

ORIGINS OF OUR CHURCH

The following is a brief history of church and early Methodism in Michigan prior to the construction of our current building.

The First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti has its genesis in the Rev. Elias Pattee, a forty year old itinerant "circuit rider", one of the men who spread the gospel throughout the ever-expanding frontiers of the growing United States.

In the fall of 1824, Pattee, "a man of moderate talents and limited education but of great zeal", was appointed to the fledgling Detroit Circuit, a station on the Sandusky District of the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Once in Detroit, Pattee was sent by the Presiding Elder of the Circuit to labor in the wilds west of settled Detroit.

In March, 1825 the Rev. Pattee arrived in the small settlement of Woodruff's Grove in the Michigan Territory.

Eventually married six times with seven children, Pattee was in his third marriage and the fifteenth year of his itineracy when admitted to the Ohio Conference and sent to preach "in the wilds of Michigan" in 1822. One of three Methodist ministers sent to the Michigan Territory in 1823-25, Pattee was almost immediately sent on a fund-raising trip to benefit the small Detroit Society, and returned three months later with either \$600 or with the church owing him \$2.50, depending on which source you wish to believe. Nevertheless, the church was built, and the congregation evolved into the

"mother of Michigan Methodism", the Central Methodist Church of Detroit.

Pattee is described by a contemporary as "large of stature, commanding in personal appearance, dressing in breeches, stockings and shoe-buckles, which costume with his graceful, natural attitudes, set off his portly, symmetrical figure to great advantage; strong in lungs and voice, and although dignified, zealous and emotional."

Ezra D. Lay in his 'History of the M. E. Church' says, "As early as May, 1825, Rev. Elias Pattee preached a sermon at Woodruff's Grove and formed a class of five persons, which was the first religious society in Washtenaw County." Rev. Elijah H. Pilcher, in an 1870 letter says, "Elias Pattee was appointed to Detroit Circuit in 1824 and in the spring of 1825 visited Ypsilanti or Woodruff's Grove, preached, and formed a Society."

The small Methodist Society in Woodruff's Grove was not only the first Protestant religious society in Washtenaw County, it was also the first in the state west of Wayne

County. It is believed by the author to be the sixth established Methodist preaching station in the state, following Detroit, Monroe, the River Rouge, Pontiac and Mt. Clemens.

The following description is given by Rev. Dr. Pilcher at the semicentennial celebration of the church, May 26, 1875:

"In the autumn of 1824, Rev. Elias Pattee, then a member of the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was appointed in charge of the Detroit Circuit with Isaac C. Hunter. This was the only circuit in the territory of Michigan at the time. It embraced all the settlements then in the territory. But these indefatigable men were not content with the plan of the circuit as they received it – they were on the lookout for new places, and as fast as they could learn of any new settlement having been begun, they visited it. In pursuance of this policy as soon as the settlers here had erected their shanties, Elias Pattee extended his circuit - came to them and preached the word of life, the blessed gospel of peace. This was in the month of May, 1825. During the summer he organized a society, or church, which has always existed since. Fifty years ago this month, Methodist preaching was established at Ypsilanti, which was the first religious services established in Washtenaw County. It was my good fortune to be somewhat acquainted with some of these first members, as the Phillipses, Phineas Silsby and some others. We were also well acquainted with Elias Pattee, and have the story of his first visit to Woodruff's Grove, or Ypsilanti, from his own lips. None of these original members now reside here, if any of them are living."

After his visit to the little Society at Woodruff's Grove in 1825, Pattee later served the St. Clair circuit (located along the river between Algonac and Port Huron) in 1828-33, and the Huron Mission at Flat Rock in 1833-34.

Elias Pattee located in 1838, so that he was not a member of the Michigan (later Detroit) Conference at the time of his death. Brother Pattee moved to Iowa in 1853, with his sixth wife and two of his surviving children. He is credited with preaching for the first time at Clear Lake, IA in 1857. He died in Iowa November 5, 1860, at age 76, survived by his wife and four children.

In 1825, the Territorial Legislature commissioned the survey of a good route through southern Michigan from Detroit to Chicago. The surveyor found his task made easy by the existence of the old Indian trail from Detroit to the Huron Valley. On June 1, 1825, the surveying party reached the Huron Valley, having crossed the Huron River about 3/4 miles north of tiny Woodruff's Grove. This ended any dreams of the Grove becoming a future metropolis, because the distance between highway and village was too great.

