs. Rinkel opened it to the Sunshine Society, Circle meetings and Ladies' Aid Society. We had several home made ice cream socials on the lawn. Both men and women worked on the project.

Money was becoming short in those days of the late 1920's just before and during the onset of the Great Depression. The women worked hard to carry part of the load by serving Harvest Dinners and Turkey Dinners and by having rummage sales. At that time we were heating the church with coal and there was always an unpaid coal bill. It was at that time that about twenty men of the church agreed to make their financial pledges with an order on their bank accounts monthly. This relieved the church's financial crunch considerably, with the result that there was always a substantial sum in the church account at the bank at the first of each month. A note in the Sunday bulletin in 1927 stated that there were 193 men in our membership.



Minutes of the Official Board for August 29, 1927, reveal the following state of affairs at of the Centenary Church. John Hall was Pastor; Clifford H. Russell, Editor and Publisher of Mankato Free Press, was Secretary pro tem. Centenary was active in the Interchurch Brotherhood. Epworth League membership and attendance was very strong – up to 200. It met every Sunday evening. Albert Nitzkowski was President. Sunday School was growing. Men's Class had 75-100 attendance, which created the not unpleasant problem of lack of meeting space. Ladies' Aid Society purchased a new carpet and other improvements for the church for \$400. A new coat of paint and kalsomine for the church cost \$300. Fireproof roof on the parsonage cost \$400.

German Methodist property was placed in the hands of a committee of Centenary for sale. The goal set for the World Service was \$1700 this year. A church visitor, Mrs. Mabel VanCamp, was appointed to accompany the Pastor on congregation visits. Centenary resident membership – 665, 93 new members in 1927. 27 children baptized and 9 adults.

The church budget for the year 1928:

Total \$6,600

Pastor's Salary \$3,600                  Rent \$350                  Travel & Moving Expenses \$109

District Superintendent Salary \$335                  District Superintendent rent, etc. \$272

Centenary officers for the year 1927:

Leslie Morse and J.W. Andrews appointed lay delegates to the General Conference of Methodist Churches held in Kansas City, spring 1928.

President of Women's Foreign Missionary Society – Mrs. Louis Todnem

President of Women's Home Missionary Society – Mrs. Frank Morse

President of Ladies' Aid Society – Mrs. A.B. Morris

Chairman of the Board – A.B. Morris

On October 19, 1927, Centenary purchased the old Weed property for \$6,163.55 for a new parsonage. The existing house on this property was to be rebuilt and remodeled and a garage built, at a total cost of \$5,500. Centenary inked an agreement between the church and Eric A. Carlstrom, also a member of Centenary, for the reconstruction and remodeling of the new parsonage and garage at 609 South Second Street. Carlstrom would be general contractor for this work. The architect was Geo. Pass & Son & P.T. Rockey. There was to be a full two story and basement dwelling with sun room and entrance porch. It was necessary to put in a new cement floor in the basement since none had existed previously. A fireplace and chimney of brick was installed. Inside wood trim for the first floor was of red oak, and upstairs of fir or pine. Heating was from a hot water system.

February 20, 1928, the Finance Committee (Geo. Sugden, Mrs. J.A. McLaughlin, and Leslie H. Morse) happily announced that the new parsonage was nearing completion and that within six weeks it hoped the pastor and family could move in. The Committee devised a plan for raising the funds for this work. It was requested that subscriptions be paid in cash, or in ten monthly payments, so that we could meet all our obligations by January 1, 1929. The costs of this construction were as follows:

Lot with old building	\$6,163	Rebuilding contract	\$5,300
Stucco extra (required in fire codes)	\$80	Garage	\$250
<u>Soft-water supply</u>	\$110		
Total	\$12,003		
Assets: Estimate of net returns from German property	\$5,500		
<u>Already subscribed by Ladies Aid Society</u>	<u>2,000</u>		
Total	\$7,500		
Balanced required	\$4,500		
Interest	<u>\$500</u>		
	\$5,000		

Official Board minutes for January 3, 1928, meeting presided by Pastor J.A. Rinkel & District Superintendent Ackerman.

World Service pledges total \$1102.58. A prospective purchaser for the German Methodist property was found. The Lutherans offered \$6300 for the church and parsonage.

Sunday School officers: Louis Todnem - - Assistant Superintendent,  
Frank Morse - - Treasurer

The April 2 meeting revealed that Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Cowden installed the new bulletin board on the church property. Landkamer Brothers Furniture Company absorbed \$40 of an \$86 bill for linoleum at the new parsonage. The parsonage was to be up and running by June 4. On this day the Board met in the Pastor's study at the parsonage. \$3,526 had been pledged (\$2,792.50 already paid) for Building Committee. The Board decided not to sell the German property at this time. Eric Carlstrom succeeded Dr. Girvin as Church Treasurer (Girvin was moving away). Carlstrom offered to buy the German property for \$5,000. This bid the Board accepted and the money was applied to Centenary's debt. \$500 was approved for new windows in the Sunday School room. Mankato District Conference of Minnesota Conference was held in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Wells, October 25, 1928. Centenary Ladies Aid Society redecorated the church basement for \$145 plus "a lot of hard work." Ladies' Aid Society income for 1928 = \$2,467.37. Epworth League attendance at regular meetings ran thirty to sixty. The Board voted to hold union meetings with the Presbyterians for two months in summer 1929. Church indebtedness in March 1929 ran \$7,278.41 (included parsonage debt of \$853.84.)

In 1929, Centenary applied for and received a charter from the Boy Scouts of America dated October 15, 1929. Thus was born Troop 12. The Centenary Boy Scout Committee was chaired by J. F. Winn and Ray Cowden was Troop 12 Scoutmaster. Except for two years during World War II, the Boy Scout charter has been renewed each year for a total of 73 years. To the present time, 147 boys became Eagle Scouts, the first being in 1930. Under the leadership of Bob Rose, twelve boys became Eagle Scouts in one year. Some of the past



scoutmasters were Elmer Fritts, Bob Rose, Dwain Petersen and Marion Carr. Centenary's main responsibility in sponsoring a scout troop is providing a place for them to hold their meetings. The church has also benefited, as an Eagle project a few years ago provided us with the carport which protects our van. The construction and materials were furnished with no cost to Centenary.

In 1946, Centenary along with First Baptist and Presbyterian Churches sponsored a Cub Scout Pack known as Pack 12. This joint sponsorship lasted approximately four years when the other two churches discontinued sponsorship, leaving Centenary as the sole sponsor of Pack 12, which still continues. Many of the women of Centenary have been Den Mothers for the Cubs. Scouting continued to be an important outreach in the community for the people of Centenary.

In January 1930, the Official Board entertained forming a Junior Choir for evening services. Joint religious education classes during week days were to be held in the Presbyterian Church. Centenary planned to designate its World Service Fund monies to help St. James Methodist Church, which was in danger of foreclosure sale. Junior Choir was off and running by March 1930.

In March 1930, the Official Board recommended renting out the old parsonage. Summer union services were planned again with the Presbyterians in 1930. Attendance in the Epworth League seemed to be flagging. Eric Carlstrom donated a good furnace, taken from the Lake City School, to Centenary. Two fans for ventilation were secured from the old Orpheum Theater in Mankato. By August, Centenary expected to finish the financial year with a deficit of \$1,300 for the current budget. Thus, there was a proposal for a reduction in the next year's budget of \$400 in the Pastor's salary and \$400 in the Music budget item. It should be remembered that the Great Depression had begun. The 1930 proposed budget totaling \$7,431 was adopted. This budget would involve no reduction in Pastor salary or music. Total Church indebtedness amounted to \$6,584.81. This represented a reduction in the debt over last year of \$1,213.

