

Chapter 7

The year 1996 will long be remembered as the year that the church celebrated its 125th Anniversary. At the same time the church's other programs and services continued. These will be reviewed prior to dwelling on the anniversary celebration.

A coordinating team of Presbyterian Women made a concerted effort to involve more women of the church in the activities of the Presbyterian Women group. They made a special effort to meet the needs and schedules of more women. Nancy Telfer was Moderator of Presbyterian Women during this year. One of their first programs was the arrangement for the Reverend Alice Winters, missionary and teacher from Columbia, to visit in April. Winters was also an evangelist, writer, and professor of the Old Testament. She placed emphasis on the truth that the church can only fulfill its calling when the mission is global as well as local.

The Wesley Foundation at C.M.U. initiated an international missions project for May. It was entitled "Mission Uganda '96". Working through the United Methodist Church in Uganda, it took on the sole responsibility to construct a much needed multi-purpose building. It will be used as a community church, a health clinic, and a child day-care center. Dan Conway, US-2 Missionary and First Presbyterian Church's Campus Ministry Director, was one of a team of ten people that made the trip.

For many years, the church supported Lake Huron Presbytery's 2¢-A-Meal program. In recent years, an ever declining Costa Rica economy made it impossible for this program to continue to buy the same amount of food. In order for the partner churches not to have to cut back their feeding programs, contributors were asked to change their meal time offering from two pennies per family member to perhaps nickels, a penny and a quarter, a dime and a nickel, etc... As a result the name of the program was changed to 2-Coins-A-Meal.

The church had a new "First Lady" when the Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert was married to Wendy Eidenberger in Mt. Pleasant on April 14, 1996. The wedding immediately followed the Sunday service with many members of the congregation attending. Wendy was a Deacon in First Presbyterian Church at the time and was an active leader in the 125th Anniversary Celebration.

The Fellowship/Evangelism Committee undertook a church-wide nametags project. The names of all church members were printed on the nametags and were to be used during the 125th Anniversary year as well as the time following.

On August 11, the church welcomed to the pulpit Mrs. Barbara Fink from McAllen, TX. She is a commissioned lay mission worker of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is a volunteer worker in the Border Ministry of Southern Texas. This ministry builds bridges of Christ along the U.S.A./Mexico border. The mission teams and individuals give their time, skills, talents, and funds to this worthy project. Our congregation was invited to participate in this Christian work.

The 125th Anniversary Committee, spear-headed by co-chairpersons Ruth & Jerry Felter and Marcia & Jerry Tuma, worked diligently to spread the celebration of this special time in the life of First Presbyterian Church from January through September. The church had truly been blessed and the series of events were in thanksgiving to

God for providing members with a church home for the past 125 years. The special events planned and carried out in this calendar included the following:

January 31

Over 200 church members and friends enjoyed a catered dinner in the Fellowship Hall with an historical review program directed by Marydeana Duckworth. Participants appeared in period costume.

February 17

"Jambalaya and Jazz." A Mardi Gras celebration of the 125th Anniversary. It featured jazz music and Cajun food. "The Usual Suspects" provided the music and John Scheide acted as chief chef.

March 17

"Houses and Heifers Carnival" was held in the Fellowship hall. This event by the youth was to benefit the church sponsored "Habitat for Humanity" house. Carnival games, snack bar, and door prizes were featured. Baked goods were donated. Approximately forty participants took part in a real fun evening. Assisting in the planning was Sallie Scheide. A total of \$515 was raised, and it would buy all of the shingles at the "Habitat for Humanity" house, plus purchase livestock for a foreign family through "Heifer Project International."

April 28

This was Heritage Sunday. Individuals who had been members of the church for at least fifty years were recognized. Of the total of twenty-four honorees, nine were present at the church service where they were honored. The honorees, with the date that they joined the church, were as follows:

Lorene Francis Brown	8/20/21
*Elinor Carey	4/18/35
*William Theunissen	6/06/38
Effie May Cook	11/21/39
Ted Cook	11/21/39
*Martha Barnes	1/12/41
Margaret Wendt	1/12/41
*Douglas McFarlane	4/10/41
*Margaret McFarlane	4/10/41
*Rogene Slocum	4/02/42
Twylah Ream	10/04/42
Maryann Serier	1/02/44
*Harriet Abrahamson	4/02/44
Eileen Harkins	4/02/44
Richard Harkins	4/02/44
Ann Louise Welch	4/02/44

Sally Weisenburger	4/02/44
Eleanor Wood	10/01/44
*Pearl Armstrong	1/07/45
Seymour Brown	10/06/46
Grace Brown Hubscher	10/06/46
*Vance Orr	10/06/46
Kenneth Wright	12/15/46
Richard Elliott	12/29/46

*Were present at the service

May 10

John Scheide spear-headed one of his famous "Shrimp Boils". Chef John treated a large crowd to shrimp, potatoes, corn, hamburgers, hot-dogs, salads, desserts, and beverage.

