

Landmark Designation Application for The First Congregational Church of Naperville

25 E. Benton Avenue, Naperville, IL 60540



The First Congregational Church of Naperville, August 2025—Source: M. L. Schweitzer

Submitted by:
The First Congregational Church
Landmarking Task Force

Prepared with the expert technical assistance and encouragement of Jane Burke and Marilyn Schweitzer, members of Naperville Preservation Inc.

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Landmark Nomination

1. The applicant is the property owner.

According to the constitution of the United Church of Christ, which governs the local church, each church can acquire, own, and manage its property. Thus, the congregation of the First Congregational Church of Naperville owns the church building and is the applicant.

Excerpt from the **Constitution of the United Church of Christ:**¹

Article V: Local Churches: Section 18 -. Nothing in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church... **to acquire, own, manage, and dispose of property and funds**

Our governing structure is outlined in our church’s Bylaws, approved 1/26/25, and section 3 applies to the property. This is the excerpt from the **Bylaws of the First Congregational Church of Naperville:**²

3 Property The congregation may, in its corporate name, ...hold, purchase, and receive title by gift, grant, or other conveyance of and to any property real or personal, with power to mortgage, sell, or convey the same, providing the laws of the State of Illinois permit.

2. Contact information of the persons or entities seeking the landmark designation (applicant), including their names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and designation of one person to serve as the primary point of contact.

First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force:

Vicki Keller, Chairperson

[Redacted contact information for Vicki Keller]

Diane Walter Diamond

[Redacted contact information for Diane Walter Diamond]

Jim Fancher

[Redacted contact information for Jim Fancher]

Diana Lorenz

[Redacted contact information for Diana Lorenz]

Sally Nurss

[Redacted contact information for Sally Nurss]

¹ “The Constitution of the United Church of Christ,” National Setting of the United Church of Christ, October 13, 2018, https://www.new.uccfiles.com/pdf/UCC_Constitution.pdf.

² “First Congregational Church of Naperville, Illinois A Congregation of the United Church of Christ Bylaws,” First Congregational Church of Naperville, IL, January 26, 2025, <https://www.loveandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Bylaws-2025-01-26.pdf>.

Vicki Keller opened the discussions about landmarking our church at the August 2024 Council Meeting. Jane Burke from Naperville Preservation, Inc. was invited to the September 2024 Council Meeting to answer questions.

Below is a summary of the landmarking discussion plus the approval vote (in italics) from the minutes taken by Chris Farthing, Secretary, at the Council of Ministries meeting of the First Congregational Church of Naperville on April 15, 2025. (See Appendix 12: Internal Discussions Re: Pursuing Landmark Status for details.)

At the April 2025 Council Meeting Vicki Keller introduced Ann Wehrli Jansen of the Naperville Women’s Club and welcomed back Jane Burke of Naperville Preservation, Inc. Ann discussed how the Women’s Club landmarked their building. Ann and Jane said that landmarking will protect the building. Jane estimated that the process to be landmarked could take as long as 6-9 months, and she summarized the process.

John thanked Jane and Ann for coming in. After they departed, he asked for a motion. Vicki Keller moved that we approve the landmarking of the sanctuary building facing Benton Avenue and Center Street, contingent on the reply from the insurance company. Jeanie Guenther seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The reply from the insurance company did not affect the unanimous vote.

Council Members:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Moderator: | John Klein-Collins |
| Secretary: | Chris Farthing |
| Associate Treasurer: | Diana Lorenz |
| Stewardship: | Jeanie Guenther |
| Christian Education: | Andy Day |
| Worship: | Laura Kemner, Penny Schaschwary |
| Missions/Social Action: | Mark Servis |
| Community Life: | Vicki Keller, Carol Patterson |
| Trustees: | Drew Walker |
| Member-At-Large: | Jean Kosiara |

3. The legal description and common address of the improvement in question

Legal description:

LOT 3 in Block 6 in Sleight’s Add. to the town of Naperville, being a subdivision in the South East ¼ of Section 13, Township 28 North, Range 9, East of the Third Principal Meridian, and in the Southwest ¼ of Section 18, Township 38 North, Range 10, East of the Third Principal Meridian, According to the Plat thereof recorded January 20, 1845, as Document 1526, in DuPage County Illinois.

Common address:

First Congregational Church of Naperville
25 East Benton Avenue
Naperville, IL 60540-4601
[REDACTED]

Website:

<https://www.loveandjustice.org/>
[REDACTED]

Property Tax Identification Number:

08-18-303-007

4. Name and Address of Property Owner(s) (from Assessor's Office)

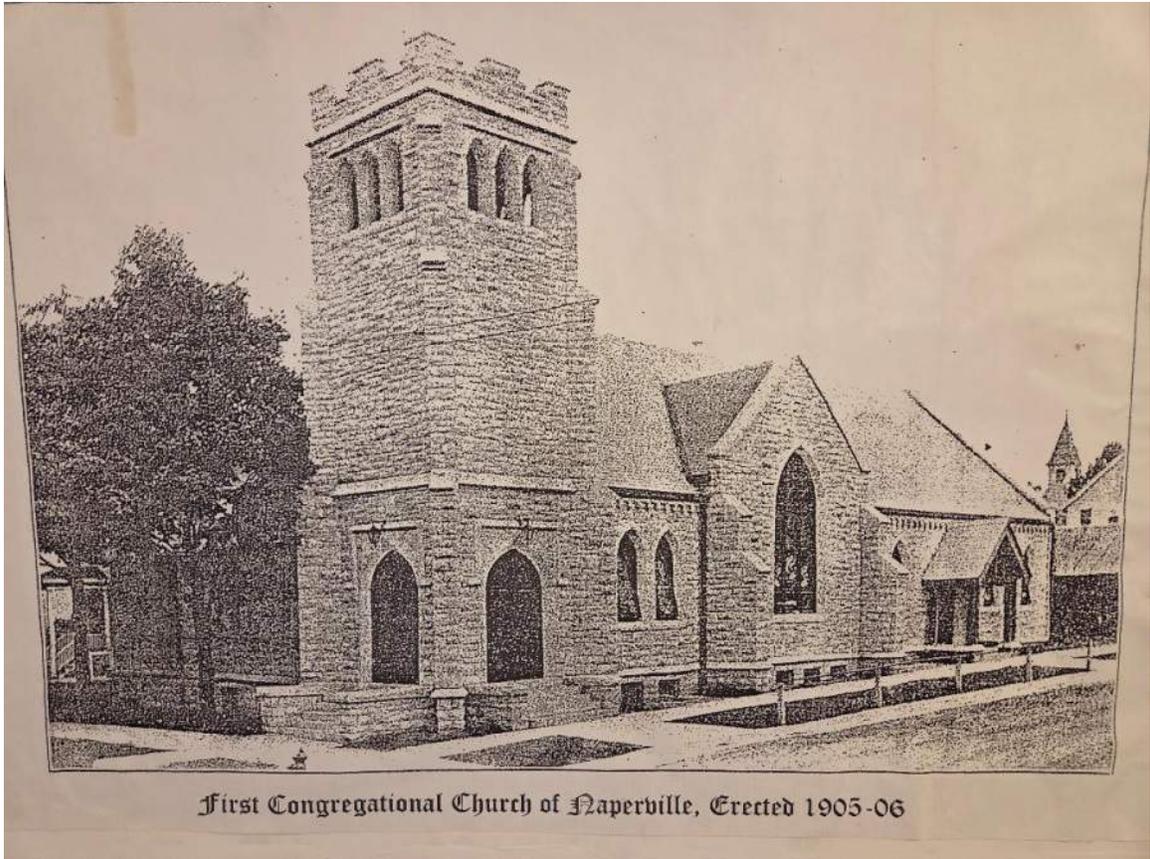
First Congregational Church of Naperville United Church of Christ, an IL Not-for-Profit Corporation
25 East Benton Avenue
Naperville, IL 60540-4601
[REDACTED]

5. A written report containing: a) a description of the real property on which the improvement sought to be landmarked is located; b) an analysis of the historic, architectural and aesthetic value of the proposed landmark in relation to the criteria set forth in Subsection 6-11-3:5 under standards for designation of landmark; c) a list of significant exterior architectural features of the property; and d) other reasons and data in support of the proposed designation.

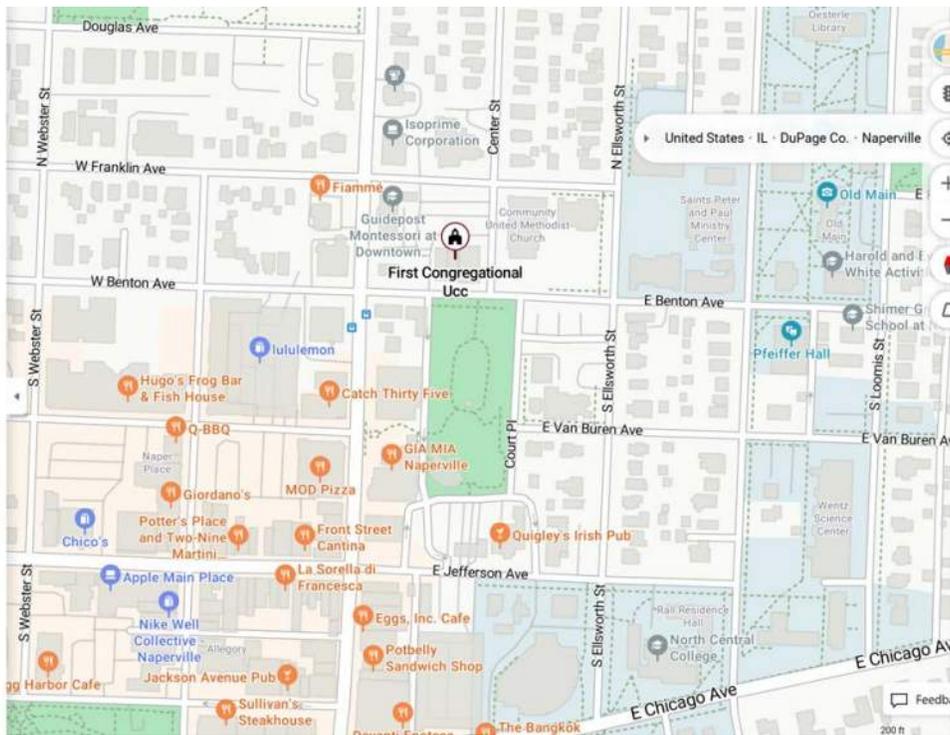
5a. Description of property

The First Congregational Church building comprises three sections, each constructed at a different time: 1906, 1930, and 1979.

The section for which landmarking is being sought is the 1906 building on Lot 3 and just a very small overlap onto the eastern portion of Lot 2. It is the easternmost section of the church buildings on 25 East Benton Avenue, Naperville, IL 60540. It faces Center Street on the east side and Benton Avenue on the south side of the structure. The other two buildings (for which landmarking is not being sought) are attached consecutively on the west side. A parking lot is located just north of the buildings.



The 1906 Building — Source: Naperville Heritage Society



First Congregational Church — Source: Google Maps

5b. Analysis of historic, architectural and aesthetic value



Bronze plaques inside and outside of the sanctuary door, August 2025 — Source: D. W. Diamond

Founded in 1833, First Congregational is the oldest church in DuPage County. Founded first as a Presbyterian church but changed after the first year to become the oldest Congregational Church in Northern Illinois. Our first congregants gathered under a large tree for worship before meeting in a succession of homes, barns, schools, and even a tent. On July 13, 1833, the Rev. Jeremiah Porter served communion under the branches of a large tree on the banks of the DuPage River, which inspired the logo that we use. Our church is the oldest organized church in DuPage County and has been on its present site since 1846.

Discussion about building a building started in 1838. It became a divisive issue as parishioners were scattered in six separate clusters within DuPage County. When the congregation finally authorized a building in 1844, a dozen members requested dismissal to form their separate congregation and build a different building (First Presbyterian Church of DuPage, located south of Boughton Road on Weber Road).

The congregation completed the construction of a **frame church in 1846**, on land donated by Capt. Morris Sleight. His gift was made with the stipulation that there never be a burial ground on the site and that the church always have a bell tower. In 1895-96, it was remodeled, but less than a decade later, it was ruled unsafe and torn down.

The 1846 building was replaced by the current structure in 1906. The current building has gone through several interior renovations and exterior maintenance.

A parsonage was added in 1884 and removed in 1929 to make room for a new Parish Hall adjoining the church. This was dedicated in 1930, with Sunday School classrooms on the ground floor and housing for the pastor's family on the second floor. Further expansion in 1979 included the Community Room and basement classrooms. (See Appendix 3: Anniversaries of the 1833 Church and 1906 Building, Appendix 6: Timeline, and Appendix 11: Blueprints.)

Criteria 5.1 That it is over 50 years old, in whole or in part;

First Congregational Church is seeking landmarking of the 1906 building. The cornerstone was laid in 1905, and the building was completed and dedicated in 1906.

The original frame church, built in 1846, was renovated in 1896, but was deemed unfit for occupancy less than ten years later. At its annual meeting on January 14, 1905, the congregation directed its trustees to proceed with building a new church building.

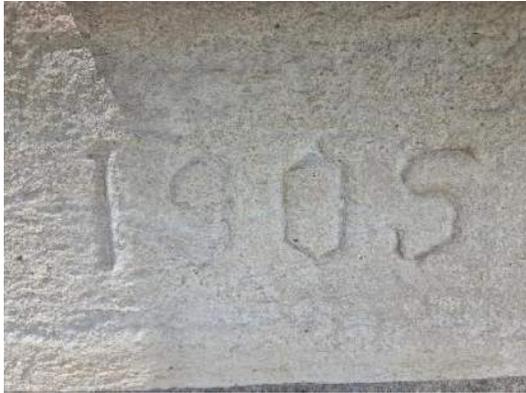


Laying of the cornerstone for the 1906 church building — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

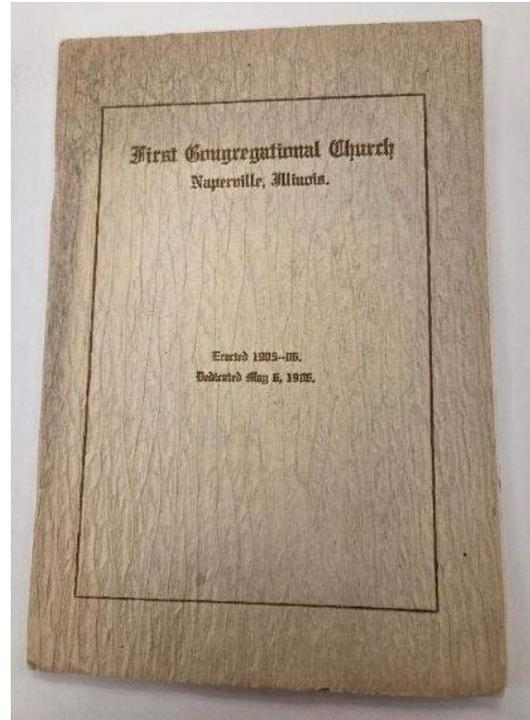
The services of the architect Merritt J. Morehouse of Chicago were enlisted to draw up plans for the new building. The Building Committee was chaired by W. R. Goodwin; members included Mr. C. A. Nadelhoffer, Mrs. Elizabeth Scott, Mrs. J. L. Nichols, Mr. B. B. Boecker Sr., and Mr. J. H. Johnson.

To save money, the Building Committee did not employ contractors but used independent local craftsmen, with John E. Shifferle as the master carpenter, and A. H. Beidelman as the head mason; the committee members themselves served as construction supervisors.

Many of the stained-glass windows from the 1846 building were reframed and placed into the new building as well, and the church bell was moved to the new bell tower. The frame church was torn down in July 1905, and construction began. The cornerstone was laid in 1905, construction was completed in 1906, and the dedication was in May 1906.



*The cornerstone of the 1906 building; August 2025 —
Source: D. W. Diamond*



*1906 Building Dedication Program — Source:
Naperville Heritage Society*

The sanctuary building has been occupied by members of the same congregation since 1906.

There have been very few changes to the building:

1. The westernmost door of the building was linked to the Parish hall with a small vestibule in 1930.
2. Handrails were added to the sanctuary entrance steps around the 1930s or 1940s.
3. The slate roof was replaced many years ago with asphalt shingles.
4. The stained-glass windows were repaired, cleaned, and renovated in the 1990s because of the high aesthetic and historic value placed on them by the congregation.
5. The Growing Place created a landscaping plan in the 1990s, and the landscaping committee has kept it up each year since to accent the beauty of our building.
6. The sanctuary entry doors were replaced by glass doors.

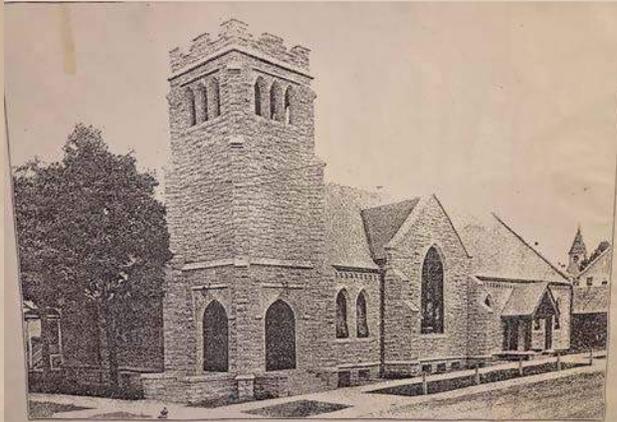
Otherwise, the exterior remains unchanged to date, except for maintenance.



This white, frame church served the parish from 1846 to 1897.



Remodel of the old First Congregational Church in 1897



First Congregational Church of Naperville, Erected 1905-06



*THE PARISH HOUSE
DEDICATED FEBRUARY 9, 1930*

History of the Buildings — Source: Naperville Historical Society

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (see Appendix 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps) also show some of the history of the Church Buildings. The 1906 building that is requested to be landmarked is clearly shown on the 1909 and 1921 maps. The earlier 1846 church is shown on the 1892 map and its additions made in 1897 are indicated on the 1898 map.



1979 Community Room, 1930 Parish Hall, and 1906 building, August, 2025 — Source: D. W. Diamond

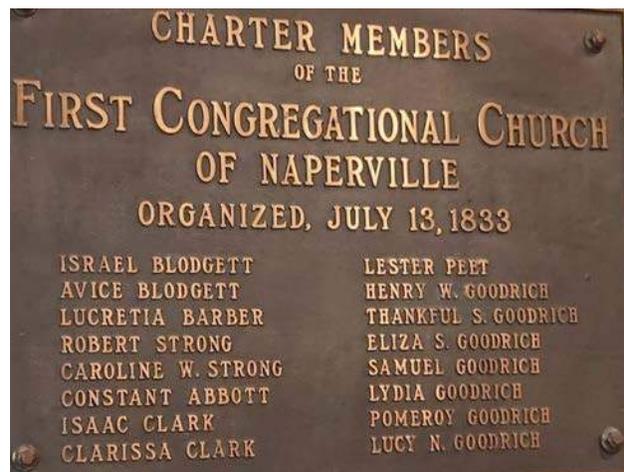
Criteria 5.2 That one or more of the following conditions exist

Criteria 5.2.1 That it was owned or occupied by a person of historic significance in national, State, or local history

As noted above, this is a church with a congregation that dates back to 1833. This means that multiple individuals of historic significance were part of the congregation at various times. It is truly the congregation that has made the historical impact as we have grown community leaders for almost the last two hundred years. Below we have listed a number of those individuals and their contributions to local, state, or national history.

Charter Members 1833

The sixteen founders and charter members of the congregation were prominent members of this early Naperville community, especially the seven of whom were in the Goodrich family and served the congregation and community for generations.



Bronze plaque located inside the sanctuary door in recognition of the 1833 Charter Members, August 2025 — Source: D. W. Diamond

Israel and Avis Blodgett³



Avis Blodgett — Source:
[Downers Grove Museum](#)

Israel and Avice (Avis) Blodgett were important in the national abolitionist movement. Originally from Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Israel and Avis Blodgett were outspoken abolitionists who opposed slavery on moral grounds. The *Western Citizen*, a contemporary anti-slavery newspaper published in Chicago, documents Israel’s participation in the abolitionist Liberty and Free Democracy Parties with other local Underground Railroad conductors in the 1840s and 1850s. An autobiography written by Henry Blodgett, Israel and Avis’ eldest son, tells how Avis refused to fetch water for a presumed slave catcher who visited their farm with two captured black men. The Blodgett Family advocated for abolitionism as members of the First Congregational Church in nearby Naperville. The Blodgetts moved to Downers Grove after three years in Naperville.

Isaac and Clarissa Clark⁴

Isaac Clark was a charter member and brother of our first pastor, Nathaniel Catlin Clark.

Isaac and Clarissa Clark were among the first settlers of Naperville, arriving in Lisle Township in the early 1830s.

By the 1840s, Isaac Clark was actively participating in various local organizations. In 1841, he was present at the founding meeting of the DuPage County Bible Society, and by 1848, he was serving on a committee of the DuPage Society for Mutual Protection, which was formed to defend settlers’ land claims.

The Clarks are perhaps best known for their involvement in the founding and early development of the First Congregational Church of Naperville. Not only were they two of its 16 founding members, but Isaac Clark was among those who appealed to the Reverends Jeremiah Porter and

³ Malone, Samantha, “Ties to Underground Railroad on display at Blodgett House,” *Suburban Life*, May 3, 2022, Page a5.

“Illinois: Israel and Avis Blodgett House,” *National Park Service*, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/places/illinois-israel-and-avis-blodgett-house.htm>.

Thompson, Richard A. and Pruter, Robert, *Dupage Roots: Then and Now*, DuPage County Historical Society, 2022.

⁴ “Early History of DuPage County,” *The Naperville Clarion*, June 28, 1923, Page 1.

“First Congregational Church Naperville Illinois History, 1833-1933,” Pamphlet, First Congregational Church, 1933.

Hall, John B., “Rev. Nathaniel Catlin Clark,” *Hall Families of New England*, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://johnlisle.com/newenglandhall/genealogy/getperson.php?personID=I11052&tree=NewEnglandHall>.

“Lisle Township History,” 1874 Atlas and History of DuPage County, Illinois, The ILGenWeb Project, 1874, <https://dupage.illinoisgenweb.org/documents/0BEC010936C5532FEB01ADE55623DD42BCE69A74.html>.

Fancher, James R. (editor), *History of First Congregational Church (UCC) of Naperville*, December 14, 2017.

Nathaniel C. Clark—missionaries to the area—to help form the religious society that ultimately became First Congregational Church. The initial meeting of that society was held at the home of Clarissa and Isaac Clark.

Isaac Clark was one of the early Elders of the church, organized at the time as a Presbyterian church. He was later elected as the church's first Sunday School superintendent during a period of change in 1840.

In 1838, when the congregation had been steadily increasing in size, the members voted in favor of building their own house of worship. A committee of five, including Isaac Clark, was formed and charged with finding a suitable lot in Naperville, then the county seat. They accepted Captain Morris Sleight's offer of a site near the DuPage County Courthouse, and by 1847—thirteen years after that first meeting at Isaac and Clarissa Clark's home—a frame building housing the First Congregational Church was ready to open.

Henry Goodrich and Thankful Goodrich⁵

Henry Goodrich (1788 - 1841) and his wife, **Thankful Watson Goodrich** (1785 -1857), and their four children arrived in Naper's Settlement in the fall of 1832, a year after the first inhabitant, Captain Joe Naper and his family, had settled there.

Henry had been a farmer in Benson, Vermont, before he and his family travelled to Fort Dearborn (now Chicago) via the Great Lakes and then on to DuPage County by ox team. In 1836, the Goodriches purchased 400 acres on the south side of Hobson Road. It is fortunate for Naperville that it was Henry and Thankful who purchased and defended this land that they and

⁵ “About Goodrich Woods,” Pamphlet, Naperville Youth Conservation Corps, 1978.

“Charles H. Goodrich,” *Portrait and Biographical Record of Cook and DuPage Counties, Illinois*, Lake City Publishing Company, 1894,

<https://dupage.illinoisgenweb.org/documents/3EA50BA4C5FB81EE8328E6B007A1B186CCAEE78F.html>.

“Early History of DuPage County,” *The Naperville Clarion*, Page 1, June 28, 1923.

Goodrich, Charles Howard III, “The Goodrich Farm on Hobson Road,” *Rural Heritage News*, Wheatland Plowing Match Association, July, 2003.

Bickhaus, Phoebe, *History of Naperville Community Unit School District 203: DuPage and Will Counties, Lisle, Naperville and DuPage Townships, State of Illinois*, Naperville Community Unit School District 203, 1997, <https://www.naperville203.org/cms/lib/IL01904881/Centricity/Domain/1951/District%20203%20History.docx.pdf>.

“Hold Services for Charles Goodrich Saturday, Sunday,” *Naperville Sun*, August 7, 1958, Page 7.

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., “Oak Cottage Cultural Resource Evaluation—Final Report,” Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, March 7, 2025,

[https://www.dupageforest.org/hubfs/DuPage2022/What%20We%20Do/Master%20Plan%20and%20Capital%20Projects/Project%20Related%20PDFs/Oak%20Cottage%20Cultural%20Resource%20Evaluation%20-%20Final%20Report%20-%20March%207%202025%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.dupageforest.org/hubfs/DuPage2022/What%20We%20Do/Master%20Plan%20and%20Capital%20Projects/Project%20Related%20PDFs/Oak%20Cottage%20Cultural%20Resource%20Evaluation%20-%20Final%20Report%20-%20March%207%202025%20(1).pdf).

“Henry Goodrich,” *Illinois Gravestones*, Gravestone Photo Project, March 20, 2010, <https://illinoisgravestones.org/view.php?id=33100>.

“Thankful S. Goodrich,” *Illinois Gravestones*, Gravestone Photo Project, March 20, 2010, <https://illinoisgravestones.org/view.php?id=33106>.

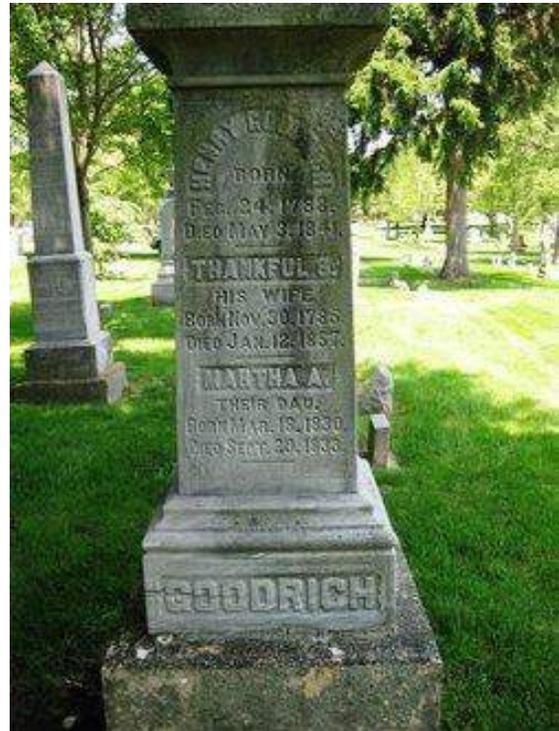
Blanchard, Rufus, *History of DuPage County, Illinois*, O, L, Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1882, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/historyofdupagec01blan/historyofdupagec01blan.pdf>.

their descendants farmed for many generations: In 1926, 16.6 acres on the western boundary of their farmland was donated by the Goodrich family for use as a forest preserve, Goodrich Woods, and in 1928, a portion of that acreage was given for constructing a public school for local farm families. The one-room schoolhouse, now owned by Hobson Cooperative School, still stands, and Goodrich Forest Preserve (Goodrich Woods) remains a much-needed oasis of oak woodlands and protected native wildflower species. Both the forest preserve and the red brick school building are a testament to the many significant contributions of the Goodrich family to the people of Naperville.

Among the earliest of their contributions was the organizing and founding of the First Congregational Church in July of 1833. Henry and Thankful Goodrich were charter members along with their 17-year-old daughter, Eliza, Henry's brother and sister-in-law, Pomeroy and Lucy Goodrich, and Samuel Goodrich and his wife, Lydia Goodrich. Eleven of the sixteen founding members were, in fact, Goodriches.

In 1838, when a building site was selected for First Congregational Church, Henry Goodrich, Pomeroy Goodrich, and Isaac Clark were named as the first trustees. Henry and the generations following him continued to be active in the church, serving as deacons and Sunday school superintendents.

Henry lived only another nine years after he arrived in 1832, dying in 1841. Thankful lived in Naperville for 25 years, dying in 1857. But their descendants continued to participate and be active in local public matters, serving on the school board and as library trustees. As Genevieve Towsley put it in her Story of the Week, “Hardly a project of community benefit can be cited that the Goodriches have not supported or even sponsored.”⁶



*Goodrich Grave marker in Naperville Cemetery —
Source: [Find A Grave](#)*

⁶ Towsley, Genevieve, “Story of the Week,” *The Naperville Clarion*, March 3, 1949, Page 2.

Founding Pastors 1833⁷

Rev. Jeremiah Porter



*Rev. Jeremiah Porter — Source:
First Congregational Church
Naperville Illinois History,
1833-1933*

The **Rev. Jeremiah Porter** was an ordained Congregational minister from Massachusetts who, with the Rev. Nathaniel C. Clark, formed a Presbyterian church with 16 founding members on July 13, 1833, a combination of six concentrations of members from surrounding farmland. This was the first congregation in DuPage County. Naperville was located at the center. These are the words Jeremiah Porter used in describing those historic days of July 13-14, 1833, of founding the church.

“Saturday the 13th ultimo, we passed in fasting, prayer, and exhortation, organized the church, and elected elders. On the Sabbath, we repaired to a grove, the place where we previously met being too small to accommodate the audience. The Lord’s Supper was administered to 35 communicants. It was a cheering scene. Few had dared to expect such a scene at this early period in the settlement of our frontier. The grain of mustard seed will, we

trust, become a great tree, so that **multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade.**” This phrase and a picture of a large tree have been the symbol of this church ever since.

Rev. Nathaniel C. Clark



*Rev. Nathaniel C. Clark —
Source: [Elgin History](#),*

The **Rev. Nathaniel C. Clark**, who assisted the Rev. Jeremiah Porter in the formation of the Presbyterian Church of Naperville on July 13, 1833, became their first pastor. In 1834, the congregation sought a more autonomous form of governance and adopted the Congregational form. The church became self-supporting in 1834 and grew from 26 to 100 members within two and a half years. The Clark Rooms under the 1906 sanctuary honor Rev. N. C. Clark.

⁷ “First Congregational Church Naperville Illinois History, 1833-1933,” Pamphlet, First Congregational Church of Naperville, IL, Page 3, 1933.

Rev. Jonathan Goodenough Porter⁸



Rev. Jonathan Goodenough Porter —
Source: [Find A Grave](#)

Rev. Jonathan Goodenough Porter was born in 1809 in Wanstead, Greater London County, England and was educated at Homerton College at Cambridge, England. He married Sarah Burchell Knight in 1830 in England and they were the parents of five children: Kate, Rev. William Clay, J. Knight, George and Mary.

He brought his family to America in 1835, settling in Chicago. They moved to Naperville in 1837 where he served as the first installed pastor of the First Congregational Church for three years. He became the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of DuPage in 1844 and served as pastor there for two terms of five and fourteen years.

He also supported his family by working as a shoemaker. He died February 14, 1883 at the home of his son in Fort Scott, Bourbon County, KS, and was buried in the Naperville Cemetery.

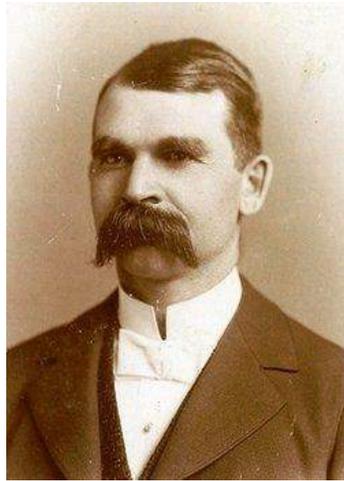


*The Porter House, still located at the corner of Porter Street and Washington St.,
August 2025 — Source: D. W. Diamond*

⁸ Towsley, Genevieve, *A view of historic Naperville : a collection of articles of historic significance from the Sky-Lines, Naperville Sun*, 1975 [1990].

Prominent 19th Century Members

James L. Nichols I & II⁹



James L. Nichols I left funds that built Naperville's **Nichols Library** bearing his name. He was a prominent member of the congregation of the First Congregational Church. He was born in Germany in 1851 and spoke German until he moved with his parents to America in 1857; first to Albany, NY, and then to Illinois. He was orphaned at age eight, learned English, and earned a teaching certificate. He moved to Naperville in 1876, when he was 25, and graduated from Northwestern College (now North Central College) by 1880. By 1882, he was appointed

1897 dedication plaque inside of *James Lawrence (Levi) Nichols*
the landmarked *Old Nichols*
Library at 110 S. Washington St. — Source: [Find A Grave](#)
— Source: S. Nurss

chair of the college's commerce department. He later **published a textbook, *The Business Guide***, which had sold 3 million copies by 1917. He was also a founding investor in the Naperville Lounge Company in 1893, which later evolved into the Kroehler Manufacturing Company.

He left higher education in 1891 to establish his publishing company, L.L. Nichols & Co. At just 44, he died (1895) but had bequeathed \$10,000 to the City of Naperville to establish a library, maintain it, supply its materials, and provide employees for its continual use. It opened to the public in 1898, and citizens donated 200 books to add to the 500 purchased for the library. Today, the Nichols Library boasts three locations with paper books, e-books, audiobooks, newspapers, magazines, movies, music, and TV.

⁹ Metsch, Steve and Field, Andrea, "The Way We Were, German immigrant James L. Nichols started the Naperville Public Library," *Chicago Tribune*, February 8, 2024, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2024/02/08/the-way-we-were-you-can-thank-a-german-immigrant-for-the-start-of-the-naperville-public-library/>.

Conour, Ashlee, "James Nichols' deathbed gift was the seed that led to Naperville's public library system," *Naperville Sun*, September 22, 2023, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2023/09/22/one-for-the-books-james-nichols-deathbed-gift-the-the-seed-that-led-to-napervilles-public-library-system/>.

Ory, Tim, "Publisher, Editor, Mayor," *Positively Naperville*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2023/09/11/publisher-editor-mayor/137740>.

Ory, Timothy, "James Lawrence (Levi) Nichols," Find a Grave, April 11, 2009, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/35755920/james-lawrence_levi-nichols.

James L. Nichols II was born in Naperville in 1890, served in World War I, graduated from the University of Illinois, and then ran the family book publishing business. He was also a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville. In 1939, he began working for Kroehler Furniture Manufacturing Company. In 1935, James II was elected **Mayor of Naperville** and served three more terms, for 16 years, until 1951. He passed away in 1955.

Hiram Hitchcock Cody¹⁰



Hiram H. Cody — Source: [Positively Naperville](#)

Hiram Hitchcock Cody was born in 1824 in New York, where he also attended Hamilton College before he came with his family in 1843 to Illinois. As a lawyer and judge, he was elected the **first DuPage County Clerk** in 1848-1852 and admitted to the bar in 1851. He served as Naperville **Village Trustee** in 1857, **DuPage County Judge** from 1861-1864, and Naperville **Village President** in 1867. As village president, he played a vital role in the Historical Ringing of the Bell.

Hiram served as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1870 and was elected Judge of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit in 1874 and served until 1879, when he returned to private practice, retiring in 1893. He was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville and served as Superintendent of the Sunday school for 25 years. He died in 1907 and is buried in the Naperville Cemetery.

George Martin III & IV, and Caroline Martin Mitchell¹¹



George Martin IV — Source: [Positively Naperville](#)

George Martin IV was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1826 and emigrated with his family to the United States. His father, George Martin III, purchased a claim of Captain Joseph Naper's south of the DuPage River. Their frame home became known as the "Century House," which was considered the first frame home built in DuPage County, and was continuously occupied until destroyed by fire in 1958. It was located on what is now called "Rotary Hill." George III donated part of his land for a Naperville Cemetery. Martin Avenue, which runs south of the cemetery, was named for the family.

George IV worked first on his father's family farm and then in the mercantile business. In 1849, he opened a stone quarry on his property along the DuPage River and started a brickwork business in

¹⁰ Ory, Tim, "The First DuPage County Clerk," *Positively Naperville*, November 17, 2021, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2021/11/17/the-first-dupage-county-clerk/124159>.

¹¹ Ory, Tim, "Pioneer, Village Trustee, Farmer, and Businessman," *Positively Naperville*, October 11, 2023, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2023/10/11/pioneer-village-trustee-farmer-and-businessman/138309>.

1853. Most of the foundations of the early homes in Naperville were built with stone from his quarry. In 1857, he partnered with Gregson Wright to establish the Producers Bank of Martin & Wright Co. That same year, when the village was incorporated and held its first election, he was elected as a **Village Trustee** and was reelected in 1863. In 1861, he partnered with William King to form the Naperville Tile and Brick Works, and later with Ernest Von Oven in the Martin & Von Oven Tile and Brick Works. Their business provided materials to help rebuild Chicago after the fire of 1871. In 1883, he built a beautiful, large brick home on his property named “Pine Craig.” He was a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville. George Martin IV died in 1889 and is buried in the Naperville Cemetery.

His daughter, Caroline, married Edward Grant Mitchell, a relative of Ulysses S. Grant, and was the last survivor of the Martin family. She donated the family’s mansion and estate to the village of Naperville to be used as a museum. Pine Craig is now the Caroline Martin-Mitchell Museum, and the estate is now Naper Settlement. Caroline Martin Mitchell also donated the land that became Centennial Beach, Central High School, and the Naperville Cemetery, among others.



Pine Craig is now the Caroline Martin-Mitchell Museum, and the estate is now Naper Settlement — Source: [Pioneer, Village Trustee, Farmer, and Businessman - Positively Naperville](#)



*The First Village Board of Naperville, Ill. 1857, in Central Park, July, 2025 — Source: D. W. Diamond
Note members above: Trustees, H.H. Cody and Geo. Martin. Commissioner, G. A. Keller (his descendant, Ron Keller, a prominent member, passed away in 2024.)*

Willard Scott Jr.¹²



*Willard Scott —
Source: Private Collection*

Stephen Scott and Hadassah Trask Scott were the first white family to settle in this area (1826 in Gross Point/Evanston), and in 1830 at the juncture of the two branches of the DuPage River, and from 1837 in the village of Naperville. Willard Sr. was their son, Willard Jr. their grandson.

Willard Scott Jr. was born in 1835 in the Scott Settlement. After attending school in Naperville, he began his business career in his father's mercantile, Willard Scott & Co. (The store was sold in 1905 to Broecker and Spiegler.) He moved to Wisconsin in 1858 for three years, where he worked in banking and met his wife. Returning to Naperville in 1861, Willard again worked with his father and brother in banking and in the mercantile business.

He served his country by enlisting in 1862 and mustered out in 1865 as a Major. In 1874, after a fire that burned the Washington House Hotel, he helped purchase fire equipment and was appointed Naperville's first **Fire Marshal**. By 1869, his civic roles included **Naperville Village Trustee** in 1869, **Village Treasurer** from 1874 to 1878, and **Mayor** from 1895 to 1896 and again from 1899 to 1900. In 1894, on a trip to Florida, he acquired a baby alligator and kept it in his store as an attraction until it had grown to 12 feet long by the time it died in 1914. He became a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville in 1898. He died in 1932 and is buried in the Naperville Cemetery.



Willard Scott House 101 N Washington St, Naperville, IL, August, 2025—Source: D.W. Diamond

¹² Ory, Tim, "Businessman, Soldier, First Fire Marshal, Village Trustee, Treasurer, and Mayor," *Positively Naperville*, January 17, 2023, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2023/01/17/businessman-soldier-first-fire-marshal-village-trustee-treasurer-and-mayor/133126>.

Alvin “Bay” Scott Jr¹³.



Alvin “Bay” Scott Jr. — Source: [Positively Naperville](https://www.positivelynaperville.com)

Alvin Bay Scott Jr. was born in 1864 in Naperville. He was the fourth-generation descendant of the Stephen Scott family that settled near the East and West Branch forks of the DuPage River in 1930. He attended Naperville schools and North West College (now North Central College) from 1875 to 1878 and went by the nickname “Bay.” He worked as a bank cashier for his uncle, Willard Scott Jr., from 1881 to 1907 and then started his own Real Estate and Insurance business.

He served Naperville as **City Treasurer** in 1890, as Naperville **Postmaster** from 1893 to 1897, and as Naperville **Mayor** from 1903 to 1907. During his term as mayor, the city installed waterworks and a sewerage system and paved the streets. He also served as **Supervisor of Lisle Township** in 1907, completing his father’s term after his father’s death. As a church member, he taught Sunday School, chaired the Board of Trustees, and was active in every ministry. Four generations of the Scott family died with his death in 1926, and he is buried in the Naperville Cemetery.

Listing of Those Who Purchased Slips (aka, pews) in the 1848 Frame Church¹⁴

- George W. Laird - slip #34
- George Martin - slip #45
- Joseph Naper - slip #16
- John I. Ridder (family of George Martin’s wife) - Slip #31

Deacons

1833-1860 Isaac Clark
 1833-c1860 Pomeroy Goodrich
 1833-1838 Lester Peet
 1859-1861 Samuel Meacham
 1859 Charles Goodrich
 1859-1872 E. R. Loomis
 1871 Hermen Knickerbacher
 1888 Robert Hynin
 1888 F. Granger

Sunday School Superintendents

1840-1842 Isaac Clark
 1850-1859 E. R. Loomis
 1859-1884 Hiram Cody
 1888-1889 J. L. Nichols
 1889 Irving Nichols

Source: Naperville Heritage Society

¹³ Ory, Tim, “What’s in a Name,” *Positively Naperville*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2022/03/10/whats-in-a-name/126530>.

¹⁴ Receipts, *Naper Settlement Archives of First Congregational Church of Naperville, IL*, Naperville Heritage Society, Accessed on August 10, 2025.

Prominent 20th Century Members

Genevieve Towsley¹⁵

Genevieve Brayton Towsley, 1908-1996, was a journalist and historian who is best known for her work for *The Naperville Clarion* and columns **Grapevine** and **Sky-Lines** for the *Naperville Sun*. She focused on the community, its history, and its people.