Reverend Dorn came to our church as Pastor in 1933. He was a very able and meticulous man. He and his wife Cora lived in the parsonage and the Church Office was there so the door was always open. They were very faithful and devoted and our church prospered. During their pastorate, our church organ was rebuilt by the Wicks Organ Company of Illinois. The new console was completely electrified during the period 1945-1947. The rose window, said to be a copy of the one at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, was purchased for \$100. Our other beautiful window of Christ Praying in Gethsemane also drew much attention. The two windows were lighted at dusk with an automatic light. This work was done during Robert E. Dorn's pastorate. The lighted cross in the choir loft was made by Rev. Dorn, as wood working was his particular hobby. Mrs. Dorn was also helpful in the Ministry of Music of the church. The Dorns went to Joyce Methodist Church in Minneapolis in 1948, after serving Centenary very faithfully for fifteen years.

On November 4, 1932, the historic and artistic-minded ladies of Centenary Methodist Church sponsored the first Quilt Fair at the church. Women of the Mankato community were invited to exhibit quilts old and quilts new at what was to become a celebrated annual event. Mrs. R. S. Willard displayed the oldest quilt, an heirloom woven in the colonial times of the 1700's in America. Two other quilts were made in 1782 and many were woven between 75 and 100 years before 1932. It was clear that many Mankato women were clever with the loom as well as needle and thread, since no less than 60 quilts were entered. Awards were made for the quilt displaying the finest work, and the most attractive, and the most unique. A lot of learning and lore of our culture were expressed in these works of the loom; they were unique, woven time-pieces from our past.

The summer union services in 1932 were conducted along the following lines. On August 13 the service was conducted in the Presbyterian Church with Methodist minister J. A. Rinkel in charge of the service and doing the preaching. Sunday Schools for both churches, however, met separately in their respective facilities at 9 o'clock. Evening preaching service of the co-operating churches was held in the Presbyterian Church at 7:30 with the sermon given by Rev. Rob Roy Hardin, of the Congregational Church.

Some traditions have come and gone in 150 years of Centenary's life in Mankato. One of those traditions is the Mother/Daughter banquet. Consider this report from the Mankato Daily Review of January 31, 1936. "Over two hundred mothers and daughters gathered at the church on Wednesday evening, January 29. The evening event was sponsored by the Women's Missionary Society and was filled with activity and entertainment. After the meal, a number of things took place including the determination that Mrs. J. W. Moose was the oldest mother present and Marilyn Cowden, aged 5, was the youngest daughter. The Pastor's wife, Mrs. R. E. Dorn, had five foster daughters with her as guests for the evening. Following musical entertainment, Miss Alice Robbins was introduced as the evening's guest speaker. Miss Robbins based her talk on the works of the French philosopher Montaigne. She urged mothers and daughters to remember and apply seven points from Montaigne's writings. They included ... have an open mind ... sift the material that goes into your mind keeping only that which is best ... be modest... be tolerant ... be conservative ... be resilient, able to rebound and comeback to the best ... and lastly, be perspective, able to fit into your own place and live harmoniously with yourself and others with whom you come into contact and the world at large." It is safe to say that over the years, thousands of young girls and their mothers participated in Mother/Daughter dinners such as this one.

In 1939, with the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Protestant Church, a new denomination known as The Methodist Church was born. In 1968, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church were united into one denomination with the new name of The United Methodist Church. Centenary United Methodist Church is proud of its long and diverse heritage from several previously existing denominations.

The Official Board meeting for June 1940 was chaired by District Superintendent Ernest D. Groenig. Church leaders included: President of Ladies' Aid Society Mrs. Walter Mitchell; President of Missionary Society Mrs. George Curry Church; School Superintendent Miss Sara Norris; Boy Scout Leader Paul Meyer; Lay Leader Bruce H. Bell, also Secretary of the YMCA; Church Treasurer Walter Lee. Church indebtedness at this time amounted to \$3,302.35. Insurance carried on the old parsonage on Cherry Street was \$2,500. The Church budget amounted to \$5,500. Centenary gifts to World Service for the year 1941 increased to \$714. Hamline University Choir of 60 voices was engaged by Centenary to appear in February 1941 at the Teacher's College Auditorium. Admission was 25 cents for students, 35 cents for adults. Centenary paid \$120 for the Hamline Choir expenses. In 1941 the National Methodist Special Fund goal was set at \$1 million. Half of this would go for relief in war-torn China and Europe, a quarter to churches in Britain and a quarter to aid to our boys in armed forces camps. To this end, our local special collections were held on Sunday, February 23.

In April 1941, the J. M. Hyde family donated funds for drapes for the church, a runner for the communion table and a scarf for the pulpit. Our Church School Superintendent for this year was Mrs. Harry D. Kies. A joint communion service was held with the Presbyterian Church on August 31, 1941 in Centenary Church. In September, the Finance Committee planned to launch a drive to eliminate our church indebtedness. In 1940, the Epworth League was re-designated Wesley Guild.

On November 5, 1940, the Free Press noted Centenary Methodist's celebration of its 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. A sharp contrast existed between the method and site of worship in 1940 and 1855. There were no comfortable pews in a well-kept church, or soft lights coming through radiantly colored windows, or deep toned music from the organ in the early days. Instead, parishioners huddled in woolens and furs in order to keep warm while an itinerant preacher gave them a monthly message in tones that sought to make his lengthy message cling to them until he returned. The walls of that early room above a downtown store, or of a log school were bare and windows devoid of color. After Rev. Chauncey Hobart, there was a rapid succession of pastors. Those too timid for strange Native Americans and rough pioneer ways were succeeded by those fervently oratorical, each moving on to other outposts or returning to a milder pastorate back East. Then as time went on, the congregation became more stable, and pastors began serving a longer period.

The 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mankato Methodism was commemorated in the edifice built in 1907-1908 under the pastorate of Rev. Peter Clare, and later remodeled. Rev. Robert E. Dorn, assisted by Bruce Bell, Mrs. A. B. Morris, Mrs. H. J. Kuhn and Mrs. Basil Williams, arranged the observance ceremony. Communion service was held at 7:30 Thursday evening. Bishop Ralph S. Cushman of the St. Paul area spoke at the Friday evening service. Rev. E.D. Groenig, Superintendent of the Mankato District, presided. Rev. W. R. Keeseey, former pastor of Centenary, was guest speaker on Sunday morning and Rev. E. H. Knehans spoke on Sunday evening. It was the intention during the four-day celebration, Thursday through Sunday, to honor the people of the early years who had the vision and courage to develop a church organization that had grown to a membership in 1940 of more than 800.

On January 5, 1942, the Finance Committee debt drive was pronounced a great success. There was achieved full payment of the church debt. The special offering at the Easter Communion service was equally divided between Overseas Relief and our service men.

