

## **ADDITIONAL HISTORY OF THE MELROSE PARK (IL) FREE METHODIST CHURCH**

Mike,

Here is some information that we learned about the M.P.F.M.C. over the years. You may or may not know this information. Doris and Ralph Park were very helpful to us, related to discovering these facts:

The M.P.F.M.C was originally a mission in the early 1900's. It was located on Lake Street. Eventually, it grew into a church and in 1958 the existing building was established. With the exception of the St. Charles church I believe the M.P.F.M.C. is the second oldest F.M. church in Illinois.

A very interesting book to read is entitled, "Maria." The book is about the life of Maria Manioia, who ministered in the early days of the F.M.C. in Melrose Park. She was an evangelist who would walk the streets of Melrose Park; challenging those of the Roman Catholic faith to read the Bible and not rely so much on what the priests say. If you remember, we had a bishop named Manioia. He was a relative of hers. I had the blessing to talk with him several times about ministry in Melrose Park. At the time, he pastored the M.P.F.M.C. it was primarily an Italian congregation. One of the services was actually spoken in Italian. After pastor Manioia moved on, the demographics radically changed. The Italian members relocated further west and the Hispanic people began to move into Melrose Park.

Prior to our appointment to the M.P.F.M.C. there were pulpit supply pastors for many years. Therefore, no one was really serving the community from the Free Methodist Church.

At one time, during pastor Manioia's appointment, the congregation was over 200 in membership. Sadly, as I previously stated upon his reassignment and the relocation of the Italian members; the church rapidly declined.

The building was then primarily used by renters.

We hope and pray that God will restore the rich history of the F.M.C.

I hope some of this information helps you.

Blessings,  
Jim

Pastor Jim Pagani