Judge Woodward, along with two other men, shrewdly realized what the intersection of the Chicago Road and Huron River must mean. Together, they bought the land adjacent to the crossing and platted a village.

What to call this village was another matter. One partner suggested "Waterville" and another "Palmyra". Judge Woodward, however, had other ideas. The man who had laid Detroit out into its present cobweb plan after the city had been destroyed by fire in 1805, Woodward was also the author of the first public school curriculum in the state and the man for whom the world-famous Woodward Avenue running between Detroit and Pontiac is named. One of the major events in the world at that time was a Greek revolution against Turkish rule. A historic figure in this struggle, Gen. Demetrius

Ypsilanti, was at the forefront of the world stage, having held the Citadel of Argos with three hundred men against thirty thousand. Then, having exhausted his provisions, he escaped at night without loss of a man. So when Woodward suggested to his partners that the name of the new town be 'Ypsilanti', (Ip-sul-LAN-ti) they concurred. Judge Woodward never resided in Ypsilanti, having been appointed Territorial Judge of Florida shortly after its founding.

The little village slowly grew. The first blacksmith, a Swiss who was schooled in the trade and a former drum-major in the Swiss Army with the unlikely name of John P. Kelly, had set up his forge in June, 1825. This business, conducted together with clearing land and building fences, was the first commercial enterprise in the county. A dry-goods store and a flour mill opened in 1829 and a carding mill the following year; it is recorded that pioneers came from as far away as St. Joseph to have their wool carded.

In the fall of 1825 the Methodist Episcopal Ohio Conference transferred most of Michigan from the mammoth Miami District which stretched from Detroit to Cincinnati, to the newly created Detroit District¹¹. William Simmons, the Presiding Elder (much the same as the District Superintendent of today) assigned Elias Pattee to the St. Clair Circuit and sent John A. Baughman to preach to accessible outposts in Michigan outside Detroit. An arduous circuit, it extended as far north as Mt. Clemens and Pontiac, as far south as Monroe, and as far west as Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Blissfield and Tecumseh. To appreciate just how near to the frontier Baughman was laboring, it must be understood that neither Jackson or Adrian had yet been founded.

Not only did the circuit rider preach at the small settlements, he would also preach to any number of settlers at virtually any place along the frontier. In addition, the Presiding Elder, who did double duty as the stationed preacher in Detroit, apparently visited Woodruff's Grove and administered the sacraments in early 1826.

Venturing out into the wilds of what would become Southeastern Michigan could be most difficult: terrain of swamps and heavy forest with no bridges or roads. Travel between Ypsilanti and the nearest preaching station on the River Rouge (west of Detroit, within the present-day Ford Rouge Plant on Butler Road near Greenfield in Dearborn) was over twenty miles and only possible by following a series of blazed trees.

John A. Baughman was born in Maryland in 1802. Converted at the age of 19, he was admitted on trial to the Ohio Conference at twenty and spent his first two years preaching at Piqua and then Oxford, Ohio. Mr. Baughman was the first minister to spend most of his career in Michigan, preaching 12 years in Ohio and 32 in Michigan. He was either the first to preach or the first to fill a regular Methodist preaching appointment in many places in Michigan. Baughman is credited with being the first to first to preach and serve the newly formed Society at Ann Arbor in April, 1827.

It was said of Baughman that "he received 43 appointments from the Bishop, and never failed to heartily do the work assigned to him." A strong proponent of sobriety and abstinence from intoxicating drink, he eventually settled in Detroit as Presiding Elder of the Detroit District and then agent of the American Bible Society. Baughman died on March 1, 1868 after preaching his final sermon on "Faith, Hope and Charity" on February 16 at the Jefferson Avenue M.E. Church in Detroit.

John Baughman was transferred to the Monroe Circuit and the Presiding Elder on the Detroit Circuit sent John Janes to preach in the fall of 1826. Janes "must have been an energetic young man" who married the chief agent in starting the Methodist Society at Ann Arbor, Miss Hannah Brown. Janes spent most of his career in appointments in Ohio.

A Methodist minister in Michigan at that time could expect to preach as many as twenty-eight times in a four-weeks route. Most places such as Ypsilanti saw the preacher about every month in the summer, and the same sermon did duty at many places and eventually became highly polished. Margaret Macmillan notes that circuit riders of the day were not chosen for their cerebral skills so much as their iron constitutions.

In 1827, Rev. George Walker was sent to preach on the circuit. A former Roman Catholic and of "fine preaching ability" according to Pilcher, he spent only two years in Michigan, and later filled many important charges in the Ohio and later Cincinnati Conferences.

