Centennial Milestones

Covenant's Historical Timeline

Published in June 2023 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of our building (dedicated as Spencer-Ripley Methodist Episcopal Church on June 24, 1923)





The church in 1923 (left) and 2023 (right)



Creating a spiritual home for as many people as we can

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF COVENANT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1884 – Sunday School formed at Central Park and Niagara St. in Rochester

1886 – On September 12, Central Park Mission started at Central Park and Fourth Street, where a chapel was built; the first pastor was appointed.

1887 – On November 16, the church was organized as the Central Park Methodist Episcopal Church.

1889 – The chapel was physically moved to North Goodman Street. On December 11, the church was renamed the Spencer-Ripley Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, in honor of Mrs. Lucina Spencer-Ripley who contributed \$4,000 for a new building.

1890 – On Dec. 2, the new Spencer-Ripley Church was dedicated at 654 North Goodman St., corner of Emma St. (later renamed Ripley St.). The chapel was retained and used for Sunday School. [Photo from 1920]

1895 – The chapel was enlarged and connected to the main building.

1912 – On October 8, North Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church (founded in 1850 and located on North Ave., later renamed North St.) merged with Spencer-Ripley Church.

1915 – Because of overcrowded conditions, the trustees started the search for another location to build a larger structure.

1916 – Spencer-Ripley bought land on Culver Road at Parsells Avenue (which, at that time, was just over the city line, in Brighton).

1917 – World War I halted building plans; the trustees decided to renovate the existing structure in the interim.

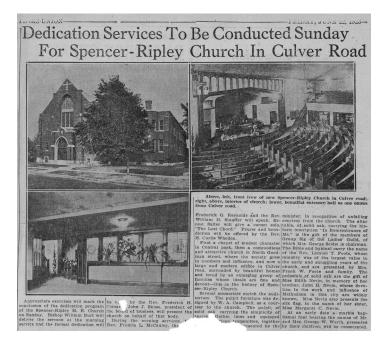
1921 – Feb. 25: Church on North Goodman St. was gutted by fire; services thereafter held at School #11 on Webster Avenue. [Newspaper article from the *Rochester Times-Union*, Friday February 25, 1921.]



1922 – On May 21, the cornerstone was laid for the new building. Worship continued to be held at School #11 until August, when services were conducted in a tent on Parsells Avenue [shown below in a photo from August 1922] on land now occupied by an apartment building adjacent to the Golden Fox parking lot. Then worship was held in the fellowship hall (basement) of the present building starting in mid-September as the sanctuary wasn't ready yet. In August, the Goodman St. building was sold to the Full Gospel Church of God (later renamed Bethel Full Gospel, which relocated in 1953 to East Ave.)



1923 – On June 24, the new church building was dedicated. [Newspaper article below is from the *Rochester Times-Union*, Friday June 22 1923; photo of chancel featuring then-pastor Rev. Dr. Milton Butler Pratt and choir is from 1923 or 1924]





1925 – On December 13, the pipe organ was dedicated. [Photo from the cover of the organ dedication bulletin]



1928 – Parsonage purchased. It had been built in 1920, but the church didn't own it originally.

1937 – Celebration of the fiftieth (Jubilee) year of Spencer-Ripley's founding took place October 27 through December 5. [Newspaper article from the *Rochester Evening Journal*, May 29, 1937]





1943 (Dec. 26) - 1949 (March 13) – Memorial stainedglass windows installed in the sanctuary; total cost \$7,503. [The Resurrection Window is shown below]

1953 – On Nov. 22, the remodeled chancel was dedicated, including a new altar (white with carved Alpha and Omega symbols). [Photo from 1959]



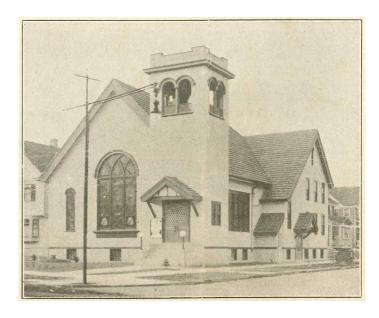
1959 – On April 26, the new chapel and Sunday School facilities were dedicated (including class-rooms created in a previously unexcavated portion of the basement). [Photo of the chapel taken in 1959 by Jim Robbins of Graflex]

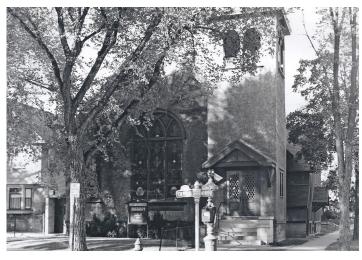


1962 – New church offices were constructed under east balcony. Also, celebration of the 75th year of the church's founding took place October 21-28.

