

Through the Grace of God: The History of the Freeland United Methodist Church

The Freeland United Methodist Church was founded in 1846 during the days of ox teams, pioneers and wilderness. It was just five years after the first meeting Tittabawassee Township held in Obadiah Crane's cabin, that Joseph King, a settler of two years led a small group of people in organizing a Sunday School.

This school, founded by Methodist pioneers, was the beginning of the society which is now known as the Freeland United Methodist Church.

The first services were held in the King log cabin during the winter and in a log barn in the summer. In 1854, the King School House was built on land donated by Joseph's son Phenious Noble King. In 1857, King School House became a "preaching point" on a circuit in which a minister conducted regular church services. The circuit included Midland, Bluff, Swan Creek and Shields.

In 1879, the parishioners felt they could support a minister of their own and in 1874 the first church was built on land given by Phenious Noble King. Luman Maccomber, who was the carpenter contractor, erector, erected the building at a cost of \$300 during the pastorate of J. D. Sparling.

The first parsonage was built in 1880. It was moved to 3rd St when a new brick parsonage was constructed next to the church in 1911.

It was in 1919, during John Black's pastorate, that the next church building was built. Louis Munger and his crew erected the church. The white oak 12x12 timbers from the original 1874 church were used along with the joists and studs. The lovely stained glass windows were all donated.

From time to time additions and improvements were made to the properties, including the remodeling of the brick parsonage in 1954 and the construction of the Sunday School sing in 1958. Some years later, the church tower was taken down and a narthex and library/lounge was added.

In May 1991, a new parsonage was purchased at 7801 N. River Rd. The 1911 brick parsonage was sold and moved to 2nd St. in the summer of 1992.

In 1988, a long-range building plan was approved by the Administrative Board. Land around the church was cleared for future use by moving three buildings off church property. A parking lot was built to the east of the church. In 1997, a building committee was formed to plan a new worship facility. On April 19, 2000, architect drawings were presented to the church conference. The design was accepted and fund-raising was approved.

Ground-breaking for the new church took place on September 19, 2000. Pumford Construction was selected as the general contractor for the construction of the new facility. Many features of the old church were incorporated in the new church. These include the stained glass windows, altar pieces, portions of the altar railing, and the steeple which is positioned near the entrance of the new building. New features of the church include a cathedral ceiling, church offices, classrooms, a large fellowship hall, food preparation area, handicap accessibility, and multimedia presentation technology. In total, the new church is 11,240 square feet at a cost of 1.6 million dollars.

The Freeland United Methodist Church is the oldest ongoing institution in Tittabawassee Township. On May 13, 2001, the first worship service took place in the new church and a new chapter in the history of the Freeland United Methodist Church began. We praise god for the years of caring ministry to the people of this community. Written in 2001