

In the decade of the sixties, the emphasis of the First Presbyterian Church was on developing program to utilize the beautiful new Building. In July, 1963, the Reverend John Paul Peter of Drayton Plains, Michigan, joined the staff as assistant pastor responsible especially for youth and college work. The Reverend Peter had graduated from McCormick Theological Seminary the preceding May with a major in Christian Education. His undergraduate work had been at Wheaton College. While in seminary, he had a year's training as chaplain at Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago and had counseled alcoholics at the Clyborn Rehabilitation Center, Chicago. Under Mr. Peter's guidance, the youth work, especially among college students, flourished.

An unusual and rewarding experience for both the congregation and its pastor came in 1965 when the Reverend Cutler exchanged pastorates for six months with the Reverend Reford Corr of Horsham, Victoria, Australia. The exchange was arranged at the suggestion of Janice Larsen Jeffers, a former Central Michigan University student who knew Mr. Cutler and later had settled in Horsham and met Mr. Corr.

The Reverend and Mrs. Cutler spent six weeks touring Southeast Asia on an Ecumenical Study Seminar before Mr. Cutler assumed his duties in Horsham. The Corrs spent a month visiting New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, Honolulu, and the western United States and Canada before arriving in Mt. Pleasant. The Reverend Corr, a native Australian, was educated at Ormond College of the University of Melbourne. After serving as a chaplain during World War II, he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Yarrowanga, serving there eight years before accepting the Horsham pastorate.

Perhaps the Corrs' best remembered experience during their Mt. Pleasant stay was a snow storm on Christmas Eve, giving them their first white Christmas, since they were natives of a snowless region. During his months in Mt. Pleasant, Mr. Corr visited extensively in the homes of members, becoming personally acquainted with as many people as possible. He will long be remembered for his warmth and friendliness.

The Cutlers and the Corrs met briefly at the home of the Cutlers' daughter Elinor in Lansing before the Corrs departed for Europe to continue their around-the-world tour and the Cutlers returned home where they were welcomed with a reception by the congregation on February 8, 1966.

Among the high-lights of the history of the First Presbyterian Church in the last five years was the adoption of a unicameral board in 1967 combining the functions of elders and trustees in one board.

Changes in leadership have taken place also. The Reverend John Peter resigned effective July 1, 1967, to assume duties in Bowling Green, Ohio. Soon thereafter, in August, Mr. Cutler resigned to become Minister of Parish Life at the First Presbyterian Church of Deerfield, Illinois, a rapidly growing church of two thousand members.

The Reverend Paul Barru of Alma College served as interim pastor and moderator. At a congregational meeting October 8, 1967, a pastoral search committee was elected. It included Mrs. Robert Connell, Charles Ramseth, Arthur Fountain, Rex Hewlett, Mrs. George Wheeler, Susan Juhnke, Mrs. John Wold, Richard Telfer, Gene Duckworth, Floyd Heydenburg, Bernt Nordfjord, and Mrs. John Wood. At the recommendation of the committee, January 11,

1968, the congregation elected the Reverend Malcolm Brown as pastor.

Mr. Brown was born in Detroit but moved to Muskegon while a boy. After serving in the navy during World War II, he earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan (1950) and then studied at Princeton Theological Seminary, graduating in 1953. He served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Carteret, New Jersey, from 1953 until 1961, and as associate pastor at the First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, from 1961 until 1968, when he accepted the Mt. Pleasant post.

In June, 1969, the Reverend David Van Dam became assistant pastor to work as Presbyterian campus minister. Mr. Van Dam, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, did his undergraduate work at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, and his divinity studies at Western Theological Seminary in Holland. After graduation, he served as Associate Minister at the First Reformed Church in Holland until joining the staff of the Mt. Pleasant church.

The music program of the church changed leadership in 1967, when Floyd Heydenburg resigned after sixteen years as Director of Music. Mr. Paul Schultz, of the high school music staff, replaced him, serving until the spring of 1971. In the fall of 1971, Mr. John Tousley assumed the directorship. Mrs. Harriett Collin resigned as organist in 1969 after 23 years of faithful service and Mrs. Mary Lou Robinson became organist.

