

**The History
of
Bethel United Church of Christ
Waterford, Michigan**



The Conception

Jun. 1924

Rev. A. W. Aufderhaar of the St. John's Church of Culeman, Alabama, sent a request for the founding of the Evangelical Church in Pontiac, on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Fischer and friends of the Evangelical Synod. The request was sent to the Royal Oak Church which gave Rev. W. F. Hetzel permission to organize a congregation and serve as part time pastor.

Feb. 8, 1925

Rev. Walter F. Hetzel came to serve as part time Pastor here in Pontiac. The first meeting was held in the home of Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Behm.



Jan. 3, 1926

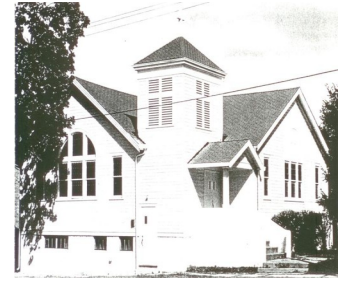
The Bethel Congregation was officially organized.

Feb. 1, 1926

All 20 members as of this date were considered Charter Members

Jun. 1, 1927

The property at the corner of Auburn and Mariva Street was purchased for \$7,800.



Apr. 3, 1927

The Church building was completed for \$5,000. The \$2,300 mortgage was paid off Dec. 31, 1946.

Aug. 3, 1928

Rev. Arthur C. Kuehn became full time Pastor.



Oct. 1931

Rev. Walter E. Uhrland became full time Pastor.

1934

The Evangelical and Reformed Churches merged.

Oct. 28, 1935

Rev. Walter E. Uhrland died.



Feb. 1, 1936

Rev. Albert H. Meyer became full time Pastor.

Mar. 15, 1936

Rev. Albert H. Meyer was installed.



Jan. 6, 1941

The Mark St. Parsonage was purchased for \$4,500.



Dec. 31, 1946

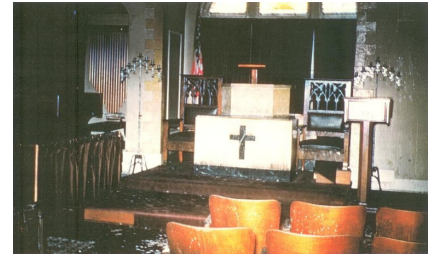
The Church mortgage of \$2,300 was paid off.

Feb. 9, 1947

The Church mortgage was officially “burned”.

Apr. 1, 1951

A fire caused \$18,000 damage to the Church. It was Palm Sunday of 1952 before it could be used again.

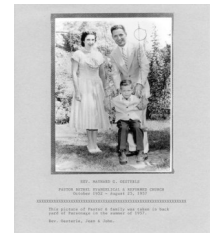


Oct. 1, 1952

Rev. Albert H. Meyer retired.

Oct. 1952

Rev. Maynard G. Oesterle became full time Pastor.



1955

Rev. Donald P. Gabler was ordained.

May 18 1957

Rev. Don Gabler & Mary Lou Weist were married.



1957

The United Church of Christ was formed from the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches with many of the Congregational Churches.

1957

The first rummage sales were started.

Jan. 12, 1958

Rev. Donald P. Gabler became full time Pastor.

Mar. 9, 1958

Rev. Donald P. Gabler was installed.

The Move

- Nov. 1959 The Congregation voted to relocate even though the Michigan Conference was against it.
- Mar 1962 a group of the building committee members attended a a three day National Conference on Church Architecture in Cleveland.
- May 1, 1962 Started the first fund drive.
- Sep. 25, 1963 The present 30 acres in Waterford was purchased for \$12,000. Les Hotchkiss & Earl Hudnell found the property.
- Feb. 1963 The Church building on Mariva St. in Pontial was sold for \$18,000.



A New Start

- Mar. 11, 1964 Started Church and Sunday School in the Wm. Beaumont School with a Wednesday evening Service. Use of the school continued until Feb 28, 1968 when we moved into our present building.
- June 8, 1965 Due the insistence of the Synod Denyes & Freeman Architects were hired.
- Dec. 1965 An 11' X 13' study addition to the Mark St. Parsonage was completed for \$1,583.
- May 29, 1966 27ft. Of our property bordering Elizabeth Lake Rd. was deeded to Oakland County for road Right of way.
- Oct. 11, 1966 Bids on the Denyes first complete design ranged from \$129,814 to 143,000 far beyond the \$90,000 maximum anticipated.

- Dec. 27, 1966 Denyes Church final blueprints were presented. Best bid was \$87,167. The Pontiac State Bank rejected the plans and bids because the cost per square foot was “much to high” when compared to the other Churches in the area. \
- May 2, 1967 Denyes & Freeman were terminated.
- May 3, 1967 The Case Construction Co. of Flint Michigan was Hired to design and build the first phase of our present building consisting of the Sanctuary, Narthex, Class room and utilities. At about \$15.00 per. sq. ft., total cost was \$78,382. Mortgaged \$54,676 at 6 1/4%. The mortgage was paid off in 1988.
- Aug. 27, 1967 Ground Breaking Ceremonies were held on our Waterford property. Guest speakers were Rev. Leanard Weigel and Waterford Township Supervisor Elmer Johnson.
- Feb. 28, 1968 The first Worship Service in our present building was held on Ash Wednesday.
- Sep. 13, 1968 The first garage was completed by members of the Cogreation. The concrete slab cost \$363.00. The building materials cost \$682.00
- Nov. 1968 The first organ of our present building was completed. It was made from a donated pipe organ console and many kits assembled by many members of the Congregation.

- Nov. 24, 1968 Our present Church was officially dedicated at a Sunday afternoon Worship Service. Guest speakers were Rev. Albert H. Meyer and Michigan Conference Minister Dr. Duanne Vore.
- Dec. 1968 The 4' wide Kitchen unit of sink, (2) burners & refrigerator was installed.
- Jul. 14, 1969 The Church parking lot 130' X 140' and 200' of driveway were blacktopped. Cost was \$4,682.00 plus \$400.00 for sealer.
- Jul. 14, 1969 The well and pump for watering the front lawn were installed.
- Feb. 10, 1970 The 21' long "Bethel United Church of Christ" sign in front of the Church was completed.
It cost \$529.00 plus lighting.
- Jun. 1970 The underground sprinkling system was installed.
- Jul. 1970 The first lawn tractor for mowing with blade for plowing snow was purchased for \$1,108.00. A lawn sweeper was purchased for \$65.00.
- Jul. 1971 The new fellowship room was completed and used for the first time. The cost was \$22,256.00 plus a new larger boiler was installed for \$2,454.00 \$14,700.00 in Faith bonds were sold at 7 1/2% interest.
The bonds were paid off in 1977.
- Dec. 15, 1971 An electric organ was donated for use in the Fellowship room by Mr. & Mrs Fred Turek in memory of Joel Wellemeyer.
- Jun. 12, 1973 The second Church garage was completed at a cost of approximately \$3,000.00. Fire codes required that it be a concrete block construction because it is so close to the other garage

Stay Tuned for more History