

75th
Anniversary

United Church of Christ

Monticello, Wisconsin

August 12, 1962

This booklet, commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Zwingli Church, has been prepared by the 75th Anniversary Committee to set forth in brief form the story of our church from its earliest beginnings, down to the present day. Through its historical sketches we are reminded of the great debt that we owe to those who have gone before us, God's faithful servants, for their continued efforts in the building of Christ's Kingdom on earth. We are reminded of the debt we owe to our God, under whose guiding hand our church was founded, and has grown and prospered. We are reminded also of the debt we owe to future generations who will come here to worship, to pray, and to learn the love of Christ our Lord for all God's children, everywhere. May we ever be mindful of the heritage which is ours, and of the responsibility that we, the church of today, have toward those who will come after us in the years that are yet to come.

“Faith of our Fathers, living still;
We will be true to Thee till death!”

THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH

THE EARLY BEGINNINGS

The history of Zwingli Church in Monticello dates back to the early 1880's, when several families of Swiss descent had settled in the village of Monticello, nestled in the rolling hills of Green County, Wisconsin.

As early as 1884, perhaps even before, a group of these Swiss families secured the services of Reverend Mr. Hirtz, pastor of St. John's Evangelical Church in Monroe, to come to Monticello to hold services of worship in the native language and according to the familiar traditions that these early settlers had known in their native Switzerland. Reverend Hirtz was also at that time preaching at Reformation Church, in Washington Township. Services in Monticello were at that time held on alternate Sundays, in the Methodist Church in the north part of the village.

There soon came a desire, however, for the group to organize itself into a congregation, to build their own church building, and to hold services regularly. Early in 1885 there was a meeting called for the purpose of organizing such a congregation, with 13 local men, the members of the Reformation church consistory, and Reverend Mr. Hirtz present. Due to certain disagreements concerning the interpretation of the constitution which was then presented, that of the Evangelical Synod of North America, a Mr. Endt, the assistant of Reverend Hirtz, who had previously expressed a willingness to serve the new church, withdrew as a prospective pastor of the Town Washington and Monticello churches, and the meeting closed with no further action.

The idea of organizing a Swiss Congregation in Monticello was not abandoned, however. Not long thereafter, in December of 1884 or 1885, the services of Reverend John Knie, a minister of the Reformed Church in the United States, were obtained to once again hold services in the German language in Monticello.

Although Reverend Knie's tenure of service was brief, perhaps even less than a year, we may infer that here were the real beginnings of Zwingli Church.

After Reverend Knie left the area, for a time a Reverend Etter, then pastor of Swiss Church, New Glarus, preached for the young congregation in Monticello. Later, the first constitution of Zwingli Church was patterned after that of Swiss Church.

In May of 1886, at a joint meeting of the Monticello and Washington churches, it was decided to extend a call to Reverend Henry Bruengger to become pastor of these churches. Being without a minister, he was asked to begin his work as soon as possible. This he did on the first of July of that year. It is interesting to note that at that time the Monticello group was referred to in the minutes of Reformation Church as "The Mission Field in Monticello!"



Reverend John Knie

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONGREGATION

Under the leadership of Reverend Bruengger, the formation of a congregation and the building of a church received new impetus, and soon became a reality. And so it was that at a meeting held on January 4, 1887, the congregation was organized, the name "German Evangelical Reformed Zwingli Congregation" adopted, and the first consistory officially elected. Officers elected at this time were Dietrich Freitag, President, and Jacob Marty, Secretary and Treasurer. Other consistory members were J. C. Steinman, Dietrich Stauffacher, and Henry Freitag.

It was also then agreed by the Monticello group and the consistory of Reformation Church that a parsonage should be built for the minister's residence, and the salary and other expenses be shared by the two congregations.

Accordingly, a plot of land was purchased from Mrs. A. Pierce for the sum of \$300.00, and the young congregation began to lay plans for the building of a House of Worship of their own. A building committee consisting of Henry Rhyner and Henry Elmer was appointed to secure a builder, and the church, a structure 34 feet by 50 feet by 16 feet high, and a parsonage were built shortly thereafter. The combined cost of the two buildings was \$3,320, the work being done by the same builder who erected Reformation Church eleven years before.

