

The congregation had not had a permanent pastor for eighteen months. It eagerly awaited the choice of its Pastoral Nominating Committee. The Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert preached on January 17, 1982 and was immediately accepted by the congregation. A potluck was held so that Steve and his wife, Dolores (Dee), plus their four children could be met by church members. Dr. Shugert was a graduate of McCormick Seminary and came directly from Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, MD. Prior to that he had served St. Stephens Parish Kirk in Glasgow, Scotland and Presbyterian Church of Covenant in Racine, Wisconsin.

In the afternoon of April 4, 1982, the Presbytery of Lake Huron held the Service of Installation for Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant, MI. in the Watson Road edifice. The Reverend Peter Russell, Moderator of Presbytery, presided. The sermon was preached by the Reverend Brad Rohwer of Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church of Saginaw, MI. Participants in the service included the Reverend Charles House, Christian Administrative Commission; the Reverend Louis Briner, First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo; the Reverend Katherine Epperly, First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant; Ruling Elder William Franklin, First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant; Ruling Elder Garry Mesler, First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant; Ruling Elder Basil McKenzie, Breckenridge Emerson; Ruling Elder Donald Swindlehurst, Rosebush Presbyterian Church; and Dr. Steven Egler, Director of Music, First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant.

In March, the Committee of Energy Conservation reported and recommended ceiling fans for the Sanctuary and insulation of the ceiling of the sanctuary. In September, the House and Grounds Committee of the Session changed the top priorities to painting the exterior trim of the church (\$4500) and purchasing and installing storm windows (\$5500). The other two projects were completed later.

At a special meeting on April 18, 1982, the congregation took action on the approval of the sale of the Manse located at 1513 E. Broadway. The proceeds were to be put into the Pastor's Housing Fund. The Manse sold for \$54,900. The Reverend Katherine Epperly, Interim Assistant Campus Pastor, left, and Robert Decker was employed to coordinate the program. Sherry Hicks assumed the role of Coordinator of Christian Education.

The Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert focused on three areas of ministry - Worship, Pastoral Care (into 150 homes), and Program and Administration. He stated after ten months with the church, "The year 1982 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the First Presbyterian Church, with the calling of a new pastor and the marvelous spirit shown by so many eager and devoted members with sleeves rolled up ready to work."

Congregational breakfasts were held monthly on a Sunday morning. Aerobic exercise classes were held for church members and others. The church building was made available to agencies whose purposes were not inconsistent with the purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ. The church facility was used virtually every day by community groups as part of ongoing ministry of service. Many of the congregation provided leadership to these groups or participated in them. Groups to make use of the building included Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, Overeaters Support Group, Association for Inter-Faith Ministries,

Southwest Neighborhood Association, and Alcoholics Anonymous/Adult Children of Alcoholics. A pictorial directory was completed, and the Presbytery of Lake Huron was hosted in October. A separate Peace Committee was established with responsibility to the Outreach Committee. A particularly successful Adult Forum studied the book, "The Road Less Traveled."

It hardly seemed possible, but in 1983 the congregation had been in the Watson Road edifice for twenty-five years. The celebration of this Silver Anniversary, "Homecoming and Heritage Celebration," dominated the year. Co-chairpersons for the festive occasion were Floyd and Peg Heydenburg and Roy and Anne Juhnke. The celebration was held the week of October 23-30, 1983.

Twenty-five years earlier, when the church building was dedicated, the Reverend Kenneth Cutler made this profound statement, "A church should be beautiful, but when we have said this, there is still something more to say. It raises the question, is there anything deeper than the physical impressions, sensations, and stimuli which the eyes receive? Let us pray that this beautiful place be dedicated always to the purpose of opening the eyes of men to the divine realities of their lives." Those words were just as applicable twenty-five years later. Equally relevant was a prayer that Cutler included that day. It was as follows:



The Reverend Dr. Stephen F. Shugert, pastor of First Presbyterian church since 1982.

"Prayer for (of) a Church"

Though I am built of stone and sand and clay,  
I'm dedicated to Thy service here,  
To Keep this place in honor to Thy Name  
And lift my spire to things that men hold dear.

May reverence abide, and contrite hearts  
Kneel at my altars and Thy blood atone;  
May mercy light the candles at this shrine  
And justice fill the chalice at Thy throne.  
Help these, dear Lord, who gather strength in me,  
to bear forth truth unto a better day;  
As golden sunlight falls through colored panes,  
May loving kindness shine through those who pray.

Keep wide my doors that all who enter in  
May know that worship leaves no room for sin!"

