

ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF EMDEN, ILLINOIS

The Zion German Methodist Church of Emden came into being when a group of German immigrants met at the Neibuhr School located west of the new town of Emden. They had been using this school building for sometime to hold religious meetings. Under the direction of Charles Emig, the church was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois on July 1, 1872. John Oltmanns was elected as the President and Paul Hartwig as Secretary. The men who served as the first Board of Trustees were Simon Neibuhr, Wilhelm Lux, John Oltmanns, George Wallentin and Paul Hartwig.

In 1875 a young Missionary, Rev. Frank Gruenewald, was sent from the Quincy District to serve as minister. The first Quarterly Conference was held November 25, 1875 under the leadership of Rev. Philip Nauman, the District Superintendent. Teddo Rohlf served as Secretary and John Suits was approved as the first Sunday School Superintendent. A one story parsonage was built for the new minister.

Rev. Henry Ellenbeck succeeded Rev. Gruenewald and under his leadership plans were laid for the building of a church. The idea was discouraged by some as times were hard. Grain

was still being hauled to Pekin by wagons and the average pay for labor was a dollar a day. But the pioneer preacher with a strong faith in God continued on with the plans. The site on which the present church now stands was purchased for forty dollars in 1879. The church was completed and dedicated November 16. The cost of the building was \$1295.00 and \$5.00 extra for the windows which were made larger than originally planned.

In 1894, when Rev. Schleuter was the minister, the parsonage was remodeled at the cost of \$775.00. Through the work of Rev. Didzun, who was the Pastor from 1901-1903, the entire property was improved and a new barn was built.

During the pastorate of Rev. Piehler, the Ladies Aid Society was formed and later both the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies were organized.

The need for a new church became evident for the building was no longer adequate for the growing Sunday School and Church. Conditions were unfavorable at this time, because of World War I, so the project was delayed. Two years later a plan to remodel and enlarge the old church was made but the bids received were so high this project was also delayed. But real needs had to be supplied and a year later the problem

was again taken up - - this time for a new building from the ground up.

Mr. John Zimmer, Architect of Pekin, was engaged to prepare specifications. Meanwhile the old building was taken down and the well preserved material was salvaged. Regular services were held in the Community House. On March 27, 1924 the contract for the present church building was awarded to Ray Lillibridge of Delavan. On April 1, the first brick was laid by Mr. Max Neumann. The weather was favorable and on April 25 the cornerstone was laid in a beautiful service. Within seven months the church was ready for dedication at the cost of \$36,000. The dedicatory services were held September 14 - 17, 1924. Rev. Fred W. Wahl delivered the sermon.

The building committee was Rev. Panwitt, chairman; John Hallmann, secretary; Tobias U. Rademaker, treasurer; Henry Kramer Sr., Fred Zimmer, Harry Van Hilsen, Albert Bruns, John Sampen, Teis Zimmer, C.C. Mammen and John Johnson.

In the earlier years the church belonged to the St. Louis German Conference. In 1925 this Conference merged with the Illinois Conference. In 1939 the Methodist Church South, the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant Churches united to become the Methodist Church. In 1968 they united with the Evangelical United Brethern Churches and has now become the United Methodist Church.

During the fall of 1947 the parsonage was vacated by Dr. and Mrs. Combs when he retired because of ill health. Regular services were conducted by Rev. Eugene Stauffer, Pastor of the Delavan Church.