Church Officers for 1942: Recording Secretary, Mrs. Herbert Lovett; District Steward & Church Lay Leader, Bruce Bell; Treasurer of Benevolences, Clifford Dietz; Superintendent of Church School, Mrs. Harry Kies; Chair, Board of Education, Phyllis Bentley; President, Youth Fellowship, Tam Hughes.

The Women's organizations were taking steps to set up a definite program for writing to the boys in service. The old parsonage was papered and painted for \$108.80. Joint services were held with First Presbyterian Church during summer 1942. A candle lighting service was held with the Presbyterians on Christmas Eve.

For the year 1943, a 10% increase in World Service giving was projected. Church Officers for the year: Leslie H. Morse, Financial Secretary; Clifford H. Dietz, Treasurer; Miss Bessie Brooks, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Harry D. Kies, Superintendent of Church School; Mrs. J. F. Watschke, President of W.S.C.S.; Bruce Bell, Church Lay Leader; Mrs. J. G. Brauch, District Steward.

This summer we continued joint services with First Presbyterian Church. Rev. Dorn would preach in the Presbyterian Church, and Rev Kirby in the Methodist Church. Pastor's salary was \$3,000 per year. Total Church receipts \$6,939.95. Total Church disbursements \$6,414.27.

The Centenary newsletter, The Methodist, for May 15, 1943 gives us a good rundown on the situation of Centenary men who were serving our country. We get a good picture of conditions during this phase of World War II: "THE LAST ROUND-UP." A recent round-up of a dozen young men of our church reveals that some are awaiting call to the colors, some have been rejected for physical causes, and others are on farms producing food for freedom. Six fellows, Virgil Pofahl, Merle Watschke, Norman Otto, Jesse Born, Chuck Kudrle and Chuck Johnson, left for Fort Snelling May 10 for physicals ... Norman and Jesse were inducted; Virgil chose the Marines ... Merle and the two

Chucks, however, returned with a 4-F status ... classed 4-F also is Ronnie Maine, who plans to stay at M.T.C. Navy reservists Wesley Volk and Merle Van Cleve both expect call to active duty by July 1 ... Before settling down in Navy blue, Van wants to hitch-hike to Washington, D.C. Wes plans to work at the local can company. Doctors want Dave Groenig's foot to heal completely before he dons khaki. His injury kept him from leaving with other Army reservists in March. Eldon Strand and Clare Karsten are tilling the fertile soil of Minnesota. Eldon is keeping the home fires burning near Mankato, and Clare began working on his folks' farm near Waseca early in May. Harvey Volk has perhaps been in navy service longer than most of our men ... He joined the Navy 2 years, 5 months ago after completing one year at college. He is at present in a hospital, and was among the injured at Pearl Harbor. No definite word has been received of Eddie Brazier's whereabouts, but it is known that he safely bailed out somewhere over Italy. He may be a prisoner. We wonder where Bud Ackley is ... North Africa? He hasn't been heard from since leaving bomb procurement headquarters in Nebraska ... Phil Baker writes from Kodiak that many of his chums are being transferred ... perhaps Lyle Long is among them ... Now Homer Daniels is driving Jeeps and camels in the desert ... Bob Rieke is assigned to a motorcycle platoon in a reconnaissance company – has charge of nine men and himself ... also a platoon leader, Lt. Bruce Mattson tells of maneuvers at Camp Claiborne. He writes of impressive church services conducted under palm trees during companies armistices' ... "Plebe" Joe Smith writes from West Point that he is having a furlough June 1 to June 15. Can he bake a cherry pie? Ray Brooks should make a good wife someday ... He will have three months of K.P. duty at Camp Quonset, Rhode Island ... Bill Davidson is training in Georgia – Camp Wheeler. He was called in March with the Army enlisted reserve corps at M.T.C. Lt. Doug Jensen is looking forward to a visit from his fiancé, Mary McConnell – if she can find him ... He is expecting a transfer. From the Navy Training Station at Farragut, Idaho, comes word that Jim Stonebraker has been made a platoon leader. Jim says that the Navy is a good deal for any ambitious, red-blooded American ... Bob Morris started his link training at Chanute Field, Illinois, last week ... John Mayer, taking boot training at Farragut, has been looking forward for a week now to a night off on the 25<sup>th</sup> ... Something for us civilians to think about."

In May 1944, Cub Pack 12 met in the church basement. Den mothers accompanied the pack. Sid Field was appointed Church Lay Leader. Mrs. M. E. Hawk was appointed Lay Delegate to the District Conference.

On July 9, 1945 the Trustees ordered the rebuilding of the church organ at a cost of \$5,600 from Wicks Organ Company of Highland, Illinois. The church heating system by 1945 used natural gas, a conversion from coal. Summer Vacation Bible School was conducted on a combined basis for Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregational and Welsh Presbyterian children. The School met at Centenary. Planning was underway for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Centenary's existence, to be held in fall 1945. The position of Chair of the Official Board, previously occupied by a clergyman, had now passed to a layman. The Board had been conducting considerable discussion of the problems of the church organ and the church roof, both in rather poor condition. The congregation approved the purchase of a new organ. Further repairs were also needed on the church building: painting, roof, chimney, insulation and gutters. It was decided to first do the insulation, roof repair, temporary painting and to remove the vines which covered the church. Ed McLean was chosen as Church Lay Leader.

On July 9, 1945, a special meeting of the Board was called for the purchase of the church organ. Mr. Vogelpohl, representative from New Ulm, of Wicks Organ Company of Illinois, explained various options: Direct electric action, rebuild the existing organ using old pipes, and installing chimes. The Board agreed to invest \$5,500 in the project. Board members immediately contributed \$665 for a

down payment. Bishop Prashares was invited to speak at the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in October 1945.

As Centenary passed its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, thoughts were turning to remodeling the church home again. A. Anderson, artist-engraver, made a sketch of the new arrangement of the chancel and choir loft in the church and published it in the Free Press on February 16, 1946. These alterations were made in preparation for the installation of the new Wicks pipe organ which was to be placed in the church shortly. This organ replaced the Eastey organ which had been used in the church for 38 years, or as long as the existing building had been in use. The entire sanctuary was slated for redecorating in the summer of 1946. A set of Maas chimes would be installed as a Gold Star memorial in memory of the men of Centenary Church who gave their lives in the line of duty during World War II.

In the year 1946, Rev. Spear was District Superintendent. Ed McLean served as Chair of the Official Board. The board purchased a second-hand Busch and Gertz piano for \$40 to be used by the church choir. Services for Holy Week were held in conjunction with other churches. The Mankato Ministerial Association sponsored Holy Week services in the State Theater, Monday through Thursday. A joint communion service was held Thursday evening at Centenary. Good Friday service was held at First Baptist. The young people were guests of First Presbyterian for Easter breakfast. Joint summer services were held in 1946 with the Presbyterians during July and August. A joint Sunday School was provided. The redecoration of the Centenary Church began in October. A natural gas line was installed as well as burners. A new furnace was provided for the old parsonage on Cherry Street. On the church building exterior, doors and windows were painted. Interior repairs to the church were made. Total cost for repairs was \$2,766.60. W.S.C.S paid \$2,074.95 of this cost. \$1,200 was paid in this year for World Service.