In 1975, Towsley **published a book** with the Naperville Sun titled “*A View of Historic Naperville from the Sky-Lines*,” a collection of her work from the newspaper’s Sky-Lines column. Her bronze sculpture, titled “Genevieve,” was installed in 1999, placed in downtown Naperville, and depicts Genevieve sitting on a bench while writing in her notebook. Her feature articles impacted the Naperville community: Her feature on Centennial Beach resulted in its becoming integrated well before the '60s; her championing of a historic church spearheaded its saving and caused the establishment of the Naperville Heritage Society. She was a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville: 1929-1996.



“Genevieve” – Source:
[Century Walk](#)



Book by Genevieve's daughter – Source:
[Century Walk](#)

¹⁵ “Genevieve by Pamela S. Carpenter,” *Naperville Century Walk*, Retrieved on July 23, 2025,
https://www.centurywalk.org/impact/art_details.cfm?artID=12.

Jackson, Jacqueline, “My mother, the columnist, journalist and historian,” *Illinois Times*, October 22, 2008,
<https://www.illinoistimes.com/arts-culture/my-mother-the-columnist-journalist-and-historian-11437829>.

Jane Sindt¹⁶



*Jane Sindt— Source: First
Congregational Church
Directory, Olan Mills, 1988*

Jane Sindt, born in Pittsburgh in 1915, arrived in Naperville as an adult in 1957 with her husband, Gus, and their two children. She developed a fierce love for her new community and was soon fighting to save the town's important historic places. She formed the **Naperville Heritage Society** in 1969 and was instrumental in relocating an old church, St. John's Episcopal Church, a country Gothic building (now known as **Century Memorial Chapel**), in 1970 to Park District land adjoining the historic Martin-Mitchell Mansion. This led to the formation of what is now known as Naper Settlement.

In addition to serving as the first president of the Heritage Society from 1969-1976, Jane also started the **Farmer's Market at Fifth Avenue Station** and worked closely with May Watts to create the Prairie Path. She attended the First Congregational Church of Naperville and passed away on December 24, 1995.

Hilde & Sig Blankenhorn¹⁷



*Hilde & Sig Blankenhorn — Source: First
Congregational Church Directory,
Olan Mills, 1998*

Sig Blankenhorn, 1915 - 2006, was a native of Stuttgart, Germany, and a long-time resident of Plank Road in Naperville, IL. Sig studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and had a career in commercial art, owning Blankenhorn Display in Chicago. Hilde (Wagner) Blankenhorn, 1914-2007, was nine years old when her family immigrated to the United States from Germany. Together, they spearheaded recycling in Naperville in the early 1980s, which was so successful that it was officially taken over by **Naperville Recycling**.

¹⁶ Gingold, Kate, "Notable Naperville Women – Jane Sindt," August 16, 2017 , <https://kategingold.com/Blogs/Author-Tips/notable-naperville-women-jane-sindt-1>.

"A champion for the past," *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 1990, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/1990/04/22/A-champion-for-the-past/>.

¹⁷ "Sig Blankenhorn Obituary," *The Kansas City Star*, September 19, 2006, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/kansascity/name/sig-blankenhorn-obituary?id=4318030>.

"Hilde Blankenhorn Obituary," *Naperville Sun*, July 18-20, 2007, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/obituaries/hilde-blankenhorn-chicago-il/>.

"Naperville Is Old-Timer at Recycling," *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 2011, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/1996/04/05/naperville-is-old-timer-at-recycling/>.

Sig Blankenhorn designed the church logo, which encapsulates the phrase spoken by the Rev. Jeremiah Porter on Sunday, July 14, 1833, during the service of communion under a large tree by the DuPage River, claiming that “multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade.” The large tree has become a symbol of our congregation and appears in our publications and in many places in our building. Both Sig and Hilde were church members from 1968 until they moved to Missouri in 2001.



The logo designed by Sig Blankenhorn —
Source: First Congregational Church

The Rev. George St. Angelo¹⁸

The Rev. George August St. Angelo Jr., 1921-2012, was the **first chaplain at North Central College in Naperville** and initiated a high-profile speaker program at the school that drew notables, including the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Henry Kissinger. He served in the U.S. Army Signal Intelligence Corps during World War II. His skill as a German translator led him to the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp to assist with interrogations of Nazi guards and to aid medics in treating the survivors. In 1968, he retired from active ministry to create Seminars International, an educational travel service that specializes in historical and cultural experiences. He was a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville from 1969 until 1996.

Dottee Krejci¹⁹



Dottee Krejci – Source: [Chicago Tribune Obituary](#)

Dorothy Peterson, known as “Dottee” Krejci, 1925-2017, devoted her life to children and education. She moved to Naperville in 1964, started **Hobson Cooperative Nursery School**, and served as the school’s Director. She left in 1971 to become the founding Director of **Little Friends Inc.**, which has served Naperville and the surrounding communities and has become one of the finest schools for special needs children in Illinois. She retired from Little Friends in 1990, and the school honored her by renaming one of the buildings “Krejci Academy.” Dottee was a devoted member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville from 1965 until she passed away in 2017 at the age of 92.

¹⁸ “The Rev. George St. Angelo, 1921-2012,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 23, 2021, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2012/03/13/the-rev-george-st-angelo-1921-2012/>.

“Official Obituary of Rev. George August St. Angelo, Jr. June 18, 1921 - March 4, 2012,” *Beidelman-Kunsch Funeral Home*, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://www.beidelmankunschfh.com/obituaries/Rev-George-August-St-Angelo--Jr?obId=2932224>.

¹⁹ “Dorothy Krejci Obituary” *Naperville Sun*, October 1-3, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/obituaries/dorothy-krejci-naperville-il/>.

Dr. A. David Rossin²⁰



*Dr. A. David Rossin — Source:
[American Nuclear Society](#)*

Dr. A. David Rossin, 1931-2020. His diverse career in the nuclear industry ranged from working with national laboratories and universities on nuclear and advanced energy technology, non-proliferation, radioactive waste management, and low-level radiation issues, to energy policy issues when he was appointed by President Reagan as **Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy for the U.S. DOE** from 1986-1987. He attended the First Congregational Church of Naperville.

John Teschner & Elaine Nyquist²¹



*John Teschner & Elaine Nyquist
— Source: First Congregational
Church Directory, United Church
Directories, 1993*

The Hon. John S. Teschner, 1935-2012, was an **Illinois Special Assistant Attorney General**. The Illinois Supreme Court appointed him a **DuPage County 18th Circuit Court Judge**. He served for over 20 years before retiring in 1995. He and his wife, The Hon. Elaine Nyquist, who was also a judge, were members of the First Congregational Church of Naperville from 1981 to 1997.

²⁰ “A. David Rossin ANS President 1992-1993,” American Nuclear Society, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://www.ans.org/about/presidents/arossin/>.

²¹ Popejoy, Hon. Kenneth L., “All in the Family,” *DCBA Brief*, DuPage County Bar Association, Vol. 12, Issue 1, September, 1999, <https://www.dcba.org/mpage/vol120999art10>.

“John Teschner Obituary,” *The News Press*, February 16-18, 2012, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/news-press/name/john-teschner-obituary?id=19664254>.

Ronald J. Keller²²



Ronald J. Keller — Source:
[Naperville Sun Obituary](#)

Born at home in 1939 and raised in Naperville, Ron Keller attended Naperville schools and began playing the tuba in the Ellsworth School Band in third grade. Ron was **director of the Naperville Municipal Band for 57 years**; he participated in the Band as a soloist and member for more than 70 years. Under his direction, the Band was awarded the prestigious Sudler Silver Scroll, presented by the John Philip Sousa Foundation in 1991, which recognizes excellence in Community Bands. In 2000, the House of Representatives and the Library of Congress honored the Naperville Municipal Band as a Local Legacy, which documents and preserves the cultural significance of community bands.

Shortly after he retired from the Municipal Band in 2023, the City Council presented him with a sign renaming Court Place as “Ron Keller Commemorative Way.”

In 2024, Ron was awarded the Outstanding Dedication to the Community Award from the Daughters of the Revolution for his tireless work to get the Naperville Concert Center built in Central Park in 2002 and the public restrooms built in Central Park in 2013. He developed the Municipal Band into a premier organization. Ron taught public school music for over four decades. He taught all levels of music instruction, with most of his time spent at Jefferson Junior High School, and served as the Music Coordinator for School District 203 for 18 years. He was a member of the First Congregational Church of Naperville from 1983 to 2024.

²² “Remembering Ron Keller: Telling Tales of Tubaman”, *Positively Naperville*, January 24, 2024, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2024/01/24/telling-tales-of-tubaman-ron-keller/137046>.

Cortez, Jesus, “Long-time Naperville Municipal Band Director Ron Keller Dies,” *Naperville Community Television NCTV17*, January 24, 2024, <https://www.nctv17.org/news/long-time-naperville-municipal-band-director-ron-keller-dies/>.

“Ronald Keller Obituary,” *Naperville Sun*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/naperville-sun/name/ronald-keller-obituary?id=54246738>.

Diane Herr²³



*Diane Elaine Herr — Source:
[Tribute Archive](#)*

Diane Elaine Herr, 1956 - 2020, started her career as a Computer Engineer at Bell Laboratories and retired from the company, then known as **Lucent Technologies, as a Vice President of Product Management**. During her career at Bell Labs, Diane held several managerial roles, which were especially significant for a woman at that time. She was also **named on several patents**.

Diane was a champion of social justice and spoke out for equality. She was a very active leader at First Congregational Church of Naperville, leading youth groups, performing in music groups, leading adult offerings, and fulfilling leadership positions: 1980-2020.

Criteria 5.2.2 That it has a direct connection to an important event in national, State, or local history

Oldest DuPage Church, Oldest Northern Illinois Congregational Church



Plaque next to the church's sanctuary entrance door: First Congregational Church of Naperville founded July 13, 1833 is the oldest church in DuPage County and the oldest Congregation church founded in Northern Illinois — Source: D.W. Diamond

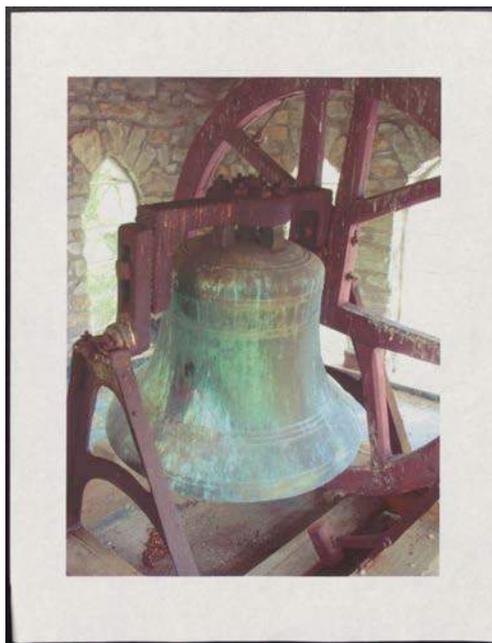
²³ "Diane Elaine Herr Obituary," *Tribute Archive*, Friedrich-Jones Funeral Home, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/18173969/Diane-Elaine-Herr>.

"Patents by Inventor Diane E. Herr," *Justia*, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://patents.justia.com/inventor/diane-e-herr>.

Historical Ringing of the Bell²⁴

The First Congregational Church has been a driving force for social equality from its beginnings. As noted above, congregants were strong supporters of the anti-slavery movement and other social reforms. But there is also at least one event in Naperville's history in which the church was directly involved.

In 1867, DuPage County voted to move the county seat from Naperville to Wheaton. The citizens of Naperville resisted the move, refusing to give up the county records. In December, a group from Wheaton descended on the Naperville courthouse and took the records. A local citizen, Hiram Cody, ran to the church and rang the bell to rally Napervillians to resist. Thus, the First Congregational Church bell was an important element in the uprising, even though the Illinois Supreme Court ultimately ruled against Naperville.



*Church Bell moved from 1846 building to 1906 building and still is rung on every Sunday —
Source: Naperville Heritage Society*

The Construction of the 1906 Building²⁵

The construction of the 1906 building garnered a lot of interest in turn-of-the-20th-century Naperville, with the citizenry kept apprised of the building's progress at regular intervals in the local newspaper, *The Naperville Clarion*.

At its annual meeting on January 14, 1905, the congregation directed its trustees to proceed with building a new church building, if the necessary funds could be secured. The services of the architect M. J. Morehouse of Chicago were enlisted to draw up plans for the new building.

In May of 1905, *The Naperville Clarion* shared these plans with the community at large, providing a drawing of the church's proposed exterior, describing its interior features, and concluding with the following appeal to the citizens of Naperville: "The subscriptions have reached an amount that prove [sic] the possibility of dedicating the new church free of all indebtedness, if substantial aid is received from the townspeople of Naperville. Surely the magnificent character of the improvement which the Congregationalists have planned will add dollars to the value of every piece of property in Naperville, and our citizens should be prompt

²⁴ Ogg, Bryan J., *Naperville: A Brief History*, The History Press, 2018, Page 68.

²⁵ "New First Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, April 5, 1905, Page 1.

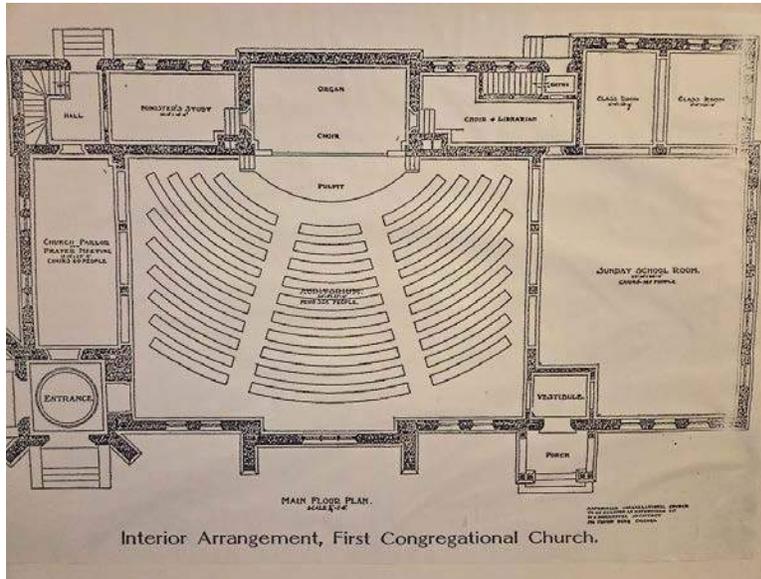
"New First Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, May 3, 1905, Page 1.

"Interior Plan of Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, July 12, 1905, microfilm, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL.

"Dedication May 6," *The Naperville Clarion*, April 25, 1906, Page 1.

"Dedication of Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, May 9, 1906.

and liberal in their response to the appeal which will be made to them for help in this enterprise. The erection in our public park of a building of such dignified, imposing, and beautiful architecture will gratify the pride of every loyal citizen, and the enterprise should enlist hearty sympathy and substantial support.”



1906 Floor Plan — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

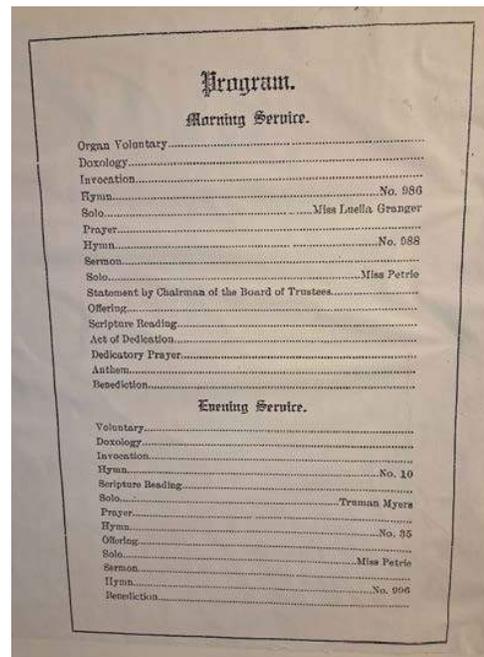
deficit could be raised in time for the dedication. A final plea was made for contributions from the community.

The structure was dedicated on May 6, 1906. There was standing room only at the morning dedication service, with approximately 700 people in attendance, including many members of the Methodist, College, and Grace congregations, whose own churches had adjourned their services so their members could attend the dedication. Almost that many people attended the evening dedication service that same day. The nearly 1400 people who attended the two services would have comprised a significant percentage of the 3000 people living in Naperville at that time.

The dedication ceremony included a report from the chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. W. R. Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin’s report stated that they had originally envisioned building a \$12,000 structure, but ended up dedicating one costing \$24,000, free of debt, with a membership of 180. Mr. Goodwin also noted several substantial individual gifts, including the \$3000 pipe organ given by Mr. T. P. Phillips, the pews, the pulpit

A subsequent article in July of 1905 included a drawing of the church’s floor plan, and indicated that the stone for the exterior would be obtained from Joliet since suitable stone for the project could not be obtained from the Naperville quarry.

Another article published a week and a half before the dedication reported that a deficit of \$6800 remained towards the cost of the building and that Mr. T. P. Phillips had volunteered to cover the cost of the pipe organ, if the remaining



1906 Building Dedication Program — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

furniture, a baptismal font from Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Martin (not related to the George Martin family), and several memorial windows, the two largest being the Barnard and the Martin windows, given by the Algernon S. and Elizabeth Reynolds Barnard and the George Martin families. He concluded by acknowledging the contributions of the wider community, “Without the extremely liberal aid of the friends of the church, this magnificent structure could not have been erected... Words fail to express our appreciation of the liberal-hearted contributions from people not connected with this church.”

Churches Organized from the First Congregational Church of Naperville

From this “mother” church have sprung numerous churches. Petitions of members to be dismissed to organize other churches were readily granted. One granted to George E. Parmelee in 1837 resulted in the formation of the Downers Grove Congregational Church.

Other churches that sprang from First Congregational Church of Naperville include the Big Woods Church Congregational Church in Eola and the First Congregation Church of Lisle. (See Appendix 2: Histories of the Church.)

Discussion about building a building for the First Congregational Church started in 1838. It became a divisive issue as parishioners were scattered in six separate clusters within DuPage County. In 1844, twelve persons presented a letter requesting to be dismissed to organize a new church in Will County, and they organized the DuPage Presbyterian Church, located south of Boughton Road on Washington/Naperville Road.

In 1965, a group of 120 departed to found the Naperville Congregational Church, not affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

In 1996, a group formed HOPE United Church of Christ.

Outreach Projects in the 20th and 21st Century

The church’s rich history of social justice traces back to its Puritan beginnings of seeking religious freedom, through the abolitionist movement, the Underground Railroad, the civil rights movement and equality for women.

In the last half of the twentieth and to date in the twenty-first century, the church has been at the forefront of efforts to prompt a more just society both within and beyond Naperville.

➤ 1906: **Two women** served on the 1906 building committee: Mrs. J. L. Nichols and Mrs. Elizabeth Scott

➤ 1950s: Women have served on the **Board of Trustees** since the 1950s

Established direct interaction with urban and Black congregations in Chicago, including exchange groups on Sunday mornings.

Initiated family camping and other exchanges with Christ Church, a Japanese-American congregation on the north side of Chicago.

Provided provisions for the bus from North Central College that went to Selma, Alabama, for the **March from Selma**.

Supported federally funded housing projects for the elderly in Naperville at **Martin Manor**. The church's Social Action Committee was instrumental in bringing a **Fair Housing Council** into being for the city.

- 1969: Esther Gardiner, the **first woman deacon** in 1969
- 1973: Jean Swanson, the **first woman moderator** (i.e., chair of the Church Council)
- 1975-1976: Sponsored a **Vietnamese family**, the Hais, who had fled from Saigon at the end of the war. One member donated a house, and many others worked to find work for Mr. Hai, collecting furniture and clothing, helping with transportation, and giving English lessons. The family, parents, and four small sons gradually adjusted and repaid the congregation with their development and gratitude before moving to California.
- 1970s: **First time women served as Ushers** in the late 1970s
- 1980s: Initiated **city-wide recycling** which was so successful that Naperville Recycling officially took it over.
- 1986: The church invited the **first woman in its history to the pastorate**, Rev. Sally Owen-Still, who served as the associate pastor from 1986 to 1996.
- 1986: Equipped our church community room and installed a shower to become a shelter for homeless people on Wednesday nights (October through April) through **DuPage Pads (Public Action to Deliver Shelter)**. Members continued to provide meals and overnight shelter to the homeless in DuPage County for 33 years until COVID, with the support of other churches and organizations on other nights of the week.
- 1989: Adopted a **Just Peace Covenant** in 1989, whereby congregants took the vow to work together for peace and justice in the church, the community, the nation, and the world. One example of our Just Peace work was our congregation's advocacy for an assault weapons ban in Naperville in 2022.
- 1991: Adopted **inclusive language** usage in worship in the 1990s in a formal stance to value women in the church.



Source: D. W. Diamond

- 1997: Voted to become an “**Open and Affirming**” United Church of Christ congregation in the 1990s, establishing a covenant that welcomes all people, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, race, religion, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or physical and/or mental abilities.
- 2003: Sponsored a Resolution to the national UCC General Synod on “An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism,” which was passed in 2004.
- 2004: The **Naperville Faith Collaboration** (a coalition of 15 religious organizations) sponsored two non-partisan Senatorial candidate forums at our church. Illinois Senator Barack Obama, a member of Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ, spoke as the Democratic candidate. Alan Keyes spoke as the Republican candidate.



Source: D. W. Diamond



Illinois Senator Barack Obama giving speech in the sanctuary as a candidate for the U.S. Senator from Illinois — Source: First Congregational Church of Naperville

- 2010: Provided free space for **Community Access Naperville**, an organization devoted to providing opportunities for developmentally disabled young adults. What began as a brief summer program achieved status as a continuing charity on its own and is housed in our church to this day. Church member Sherry Healey played an instrumental role in the organization’s founding.
- 2014: Music With A Mission, launched by the church’s Director of Music, Christopher Lorimer, and continuing to the present, is a series of free concerts featuring accomplished musicians from the Naperville and surrounding area. The goal is to provide a free cultural experience while raising money through a free-will offering to support local not-for-profits.
- 2016: We partnered with **World Relief DuPage Aurora (WRDA)** and began collecting items for a Good Neighbor Kit, which is the first step to sponsoring a refugee family. The outpouring of support was overwhelming as the church generously donated enough items for two families. 13+ volunteers completed two training classes, and in December 2016, we were

matched with two refugee families from Syria. Our two teams helped the families navigate and become acclimated to their new life in America. Each week, our volunteers checked on the families and assisted those with special needs, made doctors' appointments, organized transportation schedules, and helped the families learn English.

- 2020: Began a **monthly collection of styrofoam** (and continues today) since it is not recycled by the City of Naperville and returns the collection to Dart Industries. Food staples are collected at the same time for the **West Suburban Food Bank**. The drives are community based as we have several churches that participate and publicize the events as environmental outreach for their congregations.
- 2024: Mission Projects organized donations to **GotSneakers**, a used sneaker program that collects sneakers and repurposes them through recycling. Our church donated over 200 pairs of sneakers.

From August 2024 to present, our church community has recycled 250 pounds of used socks through **Terracycle**. Keeping them out of landfills, these socks are cleaned and sorted and recycled into raw formats that manufacturers use to make new products.

Made environmental stewardship a critical focus in recent years and advocated for cleaner energy. Founding members of the **Say No to Coal Consortium** continue to make several appearances and presentations to the city council as they vote on energy suppliers.

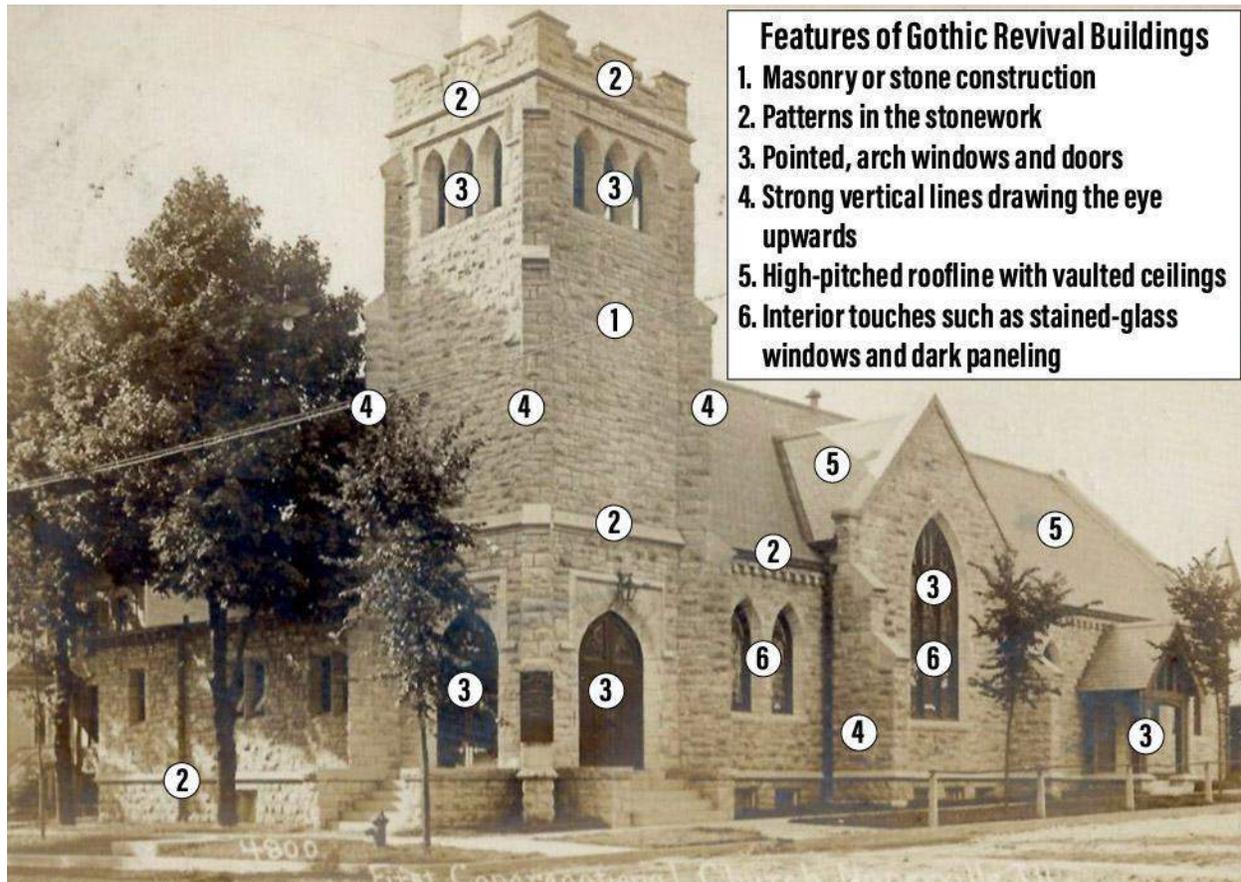
- 2025: Hosted "**The World We Inherit: A Climate Gallery**" on August 2, 2025 to raise awareness about climate change through art, storytelling, and demonstrations. More than 100 people from the community and local government attended, including Congressman Bill Foster, State Senator Laura Ellman, and Naperville City Council members Mary Gibson and Benny White.

In June, Rev. Kari Nicewander began serving as the **first woman senior pastor**.

Criteria 5.2.3 That it embodies the distinguishing characteristic of an architectural period, style, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials

Neo-Gothic/Gothic Revival Architectural Style of 1906 building²⁶

Gothic Revival (also referred to as Victorian Gothic or neo-Gothic) is an architectural structure that, after a gradual build-up beginning in the second half of the 17th century, became a widespread movement in the first half of the 19th century. Gothic Revival was a creative rebellion—a way to bring meaning, beauty, and history back in time to architecture during a time of massive social and industrial change.



1906 First Congregational Church of Naperville Building with Gothic Revival Annotations
— Source: Naperville Heritage Society photograph annotated by M. L. Schweitzer

²⁶ “Gothic Revival Architecture,” Wikipedia, Version from July 25, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture.

“Gothic Revival Architecture: History, Characteristics & Key Examples,” ArchitectureCourses.org, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://architecturecourses.org/learn/gothic-revival-architecture>.

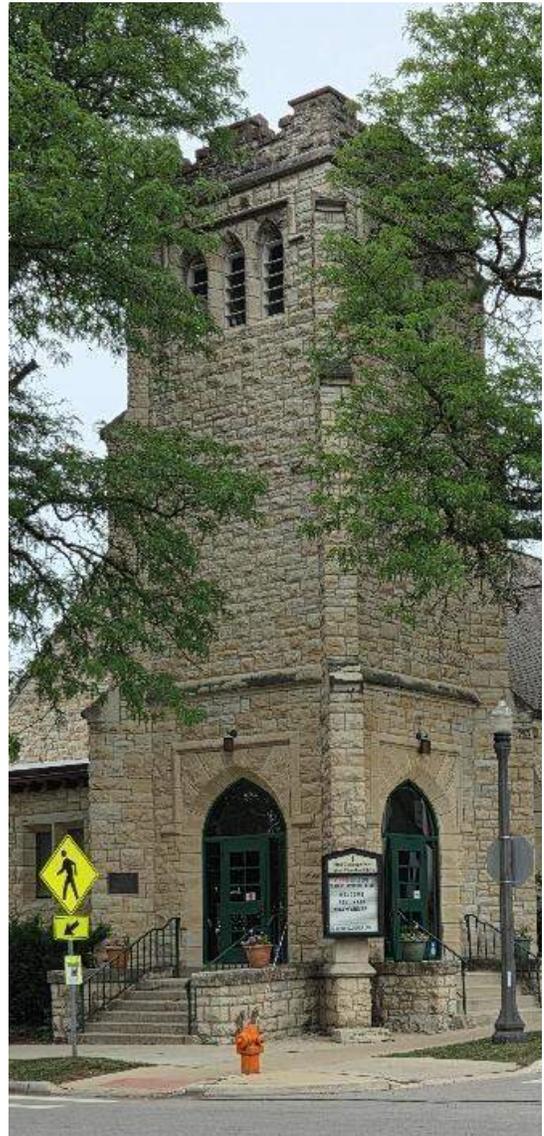
Brown, Rachel, “Development and Characteristics of Gothic Revival Architecture,” DIY Home Media SRL, December 22, 2022, <https://www.homedit.com/house-styles/gothic-revival-architecture/>.

The most common use for Gothic Revival architecture was in the building of churches. Major examples of Gothic cathedrals in the U.S. include the cathedrals of St. John the Divine and St. Patrick’s Cathedral (New York), and the Washington D.C. National Cathedral.

Architectural Features for High Gothic Revival Structures in 1906 building

(See Appendix 8: Pictures and Analysis of Architecture for details.)

1. Masonry or stone construction — Limestone sourced from Joliet quarries as suitable stone for the project could not be obtained from the Naperville quarries.²⁷ According to Bryan Ogg, formerly of Naper Settlement, “The stone used to construct the new Congregational Church was sourced and quarried in Joliet as Naperville’s quarries ceased production at the end of the 1904 work season. The limestone beneath Joliet and Naperville is identical in composition. Geologists refer to this stone as Niagara because in the geologic record of layers, the most prominent outcropping of this stone occurs at Niagara Falls, New York. The stone in Illinois is particularly noted for its uniformly fine grain, beautiful buff appearance, uniformity and strength, which makes it very desirable for building. The bands of Niagara limestone in northeast Illinois occur at depths of 12 to 40 feet. When first extracted from the ground, it is pure white but ages to a buttery yellow. This limestone could be polished to a smooth finish or hewn rough. It is somewhat of a miracle that Joliet quarries were able to furnish the Congregational Church with stone when they did, presumably during the 1905 season. In 1906, 200 Joliet quarry workers went on strike essentially shutting down all the quarries in Joliet except the Illinois State Penitentiary quarry.”²⁸



Corner bell tower — Source: D. W. Diamond

²⁷ “New First Congregational Church,” *The Naperville Clarion*, May 3, 1905, Page 1.

“Interior Plan of Congregational Church,” *The Naperville Clarion*, July 12, 1905.

²⁸ Ogg, Bryan, email to Jane Burke, September 3, 2025.

2. Use of patterns in the stonework such as dentil ornamentation in the stonework running along the roofline increase the pleasing appearance of the building.



Dentil ornamentation in stonework — Source: J. R. Fancher

3. Use of pointed, arch windows and doors distributes weight efficiently, allowing for taller, lighter structures and making those openings more pleasing to the eye.



View outside and inside of the entrance doors — Source: D. W. Diamond

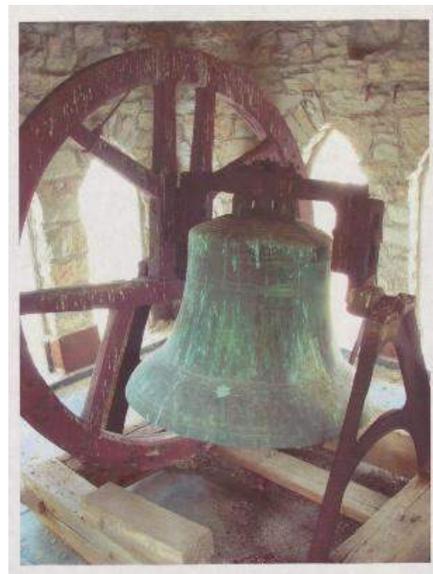
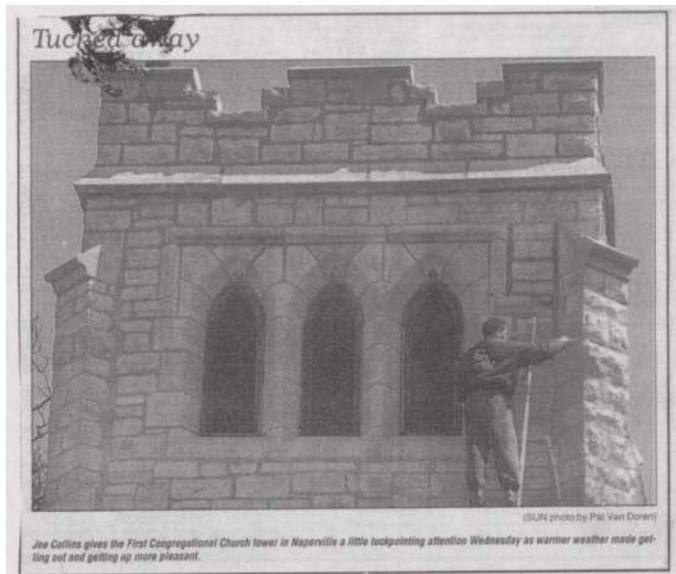
- a. Perpendicular, arched double-entry doors with vaulted ceiling
- b. Several internal doors and windows are also arched

- c. Stained glass arched windows from the 1846 building were installed in the 1906 structure.
- d. Several significant arched stained glass windows were created for the 1906 building (see 5c. Significant exterior architectural features and Appendix 4: History of Windows and Dedications.)
- e. Bride's Door



Brides door facing onto Center St. — Source: D.W. Diamond

- f. Arched openings in the bell tower



Bell Tower and Bell — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

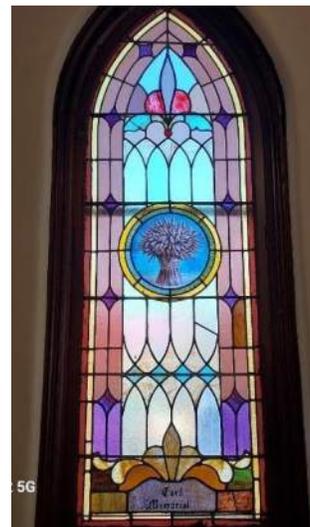
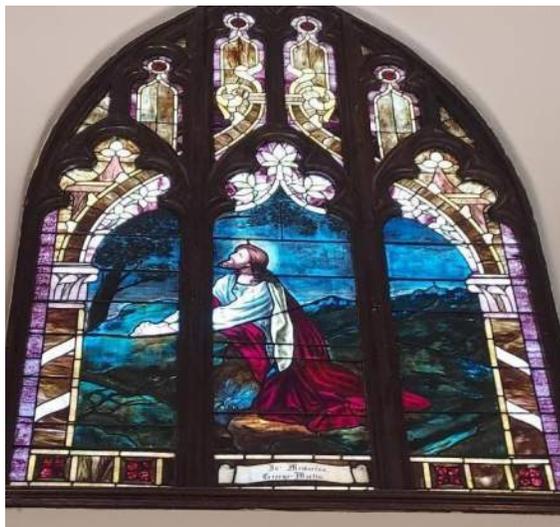
- 4. The emphasis of strong vertical lines draws the eye upwards
 - a. Bell tower as a clear symbol of a sacred building honoring worship
 - b. The crenelated (notched) four-square bell tower with the original bell from the 1846 frame church, moved to the 1906 building

5. High-pitched roofline with vaulted ceilings — Higher, even soaring space, which reaches God and the sky is evident in the exterior view of the roof and interior view in the sanctuary.
6. Interior Touches
 - a. The aesthetic dark paneled-oak vaulted ceiling imitates the image of a boat/ark.



The interior of the Sanctuary show the vaulted ceiling and dark wood paneling — Source: D. L. Lorenz

- b. Leaded, diamond-paned, and stained-glass windows — large and colorful, often telling religious stories; windows may occur singly, or paired under a single moulding, or grouped in an odd number with the tallest window at the center. These windows offer a pleasing appearance inside and outside of the building. (See Appendix 4: History of Windows and Dedications.)



Stained-glass Windows — Source: D. W. Diamond

Indigenous Materials

This limestone is indigenous as it was sourced from the Joliet quarries²⁹ as was noted under “Architectural Features for High Gothic Revival Structures in 1906 Building.”

Criteria 5.2.4 It represents the notable work of a builder, designer or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community;

Developer: Morris Sleight³⁰



Morris Sleight — Source:
[Naperville Country Club](#)

Native of NY, emigrated to Naperville in 1837. Morris Sleight was one of the earliest and most prominent residents of Naperville. Detailed information about his birth and death, except for their dates, is lacking. In 1834 he left his Hyde Park, N.Y., home for a trip through the Midwest. Greatly impressed by business opportunities and living conditions in Naperville, he settled his family there in 1837. His basic source of income in Naperville appears to have come from his farming. Sleight also had extensive land holdings, several of which were donated to various Naperville churches. He was a member of DuPage County’s first grand jury, in 1837, served as County Treasurer in 1839, and as Naperville’s Village President 1861-1862.

As a land developer, he donated land for building the First Congregational Church of Naperville at the northwestern corner of Benton Ave. and Center St., and across Benton Ave. from the DuPage County Courthouse, with the condition that there be a bell tower and no cemetery.

²⁹ “New First Congregational Church,” *The Naperville Clarion*, May 3, 1905, Page 1.

“Interior Plan of Congregational Church,” *The Naperville Clarion*, July 12, 1905.

³⁰ “Death of an Old Citizen of DuPage County,” *Suburban Life*, March 3, 2022, Page a5.

Blanchard, Rufus, *History of DuPage County, Illinois*, O, L, Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1882 ,
<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/historyofdupagec01blan/historyofdupagec01blan.pdf>.

Architect: Merritt Josiah Morehouse 1868-1952³¹



Merritt J. Morehouse — Source:
Burge Family ([Fourth Generation](#))

The architect chosen for the new church was Merritt J. Morehouse. Born in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa in 1862, Merritt Josiah Morehouse spent most of his working life in the Chicago area. Morehouse married Ida Cornelia Gray in Evanston, Illinois in 1902. They had one son, Merritt Dutton Morehouse. Merritt J. Morehouse worked in the architectural offices of D. H. Burnham in Chicago at the time of the Columbian Exposition in 1893. In 1903, Morehouse also designed the substantial renovations of “Oakhurst” which was built by James Wright in 1847. “Oakhurst” is better known as “Will-O-Way”, now occupied by the Mesón Sabika restaurant in Naperville, IL.

Merritt J. Morehouse had his architectural business on the top floor of the Fisher Building in Chicago. He and Peter J. Weber formed the firm Weber and Morehouse, which operated for about six years (1924-1930). Merritt J. Morehouse was the architect of the Burge Farm in Newton County, Georgia, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and is his wife’s family’s plantation. When Morehouse retired in about 1935, he and his wife moved to Georgia to the Burge plantation. Today, it is a historic hunting club run by Morehouse's descendants. A Chicagoan for 40 years until his retirement, he died in 1952 at the age of 84 in Georgia.



Merritt and Ida Morehouse — Source:
Burge Family ([Fourth Generation](#))

³¹ “Obituaries: Merritt J. Morehouse,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 25, 1952, Part 1, Page 18.

“Burge Farm,” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, National Park Service, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/9cec72f8-2f6e-4cd3-9388-f2171c58f47f>.

“History of the Burge Club,” Burge Club, Retrieved on July 23, 2025, <https://burgeclub.com/burge-history/>.

“Architects’ and Designers’ Papers, 1767-2018,” Chicago Collections Consortium, Retrieved on August 23, 2025, <https://explore.chicagocollections.org/ead/artic/66/x34mw9j/> (Inventory tab).

Blum, Betty J. (Interviewer), “Interview with Bertram A. Weber,” *Chicago Architects Oral History Project, The Ernest R. Graham Study Center for Architectural Drawings, Department of Architecture, The Art Institute of Chicago*, 1995, [Revised 2004], <https://artic.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/collection/caohp/id/11430/download>.