May 18

A luncheon paid tribute to women of the Church. Past presidents of Presbyterian Women were honored. A complete list of pastpresidents is contained at the end of this history. Presidents in attendance at the luncheon were Dorothy Adams, Judy DeWitt, Sue Ecker, Margie Fountain, Lois Kerr, Diane Loeth, Margaret McTaggart, Jean Mesler, Cindy Miles, Helen Morford, Sherrie Sponseller, Nancy Telfer, and Marcia Tuma. Dorothy Theunissen, organization historian, reviewed the history and accomplishments of Presbyterian Women. A display and pictures accompanied this talk. Sherry Sponseller and Jane Yantis presented a "125 year style show".

May-August

In May, the groundbreaking took place for the "Habitat for Humanity" house, a project undertaken by the church as part of the 125th Anniversary Celebration. The location of the house was 1217 Upton St. Unfortunately the project was delayed nearly a month due to very wet weather. Church members who had designated responsibility for the actual building of the house included chairperson - Bruce Eldred, Mike Theunissen, Lou Ecker, and Marydeanna Duckworth. Clarence Tuma and John Wolf handled the fund raising for the house.

Church members, John Wolf, Ruth Felter, and Marydeana Duckworth were already serving on the local "Habitat for Humanity" Board of Directors. Approximately thirty-five church members volunteered their services toward the fulfillment of

this challenge. These services included carpentry, landscaping, furnishing snacks, painting, running errands, toting lumber and other building materials, etc., etc.. Over 600 hours were contributed by these individuals. The Nancy Sweebe family, the new owners, contributed a like number of hours.

The house was officially dedicated on Sept. 22, the day of the Jubilee Celebration (service highlighting the 125th Anniversary).

June 30

The congregation, together with guests, joined in an old-fashion Sunday after-noon celebration on the church lawn. An Ice Cream Social was enhanced by a performance by the Mt. Pleasant Community Band. The afternoon reminded those present of their many happy times together in the past.

August 6-10

Pictorial Directory pictures were taken of members of the congregation by Olan Mills Co.

August 25

A golf outing was held at "The Pines" course. It was a benefit for the Habitat House.

September 22

Jubilee Celebration: 10:30 a.m. service. Lunch followed the service. Dedication of the Habitat House was held in the afternoon. Reverend Stephen Shugert received certificate of recognition and Proclamations on behalf of the congregation from to Presbytery of Lake Huron Executive Hank Snadeher-Merier, City Mayor Sue Smith and State Representatives Jim McBride and Senator JoAnn Emmons.

Additional special features included in the year of the 125th Anniversary:

1. At the Jubilee Celebration on September 22, the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church (USA), Gay Mothershed, from Dallas, TX was the featured speaker. Her text, "Remember Who You Are," was appropriate for the occasion. Paul Willwerth prepared the text and music for a special anthem, "the Servants, Known and Unknown," which was commissioned for this anniversary. The presentation involved the choirs and guest musicians. The featured trumpet soloist was

Steven Burns from Lapeer. Previous clergy of the church, and ministers who had been sponsored by the church, who returned for the celebration included: John W. Osborn, Peter Russell, and Bruce Theunissen. Over 270 people attended the luncheon in Fellowship Hall. This was immediately followed by the dedication of the Habitat House at 1217 Upton St.

2. Many members/families of the church cooperated to furnish signatures and money to see that a beautiful Signature Quilt might be assembled. Ruth Felter spear-headed this project.
3. A picture with sketches of the three churches as well as Christmas Ornaments were produced for sale to help defray costs of the 125th Anniversary.
4. Dorothy and Bill Theunissen updated the church history, starting where A Silver Spire (1871-1971) ended, and continuing through the Jubilee Celebration of the 125th Anniversary on Sept. 22, 1996. A Silver Spire (written by Floyd Dain and William Franklin) was reproduced and combined with the new history, "Partners in Christ's Service." The combined history was printed and distributed to congregational members.