



# PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## HISTORIC TIMELINE

**2017** - The church library (located in the former second-floor pastor office) is completed with the addition of historical archives and artifacts dating back to Rev. Philo Pettibone's leadership during the establishment of the church in 1858.

**2016** - With renovations completed in April, the church was readied for a special dedication service on May 29 that honored memorial gifts:

New parlor door - Pat Weygand, Max Tsuchida, Bob Jay, Cornelia Snyder & Faye Gluesing

Fireplace in pastor's meeting room - Ann & John Rowntree

New dining tables - Sally Spitzer, Ann Rowntree, Agnes Oldenberg, Rod Anderson, Kathleen Cowan & Candy Soetenga

Framing historic stained-glass windows - Dorothy Baker, Tom Peacock & Kay Connor

New administrative office furniture - Dick & Sally Picazo

An open house and dedication of the new addition was held on May 22, 2016 with UCC Associate Conference Minister, Reverend Jane Anderson, providing a special sermon.

The new addition includes an administrative office on the ground floor with visibility to the front entrance and space to accommodate two church secretaries; and a pastoral suite that includes an office, bathroom, and meeting space with fireplace and kitchenette.

Renovated spaces include the foyer and front staircase, bathroom and nursery room/classroom in the Plymouth Children's Center education wing, and basement kitchen, and dining/fellowship hall. The Plymouth Children's Center was a partner in both designing and funding the changes.

**2015** - A ground-breaking ceremony was held on October 4 with members of the congregation joining Pastor Robert Wang to break the ground with gold shovels.

**2014** - The church begins a five-year capital campaign titled *Forward in Faith* to set plans in motion for an expansion project that would extend into the spring of 2016. The church received a new roof in December 2014.

**2008** - The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southeast Wisconsin Association was hosted at Plymouth Congregational UCC in April. In October, the congregation celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church.

**2000** - On May 7 a special worship service was held to dedicate the new Holtkamp organ



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1997** – An annual fundraising tradition began on Saturday, October 4 at the inaugural Chili Supper, an all-you-can-eat supper with live and silent auctions that was open to the public.

**1992** – Plymouth church undergoes extensive remodeling beginning in April. Changes include switching the main entrance from Milwaukee Street to Washington Street, changing alter position to accommodate the new entrance, raising the floor, adding an elevator, pews and a cry room, and remodeling the church's kitchen. The congregation met at the Masonic Temple during the interim. The renovated church was dedicated on Sunday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> with a ribbon-cutting ceremony between two worship services. The Rev. Robert Horst, representing the Southeast Association of the Wisconsin UCC Conference, preached and special guests attended from Fairhaven Retirement Community, Whitewater, and Mount Carmel Care Center, Burlington.

**1983** – To commemorate the church's 125<sup>th</sup> year, a Sunday service in February turned back the clock to 1858, the year of the congregation's founding. Rev. James Burd officiated with a composite sermon of the era titled, "Advice on Various Subjects." On September 11, a dinner at the St. Francis Friary honored former ministers, organists and Sunday school superintendent. Five banners were made to honor each quarter century and a special anniversary book titled, "A Heritage of Love, Faith and Hope – the First 125 Years," was published by the people of Plymouth.

A revised constitution and bylaws were put into effect and a literacy training program initiated.

**1976** – The first bell choir began which later grew to include a junior bell and junior voice as well as senior voice and bell choirs.

**1975** – A Steinway grand piano was purchased for the church parlor with a bequest from Howard de Hodson and English hand bells were acquired by the church in time for the country's Bicentennial.

**1974** – Plymouth members become further involved in the community with work done for youth, housing for the elderly and the Human Resource Center. Plymouth Day Care Center opened under the direction of Marion Rockwell with the aid of two teachers. It was the first state licensed center in the community.

**1972** – Rev. Trent Rockwell initiated Plymouth involvement with the interdenominational "Walk for Mankind," Meals on Wheels, and food/clothing distribution.

Plymouth church wins the "Lawn of the Week" award by the Standard Press for its improvements made to the grounds and "the nice way they converted the property where the Brustman house used to stand on Washington Street." Rev. Trent Rockwell and Paul Edwards coordinated the landscaping under the direction of area nurseryman, Paul Swartz.



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1971** – In the summer of 1971, “Hello People” School was made available to Burlington youth. Milwaukee inner-city youths were brought in to acquaint each group with the other’s different lifestyles.

**1968** – At an event commemorating the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church, Miss Alice E. Walter, church organist, was surprised with a special program honoring her 40 years of service. Following a potluck supper, a program both serious and humorous was presented including several brave men who appeared as models in a women’s style show titled, “This Mad Mod World.” The fashion “beauties” included Dr. Paul Gander, Paul Edwards, David Snyder and Bob Kohout. Miss Walter would continue to faithfully serve as church organist for 52 years.

