

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, Kansas was organized March 12, 1879, by a committee of Presbytery fulfilling the wishes of fifteen local people who formed the charter membership. Meetings were held in Waskey's Hall, upstairs. This building is immediately south of the K. G. & E. office at 4th and Broadway.

A corporation was chartered by the State of Kansas in 1884 to permit the church to hold property and care for the other business activities of the congregation.

Worship was held in the Waskey's Hall for a time, later going to a frame school house on the northwest corner of 5th and Walnut, where the Bottenfield Building stands now. In 1885, on January 4th, a new church building was dedicated standing on the northwest corner of Eighth and Pine. The Rev. Francis M. Symmes was minister at the time of that dedication.

In 1907, during the ministry of the Rev. Gerrit Snyder, it developed that more adequate facilities were needed to serve the congregation. Plans were made and the corner stone of the present building was laid in 1907. In 1913 the building was completed at a cost of approximately \$25,000.00 The Rev. C. L. Alspach was minister.

Dr. Walter McCray became director of music in the church in 1914 and continued until 1954. In 1915 he was instrumental in helping the church to secure a pipe organ through provisions of the Carnegie Fund. The church used that instrument until 1969 when the present Reuter Organ was installed.

The Rev. J. N. McDonald succeeded Rev. Alspach, ministering here during the years of the First World War. He was followed by the Rev. Charles J. Armentrout in 1921. In 1928 the Rev. A. B. Miller became pastor here and served the church until 1946. From 1946 to 1950 the Rev. Wallace Faris was the pastor, the only living former minister of the church, now serving in Claremore, Okla. The major portion of Westminster Hall was erected during the pastorate of Mr. Faris. The present minister, Mr. Keith, came to the church in 1950.

An extension to the front of Westminster Hall was made in 1962. And in 1975 extensive remodeling of the entrances was completed.

For many years Miss Rose Buchmann was church organist. In 1954 Mrs. Fred Lampton succeeded her and has served the church since with only one break of about three years. Mrs. Earnesteen Hale has served the church as Assistant of the Minister since mid-1961. These long-term services to any congregation speak well of the membership

Probably the most distinctive and irreplaceable features of our church building are the beautiful stained glass windows. The Ladies Aid Society pledged \$500.00 toward the building fund on November 3, 1904 and by January 19, 1906 had raised \$486.10 of that sum. Undoubtedly encouraged by this success, they pledged an additional \$500.00. By 1908 the treasurer reported the total contribution of \$1425.00 from the Ladies Aid Society. The church membership of that year had increased from 206 to 225. "The Ladies Aid Society listed as by far its most costly expenditure \$875.00 outlay for windows." These had to be the present stained glass windows since there is no other kind in the building.

In November 1976 as an outgrowth of an inspection of the windows by a professional, Mr. Frank Hopcroft of Hopcroft Art and Stained Glass Works, a written report was submitted by the Repair and Maintenance Committee to the Session. It was recommended that a stained Glass Window Fund be established for the maintenance since the windows were estimated to have a current replacement value of nearly \$55,000.00. The purchase of a Fine Arts Insurance floater at a cost of \$224.00 annually was recommended. A motion was passed by the Session that this be done immediately and now the stained glass windows are insured. Several years ago the Board of Deacons had an electric light placed back of the Christ in Gethesmane window which had been darkened by the construction of Westminster Hall. The stained glass windows of our church are the aesthetic and spiritual pride of the members.