Although the new church had undoubtedly been completed some time before, and used by the congregation for some months, the day of dedication was August 12, 1888. Reverend Kuentzler of Waukesha was the dedication speaker, choosing as his text I Kings 8:29—"Let Thine Eyes be opened over this House night and day." Reverend Bruengger served the two congregations until January 11, 1891.



**THE FIRST CHURCH AND PARSONAGE
AS THEY APPEARED IN THE EARLY 1890's**

THE YOUNG CHURCH GREW

From January of 1891 to the spring of 1898 Reverend Henry Rusterholz served our congregation. It was during his pastorate here that the church building debt was liquidated. Records from these early years indicate that the church bells were to be rung every Saturday evening, as a reminder of the coming of the Sabbath Day, a custom which is continued to the present time.

In the first eleven years of the history of our congregation at least 131 persons received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, that 26 couples were united in Holy Marriage, and 101 young people were brought into the church through the rite of Confirmation.



Reverend Henry Rusterholz

Reverend Rusterholz terminated his pastorate here on April 30, 1898.



Reverend A. Muehlmeier

A call was subsequently extended to the Reverend Albert Muehlmeier, a young pastor at that time serving two congregations at Fremont and Dale, Wisconsin. Reverend Muehlmeier first came to Monticello on May 15, 1898, and served until 1901.

During this time, there was some discussion concerning the desirability of joining the Classes of the Reformed Church, as the congregation in Monticello had since its inception remained independent of denominational affiliation, but no action was taken at this time.

Records indicate that during these years a barn was built for

the minister's horse: prior to that time, the people were required to come to get the minister when they desired his services!

It was during Reverend Muehlmeier's first pastorate here, in the year 1901, that Blasius Elmer was elected Sunday School Superintendent, a post in which he served faithfully and well until 1924. On August 11, 1901, Reverend Muehlmeier left Monticello to accept the pastorate of the German Reformed Church at Klemme, Iowa.



**THE INTERIOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH
AT CHRISTMAS TIME**



Reverend Carl Heyl

Reverend Carl Heyl came to Monticello from a country congregation near Freeport, Illinois, on October 11, 1901. Three years later, in 1904, the school annex, 22 feet by 26 feet, was built at a cost of \$1,100, for the purposes of conducting a German school as well as confirmation and Sunday school use. At this time also, the first air furnace was installed in the church, and a second bell was purchased and installed in the church tower.

During these years the Ladies' Aid was organized, Mrs. Charles Rolph, Sr., its first president.

Many other minor improvements were accomplished during Reverend Heyl's pastorate here, and after serving these two congregations for seven years and eight months, he left this parish on May 31, 1909, to accept a call from a large church in Cleveland, Ohio. Some years later Reverend Heyl became the editor of the *Kirchen - Zeitung*, the German church paper that found its way into many of the homes of our congregation.

The congregations then extended a call to their former pastor, Reverend Albert Muehlmeier, to return to Monticello, which he did on July 4, 1909.



Reverend A. Muehlmeier

The following year the new parsonage was built by the Rolph Brothers Builders at a cost of \$4,834.10, "including all extras." A telephone was installed in the new parsonage, as were electric lights in the parsonage and in the church.



ZWINGLI CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, ABOUT 1912

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND EXPANSION

The years following 1912 were significant years in the history of Zwingli Church. In 1912 it was decided to purchase and install a new pipe organ in the church. Hence, an organ room was built, and the chancel platform raised. The year 1913 was the year of the 25th Anniversary of the dedication of the first church, an event which was observed on the 10th of August. It was at this time also that the new pipe organ, reputedly one of the best manufactured by the Hinners Organ Company of Pekin, Illinois, at a cost of \$1,400, was dedicated. An old newspaper clipping relating the events of that day states that "despite unfavorable weather, the church was filled to capacity at all of the services, which were of a highly entertaining, impressive and inspiring nature throughout."



THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVANCE
AUGUST 10, 1913

Reverend Carl Heyl, former pastor, delivered the anniversary sermon in the morning, also making an address in the evening, apparently for the first time in our church, in the English language.

Following the anniversary observance, English services were scheduled regularly, to be held once each month in the evening. This was a practice which seemingly continued until 1925, when English services were held every Sunday, with only the special services to be held in the German language! In 1920, the first English confirmation took place, and in 1923 English song books were purchased for both Sunday school and the services of worship. The young church was now well on its way toward becoming a community church in the finest sense of the word.

