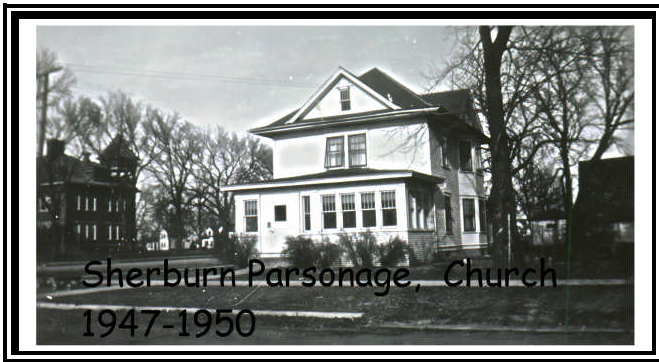


Sherburn Methodist Church Sherburn, Minnesota

The decision to go to Sherburn was made at Conference in Albert Lea, MN, which was 8 miles from the Iowa line on US Highway 16. This was a Federated Church¹. At Conference² time, the Methodists had half a house and half a church building. I wondered which half of the house we would live in. Mother & Dad wandered if we would be living in a tent. By the moving time, the Congregational Church owned the church building and the Methodist the house. This was a large house with an enclosed porch and full basement and attic. Lots of room to play in.



For three and half years, July 1947 to December 1950, this house was church and home. This house in Sherburn was across the street from the grade and high school, which made it easy to get to school on time. I went from 2 grades in a classroom at Brownsdale, Minnesota to a larger school and 1 grade per class. This school was big enough to have a kindergarten and bus in a lot of kids. There were 8 to 10 buses bringing in students from Dunnell, and the country schools that closed.

The Methodists rented the Community Theater building to have Sunday Services in it. This community theater housed, a common hall in the basement, theater on main level, and city offices on the front second floor, and the city library off the main floor with another entrance.

Sunday School was spread out through the building. There was a community hall in the basement, which was used for roller-skating on Friday, Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. The Farm Clubs used this hall for community Pancake Suppers. But on Sunday morning, it was filled with many Sunday school classes, grades preschool to Adults. The 2nd floor was the city offices and meeting room and I believe the 5th & 6th grade and the high school classes were held here. I remember finally getting old enough to have class in those rooms, and then we moved to the Church building. In the theater was the adult class and the Worship Service was held there. There was only one Church on this charge when we moved there. According to Dad, the theater was the largest Sanctuary he would ever have. He was right. Dad also programmed his services so when the end came, the last hymn and the benediction would come from the back of the sanctuary. This meant that during the choral response after the benediction he had to get out of his robe and to the back of the theater to greet people. This was touch and go as to whether he would get back there before the finished choir the benediction response. There were also threats from certain choir members as to fix his robe so he wouldn't make it. Lots of teasing and good repore went on with in this congregation.

We spent 10 years here. A new Church building was decided on. During construction of this building and while using the theater, the parsonage was used for Lenten Services, Circle meetings, youth fellowships, board meetings, preparing the theater seats for the new building (workshop), choir practice, release time classes, Maundy Thursday communion (which meant no noise upstairs for 3 hours, you sure learn to kept a hyper active dog quiet also), Easter Breakfast, and I don't remember where the Sunrise Service was (probably the city park). Many times, 3 meetings were going on at the same time, choir practice in the living room, Official Board meeting in the study and youth fellowship (Methodist Youth Fellowship) in the basement. Dean and I sure had to be quiet and did a lot of

¹Combined Methodist and Congregational Church.

