

Dedication Booklet

for the first unit

of the new

St. John's  **United Church of Christ**

1400 McAree Road
Waukegan, Illinois



Services of Dedication

Sunday, November 2, 1969

THE STORY OF ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our congregation was organized in 1863 and was known as the German Evangelical Protestant Church of St. John's Congregation. It had a membership of 63 persons. The Church was reorganized on November 25, 1871 and changed the name to German Evangelical Reformed St. John's Congregation in Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois.

From 1863 until December 31, 1871, at which time Rev. August Becker was called as its first resident pastor, the church was supplied by neighboring ministers. Under the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Becker the church at 110 N. West Street was built. The basement of the structure was designed to accommodate the German Parochial School. However, this school flourished only for about 10 years and then was discontinued. The church building was erected at a cost of eight hundred and fifty dollars in 1872. The cornerstone was laid August 5, 1872, and the building was dedicated in November of that year. The congregation was incorporated November 25, 1872.

The Rev. N. A. Holliger was pastor from 1914 until 1927. During his pastorate, the auditorium and the basement were renovated, fine art glass memorial windows replaced the old windows and a pipe organ was installed. It was also during this period that a transition from the German language to the English language was completed.

From 1939 until 1943, Rev. Frank Erdey was pastor. While he served the church, the merger of the Reformed Church in the U.S. with the Evangelical Synod of North America was consummated, and the name was changed to St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church. Under his guidance, the church basement was remodeled and oil heating was installed.

In 1944, Rev. George A. Mohr became pastor of St. John's. It had long been felt that the sanctuary should be renovated. Therefore, plans were made to have the remodeling done for the 75th anniversary. The pipe organ was modernized, the rostrum changed, a new lighting system installed, tile placed on the floor, and the auditorium redecorated. In 1948, the front of the exterior of the church was remodeled and the steeple removed and replaced with a small spire.

Rev. Vance Geier served as pastor from 1951 to 1953. Rev. William Kamphenkel was called and served until 1956. During this time the

building to the south of the church was purchased for a parsonage and the building in the rear was converted to a Fellowship House to be used for Sunday School and other meetings.

In March, 1957, Rev. Frederick A. Ludwig became pastor. This same year the Evangelical and Reformed Church joined with the Congregational Christian Churches and formed the United Church of Christ. We then officially adopted the name of St. John's United Church of Christ.

Due to the fact that the church was in a neighborhood already served by seven congregations and that traffic and parking were becoming problems, the church voted in 1961 to purchase property on McAree Road. This property consists of nearly seven acres and cost \$23,000.00.

Many types of plans and programs were discussed and in April, 1965, we retained the architectural firm of Schad, West and Associates to begin plans for a church building on our new property. A plan for a sanctuary and several classrooms was selected, but the cost of this project was too high and was eventually rejected.

The Rev. Robert J. Tripp had been called as our pastor in July, 1965. With his guidance and much prayer and many meetings the plan for an all-purpose chapel and classroom arrangement such as we have was selected and bids were approved. During this period the present parsonage on Roberts Road was purchased.

In March, 1967, our old church building on West Street was sold. Ground was broken for our new building in August, 1967. It took the better part of a year to complete the new building and the first service was held on August 25, 1968. Dr. William A. Young preached that morning and at a meeting of the congregation following the service was called to become our pastor.

A special word of thanks is due those dedicated pastors who served us so well during the time we were without full-time ministers.

We also thank all the faithful members and friends who have given of their time and means to bring us to this place in our history. We are grateful to Almighty God for the rich blessings we enjoyed in the old church and for the opportunities of service and rich fellowship He has provided for us in our beautiful new surroundings.