These are some of his buildings:³²

- American Malleable Castings Co. addition, Chicago Heights, IL³³
- Barber Construction Co., Garage Building. 5027 S. Elston Ave., Chicago, IL
- Chicago Branch of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, 33rd Place & Cottage Grove. IL³⁴
- Cole Manufacturing, Western Ave., Chicago, IL³⁵
- Davis Residence, 1733 Melrose Ave., Chicago, IL³⁶
- First Congregational Church (1906 Sanctuary, 1930 Parish Hall), 25 E. Benton Naperville, IL³⁷
- “Heatherton”, John S. Goodwin’s home, on Chicago Avenue east of Washington St, Naperville, IL built in 1903. It was destroyed by fire in 1920

ONE OF THE BRANCHES OF THE

Battle Creek Sanitarium

Is Located at 28 Thirty-third Place, near Cottage Grove Avenue, CHICAGO

THIS is a well-equipped institution, and maintains the same principles and methods as does the parent institution at Battle Creek, Mich. Rooms and board can be obtained in the institution. The treatments are all administered by trained nurses under the supervision of physicians. Its bathrooms afford facilities for the employment of all recognized hygienic measures. A valuable feature of this department is the electric light baths, in which the advantages of radiant heat are utilized for therapeutic purposes. Special attention is given to massage and electrotherapy in various forms. Well-equipped nose, throat, eye and ear departments are maintained. The laboratories of the institution afford opportunity for physiological investigations, including chemical analysis of the stomach contents, thereby furnishing a scientific basis for diet prescriptions. A complete line of the BATTLE CREEK SANITARIUM HEALTH FOODS is kept in stock, and all orders receive prompt attention.

THIS INSTITUTION ALSO SUPPLIES TRAINED NURSES for Single Treatments, or to CARE FOR CASES in the CITY OR VICINITY, under the Supervision of the Attending Physician
For Circulars and Further Information, Address

Chicago Branch of the Battle Creek Sanitarium
Phone 1131 South 28 Thirty-third Place, CHICAGO

Advertisement for Battle Creek Sanitarium in Chicago.

— Source: [Chicago Blue Book for 1902, Page 6](#)



*“Heatherton” by M. J. Morehouse for J. S. Goodwin
— Source: [“Souvenir of the Naperville Home Coming” 1917](#)*

³² Unless specified or previously referenced, the buildings were found in “Architects’ and Designers’ Papers, 1767-2018,” Chicago Collections Consortium, Retrieved on August 23, 2025 , <https://explore.chicagocollections.org/ead/artic/66/x34mw9j/> (Inventory tab).

³³ “Realty Deals of Week Reviewed,” *The Inter Ocean*, August 25, 1901, Page 27.

³⁴ “What Architects Are Doing,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 18, 1903, Page 11.

³⁵ “Chicago Real Estate,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 25, 1898, Page 19.

³⁶ “Chicago Real Estate,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 13, 1899, Page 15.

³⁷ “Congregational Church Adds New Building,” *The Naperville Clarion*, June 6, 1929, Page 1, <https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/?a=d&d=NAC19290606-01&ddiv=userclipping&cliparea=1.1%2C788%2C827%2C659%2C1685&factor=1&ofactor=5&e=-----192-en-20-NAC-61-byDA.rev-txt-txIN-Congregational>.

- Illinois Golf Club, 916 Dundee Rd., Northbrook, IL. (*The club later became the Green Acres Country Club, but the building is now demolished.*)
- Kellogg Co., Factory Building No. 5, Battle Creek, MI.
- Kellogg Co., No. 1 Building, addition. Battle Creek, MI.
- Kellogg Co., Warehouse, addition. Battle Creek, MI.
- Kellogg, W.K., Building for NW corner of Washington St. and Van Buren St., Battle Creek, MI.
- Kenna Lodging House, 300 Clark St., Chicago, IL³⁸
- Klein Building, 733-37 W Maxwell St, Chicago IL³⁹
- Mandarin Inn Restaurant, remodel, 426-8 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL (*The restaurant later became Jimmy Wong's, but has since been torn down.*)⁴⁰
- Market Building. SE corner of Jackson St. and Carlyle St., Battle Creek, MI.
- Maywood Foundry & Machine Co., Maywood, IL⁴¹
- Michigan Carton Company, Press Room Addition, Battle Creek, MI.
- Michigan Sanitarium (Battle Creek Sanitarium), Main Building extension, Battle Creek, MI.
- Michigan Sanitarium (Battle Creek Sanitarium), Receiving Building, Battle Creek, MI.
- Michigan Sanitarium (Battle Creek Sanitarium), Service Building, Battle Creek, MI.
- Nuyttens, A.A., Residence, low-pressure gravity return system for heating and plumbing, Cumberland Rd. and Gillick Ave., Park Ridge, IL
- Reber Preserving Company, Fillmore St., Near Campbell Ave, Chicago, IL⁴²
- Roeder Residence, Carmen Ave., Chicago, IL⁴³
- Rosenberg Residence, 1306 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL⁴⁴



M. J. Morehouse celebrity endorsement to Henkel & Best Co., lighting fixture company — Source: Chicago Tribune, April 30, 1928, Page 4, Newspapers.com.

³⁸ “Building Notes of the Week,” *The Inter Ocean*, Page 18, August 2, 1903, Page 18.

³⁹ “UIC to Demolish Historically Important Buildings,” *Open Air Market Network*, March 28, 1998, <https://openair.org/files/archives/maxwell/ppress2.html>.

⁴⁰ “Leases Supply Tonic to Week’s Realty Market,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 16, 1917, Page 94.

⁴¹ “Chicago Real Estate,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 20, 1900, Page 34.

⁴² “Building Notes of the Week,” *The Inter Ocean*, February 15, 1903, Page 18.

⁴³ “Chicago Real Estate,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 13, 1899, Page 15.

⁴⁴ “Building Permits,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1913, Page 16.

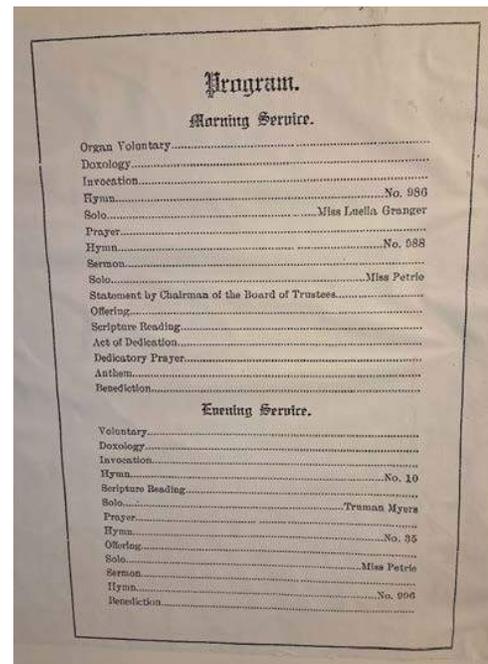
- Tract of homes on Stewart Avenue in West Pullman neighborhood, Chicago, IL⁴⁵
- Union Bed and Spring Co.,
Manufacturing Plant, S. Kostner Ave.
and W. Fifth Ave., Chicago, IL.
- Western Foundry, 2281-83 36th Place,
Chicago, IL⁴⁶
- White, Bert L., Co., Printing Building,
addition, 1229-1231 W. Fullerton Ave.,
Chicago, IL.
- William Piano and Organ Company, 54
Washington St., Ave., Chicago, IL.⁴⁷



Merritt J. Morehouse's gravestone
— Source: [Find A Grave](#)

1906 Role of the Church Building Committee⁴⁸

The dedication ceremony included a report from the chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. W. R. Goodwin who gave credit to his fellow Building Committee members: Mr. C. A. Nadelhoffer, Mrs. Elizabeth Scott, Mrs. J. L. Nichols, Mr. B. B. Boecker Sr., and Mr. J. H. Johnson. These are all important Naperville citizens of the time. To save money, the Building Committee did not employ contractors but used independent local craftsmen, with John E. Shifferle as the master carpenter, and A. H. Beidelman as the head mason; the committee members themselves served as construction supervisors.



1906 Building Dedication Program —
Source: Naperville Heritage Society

Criteria 5.2.5 That it is included in the National Register of Historic Places

Although the First Congregational Church of Naperville is in Naperville's Federal Historic District, it is not on the National Register of Historic Places.

⁴⁵ "Renting Combine Declared Absurd," *The Inter Ocean*, May 24, 1901, Page 12.

⁴⁶ "Chicago Real Estate," *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1899, Page 43.

⁴⁷ "Building Permits," *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1912, Page 20.

⁴⁸ "Dedication of Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, May 9, 1906.

5c. Significant exterior architectural features



Photo of the 1906 building circa 1906 – Source: Naperville Heritage Society

Significant architectural features have been discussed to some degree in “Criteria 5.2.3 That it embodies the distinguishing characteristic of an architectural period, style, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials”. Namely, the indigenous stone construction of limestone from Joliet quarries and the pointed, arch windows and doors. Today, the exterior of the 1906 building remains largely unaltered.



1906 building as of July 2025 – Source: D. W. Diamond

Also of exterior significance as well as historic significance are the four memorial windows from the original 1846 church that were removed and reframed when the 1906 building was erected.



Four Memorial Windows in the 1846 church were removed and reframed for the 1906 building : Crampton Earl, Scott and Nichols - Source: D. W. Diamond

In addition, several significant arched stained glass windows were created expressly for the 1906 building.



Cody Memorial Window —Source: D. W. Diamond

Cody Memorial: Given by the Trustees in 1906 in honor of Judge Hiram H. Cody, long-time Sunday School Superintendent, and his family. Judge Cody was a lawyer and was elected as a county judge beginning in August 1847. He was originally from Bloomingdale Township and was listed as postmaster there in 1857. Later, he came to Naperville as a law partner with H. F. Vallette, who was one of the authors of *The History of DuPage County*, published in 1857. Judge Hiram H. Cody served as Sunday school superintendent for 25 years. He figures prominently in the story of the midnight raid that settled the contested relocation of the DuPage County seat from Naperville to Wheaton. In 1863, a band of Civil War veterans from Wheaton came to take the county records and set fire to the courthouse. Legend has it that Judge Cody ran across the street wearing only his nightclothes to urgently ring our church's bell and alert the townspeople as to what was happening.



Goodrich Memorial: Given in 1906 by Mrs. Henry H. Goodrich (Thankful S. Goodrich), widow of one of the charter members and four of her descendants, Charles, Irving, Ida, and Jennie.

*Goodrich Memorial Window — Source:
D. W. Diamond*

Royce Memorial: Donated in 1906 by Miss Maria Royce in honor of her parents, Jonathan Royce IV and Polly Emery Royce, who in 1857 purchased the farmstead of Israel Blodgett (a founding member who moved with his family to the Downers Grove area) located along the east branch of the DuPage River. The window may also honor Maria's 11 siblings.

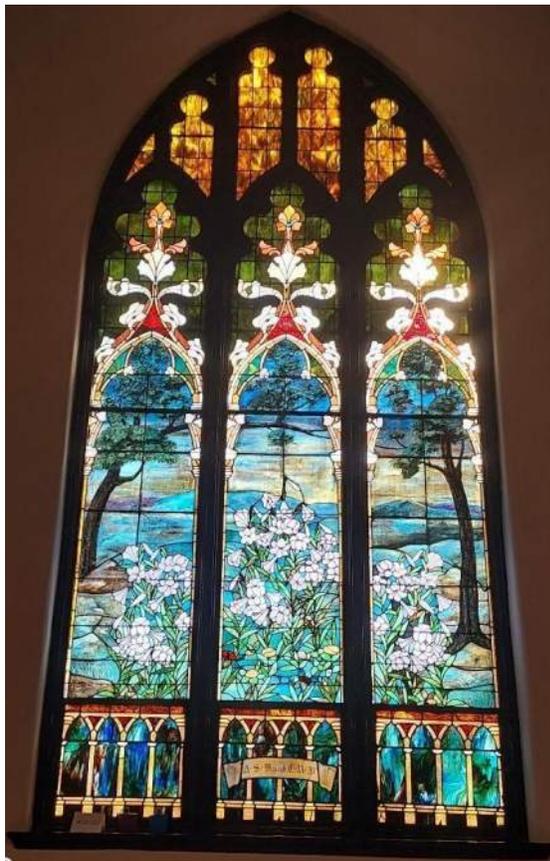


*Royce Memorial Window — Source:
D. W. Diamond*

1906 Windows: These windows are undoubtedly part of the 1906 construction. The one on the right has a painted monogram at the bottom with the initials P.G. It may have been intended as a memorial to Pomeroy Goodrich, a founding member.



1906 Windows — Source: D. W. Diamond



*Large Composite Lily Window —
Source: D. W. Diamond*

Large Composite Lily Window: This large composite window installed in 1906 appears to illustrate the parable from the Sermon on the Mount, Mathew 6:28 “Consider the lilies of the field...” It was given to the church by the children of pioneer farmer A. S. Barnard and his wife, and bears their initials at the bottom. A. S. Barnard was James Nichols’ father-in-law.

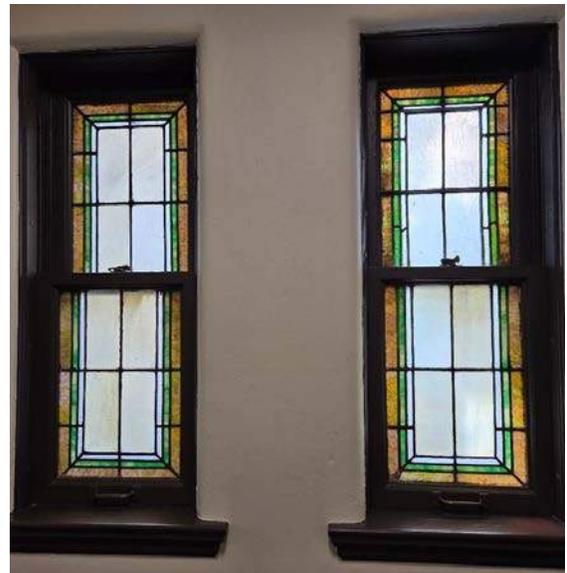


*Large Composite Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane Window —
Source: D.W. Diamond*

Garden of Gethsemane Window: Installed in 1906, the largest and grandest window, Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36), was given by the family of George Martin I, an immigrant from Edinburgh, Scotland, a grain merchant, whose descendants established a sand, gravel, and limestone business in Naperville. It is thought that his window had been created by the same craftsmen who did the Barnard window. George Martin III died in 1841, and his son, George IV, took over the businesses and was prominent in Naperville in the mid-19th century, but died at a relatively young age in 1889. It is surmised that the window honors George IV. His

daughter, Caroline, married Edward Grant Mitchell, a relative of Ulysses S. Grant, and was the last survivor of the Martin family, outliving three siblings and left no children of her own. She donated the family's mansion, Pine Craig, and estate to the village of Naperville to be used as a museum. Pine Craig is the Martin-Mitchell Museum, and the estate is now Naper Settlement. Caroline Martin Mitchell also donated the land that became Centennial Beach, Central High School, and the Naperville Cemetery, among others.

Narthex and Library Windows: The windows in the library (northwest corner) and narthex (south main entry hall) contain several small identical stock windows because the church was originally lit by gas, and windows were used to provide as much natural illumination as possible.



*Narthex and Library Windows —
Source: D. W. Diamond*

5d. Other reasons and data in support of the proposed

In 2013, The First Congregational Church was recognized by the Illinois State Historical Society as an Illinois Sesquicentennial Church.



Illinois State Historical Society certification as an Illinois Sesquicentennial Church — Source: Vicki Keller

6. A plat of survey of the property, if available, and dated photographs of the improvement in question

Dated photographs of the 1906 building in 2025 and circa 1906 have been previously included under “5c. Significant exterior architectural features”.

In lieu of a plat of survey, which is not available, please see the Naperville City Data and DuPage County Parcel Viewer drawings which show the three sites of the church on 25 E. Benton Ave.: **08-18-303-007 (1906 Sanctuary)**, 08-18-303-006 (1930 Parish Hall) and 08-18-303-005 (1979 Community Room). Notice that each of the three parcels is 50 feet x 150 feet. Since the outer dimension of the 1905 building is 54 feet, it extends over two parcels. The portion of the building to be landmarked is just the 1905-06 portion that is primarily on PIN 08-18-303-007.

25 E Benton: PINS 08-18-303-005, 08-18-303-006 & 08-18-303-007
 Created with the DuPage County Viewer and highlighting the 1906 Building.



9/3/2025
 Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Sources: Esri, USGS. Sources: Esri, Maxar, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NIMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap, and the GIS user community

Parcel Report - City of Naperville



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Naperville, County of DuPage, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

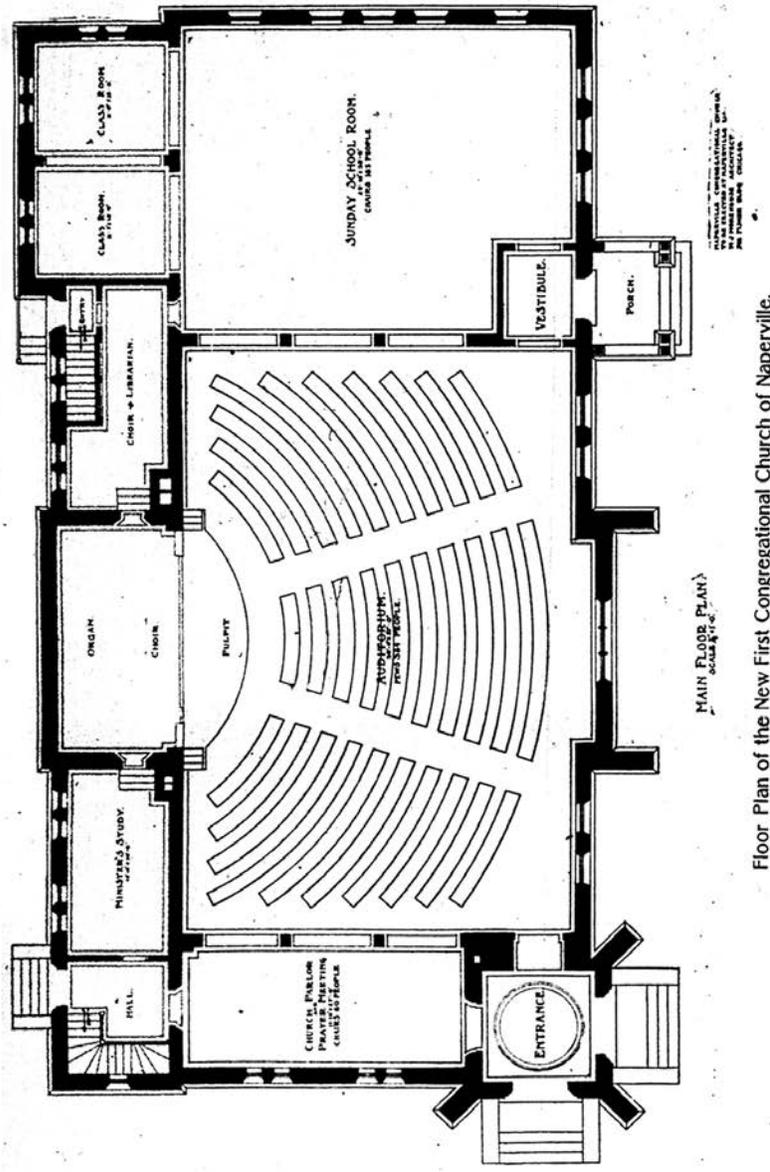
Site drawings from [DuPage County Parcel Viewer](#) and [City of Naperville YourPlace](#) of the First Congregational Church of Naperville at 25 E. Benton Avenue.

Interior Plan of Congregational Church.

The ground floor plan of the new First Congregational church of Naperville, illustrated in this issue, presents an arrangement that seems to meet every possible requirement of the membership of this church in the most satisfactory manner. At its first presentation to the people it met with unanimous approval and no suggestions as to alterations have yet been made. The new church will stand on the site of the old frame structure, and will be built of white Joliet limestone, inasmuch as stone could not be supplied from the Naperville quarries. It will face the park, extending from the sidewalk line about 105 feet, with a frontage of 54 feet.

The auditorium will seat 324 people in pews. The Sunday school room will seat 185 people in movable chairs, with room for adults in each of the two infant class rooms, which may be shut off from each other and the Sunday school room by sliding doors. The church parlor, which will be used for prayer meetings, will seat 60 people in chairs. The Sunday school room and the parlor can be thrown open into the auditorium, making an emergency seating capacity of about 600. Five exits will be available. The Sunday school has a separate entrance, which also serves as entrance to the north-east end of the auditorium.

Bids for the construction of this church from three Chicago contractors and one Joliet contractor, are now in the hands of the trustees, and they are awaiting the bids of the Naperville and Downers Grove contractors, which should be submitted this week.



*The floorplan and The Naperville Clarion article about the interior plan of the building. "It will face the park, extending from the sidewalk line about 105 feet, with a frontage of 54 feet."*⁴⁹ — Source: *The Naperville Clarion*, July 12, 1905, microfilm, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

7. Any other information that the applicant deems relevant

The tree logo is used on all of our correspondents and publications. It was designed by a church member in the 1970s and has experienced many iterations. It represents a quote from one of the founding pastors on August 13-14, 1833. These are the words Rev. Jeremiah Porter used in describing those historic days:

⁴⁹ "Interior Plan of Congregational Church," *The Naperville Clarion*, July 12, 1905, microfilm, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL.

“Saturday the 13th ultimo, we passed in fasting, prayer, and exhortation, organized the church, and elected elders. On the Sabbath we repaired to a grove, the place where we previously met being too small to accommodate the audience. The Lord’s supper was administered to 35 communicants. It was a cheering scene. Few had dared to expect such a scene at this early period in the settlement of our frontier. The grain of mustard seed will, we trust, become a great tree, so that ‘**multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade**’.”

This phrase and a picture of a large tree have been the symbol of this church ever since.



Original logo and two more modern iterations - Source: First Congregational Bulletins

8. Such other information as the Historic Preservation Commission may request or prescribe from time to time

As of the date of this landmark designation request, no additional information has been requested.

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Appendices

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Appendix 4: History of Windows and Dedications

Appendix 5: History of Organ and Dedications

Appendix 6: Timeline

Appendix 7: Pastors

Appendix 8: Pictures and Analysis of Architecture

Appendix 9: Church Bylaws relating to Property

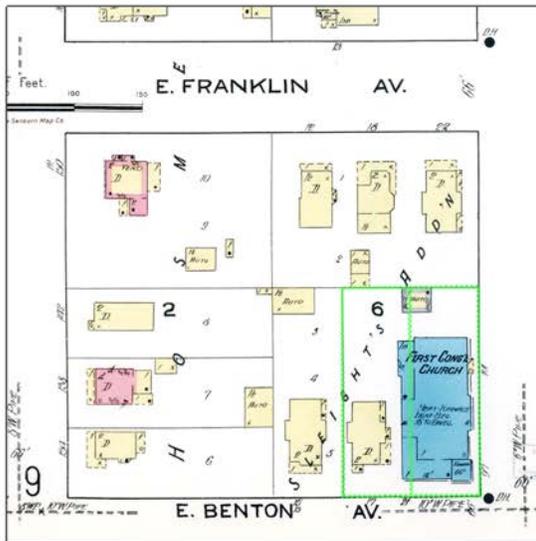
Appendix 10: List of Naperville Streets and Places Named for People of the First Congregational Church of Naperville

Appendix 11: Blueprints

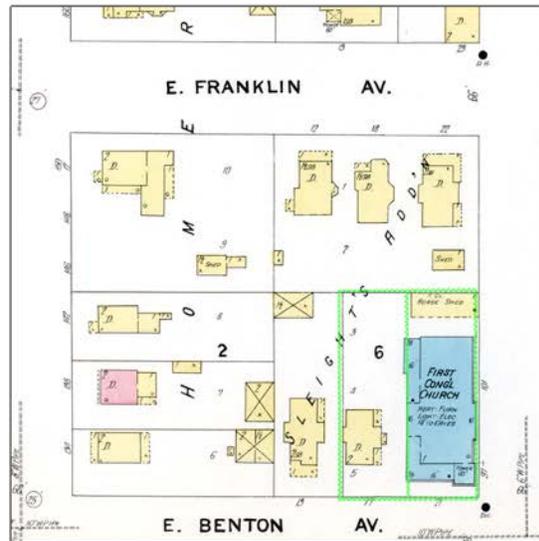
Appendix 12: Internal Discussions Re: Pursuing Landmark Status

Appendix 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps⁵⁰

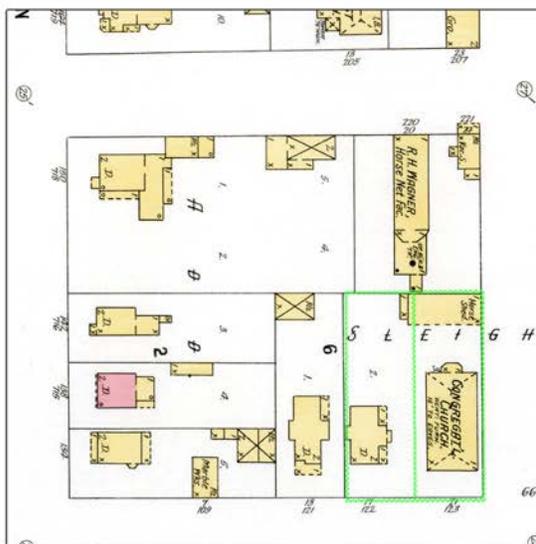
Sanborn Firemaps from 1892 to 1926 overlaid with with an outline of PINs 08-18-303-006 and 08-18-303-007 (green dashed line). Only the stone First Congregational Church (blue) built in 1906 and primarily on 08-18-303-007 is being sought to be landmarked.



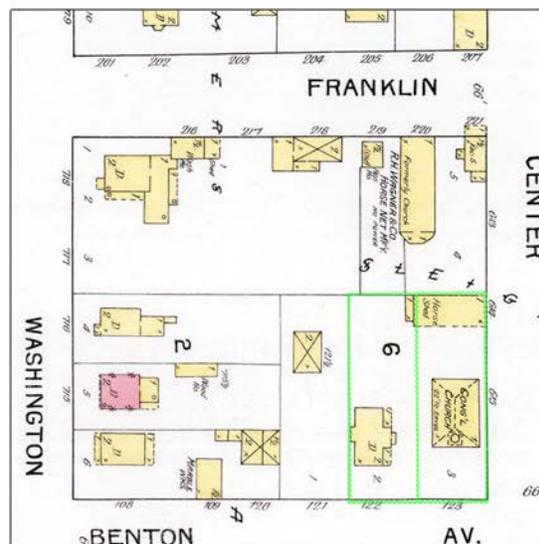
1921



1909



1898



1892

⁵⁰ (1892) *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Naperville, Du Page County, Illinois*. Sanborn Map Company, November 1892, Retrieved on May 20, 2025, Image 5, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02038_002/.

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Appendix 2: Histories of the Church

Coordinated & Collected by James R. Fancher, church member

History of The First Congregational Church (UCC) of Naperville

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- Chapter 6: History 1983—2012

Foreword

This collection is an attempt to coalesce, into one document, the most important points in the history of First Congregational. Of course that is an easy statement to make, and a hard one to carry out, because everyone interested in such a history will have a slightly different view of what is important. After much reflection, I concluded that the views which mattered ought to be those of the people who set them down. Herein, then, are the views of some of those people—some non-members, some members before me, and my own— and I can apologize only for my own views, if they do not withstand the scrutiny that I have given the others.

Similarly, I concluded that I should not rewrite the earlier works, even though in some cases scholarship has been accomplished which could result in minor modifications. Two of the previous authors, whom I knew personally—the late Genevieve Towsley, and Priscilla Grundy—were professionals in the use of the English language—the former a newspaper reporter, columnist, and historian, and the latter a professor of English. I was well instructed in the language, did well in that area in college, took elective courses in journalism, had avocational experience in journalistic endeavors, and spent much of my career reporting, documenting, and preparing procedures and instructions; but notwithstanding that experience, I cannot hold a candle to the skills those ladies brought to these tasks. I have limited myself, in this compilation, to setting down what I think are the primary events in the years since the beginning of 1983, when the church celebrated its sesquicentennial.⁵¹

⁵¹ My experience with the church is actually much broader than it appears—I first attended on the Sunday after Christmas, in 1955, and was attending regularly starting in the summer of 1956. I was married in the Church in April of 1957. In Fall, 1972, however, I left the Church to join St. John UCC, in Naperville, where I remained until Fall, 1981. Although I intended at that time to return to First Congregational—and indeed a letter was requested—I was by that time primarily attending Batavia United Methodist Church, where my fiancée, Carol, was directing the choir.

Chapter 1: Church History 1919⁵²

Contained in Pamphlet of History, Manual and By-Laws

(Author Unknown)

History of the First Congregational Church

New England families, descendants of the Puritans and loyal to the sharply-defined religious beliefs of those torchbearers of a new civilization, settled about 1830 on the banks of the DuPage River, three miles south of the site of Naperville. Consistently devoted to their Christian ideals, they early determined to establish a church on the East Branch. To them came Rev. Jeremiah Porter and Rev. N. C. Clark, missionaries of the Presbyterian church for Cook County (which then included DuPage County) and a Presbyterian church was organized July 13, 1833, with the following named members: Israel Blodgett; Avice Blodgett; Lucretia Barber; Robert Strong; Caroline W. Strong; Constant Abbott; Isaac Clark; Clarissa Clark; Lester Peet; Henry W. Goodrich; Thankful S. Goodrich; Eliza S. Goodrich; Samuel Goodrich; Lydia Goodrich; Pomeroy Goodrich; Lucy N. Goodrich.

Rev. N. C. Clark was chosen as pastor and Isaac Clark, Pomeroy Goodrich, and Lester Peet were elected elders. On the succeeding day Sarah Peet, Eunice Peet and Mrs. Prudence Smith were received into the church, which thus commenced its ministrations with nineteen members.

The church of the Puritans was Congregational, and at a meeting on August 1, 1834, it was decided by a vote to change the name and polity of the church from Presbyterian to Congregational. Rev. Mr. Clark remained as pastor and meetings were held in his house and later in the home of Deacon Goodrich. School houses and sometimes barns served these pioneers as meeting places and Lester Peet's school house in Naperville was also used.

During 1835 Rev. Mr. Clark preached every first and fifth Sabbath in his own home and every second and fourth Sabbath in Naperville. The people sought the exemplification of Christianity rather than sectarianism and desired most of all the preaching of the gospel by whatever messenger it was presented.

Men and women of such deep religious convictions would not long be content without a church building which would typify to the community their fixed belief that the proper development of the pioneer country could not be accomplished without temples of worship. In 1838 attention was turned to a church-building effort and on April 17, 1839, a Council of Congregational Churches of Illinois met at the home of Henry Goodrich to advise as to the location of the church. Naperville was the choice. Deacons Clark, Pomeroy Goodrich and Henry Goodrich were

She resigned that job in June, 1983, shortly before we were married, and we returned to First Congregational, where her membership had been uninterrupted since 1969. My membership was not officially reinstated until late 1983.

James R. Fancher

⁵² "History of the First Congregational Church, Church History 1919," *History, Manual and By-Laws*, Pamphlet, Presbyterian Church of DuPage. 1919 .

elected the first trustees. In 1840 Rev. Orvill Lyman served the church for a month until Rev. J. H. Prentiss was regularly engaged as pastor. The church endeavored to raise \$300 as salary, one-half to be paid in produce. The American Home Missionary Society was requested to contribute \$200 toward the pastor's support.

After some years of inaction on the church-building project the committee selected a site in Naperville. Capt. Morris Sleight donated the land on condition that none be used as a burying ground and that the church have a cupola and a bell. Begun in 1846, the church was dedicated in 1847. In 1896 alterations were made to the building, made possible by the gift of \$500 from James L. Nichols. In 1906 the present stone structure, of Gothic architecture and singularly impressive as a house of worship, was dedicated free of debt at a cost of nearly \$25,000. The church building committee consisted of W. R. Goodwin, chairman; C. A. Nadelhoffer, secretary; Mrs. J. L. Nichols, Mrs. Elizabeth J. Scott, Mr. J. H. Johnson and Mr. B. B. Boecker. The gift by T. P. Phillips of a pipe organ costing \$3,000 brought the total outlay for building and equipment to about \$27,000.

The pastors and stated supplies of the church and their terms of service so far as recorded are as follows:

1. Rev. N. C. Clark, 1833-36;
2. Rev. E. Strong, 1836-37;
3. Rev. Jonathan G. Porter, 1837-40;
4. Rev. Orvill Lyman, 1840-40;
5. Rev. J. H. Prentiss, 1840-43;
6. Rev. E. W. Champlin, 1843-45;
7. Rev. Hope Brown, 1845-56;
8. Rev. Elihu Barber, 1856-60;
9. Rev. C. P. Felch, 1860-64;
10. Rev. E. A. Alden, 1864-65;
11. Rev. J. C. Beckman, 1866-68;
12. Rev. J. W. Cunningham, 1868-71;
13. Rev. C. F. Reed, 1873-76;
14. Rev. J. W. Hartshorn, 1876-78;
15. Rev. Edward Ebbs, 1878-79;
16. Rev. J. H. Dixon, 1879-82;
17. Rev. J. C. Meyers, 1883-91;
18. Rev. S. A. Freeman, D. D., 1891-95;
19. Rev. H. V. Tull, 1895-1902;
20. Rev. George Peebles, D. D., 1902-1910;
21. Rev. Alfred E. Randell, D. D.,
1910-17; Rev. Frank Sherman Brewer, 1917-.

Chapter 2: Early History⁵³

James R. Fancher, Editor's note: The following text is extracted from the history book prepared for the Presbyterian Church of DuPage (now DuPage Township of Will County), which had a common origin with First Congregational UCC of Naperville. We have included it here because it nicely summarizes some of the secular history of our area, and also demonstrates religious activity that was taking place before the actual founding of our congregation. Moreover, its observations give us an additional view of the personalities, agreements, and conflicts among those early spiritual ancestors. JRF

First Settlements in the Parish

The name DuPage comes from a French hunter and trapper [of that name] who settled at the junction of the east and west branches of the river that now bears his name at the beginning of the 19th century. Here he built a trading post consisting of log huts enclosed in a stockade. This was the first settlement of any importance in this locality. (*Editor's note: His name was probably pronounced "Doo-pahzh", and it is occasionally spelled DuPazhe or some other attempt at phoneticization, both in this history and in other documents.*)

In the spring of 1830 came the next settlers into this neighborhood—Stephen and Willard Scott, Ralph Stowell, and Pearce Hawley. They settled, as DuPage had earlier done, at the junction of the two branches of the DuPage River. This junction has been variously known as The Forks, Scott's Settlement, and Fountaindale.

The old County of Cook, of which this area was then a part, was organized early in 1831. It embraced the territory now covered by the counties of Lake, McHenry, DuPage, Cook, Will, Kankakee, and Iroquois. Up to this time no church organization had been affected hereabouts, or, for that matter, in any part of northeastern Illinois. However, credit for the first religious services in this vicinity belongs to the Methodists, for it was at the home of the above-named Pearce Hawley, a Methodist, that such services were first conducted.

The vanguard of those hardy, God-fearing men and women who were to organize the DuPage Church began to arrive in 1831. These included Israel P. Blodgett, Robert Strong, Henry Boardman, Seth Wescott, Leister Peet, Samuel Goodrich, and John Dudley. Then early in 1832, before the outbreak of the Blackhawk War, came Rev. Isaac Scarrett, Capt. John Barber, Isaac Clark, and Simon Ferrill. And thus, we see how a great stream of settlers was beginning to flow from the eastern States to these wonderlands of the prairies.

But the breaking out of the Blackhawk War, in the spring of 1832, naturally filled the minds of the settlers with alarm, and for several months prevented their friends in the East from joining

⁵³ *An historical sketch of the First Presbyterian Church of DuPage Township, Will County, Illinois : commemorating the celebration of the one hundred twenty fifth anniversary of its organization, First Presbyterian Church of DuPage Township, 1958.*

them. Blackhawk was a Sauk Indian warrior who believed that his tribe had been wrongfully deprived of their lands. In March of 1832 he appeared in Illinois with 1000 warriors, all in war paint. The alarm of the settlers in this locality was increased by the horrid massacre of 15 of the settlers on Indian Creek on May 21, 1832. Most of the [DuPage settlers] fled hastily to Fort Dearborn for the short duration of the fighting. Blackhawk surrendered late in August, 1832 after his warriors were practically annihilated in a battle at Bad Axe River in Wisconsin, and the settlers returned to their homes and their crops.

The hickory log schoolhouse, around which were gathered many happy memories of those early days, was built late in the fall of 1832. It was located about two miles northeast of the present church site [probably along the present Royce Road]. This was the first public schoolhouse built in old Cook County, and was the property of the first organized public school district of that county. The organization of this district was affected mainly through the influence of Capt. Boardman, who was one of the first county commissioners of the county. Morgan Babcock was the first teacher.

The following spring (1833) the community received a large addition to its members, among them the Rev. Nathaniel Catlin Clark who, later that year, assisted in the organization of the DuPage Presbyterian Church.

However, some time before the arrival of the Rev. N. C. Clark, the Rev. Arastus Kent, a Presbyterian missionary who was on his way by horseback from Galena, Illinois to Chicago, stopped in the DuPage community and preached in the "Old Hickory" schoolhouse, where the DuPage Presbyterian Church later was organized. No doubt the residents of the community expressed the desire to be organized into a church and it is very likely that Rev. Kent informed the Rev. Jeremiah Porter of this fact. It is of interest to note here that a Sunday School was established by Robert Strong in the home of Israel P. Blodgett approximately two years before the DuPage Church was organized.

Organization of the Church in 1833

The following narrative of the organization of the DuPage Church is copied directly from the original sessional records, which incidentally are complete from the very beginning of the Church to the present day: "By a request of a number of persons at DuPage to be organized into a church of Christ, the Rev. Jeremiah Porter, the Rev. N. C. Clark, Missionaries for this County and the Rev. C. W. Babbit from Tazewell County met and after prayer and some appropriate remarks proceeded to examine credentials of applicants. The following named persons were received by letter, viz. Israel P. Blodgett, Avici Blodgett, Lucetta Barber, Robert Strong, Caroline W. Strong, Constant Abbot, Isaac Clark, Clarissa R. Clark, Leister Peet, Henry H. Goodrich, Thankful S. Goodrich, Eliza S. Goodrich, Samuel Goodrich, Lydia Goodrich, Pomroy Goodrich, Lucy M. Goodrich." Articles of faith were adopted, with a solemn covenant that the members would walk and work together in the fellowship of the gospel. The members then proceeded to the election of elders. Isaac Clark (brother of Rev. N. C. Clark), Pomroy Goodrich, and Leister

Peet were duly elected to that office. This preliminary meeting was held in the “Old Hickory” schoolhouse, mentioned above, on Saturday, July 13, 1833, eighteen days after the organization of the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago.

On the next day the schoolhouse could not hold the multitude as the people from all the settlements round about came together for worship. The meeting was therefore held a few rods away, beneath the grateful shade of the oak and hickory trees.

Quoting again from the sessional records, “After a sermon and other religious exercises, the above-named brethren were solemnly ordained with prayer and the imposition of hands to the office of ruling elders. The church was then declared duly organized.” Sarah and Eunice Peet, sisters of Leister, were received as members, with Prudence Smith from Walker’s Grove (now Plainfield). The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was then administered to about 40 communicants. The service was closed with singing and the benediction. The records state that “the meetings were solemn and the divine presence to some degree manifested.” Thus, one hundred and twenty-five years ago was born the First Presbyterian Church of DuPage, the second oldest church of any denomination within the territory of old Cook County. (written in 1958)

Of that occasion Rev. Jeremiah Porter wrote, “It was a cheering scene. Few had dared to expect such a scene at this early period in the settlement of our frontier. The grain of mustard seed will, we trust, become a great tree, so that the multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade.” Interesting sidelights on that first meeting of the newly organized church were given by Rev. Edwin R. Davis in a sermon preached on the occasion of the Church’s fiftieth anniversary (1883). “What a meeting was that held in God’s own temple on that never-to-be-forgotten Holy Day of rest and sweet Christian communion! The memorable scenes and events of that day, are fitted to inspire the readiest pencil of the rarest genius! The attentive and reverent manner of the people, clad in the simple dress of those early days, their mingled voices of praise bearing the incense of grateful hearts to heaven, the Ministers of the Lord Jesus, as they quietly move about among them in their holy ministrations, offering to them the bread and wine of Gospel Sacrament, the grand trees with their beautiful adornments of richest green, the shimmering waters of the river, half hidden by the tall grass, glimpses of the distant prairie see through the openings of the forest, and nearby a group of Indians who look on with wondering gaze, watching in silence the worship of their white brothers—all these things combined, make such a picture as no walled temple reared by the art of man can possibly represent! Fittest place, on such a day, for such a company to worship God!”

There apparently were denominational differences in the community from the very inception of the DuPage Church. On August 29, 1833 the first session meeting held after the organization of the church relates that the elders “consulted as to the expediency of adopting the Congregational mode of church government”. A committee appointed at this time to make a canvass reported on November 19, 1833 that the church already organized preferred its Presbyterian form of government, but that a majority of those interested in church work, but not yet affiliated with any

church, preferred the Congregational form. This latter group finally prevailed, for on May 2, 1834 it was resolved that the form of government be changed and on the first of August in the same year, the church officially adopted the Congregational form of government and made its ruling elders its deacons.

In striving for an explanation of why the DuPage Church almost overnight experienced a change of heart, as it were, and became Congregational, one must go back to New England for the answer. T. C. Pease, a historian, in referring to Congregationalists and Presbyterians of that section, relates the following: "Congregationalism, the state church in New England, at first spread but slowly outside. To check a Presbyterian invasion of New England, the Congregationalists virtually surrendered the newer west to Presbyterians." Rev. Edwin R. Davis, in his sermon mentioned above, said "It stands as a fact, in the early history of this state, that the leading Congregational ministers of the East advised, in those early times, the organization of the new churches in Illinois as Presbyterian in their form of government." When DuPage organized as a Presbyterian church there were a goodly number who would not abide by this form of government. Many, on the contrary, not only refused to become members, but they also left no stone unturned until it had been changed to the Congregational form of government. Elder Isaac Clark was a prime mover in effecting this change. Nor was the DuPage Church alone in this respect, Frederick Kuhns in Congregational Church in Illinois lists fourteen Illinois Congregational churches that were founded between 1830 and 1844 as Presbyterian.

Rev. N. C. Clark had the principal care of the church for three years after its formation, but did not always supply the pulpit personally because of missionary work in nearby communities. Because the members came from several different settlements, services were held alternately "on the first and fifth Sabbath of each month near the pastor's house, on the second and fourth in the neighborhood of Capt. Joseph Naper, and on the third in the neighborhood of Luther Hatch (Lisle)". During the summer of 1837 tent meetings were held in Naperville, probably at the urging of Isaac Clark who desired the removal of the DuPage Church to that community. Rev. Davis gives reasons for this proposed change in his 50th anniversary sermon when he bluntly described conditions in Naperville at that time. "This place in early days was notorious for its wickedness. Intemperance, profanity, Sabbath breaking, and infidelity abounded in it. And Mr. Clark wanted the church to go to that dark place and there let its light shine! Brother Clark desired to save the people of Naperville from the calamity of becoming barbarians!"