In September, 1828, the circuits around Detroit were changed with the creation of the Huron Circuit. This circuit, which covered all of Washtenaw and western Wayne

Counties, included Nankin (now Westland), Plymouth, Ypsilanti, Dixboro and Ann Arbor. In 1828, the conference sent Rev. Benjamin Cooper and Leonard B. Gurley to the circuit the following year.

Methodist ministers had from the first gotten hospitality and a warm welcome from the residents of Woodruff's Grove, but, as commercial traffic shifted to the more central location the original settlers either began moving into Ypsilanti or moving on. One original settler, Titus Bronson, moved to Kalamazoo, which was originally known as Bronson. His name lives on in the Bronson Methodist Hospital.

EARLY METHODIST LIFE AND WORSHIP

Methodists met at a brick school house built on the east side of the Huron River in 1830 until their new chapel on River Street was ready in 1837. One of the first industries in Ypsilanti was the distilling business, active until succumbing to a notable temperance revival in 1849. A flouring mill was built on the east side of the river just north of the present Depot Town area in 1828 and operated until 1851.

The character of the emerging town was not a good one. Rev. William Jones, a Presbyterian minister appointed to the serve the Ypsilanti Presbyterian congregation in the fall of 1829, had described the town as "in a deplorable condition, without a church, the people much given to over-indulgence in intoxicating drink and openly violating the Sabbath with revelry and drunkenness." Jones' observations were maybe not greatly exaggerated. The people of the town themselves began to wonder if there was too much drinking going on when they noticed newcomers would stop in Ypsilanti for a day or two and then move on. It is perhaps no wonder that the Methodist Society at Ypsilanti remained small and weak.

The Society had by 1828 purchased a lot east of the river on River Street (then the main street of the town) where the first meeting house was erected in 1833. The first permanent bridge over the Huron had been laid in 1827; previously, wagons had crossed by laying planks over logs thrown across the stream.

At the Ohio Annual Conference session in 1830, the small Ypsilanti Society, along with the other posts on the Huron Circuit, was renamed the Ann Arbor Circuit. The hard-worked preacher then had to preach as far out as Grass Lake and Jackson, an additional 40 miles of impassible roads, usually no better than Indian trails.

That year, two portentous appointments were made by the Conference with the appointment of Rev. Henry Colclazer, age 21, as senior preacher and Rev. Elijah Holmes Pilcher, age 20, as junior preacher on the Ann Arbor Circuit. Colclazer was to serve in Michigan for some fifteen years, and Pilcher until 1877. Pilcher had quite a

distinguished career, holding every position open to a Methodist minister than except the Bishopric. He founded at least thirteen churches in Michigan and helped to start Albion College and Bay View. He also wrote an illuminating history of Protestantism in Michigan, much used as source material for the present work.

In 1832, Rev. James Gilruth arrived to spend the first of an eventual three years as Presiding Elder on the Detroit District. Unlike his predecessors, Gilruth boarded his wife and family in Ann Arbor. Also unlike most of his contemporaries, he kept a journal that has survived. Three times a year for the next three years, Gilruth would start northeasterly from Ann Arbor to Oakland and Macomb Counties to hold Quarterly Conferences at Farmington, Mt. Clemens and St. Clair Circuits. Saginaw Mission was usually too difficult for the Presiding Elder to get there. Turning south, he would go to Detroit, on to Monroe and then up the River Raisin to Tecumseh. Clinton and Saline lay in his path back to Ann Arbor, where he might have a few days at home. Next came Calhoun Mission, a trip of seventy miles, stopping at Dexter, Jackson and Marshall before returning to begin the wearying round again. Presumably Ypsilanti was too close to Ann Arbor for Gilruth to plan his travel here. Gilruth records attendance at the Quarterly Conference held at Ypsilanti in January, 1833 to have been poor. A Camp Meeting was held here in rainy weather that summer. In 1833, the Ypsilanti Circuit reported 486 members and 645 the next year. It was the same in 1835, but this was due to the formation of the Plymouth Circuit.

In 1832, one of the first hotels in Ypsilanti appeared, the Ballou House. It was carried out on the "temperance plan" for three years (certainly ahead of the times), then sold and began to serve whiskey.

Marcus Swift, a local preacher who had settled in Nankin and was much respected in the area served the Ypsilanti Methodists in 1833. Swift was a staunch advocate of the abolition of slavery, the question that would split the Methodist Episcopal Church in the coming years. Swift's abolitionist views were so strong that the Michigan Conference refused to ordain him as Elder in 1839. After this slight, over 85 people left the church at Northville where Swift was especially esteemed.