In the year 1947, Dr. Girvin served as Chair of the Official Board. A School of Religious Education, an ecumenical effort city-wide for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade children, was run for 30 weeks. This was probably a week-day project. A total of 275 children were involved, and four paid teachers and two assistants. The Finance Committee proposed an annual increase in the Pastor's salary from \$3,000 to \$3,600. This the Board approved. Centenary began to donate a subscription of the periodical Christian Advocate to the Mankato Public Library. The Junior High Group of boys and girls had an approximate membership of 25. Average attendance ran 19. The College Age Group met Sunday evening at 7:00. Centenary now had a new Women's group, a part of W.S.C.S., of 25 members. It was called Wesleyan Service Guild. Women's Society of Christian Service (W.S.C.S) now had 240 members. Average attendance at meetings was 141. Budget amounted to \$3,578.90. Mrs. P. R. Powers was President. Status of the Church School: Children, age 4-11, 125 Youth, 12-23, 53 Nursery 25 Officers & Teachers 26  
In 1947 a new District Superintendent came on board. Rev. Bostrom.

On April 5, 1948 the Official Board organized a committee to study our religious education set up especially with an eye to organizing a Wesley Foundation. The committee was asked to consider possible building expansion and the future use of the old parsonage. Church School report for the month of June 1948:

Officers & Teachers	26	Nursery	65	Children, ages 4-11	124	Youth	49
Adult	15	Home Department	25	Average overall attendance	160		
Attendance at Vacation Church School	60						

Annual church budget: Receipts: For Local Expenses \$8,818.32 For Benevolence \$2,765.63

Boy Scout Troop 12 average attendance 20. They meet weekly on Monday evening in the Church basement or outdoors. Membership: 11 Methodist boys, 10 Presbyterian. Ages 12-19. Troop 12 did

not ask its sponsor (Centenary) for funds, as other troops did. Leslie H. Morse was primarily responsible for the support of Troop 12, but other men helped with support. The troop Committee consisted of Leslie Morse & Dr. R. E. Frazer of Centenary, and George Nelson and Ben Jones of First Presbyterian. Methodist, Presbyterian and First Baptist Churches sponsored Cub Scout Pack 312 for boys 9-12. Elmer A. Fritts was Scoutmaster of Troop 12. Dr. Robert Fraser was President of the Seventy-Niners, a group of young married people of Centenary. Esther M. Benson was President of Wesleyan Service Guild. Mrs. C. H. Wagen was President of the Sunshine Society of Centenary Ladies. The Junior High Fellowship Group consisted of 30 members. Attendance was 15-25. It met Sunday evening at the church. The President of the Senior High Fellowship was Roland Comstock. Vice President was Esther Whiting and Secretary Treasurer was Marriane Hughes. The Highroaders was a College Age Group. President was James Towler. W.S.C.S. membership this year ran 265: Mrs. P.R. Powers was President. Their budget amounted to \$2,318.11. Bruce Mattson became Chair of the Official Board. The Autumn Sunday School attendance in its 21 classes amounted to 168.

Rev. Paul J. Snyder came to be our pastor in 1948. He and his wife Bernice proved to be very dedicated and devoted servants and we grew in membership. Mrs. Snyder worked very hard with the young people. One big project was seeding and caring for five acres of sugar beets given to the young people by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vogt. The young people made a nice sum, \$750, for use in the Building Fund. Our church was involved in Wesley Center on the campus of Mankato State College. Rev. John Eddy and his wife Betty were dedicated and accomplished much with our young people on campus. Rev. Snyder was with us for ten years, from 1948 to 1958.

In the year 1949, the Official Board authorized the donation of \$50 toward purchase of an automobile for the use of the new bishop of Philadelphia. The church made purchases of new or refurbished chairs, a pulpit and Bible for the sanctuary. W.S.C.S reported 265 members. Its budget involved \$1,732.47 to Conference & District W.S.C.S and \$1,827.57 local. The Church's annual income for the year 1949 amounted to \$15,749.21.

Church officers: Chair of Board & Lay Leader, Bruce Mattson; Treasurer, Harry Currier; Financial Secretary, Raymond Wistrom; District Steward, Mrs. Clifford Dietz; President of W.S.C.S., Mrs. Frank Morse. During the autumn of 1949 the Sunday School report showed a climb in attendance to an average of 173.

In the year 1950, Mrs. Emily Stalcup donated a piano and table to the church. Total cost of improvements and repairs to the church for this year amounted to \$5,356.10. The Junior High Methodist Youth Fellowship average attendance at their meetings was 16. Senior High Methodist Youth Fellowship meetings showed an attendance average this year of 22. Pastor Snyder reported that 104 persons were received into the church this year. 244 inactive members' names were placed on the inactive list. Sunday School report by Board Chair, Bruce Mattson: Officers and Teachers 32  
Nursery 78 Children, ages 0 to 11 192 Youth, ages 12-23 17 Adult 77

Week day Church School 38

Annual report of the Church Treasurer: Receipts \$15,307.45 Disbursements \$14,422.94

Proposed Church budget for the year 1950-1951: Local Church \$14,085

Conference & World Service \$3,680 W.S.C.S. report by President Mrs. Frank Morse. Number of general members 199. Budget \$3,335.03 For the year 1950-1951: Chair of the Board: Franklin Rogers. Mrs. Ray Wistrom: President of Sunshine Society, the social organization of the Church. The young married couples group, formerly known as 79ers, changed their name to MM (Double M) – means Married Methodist?? Their meetings were running 50-80 for attendance. Centenary's portion of the Minnesota Methodist Centennial fund was \$10,621 this year. Thus far (November 7, 1950) we had \$3,500 subscribed.

During the year 1951, gifts to Centenary were received from: Mr. & Mrs. E. D. Dunlop, \$200 for the sound system. Mr. & Mrs. W. D. Mallison, \$150 for the sound system. Donations of labor for the speaker cabinets by D.F. Carpenter, J. F. Winn and C. E. Brazier.

The Wesley Foundation, an organization for all young people of over high school age, was organized and approved last fall (1949-1950.) During the winter quarter it was also accepted by the All College Association at the Mankato State Teacher's College. Its typical activities are illustrated by the Fourth Quarterly Conference report. "The group has met on Sunday evenings for worship and a program, on Wednesday evenings for Bible study and discussion, and this spring began Monday evening program meetings. They have had a social weeknight meeting once a month and the council, which is made up of twenty members and which constitutes the governing body, has met once a month. A newsletter has been published once a quarter and sent to a mailing list of 200." "Three of the students attended the National Student Conference at Urbana, Illinois; sixteen attended the State Student Conference held in our church; three assisted in the Daily Bible School workshops in northern Minnesota last summer; and one will participate this summer. Our delegate to the Minnesota Methodist Student Movement council has attended each of the monthly meetings in the Twin Cities. This month two delegates will attend the Regional Leadership Training Conference of the Methodist Student Movement in South Dakota." "The big undertaking for the year was the planning for and entertaining of the Minnesota Methodist Student Movement Conference in our church in February with 125 delegates and leaders in attendance. The group also took part in the first annual Youth Talent Show and helped put on the programs at each of the Sunday evening Family Fellowship suppers." "There were forty paid members in the group; 112 attended one or more meetings during the year. The Wesley Foundation had an estimated budget of \$150 for the year 1951 to be obtained through offerings, membership dues, and the sale of Christmas trees. \$159.83 was turned in. Of this amount \$25 was spent for sending delegates to conferences, \$40 for the Methodist Student Fellowship Fund, \$30 for an Advance Special in the Philippines, \$10 for CARE and \$35 was put into a fund to build a worship center for their meeting room and \$20 into a reserve fund. The council met here in August to make plans for the Fall Student Party and the program in the fall.

