

Livingston Free Methodist Church History

The Free Methodist Church of Livingston was organized by charter members who had been converted in the Arthur, WI revival in the winter of 1884. These charter members included Mrs. David Eustice, "Preacher Johnny" Livingston, and his mother, Jane Livingston. The first pastor of the Livingston circuit, appointed by the conference in 1887, was E. P. Tullis.

The congregation that Pastor Tullis addressed that August day in 1887 was largely of English and Irish descent. Ancestral roots, plus their new-found faith, were all they shared in common. There were farmers, lumbermen, merchants, housewives and miners. Each was a rugged individualist. These first services were held in a rented hall on Main St. It was here in the rented hall that the "Great Revival" was conducted by Rev. Frank Wolfe, in 1893. More than 100 converts swelled the ranks of the young church. Some who were converted included Aunt Jennie Livingston and her sister Grace, Mr. Noble, grandmother of Mrs. Slack, Mrs. Kohler, Harry Millard, Eugene Millard, Leora Millard, Miss Elizabeth Ferris and her brothers and sisters. It was also about this time that Mrs. Nicholas, mother of Mrs. Thomas Johnson, joined the church.

Desiring a permanent place for worship, the members purchased the front section of the hall (the rest became the John Ferris home) and moved it to the site of the present sanctuary at Barber Ave and Park Street. Services in the remodeled structure commenced on December 16, 1894.

In 1900, a Sunday school was organized by the Rev. F. L. Burns, with his wife as superintendent. A daughter, Mary, who later became Mrs. Robert Livingston, recalled that the Burns home was "two and one-half miles from church. We all walked-eleven of us-except the baby. Mother brought him along in a baby carriage."

In 1912 there was a notable revival that took place while Rev. J. Turgeson was the pastor. Many people were converted and about 25 people joined the church. Among those who joined were Miss Mable Livingston, Mr. & Mrs. George Green, Mrs. Woods, and Mrs. Ollie Kirkpatrick.

In 1932 Rev. B. T. Flannery was appointed pastor in Livingston. During his ministry there was an unusual spirit of revival. There was such an increase in attendance and membership that it was decided a new church was needed. The Sunday school became

too large for the church building, so some classes were held in the Burton home across the street (now occupied by the Darold Millard family). Some of the new members included Mrs. Roy Leslie, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Green, Mr. & Mrs. Eustice Kirkpatrick, Edward Eustice, Greta Richards, Mrs. George Coombs, Mr. Bill Lee, Dorothy and Howard Webb.

Funding for the new church was started by Billy (John William) Livingston with a gift of \$500. Rev. Flannery and Thomas Johnson were chosen to collect additional donations for the building of the new church. Mr. Almond Iverson and Mr. Wes Watson gave timber from their land to be cut for the new building. The men of the church cut the timber, and Mr. George Green, with their help, sawed the logs and made the lumber at his saw mill. Everyone worked with a willing and glad heart.

Construction on the new building began in 1936 when W. J. Eberly was the pastor. He had already built several churches in the Wisconsin Conference. He and a church committee immediately began planning for the new church. The old church was torn down, and while the new church was under construction, the congregation continued to hold services. The M. E. church offered their church for services, which was gladly accepted. The building was completed and dedicated by Rev. F. L. Baker in 1936, with the debt completely paid off.

In the early 1960's under the leadership of Pastor J. K. Peckham, the church basement was excavated and expanded. Then in 1973, Pastor Leon Rodgers was appointed to the church, and in 1974 built the current parsonage. The unique thing about the parsonage is that it is connected to the church by an underground tunnel. This enabled the parsonage to be used by the church as a fellowship hall and classroom. The church basement was then converted into classrooms.

The Livingston Free Methodist Church has had a succession of 43 pastors in its history. All of them have served the church and community well. Through years of prosperity, depression, war and inflation, the Livingston Free Methodist Church continues to add its unique emphasis on Spiritual growth and stability to the area. The church's mission is to "Love God, love people, and help others do the same", and the vision is to "Be a church making a difference in people's lives for Jesus one person at a time."

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