

Salem United Methodist Church 177 Years of Gospel Witness

I. Beginnings

- a. **1844** – Established as a Presbyterian Congregation.
- b. **1848**—the original wooden frame Church is constructed in what is now the eastern most section of Salem Cemetery. As was the custom the Church grounds were used as a burial site for Church members.
- c. **1864**---The first Methodist-Episcopal Pastor, Reverend Aaron Connor, is sent to Salem Church.
- d. **1864—1880 (approx)** – Presbyterian congregation and Methodist- Episcopal congregations share the Church.
- e. **1880** – Salem Church becomes an official Methodist –Episcopal congregation.

II. Salem Church and Salem Cemetery

a. **Late 19th Century**—Salem Church is deeded to the Salem Cemetery Association. There is no known record of why the transfer of ownership was deemed necessary. The Salem Cemetery Association leased the building to the Salem congregation for one dollar a year. That practice continued until 2009. At that time rising utility costs for the old building coupled with maintenance costs made it economically unfeasible for the congregation to continue to hold worship services and fellowship gatherings in the old Church.

- b. **2009** – The congregation begins holding services in the fellowship hall.
- c. **2021**--- The old Church is maintained by the Salem Cemetery Association.

III. The Church Building

- a. The original structure did not have a basement.
- b. **1880's** –During a storm, the Church building is blown off of its foundation. Miraculously, there was minimal damage to the structure.
- c. **1903**—The Church catches on fire and burns when sparks from a passing piece of equipment land on the building.
- d. **1903**—Church members rebuild the Church at a cost of approximately \$2500.
- e. **1960**--- The Church is moved from its original site to its current location. A basement and an office were added to the original structure. Indoor plumbing was added.
- f. **2009**—the congregation moves from the old Church to the fellowship hall for worship services and other gatherings.
- g. The stained glass windows in the Church building were purchased by individual families from the congregation. A donor recently paid to have one the windows that had been broken repaired to its original condition.

IV. Pastors

- a. Approximately 65 Pastors have served Salem Church. Since **1864** all Pastors have been Methodist. The exact number is not known owing to the fact that for a period of 12 years in

the late 19th and early 20th Century the pulpit was staffed by seminary students from what is today Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston Illinois.

V. Salem Cemetery

- a. **1844**—first burial takes place in the cemetery.
- b. The oldest section of the cemetery (eastern most area) is on the South Shore Civil War Trail, a listing of cemeteries with a significant number of Civil War veterans. c. The Calumet Region Civil War Preservation Project provided new tombstones for many Civil War Veterans.
- d. Many of the Civil War veterans buried in Salem Cemetery fought with the 9th Indiana Infantry and participated in the siege of Vicksburg, the Battle of Stones River, Shiloh, Chickamauga, and the siege of Atlanta. The 9th Infantry is famous for constructing the Hazen's Monument in Tennessee following the bloody battle of Stone River. It is the oldest Civil War monument in the nation.
- e. The cemetery is the final resting place for veterans of every military engagement of this nation from the war of 1812 to the present.