Mr. & Mrs Henry H. Toews donated an International Harvester refrigerator. A clean-up committee was set up, Edward McLean Chair, on April 1951, to assist flood evacuees to get back into their homes in West and North Mankato. Miss Norma Bolin was appointed Cradle Roll Superintendent. She was also a worker in the Wesley, Senior and Junior High groups. Active church membership for this year was 899.

Robert Rose was a prime mover in the Centenary Methodist Softball Team which played in the city Church League. The League played weekly at Sibley and Wheeler Parks. George V. Staberg was appointed Church Supervisor.

The Centenary Youth Choir has quite a history behind it. Bernice Starr Jones was the organist and director of the Adult Choir for many, many years at Centenary. In later years, she began directing the Youth Choir. For a time, she directed the Carol Choir when Mrs. Gable moved to Florida. The Youth Choir, which was originated by June Hughes in the early 1950's, was taken over by Bernice. Mrs. Jones directed the Youth Choir until her retirement. It took four people to replace her! Hazel Hakes took the directorship of the Youth Choir, Hazel Faust led the Carol Choir, Don Daggett was hired as organist and a few years later, June Hughes began directing the Cherub Choir. Hazel Hakes directed the Youth Choir for 16 years. During this time we worshipped in three different church buildings ... our "old" Methodist Church, the First Baptist Church with the Baptists during the construction of the Multi-Church facility, and finally in Multi-Church. When Don Daggett decided to retire as the church

organist and accompanist for the Youth Choir, Hazel Hakes decided to retire also. The next year Ron Urtel, West High School music director, conducted the Youth Choir for one year followed by Rev. Ron Anderson for two years and then from that date to this, Doug and Lori Faust have directed the Youth Choir.

Our history at Centenary has been rich with music, largely due to the wonderful folks who have given their time and talents to guide it. In addition, we must thank the young people who gave of themselves to provide us with great music through the years.



Happenings in the year 1952. The Junior Choir had 25 members; the choir got new robes. Around June 3 a Carol Choir was organized. The mothers of the group sewed white gowns for choir use. W.S.C.S receipts for this year amounted to \$3,706.94 and disbursements \$3,147.75. Centenary was represented at the Methodist Men's Retreat for the Mankato District held at St. James on August 25 and 26. Lay Leader for this year was Leslie Morse. There was the Annual Youth Talent Show put on by the Senior High Methodist Youth Fellowship. This

organization also participated in the Winter Youth Program and the Community Easter Sunrise Service. Wesley Foundation sent 33 members to the Minnesota Methodist Student Movement Conference held in Duluth. Over 160 young people took part in the year's program for Wesley Foundation. Day Camp Vacation Bible School was held in the summer. Over 50 attended. Mrs. Calvin Paulson was Director. Twenty teams of two church members each were sent out for Visitation and Evangelism. Over 100 church women made a partial religious survey of Mankato and LeHillier. Centenary Church receipts for the year 1952 amounted to \$20,337.73; disbursements were \$19,152.91.

Activities of the Official Board for the year 1953:

Robert Carlstrom reported plans from the architect for the proposed Wesley Center were to be ready in a month. The Church would borrow up to \$50,000 from Mankato Savings & Loan. The Church planned to spend \$1,000 to replace the old boiler in the church building. Estimated budget for 1953-1954 amounted to \$25,584. Darlene Cooper was to be hired as Youth Assistant. Her salary of \$2,800 would be paid by both the Church and Wesley Foundation. As of June, Cecil Bogard would be the new Chair of the Board. The construction bid for the Wesley Center of \$105,296 from Robert Carlstrom Company was the low bid and was accepted by the Board. Sunday School report made by Superintendent Bruce Mattson: Enrollment equaled 376, an increase of 58 over the year 1952. Average attendance was 221. Vacation Bible Camp enrollment was 53. The Sunday School paid \$450 to the Centenary Building Fund. The Commission on Missions and Social Service packed 1000 lbs of used clothing to be sent to Far East Refugees. Centenary Methodist Church maintained a Service Men's Committee of three members which sent local news, religious, sports, etc., information to the boys in military service. W.S.C.S. had 275 members plus 31 in Wesleyan Service Guild, a Business and Professional Women's organization.

Events for the year 1954.

Heads of Church organizations: Superintendent of Sunday School, Bruce Mattson; President of Methodist Men, Robert D. Carlstrom; President of Wesley Foundation, Janice Fausch; President of Junior High MYF, Kent Smith; President of Senior High MYF, Beth Snyder; President of W.S.C.S., Mrs. C. E. King; President of Sunshine Club, Duane McCracken. (Sunshine Club was responsible for contacting shut-ins and persons who were ill). Report of Church School: Total enrollment for 1954 401. Average attendance 285. Two classes in each of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, & 9<sup>th</sup> Grades. All others had one each. The school paid \$250 into the Building Fund of the Church for the Wesley Center Building. In March, Methodist Men painted four Sunday School rooms in the old Church building. Junior High MYF met on Sunday evening; average attendance 20. W.S.C.S. had 287 members plus 30 in Wesleyan Service Guild. There were six circles in W.S.C.S. Disbursement of years funds: \$1,568.15 to District Treasurer; \$1,200 to local Church budget; \$373.45 to Church Building Fund; \$356.15 to new Wesley building furnishings. Some 21 Wesley Foundation members attended the Minnesota Methodist Student Movement Conference held in St. Paul. During 1954, the local Wesley Foundation program involved 210 participants.

Wesley Center, the first enlargement of Centenary Methodist Church facilities since erection of the church structure of 1907, was officially started in April 1952, when the Official Board appointed a Survey and Plans Committee to formulate and carry out plans for the erection of a new building on the site of the old brick parsonage on Cherry Street. The architectural firm of Wick and Stansfield was employed, and a campaign for funds was successfully completed in November 1952, with architectural plans being finally approved on January 27, 1953. A congregational vote June 4, 1953 authorized the Trustees to receive bids for the construction of the building. The Robert W. Carlstrom Company was low bidder and was awarded the contract. Demolition of the old parsonage was begun immediately and the construction was underway.

Expansion of the congregation and Sunday School had necessitated the additional space. One assembly room was added to the church in 1950. In 1951 it was found necessary to utilize the old parsonage building of eight rooms for the Primary Department of the Sunday School. One of the church offices had been located in this building for the previous five years.

In January of 1954, general construction of the Wesley Annex (or center) had progressed to the extent that Methodist Men were able to lay tile floor in the new building. The overall dimensions of the three-story structure are 52 by 60 feet. Wesley Center provided offices for the Pastor, Youth Assistant, and Church Secretary; a nursery and rooms for 16 classes with possibilities for four more; a room for the Wesley Foundation; the Fireside Room for medium sized meetings; the Fellowship Room for recreation, large gatherings, and special Boy Scout occasions; two kitchenettes; eight storage rooms and abundant closet space. Total cost of the building and furnishings amounted to \$120,000.