The Rev. Jonathan Porter (who should not be confused with the Rev. Jeremiah Porter, one of the founders of the DuPage Church) became the Rev. N. C. Clark's successor that same summer (1837). Rev. Porter was a Presbyterian, and though the church was now Congregational, he was installed by the Presbytery of Ottawa, and when he wished dismissal in 1840, the Presbytery was called upon to dissolve the pastoral relationship. It was during his pastorate that preaching services were held in the Naperville schoolhouse beginning in July, 1838.

The services of Rev. J. G. Porter proved to be very acceptable, for the old schoolhouse soon could not accommodate all the worshippers. It was decided to build no later than the following

spring. James Towner, William Smith, Isaac Clark, Josiah Strong, and Samuel Goodrich were chosen as a committee to make all the necessary arrangements. But the committee could make very little headway because of differences among the members. No decided majority favored any one building site. The different factions wisely compromised by placing the matter into the hands of a Congregational council made up of delegates from neighboring churches. This council advised that Naperville be made the center of worship. In agreement with this advice the society met in that village on May 30, 1839 and organized the First Congregational Church of Naperville, Illinois. The next year Rev. J. G. Porter was succeeded as pastor by the Rev. John H. Prentiss.

The members of the church had always upheld strict beliefs regarding dancing and the use of alcoholic beverages. They soon gave evidence of their belief in temperance. Among the resolutions adopted during the first few months after the organization was one to “totally abstain from the manufacture, traffic, and use of ardent spirits, and from furnishing them on any occasion, except for medicinal, chemical, or mechanical purpose”. And at a meeting on April 30, 1841, after discussing such problems, the following resolution was passed, “Resolved that hereafter we will wholly dispense with the use of alcoholic wine for sacramental purposes and substitute therefore the unfermented juice of the raisin.”

At a meeting on November 5, 1841, another interesting affair occurred. It was resolved at that time to set aside a day of thanksgiving. There is no record of one being held until December 8, 1842, but this is believed to have been the first public Day of Thanksgiving in the county.

The records thus far show that the majority opinion favored the Congregational form of government, while the opinion as to the location of the church seems to have been more evenly divided. One group, after a more than four-year tryout of the Congregational form in Naperville, still favored a Presbyterian church in the community that first claimed it.

James R. Fancher, Editor's footnote: This history continues (the next section is "Reorganization in 1844"), but it is clear that from this point the separation of the Presbyterian group, and its relocation to the south bank of the East Branch of the DuPage River, is the primary topic, and we have not included that portion in this document. It may be of interest, however, to list the members who separated from the Naperville church, in January, 1844, to form the new congregation: They included Samuel Goodrich, Lydia Goodrich, Robert Strong, Caroline Strong, Francis F. Towner, Lyman Meacham, Reuben W. Smith, Sybel Boughton, Warren W. Boughton, Mary Boughton, Robert Freeman, and Adaline Freeman. "...this reorganization took place in the new schoolhouse a few rods east of Old Hickory". JRF

Chapter 3: The 1933 History⁵⁴

By Genevieve Towsley

A Century of Christian Service

On July 13, 1833, just one hundred years ago, a group of earnest Christians assembled at the home of Isaac Clark. It was here that the First Congregational Church of Naperville, Illinois, was organized. Oh! What rejoicing there was in the hearts of those good people on that day so long ago.

This frontier community was settled largely by sturdy New England families, descendants of Puritans, who upheld rigorous religious beliefs. At this time six settlements in this territory had no organized church, the Naper settlement, which was central, the Goodrich or East Branch settlement about five miles to the southeast, the Lisle and Downers Grove settlements to the east, the Big Woods to the west, the East DuPage or Strong and Clark's settlement to the south, and the Northern settlement to the north, the whole district being about ten miles across.

The settlers in these regions were soon conscious of the dire need of a church, so at their request, Rev. Jeremiah Porter and Rev. N.C. Clark, missionaries from DuPage, Cook Co. (for at that time these counties were one), and Rev. C. W. Babbit of Tazewell Co., met with them on that memorable Saturday in July, 1833, and helped to organize a church. They examined the credentials of applicants for membership, and sixteen people were received as charter members:

Israel Blodget, Avice Blodget, Lucetta Barber, Robert Strong, Caroline Strong, Constant Abbot, Isaac Clark, Clarissa R. Clark, Leister Peet, Henry H. Goodrich, Thankful S. Goodrich, Eliza S. Goodrich, Samuel Goodrich, Lydia Goodrich, Pomeroy Goodrich, Lucy M. Goodrich.

Eleven articles of faith were read and adopted, and likewise a covenant. Three elders were elected: Isaac Clark, Pomeroy Goodrich, and Leister Peet.

On Sunday, July 14, 1833, a larger group met in a grove, one of God's own temples, and it was then that the elders were ordained and the church was declared duly organized. Three new members were received, Sarah Peet, Eunice Peet, and Mrs. Prudence Smith.

These are the words Jeremiah Porter used in describing those historic days:

“Saturday the 13th ultimo, we passed in fasting, prayer, and exhortation, organized the church and elected elders. On the Sabbath we repaired to a grove, the place where we previously met being too small to accommodate the audience. The Lord's supper was administered to 35 communicants. It was a cheering scene. Few had dared to expect such a scene at this early period in the settlement of our frontier. The grain of mustard

⁵⁴ Towsley, Genevieve, “A Century of Christian Service,” *First Congregational Church of Naperville: The 1933 History*. 1933.

seed will, we trust, become a great tree, so that multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade.”

The church was organized as a Presbyterian Church, known as the “Presbyterian Church at DuPage”. Jeremiah Porter was himself a Congregationalist, but, perhaps because of the fact that he received most of his support from a Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, he organized Presbyterian churches. Most of our charter members were likewise Congregationalists, but it seems that at that time there was prevalent a notion that the Presbyterian mode of government was better suited to frontier life than was the Congregational. In the East an agreement had been made by the two denominations; an agreement known as the Plan of Union. This plan made it possible for the pastor of a Presbyterian church to serve in a Congregational church, and vice versa. Other similar provisions had bound the two denominations together; hence it is not surprising that these Congregationalists organized a Presbyterian church. In Chicago no Congregational church was organized either, but in 1851 the attitude toward slavery caused splits in several Presbyterian churches. The Congregationalists were very much opposed to slavery, and therefore broke away from the Presbyterians and organized their own churches.

As early as August 29, 1833, however, the founders of our church who, as Puritans, were naturally Congregationalists at heart, called a meeting to discuss the expediency of adopting the Congregational mode of church government, and resolutions for such a change were considered. No action was taken until May 2, 1834, when it was “Resolved that we desire the name and form of government of our church changed from Presbyterian to Congregational”, and on the first of August in the same year, the change was officially made and the elders became deacons.

Thus, was organized what is claimed to be the second Congregational church organized in the state of Illinois. The church at Mendon was organized in February, 1833, less than half a year earlier than ours. The Congregational church at Princeton is an older church than either the Mendon or Naperville churches, but was organized in Massachusetts, and the members moved here in a body, and thus does not come under the category of churches organized in this state. Our church has the honor of being not only the first Congregational church, but the first church of any denomination organized in this community, if not in the county.

Rev. N. C. Clark, one of the founders, was the first pastor. As there was no meeting house at this early date, meetings were held sometimes at the pastor’s home, sometimes at the home of a church member or at a school house or even in a barn. June 8, 1838, at a meeting, they decided that the bonds between the members in the different parts of the settlement would be made more secure if the pastor preached every Sunday morning in the south part of the settlement and every Sunday afternoon at Naperville. They even agreed that “in union there is strength”, so they united for their communion services too. The Lord’s supper was administered once a month alternately in each of the two above mentioned places, and the members were free to attend either place. For years the Lord’s supper was served monthly and was always preceded by a “preparatory lecture”.

Mr. Clark was pastor until 1836, when he was succeeded for a time (perhaps but a few Sundays) by one referred to only as the Rev. Mr. Foster, and later in the same year by Rev. Elihu Strong. Mr. Strong was followed by Johnathan G. Porter. Mr. Porter was a Presbyterian, and though the church was now Congregational, he was installed by the presbytery, and when he wished dismissal in 1840, the presbytery was called upon to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

It was while Rev. J.G. Porter was here that, on Sept. 29, 1837, the Constitution of the Fox River Union was adopted. Each church could send its pastor and a delegate to the meetings held twice a year. The union provided fellowship and counsel for all member churches. As the churches grew in size and number it was necessary to make a division in the Union, and as a result, our church is now a member of the Aurora Association.

In October, 1840, Rev. Orvil Lyman was engaged for six months, provided no one was engaged sooner to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Porter. He served but a short time when, on Nov. 7, 1840, Rev. John H. Prentiss was secured as pastor at a salary of three hundred dollars per year, half to be paid in cash and half in produce in quarterly payments. It was deemed at this time, expedient to seek aid of the Home Missionary Society to the amount of two hundred dollars because of the pressing circumstances of the society.

The year 1841 marks several important steps in the history of the church. The members had always upheld strict beliefs regarding dancing and the use of alcoholic beverages. They soon gave evidence of their belief in temperance. At a meeting held on April 30, 1841, after discussing such problems, the following resolution was made, "Resolved that hereafter we will wholly dispense with the use of alcoholic wine for sacramental purposes and substitute therefore the unfermented juice of the raisin."

At this same meeting April 30, 1841, it was resolved to appoint a committee to confer with Captain Sleight with reference to a site for a meeting house. It had been voted in 1837 to build a meeting house the following spring, but nothing was done.

At a meeting on Nov. 5, 1841, another interesting affair occurred. It was resolved at that time to set aside a day of thanksgiving. There is no record of one being held until Dec. 8, 1842, but this is believed to have been the first public Day of Thanksgiving in the county.

The church had apparently, through all these years, been referred to only as the "Congregational Church". In 1843 it was resolved that "the style of this church be hereafter 'The First Congregational Church of Naperville'. It was so called until Dec. 1845, when the name "First Congregational Church and Society of Naperville" was decided upon. It was incorporated under the state law by that name in 1846. March 11, 1872, the trustees were authorized to incorporate it under the former name "First Congregational Church of Naperville".

From this "mother" church there have sprung numerous churches. Petitions of members to be dismissed in order to organize other churches were readily granted. One was granted to George E. Parmelee in 1837, and the Downers Grove church was the result. On page 70 of the oldest record we find the statement that on Jan. 6, 1844 twelve persons presented a letter requesting to

be dismissed for the purpose of organizing a new church in Will County, where they resided. Their request was granted, and in that year, 1844, they organized the DuPage Presbyterian Church.

DuPage Will Co. Ill. Jan 3 1844

To the Congregational Church of Naperville

Dear Brethren

The undersigned after prayerful & deliberate reflection have made up their minds that it their duty to be organized into a church, of Christ, and do hereby request that you will give us letters of dismission for this purpose; while we still remain yours in the bonds of the Gospel —

Samuel Goodrich
 Lydia Goodrich
 Robert Strong
 Caroline W. Strong
 Maria Smith
 J. E. Turner
 Lippinott Williams
 Lyman Meacham
 Sarah F. Meacham
 Emma Barber
 Ruth W. Smith
 Betsy C. Smith

The above request granted Jan 6 1844

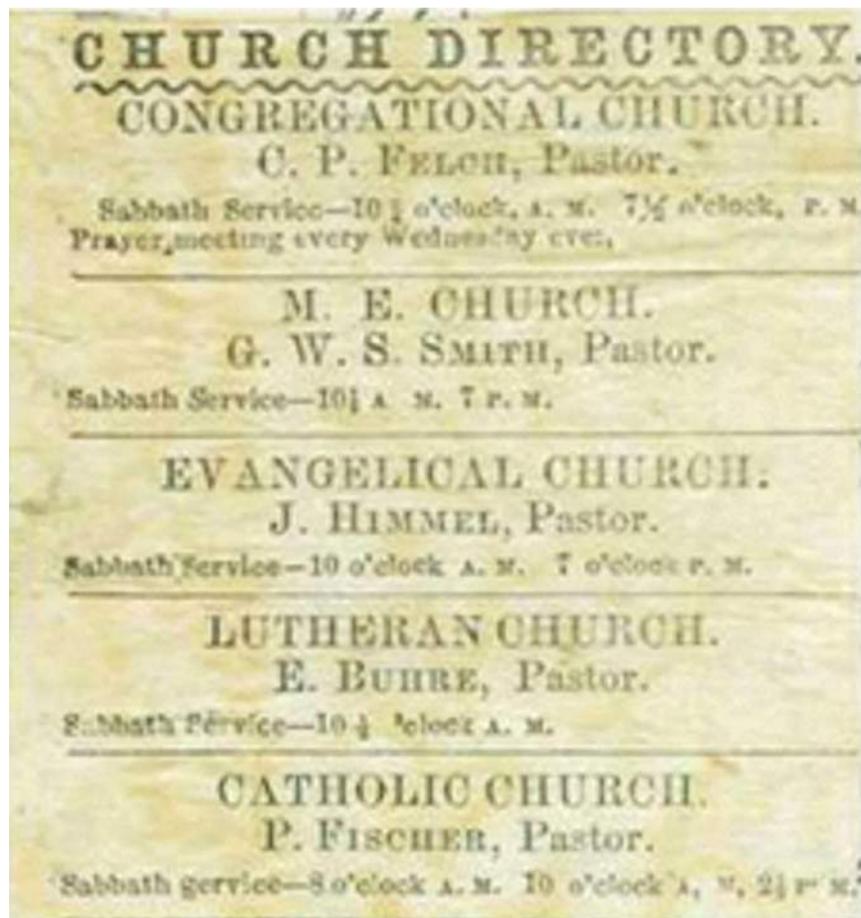
Petition for “dismission” of the group forming a Presbyterian church (now in Bolingbrook). The note at bottom indicates fulfillment of the request on 1/6/1844. Source: Naperville Heritage Society

Other churches were similarly formed by one-time members of this church. In May, 1875, a letter was granted to Julia Dudley, who had gone out as a missionary to Japan, where she organized a church.

In 1844 the Court House at Naperville was secured for a meeting place, and later meetings were held in the Baptist meeting house until Sept. 1846, when the Baptists decided they needed their church full time.

The need for a meeting house was ever uppermost in the minds of the people. August 31, 1844, they resolved that the dimensions of the contemplated house “be 48 ft. by 32 ft. with a cupola”, and a committee was appointed to locate a site. Again on May 30, 1845 it was moved that the trustees procure a plan for a meeting house with the above dimensions. In 1846 a building was erected on ground donated for that purpose by Capt. Morris Sleight. The ground was given on condition that the church have a cupola and bell and that there be no burying ground on the site. The trustees, Josiah Strong, John Frazier, Pomeroy Goodrich, George Blackman and Hiram Branch, assisted by Gen. F. Bell, H. C. Hasmer, Nathan Allen and A. Morse, served as a building committee, and on Jan. 27, 1847 the first church was dedicated and Johnathan G. Porter, a former pastor, gave the address. Rev. Hope Brown was pastor at that time. Mr. Brown had succeeded Rev. E. W. Champlin, who came here in 1843 and was taken by death in 1845. He remained until 1856, a period of about eleven years.

In 1856, Rev. Elihu Barber came to the church and remained until 1860, when he was followed by the Rev. C. P. Felch.



Newspaper church ads, as published during Rev. Felch's term in the early 1860s — Source: Debbie Baker

Thus far nothing has been said about the church school. Nothing can be found in the records that shows just when the Sabbath School was begun, but it must have started shortly after the church was organized, if not at the same time. Mention is made of a school library, and the records show that Isaac Clark was the first Sunday School superintendent; he was elected in 1840.

In 1855 the church members were required “to labor to promote interest in the Sabbath School and to report”. It is interesting to note how many similar demands were made by action of the church. If a person was absent from a service, he was required to report at the following meeting with an excuse, and the church decided whether or not the excuse was satisfactory. Resolutions regarding personal conduct were passed. The attitude toward dancing was very stern. On Mar. 22, 1856 it was decided that dancing in homes and family groups was permissible, but even then, it was generally disapproved.

This, however, is getting away from our subject of the Sabbath School. In one account of the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, the following amusing story was related. It was supposedly told by Judge Hiram H. Cody, who had served as Sunday School superintendent for twenty-five years. Deacon Knickerbocker, who preceded Mr. Cody as superintendent, is said to have carried the school library to and from church in a big red bandana handkerchief. Here is the story. “It so happened that Dick Sweet, who was then not so pious as the Deacon, carried his dinner with him to work in a bandana something like the Deacon’s. One Sunday Dick had started hunting and had his dinner with him in his handkerchief. He stopped at the saloon and the boys stole the dinner and hid it. He had hunted for it until he was a little impatient, when along came the good Deacon with his Sunday School library in his handkerchief. One of the boys told Dick there was a man with his dinner going down the road. Dick looked and was convinced that this was true. He called out to the deacon to bring back that dinner, but of course a Sunday School superintendent could not stop or take any notice of a crowd of loafers about a saloon, and he trudged on toward home. Sweet was pretty mad by this time and a little reckless. He called out again, and added that if the dinner was not brought back, he would shoot. A soldier of the Lord does not fear threats from sinners, and the Deacon walked bravely on, looking neither to the right nor left, until there was the crack of a gun and the buckshot flying around him. It so happened that Sweet had taken just enough at the bar to twist his eye a little, and his aim was not good. The Deacon was not hit, but he stopped, and the boys explained and got the missing dinner. Sweet apologized and each went his way.”

Rev. C. P. Felch remained with the church until May, 1864, when Rev. E. A. Alden came. He was followed in 1866 by Rev. J. C. Beckman. Mr. Beckman was superseded by Rev. J. W. Cunningham 1868-1871. When Mr. Cunningham left, the church was under such financial pressure that it was resolved not to try to supply the pulpit until Mr. Cunningham could be paid. For about a year the services were conducted by various ministers, many of whom were considered as a permanent pastor. No one was engaged until 1873, when Rev. C. F. Reed came. He remained until 1876 and was followed successively by Rev. J. W. Hartshorn 1876-1878; Rev. Edward Ebbs, 1878-1879; Rev. J. H. Dixon 1879-1882; Rev. J. C. Meyers 1883-1891.

Mr. Meyers had been here but a short time when the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the church was celebrated. Rev. Jeremiah Porter was here for the celebration. Judging by the records it must have been an impressive affair and an exceedingly happy occasion. The celebration was held in the original church, in which there had been made no changes except for a few improvements in the way of repairs. After the program, many of the members withdrew to the cemetery to decorate the graves of Rev. J. G. Porter, Rev. E. W. Champlin, and Rev. J. W. Cunningham who were then, and are now, the only pastors laid to rest in our city.

In 1871, on June 18th, a collection of \$22.95 was taken for the purpose of laying the first sidewalk around the church.

As yet there was no parsonage. In 1881 the church was the very fortunate recipient of a five hundred dollar legacy left by Ann Wight, to be used toward the building of a parsonage.

On June 23, 1884 it was moved to build a parsonage, the cost of the building and lot not to exceed \$2000. Almost immediately \$1270 was subscribed by church members. Later it was decided to erect the building on the west side of the church lot. In 1884 the parsonage was finished at a total cost of \$2361.17. At the same time repairs were made on the church windows and the steeple, and the church was painted. There was as a result, a deficiency of \$330. Mr. Wm. King, who was chairman of the building committee, announced this deficiency and \$200 was subscribed “on the spot”.

When the house warming was held Nov. 13, 1884 the church members presented Mr. and Mrs. King with an “elegant silver water pitcher” for the endless efforts of Mr. King as chairman of the committee. Mrs. N. C. Knickerbocker made the presentation speech and a lovely one it was. In his acceptance speech Mr. King used words which very aptly describe the cooperation and willingness to give on the part of the members of the church, not only then but at all times. He said he felt he deserved little credit for what had been accomplished, for he had only to ask and he received. “With such givers and such a desire to help pervading the society, nothing could be impossible.”

Mr. Meyers was the first pastor to occupy the new parsonage and our present pastor the last, as it was removed in 1929 to give place to the new parish house.

While Mr. Meyers was here a week of prayer was observed in June 1885. This seems to be the first week of prayer recorded for this church.

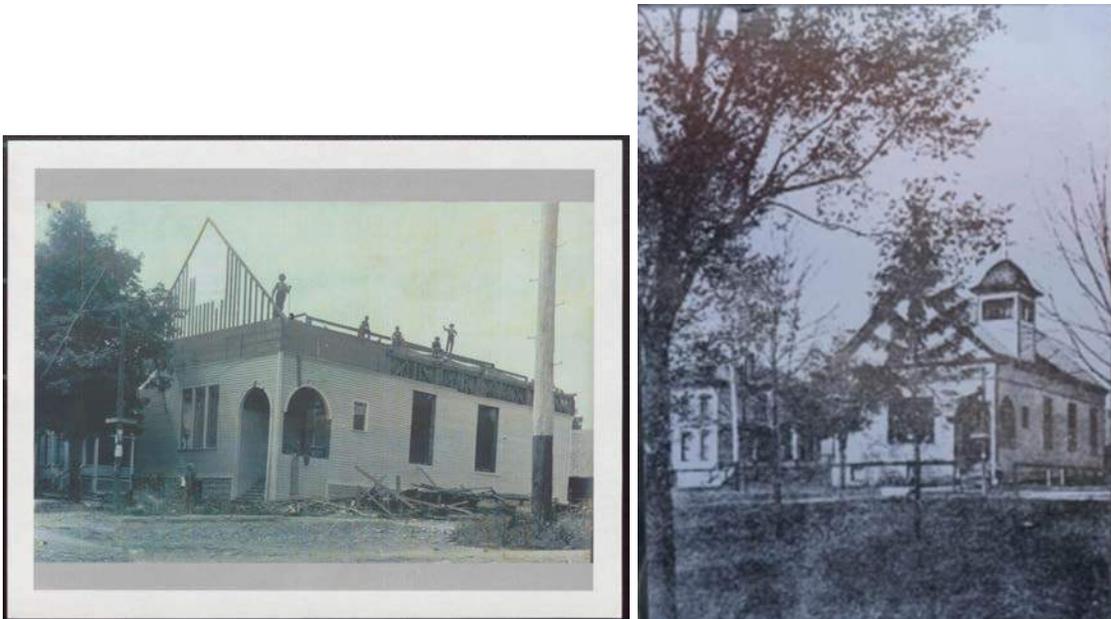
The annual meeting of the church was always held in September. In 1848 it was voted to hold it the first Saturday before the first Sunday in September. Not until Nov. 2, 1889, was it changed to January—the second Thursday in January, later to the second Friday in January, and now the second Wednesday.

Such facts are perhaps not vitally important in the history of the church, but they are nevertheless interesting details.

The period beginning with Mr. Freeman's pastorate in 1891 shows a stress of money, doubtless caused by the depression of the times.

Later, under Mr. Tull 1895-1902 the church seemed more flourishing; and there was a period of quiet growth and tranquility. The prayer meetings were held regularly, and business meetings were usually held after such meetings. The Christian Endeavor Society was active, and Sunday evening services were maintained. At one time there was a Sunday Evening Club which filled the church for several months. A special note is made of the first use of the individual communion service.

In 1896 the church was remodeled. The appearance was much changed. There was an addition put on the front which necessitated tearing down of the lofty steeple, the massive columns and the wide flight of steps. In their places were a typical cupola and a small two door entrance.



The church during and after the 1896 remodeling.

Note that the parsonage discussed above can be seen to the west of the church. Source: Naperville Heritage Society

The cost was \$2000, and the church was re-opened with no debt, made possible by a gift of Mr. J. L. Nichols.

But this improvement seemed unsatisfactory, for in less than ten years, there was talk of the building being unsafe, due to its bulging walls, rotting sills and an insecure roof.

It is interesting to note that before a new church was decided upon a consolidation of churches was discussed. But this ended in the following resolution which was adopted: "that any attempt to consolidate with any other church in the city would be unwise, inexpedient and impracticable, if not impossible."

In 1905 talk of a new church became tangible by pledges of over \$5000. On July 30th, after it was fully decided to tear down and build, a farewell meeting was held in the old church. There were

reminiscences of the early life of the church which were most interesting. Afterwards the trustees submitted their plans for the new church.

During the months of building, services were held in Scott's Hall, as they had been ten years before at the time of the remodeling. A resolution is spread on the records, thanking Mr. Scott for his courtesy and generosity.



Early 1900's postcard view of the 1906 church building. Note that the parsonage house can be seen to the west (left), and other buildings—including the “horse shed” immediately behind the church—to the north along Center Street.

Source: Naperville Heritage Society

The new church was dedicated May 6, 1906, with large audiences both morning and evening, Dr. J. M. Lewis of Sandwich preaching in the morning, and Mr. Peebles, the pastor, in the evening. Mr. Peebles served here from 1902-1910.

Mr. Goodwin's report as chairman of the building committee is printed in full in the records. Some of the outstanding facts are: they contemplated a building of \$12,000 and dedicated one costing \$24,000 free of debt with a membership of 180. The annals of church building rarely reveal the equal of this accomplishment.

To the building committee, Mr. W. R. Goodwin, Mr. C. A. Nadelhoffer, Mrs. Elizabeth Scott, Mrs. J. L. Nichols, Mr. B. B. Boecker Sr., and Mr. J. H. Johnson due credit should be given for the church's freedom from debt.

Referring again to Mr. Goodwin's report, he had a long list of individual gifts to the church—such as the \$3000 pipe organ given by Mr. T. P. Phillips, with the wise condition that there should be no debt when the church was dedicated. Also there were the pews, pulpit furniture, a baptismal font by Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Martin and memorial windows. The two largest

were the Barnard and the Martin windows given by the A. S. Barnard and George Martin families.

This report ended with these words: "And may the beauty of this edifice be ever symbolic of the beauty of holiness that dwells with God's people in his temple."

In November 1909, after serving seven years as pastor, Mr. Peebles resigned to accept a church in California.

The Rev. Alfred E. Randell became pastor in 1910. During his seven years in Naperville he was beloved not only by his own people, but by the whole community. His fine personality and marked ability as a preacher made him an outstanding figure. His deep interest in children and young people found a ready response. In 1917 he resigned to go to Jamestown, New York, where he is at the present time.

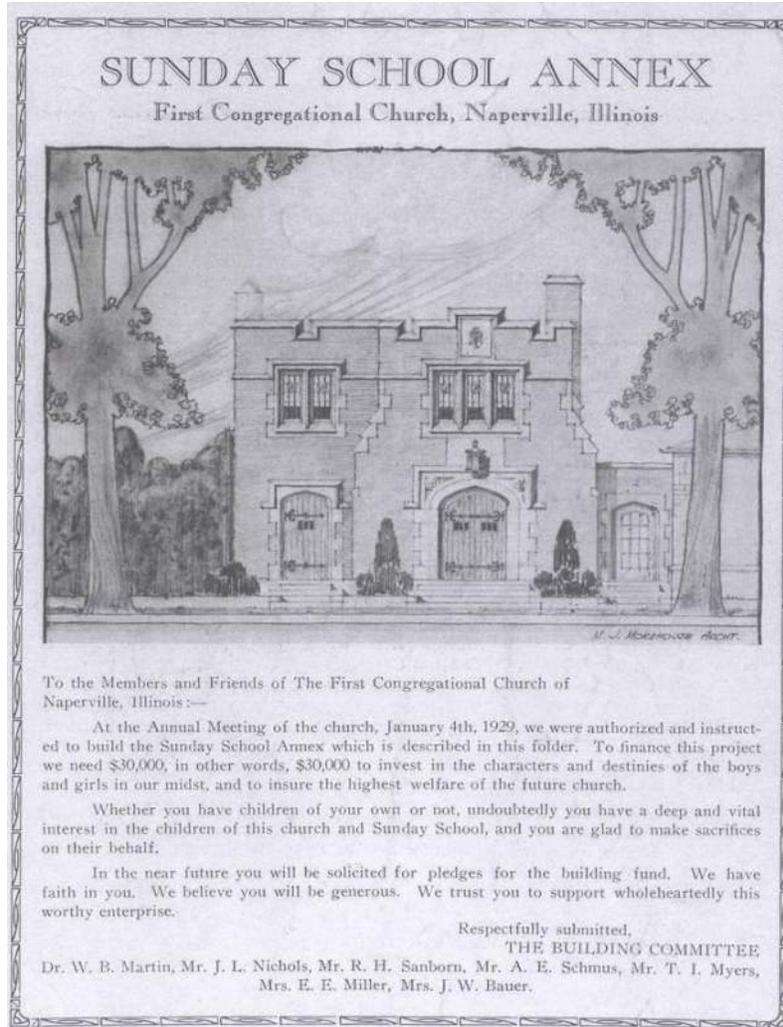
In October, 1917, the Rev. Frank S. Brewer began his pastorate and remained until December, 1919. The Preparatory Classes for church membership for boys and girls were begun by him. They are now held every year, meeting each Sunday during Lent, and are bringing our young people into the church under the guidance of the pastor.

For many years there had been two women's societies in the church, the Ladies Social Circle and Missionary Society. In 1919 a new organization, the Woman's Union, was formed, which includes in its programs all the activities of the two earlier groups. This is one of the vital organizations of the church, taking charge of social activities and missionary work, besides raising each year a generous amount of money toward the support of the church.

The Rev. Wm. Aitchison came to Naperville in April, 1920. During his pastorate here there was a large increase in church membership and an active interest in the Young People's Society. A choir was organized, after having been without one for a number of years. Since then, except for brief intervals, there has been an excellent choir under capable directors.

The present pastor, the Rev. Earl F. Collins, began his ministry in October, 1923. Only one pastor has served the church for a longer period, the Rev. Hope Brown, (1845-1856). An interesting coincidence is the fact that the founder of this church, the Rev. Jeremiah Porter, died in the same year in the same city in which Mr. Collins was born.

These ten years have been marked by the harmony which has existed between the pastor and the congregation and among the members of the congregation. Mr. Collins' ability as a pastor and leader is known and appreciated far beyond his own church.



Artist's view of the front of the 1930 Parish Hall addition. Sunday school space was provided on the first floor, and the pastor and his family lived on the second floor. — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

For some years it was evident that additional room for the Sunday School was greatly needed. At the annual meeting on January 6, 1928 a committee was appointed to arrange plans and raise money for a building. At the annual meeting on January 4, 1929 the final plan, for a separate building with an apartment on the second floor for the pastor, was presented. The plan was approved and authority was given to proceed with the work. The building committee consisted of Dr. W. B. Martin, J. L. Nichols, T. I. Myers, A. E. Schmus, R. H. Sanborn, Mrs. E. E. Miller and Mrs. J. W. Bauer.

The Parish House was dedicated February 9, 1930 with appropriate ceremonies. It has become an important factor in church life. It provides us with a pleasant and convenient Sunday School room and is the scene of many other church activities. The continued growth of the school is a constant proof of its worth.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of the present church building was held May 3, 1931, with Dr. James Lewis of Sandwich, who preached the dedicatory sermon, preaching the anniversary sermon.

On June the 11th, 1933, Mr. Collins resigned to accept a call to the church at St. Johns, Michigan. The resignation, which takes effect August 1st, has been a cause for deep regret. We rejoice, however, that he celebrates our centennial with us.

In order properly to celebrate the hundredth birthday of our church, the following committees were selected: General Centennial Committee, Rev. E. F. Collins, Mrs. W. B. Martin, and Mr. Irving Goodrich. Sub-committees: Finance, Mr. H. C. Williams, Mr. C. A. Nadelhoffer, Mr. T. I. Myers, and Mr. P. H. Boecker; Printing, Mr. J. L. Nichols and Mr. H. C. Hyland; Program, Mrs. J. W. Bauer, Mrs. Myron Towsley, and Miss Daphne Wilson; Historical, Miss Jennie Goodrich, Mrs. Paul Boyer, and Miss Leona Corel. Undaunted by hard times, these committees have, through their own hard work and the loyal cooperation of the other members of the church, made it possible for us to celebrate our church centennial in a fitting manner.

One hundred years have passed since that small group of people met in a grove on the Illinois frontier to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The settlements have become thriving towns and rural communities with churches of their own. From a membership of nineteen we have grown to a congregation of three hundred ninety-seven. The hope expressed by Jeremiah Porter that "the mustard seed may become a great tree so that multitudes may rest under its delightful shade" has been fulfilled.

Our church for a century has had a deep influence in the life of this community. That it has done so is due to the faith and zeal of its members, not only the pioneers of a hundred years ago, but throughout its history.

Although we have few of the hardships of the pioneer church, a living church demands earnest endeavor and sacrifice. Surely it can be said that we have members today who serve the church as faithfully as did its founders. A changing world has made our creed more liberal, but it still rests on the firm foundations of Christian faith.

We look back over the century with a feeling of reverence and pride. Let us look forward to still finer achievements in the years to come.

Chapter 4: 1963 Church History⁵⁵

by Genevieve Towsley

The First Congregational Church

The First Congregational Church of Naperville was the first church founded in DuPage county. It is also the oldest Congregational Church to be founded in northern Illinois. In gratitude for this distinctive heritage, members of the church will recognize its 130th anniversary with appropriate services and an historical exhibit on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24.

Many of the early settlers who arrived in 1832 to stake their claims in the woodlands and along the DuPage had migrated from New England. Steeped in a Puritan background, they missed their regular Sabbath observances and soon began to think in terms of organizing a church. Hearing of the arrival of the Reverend Jeremiah Porter in Chicago in May of 1833, they invited him to spend a Sabbath in their midst.

Mr. Porter had been ordained a Congregational minister in his home town of Hadley, Massachusetts. He was commissioned to serve as a missionary to the frontier people by the American Home Missionary Society. This organization was a joint missionary effort of eastern churches and theologians who were largely of the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Dutch Reformed faith.

The well-known church historian Matthew Spinka in his “A History of Illinois Congregational and Christian Churches” quotes from Porter’s papers in relating the missionary’s first visit to this vicinity:

“Porter ‘passed a Sabbath (June 30, 1833) at a settlement on the DuPage, 30 miles west’ where he found 15 professing Christians from Vermont (probably the Goodrich clan). To his great joy they had ‘transplanted New England piety into these beautiful prairies where it bids fair to flourish with strength equal to that seen on the hard soil of the Green Mountains... They had two services on the Sabbath in their log forest sanctuary; a pleasant Sabbath school, a temperance society, and distribute tracts monthly. At their request I expect to organize them into a church before the second Sabbath of this month, and administer the Lord’s Supper on that day, when there may be many more persons from other settlements to enjoy the feast of love with them.’”

Quite obviously the little band of worshippers had been meeting together before that first visit of Mr. Porter to “DuPage”, the name by which the community south of the Naper settlement was known. He kept his promise to return and organize them into a church body.

The tattered and faded pages of the churches oldest record book give an account of that historical event:

⁵⁵ Towsley, Genevieve, “The First Congregational Church,” *First Congregational Church of Naperville: 1963 Church History*. 1963.

“DuPage, Cook County, Ill., July 13, 1833—By a request of a number of persons at DuPage to be organized into a church of Christ, the Rev. Jeremiah Porter, the Rev. N. C. Clark, missionaries of this county [DuPage was then part of Cook County], and the Reverend C. W. Babbit, from Tazewell county, met and after prayer and some appropriate remarks, proceeded to examine credentials of applicants...”

Sixteen members were received by letter (seven of them Goodriches) on that Saturday in the Isaac Clark home. After adopting 11 articles of faith and the covenant, the members elected three elders. On the following day, the Sabbath, the elders were “solemnly ordained”, and three more members received into the fellowship. Mr. Porter also recorded the event:

“According to appointment, I went on the second week of July to organize a church... Saturday, the 13th ult., we passed in fasting, prayer, and exhortation, organized the church, and elected elders. On Sabbath we repaired to the grove, the place being too small to accommodate the audience, where we had previously met. The supper was administered to about 35 communicants. It was a cheering scene. Few had dared to expect such a one at this early period in the settlement of our frontier. The grain of mustard seed we trust will become a great tree so that multitudes shall yet rest under its delightful shade.”

The church was designated as the “Presbyterian Church at DuPage”. That a Congregational minister should establish a Presbyterian church in a community of Puritan Descendants seems irregular today, but this was a common practice on the frontier. Under the “Plan of Union”, which was agreed upon by Congregationalists and Presbyterians in 1801, this had been sanctioned, according to Spinka, by “Congregationalists in Connecticut (who) believed that the nurturing of the feebler churches in isolated regions could be more effectually promoted under Presbyterian, rather than Congregational, procedures.”

That the members of the newly-founded church soon regretted their formation under Presbyterian polity, and desired a more autonomous church, is recorded in the minutes of the business meeting of August 29, 1833, when they “consulted as to the expediency of adopting the Congregational mode of church government.” On August 1, 1834, the form of government was unanimously changed to Congregational, and the persons previously elected as elders were designated as deacons.

Church membership was not taken lightly. One of their first resolutions declared it the duty of each member to attend all meetings of the church, and required the moderator to compel absentees to give proper excuses or suffer discipline.

Members met for worship in various places—homes, school buildings, an occasional barn, a large tent procured for that purpose, and in the first DuPage county court house after it was erected in Naperville. When the Baptist meeting house was built, the Congregationalists used it on alternate Sundays.

The members were scattered in six “neighborhoods” which, according to the history of the church written for its 50th anniversary, “were five and sometimes 10 miles apart”. That the Sunday services were alternately held in different settlements is understandable, when those neighborhoods are defined:

“There was the Naper settlement, which was central. The Goodrich or East Branch neighborhood was about five miles to the southeast, the Lisle and Downers Grove neighborhood was to the east, the Big Woods neighborhood to the west, and the East DuPage or Strong and Clark’s settlement to the south, and the Northern settlement to the north...

In going to church, neighbors went together, and their processions of ox teams were familiar to the early settlers who were not so religiously inclined.”

Shortly after the church became Congregational, it joined with the churches of Big Grove (Newark), Long Grove (Bristol), and Walker’s Grove (Plainfield) to form the Congregational Union of Fox River. This forerunner of the Aurora Association was organized June 26, 1835.

As the neighborhoods that made up the early Naperville church became settlements or villages, members from several of them asked for dismissal from the original church to organize churches within their communities. Big Woods (Eola) was founded in 1836, and in March of 1837, according to the old records, “a petition from George Parmelee and other members of this church was read for the purpose of organizing nearer their respective abode.” These members formed the East DuPage (Downers Grove) church. The church at Lisle was organized in 1842.

An entry of January 6, 1844, states that 12 persons “presented a letter requesting to be dismissed for the purpose of organizing a new church in Will county where they reside.” Those who withdrew formed the nucleus of the First Presbyterian church of DuPage.

Grateful that their frontier ventures were prospering, and remembering their New England traditions, the members resolved on November 5, 1841, “that the church deem it expedient and proper to revive the ancient custom of annual thanksgivings...”. It is presumed that a thanksgiving service was held that year. The following year it was resolved “that as a church we observe Thursday, the 8th of December, as a day of thanksgiving, and this community be invited to unite with us in the public exercises of the day.” This fact makes the selection of Thanksgiving Sunday an especially appropriate day for recognition of the church’s 130th anniversary.

Although as early as 1838 there was agitation for erection of a meeting house, the project moved slowly. The following year, Naperville was chosen as the location of the church, and three trustees were selected to acquire a site and supervise construction; but no action was taken. With the church still paying the pastor “one-half in produce”, and receiving some of his support from the American Home Missionary Society, building of a meeting house was not yet advisable.

In 1845, Captain Morris Sleight donated land for the church, stating two conditions— that no part should be used as a burying ground, and that a cupola and bell should be on the church. These conditions are still fulfilled today, although the tall, spired, white, frame church which was

erected in 1846 has been gone for more than half a century. The site was ideal, since it overlooked the village park or square where the DuPage county court house stood.

Religious instruction and benevolences were concerns of the church from its inception. Jeremiah Porter's mention of the Sabbath school confirms its establishment, as do also the minutes of the church's second meeting when Brother Isaac Clark was appointed a committee to see that the Sabbath school books were "repaired, numbered, and registered." Perhaps some had come with cherished possessions in covered wagons. Poor though the little group of worshippers was, in March of 1834 it raised \$16 for the Illinois Bible Society.

Record of the early meetings of the Women's Missionary Society have been lost, but its date of founding was 1873. There was also a Ladies' Social Circle which was formed "to promote sociability in the congregation and to devise ways to raise money...". The two eventually merged into the Women's Union, which has within recent years become the Women's Fellowship. It strongly undergirds the church, promoting its social and spiritual life and supporting financially its world mission as well as improvements to the church facilities.

Church membership grew slowly before 1900. In the beginning, when the Congregational church was the only organized religious group in this frontier area holding regular services, many who were religiously inclined joined the fellowship. Each time, however, when a number withdrew to form churches "nearer to their place of abode" or to organize a church of another denomination in this community, the membership was decimated. When the church celebrated its 50th anniversary, the history written for that occasion states:

"From the beginning to the present time, the church has received into its fold 352 members, and has at present a membership of 90."

The white, spired church stood 50 years in its original form, serving adequately. As the parish flourished, toward the end of the century, it was decided, however, to enlarge and remodel the building's architecture. The steeple, pillars, and center stairway were removed; an addition was placed on the front, and a tower built over the corner entrance. Many agreed that the beauty of the original structure was gone; and the remodeling did not prove satisfactory. Within 10 years the building was declared unsafe, and the congregation faced the challenge of removing the entire structure and erecting a new church.

The new stone church, costing \$24,000, was dedicated May 6, 1906, free of debt. This was the culmination of a long and rewarding effort on the part of all of the 180 members.

A frame parsonage had been erected on the west end of the church property in 1884. When the religious education facilities of the stone church became inadequate to accommodate the growing Sunday school, it was decided to remove the parsonage and "build a separate building with an apartment on the second floor for the pastor".

The parish house, which is attached to the main building by two passageways, was completed early in 1930. Three years later, the church celebrated its centennial with appropriate services and a pageant that re-enacted dramatic events in the church's history.