Meanwhile, the congregation had taken another significant step toward extending its sphere of influence even beyond the local community. In 1918 the congregation joined the Milwaukee Classes of the Reformed Church (now the South Wisconsin Synod), and in the intervening years followed that group through two significant mergers: in 1934 the merger of the Reformed Church in the United States with the Evangelical Synod of North America, forming the Evangelical and Reformed Church; and in 1957 the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church with the Congregational Christian Churches, forming the United Church of Christ.

In 1922 the first confirmation reunion was held at Zwingli Church; in 1924 C. M. Stauffer was elected to succeed Blasius Elmer as superintendent of the Sunday school, and in 1933 the Ladies' Aid purchased the home known as the Parish House for their meetings and other uses. The cost of the Parish House was \$3,300.00.



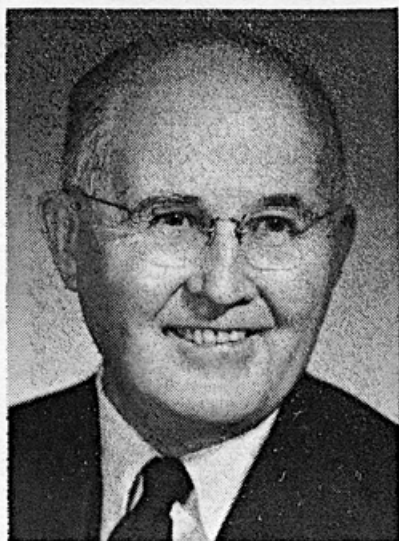
THE PARISH HOUSE, ABOUT 1935

Because of the growth of the congregation and the church school, in 1937 the church building was extensively remodeled. The basement under the entire building was excavated, and the church was made 16 feet wider by the addition of 8 feet on both the east and west sides of the church building. This rebuilding resulted in the addition of six Sunday school rooms. A new heating system was also installed at this time.



**ZWINGLI CHURCH AS IT APPEARED
FROM 1937 TO 1954**

It was in the same year that Reverend Muehlmeier was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Mission House College and Seminary. The "burden of advancing years . . . bearing heavily upon him," in January of 1938 Dr. Muehlmeier presented his resignation to the Zwingli and Reformation congregations, to become effective on June 30 of that year. After serving our congregation for a total of more than 32 years, Dr. Muehlmeier retired in our community, and remained active in the life of the church until his death in 1943.



Reverend A. R. Achtemeier

On July 1, 1938, Reverend A. R. Achtemeier, formerly pastor of Grace Church in Kohler, Wisconsin, began his ministry here. Within the next few years a hearing aid system was installed in the church; the present garage was built, the Parish House remodeled, and oil burners installed in the church and parsonage. In 1947 a Hammond electric organ was installed, and a new rug in 1950.

The year 1953 was also a significant year in the history of our congregation, for it was at that time that the congregation of the Zwingli Church, Albany, joined with the Monticello congregation.

The story of the Albany group dates back to the summer of 1922, when services were held in the shade of several oak trees on the farm of Fred and John Guertner, later in the home of Fred Schenk, Jr., and finally in the English Methodist Church in Albany. On October 4, 1925, the congregation was formally organized under the direction of Reverend John Gaterman, a constitution adopted, and Fred Schenk, Sr., and J. Baumgartner elected elders. During their thirty year history prior to 1953, this part of our congregation was served by five ministers:

Reverend John Gaterman, 1923 to April 4, 1926

Reverend G. A. Zimmer, April 4, 1926, to September 30, 1926

Reverend John Gaterman, October 1, 1926, to May 15, 1927

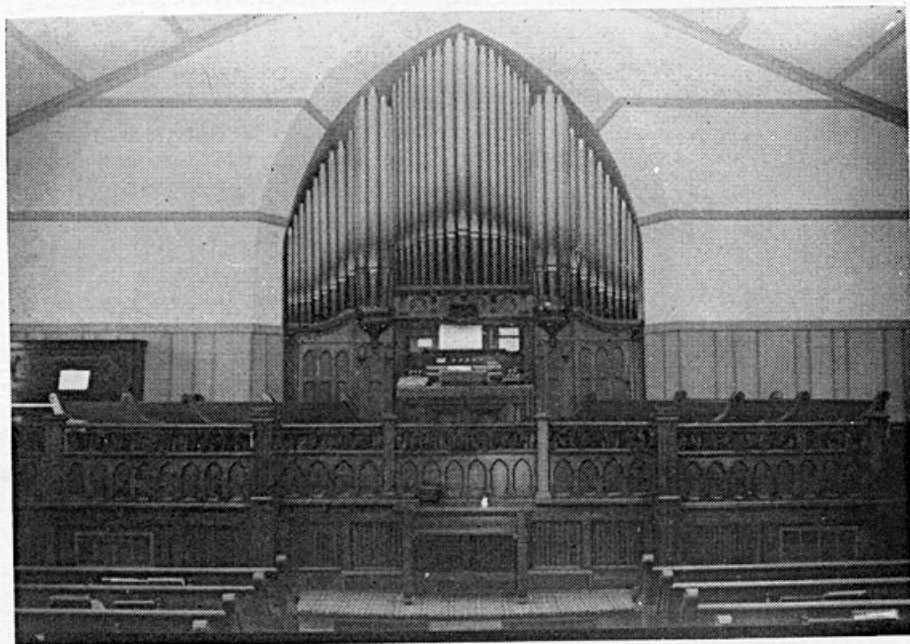
Reverend Herman Lehman, August 13, 1927, to February 1, 1929

Reverend Carl Flueckinger, March 1, 1929, to May 11, 1939

Reverend Harvey Norenberg, July 1, 1939, to 1953.

In 1953, forty members of the Albany congregation united in the fellowship of Zwingli Church, Monticello.

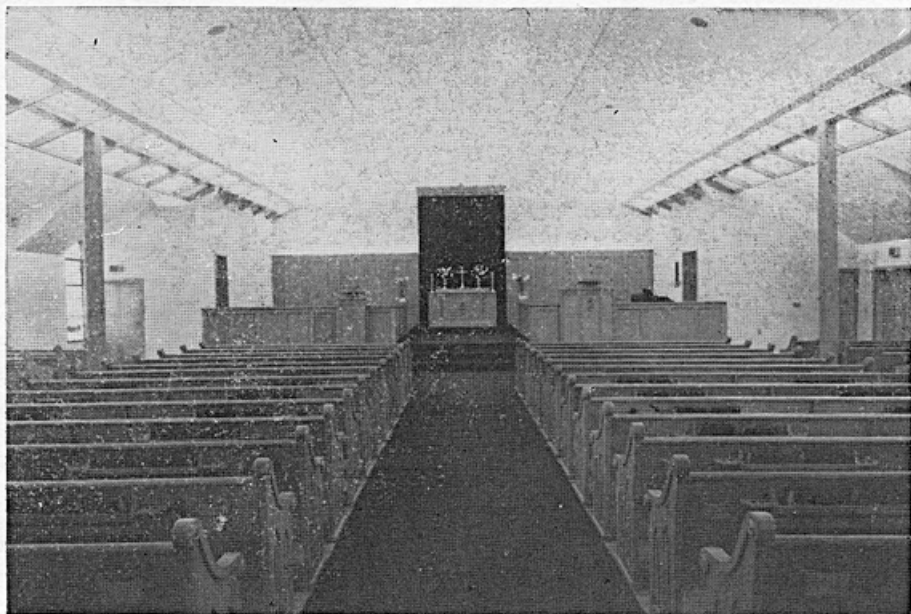
Because of the increase in the number of families and in Sunday church school attendance, it soon became apparent that more room was needed in order to effectively carry on the work and worship of the church. At a special congregational meeting on May 26, 1953, it was unquestionably decided to proceed with plans to enlarge to meet the expanded needs of the congregation.



INTERIOR OF OLD CHURCH

The last services of worship in the old church were held on April 18th, Easter Sunday, in 1954. During the days that followed, the carpet was rolled up, and under the direction of an experienced organ man the pipe organ was carefully dismantled and stored away until such time as the congregation would once again see fit to rebuild and reinstall the organ in the Sanctuary.