Consecration services for the Wesley Annex were held on May 2, 1954, conducted by D. Stanley Coors, Resident Bishop of the Minnesota Area of the Methodist Church. Assisting were Willis W. Welte, superintendent of the Mankato District, and Paul J. Snyder, Pastor of Centenary Methodist Church. The Church recognized the gifts of lovely flowers from Floral Land Florists, Hilltop Greenhouses, Neil Neilsen, Inc., Windmiller Co., and Wayside Greenhouse & Nursery Co.

The Free Press reported Centenary Methodist's observance of its Centennial of founding in early October 1954. Dr. Robert E. Dorn, former Pastor at Centenary, preached the Centennial sermon at the 9:30 and 11:00 Sunday morning services, with Dr. E.H. Knehans, also former Pastor, taking part. A 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. guest hour in the Fellowship Room provided a chance by which friends could visit with former pastors. A potluck dinner followed, plus a songfest and a program of reminiscences. Dr.

Paul Waldorf presented an historical sketch and Francis Hatfield projected historic pictures on the screen with brief comments. Old pictures and other historical items were on display during the day. The evening was concluded with ten minute reminiscences by three former pastors of Centenary: Dr. Robert E. Dorn, Dr. E. H. Knehans and Dr. J. Arthur Rinkel. The Free Press noted that the turn-of-the-century membership was 300 with a Sunday School of 250, compared with a membership of 1030 and a Sunday School of 622 in 1954.

Centenary activities for the year 1955 were equally varied and interesting. Our 1955 Winter Youth Program, which ended on an enthusiastic note March 28, proved to be the best program, suppers and attendance of the seven Winter Youth Program series which we had held. The average attendance for the twelve nights of this year was 229 with the highest single night's attendance at 259. The highest single night attendance of each group was as follows: Married couples 77, Wesley Foundation 70, Senior High 36, Junior High 37, Juniors 25, Primettes 26, and Nursery 18. Great credit was due the 217 Kitchen Couples who prepared and served the suppers. Except for this splendid service, so cheerily and capably rendered, the Winter Youth Program could not have possibly succeeded.

In the year 1955 Camp Fire Girl's Sunday at Centenary fell on March 13. This day was being observed nationally as Camp Fire Girl's Sunday. All the Camp Fire Girls and Blue Birds of Centenary Church were asked to attend the 11 o'clock service as a group and in uniform, if possible. All leaders, sponsors and Council members of the Camp Fire Girl troop were invited to sit with the girls in a reserved section of the Church. Lucile Bugbee, Executive Director of the Camp Fire Girls, was a member of Centenary. The Camp Fire Girl movement in Mankato was founded by Mae Fletcher near the beginning of the Twentieth Century and soon after, the organization was founded in America. When Mae retired in 1946, the leadership of Mankato Camp Fire Girls passed to Ruth Schellburg of Mankato State College.

Reverend Wilbur Grose and his wife Jeanette came to be our leaders in 1958 and remained so until 1965, when he was asked by the Bishop to be Chairman of a new program committee of the Methodist Church of Minnesota. The Rev. Stanley Williams began duties as Associate Pastor at Centenary in June 1964. He filled a vacancy created when Rev. John Eddy, former Associate Pastor, became Director of the Mankato Wesley Foundation during the previous year. For the previous nine years Rev. Williams had served the Methodist Church at Winnebago. Rev. Williams was a native of England, having been born in Liverpool. He moved to Minnesota with his parents in 1912 where his father served as Pastor of the Methodist Church at Marion. Stanley graduated from Stewartville High School and Hamline University. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. The Williams couple had two daughters, both college graduates. It was Rev. Williams' coming as Associate Pastor to Rev. Grose that necessitated the purchase of a new parsonage at 109 Ridgley Road in Mankato. He and his wife Lily were most dedicated and were loved by all. They were later transferred to Lakefield, Minnesota, which was their last charge before retiring. Reverend Ralph High succeeded him as Associate Pastor to Rev. Perry Hultin.



Dr. Wilbur D. Grose preached his final sermon at Centenary Methodist Church in late January 1965. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of that month, he assumed duties as Program Director of the Minnesota Methodist Conference. His new office was in the Methodist headquarters in the Protestant Center in Minneapolis. The new minister at Centenary, Rev. Perry Hultin, arrived in Mankato around the First

of February 1965. He came from a Minneapolis charge and moved to the parsonage at 609 South Second Street, until it was sold to the YMCA, whereupon the Hultins moved to the newly-acquired parsonage at 109 West Glencrest Drive. The Hultins had five children of college, high school and grade school age. Reverend Hultin served us effectively through the upsurge of the Ecumenical Movement in which there were many changes and much accomplished.

The Reverend Ralph High and his family came to Centenary in the summer 1967 as Associate Minister. Rev. High had served as Pastor at Simpson Methodist in Minneapolis for a year, Pastor at Osseo First Methodist for six years, Pastor at Arcola-Lake Chapel in Indiana and Associate at First Methodist in Fort Wayne. Mr. High was originally from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Ralph was drafted into the Army and served three years in the Infantry. He was shipped to Sicily where he had his encounter with destiny. He said, "I saw all the sin, corruption and horrors of war, and one day on a mountain top I saw the beauties of God and decided then and there to become a minister." The High family – Ralph, wife Nadine, and three children – enjoyed camping and fishing in northeastern Minnesota. None of these motorized palaces for them: the Highs camped in tents and "roughed it all the way." Their canoe was named Xapis, meaning in Greek, Grace of God or unmerited favor. Rev. High came upon this name because someone did something for him that he felt he did not deserve: giving him over half the money to buy the canoe. Rev. High said he "is here to serve people." He believed in personal contact and was always concerned with their needs. Mr. High's responsibilities at Centenary United Methodist Church included Christian social concern, membership, evangelism and missions.

At the 1972 Annual Conference, Reverend Hultin and Reverend William Kvale of Virginia, Minnesota, exchanged pastorates. Coming with Rev. Kvale were his wife, two high school youths and two temporarily adopted foster children, aged three and five. During Rev. Kvale's Pastorate, several Associate Pastors, namely Norman Witt, Ralph High, Gary Bruening, and Ed Shannon served Centenary. Rev. Kvale, on leaving Centenary, took a Pastorate in the Twin Cities. It is a noteworthy aside that Rev. Kvale is an outstanding expert in the world of stamp collecting on the plating of early American postage stamps.



In 1970 the Administrative Board of Centenary established a Building Proposal Committee to study the building needs of Centenary. In 1971, upon the recommendation of that Committee, the Administrative Board authorized a further study to consider the possibility of sharing program and building facilities with other churches. The five MAP churches (Centenary United Methodist, First Congregational, First Baptist, Zion Presbyterian and First Presbyterian) entered into a Multi-Church study. In autumn 1972, a survey report was delivered to each family of

Centenary. Each of the five congregations compiled reports based on survey of its members and leaders. At a Church meeting on June 2, 1974, a motion was made to adopt the Articles of Incorporation of the Multi-Church Foundation, Inc. and the by-laws. The motion passed 174 to 17. On March 10, 1974 the congregations of First Baptist, First Congregational and Centenary United Methodist voted to build a religious structure in which all three congregations would share while at the same time retaining their separate identity (actually, the Baptists had a re-vote two weeks later). From March 10, the Multi-Church committee began working with several attorneys to draw up the legal papers that would implement that decision. The name of the Corporation was changed to Multi-

Church Foundation, Inc. Centenary expressed its thanks to Attorneys Kelly Gage and Ed McLean for contributing many hours of legal talent on the Multi-Church project. The next step was the hiring of the architectural firm that would create the design for the new church to be built on the existing site of Centenary Church. The Board of Directors of Multi-Church would have thirteen members from Centenary, the composition of the Board being represented in proportion to the memberships of the three churches. Demolition of Centenary's old church and the beginning of construction of the new Center took place in June 1975. The project was completed in the summer of 1976.