1968 – Two denominations, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, merged to form The United Methodist Church.

1969 – On May 8, Spencer-Ripley Methodist Church merged with Calvary Evangelical United Brethren Church to form Covenant United Methodist Church. (Calvary E.U.B. was founded in 1896; a chapel on Ontario St. was built in 1898; congregation relocated to a new building on Culver Rd. at Melville St. in 1914.) With two buildings located within a block of each other, the merged congregation rented the Calvary Church building to NEAD (North East Area Development). [Photos of the Calvary Church below are, respectively, from April 1919 and October 1961]





1971 – Covenant facilities used by the Kiddie Town Day Care Center; it closed in 1974.

1973 – Covenant joined with six other area churches to form NECC (North East Church Cluster).

1974 – The Calvary Church building was sold to NEAD. [Later, NEAD also sold it; the First Rochester Spanish Church was located there for many years. In 2010, it became Iglesia De Dios El Alfarero Divino (Church of God the Divine Potter), an Assembly of God congregation.]

1976 – On June 9, Monroe Avenue Methodist Church merged with Covenant U.M.C., and the Monroe Foundation was established. [Alexander St. M.E. Church was founded in 1852, a building was dedicated in 1854; the congregation moved to the corner of Monroe and Averill avenues in 1893 and the name was changed to Monroe Avenue M.E. Church. The church existed there until May 18, 1973, when it was destroyed by fire. Photos below show the Monroe Avenue Church in 1966, followed by how it looked after the 1973 fire.]





1977 – House and lot on Parsells Avenue purchased, house demolished and parking lot extended to include this property.

1978 – Pew cushions placed in all the pews except the ones in the balconies.

1982 – Enclosure at back entrance built (this was replaced by the current entrance in 2019).

1985 – Ceiling fans installed in the sanctuary.

1986 – Wooden cross over the altar in the sanctuary dedicated in memory of Ward & Mary Turner.



1987 – Ceiling fans installed in the chapel as a memorial by the Gordon family.

1988 – Ceiling fans installed in the parlor as a memory to Ruth Foos.

1989 – New hymnals purchased by donations from members and money from the Memorial Fund. That edition of the *United Methodist Hymnal* was innovative for its time, and it's still in use.

1990 – Wooden cross installed in the chapel in memory of the Huser family.

1993 – The sanctuary floor was refinished and carpet was replaced in the sanctuary, chancel and narthex. The fellowship Hall floor was replaced; it had been damaged in a heavy rainstorm in 1992.

1994 – On November 18, "Catacombs Coffeehouse" opened in the basement and was in operation for several years. Also that year, the flat roof over the classrooms was stripped of asbestos and rebuilt; all other roofs except over the sanctuary were redone.

1995 – Men's and Ladies' bathrooms on main floor were renovated with drop ceilings and an automatic vent system. (These old bathrooms were replaced during the UpLift renovation.) The church offices were renovated; a central air and heating unit was installed. And the sanctuary was painted.

In September 1995, Covenant launched "The Cave" youth ministry (a weekly program for teens in the basement featuring a pool table and foosball). By 1998, Parsells Avenue Community Church became a partner in this ministry. [Photo below is from 1999; the adults standing in the rear are Andy and Dawn Taylor (of Covenant) and Rev. Bob Morgan (of Parsells).]



1996 – The Men's and Ladies' restrooms in the basement were completely renovated, including installation of a shower in the men's room.

1997 – Covenant purchased property at 1199 Culver Road for a Teen Mothers daycare; the building was then renovated and equipped. [The daycare transitioned to Franklin High School in 2001-2002, under private ownership. In 2010, the property was sold to Second Life Bikes, but was foreclosed and sold at public auction in 2016. The building was later razed and is now a community garden run by St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church.]

