

# **A Brief History Of The Appleton Church Of Christ**

Thought the details are sketchy, through the work of a preacher, Wayne Sullivan, and a few others, in the early 60's things began to develop into what would eventually be known as the Appleton church of Christ. There is solid proof of it being in existence in 1968.

Though there was possibly an interruption of brethren meeting from Lord's Day to Lord's Day in the early 70's, there was a time that members met in a rented facility (possibly a schoolhouse) over on the west side near Spencer & Bluemound in the mid to late 70's.

The history of this congregation meeting on Newberry Street can more certainly be traced back to the late 70's, when brethren met in the Odd Fellows Hall on Badger Ave. Arnold Sabsowitz, along with his wife Marilyn, came to this area after he completed a preacher training school in CA, with the intention of working with the church in Green Bay. But, when that fell through, he was encouraged by brethren in Waupaca to work in Appleton and so he and new Christians, JR & Mavis Siegler, and Dave & Kim Mentzel (all from Waupaca) did so. Dave and Linda Chroninger came soon also and this with maybe a couple others constituted the group in 1979.

After a couple years, the Sabsowitz's moved to WA, as did the Siegler's, but Dave Mentzel continued on doing the preaching, and along with the Chroninger's and by then a few others, kept the new work going at the Odd Fellows Hall on through the 80's. It was during this time that George Crowell was baptized, and later Karen. Steve Seeger helped with the preaching for awhile.

Then in March of 1988, evangelist, Reggie Finch moved here to labor and continued until 1992, when he moved out of state. It was during the years that Reggie was here that plans were made to purchase a lot for the eventual building of a church building. The location of 3601 E. Newberry St. is actually two lots that were originally owned by a bank who intended to build on a branch here, but they changed their mind (possibly due to finding out that there was not going to be an exit off of the future highway 441...it was not in existence at the time) and the church got a good deal and construction soon got under way.

The original building was an auditorium in what is now the class rooms area (though with vaulted ceiling) and the present middle section, though arranged somewhat different than it is now. It was occupied in 1990-91. Since, there have been a series of expansions. Additional parking spaces have been made twice, and it is even now being done a third time in 2014. Two additional classrooms in the area that is now the main foyer were the first structural additions. And then in 2008 a new auditorium was built, the old auditorium turned into class rooms and the middle section majorly changed as well.

After Reggie Finch moved in 1992, Jeff Guenthner regularly would travel down from Antigo once a month to help with the preaching until Whit Sasser moved from New Hampshire to work with the group full time beginning the first Sunday of 1993. The group at that time numbered about 15-20. Of those, only George & Karen Crowell, Christine Nadolny, Ginnie Peters and Teresa Lind remain to this day (2014). Soon after Whit's arrival, in the same year, newlyweds, Tim & Nancy White placed membership, as did Tina (Murray) Fischer (now in Arkansas). Though other new ones came that first year or two, over half the group moved away during that same time period, so that the regular attendance was still in teens or twenties through most of the 90's.

In the early 2000's the membership quickly grew to 50-60, with some coming over after the closing of the New London church, and others moving in from out of town, and still others added by conversions and restorations. By the late 2000's

the crowds were regularly numbering 80-90 in the old smaller auditorium, to where pews were being placed very close together, so that knees touched the pew in front and chairs were placed in the middle aisle. It became obvious that a bigger meeting hall had to be built. It was a wonderful problem to have (seating everyone) but no one complained.

A significant milestone of this flock was the selection of shepherds (elders) in late 2007 and deacons a few months later. At one time or another, Bill Martin, John McNeill, Jeff Krumrei & Whit Sasser have served in the capacity of pastors and Ed Myers, John McNeill, Wade Wells, Jeff Krumrei & John Halambeck have served as deacons.

Currently, the attendance at most Sunday morning worship hours is 100-120. The number at the other three assembly hours average 70-80.

Written in late 2014 by: Whit Sasser, with the assistance of George Crowell and JR Siegler.