

From "Outline History of the First Congregational Church, River Falls, WI"
by Stephanie Zeman, Dec. 1995
Additional history added after 1995 by various persons

1848 - Joel Foster settled in the Kinnickinnic River Valley area. He was considered the founder of River Falls.

1854 - First sermon preached by Rev. Richard Hall of St. Paul at the home of N.N. and Oliver Powell, which was on the southeast corner of Maple and Main streets.

Feb. 1855 - The church was officially organized at a meeting.

1856 - Rev. William R. Stevens answered the call to become the first permanent minister of the church.

July 1858 - The "Little Brown Church", the first official church building, was dedicated. It was on a lot on Spruce St., just off E. Cascade Ave., donated by G. W. Pratt.

1862 - Rev. William Gill became pastor.

1867 - Land along 3rd Street was donated by the Powell family to the church. Also, a cabinet organ was purchased by the church. Additionally, the church became a legally constituted body, with papers filed at the Pierce County Register of Deeds office.

1869 - The practice of selling pews annually to collect money was discontinued.

1870 - The first parsonage was built.

1875 - Rev. John Ball became pastor. His salary was \$1000, without use of a parsonage.

1876 - Rev. Theodore Jerome became pastor.

1878 - Rev. N.T. Blakeslee became pastor.

ca. 1880 - The envelope system began to be used as the way to collect weekly contributions.

1883 - Rev. C.H. Rogers became pastor.

Feb. 1884 - The new church building on the present site was dedicated.

1887 - Rev. James Whitlaw became pastor.

1890 - Rev. S.S. Grinnell became pastor.

Sept. 1893 - The Ladies Aid Society was organized. This was the forerunner to the present-day Women's Fellowship.

1895 - Rev. C.H. McIntosh became pastor.

1901 - Rev. D.B. Spencer became pastor.

1910 - Rev. William Gray became pastor.

1916 - Rev. E.W. Serl became pastor.

1918 - Rev. J.O. Thrush became pastor.

1926 - Rev. Clyde Harris became pastor.

Nov. 1932 - Fire destroyed the church building.

Sept. 1933 - The present church building was dedicated.

1943 - Rev. Keenan Sheldon became pastor.

1948 - Rev. John Fritzmeier became pastor.

1950 - The church was chosen as "Church of the Year" in Wisconsin Congregationalism.

May 1955 - The church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

1956 - The present parsonage was built, at a cost of \$20,000. Also, Rev. John Merner became minister.

1957 - On the national level, the United Church of Christ was formed with the merger of the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

1960 - The church voted unanimously to accept the constitution of the United Church of Christ. This acceptance was done nationwide in 1961.

1961 - The educational wing was added to the church. Also, the chancel was remodeled.

1962 - Rev. Stanley York became pastor.

Nov. 1975 - The mortgage papers were burned. Everything was owned free and clear.

1970 - Rev. Richard Hoblin became pastor.

1977 - The dining room area was remodeled.

1983 - Rev. Delbert Permann became pastor.

1985 - The church basement remodeling was completed and dedicated. This resulted in several new classrooms. Also, the church budget topped \$100,000 for the first time.

- 1992 - Extensive remodeling was done with fixing the roof over the educational wing, fixing the organ and tuck pointing the brick on the church.
- 1995 - The church embarked on a new strategic plan.
- 1996 - 1998 Embarked on a long-range plan for growth and expansion of the church's ministry.
- Mid-1997 - called the Rev. Beth A. Faeth as a second staff clergy with specific responsibilities in education.
- 2000 (October) - Memorial Garden established in memory of Janice Proescholdt and Julia Anne Faeth. The center piece is a statue of Jesus with his arms around some children is carved from the stump of a tree within the church yard.
- 2001 (Summer) - Complete renovation of the Sanctuary and other areas within the church building. Seed money for these projects given through several large bequests to the church.
- 2001 (September) - Embark on a capital campaign raising funds for completed renovation and Wisconsin Conference's "Forward In Faith" Initiative.
- 2001 (November) - Dedication of the newly renovated sanctuary.
- 2002 - Rev. Delbert Permann retires and becomes the interim minister at a church in Arizona.
- 2002 - Rev. Jack Kraaz is called as the interim senior minister.
- 2003 - Rev. Chris Myers is called as the senior minister.