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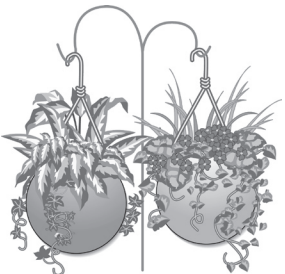
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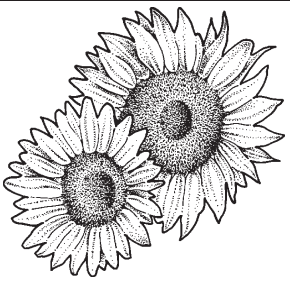
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The current First United Methodist Church is located at 1116 Sherman. A Fellowship Hall completes the facilities next to the church.
Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Methodism celebrates 125 years of tradition

By Pat Schiefen

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The first Sunday in March was the time for Methodists to celebrate 125 years in Sherman County and ponder what direction the congregation will take for the future.

The Goodland First United Methodist Church began with seven people forming a Sabbath school class at Leonard, later called Itasca. The seven were Thomas P. and Kate (Withers) Leonard, Roswell R. and Annie Frisbee and their daughter Edna; J. C. Elwood and Horace E. Neal. The first quarterly conference, Voltaire Circuit, Norton district, Northwest Kansas Conference, was held at Leonard on June 28, 1886, Rev. Samuel A. Green, Presiding Elder and Silas B. Lucas, Presiding Clergy in charge.

A charter had been issued in Sept. 4 and 5, 1886 to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Itasca. Early services were held in the newly constructed building of W. B. Swigart during August 1886. When Itasca folded in late 1886 many residents first moved to Sherman Center and then to Goodland, when it was established in 1887. Services were first held in the loft of Erasmus Thorson's Store, Goodland's first general merchandise and grocery store located just north of the corner now occupied by Bankwest of Goodland at 10th and Main.

The Sherman County Development Corporation donated lots at West 11th Street and Sherman to the Methodist Episcopal Church. A frame church was constructed during 1888-1889 on the site and was dedicated on April 14, 1889. By December

1889 the church was complete with opera and orchestra chairs, pulpit, pulpit chairs, chandelier, bell and reed organ.

A new red brick church with stone trimming a fort-like structure was built and dedicated on March 13, 1911. The windows were stained glass. One of the windows depicting a railroad engine, the only one without a strictly religious symbol, was paid for by railroad families with donations collected at the roundhouse, is now installed at the meeting room of the Goodland Public Library.

A two-story yellow brick educational building was erected just south of the 1911 church.

The current church was built in 1968-1969. The fellowship hall was built in 1975-1976. The history was compiled by Lloyd Holbrook.

Recently new audio-visual equipment was installed in the church and fellowship hall.

The celebration included a coffee, worship service, noon meal and a remembrance program in the afternoon.

At the remembrance program former clergy were acted to talk about what they remembered from their time in Goodland and what they were doing now.

Dr. Tom Schneider was first to speak. He served from June 1990 to July 1995. Currently he is retired and lives at the Asbury Park at Newton. The most important thing to him was the retreat to write the mission statement still in use and that Goodland was the top church in his career. He talked

of starting the bell choir and how they even rang the "Phantom of the Opera"

James Iwig was next and he served in Goodland from June 1977 to June 1982. He said he liked the cool evening breezes, how the snow storms had a way of slowing things down, the short distance to Denver and skiing. Most important to him were the Bethel Bible Study and the pastoral exchange with Ireland.

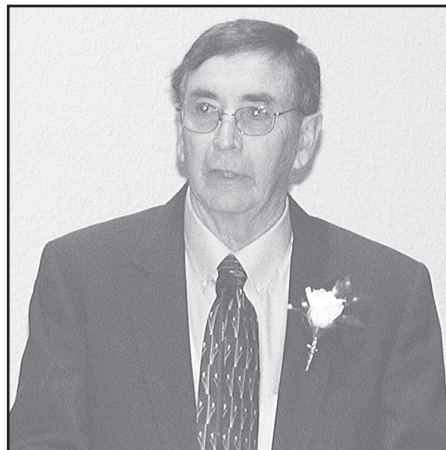
Janet Hernandez was in Goodland from July 2002 to July 2007 and now is the West Superintendent in Wichita. What she remembered was the music, the food pantry, making ice cream for the fair, Blessing of the Palms in the park and Easter Sunrise service in the cemetery.

Karen Rice Rendolf spoke next. She is a graduate of Goodland High School and is an associate pastor of Mound Ridge. She remembered the music of Trish Dorsch and Isabelle Hellerud. When Matt and Marsh Thompson were killed Pat Jordan told her that God doesn't cause tragedy. She said her clergy mentor was Carol Moore-Ramey, pastor at Goodland from July 1995 to July 2002.

Dr. Chet Ross was the last to speak. He served as interim from July to December 2008. He said served the congregation over 22 years as a backup and never once took an honorarium. His favorite memory of the congregation is how it has had the true Wesleyan spirit and how it grew back after disagreements.



Dr. Tom Schneider



James Iwig



Janet Hernandez



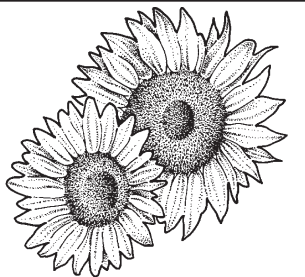
Karen Rice Rendolf



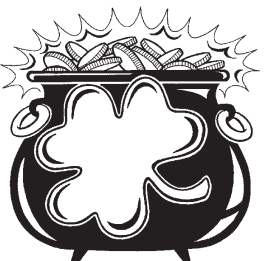
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