

Brief History of the Evangelical Lutheran Friedensgemeinde (Peace) Church of City of Clayton, Clayton County, Iowa

The congregation was organized in 1903 and held services on the upper floor of Woodman's Hall in Clayton, Iowa, which was located next to the Clayton school. Services were held there from 1903 – 1924. Per the deed, the Lutherans purchased the second floor from the Woodsman Lodge on June 25, 1906.

On November 29, 1924, the congregation purchased the deed to the 1st Methodist Church of Clayton on lot 1, block 9 and lot 1 block 10 in Clayton, Iowa, for \$800.

Furnishings transferred from Woodman's Hall to the church building were 2 pastor chairs, black crucifix, long handled offering basket, candle sticks, 3 square tables and 5 chairs.

The altar, platform and altar window were provided by the Mary's & Martha's women's organization sometime after the group organized in 1926.

Early lighting was provided by kerosene reflector lamps on the side walls. Later, gas lamps with mantles that were pumped full of air provided lighting. Electricity was installed in the 1940's.

The pews were pine and attached to the walls of the church. These were later replaced with oak pews purchased at \$10 each from St. Paul's church in Monona.

The first piano in the church came from a dance hall. The first organ was an Epworth pump organ.

In 1969, the church was re-plastered, and in the early 1970's all the woodwork was refinished as well as the floor.

In 1977, the church was "raised" and a new foundation and full basement with outside access was completed. The basement included a bathroom, kitchen, and Sunday School space.

In 1992, the steeple was completely restored to its original state.

In later years, a ramp to improve handicap accessibility and a stair chair lift were installed.

The congregation as well as the Mary's & Martha's group continue to be active. Services continue to be held weekly all year round.

Sources: Louise Liers Clayton County Picture History Book courtesy of Kent Werges; History written in 1993 by Stella Szemkus; History article compiled by Stella Szemkus and Katherine Clefish; 1993 Congregation Anniversary Booklet; information from Vicki Spiker

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