Continued growth and departmentalization of the Sunday school in 1951 prompted the trustees to purchase a parsonage at 32 S. Wright Street and to remodel the second floor of the parish hall for religious education purposes. In 1954 a more modern parsonage was secured at 220 N. Sleight Street and the Wright Street property sold.

Modernization of the church plant continues. The "north room" has recently been tastefully renovated and furnished as a parlor and reception room.

Physical growth and material assets of an organization are easy to record. The spiritual progress and influence of a church, however, can never be accurately measured or expressed. The church, which now has a membership of 771, has programs or fellowships for youth, men, women, and couples. Two worship services are held each Sunday morning to accommodate the attendance. The church has long been a member of and supplied leadership in the Naperville Council of Churches.

The Rev. Anthony Wayne Myers, who began his pastorate in August of 1962, is the 29th minister to serve the Naperville church. A full-time minister of Religious Education joined the staff in 1962. Other staff members include a full-time church secretary, director of music, two organists, youth choir director, and custodian.

Jeremiah Porter's trust that "the grain of mustard seed will become a great tree" was not misplaced. The little band which worshipped in a "log forest sanctuary" has increased more than 30-fold. The advance has not been without periods of hardship or stress, both physical and spiritual. Only by earnest adherence to the Christian faith and principles has the long line of members and pastors made possible the significant heritage of the First Congregational church.

"Like a mighty army moves the church of God!
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod."

Chapter 5: 1983 Church History⁵⁶

by Priscilla Grundy

Given Orally at 1983 Sesquicentennial Celebration

The history of the First Congregational Church of Naperville for the twenty years 1963-1983 shows turmoil and change, particularly at the beginning of the period. During the second decade the church experienced continuity in having a single senior pastor, and growth in both members and activities.

⁵⁶ Grundy, Priscilla, *1983 Church History, Given Orally at the Sesquicentennial Celebration*, 1983.

In the early years of the congregation in the 19th century, several groups left to form new churches. The Lisle and Downers Grove Congregational churches and the DuPage Presbyterian Church are examples. In 1965 another group left, this time to form the Naperville Congregational Church. With the early break-offs, geography was most often the reason for the split. In 1965, the reason was governance.

The departure of this group marked the end of several years of anguish and discord suffered over the decision to join the United Church of Christ. The United Church had been formed in 1957 as a merger of the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed denominations, but each Congregational congregation had to decide whether to join the new body. From the first vote in Naperville, a majority favored the merger, but not a large enough majority to gain the three-fourths needed under the bylaws. Those who wanted to stay out and to join the Continuing Congregational Churches became embittered because the majority would not accept the first vote as final. The majority were frustrated because they felt separated from the denominational organizations and the great majority of other Congregational churches which became part of the UCC. Social and political questions of the sixties became intertwined in the struggle. In 1965 one more vote was taken on whether to join the National Association of Continuing Congregational Churches, and when that vote failed, a group of 120 departed to found the Naperville Congregational Church. In the months following, those who remained felt both a sense of relief that the struggle was over and a sense of failure that it could not be resolved in such a way as to maintain the church fellowship complete. The church joined the United Church in 1966 and, in a move which signified its growing sense of relationship to Chicago, switched its membership from the Fox Valley to the Metropolitan Association.

Membership and budget statistics for the two decades show the struggles, but also reflect the way the church overcame them. In 1963 church membership stood at 737 and rose to 763 in 1965, just before the split. It went down to 581 in 1966, but back up to 628 the next year. Then the church began for the first time culling inactive members, and that together with differences over social issues (the church prayed for North Vietnam as well as South) caused a decline in membership each year until 1972, when it was 480. In 1969, for instance, the deacons removed 85 inactive members from the rolls. For the past decade membership has increased each year, until it reached 645 in 1983.

At the same time membership was riding the roller-coaster down and then up, however, the budget held steady and then increased. After a slight drop (\$500) in 1966, the budget remained mostly in the mid-\$40,000 range until 1972, when it began an upward climb which reached \$147,000 by 1983.

Even more problematic than internal struggles was the continual need to replace members who moved away. Naperville turned over about 20% of its population each year during these two decades, and the church members moved at about the same rate. Another factor affecting church membership was the decision to provide only one church service on a regular basis. The

sanctuary was often sardine-tight on Sunday morning, but by keeping to one service, the congregation remained closer knit, which could experience community better.

The tightness in the sanctuary was accompanied by tightness in space for church school classes, and these two factors led to a decision to construct an addition and remodel the sanctuary, in 1977. Members volunteered as much of the work as could be done by nonprofessionals, but major professional work was needed as well. The addition provided a large community room with kitchen on the ground floor, and numerous classrooms in the basement. Enlarging the sanctuary involved removing the wall between it and the North Room, which had served as a parlor, with the result that the church could seat 260 instead of the previous 200. The work was completed in 1979.

The property on which the addition was built came to the church almost in self-defense. The lot west of the church contained an old wooden residence. In 1964 the congregation voted to buy the property to prevent it from being made into a parking lot. The plan was to liquidate the mortgage by rental income, but the plan failed, because not enough rent was obtained. As the house continued to deteriorate, the church was in the embarrassing position of appearing as a slumlord, and in 1968 the congregation voted to demolish the house. The remaining mortgage was paid off in 1971, when the church sold its parsonage at 220 N. Sleight. This was possible because the minister now owned his own house. Thus by 1977 the church owned the adjacent property and was able to build on it.

The sale of the parsonage provided one of several forums for debate during these two decades on the role of benevolence in church life. On this occasion the congregation decided (after two votes at separate meetings) to first pay the mortgage, and then divide the remainder equally between the church building fund and the missionary education committee, which dispensed benevolences. An unexpected bequest of \$19,000 from the Frech estate resulted in further discussion over eight months in 1973-74, and again a decision to donate half the money outside the church. These two special decisions supplemented a congregational decision to designate a set percentage of the church budget to benevolences, beginning in 1972-73. That first year the percentage was 20%; by 1983 the percentage was increased to 24%. This change resulted in increases not only in dollars, but in percentages (the amount designated for benevolences in 1963 was about 15% of the total budget).

Between 1963 and 1983 the congregation had three ministers and eight associates with varying titles. Anthony Wayne Myers held the position of minister from 1962 to 1966, thus presiding over the split. Robert Findlay and J. Stanley Cox assisted him, and Mr. Cox became senior pastor from 1967 to 1970. Jim Bundy assisted him. Keith Torney was called to First Congregational in 1971. Assistants during his tenure have been Rosalind Lyle (from Glasgow, studying in Chicago), Al Eickelman, Ann Latourette, David Schoen, and Peter Luckey.

Thus during the 1980s the church invited the first woman in its history to the pastorate. Other firsts for women were Esther Gardiner as first woman deacon in 1969 and Jean Swanson as first

woman moderator in 1973. Women had served on the Board of Trustees beginning in the 1950s, but the last bastion, the ushers, didn't fall until the late 1970s.

During these twenty years the church engaged in several kinds of outreach projects. Some involved getting to know urban members of our own denomination, such as Sunday morning exchanges of groups from our church and a black congregation in Chicago, and family camping at Lake Geneva and other exchanges with Christ Church, a Japanese-American congregation on the north side of the City. Earlier the church sent lunches with the bus from North Central College which went to Selma, Alabama. A local project involved the development, with others, of federally funded housing for the elderly in Naperville, Martin Manor, and the Social Action Committee was instrumental in bringing a Fair Housing Council into being for the city. In 1975-76 the congregation sponsored a Vietnamese family, the Hais, who had fled from Saigon at the end of the war. One member donated a house, and many others worked on finding work for Mr. Hai, collecting furniture and clothing, helping with transportation, and giving English lessons. The family, parents and four small sons, gradually adjusted and repaid the congregation with their development and gratitude before moving to California.

Chapter 6: History 1983-2012

By James R. Fancher

At the beginning of the sesquicentennial year, First Congregational had a senior pastor, Rev. E. Keith Torney, and an associate pastor, Rev. Peter Luckey, whose primary responsibility was the needs of the parish youth. Other members of the staff were Ellen Stone, who was directing the Chancel Choir at this time; Beverly Owens, organist; and church secretary Joy Bandemer. Carol Marquart served as Sunday School director.

Two items of congregational interest at this time, represented by separate study committees, were the promotion of affordable senior citizen housing in Naperville, and a comprehensive study of needs in the Christian Education area. The former interest had continued over several years, ultimately providing impetus to the construction of Martin Avenue Apartments in 1971. (Roland and Mabel Miller, from our congregation, became the first resident managers of that facility.) Beginning in 1984, the Church offered assistance to the First Spanish Church in Joliet; social affairs were organized to get the two congregations acquainted, and fraternal delegates attended on special occasions. Studies were also undertaken regarding a possible family shelter in Naperville—clearly, as the community grew, there was increasing need for such facilities.



Rev. E. Keith Torney (Aug. 16, 1971-Aug. 6, 1989) — Source: J. R. Fancher

Facilities improvements were still on the agenda, and in early 1986 a major remodeling was begun on the basement area beneath the sanctuary. The cost of the remodeling was around \$150,000. The result was rechristened the Clark rooms, in honor of Rev. N. C. Clark, who had assisted in founding the church and served as one of its early pastors.

In April of 1986, Rev. Peter Luckey, who had served as associate pastor since shortly after his 1982 ordination, moved to Oak Park, Illinois. A search committee was already up and running, and in May, 1986, a call was extended to Rev. Sally Owen-Still, primarily to serve, as Rev. Luckey had done, as an associate minister to youth.

Ellen Stone, who had served for several years as choir director, took a leave of absence from that position after the end of the 1985-86 season, and was replaced in the fall of 1986 by Vince Rock, at 20 probably the youngest choir director the Chancel Choir had seen. Vince's tenure was nonetheless fruitful; the choir made a television appearance during his term, and grew considerably in numbers.

One of the most significant decisions during this period was the commitment to the PADS program (Public Action to Deliver Shelter), a county-wide program to provide overnight housing for homeless people. The church began studying this activity in late spring, 1987, and was able to offer its own site in the fall of that year; there were substantial facilities changes needed, in particular the conversion of the two bathrooms beneath the Community Room into men's and women's shower rooms. The PADS site activity has continued ever since, and has become one of the services which defines this congregation.

Rev. Keith Torney's pastorate across this period had become a significant identification as well. Having started in 1971, he had served much longer than any pastor in the church's history; and

his leadership, not only within the church but also in activities throughout the area—for example, he served on the board of Evangelical Health Systems, which operated, among others, Good Samaritan Hospital at Downers Grove— had brought attention to the church as well. It was then with considerable regret that the church accepted his plans to leave, announced early in 1989; a position had become available in Billings, MT, and as an Idaho native, Keith was looking forward to being closer to “home”. A search committee formed in March of that year, and it was quickly clear that a pair of large boots had to be filled. Notwithstanding Keith’s decision, significant activities continued in other areas of church life: In Christian Education, Mary Kroening, who had served for some time, left the post, and in her place the church hired Sandy Hunter. Another significant activity was the presentation and adoption of a Just Peace Covenant, which also has become an essential part of our identification.

Rev. Torney left in June of 1989 (although the official celebration of his ministry was held in August of that year), and early in 1990 the church extended a call to the Rev. Robert T. Baggott III (Rev. John Bollinger had served as interim pastor for 44 weeks, but Rev. Sally Owen-Still continued in her position, covering some of the broader activities of the church). Rev. Baggott began his ministry in April of 1990. The congregation also reactivated the Long Range Planning Board at about the same time. November of 1990 saw the retirement of the longest-serving member of the staff—organist Beverly Owens, who had begun in 1961. A new organist, Ann Brown, began serving shortly thereafter.

During Rev. Baggott’s first year, the church established a Task Force on language, which dealt with a particularly thorny issue—the handling, within services, of gender-specific, or gender-suggestive, wording, which of course exists in Scriptural passages, traditional orders and prayers, and music—both that performed by choirs and that shared by the congregation. The Task Force worked for well over a year, eventually providing recommendations in mid-1991. Notwithstanding their hard work, the issue continues to arouse strong opinions in various parts of the congregation, and has led to incorporating both gender-neutral and traditional music, prayers, and texts into the services.

Changes in the church’s by-laws elaborated the duties of the Treasurer, but also established a professional Bookkeeper position to take over much of the routine work.

For a time in the late 1980s and 1990s, a popular church function was the Progressive Dinner: Participants typically visited one family for appetizers, a second for main course, and a dessert course was then served either at a third location or at the church. Such dinners were held once or twice a year. Other social functions were also encouraged; a breakfast following the early service on Easter morning has been traditional for some years.

Beginning in the 1980s, members of our congregation—notably Sig and Hilde Blankenhorn—became leaders in the institution of recycling in the Naperville Community, helping organize the Naperville Area Recycling Center. By 1991 the Naperville City Council was looking into commercial recycling, and that became a reality in 1992, resulting in a bittersweet goodbye to the volunteer organization. Although it started much earlier, mention

should also be made of the activity of another member, Jane Sindt: Jane had been a Sunday school teacher, and from at least the 1950s was interested in the history of Naperville and its institutions. When the historic Episcopal Church building was threatened with demolition in 1969, Jane was in the forefront of the effort to move the building to what was then the grounds of the Martin-Mitchell Museum. That successful project led to the founding of the Naperville Heritage Society, which Jane served as its first president.

Rev. Baggott's forceful preaching style attracted a number of new members; he also actively recruited members through his own activities, in service clubs, golfing, and the like, with membership reaching a peak at the end of 1994. There was still concern about the church's youth program, and in May, 1994, a new youth pastor, Rev. Laurie Powell, was hired. The church appeared to be prospering, but in March of 1995 Mr. Baggott announced that he had received a call from a large Minneapolis-area church. His departure was followed by a period of dissension among the members; a part of Mr. Baggott's vision—and that of many supporters—had been the development of First Congregational UCC into a distinctly suburban church, that is, a church located in, and attracting membership from, the newly settled areas of Naperville and surrounding communities.

That premise was not shared by all of the members, for a number of reasons: The historical significance of the Benton/Center property; the commitments to the PADS homeless shelter—a significant percentage of the guests travel via train, hence the location near the railroad station is optimal for that purpose; and, not least, skepticism as to whether a church of our traditions would be sufficiently attractive to new, young, largely unchurched residents (which of course also raised the question of whether our traditions and worship style could be maintained).

This division in the Congregation forced a long interim: The first interim pastor, Rev. Steve Davidson, attempted, for more than a year, to harmonize the two views, without success, and ultimately a large number of congregants and families separated and formed a new church, Hope United Church of Christ, to pursue the vision of a congregation located in the growth area of Naperville. As was to be expected, there were also members who grew impatient for resolution of the differences within the congregation, and/or the lack of a permanent pastor, and so the losses of membership over this interim period substantially exceeded the number who left to found the new church.

An immediate and difficult consequence of the spin-off, for those remaining with First Congregational, was the necessity to adjust to a much-reduced budget, and Rev. Owen-Still was terminated as a result. (Rev. Powell had taken her own leave more or less coincidentally with Rev. Baggott's departure, although not for that reason.) A second interim pastor, Rev. Helen "Penny" Greer, guided the activity of the remaining members, and by late 1997, the church found itself able to extend a call to Rev. Dr. Gregory Schneck-Skiba, who at that time was serving as an associate pastor at Hinsdale's Union Church. He began his pastorate in December, 1997.

During Rev. Schneck-Skiba's first full year, 1998, evidence of new activity was obvious: A series of "cottage meetings" served to improve communications, highlight congregational

sentiment, and provide guidance for the church's officers. A "Spiritfest" celebration in Central Park, across from the church, served the function of a "rally day" in the fall. Staff changes were accommodated: Jim Schopp took over organ duties, and Barbara Bailey was hired as church secretary. A Stephen ministry program was strengthened, and a proposed change in by-laws to enable a more flexible church government was opened for discussion. In a particularly significant decision, the congregation agreed to become the meeting place for the DuPage Questioning Youth organization.

There was also discussion of fund-raising to enable church repairs and modifications; some of these (e.g., organ modifications, and restoration of the stained-glass windows) had been accomplished earlier via specific campaigns, but the need for major work required a broader base. In 2000, a program was committed to look further into such a campaign, and by late summer, 2001, the program was almost ready for launch. However, the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington placed an obstacle in the way of that start, and the professionals who had helped organize that activity recommended a delay. It was thought that the postponement would be on the order of a few months, perhaps a year, but it was actually more than three years—early 2005—before that campaign was really in motion. However, once the program, titled "Building First to Last", was at last underway, it yielded significantly more than intended: The \$750,000 target was eclipsed by a final total of \$822,000 registered as of May 2005.

One provision of the "Building First to Last" campaign sought seed funds for the hiring of an associate pastor assigned to the youth program. In November, 2005, a call was extended to Rev. Katie Morrison, as a ¾-time associate handling that portfolio. Rev. Morrison was openly gay; further, her partner was serving a church in Princeton IL, where they lived, which tasked her with a commute of more than 65 miles. Nonetheless, she served until early 2008, when she and her partner relocated to California. There was enhanced youth activity during her tenure; one such activity was participation by our youth in "Sleep Out Saturday", which helps youth understand the challenges of homelessness. Participation in that event has continued since.

Another salient action, which began in 2002-2003 among a few individuals within the congregation, resulted in our congregation sponsoring a resolution for consideration at the biennial UCC General Synod. The resolution called on the UCC to offer alternatives to 'Christian Zionism'—an eschatological view which promotes support for modern Israel based on a scriptural interpretation suggesting that restoration of Israel's historic territory will precipitate the second coming of Christ. The Synod passed the resolution.

The 2005-2008 capital campaign resulted in a number of physical changes in the church: The church office and pastor's office were relocated, and the church library was installed in the former Christian Education office. Extensive tuckpointing and masonry repairs were undertaken on all three buildings in the complex. The original pastor's office in the Sanctuary became a coatroom, and the narthex area was remodeled to be more welcoming. New stained glass windows were installed in the doors between the Sanctuary and the narthex, allowing more

natural light in the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary building received a new boiler and new audio equipment, and windows were replaced in the Community Room and several other areas in order to reduce heating and cooling costs. Air conditioning of the Sanctuary had also been a priority item, and since its installation, services can remain in that location year round.

The church observed its 175th anniversary in 2008 with an outdoor service in a location believed to be near that of its initial service in July, 1833.



Marker located at Royce Homestead Park, along Royce Road E. of Naper Blvd. It reads: "First Presbyterian Church of DuPage founded July 14, 1833 in Old Hickory school".— Source: J. R. Fancher

In 2008, the church was once again considering what might be done to support its youth program. With the current membership it did not appear feasible to call a full-time associate pastor (and indeed, Rev. Morrison's tenure was only possible because some of the seed money came from the capital campaign of 2005). Rev. Schneck-Skiba offered a surprising proposal: That a call be extended to a "co-pastor", who would have a broader portfolio; and that he, Rev. Schneck-Skiba, would take early retirement within a couple of years after that call. This offered not only the possibility of additional effort on programs such as youth, but also the potential of avoiding the usual delay (often as much as a year) when one pastorate ends and a new pastor must be called.

Although some concerns were raised about this approach, the church accepted it in May, 2009, and Rev. Mark Winters accepted a call to the new position beginning September 1, 2009. He served as a co-pastor with Rev. Schneck-Skiba until the latter's departure at the end of August, 2011. An ad hoc 'Transition Team' worked with the pastors to assure a smooth passage. Rev. Schneck-Skiba's service (12/1997 through 8/2011) was the second longest tenure in the church's history, exceeded only by that of Rev. Torney.

Church members continue to find new avenues for service: One such initiative resulted in the formation of Community Access Naperville, an organization devoted to providing opportunities

for handicapped young adults; it began as a brief summer program in 2010, but by late 2011 had full status as a continuing charity on its own.

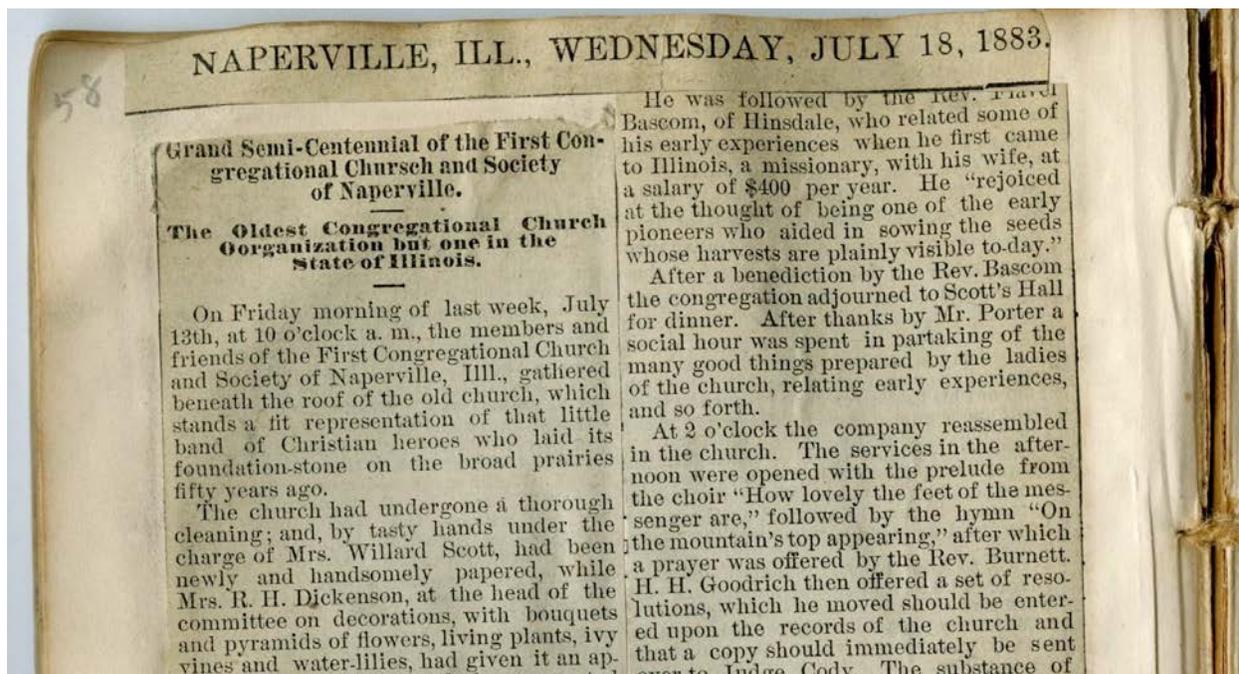
Financial stresses continued to pose difficulties; the co-pastorate had been undertaken in the knowledge that it would generate an intermediate-term deficit, but it became necessary to get appropriate support from the banking community. Ultimately, a change in banks was necessary to garner that support. A Development Team has operated since 2010 to focus on actions which maintain financial stability. Personnel changes also became a challenge, with a new organist hired in 2010 and a new choir director in 2011. The Development Team ultimately recommended a further Capital Campaign, and that was set up in late 2012, for implementation in the first half of 2013. That activity is now underway.

In July of 2013, First Congregational will celebrate its 180th anniversary. As this compilation of histories documents, multitudes HAVE rested in the delightful shade of the church's activity. We trust that it will continue to provide succor and success to those in the embrace of its branches.

Appendix 3: Anniversaries of the 1833 Church and 1906 Building

Church Anniversaries

1883 > 50 years



*50th Anniversary of the Congregational Church of Naperville —
Source: Hannah Ditzler's newspaper scrapbook, Vol. 4, Page 58.*

1933 > 100 years

CHURCH TO MARK 100TH BIRTHDAY AT NAPERVILLE

The First Congregational church of Naperville, one of the oldest houses of worship in Illinois, will celebrate its 100th anniversary July 13. Centennial Sunday will be observed on July 16. The church was formed July 13, 1833, by the Rev. Jeremiah Porter. The Rev. Earl Collins is the present pastor.

The history of the church will be read and several episodes will be dramatized at 7 p. m. on July 13. Old time songs will be sung.

On Sunday, July 16, there will be a centennial sermon at 10:30 a. m. by the pastor; a service commemorating the first communion service 100 years ago; a memorial service for those who have died since the organization of the church, and music by the choir and soloists. At 4 p. m. there will be a friendly hour with brief messages by former pastors and others. At 6 p. m. tea will be served and at 7:30 p. m. there will be a community service.

All the churches of Naperville are uniting in the services. The Rev. T. C. Hume, pastor of the New England Congregational church, Chicago, will speak.

History Drama Opens Centennial Exercises of Naperville Church

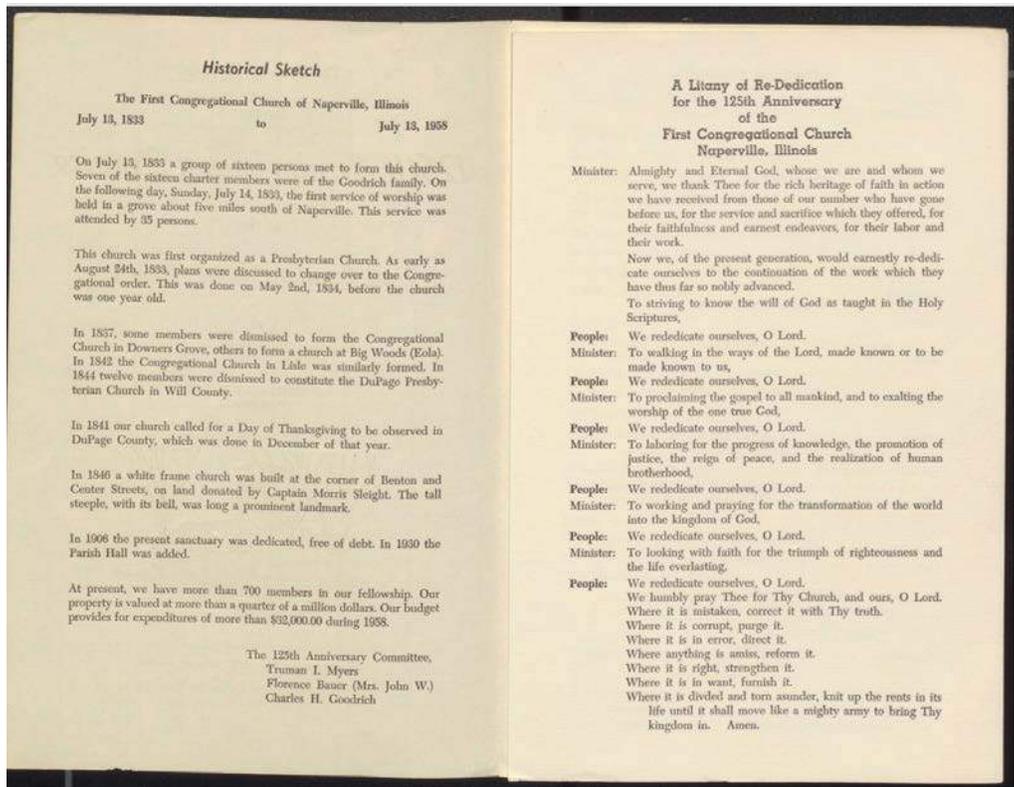
The centennial celebration of the First Congregational church of Naperville opened last night with a drama portraying the church's history. A large audience attended. The centennial services will be held next Sunday. Morning worship will be observed at 10:30 and the centennial sermon will be preached by the pastor, the Rev. Earl F. Collins. Friendly hour will be at 4 p. m., when there will be brief talks by former pastors. At 7:30 o'clock a community service will be held. The sermon will be preached by Dr. T. C. Hume, pastor of the New England Congregational church of Chicago.

The Naperville church was organized on July 13, 1833, by the Rev. Jeremiah Porter of Chicago to serve six settlements of the district which were without organized churches.

Newspaper article about the 100th Anniversary — Source:

Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1933, Page 1,
Newspapers.com

Chicago Tribune, July 14, 1933, Page 19,
Newspapers.com

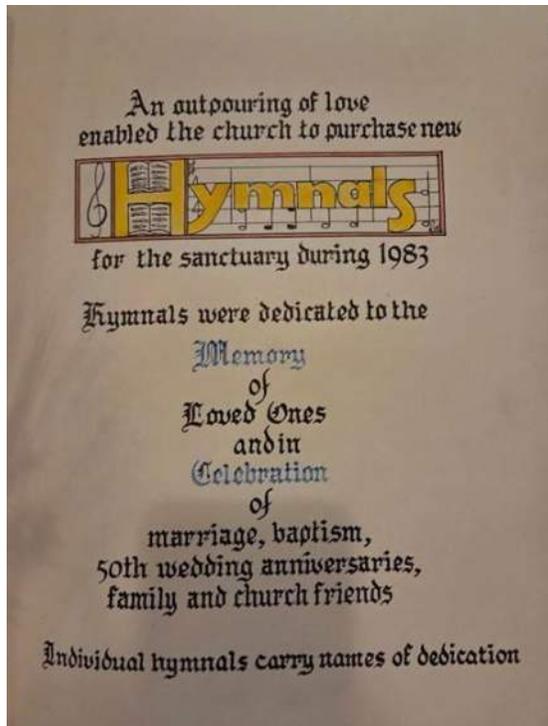


Program for the 125th Anniversary Service — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

1983 > 150 years



Illinois State Historical Society certification as an Illinois Sesquicentennial Church — Source: Vicki Keller



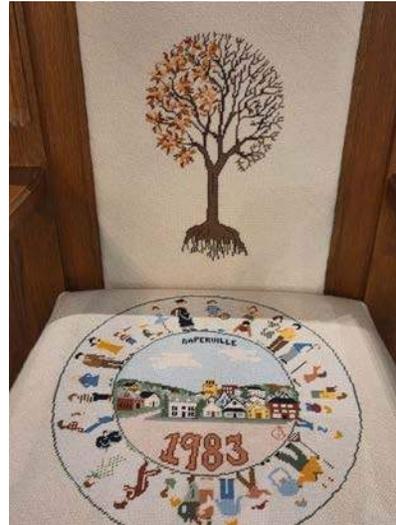
Hymnals were dedicated and a hymn written (words by Mary Kroening; music by Harriet Ziegenhals) for the 150th Anniversary — Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force



In Celebration
of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the
First Congregational Church
needlepoint covers for the sanctuary furniture
were completed and dedicated May 12, 1985

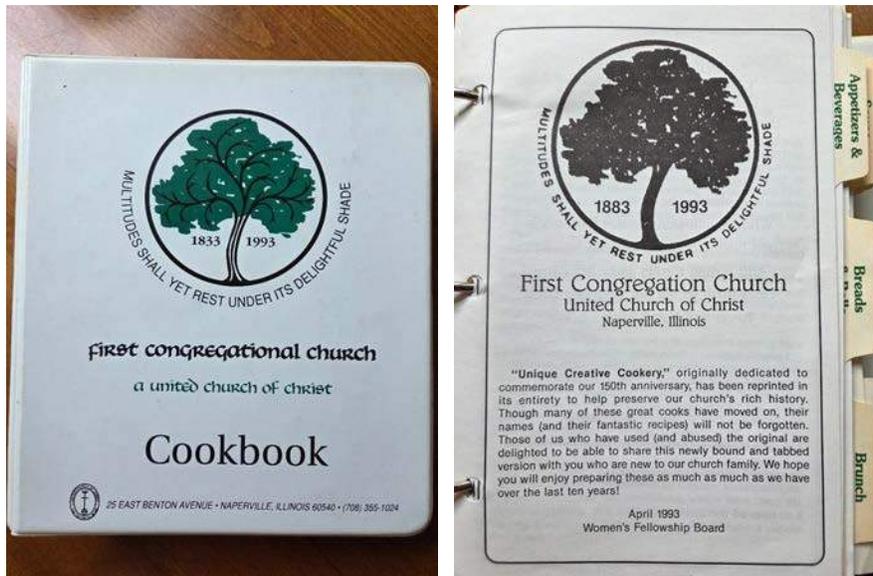
Beverly F George - architect, teacher
Ardys P Goodridge - designer
Stitchers

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Jean A Guenther | Lillian Z Nicholas |
| Karen M Henry | Carol S Patterson |
| Susan G Jacobson | Terry J Pelletier |
| Leslee W Kattke | Norma J Rambow |
| Danice J Wee | Elizabeth A Robson |
| Sylvia A Leesoberg | Mary Lou Rolland |
| Linda W Melzer | Carrol A Smith |
| Mary L Messina | Sally C Smith |
| Mary B Minor | Ella W Snyder |
| Mary G Morris | Nancy C Steinberger |
| Judith B Morris | Barbara Ulvestad |
| Polly B Moss | Carolyn W Wollaston |
| Linda L Wuetrich | |



*Needlepoint covers were created for sanctuary furniture in honor of the 150th Anniversary
— Source: D. W. Diamond*

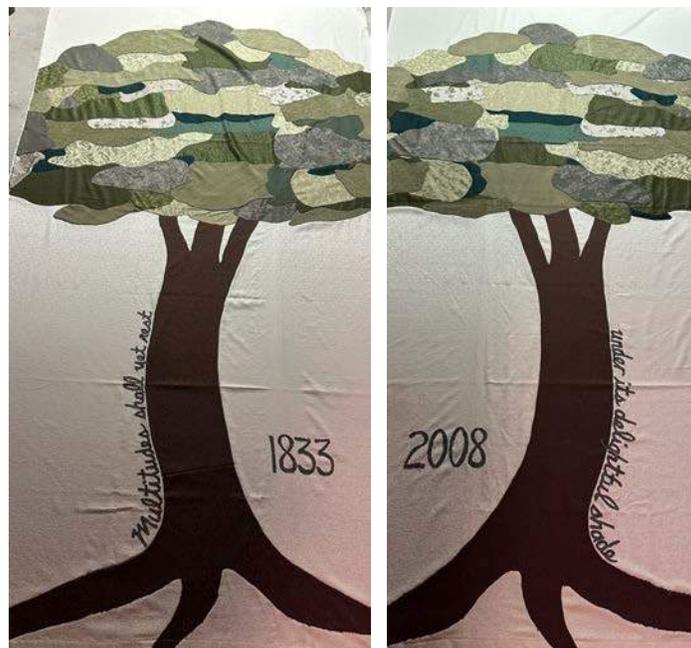
1983 & 1993 – The Women’s Fellowship Board envisioned, designed, edited and created the Unique Creative Cookery Cook Book to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the church. It was reprinted in 1993 to help preserve the church’s rich history.



*150th Anniversary Cookbook that was reprinted in 1993
— Source: D. W. Diamond*

2008 > 175 years

Member Peggy Bradley designed and created two banners, each 15-feet long, for each side of the chancel in celebration of the 175th anniversary.



Banners designed for the 175th Anniversary — Source: D. W. Diamond

Press Release

June 23, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sally Winkelman

First Congregational Church of Naperville Celebrates 175 Years

Naperville, Illinois - In commemoration of its founding in 1833, First Congregational United Church of Christ of Naperville is holding a 175th Anniversary Worship Service and Picnic on July 13, 2008 in DuPage River Park on Royce Road. The event will be celebrated with praise, hymns from across many decades, food and fellowship.

In the early 1830s, Reverend Jeremiah Porter, a Congregational minister from Hadley, MA, was serving as a missionary to the frontier people who settled in Naperville. He led the first worship service for what is now known as First Congregational, under a grove of trees along the banks of the DuPage River on July 13, 1833.

First Congregational UCC sits at the intersection of Benton Avenue and Center Street in downtown Naperville on land that was first donated by Captain Morris Sleight and his wife in 1845. While the original structure is gone, the current sanctuary, housed in a limestone building with an amazing inverted oak Noah's Ark ceiling, was built in 1906.

The theme for celebrating the church's 175th Anniversary is "Awaken to the Promise...Listen, Imagine, Ignite." In living out this theme, the church has placed a strong emphasis on Kairos time, or God's time, in discerning what God is calling them to be and do now. "The national UCC's God is Still Speaking campaign forms the basis of this fulcrum year as our congregation not only celebrates its past, but begins forming a foundation for our next 175 years," says Rev. Greg Schneck-Skiba, pastor at First Congregational UCC of Naperville. "We are listening for God's still-speaking voice, imagining the possibilities of where it can lead, and are ignited by the Holy Spirit within."

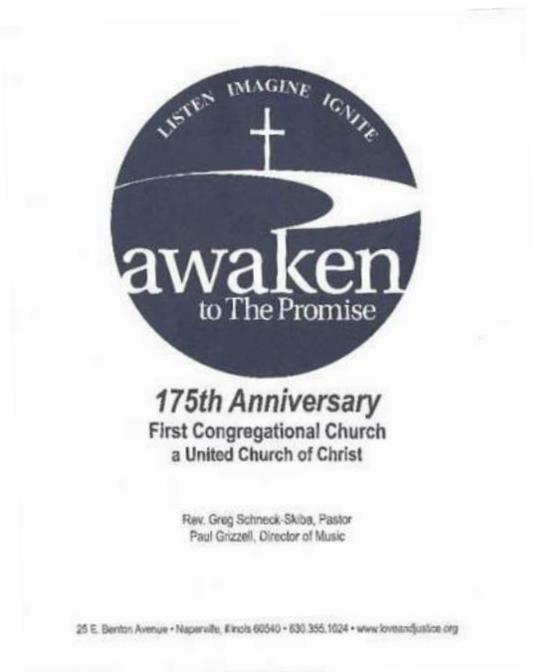
The church's rich history of social justice tracks back to its Puritan beginnings of seeking religious freedom, through the abolitionist movement, underground railroad, and the civil rights movement. In the 1970s, the church sponsored a Vietnamese family by providing housing and support. In 1986, First Congregational UCC of Naperville became a shelter for homeless people through Public Action to Deliver Shelter, Inc., or PADS. They have continued to provide this care to the homeless in DuPage for the past 22 years with support of other churches and organizations.

In a deliberate effort to make a difference in the lives of others who experience injustice and violence in our nation and world, the church adopted a Just Peace Covenant in 1989, whereby congregants took the vow to work together for peace and justice in the church, the community, the nation and the world.

First Congregational UCC of Naperville adopted inclusive language usage in worship in the 1990s in a formal stance to value women in the church. Around the same time, a congregational vote resulted in the church becoming “Open and Affirming,” establishing a covenant that welcomes all people, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, race, religion, ethnic background, socioeconomic status or physical/mental abilities.

First Congregational is one of 5,700 congregations of the United Church of Christ (UCC), a mainline Protestant denomination. The UCC merges four historic traditions: Christian, Congregational, Evangelical and Reformed churches. The church, like all UCC churches, operates through a democratic form of government with the moderator, a layperson, being the highest elected official.

Press Release for 175th Anniversary - Source: Naperville Heritage Society



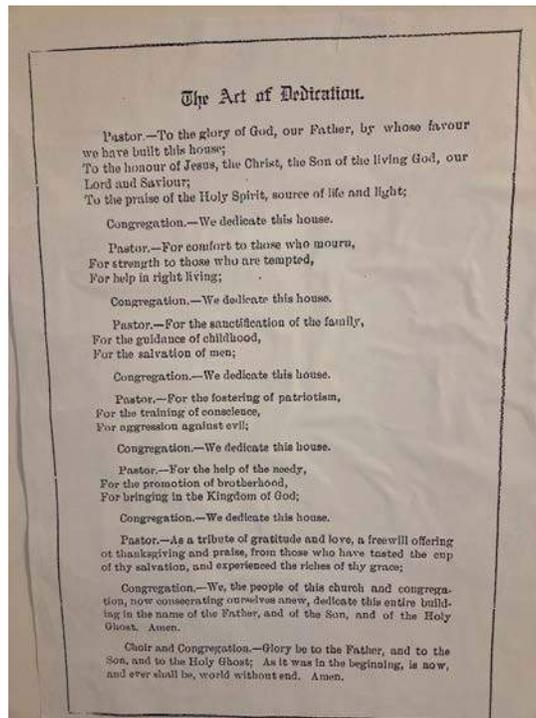
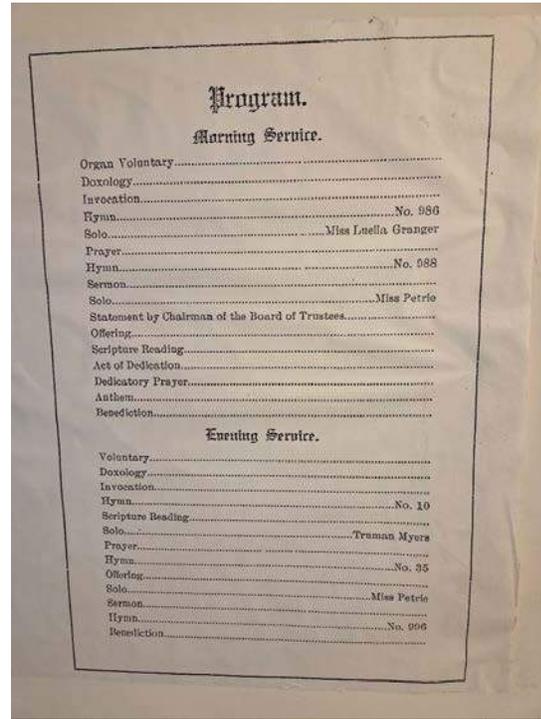
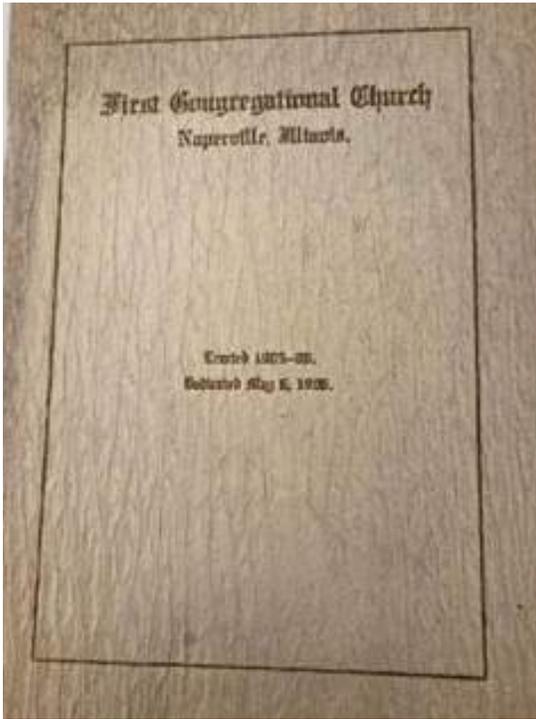
*Affirmation of Faith (see song booklet) "I Believe Jesus Saves" (1868)
 *Prayer of Invocation "Shine Jesus Shine" (1987)
 *The Lord's Prayer
 Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.
 *Passing Christ's Peace
 God's Word Engages Us
 A Time with the Children
 A Reading from the Scripture Isaiah 55:8-13
 Anthem (see song booklet) "Spirit Touch Your Church" (1990)
 A Reading from the Scripture Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
 Hymn (see song booklet) "The Church Has One Foundation" (1866)
 The Message "Awakening to God's Promise: Then, Now and Then"
 We Respond to God's Word
 Time of Prayer
 Leader: Christ is risen, bringing us fresh New Life!
 People: We come seeking his gift with hearts of faith.