In 1834, twenty-one year old newly licensed to preach Rev. William Brockway was sent to the Huron Mission Circuit, which that year included Ypsilanti. Brockway included the Wyandot Indian settlement near Flat Rock, where he had taught the Mission School the year before. He would later have much success among native Americans as the first Superintendent of the Mission District in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He would also serve as agent and trustee for Albion College and as a chaplain in the Civil War. He never retired, giving fifty-eight years to the active ministry.

Ypsilanti remained as a point on the Huron Circuit in 1835. This was the last year of appointments being made by the Ohio Conference, as a new conference, the Michigan Conference (now West Michigan), was formed in 1836. The new conference at that time covered both peninsulas of Michigan. Detroit remained a part of the Detroit District, notwithstanding the creation of a second district named Ann Arbor.

Over time, Ypsilanti began to lose the frontier look of rude, hastily built shanties and primitive living. The first brick residence in Ypsilanti was built in 1830, and still stands today.

In 1831, the Methodists started work on a small brick meeting house on their lot on River Street. Due to the weak condition of the Society, they could only erect a plain building with wooden benches and tiny windows. Over time, improvements were made including the addition of two 8 x 10 glass panels of thirty-five panes each in the east wall. The new building, which initially cost \$550.00, was opened for worship by 1837.

Rev. Henry Colclazer, who had served the Ann Arbor Circuit in 1830, came to the Ann Arbor District as Presiding Elder. He would serve for the next two years, until 1840. An amusing tale is told about Colclazer by Margaret Macmillan:

"Families gave the best that they had to the Presiding Elder. Once a family prepared their only four poster bed and even hung up sheets around it to give it a bit of privacy. All this was for the Rev. Henry Colclazer, then the Presiding Elder on the Ann Arbor District. He was completely bald and wore a full black wig but none of the people there knew it. As was his usual custom, Colclazer hung his wig on the bedpost when he retired. When the host, a Mr. Boutwell, went to call the minister the next morning, his eye fell on the wig, and he yelled out that the Indians had been there and had scalped the minister. The latter was awakened by the noise and clapped on his wig immediately, but by then Boutwell was screaming "Murder, "Murder". Everyone was awakened and Boutwell was with some difficulty brought to realize what he had done. Then he was so chagrined that he fled to the barn and spent the day, missing most of the meetings."

The two years that Colclazer was on the district the stationed preachers in Ypsilanti were Elijah Crane and David Burns. Crane was recorded by James Gilruth to preach "a plain discourse the greatest merit of which consisted of the correctness of the language". In 1837 there were 464 members of the Methodist Society in Ypsilanti, compared to 190 in the next year. The charges in the Ann Arbor District for the year 1837-38 were Ypsilanti, Plymouth, Northville, Livingston, Dexter, and two missions in the Upper Peninsula. While there is nothing to suggest that the Presiding Elder ever

saw the missions work at the Soo and Kewawenon, his confidence undoubtedly resided in the Rev. William Brockway, who had served the Ypsilanti church in 1834.

Ypsilanti continued to prosper, changing from a sleepy hamlet to a bustling village with the coming of the railroad from Detroit in Ypsilanti in 1838. Eventually the railroad was completed to St. Joseph and then Chicago, and brought Ypsilanti much commerce and prosperity.

The year 1838 was marked in the Ypsilanti area by a wave of lawlessness and terror. Robberies and other crimes grew so numerous that polite citizens became most wary and afraid to go out. The ordinary police agencies seemed unable to deal with it, so a group of Ypsilanti citizens formed the "Ypsilanti Vigilance Committee". This committee, charged with maintaining the peace and security of the town, recorded 112 convictions and the recovery of over \$10,000 in stolen property by the end of the next year.

It is not hard to imagine that there were many church members on this committee as the

Presbyterians (1829), the Baptists (1836), and the Episcopalians (1837) had also organized in Ypsilanti. The Presbyterian faithful at that time included many Congregationalist adherents, who eventually formed their own church in 1881.

In 1839, a sewing circle was started by the women of the church for the benefit of the poor and needy. This has existed ever since under various names, thriving today as the local unit of the United Methodist Women.

By 1840, the river dividing Ypsilanti had been bridged at three points. Cross Street ended at the river, there being no permanent bridge yet due to the distance between the high river banks at that point. The area between the banks and the water often became a morass of mud over which were laid planks and a rude wooden foot bridge constructed, often carried away by the river and then rebuilt.

