

A BRIEF HISTORY

of the

СОНАГ УНИТЕД МЕТОДИСТ ЧУРЧ

(1870-2000)

A church having borne witness to the Gospel for a portion of three centuries.

(Compiled from historical accounts from the 1971 Centennial Publication, old newspaper articles, and other recollections. Much of the content is written in the form of its originality.)

Everything Has Its Time

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace."

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Roll of Pastors

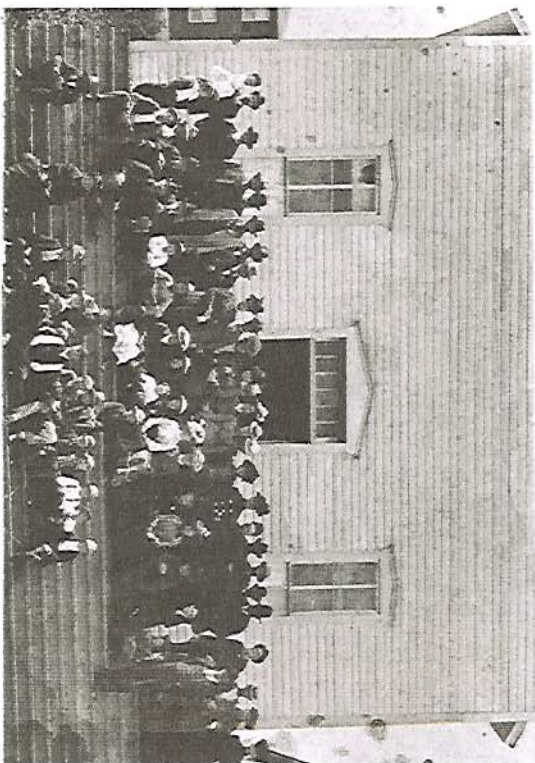
Loyal United Methodist Church

(1870-present)

1870	Rev. John Graves
1871 (fall)	Rev. Samuel E. McLain
(Fill-in)	Rev. S. P. Waldron
1873 (March)	Rev. M Woodley
1873-1875	Rev. John Holt
1875	Rev. John J. Garvin
1876	Rev. J. N. Phillips
1878	Rev. Benjamin Reeve
1879	Rev. J. P. Greer
1880	Rev. C. C. Swartz
	Rev. J. J. Austin
-Local Pastors serving were John Graves, L. Allen, B. M. Fullmer	
1882-1883	Rev. B.M. Fullmer
	Rev. G. W. Case
1883-1885	Rev. G. N. Foster
1886	Rev. W. E. Daughly
1887-1888	Rev. L. W. McKibbin
1888-1889	Rev. Mardin
1889-1890	Rev. James Connor
1891-1892	Rev. James Ford
1893-1895	Rev. S. A. Hoffman
1896	Rev. W. J. James (assist. pastor)
1897-1899	Rev. T. O. Knudson
	Rev. George Brown
1899-1900	Rev. Dan Thomas
1900-1905	Rev. James A Hill
1905-1907	Rev. J. T. Bryan

Roll of Pastors (cont.)

1907-1909	Rev. C. H. Towne
1909-1912	Rev. E. R. Kildow
1912-1913	Rev. Nelson J. Alderson
1914-1916	Rev. Thomas Harris, Rev. W. P. Powell
1916-1917	Rev. Wilkie C. Clock
1917-1919	Rev. E. E. Strevey
1919-1923	Rev. J. Henry Chatterson
1923-1927	Rev. W. J. James
1927-1930	Rev. Grier C. Wadding
1930-1931	Rev. V. C. Kegley
1931-1933	Rev. W. Norman Grandy
1933-1936	Rev. Austin N. Chapman
1936-1939	Rev. Raymond J. Flenning
1939-1942	Rev. O. A. Jewell
1942-1946	Rev. Myron Taylor
1946-1952	Rev. Lee Holmes
1952-1954	Supply Pastors & Lay leaders
1954-1955	Rev. Willard Mecklenburg
1955-1956	Rev. Charles Swanson
1956-1958	Rev. Wendell Bennett
1958-1960	Rev. Alford E. Atwood
1960-1966	Rev. Paul Doering
1966-1968	Revs. Lelan & Ellen Shaw
1968-1971	Rev. Conrad Mickelson
1971-1977	Rev. Gene Carlson
1977-1983	Revs. Charles & Lurinda Sanford
1983-1991	Rev. C. Arlene Denzer
1991-1996	Rev. Steve Groves
1996-1997	Rev. Sharon Stewart John
1997-present	Rev. Evan G. Butterbrodt



IN THE BEGINNING, it was the original platting of the Village of Loyal in 1870 when the first firm foundation of the Methodist Church was laid. Before coming to Loyal Township, Rev. John Graves, a minister at Wautoma, platted the land for a church.