175th Anniversary Program — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

2033 ➤ 200 years

In July of 2033, First Congregational will celebrate its 200th anniversary. As this compilation of our history illustrates, multitudes have indeed “yet rested in the delightful shade” of this church.

1906 Building Dedication



1906 Building Dedication Program — Source: Naperville Heritage Society

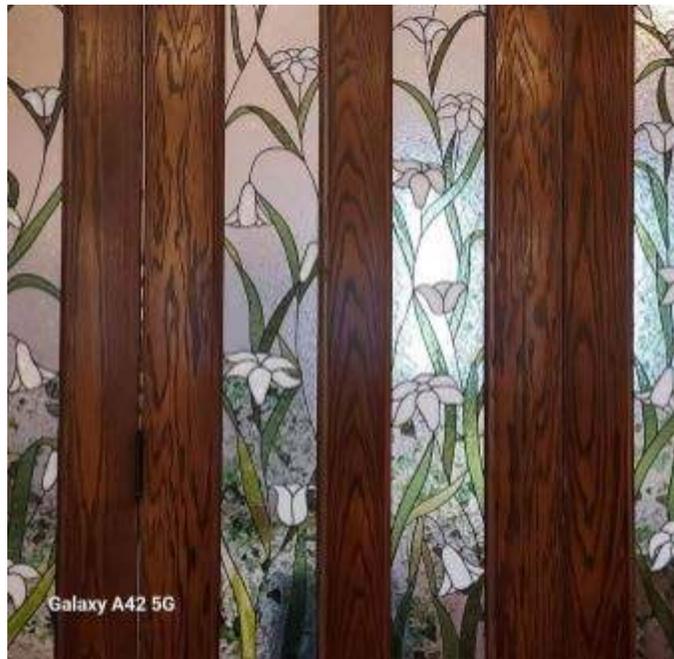
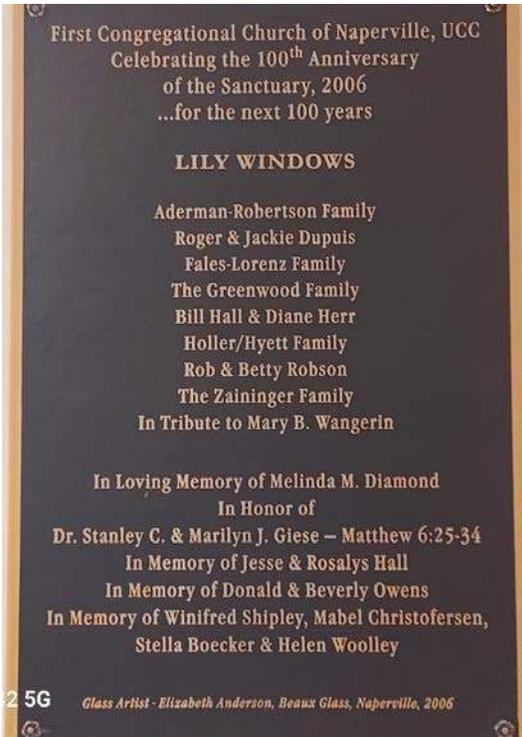
1906 Building Anniversary

2006 ➤ 100 Years

Stained-glass windows celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our sanctuary were installed in the doors between the sanctuary and the narthex. Funds for the windows were raised by donations to honor or memorialize specific individuals. Two bronze plaques on the south wall of the narthex detail those whom these windows honor and memorialize. Stained-glass Centennial Crosses with the 2006 date attached were sold to commemorate and to raise funds for the event.



2006 Centennial Cross — Source: D. W. Diamond



Lily and Tree Plaques and Windows — Source: D. W. Diamond

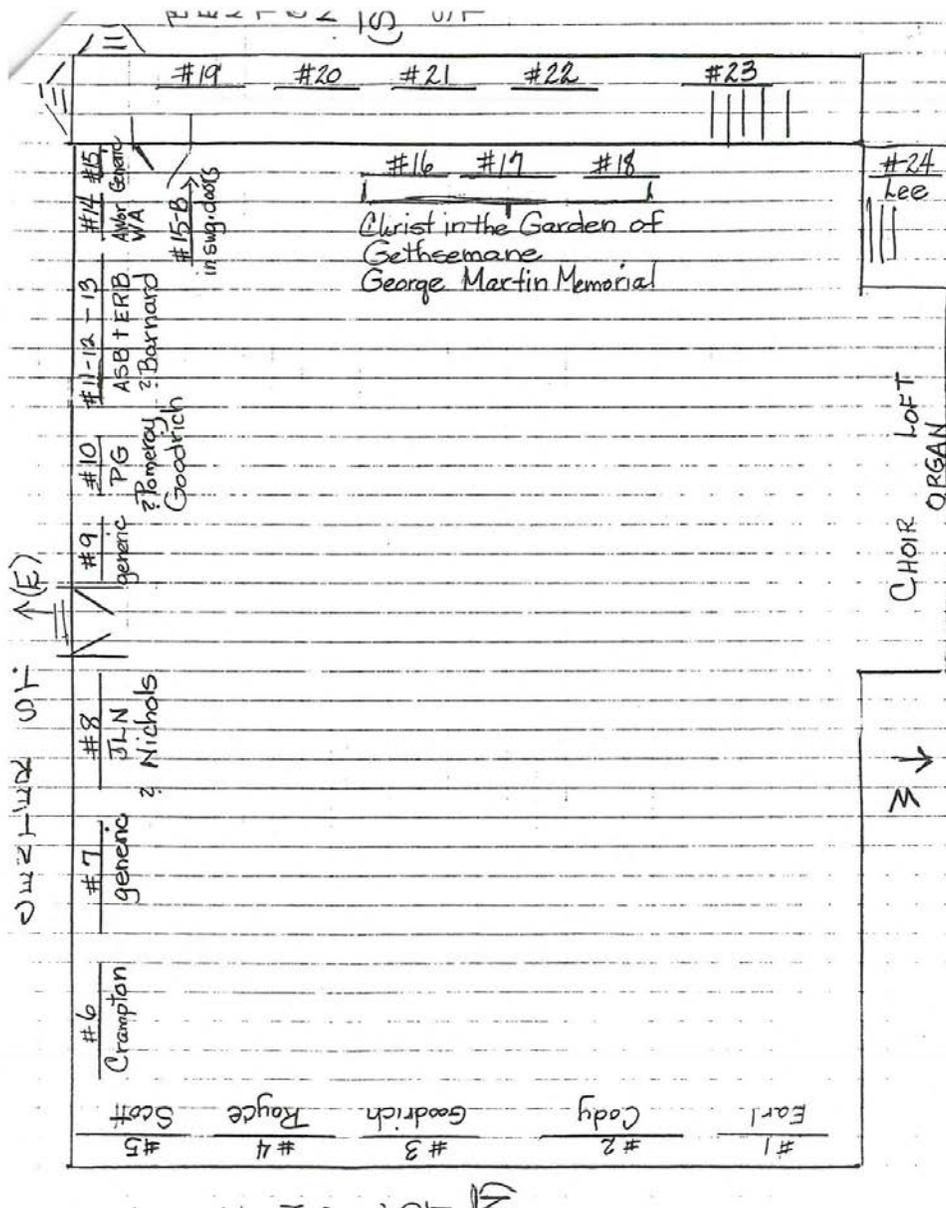
Note that the many acorns that appear beneath the tree represent the many congregations that were seeded by our congregation.

The Glass artist was Elizabeth Anderson, Beaux Glass, Naperville, Illinois.

Appendix 4: History of Windows and Dedications

Window Identification and History

Many of the stained-glass windows [on the walls of the sanctuary, narthex, and library] honor noteworthy Napervillians who belonged to the congregation and shaped the city in its early years. In the sanctuary, four memorial windows were salvaged from the 1846 church building. These are dated before 1900 and may have been constructed between 1846 and 1896. They were reinstalled in new frames, and the other windows were designed to match in dimension and design with the 1906 current structure.



The numbers in this drawing identify the location of each of the stained-glass windows described below.

1. **Earl memorial:** < 1900. We have no information at present on the Earl family, or on what person or event it was to commemorate.
2. **Cody memorial:** Given by the trustees in 1906 for the present building, in honor of Judge Hiram H. Cody, long-time Sunday School superintendent (and probably to honor others of his family as well). Judge Cody was a lawyer and was elected a county judge beginning in August of 1847. He was originally from Bloomingdale township—in fact, he was listed as postmaster there in 1857—but later came to Naperville as a law partner of H. F. Vallette, who was one of the authors of the History of DuPage County, published in 1857.
3. **Goodrich memorial:** This 1906 window was given by Mrs. Henry H. Goodrich, widow of one of the charter members, and four of her descendants— Charles and Irving Goodrich, and the Misses Ida and Jennie Goodrich.
4. **Royce memorial:** 1906. This window was given by Miss Maria Royce, probably to honor her parents, Jonathan Royce IV and Polly Emery Royce, who purchased the farmstead of Israel Blodgett (a founding member), along the East Branch of the DuPage River, in 1835, when Mr. Blodgett and his family moved to the Downers Grove area. The window may also honor some or all of Maria's 11 siblings.
5. **Scott memorial:** < 1900. This window probably honors Willard Scott Sr., but possibly also his parents, Stephen Scott and Hadassah Trask Scott, who were the first white family to settle in this area (1826 in Cross Point (Evanston); 1830 at the juncture of the two branches of the DuPage; 1837 and after in the village of Naperville). Willard Sr. established the firm of Willard, Scott & Co., a department store selling groceries, crockery, millinery, dry goods, etc. Willard Jr. and two brothers ran the store for some years; it was sold in 1905 to Broeker and Spiegler. Willard Jr. was on Naperville's first council and was active in many civic activities.
6. **Crampton memorial:** < 1900. This window probably honors an early farm family: N. Crampton and his family are identified as living in this area before 1838.
- 7.: This window is not identified and probably was one of the new windows in 1906.
8. **Nichols memorial:** 1896? This window almost surely honors James L. Nichols, who came to Naperville about 1876 and became one of the village's most prominent citizens; he was principal of one division of Northwestern College (North Central) and was responsible for many local innovations. Since he died in 1896, and since the window is identified as a memorial, we presume this was installed at about the time of the 1896 remodeling of the original building. It was, in any event, one of the four windows renovated and reinstalled in the present building.
9. & 10.: These windows are very similar to No. 7 and undoubtedly were part of the 1906 construction. No. 10, however, has a painted monogram at the bottom with the initials P. G. We surmise that it may have been intended as a memorial to Pomeroy Goodrich, a founding member, but there is no evidence to support that.

- 11., 12. & 13.:** 1906. This large composite window appears to illustrate the parable from the Sermon on the Mount, "Consider the lilies of the field... " (Matthew 6:28). It was given for the new church by the children of pioneer farmer A. S. Barnard and his wife, and bears their initials at the bottom. We believe that Mr. Barnard was father-in-law to James L. Nichols.
- 14. & 15.:** Like Nos. 9 and 10, these windows were part of the 1906 construction and are not identified in the records we have. No. 14, however, like No. 10, has a mysterious painted monogram, with the initials W. A. (or A. W.). We have not located any individuals for whom these initials appear.
- 16., 17. & 18.:** 1906. The large composite window on the south wall depicting Christ praying in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36) was given by the family of George Martin III, an immigrant from Edinburgh, who was a grain merchant and established a sand, gravel, and limestone business here. This window appears to have been executed by the same craftsmen who did the Barnard windows (11-13). George Martin III was also a partner with the Von Ovens in the brick business. He died in 1841; his son, George IV, took over the businesses and was prominent in Naperville in the mid-19th century, dying, however, in 1889 at a relatively young age. We surmise that it is George III whom the window honors. George IV's daughter Caroline, who married Edward Grant Mitchel I—a relative of Ulysses S. Grant—was the last survivor of the Martin family, outliving three siblings, and left no children of her own. She donated the family's mansion, Pine Craig, and estate to the village to be used as a museum; the Martins also donated the land on which Naperville Cemetery is situated. Pine Craig, of course, is the Martin-Mitchell Museum, and the estate is now Naper Settlement.
- 19. through 23.:** These small narthex windows are located to provide natural lighting; the windows in the C.E. office addition [now the library], which we have not numbered, are nearly identical.
- 24.:** This rose window is identified with its plaque; it was donated in 1989 by the children of Norman and Marie Lee, and, after some debate as to its proper location, was ultimately applied to replace a doorway which had outlived its usefulness.

Dedication of the Restoration of the Windows, October 31, 1999

1996-1999 Window Restoration Project⁵⁷

The original stained-glass window work was done in 1906 by the firm of Schuler and Muhler, long since vanished. The records for the 1906 construction show that the cost of the memorial

⁵⁷ Hostert-Cassidy, Judy, "A living memory" *Naperville Sun*, December 13, 1996.

Wangerin, Mary B., Project Manager, "Sanctuary Window Restoration 1999," Internal report, First Congregational Church of Naperville, IL, October, 1999.

"Windows Reflect Church's History," *Naperville Sun*, October 29, 1999, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/1999/10/29/windows-reflect-churchs-history/>.

Kalin, Deborah, "Church celebrates bright idea," *Daily Herald*, November 3, 1999.

St. Clair, Stacy, "Letting in a little more light," *Naperville Sun*, October 31, 1999.

windows (mainly reframing) was \$700. The other windows, including materials, were all obtained for \$300.

In late 1996, the church recognized that the 18 stained glass windows urgently needed conservation measures. The church contracted with a preservation firm to obtain appropriate restoration and conservation: Bovard Studios from Fairfield, Iowa. At the dedication, the final cost was \$23,000. The congregation contributed to this project with sponsorship and purchases of cards and tree sun catchers of our tree logo, and none of the cost came out of the church budget.



Tree sun catcher ornaments were sold to raise funds – Source: D. W. Diamond



Sets of 12 greeting cards picturing select windows were sold to raise funds – Source: D. W. Diamond

CELEBRATING
TWENTYTHIRD SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

October 31, 1999 10:00 a.m.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW DEDICATION SERVICE

Prelude "Benedictus" – Young Jim Schopp, Organist
Welcome to this Special Service! Rev. Greg Schneck-Skiba

Dramatic Introit
Henry H. Goodrich Chuck Hall
Elizabeth Barnard Kathy Hall
James Nichols Buzz Patterson
George Martin Dave Klaiber
Willard Scott Sr. Tom George

*Call to Worship

Leader: The Lord our God is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path.
People: God comes to us in light and love, to guide us in the way of faith and truth.

Leader: As we have gathered in worship on this special occasion, may our minds and hearts be centered in the beauty of God's light-giving presence.

People: And may our worship be ever in devotion to our God who makes peace, who brings hope to our hearts, and who seeks justice and love for all God's people on earth.

*Hymn "Anniversary Hymn" (vss 1&2—Back of Red Hymnal)

*Prayer of Invocation

O God, be with us today as we celebrate your light, shining through our restored windows, as your love shines through the many persons who have been and are part of this congregation. We lift up those whose vision lives on in these windows and our sanctuary. We

rejoice in gratitude for those who have made possible the restoration of these vessels of light that surround us during worship each Sunday. We look to you for the guardianship of those many generations who have graced this sanctuary in the past, and those who delight in it today. May your providence continue with us, and with those who will receive the legacy of light that we have worked together to preserve. For we pray in Christ, who taught us to say, "Our Father, ..."

*Passing Christ's Peace

A Time with the Children Rev. Greg Schneck-Skiba
Heifer Project Offering

Anthem "Shut De Do" – Stonehill The Gospel Group
Carol Fancher, Director
Vicki Keller, Accompanist

A Time of Prayer

L: The Spirit of God is within you.
C: And also within you.

Joys and Introduction of Special Guests
Concerns, Silent Prayer, Pastoral Prayer, Lord's Prayer
Choral Response

Reading from Scripture Isaiah 60:1-3; Matthew 5:14-16

*Hymn #43 "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" (Red Hymnal)

The Message: "The Legacy of Light" Rev. Greg Schneck-Skiba

A Litany in Light and Voice

The Dedication of our Restored Windows

Leader: To God's glory, and for the service of Jesus Christ, and by the enlivening presence of the Holy Spirit:

People: We rededicate these restored windows.

Pages 1 & 2 of the 1999 Stained-glass Window Rededication Service
— Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force

Leader: In celebration of the spirit of generosity and friendship that first graced our sanctuary with these patterns of color and light:

People: **We rededicate these restored windows.**

Leader: For the on-going spirit among us today, that has enabled the refurbishing of this stained glass art, so that it may enrich and nourish our souls, and continue to influence among us an attentive sense of devotion to God's highest purpose:

People: **We rededicate these restored windows.**

Leader: For the diversity of designs and symbols illuminating our time and space, encouraging our community to reflect and embrace the diversity of people who worship God in truth and grace, both here and around the world:

People: **We rededicate these restored windows. May they continue to inspire future generations in sensing God's true presence, so they too will seek to know the vital teachings of Jesus, and pursue the truth, love, joy, and peace of God's Spirit in their daily lives. So may it be! Amen!**

The Joy of Giving

Invitation
 Offertory Anthem "Psalm 150" – *Lewandowski*
 The Chancel Choir
 Keith Becker, Director
 Jim Schopp, Accompanist

***The Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
 Praise God all creatures here below,
 Praise God above ye heavenly host,
 Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

or

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
 Praise Him all creatures here below,
 Praise Him above ye heavenly host,
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Closing Hymn** "Anniversary Hymn" (vss 3&4)

***Benediction**

***Choral Response**

***Postlude** "Fugue" – *Dandrieu* Jim Schopp

(You are invited to be seated to listen to the Postlude)

.....

***Please stand as you are able.**

Note to Parents of Sunday School Children:
Please go to your child's Sunday School class after the worship service.

Prayer request cards are located in the pew racks. If you wish to have a prayer concern mentioned in the church newsletter, *The Leaflet*, please fill out and place in the offering plate.

Please feel free to use the language most meaningful for your worship experience. Our community of faith recognizes diversity of spiritual expression.

This is an Open and Affirming Church; WE WELCOME ALL!

If you are new to our community of faith, we welcome you today. We encourage you to sign the Friendship Pad. We hope you will attend our Coffee Hour fellowship following the service. If you would like a visit by the pastor or more information about us and our ministry, please indicate this on the Friendship Pad. Welcome!

The Greeters are Julie Phend and Caroline Carter. The Ushers are Brian Bernard, Eileen Oclon, and Mary Kay Hyett. The Missions Board is responsible for Coffee Hour. The Altar Flowers are from the KlaiBERS in celebration of Andrew's 1st Birthday on 10/27, and David & Lesley's Anniversary on 10/28.

Looking Ahead:

| | | |
|--------------|--------|--|
| Sun. Oct. 31 | 9:00a | Book Discussion (Library) |
| | 10:00a | Stained Glass Dedication Service |
| | 11:15a | Christmas Pageant Practice (Sanctuary) |
| | 11:20a | Godsingers Rehearsal |
| | 7:00p | Pathfinders Adult Ed. Class (Clark Rooms) |
| Mon. Nov. 1 | 7:00p | Stewardship Meeting (Library) |
| Tues. Nov. 2 | 7:30p | Women's Fellowship Board Meeting (Library) |

*Pages 3 & 4 of the 1999 Stained-glass Window Rededication Service
 — Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force*

was the last survivor of the Martin family, outliving three siblings, and left no children of her own. She donated the family's mansion, Pine Craig, and estate to the village to be used as a museum; the Martins also donated the land on which Naperville Cemetery is situated, Pine Craig, of course, is the Martin-Mitchell Museum, and the estate is now Naper Settlement.

Narthex and Christian Education Office

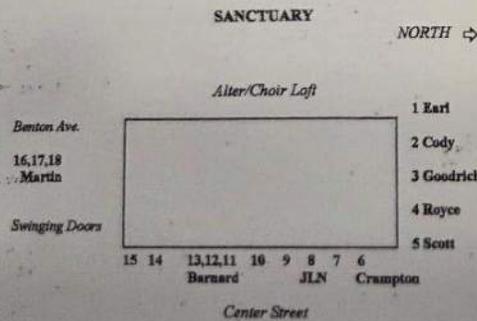
These small narthex windows are located to provide natural lighting; the windows in the C.E. office addition, which we have not numbered, are nearly identical.

Walkway by Pastor's Office

Lee Memorial 1989. This rose window is identified with its own plaque; it was donated in 1989 by the children of Norman and Marie Lee, and, after some debate as to its proper location, was ultimately applied to replace a doorway which had outlived its usefulness.

Pastor's Office Windows

These four windows were gifted to the church by Mary B. Wangerin in 1998 in celebration of the arrival of Rev. Greg Schneck-Skiba. The windows were designed by Elizabeth Anderson of Beaux Glass, Naperville.



HISTORY
of the
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
STAINED GLASS WINDOWS
by Carol Fancher

Building History

The congregation was formed in 1833 (see the bronze plaque inside the main sanctuary door), and started discussing a building about 1838. However, the parishioners were scattered in six separate clusters about a rural territory-- DuPage County became a separate entity by an 1839 act of the legislature -- and the location of a permanent church building became a divisive issue. So much so, in fact, that, when the congregation finally authorized a building in 1844, a dozen members requested dismissal from the church to form their own congregation and build their own building (now First Presbyterian Church of DuPage Township, located south of Boughton Road on Washington, in Bolingbrook).

The frame church building located on the present site was completed in 1846. In 1895-96 it was extensively remodeled, but less than a decade later it was ruled unsafe, and was torn down to be replaced with the present structure, dedicated in 1906. The architect was M. J. Morehouse, of Chicago; the master carpenter was John E. Shifferle; and the mason was A. H. Beidelman.

The window work was done by the firm of Schuler and Mühler, long since vanished; a bonus for their work was the windows in the swinging sanctuary doors, which they furnished without charge.

The present church building has undergone several renovations and remodeling in its 90+ year history. One of these, probably early, added the small room at the northwest corner, which is now the Christian Education office; it contains several small stock windows, essentially identical to those in the narthex along the south side of the building; because the church was then lighted with gas, windows were used to provide as much natural illumination as possible.

Of the windows in the sanctuary area, four memorial windows were salvaged from the earlier church building. These are dated, in the attached tabulation, 1900, although some may have been considerably earlier, i.e., may have been constructed between 1846 and 1896. The windows, which were reinstalled, were placed in new frames, and it is evident that several windows added with the new building were designed to match, in dimensions and design, the earlier windows. The most recent art glasswork is the 1989 Lee memorial window, in what had been an exterior doorway between the sanctuary and the parish hall, and, the four windows installed in 1998 in the pastor's office.

Insert to Program above - Source: Carol Fancher

SANCTUARY WINDOW RESTORATION 1999

PROJECTS

The Renovation Project was begun in 1998 under the supervision of Bradley Swanson. The company who began was United Art Glass from Naperville. They cleaned the windows in the inside and were to do the outside the following spring after the weather got consistently above 50 degrees. They did not return and when queried said they did not have anyone who had the expertise for the job. So we had to find someone else to complete the job. Bradley gave the project to Mary B. Wangerin who called some other art glass companies and finally settled on using Bovard Studios in Fairfield, Iowa.

The representative from Bovard Studios came out and took many pictures and inspected what he could from the ground level, inside and out. In that inspection the most serious problem was in the Lily Window (Barnard Window) where there was a substantial bulge in bottom center section. The Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane Window (Martin Window) was sliding down and much of the bottom frame was disintegrating and the hands and head of Jesus had serious cracks in them. The Young Jesus or Jesus in the Temple Window (Goodrich Window) and the Wheat Window (Earl Window) had been vandalized and poorly repaired. The estimate for the restoration of these four windows was \$14,000 dollars. That price included completely redoing the Young Jesus figure and the background surrounding him, which did make a very different looking window but Jesus now looks like a concerned youth in the Temple. The drape of the altar behind him looks like green velvet! The Wheat Window medallion was also completely redone.

The Lily Window had to have the three large center sections removed and taken to the Bovard shop and the painted glass was cleaned off and repainted so all the panes would match. The bulges were taken out. Our member, Tony Rambow, built a frame box to cover that window from the outside so the weather wouldn't effect it and so that it would not be a temptation for vandals. He also made a new frame for the window as it had rotted out and member, Jeff Kling, painted the frame. That box remained up for about three years. The head and hands of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane were both cracked severely and were both replaced.

The four windows were cleaned inside and out with a special linseed formula. The frames were all painted and caulked, and a ventilated protective covering of one quarter inch Extended Life (XL-1) Lexan was fabricated for each of the four windows. These coverings should stay clear for some years. The Lexan should not be washed with anything but water. The Lexan scratches very easily so should not be touched with a cloth. The inside stained glass portions of the windows can be washed with a solution, of a drop of Dawn dish soap in a spray

bottle, and gently rubbed with a soft cloth. This renovation was completed in the spring of 1999. The remaining ten windows in the sanctuary and the tiny medallion that is on the north outside wall received the same renovation treatments. Many of these windows had several small bulges that needed to be straightened and some had to be resealed. This portion was completed in October of 1999. As of October 31, 1999 the narthex and Christian Education Office windows remain to be done as well as the few windows in the stairway leading to the Old Parsonage and the fireside room. These windows are in much better condition and will be much less costly.

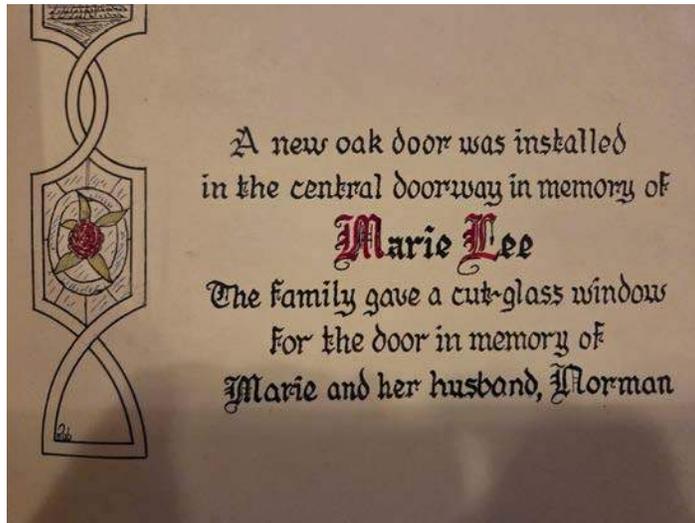
FUNDING

Rev. Steve Davidson started a money-raising project in 1995 when he was our Interim Pastor. SOS '95 was to help pay for projects that needed to be done in the upkeep of the church. Diane Walter started a project of greeting cards. The covers are composed of pictures of some of the different stained glass windows. Diane started another project of sun catchers in the shape of our church logo, *The Tree*. Anyone who became a window sponsor got a sun catcher in the season of his or her choice. There is also a lottery for two special large stained glass pieces. The projects have done well and gathered over \$10,000.00 of donations.

The total cost of the renovation done so far has cost \$23,000.00. Several memorials have been given to the project and several individuals have donated larger sums. The congregation has contributed wonderfully to the project with their sponsorships and purchases. The income sources, as of August, 1999, to the Stained Glass Window Account came from the SOS '95 fund, the sale of cards, sun catchers, garage sales, Memorial funds, Morning Circle, Evening Circle, Women's Gathering and Individual Gifts. Therefore none of this large sum has had to come out of the church budget. God's glory has certainly shone upon us!

Respectfully submitted,
Mary B. Wangerin, Project Manager
October, 1999

Other Stained-Glass Windows Installed After 1906



*The Lee Memorial Window and donation information
— Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force*

In 1989, the Lee Memorial Window was installed in the exterior/now interior doorway between the sanctuary (where there is the ivy planting) and what used to be the parish hall but now leads to the church office and nursery room. It was donated in 1989 by the children of Norman and Marie Lee and was installed to replace a doorway that had outlived its usefulness.

The Glass artist was Elizabeth Anderson, Beaux Glass, Naperville, Illinois.



Stained-glass windows installed in celebration of the 100th Anniversary — Source: D. W. Diamond

1906-2006 Stained-glass windows celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our sanctuary were installed in the doors between the sanctuary and the narthex. Two bronze plaques on the south

wall of the narthex detail those whom these windows honor and memorialize. Note the many acorns beneath our oak tree...representing congregations that were seeded by this grand tree.

The Glass artist was Elizabeth Anderson, Beaux Glass, Naperville, Illinois.



Stained-glass windows in the Pastor's Study — Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force Windows in Pastor's Study, donated by Mary B. Wangerin in honor of Rev. Gregory Schneck-Skiba, 12/1997-9/2011. The Glass artist was Elizabeth Anderson, Beaux Glass, Naperville, Illinois.

Stained Glass Window Commentary

by Carol Fancher

***James R. Fancher, Editor's note:** In late 1996, it was recognized that our stained glass windows urgently needed conservation measures. We contracted with a preservation firm to obtain appropriate restoration and conservation. In order to elicit the support needed from the congregation, a number of publicity measures were initiated, one of which attracted my late wife, Carol (Pickhardt) Fancher. Her contribution was an eight-issue weekly newsletter on that subject, for which she researched a considerable amount of family, church, and community history, and interviewed a number of seniors in our congregation and in the community. The result has been attached here as a series of images of those newsletters. We investigated the original electronic files, but they were typed using a long-obsolete word-processing system (under MS-DOS, for the edification of techies!), and could not be readily converted. We apologize if any of the scans are less than fully readable. JRF*



TIDBITS OF OUR HERITAGE THROUGH WINDOWS OF TIME

Rather than running a class on the history of our congregation and its facilities, the Adult Ed subcommittee of the Christian Ed Board will be running short articles on this subject throughout the year. Information for these will be gleaned from many different places including: our own archives; a History of DuPage County published in 1857; Historic Naperville authored by Genevieve Towsley (a life-long member of our congregation now deceased); Farm Families of Naperville, a publication from the Heritage Society a number of years ago; past (read "ancient") articles from area newspapers, etc. etc. Hopefully, in small and "painless" doses, this will give you some knowledge of the legacy that is being passed on through this congregation.

The congregation was first formed in 1833 under the joint sponsorship of Congregational and Presbyterian denominational leadership. Such cooperation/collaboration was not unusual in the days of the circuit-riding preachers and frontier churches. OUR circuit riding preacher was REV. JEREMIAH PORTER who served us from July 13, 1833 until mid 1835. There is a bronze plaque inside the main door of the sanctuary that lists the names of these pioneer parishioners. (Note: there are different spellings and initials noted for some of these early members in the above references when compared to the plaque. They are almost certainly the same people nonetheless.) The group started discussing a church building about 1838.

The membership was scattered geographically throughout the local area in about six clusters, and covered a goodly amount of rough, rural territory. (Remember, "horsepower" was truly equine at this point in time!) Illinois had become a state in December of 1818, and DuPage County did not exist until 1839 when it was formed as a separate entity by act of the state legislature. At this point, location of a permanent church building became a divisive issue. (Could this be the beginning of a pattern?!) The lack of agreement, lead about a dozen members to request dismissal from the church. They then formed their own congregation and built a building. This second congregation and its building still exists--it is the First Presbyterian Church of DuPage located south of Boughton Road on the east side of Washington St./Naperville Rd..

Our congregation finally settled on our present site which is land donated by Morris Sleight. Mr. Sleight, however, had two provisions to his gift. One was that no part of the land was to be used for a "burying ground", and two was that the church was to have a tower with bells. We have been faithful to those provisions to this day, and the first Congregational Church building on this property (now known as 25 E. Benton St.) was a white frame building completed in 1846. (To help place that in time it was BEFORE the CIVIL WAR.) In 1895-96 it was extensively remodeled, but less than a decade later it was ruled unsafe and replaced with our present structure. Our current stone structure was dedicated in 1906---debt free!! More next time!

THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF THE PAST

Welcome to issue two of TIDBITS OF HISTORY.....once again step back in time to the days just after the establishment of our little settlement on the frontier of what would then have been known as either The Northwest Territory or The Indiana Territory.

If one goes even further back in time to the late 1500's and early 1600's this geographic area was technically owned by Spain. Actually it was in the control of our Native American friends---primarily the Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, and Menominee with influences from the Shawnee Confederation eastward. and the Miami tribes also dominated to the southern part of present day Illinois along the Ohio and Wabash Rivers.

By the late 1600's the Jesuit explorers, Marquette and Joliet had opened up the area from the northern end of Lake Michigan through what we now call mid-Wisconsin, and down the great waters of the Mississippi River as far as the Arkansas River. There they turned back north, and where the Illinois River merges with the Mississippi they headed northeast across present-day Illinois following the suggested shorter return voyage explained to them by Native American acquaintances enroute. From the Illinois River they turned up the DesPlaines River, and then portaged across a very icky smelling marsh/swamp area to the shores of Lake Michigan with a short stretch on "the Chicago River" (before city engineers reversed its direction of flow!). Following the shores of Lake Michigan, of course, returned them to their starting point. This was about 1673.

Father Marquette and Joliet were followed in the next few years by a second group of French explorers led by Robert Sieur de LaSalle, who was interested in this particular piece of geography with an eye toward development of the "European fur-trade". Fur capes, hats, etc. for "the well-dressed gentleman" were a big thing back in London and Paris. LaSalle pushed on beyond the point at which the priest and his companion had turned back north, and discovered that one could follow the Mississippi all the way to the Gulf of Mexico and the known port community of New Orleans. Both explorations opened these areas, especially along the waterways, to the development of French trapping/trading communities, and LaSalle established forts at places such as Kaskaskia, Cahokia, St. Louis, and Crève Couer which is close to present-day Peoria.

One can still see both the Native American and French influences in the names of rivers, towns, streets/roads, etc. This influence grew throughout the early 1700's until the push and pull of the French and British over the fur trade eventually brought the "Seven Years War" from Europe to this continent in the form of the "French and Indian War (It's the same war on two different continents with two different names!). Once the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, ended this war, it was somewhat safer for people to move to outlying farms and small communities along the frontier.

The people of this area were still in the midst of turmoil for the next 75 to 100 years. England assumed ownership of the area through

TIDBITS, CONTINUED.....PG.2

The Treaty of Paris (1763), and actual governance was under the Colony of Virginia until the Revolutionary War separated the area from English control. A treaty with the Native Americans in approximately 1784 created The Northwest Territory from the land that was current Ohio west to the Mississippi River, and north including all land that is now Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana. As brave souls moved their families west of the Appalachian Mountains seeking better lands, more freedom to shape their own lives, etc. various areas became states when they had sufficient population. We have been part of the Indiana Territory, the Illinois Territory, and finally, in December of 1818, THE STATE of Illinois... a part of The United States of America.

It's no wonder that it was the 1820's and 30's before folks moved their families into "the Chicago area", and it was 1830-31 before Capt. Joseph Naper and folks like Bailey Hobson came through the Great Lakes by boat, and then overland by wagons to stake their claims to the farmland they sought. Remember from last week, it was in 1833 that our frontier forbears established this congregation.

By 1838, we were an active congregation, but were meeting in a variety of places including homes, school buildings, several barns were utilized, at one point a large tent, the DuPage County Courthouse (after DuPage became a county and Naperville the county seat!), AND we even shared the BAPTIST meetinghouse using it on alternate Sundays with the Baptist congregation which had become active by this time.

It is interesting to note that the members lived in what they termed about 6 different "neighborhoods" which were 5 to 10 miles apart. When the congregation was very young they would rotate the location of the services on consecutive Sundays so that the same members were not always traveling huge distances. Naper Settlement, itself, was considered the central location. Figuring from our current location, the Goodrich or East Branch neighborhood was about 5 miles southeast, the Lisle/Downers Grove neighborhood was to the east, the Big Woods neighborhood was to the west. There is reference made in the literature to the Strong and Clark settlements being the neighborhood to the south, and the Northern settlement was the neighborhood to the north. Shortly after the Congregational and Presbyterian elements of the congregation separated (about 1835) we joined with the churches of the communities now known as Newark, Bristol and Plainfield which are to the southwest and west, to form the Congregational Union of Fox River. This was the forerunner of the Aurora Association which originated in June of 1835.

As sister congregations grew and frontier settlements gained population, independent churches came to exist at Eola--The Big Woods Church 1836; East DuPage neighborhood formed the Downers Grove Church in March of 1837; and the Lisle Church was organized in 1842.

Next time--our part in the stealing of the county seat!!!

11/4/96

TIDBITS THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF TIME

Step back through the beautiful CODY window for an anecdote in Naperville history that seems quite appropriate for the week of elections.

Any of you who have lived in town for awhile have probably visited our living history museum known as "Naper Settlement". In the basement of "The Meetinghouse" where you enter the settlement at Webster and Porter Sts. is a gallery of original artworks painted by one of our local citizens now deceased, Lester Schrader. At least one of these depicts the story of the night the men from Wheaton stole the records from Dupage County, set fire to the Courthouse, and fled to Wheaton with "the county seat"!!

It was 1838 before DuPage County was carved out of a humongous area known as Cook County. Three other counties were also born from that piece of geography at the same time. Captain Joseph Naper held a seat in the Illinois legislature. In 1839 three commissioners of the newly formed DuPage County met at the PreEmption House, Naperville's oldest inn, and selected the site for the new County Courthouse and Jail that was to be built. The location was in what is now known as Central Park, (behind and east of the YMCA) and the two buildings were built from voluntary subscriptions for a total amount of \$5,000.

The buildings were quickly put to use, and in 1853 they held an important murder trial there, quickly followed by a highly publicized divorce trial tried in Naperville due to a change of venue. People in those days were as interested in other people's problems as they are now. The public was miffed that they didn't get their news (read gossip) more quickly!

The widespread interest and slowly dispersed news of these two trials underlined the need for both transportation and communication improvements in our community. (Some problems don't seem to change.....right?!)

In 1857, and again in 1868, a poll was taken of the population of the county, and in 1868 the results authorized the "County Seat" to be moved to Wheaton. This included the Courthouse, all of the records, and the Jail. The arguments were that the community of Naperville lay all the way at the southern edge of the county on the county line. (too far for those rough buggy trips!), and that the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad had reached Wheaton which would make access even easier. The Burlington Railroad had not yet come to Naperville.

A vote was taken, feelings ran "high", and the court dallied in confirming the count of the vote. Supposedly Wheaton won----but the citizens of Naperville contested the results of the vote.

It so happened that our Judge Hiram Cody and family lived across the street from the Courthouse on Court Street.. (it's still there along the east side of Central Park.) One dark night, as Mrs. Cody and daughters, Frances and Grace, watched from the darkened windows of their livingroom, they saw a group of about 40 men from Wheaton pull wagons up to the windows and doors of the Courthouse and begin to load all of the records from the courthouse. They emptied the records into the wagons and set fire to the building.

Against Mrs. Cody's wishes, the Judge dashed across the street to the Congregational Church. Clad only in his nightclothes he wildly rang the bell in our steeple to alert the town to what was happening.

The townsfolk gathered quickly and gave chase! Shots were fired, one man lost his life, but they had too much of a headstart and the records reached Wheaton safely and have resided there ever since!

Next week we'll step back through a different window and check a different family's involvement!!

TIDBITS THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF HISTORY.....

Welcome to our fourth week of being historical "peeping Toms"! This week I'd like you to step to the northeast corner of the sanctuary for a look through the window dedicated to the Scott family. This is one of the windows which appear to be from the earlier church building, and was incorporated into our current structure when it was rebuilt in 1905-1906. The window recognizes a family which is no longer evident in our community, but to quote our recently departed Genevieve Towsley in her book, HISTORIC NAPERVILLE, "Four generations of Scotts helped to mould and develop our city, and while their names have vanished everywhere but on the tombstones which mark their graves, we today owe this illustrious family much honor and gratitude." (Some of this may have been rectified with the naming of Scott School--Dist.203.)

Stepping through time we go all the way back to the fall of 1830 when Stephen, wife Hadassah, and children arrived in this area. They came originally from Connecticut with some time spent in New York and Maryland where Stephen was the owner and master of a schooner engaged in seacoastal trading. Their thought in coming west through the Great Lakes was to head for the St. Joseph, Michigan area, but in travelling they liked the shores of what was then known as Gross Point (now Evanston), and did live there for about four years before moving on to the DuPage/Naperville area. Their son, Willard, Sr., was at that point a young man in his early twenties, and after meeting the daughter of his host while on a weekend hunting trip to Holderman's Grove (currently Newark, southwest of Plainfield and west of Route 47) he proceeded to court and marry young Caroline Hawley. The newlyweds then joined Stephen and Hadassah as residents of the Naper Settlement. From about 1830 to 1837 the elder Scotts had resided on their claim out along the East Branch of the DuPage River close to "the fork".

These were apparently open and affirming folks (for that day and time!) and were well-acquainted with their Native American neighbors. The story is told that they were such good friends with one of the Pottawattomi chiefs that the chief's son was allowed to live with them. This was in 1832 when most of the settlers were dashing for refuge from Chief Blackhawk and his rampaging braves. The Stephen Scotts stayed on their claim out along the East Branch of the DuPage until their young friend's family came for him, and THEN they joined their neighbors in the safety of Fort Dearborn (read forerunner of Chicago as a settlement).

It was Stephen's son, Willard, Sr. who built the Naperville Hotel as a 3-story frame building on the site of what later became Broeker's Department Store, and those of you most recent to town would know it as the location on Jefferson St. of the "Front Street Cantina".

In 1846 (about the time the first of our church buildings actually materialized) Willard, Sr. sold the hotel and entered the mercantile business. In so doing he built a store on south Washington Street. (This building later became the first offices of the Naperville SUN

at 128 S. Washington. It was demolished in the expansion of First Star Bank a few years ago. The location was just north of the Naperville National Bank.) Willard, Sr. who was joined in this business by his elder son Thadeus, was a sharp businessman and developed a reputation of utmost integrity. Urged on by fellow businessmen and other villagers, in 1854 Willard, Sr. established a private bank in the north end of his store. The store, incidentally, sold not only groceries, but also dry goods, crockery, tailoring services, and millinery (read hats for ladies).

