

## HISTORY OF RICHLAND METHODIST CHURCH

The original settlers were largely from Germany, and for some time were affiliated with a German Lutheran church at McConnell.

At the Easter service at Basswood a visitor asked Rev. Schreiner if he would be willing to come to Richland as preacher for the people there. This was in 1871. An appointment was made and at the first service 70 people were present. At the second service on Ascension Day, 140 people were present. The following fall of 1872, three preachers held a basket gathering at which a number of people were converted and a class of 12 members was organized. This created enmity in the community with the result that the school house which had been used for the services was locked.

At this time a Wm. Zipse opened his house in which services were held. During the winter of 1871-1872, a great revival was held in the Zipse home in which 45 people were converted most of whom joined the church.

A church was built in 1873. The first Richland Church group officially were known as Richland Methodist Episcopal Church of the Northwest German Conference. German services were changed to English in 1884.

In 1899 the new church was partially destroyed by fire. During the same year the church was repaired, decorated, and the steeple was built.

In 1930 the congregation, together with the German Conference, became part of the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Church.

A second hand piano was purchased for \$20 in the spring of 1935. New song books were bought in 1936.

General repairs in 1941 in July: paint interior, electric lights installed with meter hook up on Aug. 5, 1941. New pulpit carpet cost \$488. On Aug. 10, 1941 a re-dedication service was held at 8:00 P.M.

April 19, 1942 an American flag was presented to the church by Robert F. Koenig of Freeport.

Sunrise service on March 28, 1948 was called off because of bad roads at Richland. The union service was held at Red Oak at 10:30.

On Sept. 19, 1948 the church celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the church. The district supt. of the Rockford district was the morning speaker. A former pastor who was then serving in Chicago spoke in the afternoon. Another former pastor was the evening speaker. Special music and greetings from former members in the afternoon and evening. Many people were entertained in various homes for the dinner and supper meals. The offering that day was \$56.00.

The congregation voted to cease having services in June 1959. Later, the church was officially closed.

A group of people felt the need for an evangelistic church in this area. They sought the services of Rev. Lyle Babcock. The church was reopened on April 29, 1962 under the auspices of the Free Methodist Church which is a separate denomination. Rev. Lyle Babcock, founding pastor, continues to serve the Lord in this house of worship as he has for 45 years.

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