Seventy youths and adults from five states shared their experiences at a Lay Witness Mission Week, February 1-3, 1974, held at Centenary United Methodist Church. Edgar McCracken of Sioux City was the lay witness coordinator. The schedule included an all-church potluck supper on Friday, small discussion group meetings in twenty homes Saturday morning and dessert at 7 p.m. at the Church, followed by general discussion that evening. Breakfast at 7:30 was held at the Church. McCracken and other lay witnesses conducted Sunday Church services. The mission, which included special events for youngsters, was open to the public.

Pertinent data for the years 1974 and 1975. Church budgets: 1974 \$118,122 Proposed for 1975 \$123,468 Church membership had begun to decline, but church attendance was on the rise. Church financial giving was healthy. Church membership had declined from 1,389 in 1970 to 1,126 in 1974. United Methodist Women membership for those years dropped from 244 to 210.



During the year 1977 Centenary United Methodist Women hosted the Southwest District Meeting which involved about 350 women and pastors. It was the first real test of our new Multi-Church facility with a group that size. The women donated \$1,000 this year to Centenary's Building Fund.

Centenary had been participating, along with the other churches of Multi-Church, in the annual Camp Patterson weekend. This involved "roughing it" in cabins, campers, or for the very adventurous, in tents. Friday night and all day Saturday were open and free in time. But Saturday night saw a potluck supper at 6:30 in the Camp dining hall. This was for everyone whether they stayed for the weekend at Camp Patterson or not.

The Sunday School schedule for May 1975 was organized as follows: 9:30 A.M. Sunday School was held for Baptist and Congregational students with the Methodist students invited to attend. 11:00 A.M. Sunday School was Methodist. All classes were held at the Baptist Church. Preschoolers were located in the basement and all other classes were on the top floor. Sunday worship services were held in the Baptist Church with Methodist, Congregational and Baptist clergy trading off as liturgist and preacher.

In May 1974, the jazz cantata, "100% Chance of Rain!" was presented at both services on Sunday morning at Centenary United Methodist Church by the 48 member Carol Choir. Assisting the singers

who were in Grades 4 through 7, were June Hughes, piano; Richard Hamer, string bass; Virginia Berg and Lisa Clayton, flute; and Doug Faust, drums. Director was Hazel Faust. Mrs. Terry Brown designed a banner that was used for the service.

During the demolition of the old church building in June 1975, Elmer Fritts, Lay Leader of Centenary, watched as the cornerstone (marked 1907) was opened by workmen. Elmer displayed a copy of the 1907 Mankato Daily Free Press which described in great detail the construction plans for the then new Methodist Church. Also in the copper time capsule were found compressed sheets of yellowing newspapers, magazines, etc. Newspapers included the Mankato Journal (now long gone), the St. Paul Dispatch and the three Mankato dailies of the time. The six-inch lead paragraphs of the Mankato Daily Free Press described the history of the original Centenary Church as well as its successor. Also described was the first sermon delivered by Rev. Chauncey Hobart in 1853. The Free Press extolled the appearance of the 1907 Church as “among the handsomest and most convenient sacred edifices in the city.”

The interim period prior to the completion of the Multi-Church Center required some careful planning by all three churches. Here is how Centenary worked out its part: The 9:30 hour at First Baptist Church will officially be known as the United Methodist Worship Service. The 11:00 hour at First Congregational Church will also be known officially as the United Methodist Worship service. One of Centenary’s ministers will participate – as liturgist or preacher – in each of these services each Sunday. A Methodist Choir will sing at 9:30 at the Baptist Church, and a Methodist Choir will sing at 11:00 at the Congregational Church. Centenary will provide greeters and ushers at 9:30 in the Baptist Church, and at 11:00 in the Congregational Church. The provision of flowers in each church for worship services will be the responsibility of a committee made up of people from all three churches. Christmas sanctuary decorations will be the responsibility of the Baptists and the Congregationalists. The Sanctuary Choir usually has had a cantata during Advent. An equivalent service was suggested at the High School in a joint service. Laity Sunday, usually held in the fall, will be postponed until January. Services will involve laymen from all three churches using the theme: “I Believe.” In addition to the joint Worldwide Communion Service, the Baptists will celebrate Communion on the first Sunday in September and November, with these services open to all. All three churches will celebrate Communion the first Sunday in Advent, November 30. Throughout the year, there will be a Bicentennial sermon theme – one per minister--a different religious leader or sermon that has influenced America. The recommended preaching schedule is a compromise. There are those who wish to continue the summer schedule where each of the four ministers shared equally in the preaching. There are those who feel that a Methodist minister should preach every Sunday at 9:30 in the Baptist Church and at 11:00 in the Congregational Church.

The Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers came back to her native city of Mankato in June 1979 and spoke at her home church, Centenary United Methodist, on Sunday at 9:30 worship services. Her text, from Luke 13:10-35, developed the theme of “The Bent Over Woman.” The sermon was dramatized in part by choreography under the direction of Florence A. Cobb, once involved in Mankato State University Dance Department. Jeanne Audrey at the time was on the staff of the Board of Global Ministries in New York.

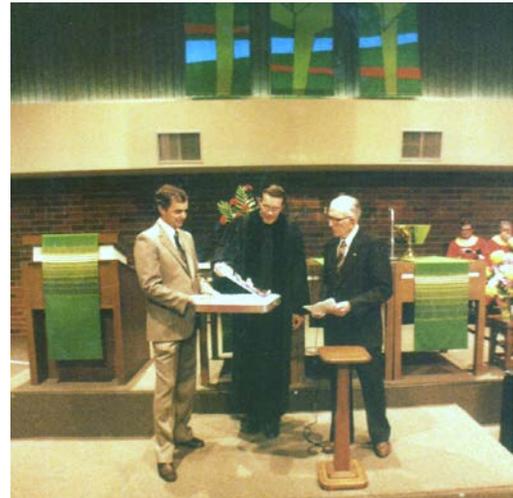


An Open House honored Rev. William O. Kvale and his wife Carol at the Multi-Church Center in April 1982. The Kvales would be leaving Mankato at the end of June for a new assignment at Aldersgate United Methodist Church of St. Louis Park. In 1982, Rev. James Dodson became Senior Pastor at Centenary and Rev. David McBride became Associate Pastor next year. Rev. McBride arrived in Mankato in July. He graduated from Mankato State University in 1975 and earned his Master of Divinity from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. He came to

Mankato from a pastorate at Adrian and Magnolia, Minnesota. David E. and Robin McBride lived at 225 Moreland Avenue in West Mankato.

In 1984, Rev. E. Byron Anderson served as Minister of Music at Centenary and as the Multi-Church Education Director. Reverends Dodson and McBride served Centenary until 1986, when Roger A. Parks and Nancy Wheeler Handlon became Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor, respectively. Rev. Anderson was re-appointed in 1987.