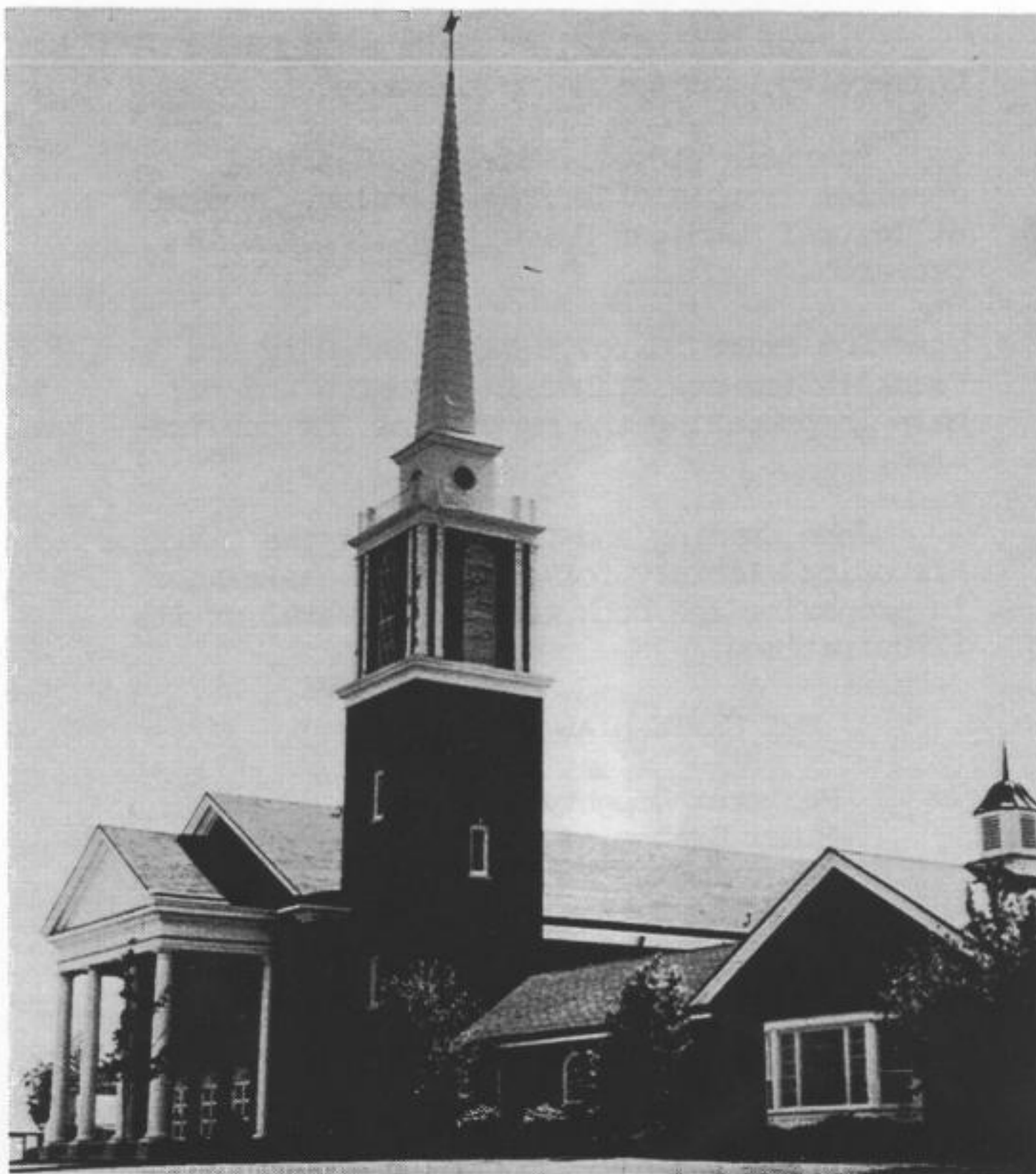
In a sense, a measure of church's effectiveness is its influence upon its youth. First Presbyterian Church has sent several fine men into the ministry since World War II. Among them have been John K. Osborn and John W. Osborn, father and son, Peter Russell, Gaylord Brunelle, Bruce Theunissen, Allen Sager, Lynn Vandebrake, and Craig Rackliffe. Miss Margaret Purchase, a graduate of Central Michigan College, became a missionary and



The Reverend Malcolm Brown, pastor of First Presbyterian Church since 1968.

now serves as Co-Secretary for the Division of Christian Education of the Near East Council of Churches with offices in Beirut, Lebanon. It has been impossible to determine how many others from the congregation have gone into church-related careers.

For one hundred years the First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant has offered Christian fellowship to all who would praise God. In meeting the challenges of the past, it has known heartache and frustration as well as joy and triumph. As the church begins its second century at the outset of the turbulent seventies, may all who would seek God's guidance look with confidence to the symbol of His love, the golden cross held high by the silver spire.



The present First Presbyterian Church with its silver spire holding high the golden cross.

In the publication of A Silver Spire, we are deeply grateful to the following:

Floyd Russell Dain, of Central Michigan University, for chapters 1--7.

William E. Franklin, of Central Michigan University, for chapters 8--10.

Victor Croftchik, of Central Michigan University, for designing the cover.

Patricia Kidwell, Margaret Gaffney, Jennifer Trap, and Jeffrey Charnley, students at Central Michigan University, for aid in research.

Lou Smith, Carolyn Dain, and Mary Lou Franklin for assistance in research and for help in preparing the manuscript for publication.

John Cumming and the staff of the Clarke Historical Library for advice and assistance in preparing the book, and for several of its illustrations.

THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE:

Margaret Doughty, Chairman
Elmer Graham
Helen Louise Hamel
Floyd Heydenburg
Verna Kemp
Rachel Loughridge
Earl Majeske
Ellen Maxwell
Jane Meyer
Janet Tuma
Marilu VanDam
Elinor Wood
Malcolm Brown, ex-officio