Plymouth strove to gain understanding between Burlington Protestants and Catholics in 1968 with “living room dialogs” arranged for discussion of differences and misconceptions. Many youth and minority efforts were undertaken and The Friendship School for the Handicapped was opened on a daily basis (later taken over by Racine County Social Services). The church joined four other community churches to form the United Christian Youth to provide healthy activities for junior high residents. Plymouth also became part of the community group supporting the Human Rights Movement.

A preschool nursery program was set up in 1968.

**1965** – The Alcoholics Anonymous organization was allowed to use the church facilities for meetings. Another Chinese refugee, Leung Siu Kit, was sponsored by the Women’s Fellowship. The church prepared for the addition of a narthex, new pews were added, and the dining room was remodeled.

**1963** – The Rev. Trent Rockwell was called to lead Plymouth Church and the Walter Voss home on Peters Parkway was purchased as a new, permanent parsonage. The church became active in the United Church of Christ and began using the curriculum of the denomination as the official material for Sunday School classes.

**1960** – The church accepted the constitution of the newly formed United Church of Christ, making this congregation part of the “newest church” – a merger of Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed denominations.

The Ladies Auxiliary becomes Women’s Fellowship.

**1959** – A director of religious education was named to train teachers of Sunday school to use the curriculum and the audio/visual equipment.



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1958** – The church entered its 100<sup>th</sup> year with a goal in mind – spiritual progress. The church centennial was celebrated with a year-long program including Visitors' Day on April 27 for former friends and members, a banquet, a tea with members attending in costume of the past years, Covenant Sunday, when all present members reaffirmed their faith by signing anew the original covenant of faith, and a centennial pageant. Many improvements were made to the church including carpeting in the sanctuary, painting, and laying asphalt tile on the dining room floor. On Sunday, Nov. 23, the church presented a 100-year pageant depicting church history in two performances.

Tsang Seen Yee, a Chinese refugee, was sponsored by the Women's Fellowship. At the same time, much of the congregation's energy and money was spent on the Fairhaven Retirement Home project.

Plymouth began a home mission in 1958 under the Rev. Henry Schadeberg. The church aided the fellowship of the Twin Lakes Congregational Church and development of its organizations and Sunday school. The new Calvary Congregational Church was dedicated later that year, naming Plymouth as their parent church.

**1954** – A second church service was held every Sunday in the new chapel and a class was set up for the mentally handicapped members.

**1952** – Over 400 people attended the open house and dedication on Sunday, February 10, 1952, followed by a Thanksgiving and Consecration service in the evening.

**1951** – On May 20, 1951, Rev. Henry Schadeberg laid the cornerstone for an extensive church expansion that would include an educational wing called Plymouth Hall, consisting of eight classrooms, a chapel seating 80, a minister's study, and church office. The church parlor was reconstructed with a lowered ceiling. The construction required the sale and move of the Tobin house which was purchased by Russell E. Wilson who moved to 311 Edward Street. The new, two-story brick addition connected to the church on the corner of Johnson and Washington Streets. Today the space is primarily occupied by the Plymouth Children's Center, Plymouth Church's main community mission since 1979.

**1950** – The Constitution of the bylaws were amended to institute the office of Moderator, placing the Moderator as layman, previously the position was a part of the role of the Minister. Roy A. Hoffman was elected the first Moderator in 1950.

**1948** – The Plymouth Tower, a new church publication, issued its first copy beginning as a monthly newsletter that later was distributed weekly.



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1940** – With the growing conflict in Europe, the 1940s saw the start of the Mission of Peace. More than 50 church members had been personally involved with the war as young men joined the armed forces. The congregation lost three members in World War II.

**1933** – 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is celebrated with a banquet and historical program, and a new period in the life of the Congregational denomination begins. The church became known as the Plymouth Congregational Christian Church after the Congregational Christian Church is formed as a new denomination under a merger with the Christian Church, a largely New England denomination sharing similar government and precepts. From this time on, the church emphasized community involvement. Church members became active in school committees, the hospital, Rotary, Kiwanis and veterans' organizations.

**1924** – Plymouth hosts the 82<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of Milwaukee Association and Congregational Churches and Ministers, and Christian Endeavor Convention of Eastern District of Wisconsin. “Daughters of Plymouth” is organized as a young lady’s group.

**1923** – The Plymouth Club was created for younger women. It consisted of 30 members and met monthly. Projects were created and carried out to improve the intellectual, social and spiritual lives of members.

**1922** – The Ladies Aid changed its name to the Ladies Auxiliary. Along with community involvements, fundraising was added to the list of church duties. A generous annual pledge was given to the church budget from the auxiliary.