In 1840, a loan of \$150 was made by a member to the church to make more pews for the chapel. The rent was to be collected in February and September.

A rivalry gradually came into being between East and West siders. The east side had the first fire department, the first street with a paved gutter (Cross Street), the first clothing store, and the Methodist Episcopal Church until 1843. The Cross Street business district (the present Depot Town area) was for some time busier than the comparatively quiet Michigan Avenue district due to the busy traffic at the flouring mill. The west side had the Post Office: a sore subject with east siders, who for a time

maintained a private post office on their side of the river. West siders also had the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches and the Methodist Church after 1843. The rivalry eventually grew so intense that the plat of the town east of the river was vacated and set back into Ypsilanti Township, and organized into East Ypsilanti in November, 1857. This state of affairs could hardly remain permanent, and the two village boards ratified a unified city charter to create the City of Ypsilanti in 1859.

In early 1843, tragedy struck the little chapel on River Street. During an evening revival the floorboards gave way, causing a serious panic. A Mrs. Chase was so badly burned by the overturned stove that she died three days later. When the building was inspected following the incident, it was found that the floor timbers had merely sprung from the too great weight placed upon them.

However, the Board of Trustees, meeting soon after, found that "the walls have grown too straight for the congregation" and discussed building a new meeting house. A local physician, Dr. Thomas Towne, loaned the congregation \$4,500.00 and gave the land to build a new meeting house on the west side of the river.

The society met in the loft of a warehouse near the railroad station until the new sanctuary was ready for use.

The original chapel was used by Ypsilanti Baptists. Later it was used as a public school and by 1868 was the plant of a manufacturing concern that made vast fortunes producing a patent buggy whip. Part of the original structure survives today as part of the City Radiator Company, at 110 River Street.

The new meeting house, built on the corner of Ellis (now Washtenaw Avenue) and North Washington Street, has remained the site of our congregation to this day. The new sanctuary was ready for services in September, 1843, a mere six months from the tragic accident in the old church. The new church had 100 pews and could seat 600 people. Designed to look like the houses of worship in New England that people remembered, it was a white frame building with green shutters and a two story tower.

The Methodists diligently strove to pay Dr. Towne back the sum that had been advanced to construct the new sanctuary. The women worked at quilting bees, harvest dinners and socials of various kinds. The youth of the church made it known: they would help, but "sew, peddle and knit they would not". They held a series of socials; the first of which made a profit of \$60. The second social barely paid expenses, and the third was a dismal failure. Nevertheless, the women kept cooking, and opening their homes to the youth for social gatherings and gradual inroads on the debt were made.

The debt to Thomas Towne was eventually satisfied. This is the last instance of the Ypsilanti church incurring any amount of external debt.

The new sanctuary made it possible for Ypsilanti to host the Michigan Annual Conference session in 1847, with Bishop Morris presiding.

In 1852, a lecture room was added to the meeting house; it is recorded as "much needed for the growing activities of the Society".

The first church parsonage was purchased in 1854, located on South Washington near Ferris Street. In 1858, the newly organized Detroit Conference was entertained at Ypsilanti, with Bishop Baker in charge.

In 1859, the church was enlarged by being cut in half, the west end moved back 16 feet with new pews filling the created space.

Rev. Seth Reed had served the Ypsilanti church in 1851-52, and returned in 1862-63. During this Civil War period, Rev. Reed and "his excellent lady" went to the South where he served as chaplain in the Union Army. Rev. Reed would later become known as the "Grand Old Man of Michigan Methodism," his 100th birthday party in 1923 was the greatest birthday party held in Flint to that time and was attended by almost every Methodist minister in the state of Michigan.

Reed later reminisced about his first pastorate:

"I think the most genuine and far-reaching revival that has ever occurred under my ministry was realized at Ypsilanti. From it about sixty received into membership, most of whom were young people between sixteen and thirty years of age." Of his second time in Ypsilanti, he was less sanguine: "That although the congregation had increased greatly in members, the revival spirit was not as dominant. The people thought I had back-slid; I was sure they had."

In 1863 an organ was provided for the church which served until the purchase and installation of a pipe organ. Pew rents for the year totaled \$1,545.00. An interesting note during this period is the Board of Trustees' action that any expenditure of funds must always be made with this proviso "as soon as and not before a sufficient amount of money shall be pledged to meet the expense". This has proved the watchword for the church leadership until the present day.