Fleta Bruer Gonso

It was an occasion of re-dedication, not only of the church building but of the church members and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The week of celebration was a full one. On Sunday, October 23 the sermon was given by Dr. Harold Kaser, Moderator of the Presbytery of Lake Huron. His sermon was on the theme of the 25th Anniversary, "Ages Past and Years to Come." A feature of the service was the re-dedication of the original church bell. It had first been installed in the tower of the frame building on Court Street in 1879, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Dwight May. When the new brick building was erected on Main Street in 1907, the bell was installed there and hung for over fifty years. The Donald Goulds then had the bell for the next twenty-five years and returned it as a gift. Four generations of the Theunissen family took part in the "Ring of the Bell" ceremony.

These individuals were Lucile (held the most seniority in the church), Bill (son), Chris (grandson), and Craig (great-grandson). It could be noted that on October 22, 1988 the bell was raised to its place beneath the Silver Spire. Thirty-three former Cadet and Chancel Choir members joined the present Chancel Choir. Extra music included an anniversary celebration anthem, "Psalm 150" (composed by Dr. Austin Lovelace from Denver, CO). The anthem was performed this day by the Chancel Choir under the direction of Dr. Steven Egler. It was accentuated by the brass ensemble composed of Tim Bender, David Bush, Craig Heydenburg, and David Jansen. Harriet Abrahamson gave added beauty with the printed poem, "The Message of the Bell." The day was concluded with a dinner and a vesper service.

On Monday, October 24, there was a Chili Dinner in the Fellowship Hall. On Wednesday, there was a United Presbyterian Women Tea and an Apple Fest for Youth. Friday included a Halloween Hop and Refreshments - a Youth Retreat.

Sunday, October 30, was Reformation Sunday. The anniversary celebration concluded with a Festive Presentation of Historic Banners. This also commemorated the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther. Each banner was expertly made from fine fabric, hand-sewn, and brilliantly representing a particular Confession. Banners had been presented to the church as a gift through Memorial Funds. Makers of the Reformation Banners included Harriet Abrahamson, Pearl Armstrong, Nikoline Bye, Muriel Lakey, Louise Decker, Sue Ecker (chairperson), Mary Franklin, Becky Majeske, Peg McFarlene, Jean Mesler, Norma Richardson, Charlotte Schenkuizen, Maxine Tanner, and Ruth Wolf. The

eight banners now hang in the church sanctuary and have represented the following historic church confessions:



The original church bell that has called First Presbyterian worshipers to service since 1879. It was re-dedicated at the Watson Road church in 1983 and raised to its place beneath the Silver Spire in 1988.

1. The Nicene Creed
2. The Apostles Creed
3. The Scots Confession of 1560 (Scotland)
4. The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 (So. Germany)
5. The 2nd Helvetic Confession of 1566 (Switzerland)
6. The Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism of 1643 (England).
7. The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 1934 (Germany)
8. The Confession of 1967 (U.S.A.).

The Silver Anniversary shared emphasis in 1983 with the \$250,000 goal Capital Fund Campaign.

Clarence Tuma was General Chairman, and his committee consisted of Glenn Lowery, John Yantis, Bill Theunissen, Gerald Cassel, Aubrey and Hope Carlson, Mary Franklin, and Vern Austin. The drive realized 175 pledges for \$207,012 (over three years). The implementing of the improvements fell to a new Capital Improvement Committee. Frank Ingram chaired this important committee which also included Gerald Cassel (Finance Chairman of Refurbishing Committee), Glenn Lowery (Chairman of House & Grounds Committee), Mary Franklin, Jean Mesler, Marilyn Johns, Clare Lyle, Dick Moose, and Vern Austin. Their charge was to bring a proposal to Session which would prioritize projects to be undertaken. It was an advisory group to establish priorities, and oversee and recommend to Session the capital improvement expenditures within the money raised. This committee was kept busy over the next three years. The Capital Fund Drive had been held in conjunction with the Annual Pledge Campaign. The latter campaign totaled \$121,927 in 1983.

A Capital Fund Follow-Up Committee was appointed by Session in the fall of 1983 in conjunction with the Capital Fund Campaign. The purpose of the committee was to monitor pledge contributions during the three year period through October 1986 and to insure a high percentage of payment. It later included the tracing of unpaid pledges beyond the three year payment period.

During the year Cindy Miles replaced Sherry Hicks as Christian Education Coordinator, following Sherry's move to Texas. Pat Latus was employed for campus work. A contract was signed with I.C.T.C. for bus service to and from campus.



A festive presentation of historic Banners. Part of the 1983 celebration of the Silver Anniversary of the Watson Road church building.

The Board of Deacons started a Healing Grief Program. David Kerr gave leadership to this program. It offered a chance to take part in discussions and to share experiences with a bereavement group. It has continued to serve those who have suffered a loss by death. Group sharing, support, and education are the main parts of the program. Two other groups started within the church have included a singles group and a young couples group.