The Loyal-Greenwood charge of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been set aside in 1870. At the annual conference in the fall of 1871, Rev. Samuel E. McLain was appointed to serve the charge.

According to the records he must have worked to organize a church by December 3, 1871. The charge to which he was assigned included the area beyond what is now Christie, north to Longwood, east to Ripplinger and then to Dorchester. Then the boundary turned south to McMann's Corner, better known as Mannville and followed back in the general direction of Christie.

Rev. McLain traveled these trails along with the help of many local preachers, both ordained and self-appointed, but not officially recognized. The original charge had a transfer of members from the Neillsville circuit. There were 51 who transferred, as well as 9 others who transferred by letter on or before that December 3rd.

OUR HISTORY — 1880-2005

The history of York Center Church really began in 1872, with Rev. McLain as pastor receiving a salary of \$500.00. The first church services in the area of York Center were apparently held in a schoolhouse near the County Farm. The County Farm was located between Neillsville and the present York Center Church on what is now County Road C. Many of the families had moved here from the southern counties of the state. They came in covered wagons, with little money to purchase land. They only found dense woods with few roads or trails and almost no bridges. Mr. & Mrs. William Rowe and Walter were among the first. Land was purchased for one dollar an acre, log buildings were built and the land was prepared for farming.

In 1873 a new log schoolhouse was built, one quarter mile west and one half mile north of the present church. Circuit riders held church services there until the new church was built. Adonijah Benedict and his family came to York Center that year. He became instrumental in organizing the Sunday School and served as its leader.

In 1879, Greenwood/Loyal charge separated and became Loyal/Spencer/York Center charge. They were served by Rev. J. P. Greer until September 1881. He lived in Spencer and came on horse back to Loyal and York Center. He helped plan the building of the church with the help of Burt Lindsley and Burton Lawrence. They also plotted out the cemetery.

The east wing of the church was built in 1880. Six acres of land was given to the community by the Fox River Lumbering Co. for the church and cemetery. The church was built from logs cut from this land. Many helped cut and haul logs to the mill, clear the land and hew out the blocks for the first foundation. The church was filled from the start with families coming from miles around. Homemade benches and seats were placed around the edge and chairs were placed in the center. The pulpit and altar were added later. In 1884 Rev. G. N. Foster started the permanent records of Loyal and York Center. These early records were kept in Spencer but were destroyed by fire in 1886.

The first ministers, until about 1884, only served a year at a time. The Sunday School, in early years, began at 1:00 PM and lasted 1 hour. At 2:00 PM the preacher presided for 1 hour, followed by what was called a "class meeting". It was really a testimony meeting. A member of the church would go up and down the aisles and ask what was the condition of their souls, or how they were faring, etc. This kind of put the members in a squeeze, as some of them may have been heard getting their cows out of the corn in the morning and it wasn't too peaceful.

In cold weather, the congregation would sit around the wood stove. After the pews were installed or during an afternoon service in warm weather, some of the older men's heads would nod and their eyes assumed a resting position.

The earliest mention of a name for the church is in the conference yearbook of 1894. The District Superintendent says in his report, "We have had two camp meetings in the District, one at York Center with much profit to that rural district". This location was previously known as Location #25, then it became Turner District, then Wilcox, and later York Center. The York Center camp meetings were held on the SW corner of 10 acres, leased from William Rowe, that adjoined the church grounds. They met under a large tent and the meetings lasted for 1 week each summer.

The remodeling and enlarging of the church began during the pastorate of Rev. Knudson in 1897. The changes consisted of an annex and belfry on the west, new windows, concrete steps at the entrance, new pews, new pulpit and bell. Re-dedication services were held in February 1899. The sheds that housed the horses during services were on the west side of the church. The first stall was the preacher's, that was understood.

About this same time, some members wanted an organ. Arguments arose, as some of the congregation were absolutely against having music in the church. The church soon divided into 2 groups. George Lindsley took their organ from home and put it in the church. Those people not wanting the organ left and formed a new church, called the Free Methodist Church. This church stood about one mile north of York Center church. Later a new Kimball organ was purchased and used for more than fifty years.

In 1903 York Center's \$75.00 debt was paid. Rev. W. J. James served as pastor from 1923-1927 and had served here as an assistant pastor in 1896. During that year he recalls that he was called "the boy preacher of the conference". He couldn't vote until after his first service at York Center. Some of the changes during his ministry were: The Sunday dinner was prepared on Saturday so that there had to be no cooking on Sunday. It was considered wrong to slave on Sunday, or to blacken shoes. There were no baseball games on Sunday, no picnics were held on Sunday, and no Methodistist would dance - ever.

In 1933 a new roof was put on the church. In November of 1941 redecorating started on the interior of the church. Nu-Wood was used and completely covered walls and ceiling. The Nu-Wood cost \$250.00.