The church building was completely renovated inside and out in 1866. The inside of the sanctuary was painted and plastered, new frescoes painted on the ceiling, and the building was completely carpeted. The gallery was enclosed and a new pulpit and

chandelier were also purchased at this time. \$4,000.00 was expended to this end under the leadership of the Rev. James S. Smart, "an indefatigable and tireless worker" who also increased the church membership to 425.

In 1870, Methodists began building a new parsonage at 212 Ellis (now Washtenaw) Avenue, across the street from the church. A local newspaper reported on July 2, 1871 that "the children of the M.E. Church are enterprising. They propose to pay for the front door of the new parsonage in process of erection. They will have a festival to raise the money, music and fair in the church, refreshments in the lecture-rooms, museum in the infant room. Admission: fifteen cents."

In 1871, we also read that "The Methodists have done a nice thing for their Pastor; they voted him a vacation of three Sabbaths and \$50.00 for his expenses while absent".

The new parsonage was completed in 1871, and elegantly furnished with a haircloth parlor set, marble top tables and stands. It served the church faithfully for over a hundred years as pastor's home, office space, wartime "canteen" and teen center until it was sold in 198x for \$34,000. It has been lovingly restored by the current owners over the last fifteen years.

In 1872 an attempt was made to burn the church by pouring oil through a hole bored in the door of the infant room. The fire was discovered before much damage had been done. This was done at a time of increased liquor prosecutions and as an act of revenge against the members of the church.

The Detroit Conference was again hosted by the Ypsilanti Methodists in 1873, presided over by Bishop Wiley. The women's group served dinner at the Washtenaw County Fair to add to their funds and were later able to report that all debts were paid. However, they continued to work for the poor and towards a new project -- a new carpet.

1875 saw a gala celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Ypsilanti Methodism. No one could improve on the description written by Dr. Harvey Colburn, pastor of Ypsilanti's Congregationalists. In his "The Story of Ypsilanti", written in 1923 at the time of the community's centennial anniversary, Colburn says:

"In May, 1875, the church celebrated its semicentennial holding services for two days and closing the festival with a public dinner. Many old residents were present who had not met before for years. Among the ministers present were Elijah H. Pilcher, Alvan Billings, W. H. Brockway, J. S. Pietzel, Seth Reed, F. A. Blades, J. S. Smart, B. F. Crocker, M. Hickey, J. Stalker and J. M. Fuller. The church auditorium was

beautifully decorated for the occasion. Above the pulpit was displayed, on one side, '1825,' and on the other, '1875,' while between hung the motto 'What Hath God Wrought!' Among the older members at this time were Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Thompson, who had been active members since 1838; W. B. Clarke, Mr. and Mrs. William Wortley, Watson Snyder, Mr. and Mrs. E. Comstock, Charles Shier, Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. A. Williams and H. A. Wells."

During the pastorate of the Rev. O. T. Perrin (1875-1877), 180 people were added to the membership rolls and 100 added to the Sunday School. A Young People's Prayer Service was added, a debt of \$1,600.00 was paid, and the church became interested in and contributed to the start of the Bay View Association. It should be noted that Rev. Seth Reed, First Church pastor in 1851-52 and 1862-63, served as secretary of Bay View's governing body for fifteen years. It was on his motion that the name of Bay View was chosen; that Elijah Pilcher, who served the church in 1831, became the first President; and that Rev. William H. Brockway, pastor in 1835 and 1837 was instrumental in its organization.

By the early 1880's, a need for more space was becoming apparent. Discussions centered on adding a chapel to the existing frame church building, aided by the women of the church, who created a fund for that purpose.

By 1887, when the Rev. James Venning was appointed to the Ypsilanti church, the discussion had turned to whether to remodel the old or to build a new sanctuary.

In May, 1889, the Board of Trustees met and passed a resolution to have plans for a new and adequate church building drawn to be built as soon as possible.

On September 30, 1891, 1200 people gathered to witness the laying of the cornerstone for the new Methodist Episcopal Church. Representatives from the Michigan State Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) and the other congregations in Ypsilanti were present, each having a part in the program. Dr. Lewis Ransome Fiske, D.D., the President of Albion College, gave the address. W. B. Clarke, the oldest living member of the church, laid the cornerstone.

The last meeting in the old white church was held July, 1891. A "Farewell Service" featured the participation of the oldest members. Those who had died were eulogized as "wise in council, fervent in prayer and generous in giving."

The new church building was ready for dedication in the summer of 1892.