**1918** – The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church is observed. Fifty-three persons were called from Plymouth to the war. Thirty-eight members are in the Armed Forces including ex-pastor. C.G. Foltz celebrated his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday and makes history as the only surviving charter member of the Congregational church and clerk for 55 years.

**1917** – The church sponsored many newly established youth programs and made church facilities available for meetings of the YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts and Friendly Indians.

**1913** – Students from the Chicago Theological Seminary were hired to train the church’s adult choir. Choirs for youth were also set up and directed. The Boys Choir was created for grade school boys, and the Carole Choir for grade school girls. The Jenny Lind Choir was started for junior high girls. The Plymouth Choir was designed for senior high students and adults. All the choirs were joined under the title, “United Choirs.”

**1912** – A new boiler was added after water and heat lines froze during the winter. In subsequent years, the church horse sheds were torn down due to the widespread use of automobiles.



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1908 – Rev. Blyth led the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary church festivities September 13 – 15 including an anniversary service and a historical paper reading. A pipe organ was presented to the church by Henry L. Simpson, local manufacturer of lightning rods and a church member, in memory of his late wife, Lillian. The new organ was dedicated in September when Mr. Lewis A. Vantine played a recital with it. A choir of five was started, sparking interest and involvement.

1905/1906 – Purchase of a church parsonage on Kane Street and Chandler Boulevard was made in September under the Rev. Robert Blyth. It was owned and occupied by Dr. Leif Erickson, Jr., and family, who were once active members of Plymouth church.

1903 – Dedication of the new Plymouth church occurred on February 8; membership was 160.

1902 – The old church is torn down to make way for a new, larger church. Services and Sunday School were held in the Lincoln School in the interim. Laying of the cornerstone for the new church took place on July 1. The beautiful stained-glass windows from the first church were carefully removed and installed on the new building as was the original bell, “that for nearly a half century, performed the pleasant duty of calling the people of dear old Burlington to worship within its sacred walls,” Lucius W. Conkey.

1899 – The Rev. William Kilbourne inspired the congregation to build a new sanctuary.

1895 – Church records were destroyed by a disastrous fire in the Foltz store. Some of the early records and personal accounts were saved by members of the family and some of the details of the early church activities were pieced together.

1893 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of organizing the Presbyterian Church

1891 – On October 28, 1891, a special service was held where two new items were used to celebrate Holy Communion – a communion table and communion service set that remain at the church today. The table was a gift in memory of Lucius and Frances Conkey given by their children and grandchildren.

1890 – Improvements are made including a new roof, windows, pews, wall papering and painting.

1885 – The old church windows were replaced with colorful, stained glass bearing memorial texts of dedication on all but two of the windows.

1883 – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church. Organization of the Christian Endeavor on October 1.



## **PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1880** – Rev. Luman Pettibone started a boy’s athletic program which promoted gymnastics and swimming. Also, the first Christian Endeavor group started.

**1877** – The Sunday school facilities were remodeled to make them more appealing. Thomas W. Buell was superintendent of the church’s early Sunday School.

**1876** – Improvements are made including the removal of the gallery, an extension of the front and addition of a spire.

**1867** – A lecture room is built at the rear of the church and an infant class was added to the existing classes by the wife of the Rev. Sidney Barteau. When all the “followers of her little flock” were present, they numbered between 75 and 100 infants!

**1859** – A Board of Trustees is elected and a Code of Rules for membership created.

**1858** – A meeting was held at the home of Tobias VanSlyck on July 30, 1858, to take proper measures to form a Congregational Church. The event culminated on September 15, 1858, when the Plymouth Congregational Church (formerly Plymouth Evangelical) was formed and the Rev. Philo C. Pettibone was installed as the first minister. The 47 members voted to buy the frame building from the Presbyterian Society and Zabine Bliss and Samuel P. Lockwood were selected as the first Deacons, and Jacob S. Crane as the first clerk.

“At this time, a manual was given to each member of the congregation which included a strong view on slavery. Many of the early members handled slaves by directing the run-away railroad. The manual stated that anyone could become a member [of the church] regardless of the color of his skin.”

**1852** – A church building was erected and dedicated in December.

**1843** – Organization of the first Protestant Church in Burlington, Wis. on February 18. Eighteen members organized Presbyterian Church under the guidance of Rev. Stephen Peet, pioneer agent of the Home Missionary Society. The congregation met in the Academy building and Whitman School with Rev. Milton Wells first presiding and Rev. C. C. Caldwell assisting Rev. Wells and Rev. Peet. Services were suspended for a year or two except occasional services held at a school house on Spring Prairie Road.

Soon afterward, the Ladies Aid was established with a main objective to work as a nursing team to plan spiritual and social activities for the church. The women met monthly and the group raised one-fourth of the funds to construct a new church building.