

Celebrating 175 Years of Faith, Family and Community



DeWitt United Methodist Church

DeWitt, Iowa

June 24, 2018

***"Our vision is to connect with and care for
God and People."***

OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS OVER THE YEARS

In 1843, our humble beginnings started with three dedicated couples meeting in family homes. The town of DeWitt had recently changed its name from Vandenburg.

By 1850 participation had grown and support for a building led to construction of our first church. The building no longer remains - it was located at 701 11th Street.

The population of DeWitt began to swell— reaching 5,500 with the advent of the Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska railroad route through town.

The story is told that Sunday services included an interruption to worship so the men could run outside to calm frightened horses each time the train came through town!



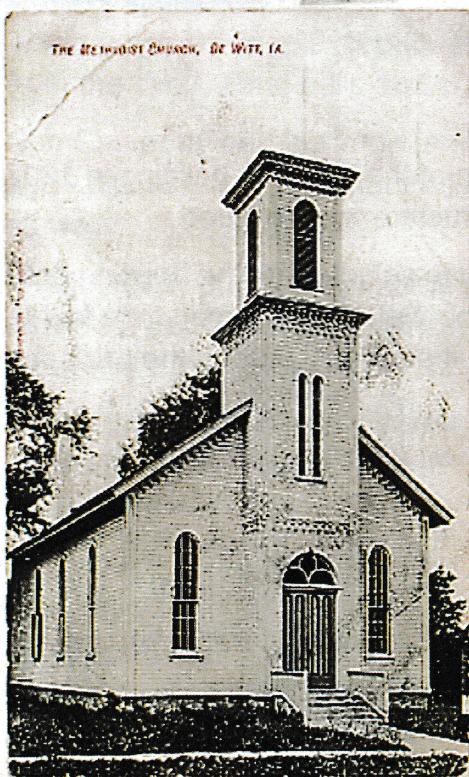
Increased church membership and growth of the Sunday school program led to a “busting at the seams”. So, a second and larger building was built. It stood at the corner of 7th Avenue and 11 Street - near where the back of Randy’s Market is today.

Extensive improvements were made to the building in 1864, again to keep up with the growing membership and activities. The bell was purchased for \$270! It remains in the current bell tower.

In 1869 the church had 201 members and paid a salary of \$950 to the minister.

Membership dropped decidedly when the Clinton County courthouse was relocated to Clinton in 1873.

However, pastoral leadership is credited with a recovery and steady increase in membership through the early 1900s.



2nd Church - corner of 11St @ 7th Ave.
Used from 1861 to 1910



3rd Church- in 900 block of 5th Ave.
Used from 1910 to 1959

After the condemnation of the church's building in 1907, it was clear that a new structure was required.

A site on 5th Avenue was selected for the building estimated to cost \$3,000. Completed and cornerstone laid in 1910, the congregation felt a permanence in the brick structure.

However, the feeling went up in smoke 23 years later, when the building suffered extensive fire damage. The fire was blazing when first spotted by church members meeting in the sanctuary.

The congregation met in the Iowa Mutual basement until the church was restored a few months later.

The beloved brick and stained glass served the community for 49 years.