Evidence of its success was seen in late January 1981 when Centenary United Methodist Church's congregation performed the ritual of burning its mortgage. First Baptist and First Congregational churches had retired their building debts in 1978. Members of Centenary congregation had given \$500,000 to the building fund over the previous four years. That amount was in addition to the \$165,000 already in the building Fund. Rev. Kvale stated, "The debt was paid up soon because the congregation as a whole wanted it to be. Many people gave extra. It was nothing unusual for people to give an extra \$100." Rev. Kvale stated further "The biggest concern at the beginning was whether loyalty to a previous heritage would be greater than that to work together. That didn't happen. Instead, the churches found that what was good for one was good for all three.



Hectic days, busy nights – who has time to socialize? The people of Centenary did in 1968. All it took was a little structuring. Participating couples were assigned into groups – usually four couples to a group. Each of the four couples took turns hosting a potluck meal, once a month, with each couple bringing some of the food. After four months – after everyone had hosted a dinner – the round was completed, and a few months later, names were mixed up and new four-couple potlucks were formed.

One couple had been having trouble meeting and getting to know other young couples when they moved to Mankato, but the four-couple potlucks made a big difference. Naturally, the couples came from diverse backgrounds – many were people they would normally not get to know. Usually the potlucks were set up with two season sessions – one in the fall and one in the spring.

Centenary United Methodist Church celebrated its 135-year history with a Heritage Sunday celebration May 20, 1990, with about 175 people in attendance. Honored during the celebration were Centenary members who have entered the ministry of 50 years or more and former pastors. Former pastors in attendance were the Reverends James Dodson, Perry Hultin and Edward Shannon. Former



members who became pastors were the Reverends Jeanne Audrey Powers, Al Toews, Frederick Atkinson, Holly Wood and Susan Adams-Trembath.

The celebration began at the 11 A.M. worship service led by Rev. Nancy Wheeler Handlon and assisted by the visiting clergy. Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers presented the sermon "Giving Account of Our Hope."

Special music was provided by the Grace and Power Handbell Choir, named for life-long members Grace Jones and Florence Powers, directed by Marilyn Birbeck. Among the songs performed by the Sanctuary Choir was "Unto They Name O Lord," written by Choir Director Carl Kittleson.



Sanctuary Choir: Carl Kittleson, Director  
Donald Daggett, Organist

Also, in April 1990, Lorinda Parks, daughter of Pastor and Mrs. Roger Parks, and Pat (Mrs. Ron) Peterson, joined nine other Minnesota Methodists on a mission trip. Their goal was to repair a village school in Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa.

Associate Pastor Deb Walkes arrived at Centenary in 1990 and in 1991 she and Roger Parks began a Healing Service as part of a Lenten study series. They continued to offer monthly healing services as late as December 1992, helping those who were hurting. Pastor Deb noted that "wholeness comes from reconciliation with God. When this happens, physical, emotional or mental healing may take place. Spiritual healing does take place."

In December 1992, the Mankato Symphony Orchestra featured CUM's Grace and Power Handbell Choir ringing in the holiday season, under the direction of Marilyn Birbeck. The choir, organized in 1982, was currently using five octaves for a total of sixty bells rung by a dozen ringers.

The first of the three churches in the Multi-Church Center regretfully closed its doors in 1993. Some First Baptist members remained to join with First Congregational or Centenary. At the time, First Baptist had been active in Mankato for 134 years.

Shortly after, First Congregational Church purchased a large property on Stoltzman Road with the intention to build "someday." The church sold a portion of the property to the developers of CADA House, a shelter for battered women and children, and eventually erected its new home, moving into it in the spring of 2002.

Associate Pastor Nancy Wheeler-Handlon had left Centenary in 1990 and Deb Walkes had continued as associate from 1990-1997. Senior Pastor Roger Parks continued on until 1994, when he was succeeded by Dean Wolf, who remains at Centenary today. (2004)

Pastor Wolf was joined by Ruth Ann Ramstad as associate in 1997. Pastor Ramstad was featured in the Mankato Free Press in May 1998, along with her two sons Jonathan and Benjamin. (She and her husband David Coward would also have a third son, James, born during their stay here.) 'Pastor Mom' Ruth Ann's move to Mankato was her fifth in her role as pastor. Just before that, she had been a hospital chaplain in the Twin Cities.

Another Free Press article, this one in December 1999, focused on a second mission group from CUM preparing to travel abroad. Led by retired Mankato schoolteacher and church member, John Just, a dozen Centenary faithfuls were readying themselves to leave in February of 2000. They would spend 18 days renovating a hospital in the Bolivian Andes. Ages of the group ranged from the 20's to the 70's and included Rev. Dean Wolf, David Coward, Lisa Hoffman, Cindy Coker, Dwain Petersen, Jo Ann Schultz, Doris Bateman, D'Ann Carrison, Katie Menne, Judy Abraham and John Just. Each would pay \$1,800 for the privilege of this working vacation. John had a double reason to go: his son and daughter-in-law taught in the American Embassy School in LaPaz and this would be his fourth mission trip!

Ruth Ann Ramstad would leave us in 2001 and be followed by Pamela Serdar. Pam was a Commissioned Pastor in the United Methodist Church and this was her first assignment. She and Dean soon found they enjoyed their sermonal dialogues almost more than “going it alone.”

In July 2003, the two combined to bring a wonderful experience to Mankato when Dean portrayed Chauncey Hobart and Pam brought to life Sarah Parker Hammett, an unordained preacher of Mankato's early days. Together they re-created the very first service ever held by a Methodist preacher in Southern Minnesota. And it took place on the bank of the Minnesota River at Sibley Park where Chauncey Hobart had preached that first sermon to a crowd of 200 back in July 1853, just 150 years before! This time, nearly 300 Methodists and friends gathered to watch and partake in the authentic re-enactment using the King James Bible and actual words spoken long ago by Hobart and Hammett. The service was highlighted by the baptism of several members in the river. A visitor from North Carolina, a young Baptist minister, commented: “I have never seen anything as beautiful. . . a service like this reminds us of our roots, both in faith and community.” And—like those long-ago meetings—the service was followed by a bountiful meal of fried chicken and mashed potatoes, then afternoon games for the children and any willing adults, and a pleasant rest among beautiful surroundings for all.

Now, in late August, 2004 continues to be a very special year in the life of Centenary United Methodist Church: in June, our Associate Pastor, Pam Serdar, finished her third year with us and was ordained as an Elder at impressive ceremonies in St. Cloud. About fifty members of CUM joined a thousand others at the culminating service of the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Pam's sponsors were Mankato native, Rev. Judy (Swenson) Myers and our own Rev. Dean Wolf. The best news was given to the entire congregation on the following Sunday: it was announced that both Dean and Pam had been reassigned to Mankato for another three years! An interesting sidelight of Pam's ordination was that she was among four women pastors who were ordained or who received recognition of orders, and participating in the service were a further ten women pastors; among them was Rev. Ruth Ann Ramstad!

Now we are all preparing for the Sesquicentennial Weekend, September 18-19, 2004, when we celebrate the long history of Centenary United Methodist Church. Many events and special services will be held, including welcoming returning clergy and members, and commemorative gatherings. The Lord has indeed blessed the long and successful history of our church in Mankato, and most importantly, the faithful witness of the generations of Methodists for one hundred and fifty years here at the corner of Second and Cherry Streets.

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