During the remodeling project, which took just about a year, services of worship were conducted in Karlen's Hall, above the Ford Garage. At this time the building was extended 30 feet to the north, the entire basement excavated, a new heating plant installed, a new chancel area constructed, and the whole sanctuary virtually rebuilt. The "new" church has a present seating capacity of 410 persons, and was completed in the spring of 1955 at a total cost (not including memorial gifts, which were donated) of \$60,533.49. On March 20, 1955, the first services were held in the remodeled church.



**THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH
AT THE TIME OF DEDICATION — APRIL 24, 1955**

On September 15, 1959, Reverend Achtemeier left the Monticello parish to become the Western Field Secretary of the Evangelical and Reformation Church, serving the churches of our denomination in Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, and the Dakotas from his present headquarters in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Reverend Achtemeier served our congregation, in the same manner as his predecessor, for over 21 years.

In November of 1959 a call was extended to the present pastor, Reverend J. Allan Mittler, who was then the assistant pastor of St. Paul's Church in Wausau, Wisconsin, to serve the Monticello churches. Reverend Mittler came to Monticello on February 1, 1960. During the interim between pastorates, the congregation was served on week-ends by Reverend John Oliphant, a young national missions pastor who was working in Madison at the time. In December of 1959 the glass and aluminum doors were installed on the front of the church.

September 1, 1960, marked the appearance of the first issue of the **Church Chimes**, a monthly news and informal publication which is mailed to the home of every member of the congregation. Also during the years, 1960, 1961, and 1962 the sidewalks in front of the church and parsonage were widened to meet the curbs, the parsonage was completely re-decorated, and other various small additions and modifications have been made in order to improve and better preserve the fine church buildings and the wonderful tradition which is ours.



Reverend J. Allan Mittler

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THE PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED OUR CHURCH:

|                        |               |                   |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Rev. John Knie         | Dec. 1, 1884  | —Fall of 1885 (?) |
| Rev. Henry Bruengger   | July 1, 1886  | —Jan. 11, 1891    |
| Rev. Henry Rusterholz  | Jan. 26, 1891 | —April 30, 1898   |
| Rev. Albert Muehlmeier | May 15, 1898  | —Aug. 11, 1901    |
| Rev. Carl Heyl         | Oct. 11, 1901 | —May 31, 1909     |
| Rev. Albert Muehlmeier | July 4, 1909  | —June 30, 1938    |
| Rev. Arthur Achtemeier | July 1, 1938  | —Sept. 15, 1959   |
| Rev. J. Allan Mittler  | Feb. 1, 1960  | —                 |

## LOOKING BACK OVER 75 YEARS:

Looking back over the 75 year history of Zwingli Church, we find that:

On December 14, 1884, Johan Fridolin Zwickey, son of Rudolph and Katharine Rhiner Zwickey, was the first baby baptized by the pastors of Zwingli Church. Since that time the Sacrament of Holy Baptism has been administered to 1,956 individuals.

The first confirmation class, 1885, consisted of four people: Jacob Freitag, Euphemia Freitag, Maria Rhiner, Clara Knie.

To date, 1,396 young people have been received into the Christian Church through confirmation, the largest class being the one of this past year, with 37 young people being confirmed.

The first wedding took place on September 5, 1886, when Gottlieb Kung and Katarina Knobel were united in Holy Marriage through the pastoral services of Zwingli Church. Through the years since 1886, 616 weddings have been recorded in the annals of our church.

The first Service of Worship was held in Zwingli Church sometime in 1887 or 1888. Since then, over 4,000 Services of Worship have been held in our church.





ZWINGLI CHURCH, 1962

## OUR CHURCH TODAY

From its humble beginnings among a small group of Swiss pioneer families 75 years ago, our church has grown to its present congregation of over 700 members, with a Sunday church school enrollment of 390. The congregational budget for 1962 calls for a total of \$23,946.00 for local operating expenses and the benevolent program of the church. This figure is over seven times the total cost of the first church AND the parsonage! What a staggering figure this would have seemed to those charter members of 1887!

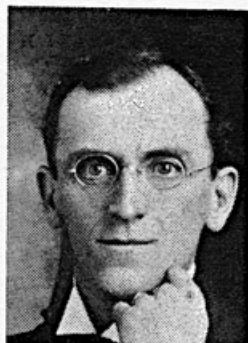
Although for many years Zwingli Church has paid its denominational apportionment in full, the year 1961 was the first year in which all four benevolent challenges of our church—the denominational apportionment, the Synod Levy, the World Service Challenge, and the United Synodical Appeal—were all paid in full. In addition to this, of course, is the reduction of the 1955 remodeling debt, and increased local expenses and obligations.