Despite financial panics and business fluctuations of that 1850-60 era, both bank and store prospered, but after the untimely death of Thadeus, Willard, Sr. sold the mercantile business to Willard, Jr. who continued to operate it along with his brother, Alvin. It was Alvin (Sr.) who maintained the family business while Willard, Jr. marched through Georgia with General Sherman and the Union Army and participated in the final Grand Review at Washington D.C. before being discharged.

Willard, Sr. went on to build a brick building north of the store and flourished in the banking business until his death in 1891. In addition, he was the first constable of the community (in 1832), a promoter of the Plank Road which ran from Fort Dearborn out to this area, a staunch Democrat who supported Andrew Jackson (can you believe that---in DuPage County!), and as patriarch of the clan, in 1867 he built the beautiful red brick home on the northwest corner of Franklin and North Washington Streets. Depending on how long you have been a Naperville, you may know this building as the Scott House, the Beidelman House, or the law offices of Fawell, James, etc. Willard, Jr., like his father, was also a community leader. In addition to serving as a Naperville trustee, he was also mayor of the village for four terms, the first fire marshal, and sponsored the purchase of the first fire engine in 1871. (This was also the year of the great Chicago Fire. One wonders if there was a connection in thought!?) Under his leadership the property north of the Burlington tracks and east of Washington St. was subdivided, and his wife, Etta, served as the social leader of Naperville for more than half a century. It was under her leadership that the Naperville Women's Club was established.

In 1905 Willard, Jr. sold the mercantile business to the firm of Broecker and Spiegler, and many of you can remember the operation of Broecker's Department store under Bill Broecker until almost 1980. You also may know Dave and Genevieve Spiegler who are descendants of this enterprise, and long time residents here in town.

The last of the Scott line expired in 1949 when Mrs. Alvin Scott, Jr. passed away. At the time of her death she was a resident of the Congregational retirement home in LaGrange known as Plymouth Place. With that passing we "close the window" on four generations of community leadership and development supplied to us by another of our early Congregational families.

More next week - Carol Faucher

Let's peer through one of the UNdedicated windows on our east wall this week. As we look back through time we find another of our early Congregational farm families located along both sides of what we now call Olesen Drive.

Peter Olesen came to the United States from Haastrup, Denmark in 1899 at the age of 19. After working for farmers in the Elburn area as a hired hand, he met and married Doris Heusinger Peterson, a 23 year old widow with two small sons. Together, the young couple rented a farm and built an accredited Holstein herd and a profitable dairy operation. This first enterprise was in the Hinckley area.

In 1916 they moved their dairy herd and expanding young family to the site on "Olesen's Lane" which had 70 acres west of the lane and 120 acres along the east side where the limestone farmhouse was located. (Take a ride down Olesen Drive today--it runs along the east side of the Eagle Plaza from Chicago Avenue to Hobson Road--you can still see the white, limestone farmhouse although I believe it's been "added to" recently.)

It was at this point that good Danish Lutherans became Congregationalists as was explained to me by a friend of the Olesen family who Peter called "little yanie [Janie]"--(read with a Scandanavian accent!).

The Olesens continued their dairying for the next 25 years; raising, bottling and selling milk to Naperville families. Can you believe milking 20-25 head of cattle and HAND-bottling 200 quarts and 60 pints daily??!! That's what they did! (How did they ever make it to town in time for church services?!) After the family was grown they DID switch the dairy business to "feeder cattle" which were less work and more profit.

In 1959 (when they were both 79 years old) they sold the farm and moved into town. Their children are: GLADYS (Mrs.Glen Sprague) Plainfield; HAZEL (Mrs.Alfred Faser) Lockport; FLOYD, ROY, and OLIVE (Mrs.Arnell Peltzer) Aurora; and in Naperville ERNEST who died several years ago, and ALICE who is a resident at Community Convalescent. I'm not sure any of the others still survive, but Alice is the youngest, and we regularly add her to our prayers during weekly services and also via THE LEAFLET, as we did Ernie during recent years.

Little "Yanie Yorgensen" is our own Jane Jorgensen Ripsky Malon whose UNCLE, Peter Hoy, came from Denmark at about the same time, and was a life-long friend of Peter Olesen.

Jane has fond memories of her childhood, and she shared a few of these as she recalled her early years which were spent on a farm that still stands (who knows for how long!) on the northeast corner of Route 59 and North Aurora Road. She remembers family discussions centering on the fact that, like the Olesens, the Jorgensens were

originally of the Lutheran background. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (now St. John's UCC) would have been a logical choice of congregation for them; however, St. John's held all of their services and Sunday school classes at that time in the German language. Papa Jorgensen had some strong feelings about the fact that we were in AMERICA now, and his children were going to use ENGLISH!! As a result, Jane and her sisters would ride into town with their neighbors, the Simpsons, to attend Sunday School at the Congregational Church. Since the Simpsons stayed several more hours to attend church services, the Jorgensen girls would walk home by following the Burlington railroad tracks "because this gave them a bridge across the river"! They were, of course, cautious to avoid any trains coming through the area. They did this for quite a few years, since Jane says she was 13 when they moved into town from the farm.

She also mentions going to school in a one-room schoolhouse that was located where the Speedway gas station stands on the northwest corner of Route 59 and North Aurora Road. This button-bright little pre-schooler was always tagging after her older sisters, asking questions, trying to do new things, etc. Since school was just across the road from home, the teacher (another neighbor) suggested to Mama Jorgensen that Janie might just as well come to classes even though she was only four. As a result she got a jump-start on her school days!

Jane is one of many of our long-time members who can supply us with views of the past. As we come to other undedicated windows we'll look for other such glimpses from the past.

Next week---a look through the Goodrich window with the help of Jack Goodrich who grew up in this congregation and community, but has lived and worked for most of his adult life in the DeKalb area. Until then.....Carol Fancher

THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF THE PAST.....

(#6)

Strains of "The Plow That Broke the Plains" by Virgil Thompson drift from the radio as I start this week's glimpse of Naper Settlement as a frontier community---an appropriate accompaniment. This early community was settled primarily by sturdy New England families, descendants of Puritans, who held rigorous beliefs. Prospective church members had to undergo an oral questioning and examination by qualified clergy or church elders. Questions were included on both religious knowledge and personal habits. (I wonder how many of US would have passed!?!)

On our plaque of charter members one finds the Goodrich name seven times! THEY must have passed the examination of the Rev. Jeremiah Porter. Pomeroy Goodrich was also elected as one of the three Elders chosen that day. (Note that the founding followed the Presbyterian form of government. Within a year or two it was changed by request of the group to the Congregational form of government, and he was known as Deacon.) Those seven Goodriches included: Henry H.; Thankful D.*; Eliza S.; Samuel; Lydia; Pomeroy; and Lucy M.. (* Our data shows the initial S, but the Goodrich Family Genealogy shows D.)

You will find two memorial windows to the Goodriches of our founding families. The first is centered on the north wall, and was given in honor of Henry H. by his widow and children. It is one of the windows incorporated into our current structure from the older building(s). There is a smaller window on the east wall marked with the initials P.G. which may well be in honor of Pomeroy.

Relatives, Samuel and Henry Goodrich, Isaac Clark, and Lester Peet (all among our charter members) came to the Illinois frontier from Benson, Vermont during 1831. Their express purpose was to search out land before moving their families westward.

They arrived about a year after Israel Blodgett, a blacksmith/farmer (and founder) who had come from the Amherst, Massachusetts area. Blodgett had come following a long, arduous journey following the National Road across Ohio and Indiana to Vandalia, Illinois. He then turned northward and following rivers and creeks explored the land closer to what is now Naperville. (One can follow large portions of this first federal road through that same territory as U.S. Highway 40, today!)

Israel had already cleared land and built a cabin on the East Branch of the DuPage River near the fork, and it was his hospitality that the gentlemen from Vermont enjoyed. While with their host family they explored the area, staked claims for their own land and even began clearing as they jointly made plans to bring their families west.

From the accounts given in several sources it appears that Henry H. (age 44); Thankful D. (age ?); daughter Eliza S. (age 17); and young son, Charles H. (age 9) arrived in this area by boat after having come through the Erie Canal (completed in 1825) and then on a steamer through Lake Erie and Lake Michigan to Ft. Dearborn. (Chicago did not yet exist!) From there, the trip to their claim would have been by wagon, horseback, and pied a terre (on foot).

Henry's bother, Pomeroy (age 36) and his young wife, Lucy Parmelee Goodrich, along with Samuel and his wife, Lydia, appear to have parted company with Henry and Thankful at a port in northern Ohio on Lake Erie where it is said that they "laid over for a season

with Henry and Pomeroy's older brother, Charles". They had heard tales of "Indian uprisings" in the Illinois area and were probably being cautious. This group continued to the DuPage area by ox-team following an overland route across Indiana. They arrived in the Fall of 1832.

It was not clear in the sources I used how Samuel was related to Henry H. and Pomeroy, but he WAS from Benson, Vermont, and undoubtedly a part of the same clan---perhaps an uncle or cousin. "Deacon" Pomeroy Goodrich lost his good wife, Lucy, in 1864, and after several years of being a widower he married a second time to a young widow, Mrs. Sophia Barnard Thompson who was the sister of A.S. Barnard. (Thus was forged another of the interlinks in the history of our church families!).

Although we do not currently have Goodrich family members in our congregation, they are as close as the Jack and Marcia Fry Goodrich family in DeKalb, IL, and although one of their sons, Jeff, lives in Sycamore, he works here in Naperville.

For a quick run from founders to the present generation: Henry H. [Jack's Great-great grandfather] and Thankful D. were the parents of Charles H. Goodrich [Great grandfather]. Charles H. (#1) and Phoebe Jane (nee Turner) had four children including Irving [Grandfather]. Irving married Elizabeth McDowell (yes, the family whose land is now McDowell Woods Forest Preserve off River/Diehl Rds.). Irving and Elizabeth were the parents of Charles H. (#2) [Jack's father]. This Charles H. (#2) married Rose Gunther Goodrich and they had two small sons--John (known to this day as Jack) and another Charles H. (#3) always known by Howard. Their mom, Rose, died in 1944 or 1945, and "Charlie" as dad was called, remarried to another young lady from the Congregational Church---Beatrice Christopherson. [Some of you may know this ties to another interesting, active and influential family of our church past!] Charlie passed away in 1958, and Beatrice, too, remarried. Her second husband was Robert McLaskey who had three small sons of his own. Beatrice Christopherson Goodrich McLaskey lives today in Mt. Vernon, Washington, and the current generation is spread from Seattle to New York and from the Great Lakes to the Equator. It is Jack we thank for much of the information that brings the Goodrich family up to date for us.

You might be interested to note as we approach Thanksgiving Day 1996 that at a church meeting back in 1842, the Goodrich group and our other founding members determined "to set aside a day of thanksgiving". That remembrance was held December 8, 1842, and is "believed to have been the first public Day of Thanksgiving in the county"!! Plymouth Colony celebrated Dec. 13, 1621. George Washington proclaimed the first federal Thanksgiving Nov. 26, 1789, but no designated date annually. Abe Lincoln did that in 1863 making it the last Thursday of November. In 1941 Congress made it a legal national holiday and set the date as the FOURTH THURSDAY of November.

Many of you have expressed appreciation of TIDBITS which I'm glad you are enjoying. TIDBITS will be taking an "Advent break", but will be resumed with new material some time after the first of 1997.

Thankfully, your TIDBITS editor, Carol Fancher

TIDBITS OF HISTORY
THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF THE PAST.....

As we sang, listened to, and absorbed the haunting strains of Theodore DuBois' The Seven Last Words of Christ last Sunday, my eyes were drawn to the beautiful three-panel window overlooking the south side of our sanctuary. Its elegant depiction of Christ praying in the garden at Gethsemane seemed a multi-media extension of the passion story being animated through our musical senses.

This window portrays Christ as he struggles to understand the will of God. There are some times when it appears to glow above us, while at other times it takes on a brooding character. The window was installed when the main portion of our current building was built, and is noted in the dedication records of 1906 as having been the gift of the George Martin family.

Who were these people? This is not a name one finds in our current directory of members. If you number your years in Naperville at less than sixty, [and many of us do!!] the name of "Martin" may only be familiar to you through your contacts with local history, (If you're beyond public school years that could be "zip"!!) but this was a family who for three generations played a major role not only in the growth and development of our church, but also in the commercial and social development of Naperville as a community.

The first generation included George Martin, his wife Elizabeth, and son George (II) who was six years old when they came to the DuPage valley in 1832. Their names do not appear among the founding members, but they do show in the register shortly thereafter. Their point of origin was Edinburgh, Scotland where Mr. Martin was an influential businessman who owned and operated commercial shipping vessels and also acted as a grain merchant. Nowadays he would probably have qualified as a commodities broker on Chicago's Board of Trade or perhaps the Mercantile Exchange.

A frontier cabin didn't fit with the many lovely things they had brought with them as reminders of home and family left in Scotland, and thus George (I) built a unique homestead of native oak and walnut. The woodwork and flooring were turned out at the sawmill of Joseph Naper, and the foundation stones were among the first pieces quarried from the area that is now our community swimming pool at Centennial Beach and Park. This home was a landmark in the area for over 100 years. It was destroyed by a fire in 1958. The home was located on the north side of Aurora Avenue approximately across the road from Naperville Central High School (known in 1958 as Naperville Community High School), and often referred to as the Century House.

George (I) made his living from the sand and gravel quarries which still stand in that area, and from his lime kilns. Like many of the early settlers he shared his success with the community. The

land we know as the Naperville Cemetery, which runs along Washington Street from Hillside south to Martin Avenue, and west along Hillside to West Street, was all donated to the village of Naperville in 1836 by George Martin (I). But some of that is Park District ball fields and/or School District #203 land, you may say! Well, yes, it's leased and used by these groups because George (I) intended it to be used for the good of the community, but actual ownership is still retained by the Naperville Cemetery Association and its Board of Directors.

In 1841, George (I) died an untimely death, and young George(II) who was only 15 years old took over and carried on his father's business dealings. In 1857, as Civil War approached, George (II), now age 31, was elected a member of the first village council of Naperville, and in the same year he organized the Producer's Bank. The bank suffered heavy losses after the Civil War, but the depositors did not suffer grave losses as many did in other parts of the United States because they were repaid their deposits in full by George's sale of some of the Martin family property.

In 1871, George (II) started a new commercial enterprise which was undoubtedly piggy-backed upon some of the other family business and property holdings. With his neighbor and partner, Mr. VonOven, they started a brick and tile manufacturing venture. [Some of you may have enjoyed the use of lands left to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Park District by Mr.VonOven. These are located along the west side of West Street running south from Oswego Road and across from the Little League fields.]

This turned out to be a very propitious time to be in the brick and stone business when you realize that the Great Chicago Fire which wiped out all of downtown Chicago and most of the surrounding residential area took place in 1871. It was in the rebuilding of the city of Chicago that new building codes and ordinances were passed requiring many of the buildings to be reconstructed using brick or stone materials rather than the wood materials that had helped create the disastrous conflagration of October 8-9, 1871. The geographic location of the Martin/VonOven brick making and stone quarrying undoubtedly did much to add to the commercial status and financial well-being of both of these families.

Somewhere in those early adult years George (II) met and married a young woman from his native Scotland. Her name was Sibelia Riddler. As the years progressed they became the parents of one son, George (III), and three daughters: Elizabeth, Katherine, and Caroline.

Next week we'll continue the tale of this second and third generation of the Martin family, and how they have influenced our lives in Naperville even to this day. -----Carol Fancher



Article #8
March 24, 1997

TIDBITS OF HISTORY
THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF THE PAST.....

If you missed last week's newsletter, you really need to go scout it up, because this is a continued story.

As might be considered appropriate, the window of concern this week continues to be Christ in the Garden at Gethsemane which is one of several focal points as the passion story unfolds across the days of Holy Week. It was noted in last week's tidbits that this three-panel window was a gift to the church for our (then new) sanctuary dedicated in 1906. This was a gift from the widow and children of the George Martin family in memory of both grandfather and father. Let us continue our glimpse of what these folks did, and what they considered important.

When we stopped our story last week, George Martin (II) had married a young woman named Sibelia Riddler and they had four children. Together, George and Sibelia planned and built the stately red brick Victorian mansion known as Pine Craig. This still stands today on the grounds of the Naper Settlement about where South Eagle Street intersects Aurora Avenue (across from City Hall). The structure was completed and occupied in 1833.

Unfortunately, George and Sibelia had only six years to enjoy Pine Craig as a family. George (II) died in 1889 at the age of 63. It seems most likely that his death was the impetus for Sibelia and their children to provide this lovely window as a memorial.

Of the four children we know the most about the youngest, who was Caroline. Older brother, George (III) became a Cook County lawyer whose area of expertise was real estate and probate. It was probably Caroline who carried on the family business in connection with Mr. VonOven, since she had worked with her father in the business office which was also located in PineCraig. There is a two-person desk in that office which you can see if you tour the museum, and according to the docent I spoke with a number of years ago, Caroline and her father were the user-occupants of that office and its furnishings.

By 1896 Caroline had married Edward Grant Mitchell. He was another descendant of Scotland and traced his ancestry to the same Scottish clan as that of Ulysses S. Grant. (Yes, the same one that was THE General Grant of the Civil War and then President of the United States!) The Grants were also an Illinois family with their primary residence in Galena. Edward, however, had a business career rather than a military/political one. When they were first married he owned a number of greenhouses in Hinsdale, but after a few years he changed to mercantile enterprises. For a time he was associated with Marshall Field & Company, and following that with Carson Pirie Sott & Company. Edward's later years were spent as a farmer on his wife's estate. His death after a long illness occurred in 1929, and appears to have "capped" a period in which a number of family members passed away in rather close succession. The records show that Caroline's brother, George (III) died in 1925, and that he was preceded in death by their two sisters, Elizabeth and Katherine.

Caroline and Edward had no children, nor did her siblings since.

Article #8 (cont.)

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I don't believe any of them married, and so she lived out the last seven years of her life alone, rattling around PineCraig. In 1933 she observed the anniversary of her grandparents emmigration to this country with a monumental program and open house for the community and countryside. This may have planted the seed(s) for some of her later inspiration to leave her home and property to the community as a museum.

Caroline Martin Mitchell died in October of 1936 thus ending three generations of astute business leadership and many years of civic concern and responsibility. In 1937, the city council passed a resolution that "the lands so closely connected with the beginning and development of this community should be perpetually devoted to public use as a monument to the character, staunchness, spirit, enterprise, and generosity of George Martin(I), the pioneer and his family, as expressed by Mrs. Mitchell in her last will and testament...and bequeathed her entire estate in trust to carry out such purpose."

And so it is that we no longer have a George Martin family in our membership directory, but we DO HAVE a gorgeous and very meaningful window in our sanctuary. We also have a community facility in the form of our heritage village, Naper Settlement, that is one of the finest examples of a living history museum in the Midwest. PineCraig, of course, is an historical landmark, and anchors the Settlement with its Victorian splendor, original furnishings, draperies, wall coverings, etc.. If you have not visited within the past year (or some of you may never have been there!) the entrance fee is nominal, even less if you become a member of the Heritage Society, and the life of this community as viewed from the past will take on new meaning. One of my nieces, now grown up, visited as an 8 or 9 year old and was captivated by the fact that what she was seeing was much of what she had been reading about in some of the first "novels" she tried such as Little House in the Big Woods which is one of the early Laura Ingalls Wilder stories.

Even those who say, "Aw, history and social studies aren't/weren't my thing!" will find something to fascinate them, particularly if you go during one of the Revolutionary or Civil War Reenactment weekends, or on Joe Naper Days, or the weekend of the French Voyageurs (No! the're NOT 'peeping Toms'!). While you're there be sure to see the art gallery that depicts highlights of Naperville history, the log cabin house and its accouterments, a replica of Fort Payne (the original protected settler families during the Blackhawk Indian War and actually stood on the hill above the present location of the North Central College Merner Fieldhouse along Chicago Avenue). Be sure to save time to tour, enjoy and appreciate PineCraig and the "prairie gothic" styling and stenciling of The Chapel which was the original St. John's Episcopal Church. It stood at the top of the Jefferson Street hill on the Ellsworth Street corner. It has an interesting and unique history. (Did you ever see an Episcopal Church with a baptismal tank? This has one!)

Obviously, I could go on and on about these things I consider some of Naperville's "hidden treasure". The bottom line is that for not only our beautiful window, but for many things we owe a prayer of thanks to the George Martin Family. May their memory be blessed.

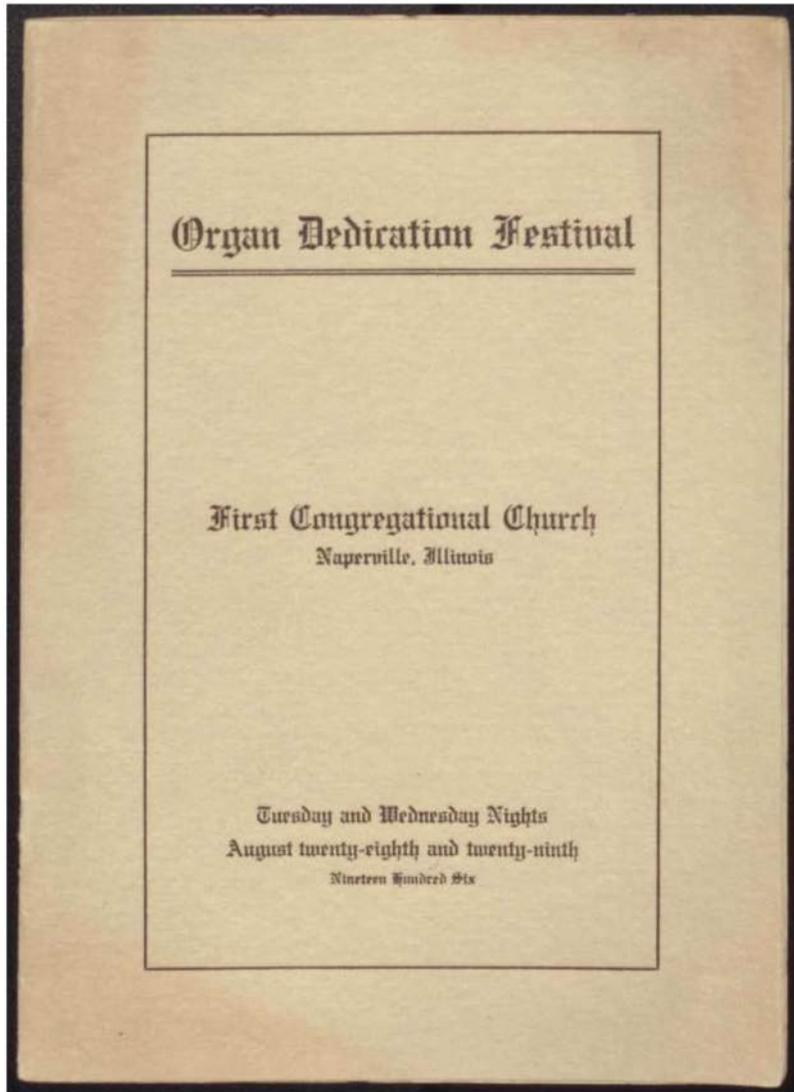
--- Carol Faucher

Appendix 5: History of Organ and Dedications

The 1906 Original Austin Opus 163 organ, Hartford, CT, is the oldest of its kind surviving to date, with the original 1,014 pipes.



Views of the 1906 organ — Source: D. W. Diamond



*Program from dedication of the organ and concert on August 28 & 29, 1906
— Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force*

\$3,000 was donated for the installation of the organ in the 1906 building in memory of Frances E. Phillips and pipes were added in 1980 by the Century Organ Company in memory of LeEtta Zaininger.



| AUSTIN ORGAN COMPANY 1906 | | CENTURY ORGAN COMPANY 1980 | |
|---|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Great Organ (Exposed) | Pipes | Swell Organ (Enclosed) | Pipes |
| Open Diapason, 8' | 61 | Open Diapason, 8' | 73 |
| Flute, 8' | 61 | Stopped Diapason, 8' | 73 |
| Dulciana, 8' | 61 | Salicional, 8' | 73 |
| Octave, 4' | 61 | * Voix Celeste, 8' | 73 |
| * Fifteenth, 2' | 61 | Oboe, 8' | 73 |
| * Mixture III | 183 | Flute, 4' | 73 |
| * Great to Great 16' | | Tremolo | |
| * Great Unison Off, | | Swell to Swell, 16' | |
| * Great to Great 4' | | Swell Unison Off | |
| Swell to Great, 16' | | Swell to Swell 4' | |
| Swell to Great 8' | | | |
| Swell to Great 4' | | | |
| <u>Pedal Organ</u> | | <u>Electronic Combination System</u> | |
| Bourdon, 16' | 32 | *4 General Presets | |
| Lieblich Gedeckt, 16' | 32 | *4 Swell Presets | |
| * Gedeckt, 8' | 12 | *4 Great Presets | |
| * Flute, 4' | 12 | *2 Pedal Presets | |
| Great to Pedal, 8' | | * Crescendo | |
| * Great to Pedal, 4' | | * Sforzando | |
| Swell to Pedal, 8' | | *Great to Pedal | |
| Swell to Pedal, 4' | | Reversible | |
| * LE ET TA ZAININGER MEMORIAL | | | |
| ----- | | | |
| Le Etta Zaininger was an active and devoted member of this congregation for many years. Her interest in music was great and she served as Chairman of the Music Committee with enthusiasm and creativity. | | | |

*Plaques and information about the 1980 expansion of the 1906 organ —
Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force*

The organ was restored in 1991 thanks to the generosity of the Zaininger family. The organ was re-pitched, all leathers replaced and primary actions retooled and installed. The rededication service included an organ recital and formal tea. A plaque was placed by the organ in memory of Lucille Zaininger.

The Owens family made a contribution to the church in memory of their mother, Beverly J. Owens, a member of the church who served as organist from 1961 to 1990. A plaque in her memory was placed by the organ.



*Plaques in memory of Lucille N. Zaininger and Organist, Beverly J. Owens —
Source: the First Congregational Church Landmarking Task Force*



View of the 1906 organ — Source: D. L. Lorenz

Appendix 6: Timeline

This timeline was developed using the histories provided in Appendix 2: Histories of the Church.

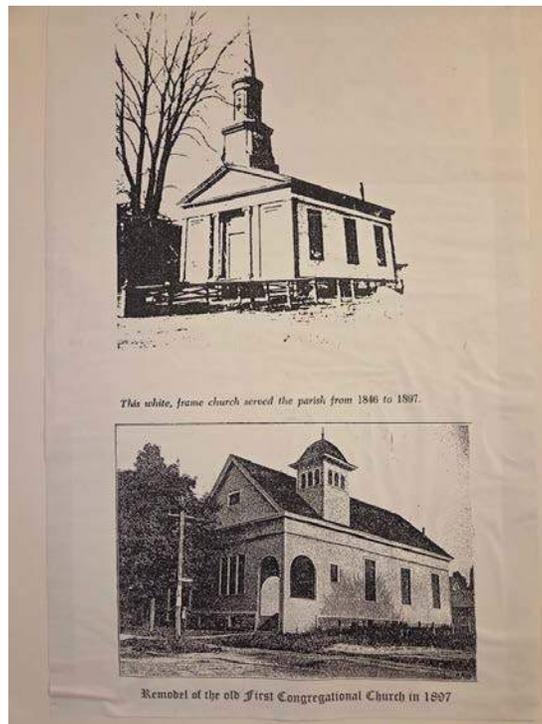


"First Presbyterian Church of DuPage was founded on July 14, 1833, in Old Hickory school." Marker located at Royce Homestead Park, along Royce Road E. of Naper Blvd. — Source: J. R. Fancher

- **1831** Founding of Naperville by New Englanders and Joseph Naper
- **1833** Founding of the Presbyterian Church, the first church founded in DuPage County
- **1834** changed to a Congregational governance structure, the oldest Congregational Church founded in Illinois
- **1839 - 1868** Naperville as DuPage County seat; courthouse constructed on what is now Central Park
- **1868** Dupage County seat moved to Wheaton by winning a poll, as in the center of the county and had a railroad
- **1868** "rape of the records" (aka Ring the Bell) when a group of 40 Wheaton residents drove a wagon to Naperville in the middle of the night, backed up to a window left open and loaded up all of the books and records, got back to Wheaton before Napervillians could respond even though Judge Hiram Cody heard the commotion as he lived across the street and ran over to the First Congregational Church to ring the bell and alert the town.
- **1845** Land donated by Morris Sleight for the building of a frame church for First Congregational Church, with the stipulation that there would be a bell tower and no cemetery
- **1846** A frame church was built
- **1896** A frame church was renovated
- **1905** The frame church was torn down in July; the Cornerstone was laid for the limestone church, and construction began
- **1906** Church construction completed, dedicated, and occupied by the congregation

- **1930** Parish house built and dedicated
- **1957** Merger of the Congregational, Christian, and Evangelical and Reformed denominations into the United Church of Christ
- **1966** First Congregational Church of Naperville joined the United Church of Christ
- **1977 - 1979** Built on the community room and kitchen with Sunday school rooms on the lower level, and converted the North Room into additional sanctuary seating
- **2033** Celebrates 200th anniversary

History of all of the Church Buildings - Constructed from 1846 to 1979

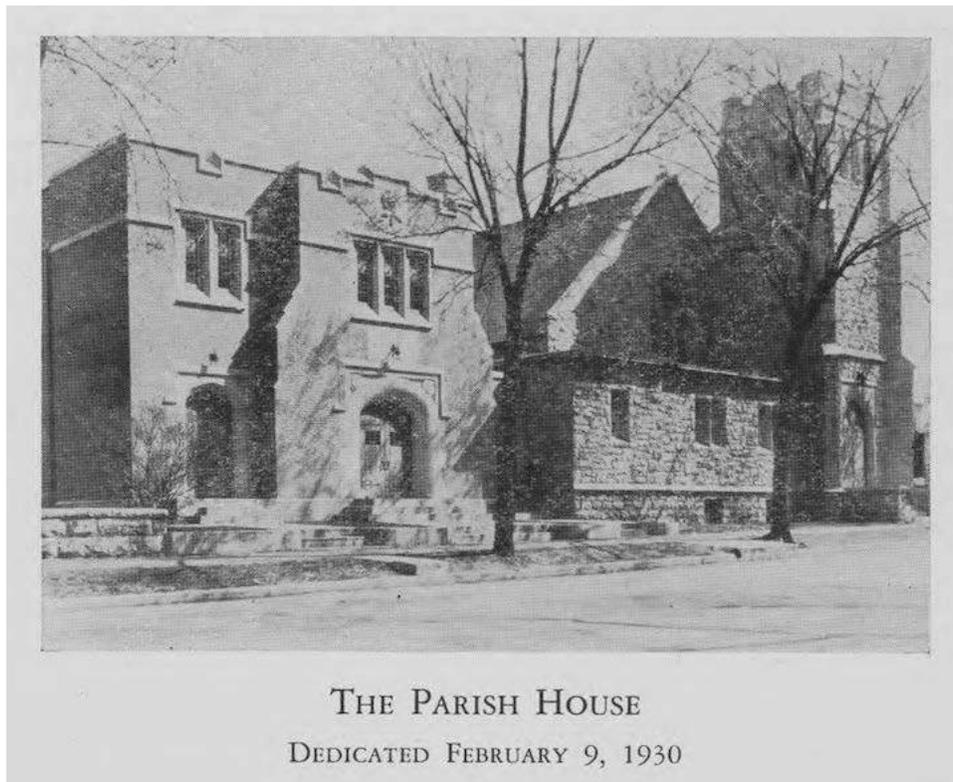


The congregation built the first church building as a framed structure in 1846 that was remodeled in 1897.

— Source: Naperville Historical Society



*The congregation replaced the remodeled frame structure with a limestone building dedicated in 1906.
— Source: Naperville Historical Society*



Parish Hall built in 1930 to the west of the 1906 building — Source: Naperville Historical Society



Community room with education rooms below built on to the west in 1979 — Source: D. W. Diamond

The first frame church building was erected in 1846 and renovated in 1897. The limestone building replaced the frame church in 1906. A parsonage was added in 1884 and removed in 1929 to make room for a new Parish Hall adjoining the church. It was dedicated in 1930, with Sunday School classrooms on the ground floor and housing for the pastor's family on the second floor. Further expansion in 1979 included the Community Room and basement classrooms.

Appendix 7: Pastors

For reasons that are not clear, some of the Church's historians did not record the names and sequence of pastors who served this church. There should be a single record identifying as many as possible, and the tabulation below is such an attempt. The gaps are most troublesome concerning assistant or auxiliary pastors; interim pastors have not been consistently recorded, nor were interns, who have often assisted with youth programs, for example, and there is essentially no record of church staff such as secretaries, choir directors, church school staff, etc.

| Senior Pastor | Dates | Associate Pastor(s) | Dates |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| N. C. Clark | 1833 - 36 | | |
| "Rev. Mr. Foster" Interim? | 1836 | | |
| E. Strong | 1836 - 37 | | |
| Jonathan G. Porter | 1837 - 40 | | |
| Orvill Lyman | 1840 | | |
| J. H. Prentiss | 1840 - 43 | | |
| E. W. Champlin | 1843 - 45 | | |
| Hope Brown | 1845 - 56 | | |
| Elihu Barber | 1856 - 60 | | |
| C. P. Felch | 1860 - 64 | | |
| E. A. Alden | 1864 - 65 | | |
| J. C. Beckman | 1866 - 68 | | |
| J. W. Cunningham | 1868 - 71 | | |
| (Interim supply, due to financial stress) | 1871 - 73 | | |
| C. F. Reed | 1873 - 76 | | |
| J. W. Hartshorn | 1876 - 78 | | |
| Edward Ebbs | 1878 - 79 | | |
| J. H. Dixon | 1879 - 82 | | |
| J. C. Meyers | 1883 - 91 | | |
| S. A. Freeman | 1891 - 95 | | |
| H. V. Tull | 1895 - 1902 | | |
| George Peebles | 1902 - 10 | | |
| Alfred E. Randell | 1910 - 17 | | |
| Frank Sherman Brewer | 1917 - Dec. 1919 | | |
| William Aitchison | Apr. 1920 - 1923? | | |
| Earl F. Collins | Oct. 1923 - Aug. 1933 | | |
| Nelson Wehrhan | 1933 - 1938 | | |
| Franklin Loehr | 1938 - 1943 | | |
| Delbert Harrell | 1943 - 1947 | | |
| Harry Gordon | 1947 - 1954 | | |
| Robert Chatfield Kemper | 1954 - 1961 | | |
| Anthony Wayne Myers | 1962 - 1966 | J. Stanley Cox | |
| J. Stanley Cox | 1966 - 1970 | James Bundy | |
| E. Keith Torney | 1971 - 1989 | Al Eickelman? | |
| | | Ann Latourette | 1976 - 78 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | David Schoen | 1978 - 82 |
| | | Peter Luckey | 1982 - 86 |
| | | Sally Owen-Still | 1986 - 96 |
| (Interim: John Bollinger) | | | |
| Robert T. Baggott III | 1990 - 1995 | Lori Powell | 1994 - 95 |
| (Interims: Steve Davidson; | | | |
| Helen "Penny" Greer) | 1995-1997 | | |
| Gregory Schneck-Skiba | 12/1997 - 9/2011 | Kathleen Morrison | 11/2005 - 2/2008 |
| Mark Winters | 2009 - 2023 | | |
| Benjamin Reynolds, Interim | 2/6/2023 - 5/21/2023 | | |
| David Voll, Interim | 8/1/2023 - 5/19/2024 | | |
| Ramona Gant, Bridge | 11/12/2024 - 6/22/2025 | | |
| Kari Nicewander | 6/23/2025 - | | |

Appendix 8: Pictures and Analysis of Architecture

The following are pictures and commentary by James Fancher, member, and Roger Roslansky, architect.



Rear (north side) of the 1906 Church — Source: J.R. Fancher

Rear (north side) of the church: In the original interior configuration, there was a large community room inside this wall, a space which shared the high ceiling of the Sanctuary itself. Today, that room is part of the Sanctuary. Some of these windows were salvaged from the original 1846 frame church building.

The false ceiling in the current room means that the circular window near the roof peak is not visible from occupied spaces. Air conditioning equipment occupies the space above that false ceiling.

There are three flat-roofed spaces around the building: They are not additions, as all were part of the original construction. Those are a) the Narthex, b) the library and "back hall", i.e., the area between the choir loft door and the library wall; and c) the cloak room between the narthex and the choir loft. Both (b) and (c) have had other uses: (c) was once the pastor's office, and (b), the "library", has been the choir room, a Christian education office, and probably other things. The original interior drawings show that these were originally Sunday school rooms.



1 of 3 spaces with a flat roof— Source: J. R. Fancher

One of three spaces which have flat roofs: This is to the right (west) of the rear church view shown above. It currently provides a library and meeting space, accommodating at most a dozen people around a large table; in its original configuration, pocket doors could be raised to make it part of the large North Room, which is mentioned above. The door visible to the right provides handicapped access to most church functions, serving the Sanctuary to the left and (via ramps) the parish hall and Community Room to the right.



East side of the 1906 Church along Center St. — Source: J. R. Fancher

East side of the building, along Center Street: The large window occupies the east end of this transept, which does not extend much beyond the exterior wall of the remainder of the building; moreover, it provides only a slight ‘bulge’ in the north-south aisle within, at the rear of the Sanctuary seating area.



1 or 2 masonry “buttresses” — Source: J. R. Fancher

This detail shows one of two masonry “buttresses” adjacent to this transept. Whether they have a real structural function is not clear, but they are quite substantial. They can be seen edge-on in the above picture.

The dentil ornamentation in the stonework running along the roofline is both an element of Classical and Gothic Revival architecture. It is not clear if it has any structural purpose.



The “Bride’s Door” on the east side — Source: J. R. Fancher

The “Bride’s Door”, on the east side (Center Street side) of the building, north of the east transept, previously shown. The said doorway serves other functions: Access for emergency personnel, egress/ingress for ladders and other large equipment, etc. But it is normally kept locked and is not used as a congregational entrance. The dentil ornamentation in the stonework above the door is similar to that seen to the south of the east transept.



The interior of the Sanctuary — Source: D. L. Lorenz

Interior Sanctuary view, looking south. Note especially the wooden fixtures on the walls—the two on the left are on opposite sides of the east transept shown in earlier pictures—and they appear to support the roof via the arched members below the ceiling. On the right, similar structures appear on either side of the west transept. The wooden ceiling itself, we are told, is false—there is a space between that and the actual roof of the building. The Sanctuary seating faces west and slopes slightly downward in that direction. The pulpit is visible on the right, and it normally is more or less centered to the congregation in the main portion of the Sanctuary. There is no center aisle—two aisles approach the front of the church at similar angles.



One of the wooden supports — Source: D. L. Lorenz

Close-up of one of the wooden supports (east side of the Sanctuary, on the north side of the east transept).



The west transept — Source: D. W. Diamond

View of the west transept from behind the congregation. The 1906 Austin organ dominates the transept; there is room for three rows of chairs, which will accommodate almost two dozen choir members. Note that the west transept is much deeper than the east transept—if one takes into account the depth of the organ structure, it extends at least 15 feet from the west interior wall of the Sanctuary.



The choir loft — Source: D. W. Diamond

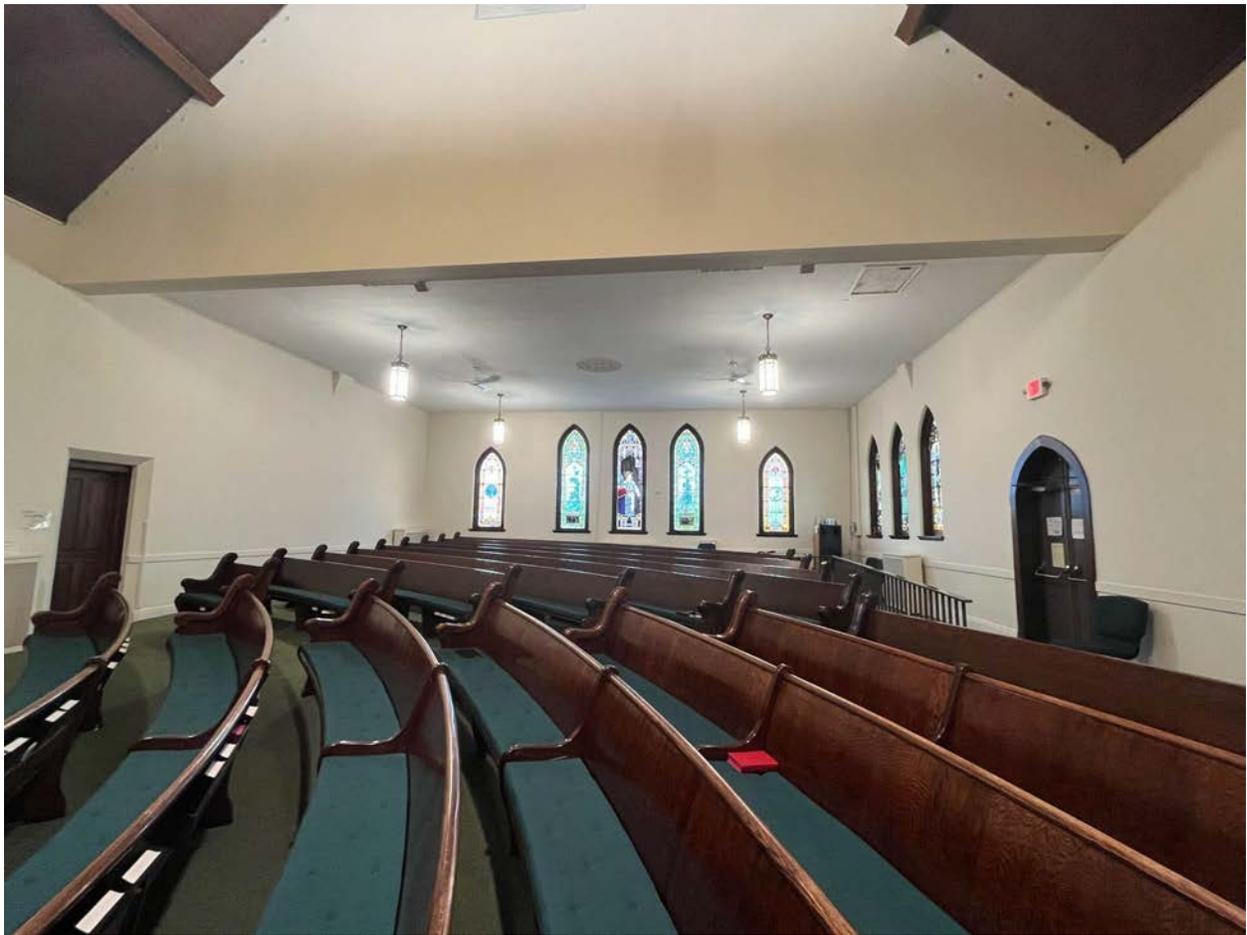
View inside the choir loft.