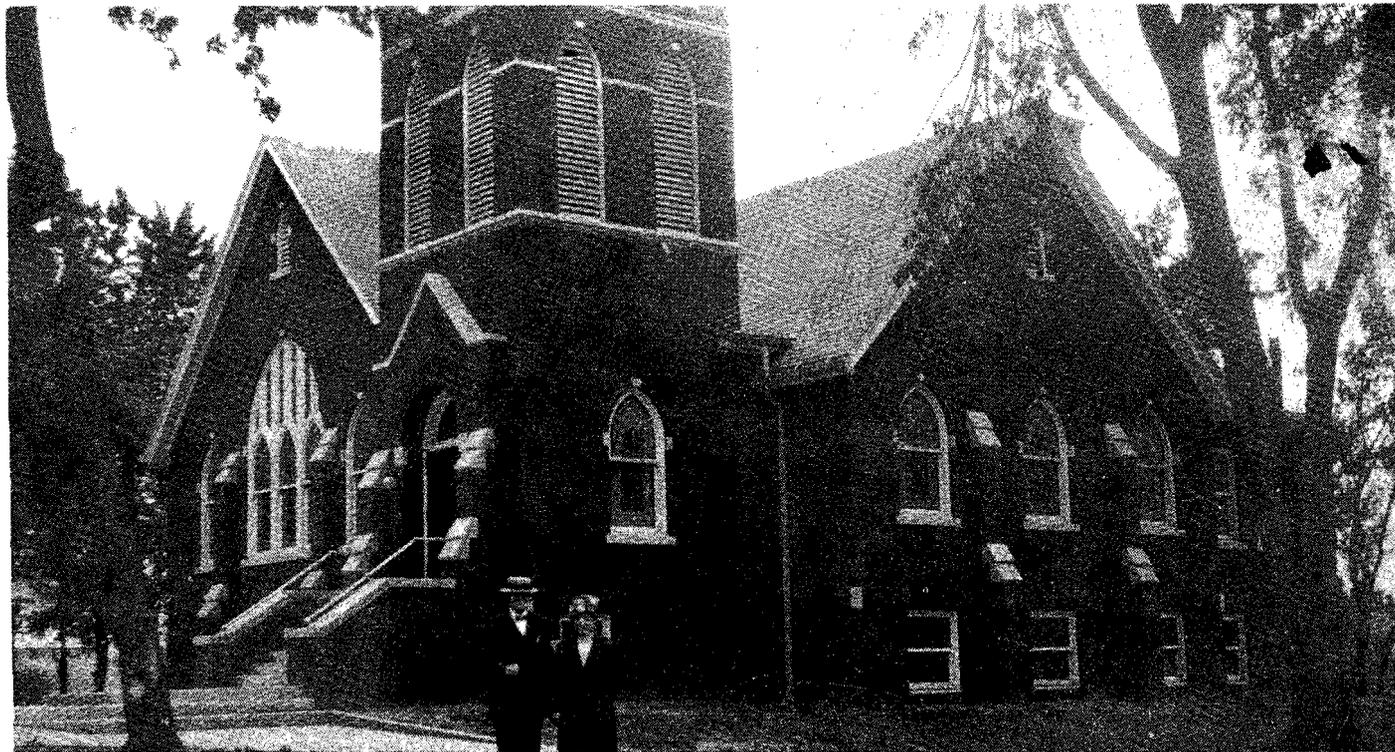
It was at this time decided to erect a new parsonage. Work began immediately and by spring it was ready for occupancy. It was dedicated July 10, 1949. Rev. Selden Meyers was the first minister to reside there. New improvements as time went by such as a gas furnace, a second bathroom, new kitchen cabinets, rugs and drapes were some of the additions.

Many groups were organized through the years so all ages were kept busy in the work of the church. The King's Herald

for the children, the Standard Bearers for the youth and the Queen Esthers for the young women were all interested in the missionary work. Names were changed and the Epworth League, Childrens Societies, the Methodist Men and the Womens Society of Christian Service came into being. Senior, youth and childrens choirs were organized to provide music for the church services. The Senior, Junior and Intermediate Youth Fellowship groups are now active organizations. Three Sunday School Classes also organized into fellowship groups. They are Friendly Circle, Yadnus and Homebuilders Classes.

In 1967 a new gas furnace was installed in the church and a year later the sanctuary was redecorated, carpeting installed and new lights hung to make it the beautiful church that it is today.

Thru the years many faithful families helped this church to grow through their dedicated service. Their purpose being to further the work of the Kingdom of God. They are proud to be a part of the beautiful and growing town of Emden. The following served so faithfully as ministers: 1875 - 1878 - Rev. Frank Gruenewald; 1878-1881 - Rev. Henry Ellerbeck; 1881-1884 - Rev. Charles Emig; 1884-1886 - Rev. Philip Barth; 1886-1890 - Rev. Frank Piehler; 1890 -1892 - Rev. Peter Martin; 1892-1897 - Rev. F.W. Schlueter; 1897-1901 - Rev. William Sipfle; 1901-1903 - Rev. August Didzun; 1903-1907 - Rev. Henry Tempel; 1907-1913 - Rev. Fred Wahl; 1913-1915 - Rev. F.S. Eitelgeorge; 1915-1919 - Rev. W.H. Treager; 1919-1921 - Rev. Carl Fritz; 1921-1925 - Rev. H.J. Panwitt; 1925-1930 - Rev. W.P. Ludwig; 1930-1936 - Rev. W.L. Nagel; 1936-1938 - Rev. M.D. Tremaine; 1938-1940 - Rev. Oscar Chindbergh; 1940-1947 - Dr. E.S. Combs; 1948-1952 - Rev. Selden Meyers; 1952-1957 - Rev. Darrell Williams; 1957-1962 - Rev. Robert Sharp; 1962-1967 - Rev. Frank Rider; 1967 - - - Rev. Robert Sabo.



New Methodist Church, shown are Rev. and Mrs. H.J. Pan-

witt. Dedicated September, 1924.



"Old" Methodist Church