

Rapid City Free Methodist Church

History

In the summer of 1922, Rev. C. A. Evans, a district elder in the South Dakota Conference of the Free Methodist Church, came to Rapid City. He held tent meetings with the help of an evangelist by the name of Rev. J.T. Logan in downtown Rapid City. By fall, Rev. Evans had organized the Free Methodist Church of Rapid City with 18 members. The first worship service and Sunday School was held above the old Behren's Furniture Store at 606 Main Street, Rapid City. Church was held in various locations until Rev. Evans built the first mission building at 504 Main Street.

Rev. G. A. Evans, brother of C. A., was appointed pastor and served two years, living in the first mission building. Rev. C. A. Evans lived in Rapid City and served as the conference district elder. When Rev. G. A. Evans was appointed to Ortleby in the fall of 1925, Rev. C. A. Evans once again became pastor of the Rapid City Church relinquishing the office of district elder. Early in his second pastorate the first mission building was sold to the Salvation Army, and Rev. Evans erected a new mission building at 505 Main Street, across the street from the previous building. Rev. C. A. Evans served as pastor of that church until 1942.

Following Rev. C. A. Evans, the church has been served in that location by these pastors: Rev. Omar Schantz (1942- 45); Rev. C. E. Odermann (1945-50); Rev. G. H. Bonney (1950-53); Rev. D. J. Rogers (1953-55); and Rev. D. L. Spicer (1955-57).

During Rev. D. L. Spicer's pastorate and under his leadership, the building at 505 Main Street was sold to the Rapid City Journal and the site on South Canyon Road purchased and the present building erected. The first service was held on Sunday, August 18, 1957, in the new church.

The following pastors have served at the Rapid City Free Methodist Church: Rev. E. C. Pepple from 1957-1964; Rev. Robert Potts from 1964-1973; Rev. Thomas Ramundo from 1973-1978; Rev. Charles Frankenfeld from 1978-1982; Rev. Charles Fender, Jr. from 1982 – 1988; Rev. J. Wesley Wilson from 1988 – 1990; Rev. Ron Pulscher from 1990-1995; Rev. J. Wesley Wilson from 1995-1996; Rev. Robert Wittstruck from 1996-2001; Rev. Dean Ewing from 2001-2002; Pastor Joel Morris from 2003-2006; Rev. Doug Heck from 2006 – 2013.

In October of 2013, Paul Muller was appointed pastor by Conference Superintendent Mark Adams and the name was changed to Freedom Church, also known as Freedom Motorcycle Church. Renovations of the building took place at this time as well. Paul Muller resigned in August of 2015 with Jacki Basener serving as interim pastor until December of 2015 when Brett and Linda Hilgamann were appointed. The church has had its ups and downs with membership coming and going, but through it all, the Lord Jesus has been at work and lives have been changed, renewed and transformed. God is good and God is faithful. Blessed be His name.