

Still going strong

Gunnisonville church celebrates 100th

It has been a year of celebration for the United Methodist Church of Gunnisonville in DeWitt Township. Members have spent the year celebrating its 100th anniversary.

'It's been a super year. It's just been wonderful.'
Florence Hartman

In January 1862, residents in the Gunnison area met at the schoolhouse, which is located across the road from the United Methodist Church, to organize the first religious services. The congregation is 125 years old, it's the building that reached 100 this year.

Gunnison is now known as Gunnisonville, and the one-room schoolhouse is unoccupied, but a strong congregation still attends the old country church on the corner of Wood and Clark roads.

In 1885, the Ladies Aid was organized and under-

various celebrations throughout the year and is working on a scrapbook.

"We've had potlucks, breakfasts, and hymn sings," says Florence Hartman. It's been a super year. It's just been wonderful."

In mid-September, the church held a large

celebration, which was attended by many members of the community. On Nov. 6, the committee set up a large dinner for members of the congregation at the church. According to Florence members attending ranged from 87 years of age to 3 weeks.

One project the com-

mittee is very proud of is a walnut scrapbook made by Merl Trowbridge. It contains the history of the church and photographs marking the events of this centennial year.

Most members of the congregation have been involved with the church for years, according to Lois. "Most of us grew into adulthood in this church," adds Lois.

"I can't imagine going to another church," says Florence. "We're very close. New members say they feel so welcome and the community is so warm."

It is the members of the church who support the church and supply it with the many needed items. Vergiline Zeeb donated an organ to the church, according to Florence.

"Even the people who are not members here feel connected," explains Lois. "When we've needed help they pitched in. People are committed to this area. Gunnisonville is our home."



The Centennial Celebration Committee

In 1885, the Ladies Aid was organized and undertook the building of a new church. The land on the corner of Wood and Clark roads was donated by the Phillip Kraus family for the new church site.

The Sons of Temperance, the Ladies Aid, and the community banded together to build the new church and in the spring of 1888 it was completed. The first service was held in the new church on Nov. 4, 1888.

The church has been known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Gunnisonville Community Church, and is now known as the Gunnisonville United Methodist Church:

The church has had its ups and downs over the years, according to congregation members, but there have always been a few faithful followers who have kept it open. There are presently 67 official members.

A Centennial Celebration Committee was created this year to set up events celebrating the church's 100 years. The committee consists of Lois Rhynard Baumer, Florence Hartman, Nancy Hartman Baker, Phyllis Rhynard, Kathy Rhynard Hundt, Lorraine Wright, Althea Placer, Margaret Stampfly, Katie Baker, and the late Gladys Coulter.

The committee has been meeting over the year, according to Lois Baumer. She says the committee has set up



Marker Dedication Sunday, Sept. 18, 1988



CENTENNIAL MARKER — The building centennial marker was presented to the oldest members of the church. Present at the ceremony were Rev. Carl Staser, Cecil J. Rhynard, Margaret Stampfly, Jerry Roe of the Michigan Bureau of History, Mildred and Oliver Angell, Ina Cook, and Evelyn Case. Courtesy photo.