²Minnesota Annual Conference at Albert Lea, Minnesota June 1947

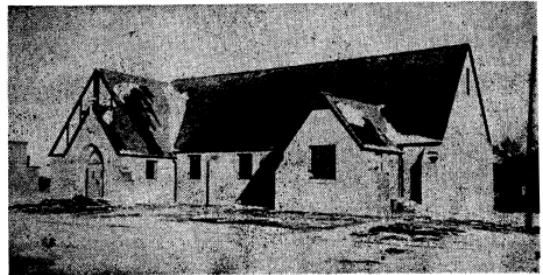
playing in our rooms. The first released time classes of the high school were held in the house, 70 young people. They filled the porch, the living room, dining room and up the stair steps. Also some went to neighborhood houses, like Eva Uplinger Mayo, and H. P. Bradt's house. Many of these youth were Presbyterians & Methodists from neighboring towns of Dunnell and Alpha, MN. This house had to be kept spick and span all the time. With two children, a preschooler and grade schooler, plus a dog, this was hard on Mother and she survived. It also brought some really close relationships with church members, which did not happen at other appointments.

Mother & Dad were in a community like they had grown up in, Walnut Grove, Minnesota, and could relate to the farmers really well. Many special birthday parties were given for both of them. One was after Church on the Sunday after Christmas. Dad's birthday was December 30th, and the congregation decided to surprise him. Two things happen to make him wonder what this group was up to now. He could smell coffee brewing and when the offering was done only 2 out of the 4 plates came back to be put on the altar. Those of us in the choir, heard him ask Darrell Worthley, the choir director, what was going on. Darrell said he didn't know. Well there was a surprise potluck birthday party for him and they had collected quite a bit of cash for Dad's birthday with the two offering plates.

The WSCS³ would get together and have hanky birthday cards sent to Mother on her birthday. Jeanette Worthley, the Church Organist, mentioned in her letter regarding our planning a 75th Birthday party on Mother, she hoped it would work out better as it was very hard to surprise her and still have fun.

While we were at Sherburn, Dad had made it very clear he would not wear a shirt, which was red or bright colored. Well a box with a bright colored shirt arrived in the mail one

Christmas. We still do not know who sent it, but suspect that some of John Worthley family.



**THE
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Sherburn, Minnesota

December 17, 1950

The Sunday, 17 December 1950, was quite an occasion for this congregation. The day had finally arrived for them to use the new Church building. Everyone lined up at the theater and walked in a long line two blocks to the new Church building. This was a very proud congregation after dividing all assets with the Congregationalist and being able to have a debt free building in 3 and one half years. The first Church service in the new building was a consecration service, and it was a surprise to a lot of people when the announcement was made that the debt to the building was paid off.

This congregation was also very tolerant in allowing young people to learn, by playing the organ for church, typing bulletins, including mistakes in typing like "O For a Thousand

³Women Society of Christian Service

Tongues to Sin", starting a MYF⁴ group which became very active in District Mid-Winter



Institutes and summer camps at Frontenac



Methodist Church Camp, Frontenac, MN. Many parents and adults like Norman Lidtke (eventually became the Reverend Norman Lidke) and Jessie Gemmill were very instrumental in helping keep this group going. Norm & Elaine left Sherburn before we did and Norm decided to go into the ministry. Norm and I graduated from Hamline University in the same class, and I played the organ for me him at Epworth United Methodist church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In the middle of my sophomore year, Dad was asked to move to Harron Methodist Church in Minneapolis. Times were changing in the ministry, as here was a time when Dad said no to a move and the District Superintendent accepted

it. He did this so I could finish high school in one place. But time for a move did come and it happened the summer, I graduated from High School, 1957.

Mother & Dad participated with me, in 4-H Club and Dean in Boy Scouts. They became members of the Jay Farm Club, which met once a month for potluck at different families homes. This was a fun time for kids. These same people were part of the Church, the 4-H club and Jay Farm Club. This community stuck together. We had been there one week when a tragic homicide/suicide happen. The community would suffer through three of them in the 10 years we were there.

We as a family have many fond memories of this congregation and the community called Sherburn, Minnesota.



Written for the chapter in Dad's book about his churches, information added by Annette DeCourcy Towler and Genevieve May Pack DeCourcy. Dec 2000.

⁴Methodist Youth Fellowship