2012 – On September 30, Covenant, at its Church Conference, adopted an inclusive "Welcome Statement" and approved Covenant's "Safe Sanctuaries" Policy to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Welcome Statement

Reflecting the universal and inclusive love of Jesus Christ, Covenant United Methodist Church is called to create a spiritual home for as many people as we can.

Covenant ministers with our local and global neighbors, with special sensitivity to people who have been marginalized by society or by the Church.

We welcome all whom God brings into this faith community regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, family system, socioeconomic status, or physical or mental ability.

Covenant values the diverse gifts of all people reflective of God's universal gift of grace.

2013 – On October 6, Covenant, at its Church Conference, adopted a resolution designating Covenant United Methodist Church as an affiliate member of the Reconciling Ministries Network.

2015 – On July 26, Covenant approved a project to stabilize and restore the brick exterior of the church building.

2016 – A water pipe burst and flooded The Historic Parsells Church on February 17; that congregation began holding worship services at Covenant on February 21. On September 11, "Praise and Play" was launched, featuring worship and Bible stories for families. In October, the "Blessing Box" was installed on the front lawn of the church. And in December, the New York Kachin Baptist Church began renting the chapel for their worship services.

2018 – Covenant began the "UpLift" accessibility project to install an elevator, build a new entryway and create accessible restrooms.

2019 – Covenant held the "UpLift" celebration on April 14, dedicating the improvements which made the building fully accessible. [Below are photos showing the new addition and the April 14th service.] On May 1, Dharma Refuge, a Buddhist sangha, began renting space on the second floor.





2020 – On March 18, the first weekday "time of prayer and meditation" was held online as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic; this was the beginning of what would be called "Reflections on the Roc." The pandemic prevented public gatherings. On March 22, the first online-only worship service was held; in-person worship did not resume until February 21, 2021.

2021 – On May 10, the "Covenant Table" meal ministry began.

2023 – On June 25, Covenant held a celebration marking the building's centennial.

1124 CULVER ROAD BUILDING EXTERIOR THROUGH THE YEARS



Photo by the architects, featured in Monograph of the Work of Gordon and Kaelber, published in 1923 (the book also featured the Eastman School of Music, completed in 1922)



Photo taken in 1957 for the capital campaign brochure raising funds for classroom renovations (the bus loop for the Parsells city bus route is in the foreground; it's now a parking lot)



Photo taken on May 18, 2023

PASTORS OF ALEXANDER STREET/ MONROE AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH

PASTORS OF NORTH STREET METHODIST CHURCH

Years of Pastorate	<u>Name</u>	Years of Pastorate	<u>Name</u>
[Before ch 1842-1845 1845-1852	nurch was established] Nathan N. Beers (Supply Pastors)	<i>[Before ch</i> 1849, April 1 1849, April 8	ourch was established] John E. Robie Daniel D. Buck
	urch was incorporated]	1849	Sevellon W. Alden
1852-1855	Alpha Wright	[Once chu	rch was incorporated]
1855	Thomas Stacey	1850	Sylvester Laurentus Congdon
1856-1857 1858-1859	Elijah Wood John G. Gulick	1851	(Supply Pastors, incl. Sanford
1860-1861	Israel Herrick Kellogg		Van Benschoten)
1862-1864	John Raines	1852-1853	Alpha Wright
1865-1866	Edward J. Hermans	1854-1855	John Mandeville
1867	Henry Van Benschoten	1856-1857	John N. Brown
1868	Andrew Sutherland	1858-1859	Nathan Fellows
1869-1870	DeWitt C. Huntington	1860	Samuel Lucky
1871	James Dixon Regua	1861	Martin Wheeler
1872-1874	John A. Copeland	1862-1863	Israel Herrick Kellogg
1875-1876	Thomas J. Leake	1864-1865	Alonzo H. Shurtleff
1877	Albert N. Damon	1865-1868	Daniel Leisenring
1878-1880	John Edward Williams	1869-1871	John N. Brown
1881-1883	Lemuel Thomas Foote	1872-1874	Reuben D. Munger
1884-1885	John Talbot Gracey	1875-1877	E. Lansing Newman
1886-1888	Albert N. Fisher	1878-1880	Lemuel Thomas Foote
1889-1890	Sion Abisha Morse	1880-1881	E. T. Green
1891-1892	Thomas Cardus	1883-1885	Richard F. Kay
1893-1898	Ward Dulos Platt	1886-1890	George Stratton
1898-1903	Frederick D. Leete	1891-1895	George Wesley Peck
1903-1908	Josephus Leander Sooy	1896-1897	Frederick Shrewsbury
1908-1912	Conrad Hooker	1090-1097	Parkhurst
1912-1915	John E. Martin	1000 1004	
1915-1918	Albert R. Lambert	1898-1904	George Mortimer Harris
1918-1920 1920-1929	Samuel W. Robinson Samuel J. Clarkson	1905-1907	Ray Allen
1929-1931	Wilber W. McKee	1908-1910	Burnside Steen
1931-1933	Herman H. Downey	1911-1912	Harvey R. Williamson
1933-1934	Robert T. Doherty	[0]	H- C
1934-1938	Robert Kazmayer	[Church merged with Spencer-Ripley in 1912]	
1938-1941	Thomas M. Steen		
1941-1944	Kenmore Wesley Haight		
1945-1948	Chester C. Beebe		
1949-1953	Guy M. Ovenshire		
1954-1963	Glenn Ernest Bucher		
1963-1970	W. George Thornton		
1970-1973	Willard J. Barber		
1973-1976	Paul E. Sherman		
1976	John D. Rein		