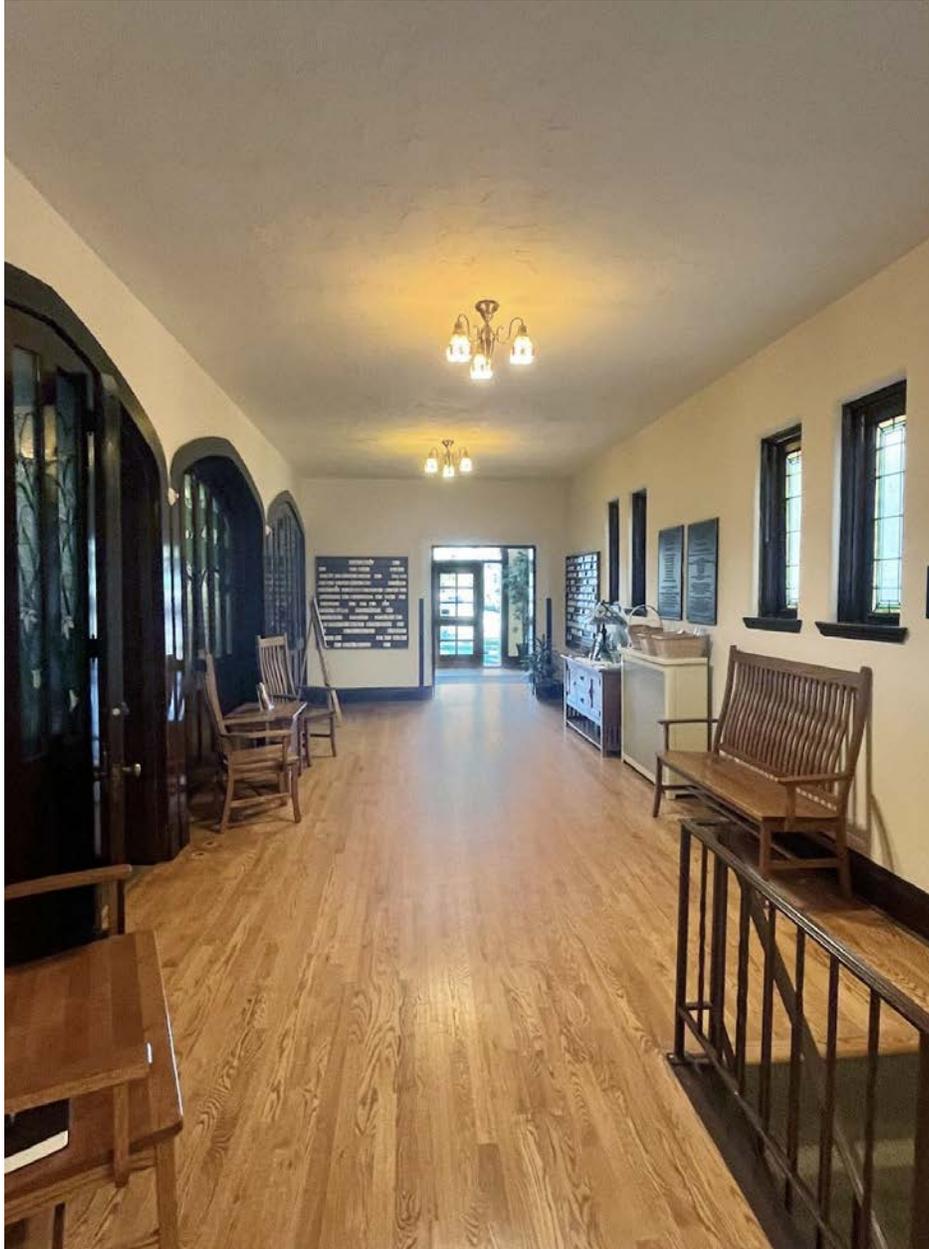
The south wall of the Sanctuary — Source: D. W. Diamond

Doors on the south wall of the Sanctuary, adjacent to the Narthex or hall: These are now more-or-less conventional doors, but they replaced pocket doors, which could be lifted. Similar pocket doors existed on the north wall of the Sanctuary, allowing the large room there to be

opened to the Sanctuary; doors also existed on the wall between the North Room (as that space has since been called) and the small flat-roofed section now used as the library. (The latter doors are still in place but have been plastered over in the Sanctuary and are blocked by bookcases in the library.) The wall between the Sanctuary and the North Room was removed in a late 1970s remodeling—part of it still exists above the level of the North Room ceiling—but the North Room is now effectively a fully functional part of the Sanctuary.



View from the Sanctuary to the North Room after the separating wall was removed — Source: D. L. Lorenz



The Narthex looking East — Source: D. L. Lorenz



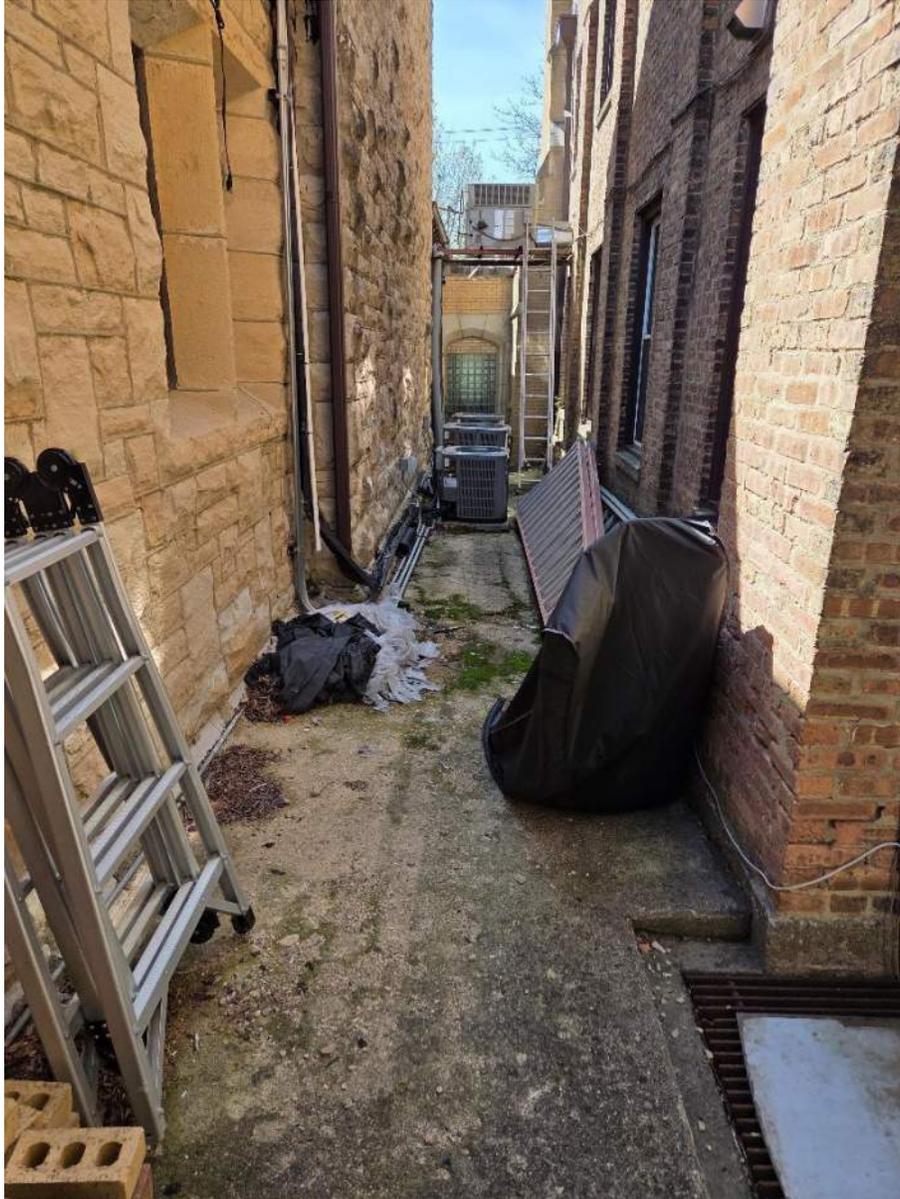
The Narthex Looking West — Source: D. L. Lorenz

The Narthex or hall across the south edge of the building. The doors that were seen in the previous picture are on the right in this view, looking west. Name tags and literature are available here, among other things. One of the two stairways to the basement is visible to the left ahead; a coatroom exists at the right beyond those doors. This hall and the coatroom are in flat-roofed sections of the original building, which will be identified in a later picture.



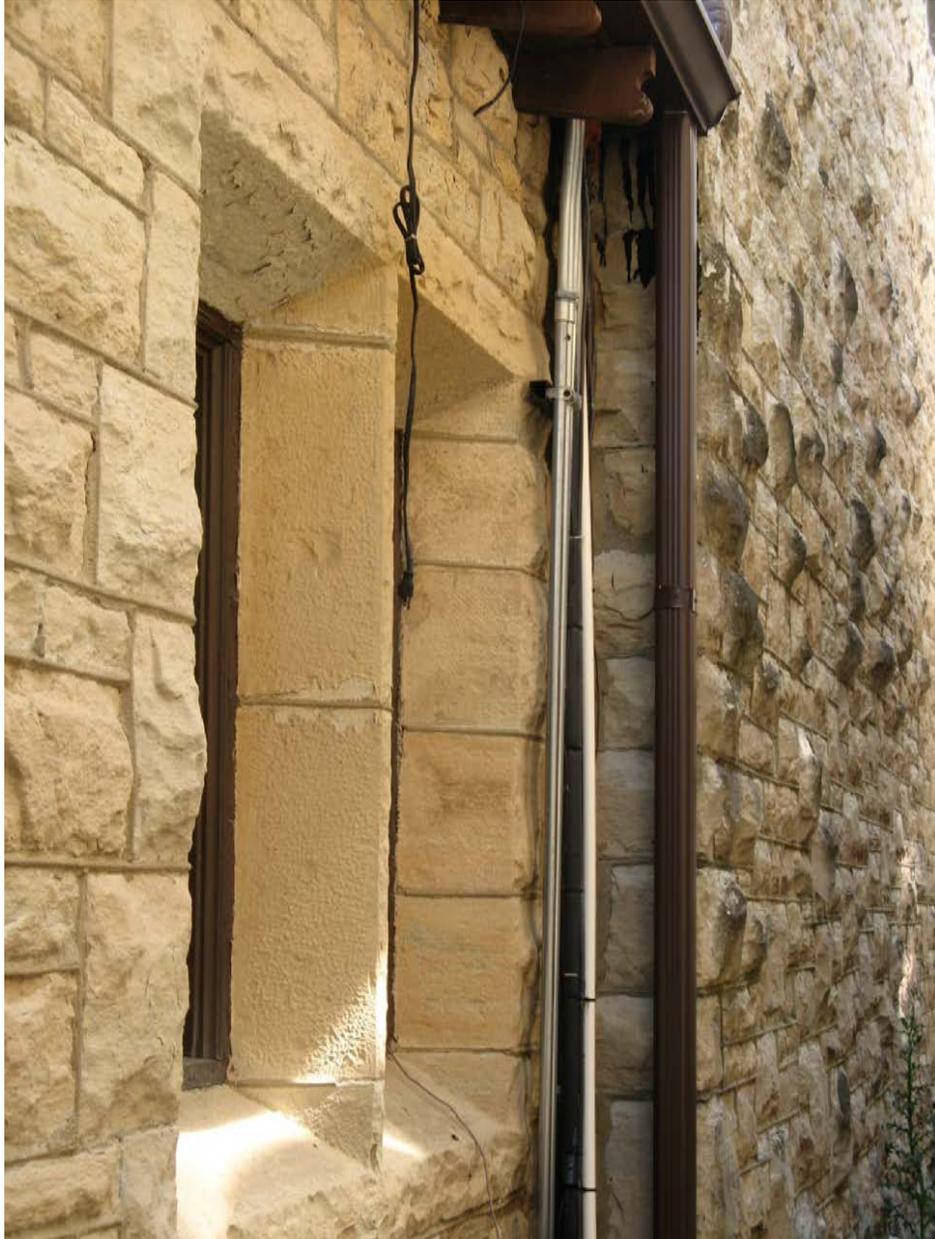
Front of the Church along Benton St., August 2025—Source: M. L. Schweitzer

This picture of the front of the church (from across Benton Street) shows the position of the bell tower and main entrances (stairs on both the Benton Street and Center Street sides of the tower). The flat-roofed section west of the tower contains the Narthex hallway, shown earlier. The newer buildings to the west—to the left in this picture—are not part of our application for landmarking.



The “ladder garden” — Source: D. W. Diamond

This strange apparition is known to us as “the ladder garden.” It exists between the Sanctuary building on the left and the parish hall building on the right. It serves as the location for supplementary heating and cooling for offices (equipment located at the far end of this space), the eponymous ladders, and storage for some maintenance equipment. The area behind the wall immediately to the left is single-story and flat-roofed—it contains the hall from the rear door and serves as an auxiliary coatroom. It is an extension of the area previously described as the library. The wall just beyond the downspout on the left is the end of the west transept of the Sanctuary, i.e., the wall behind the organ mechanism, so once again the transept does not seem to project much beyond the church wall—but in this case that wall is NOT the wall of the Sanctuary itself, but a wall protecting a different function of access and storage.



The window between the “ladder garden” and the Sanctuary
— Source: J. R. Fancher

This close-up shows the windows for the hallway between the “ladder garden” and the Sanctuary.

Appendix 9: Church Bylaws relating to Property

Here is the pertinent chapter relating to property from the Church Bylaws⁵⁸ as voted and approved on January 26, 2025.

3 Property

The congregation may, in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold, purchase and receive title by gift, grant or other conveyance of and to any property real or personal, with power to mortgage, sell or convey the same, providing the laws of the State of Illinois permit. In case of a division of the membership of the congregation, the right of property will first be voted on during a business meeting in accordance with Section 9. If a two-thirds (2/3) majority is not achieved, all parties will submit the question of the right of property to the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (hereinafter called the Illinois Conference). The resulting decision is binding on all members of the congregation.

If the congregation is dissolved, the right of property will be decided by vote during a business meeting in accordance with Section 9. If a two-thirds (2/3) majority is not achieved, the title of the property will revert to the Illinois Conference or its successor body.

The primary church building is located at 25 East Benton in Naperville, Illinois.

⁵⁸ “First Congregational Church of Naperville, Illinois A Congregation of the United Church of Christ Bylaws,” First Congregational Church of Naperville, IL, January 26, 2025, <https://www.loveandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Bylaws-2025-01-26.pdf>.

Appendix 10: List of Naperville Streets and Places Named for People of the First Congregational Church of Naperville⁵⁹

These streets and places were named after church members and friends/relatives who influenced the church and community of Naperville and beyond.

1. **Sleight Street** – Captain Morris Sleight donated land for the church building
2. **Goodrich Woods** – on land owned by Henry and Thankful Goodrich, a founding family. Hobson School is also on the Goodrich property.
3. **Scott School** – formally dedicated to the Willard Scott family on May 20, 1979⁶⁰
4. **Nichols Library** - \$10,000 bequeathed by James Nichols to build and equip a library in Naperville
5. **Caroline Martin-Mitchell Museum** – land and mansion donated to the city by the daughter of George Martin IV
6. **Von Oven Scout Reservation** on West Street– George Martin IV was co-owner with von Oven in the brick and tile business (Martin & von Oven Tile and Brick Works).
7. **Bay Scott Circle** – Alvin Bay Scott, nephew of Willard Scott Jr.
8. **Martin Avenue** – George Martin III donated land for the Naperville Cemetery
9. **Porter Road** – named for Rev. Johnathan Porter, pastor of our church from 1837 to 1840. The Porter House is on the northwest corner of Porter and Washington Streets.
10. **Royce Road** – Jonathan Royce and Polly Emery Royce, who purchased the farmstead of founding member Israel Blodgett, located along the east branch of the DuPage River.
11. **Loomis Street** – E. R. Loomis, deacon of the church, 1859-1872, and Sunday School Supt. 1850-1859
12. **Laird Street** – George W. Laird purchased pew # 34 in the frame church building in 1848
13. **Naper Boulevard** – Joseph Naper purchased pew # 16 in the frame church building in 1848
14. **Genevieve:** Bronze statue of Genevieve Towsley, located on the southeast side of Chicago Ave. and Washington Streets. She was a journalist/historian who published columns in the Naperville Sun for years and was a church member whose \$10,000 bequest started the church’s endowment fund.

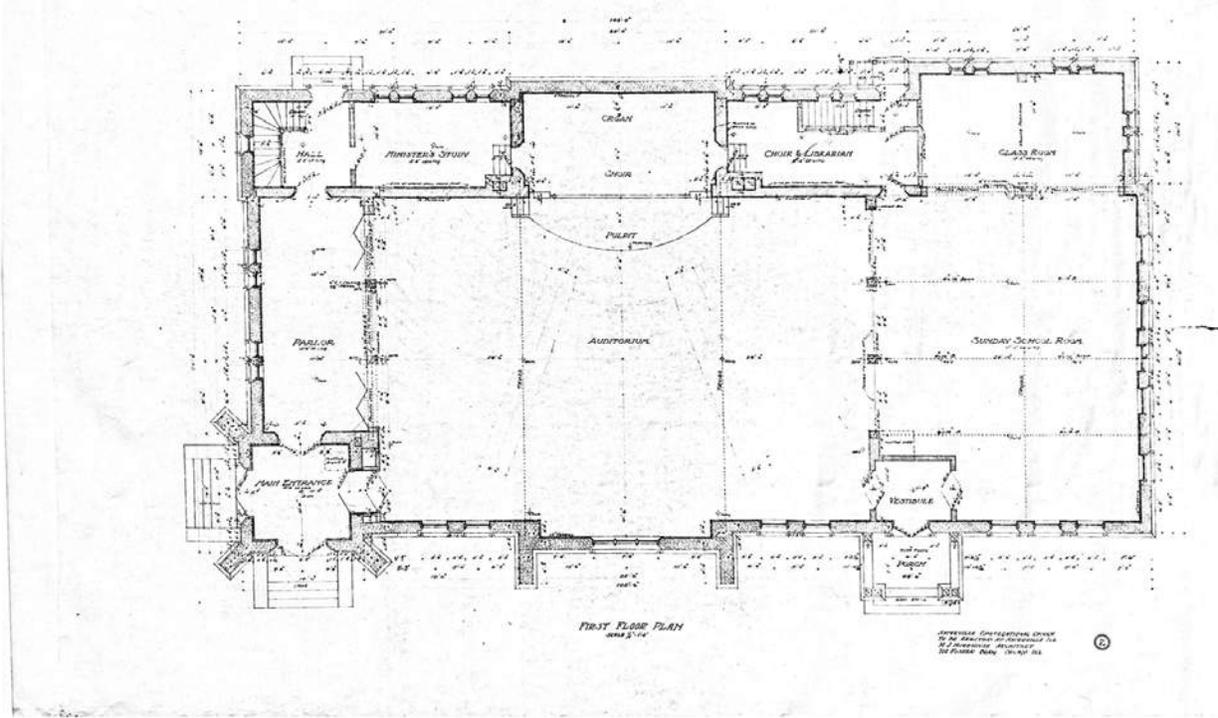
⁵⁹ Ogg, Bryan, “The Curious Curator - A Street By Any Other Name,” *Positively Naperville*, December 4, 2013, <https://www.positivelynaperville.com/2013/12/05/curious-curator-street-name/29014>.

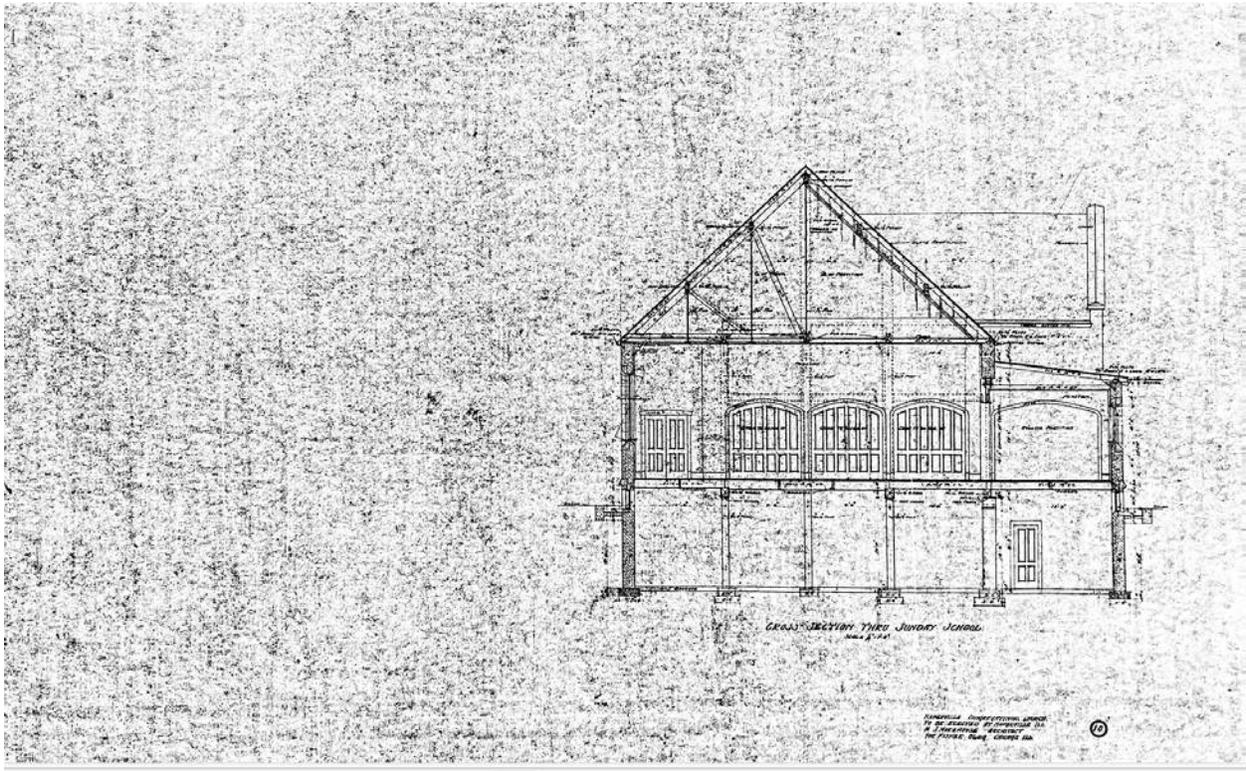
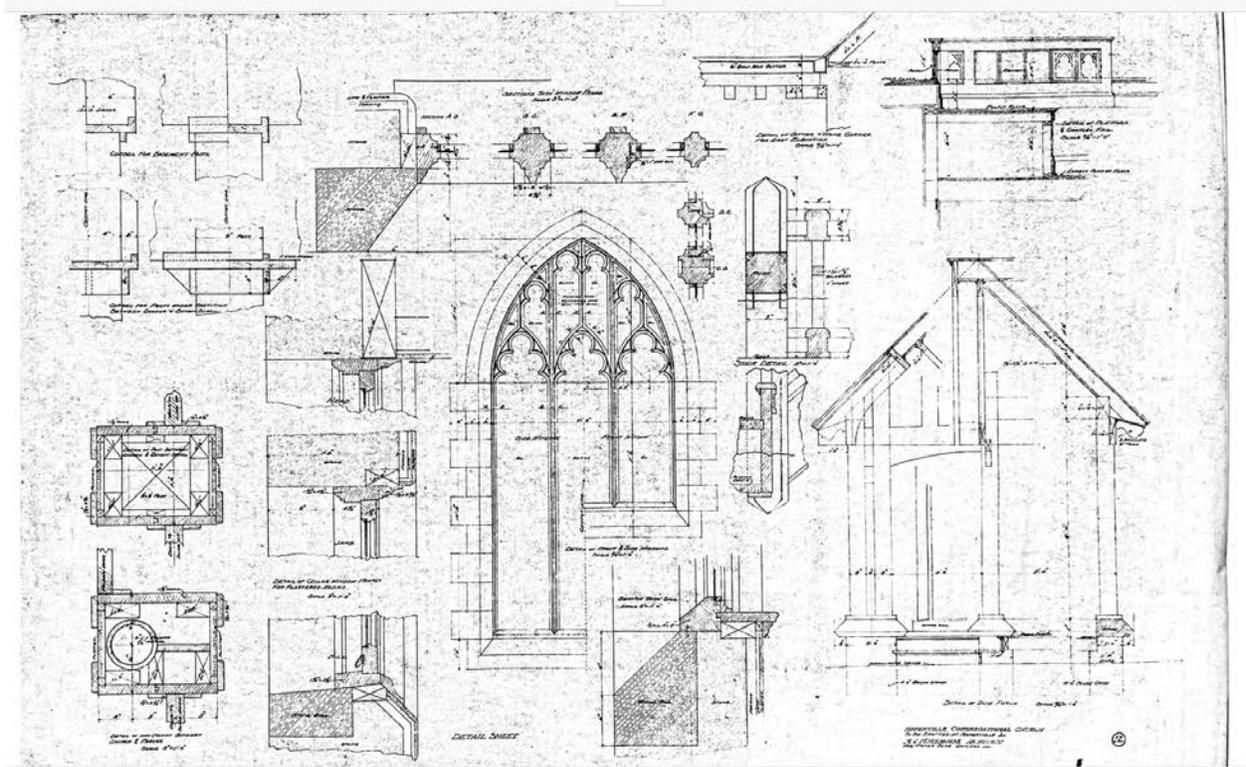
⁶⁰ Bickhaus, Phoebe, *History of Naperville Community Unit School District 203: DuPage and Will Counties, Lisle, Naperville and DuPage Townships, State of Illinois*, Naperville Community Unit School District 203, 1997, Page 42, <https://www.naperville203.org/cms/lib/IL01904881/Centricity/Domain/1951/District%20203%20History.docx.pdf>.

15. **Honorary (Jane) Sindt Memorial Court** – named for Jane Sindt, who founded the Naperville Heritage Society, started the Farmer’s Market at Fifth Avenue Station, and worked with May Watts to create the Prairie Path. When you stroll the Riverwalk, attend an event at the Grand Pavilion, or swim at the beach, you are probably familiar with her name as the drive there was designated “Honorary Sindt Memorial Court” in 2002.
16. **Ron Keller Commemorative Way** – named for member Ron Keller, Naperville Band Leader, aka Central Park Road or Court Place.

Appendix 11: Blueprints

The signature on this copy of the blueprints reads “Naperville Congregational Church, To be erected in Naperville, Ill., M. J. Morehouse, Architect, 702 Fisher Bldg., Chicago, Ill.”





Source: First Congregational Church of Naperville;
 Reproductions Courtesy of Tom Ryan, Architect, Naperville Preservation

Appendix 12: Internal Discussions Re: Pursuing Landmark Status

The following snippets were extracted from the meeting minutes for meetings of the First Congregational Church of Naperville's Council of Ministries from August 2024 to April 2025, and detail the discussions that took place in those meetings leading up to the vote to pursue Naperville Landmark status on April 15, 2025. Other significant communications between Council members or from the Council to the congregation are included as well.

August 20, 2024: Landmark Designation

Vicki Keller has been in communication with Naperville Preservation, Inc. Jane Burke from that organization will be coming to the Council meeting in September to discuss having our church designated as an historical landmark and to answer our questions about such a proposal.

September 17, 2024: Presentation - Naperville Preservation, Inc.

Jane Ory Burke of Naperville Preservation, Inc. (founded eight years ago as part of the effort to save the old Nichols Library from demolition) spoke to Council about the process of applying for landmark designation. Our church is currently within Naperville's federal historic district, but this places no restrictions on what can be done to the building. There are some regulations that apply to Naperville's local historic district, but we are not within that. The landmark designation provides an additional level of protection against future change and loss of cultural heritage.

Communities that are less affluent tend to be better at preserving their cultural heritage than more affluent communities, since poorer communities don't have the money to replace or make major modifications to buildings. Aurora has 58 buildings with landmark status, while Naperville has only five.

She assured Council that the process does not take too much effort or time, and there is no cost to submit an application. Her organization would assist us in the application process. The application would need to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council, but this is usually just a formality as long as the building owner is in agreement. The entire process of obtaining landmark designation for the Beidelman Furniture store took only 75 days, while they were unable to obtain the designation at all for the old YMCA.

She distributed a chart that summarized the restrictions that landmark designation places on the building owner. Essentially, any changes to the size, style, or materials on street-facing building façades would require approval. Owners are not required to restore existing features that deviate from the original, but Jane will get back to us on whether features need to be restored when they are replaced. E.g., if we replaced a window that is currently vinyl-clad, would the new window have to be made of wood? Solar panels would be more likely to be approved if they weren't visible from the street. A building has to be at least 50 years old to obtain landmark designation. Our Community Room building would not be eligible as it was built circa 1979. We could apply for landmark designation for some of our buildings and not others.

We thanked Jane for her presentation and tabled further discussion of this topic until a later meeting.

October 16, 2024: Landmark Status

We briefly discussed the topic of pursuing landmark status for our church, following up on last month's discussion. One proposal offered was just to pursue it for our sanctuary. The upside of pursuing this status is that there are sometimes grants that are available for landmarks (although none that are available now would be applicable) and it would provide an opportunity for recognition and publicity. The downside would be the restrictions it would place on modifications to the building. One particular concern that was raised would be the impact of such restrictions on any future plans to add solar panels to the church building. Theresa [Hus] will contact some solar panel experts to provide guidance on where solar panels should be placed should we decide to install them in the future. We tabled further discussion of pursuing landmark status until we have that information in hand.

November 19, 2024: Landmark Status

Theresa found that a study was done a while ago that concluded that the best placement for solar panels on the church would be on the parsonage roof. We would be unlikely to want to put solar panels on the sanctuary, which would remove one potential barrier to pursuing landmark status for the sanctuary. Jane Ory Burke never got back to us on whether features need to be restored when they are replaced, and we would like to have the answer to this question before considering the matter further. Vicki will follow up with Jane.

December 17, 2024: Landmark Status

Per Jane Burke, if we acquire Landmark Status, any changes to the building will need to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. This answer prompted Council to have even more questions. I.e., if there is a conflict between what is historically accurate and what is required by current building codes, which prevails? Also, if an urgent situation is prompting the change, what turnaround time can we expect from the Commission? Council decided that we need to have someone come and talk to us again, perhaps someone from the Commission. <ACTION-Vicki> Vicki Keller will speak to Jane to determine how best to proceed.

February 18, 2025: Landmark Status

[Note: A new Council would have been seated between the prior meetings and this one.]

Jane Burke and architect Tom Ryan, both from Naperville Preservation, will be at the March Church Council meeting. Landmark status impacts only the exterior aesthetics of the sanctuary building from Benton and Center Streets to ensure they appear historically appropriate. Jane and Tom can help walk us through the process. We expect the financial costs to be minimal (plaques, applications). Rev. Kari asked if this would limit the use of signage such as banners. Drew

Walker asked about standard specifications that we are limited to. John will send the earlier questions and answers that we have received from Jane to Council and follow up with Jane on the new questions so that Jane and Tom are prepared for the March meeting.

February 19, 2025: Email from John Klein-Collins, Moderator, to Council

Below are the questions Vicki relayed to Jane Burke and Jane's responses (with some links for further information). Please review Jane's responses so we are prepared for her visit to next month's Council meeting. I will also mail Jane with the questions raised at last night's meeting that emerged from our thoughtful discussion. As soon as I receive Jane's responses to last night's questions, I'll forward them. Please let me know if any other questions come to you regarding our look into gaining historical preservation status. Thanks!

Jane's Responses to Our Questions:

1. If, let's say, a door or window needs to be fixed, do we contact HPC and then how long do we wait for an answer? Does somebody come to look at it, or do we send photos? How do we determine what repair method fits in with "historic"?

If it is a storm door or storm window just needs to be repaired, you do not need to involve the HPC or the City. In terms of what can be done without question, please see the COA Requirements Table here:

<https://www.naperville.il.us/globalassets/media/boards-and-commissions/historic-preservation-commission/coa-requirements-table.pdf>

For an item where you are uncertain, there is a "fast track" process for getting a determination. See

<https://www.naperville.il.us/globalassets/media/boards-and-commissions/historic-preservation-commission/coa-fast-track-application-august-2024.pdf>

City staff review these questions within five days of receipt. See the above link for quite a detailed explanation.

2. If something is not up to code and needs to be replaced, what is the balance between historically accurate and up to code?

It depends on what the item is. The code is designed to protect the exterior, street facing facades of the landmarked building. I would say that the code looks to me to favor historically accurate. I say this because the COA Requirements Table uses the phrase "in kind replacement". There are a number of companies that provide for both historically accurate and up to code, especially for windows and doors.

This is probably too vague an answer for what you have in mind. A discussion would be useful.

3. Is landmarking more concerned with the outside of the building, or will the inside be looked at as well. Trustees have a list of things that need attention and one of them is the stairway inside by our library back entrance. The railing is definitely not up to code and Trustees need to replace it.

Landmarking is concerned with the exterior of the building. It does not restrict interior alterations.

4. Is it possible to have a member of HPC attend a Council meeting or are you able to answer these questions or should both of you attend?

I think having both someone from Naperville Preservation (such as myself or Tom Ryan, our preservation architect) and the City staff planner assigned to the HPC attend is a good idea. Tom Ryan has appeared before the HPC many times because he works with a lot of houses in the historic district. The City staff person is currently Brad Iwicki, who is quite responsive.

March 18, 2025: Old Business

Jane Burke and Tom Ryan from Naperville Preservation, Inc. discussed the possibility of designating the sanctuary building a landmark. This would apply only to the exterior facades on Benton Avenue and Central Street. Jane was also at the September 2024 Council meeting. Naperville Preservation, Inc was formed about five years ago during the push to save the old Nichols Library. It is not part of the City of Naperville or Naper Settlement. They work to raise awareness and educate people about preservation. Naperville has five local landmarks. The organization does tours and assists people on how to go through the landmarking process.

The church building is currently in a federal historic district, however buildings in such a district are not automatically protected. This is different from the Naperville Local Historic District, which was formed when the approximately 300 homeowners decided they wanted to be a historic district in which all buildings are protected.

The process is not daunting. To become landmarked, there would be a cost to rent a notice sign from the city, but that would be paid back on return of the sign. There would be two public hearings after the application is submitted: 1) in front of the Historic Preservation Commission; 2) in front of the City Council.

Once a building has landmark status, if something needs to be replaced as long as materials are similar they do not need to be an exact replica of the original. The goal is to keep the building exterior as close as possible to how it originally appeared. It does not affect anything behind the walls. If there is an urgent need for replacement (something falls off and is to be replaced in kind, e.g.), the city planning staff can fast-track the process. For updates broader in scope (changing the shape of a window, e.g.), the city's Historic Preservation Commission reviews it. Jane suggested that we speak with someone at the Women's Club as their landmark building is similar in structure to the church. Vicki will reach out.

Exterior signage for the church is not included in restrictions, although it still would need to follow the Naperville sign code. Tom and Jane did not think that adding exterior lighting would be an issue, as long as it is not changing the building. Drew Walker said that Trustees' current list of projects is mostly for repair and replacement. Tom said that they are very aware of maintenance issues. What would happen in the event of a disaster like a tornado is not known. Drew will reach out to the insurance company about historical status.

Being a landmark does not automatically mean that there will be a plaque, but it would draw attention. The application can be a notable historical document. Jane will send a link to the Beidelman application. The organization would make sure the landmark status is publicized in the newspaper and on their website.

The only noted downside to being a landmark is if we wanted to sell the building. It is possible to rescind the designation in a dire situation by going back to the City Council. Tom said being landmarked is a protection on investment as well as an honor and says something about the building and congregation. It goes hand in hand with being the first church in the county. Jane didn't know of grants directly for landmarked buildings, but said that having landmark status for the exterior could influence grants for interior work.

April 15, 2025: Old Business -Historic Preservation/Landmark Status

Vicki Keller introduced Ann Wehrli Jansen of the Naperville Women's Club. Jane Burke of Naperville Preservation, Inc was welcomed back. Ann discussed how the Women's Club has stuck by the landmark rules, describing the addition of a ramp on the back of their landmarked building to make it handicapped accessible. Updates that were not visible from the street, either because they were on the back of the building or were interior, were not impacted by the landmark status. They needed to replace some visible limestone and did not have any of the original but were able to find an acceptable replica. The purple door is not original, but it was in place when they were landmarked in 2008 [note: the Women's Club was actually landmarked in 2011] and that is how people identify the building.

Ann and Jane said that landmarking will protect the building. The Women's Club went through landmarking to ensure their building will not be torn down. If the church should fold and the building sold, the new owners would still need to follow the landmarking rules. In an extreme circumstance the organization could apply to the City Council to be de-landmarked. Drew Walker asked Ann about building insurance changes. She was sure they had some and will put Drew in contact with the person at the club who dealt with them.

Jane estimated that the process to be landmarked could take as long as 6-9 months. We are lucky because we already have a good archive. The application is a writing exercise. Jane passed around the Beidelman Building application as an example. Naperville Preservation Inc. will assist, but the owner of the building must write the application. The application is submitted to the City Council, which takes it to the Historic Preservation Commission for review. It must go

back to City Council for approval within 45 days of the Commission recommendation. Applicants must attend the City Council meeting.

John [Klein-Collins] thanked Jane and for Ann coming in. After they departed, he asked for a motion. Vicki moved that we approve the landmarking of the sanctuary building facing Benton Avenue and Center Street, contingent on the reply from the insurance company. Jeanie Guenther seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

April 17, 2025: Email from Drew Walker, Chair of Trustees Ministry, to Council

Council,

Great news, I confirmed with our insurance provider that not only would there be no changes or cost impacts to our insurance policy but in fact there was already a clause in our coverage requiring replacement to building features in kind if in fact they are designated as historic.

We're good to go!

Drew

May 5, 2025: The letter from John Klein-Collins, Moderator, that was published in The Leaflet, the newsletter of First Congregational Church of Naperville

The Civil War had not yet started, Abraham Lincoln was just 24 years old, and only 24 of the 50 states had been entered into the Union when the Blodgett, Barber, Strong, Abbott, Clark, Peet, and Goodrich families established First Congregational Church of Naperville on July 13, 1833.

It goes without saying that we are a historically-significant part of Naperville and DuPage County, so our goal should be to celebrate and safeguard our legacy and contribution to the community.

Through Vicki Keller's vision, passion, and perseverance, Council has unanimously voted to seek historical preservation status for the building that houses our sanctuary. Historic preservation is concerned with maintaining the original (or as close as possible) integrity of a structure's exterior appearance. In our case, the facades facing Benton and Center are the primary focus.

Multiple meetings with Jane Burke and Tom Ryan of Naperville Preservation, Inc. and a final meeting with Ann Wehrli Jansen of the Naperville Woman's Club convinced us that seeking historic preservation status is a worthy cause. Jane, Tom, and Ann patiently answered all of our questions and provided us with beneficial information from their own experiences. Jane generously offered her organization's assistance with the application process.

Council members asked countless questions about potential costs. Drew Walker determined that our existing insurance policy already contains language addressing historic designations, and we verified that there are no restrictions on exterior signage.

Should we gain historic preservation status, we would be only one of a handful of buildings in Naperville, including the Truitt House, the Thomas Clow House, the Naperville Woman's Club, the Old Nichols Library and the Beidelman Furniture building. We'll join a select club of historic buildings.

Vicki has volunteered to lead the charge and chair the committee that includes Diane Diamond, Jim Fancher, and Diana Lorenz [note: Sally Nurss joined the committee after this letter was published]. While they have a lot of work ahead of them, all have significant historical knowledge of our church that will benefit the process. Vicki and the committee would love to talk to you if you have any photos, stories, or information that you feel is relevant and helpful to the application process.

We'll provide you with updates throughout the process, but for now, all four committee members are digging into the rather arduous application process. I'm grateful for their efforts and commitment to the church. I'm sure you are as well.

John Klein-Collins
Moderator

Acknowledgements

No endeavor of this magnitude can be accomplished by just a small group of people, and we wish to offer our thanks to all those who assisted us along the way.

We especially wish to thank Jane Burke of Naperville Preservation, Inc., for her encouragement and support, and her colleagues: Marilyn Schweitzer, for offering invaluable assistance in the formatting and refinement of this document, and Tom Ryan, for his guidance on architectural matters, including his expert reproduction of our church's blueprints.

We are also indebted to those who provided us with guidance in their areas of expertise. These include:

- Roger Roslansky, architect, formerly of Roslansky & Co;
- Jill Morehouse Lum of the Burge Farm;
- Christine McNulty, Chief Curator, and Sarah Buhlig, Registrar, at Naper Settlement; and
- Tim Ory, the author of many of the articles in *Positively Naperville* and a contributor to many of the *Find-a-Grave* pages that we consulted.

Posthumous recognition also needs to be given to the decades of contributions Genevieve Towsley made in recording the history of both this church and the wider community.

We are grateful for the various digital and physical historical archives that we were able to consult, including Newspapers.com, the University of Illinois Digital Library Collection, and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and we are appreciative of all those who had a hand in making it so easy to locate and search the needed references.

Finally, we are thankful for the saints who have gone before us, the men and women whose faith and dedication wrote the history of this church, ensuring that multitudes shall yet rest in its delightful shade.

The First Congregational Church of Naperville Landmarking Task Force,
Vicki Keller, chair, Diane Walter Diamond, Jim Fancher, Diana Lorenz, and Sally Nurss