The work of the church is expedited greatly by the various groups and organizations within the church: The Women's Guild, The Brotherhood, The Youth Fellowship, the Sunday Church School, the Choirs (Senior Choir, Junior Choir, Boys Choir, and Girls Choir), a Bible Study Group, the Zwingli Aid, The Washington Aid, Albany Aid, Missionary Circle, and Ruth Circle, with the addition of several other groups and committees as the occasion and need arises. The work of the congregation in general is administered by the pastor and the church consistory, composed of 13 able and dedicated men with the welfare and future of the congregation and of the Kingdom of God at heart.

Our congregation is a member of the South Wisconsin Synod, an acting Conference of the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin, and through this organization, of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches, it welcomes into its fellowship and membership all persons in our community, regardless of their former denominational background. As such it seeks to be and ever continue of highest service to the Community, the State, Nation, and World, to the never ending Glory and Honor of God.

## OUR MEN IN THE MINISTRY

Zwingli Church is fortunate in having had three "sons of our congregation" enter the ministry of our denomination. These men grew up in Monticello, attended schools here, and received their early Christian training in our church.



**Reverend Jacob Elmer, 1875 - 1950**

The son of one of the founders of our church, Jacob Elmer was graduated from Mission House College in 1910 and Mission House Seminary in 1913. He was ordained at Celersburg, Indiana, on October 3, 1913, and served congregations in Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois before his retirement in Freeport, Illinois, in 1947. Reverend Elmer was called to his eternal rest in March of 1950.

**Reverend Paul Edward Aultman**

Paul Aultman also attended Mission House College and Seminary, graduating from the College in 1941 and the Seminary in 1944. He was ordained in our church in June of the same year, and served from 1944 to 1948 as pastor of Trinity Church, Thornville, Ohio. In December of 1948 he was called to St. Luke's Church in Cincinnati, where he now serves as the pastor of that congregation.



**Reverend Doctor Paul J. Achtemeier**

The son of a former pastor of our congregation, Paul Achtemeier was graduated from Elmhurst College in 1949, and Union Theological Seminary in 1952. After studying abroad, he returned to Union, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology in 1958. Having taught one year at Elmhurst College, he began his work at Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1957, where he is currently professor of New Testament.





THE CONSISTORY OF ZWINGLI CHURCH  
1962

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Herman Pluss     | Calvin Derendinger |
| William Weiss    | Henry Spring       |
| William G. Meier | Elton Segner       |
| Adam Schuler     | William Moser      |
| Kermit Kammerer  | Herman Durtschi    |

Dr. C. J. Klooster, President

Frederick S. Voegeli, Secretary

Cloyance W. Karlen, Anniversary Committee Representative

THE 75th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

|                   |                     |                 |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Jacob Wittenwyler | Alfred Isely        | F. W. Schuler   |
| C. M. Stauffer    | Mrs. Wm. V. Baebler | Mrs. M. E. Lynn |
|                   | C. W. Karlen        |                 |

CONGREGATION PRESIDENTS

The following men have served as president of our congregation:

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Dietrich Freitag    | 1887 — 1899 |
| Jacob Stauffer, Sr. | 1899 — 1914 |
| John Dick           | 1914 — 1947 |
| Jacob Stauffer, Jr. | 1947 — 1954 |
| Alfred Isely        | 1954 — 1957 |
| Jacob Wittenwyler   | 1957 — 1962 |
| Dr. C. J. Klooster  | 1962 —      |

What makes a church great?

Not soft seats and subdued lights,  
But strong, courageous leadership, past and future;

Not the sweet tones of the organ,  
But sweet personalities that somehow reflect the Christ;

Not the tall towers with the chimes and bells,  
But a lofty vision of its people;

Not a big budget,  
But big hearts in big people who love and serve;

Not the amount of money received,  
But the amount of service rendered in Christ's Name;

Not a large membership,  
But God's presence and direction and power.

Not what it has done in the past,

    But what it is doing now,

        and will do tomorrow!