PASTORS OF SPENCER-RIPLEY METHODIST CHURCH

PASTORS OF COVENANT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Years of Pastorate	<u>Name</u>	Years of Pastorate	<u>Name</u>
1886-1889 1889-1890 1890-1893 1893-1895 1895-1898 1898-1902 1902-1906 1906-1908 1908-1913 1913-1915 1915-1918 1918-1921 1921-1924 1924-1928 1924-1928 1928-1932 1932-1938 1938-1941 1941-1948 1949-1961 1966-1969	John H. Stoody Arthur O. Sykes Lemuel Thomas Foote Thomas J. Bissell John H. Stoody Phineas T. Lynn John M. Walters Burton M. Clark Herman H. Downey Frederick M. Williams John T. Cameron J. Harrison Olmstead Milton Butler Pratt James F. Bisgrove Spencer Bacon Owens Robert E. Brown Henry G. Budd Charles Bollinger Lincoln G. Archer Allen G. Skiff Richard G. Harrington	1990-1997 (1995-98: Denise 1997-1998 1998-2003 2003-2011 (2006-2011: Ann 2011-	Edward T. Read Everett B. Fitts William D. Reeder thy A. Petrie, Associate Pastor) Lawrence E. Lundgren Cooper, Licensed Local Pastor) Justo Gonzalez-Hernandez II Natalie Hanson & J. Paul Womack (co-pastors) Paul Gongloff Kemper, Associate Pastor) Ann Kemper ey Raca, Associate Pastor)

[List continues under Covenant United Methodist Church]

PASTORS OF CALVARY UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

Years of Pastorate	<u>Name</u>
1898-1902 1902-1905 1905-1908 1908-1910 1910-1913 1913-1916 1916-1920 1920-1924 1924-1928 1924-1928 1928-1930 1930-1934 1934-1944 1944-1950 1950-1969	W. H. Stauffer George Degen Newton S. Methfessel John Preis W. J. Merle A. A. Holzwarth P. C. Braunschweig W. H. Stauffer E. E. Rife Frank A. Palmer Alvin S. Haag John D. Rein F. B. Sovereign R. W. Stenquest Lester M. Driftmyer
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[List continues under Covenant United Methodist Church]



Pastor: Rev. Dr. Ann Kemper

Music Director: Dr. Kevin Lieb

Ministry Coordinator: Bob Kern

Lay Leader: Valerie Clark

Church Council Chair: Mark Soule

President of Trustees: John Nagel

Finance Chair: Paul Raca

Treasurer: Tracy Jackson-Adams

Staff/Parish Chair: Christine Doran



The sanctuary [photo taken May 18, 2023]

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