

written in 1938

A Church with an Interesting Background

WE came over in the Mayflower along with all the other Congregational Churches in America.

We belong to a great fellowship of Congregational and Christian Churches (merged in 1925), numbering about one million members.

The Congregational Churches make no claim to any monopoly on truth or virtue. The following emphases, however, are characteristic:

Democracy in government and spirit

Intellectual Freedom

Higher Education

World-wide Missions

Social Action

Church Unity

Plymouth Church, Des Moines, was founded on December 6, 1857, with a membership of eleven. In its early years it was widely known as an "abolition" church. Until 1927, it was situated in the downtown section. In that year the present building was completed and the new Plymouth, a merger of old Plymouth, Greenwood and Waveland, moved into its new location.

Plymouth is the largest Congregational church in Iowa and one of the leading churches of the denomination. Its history of eighty-one years is the story of thousands of people, who, under the leadership of their nine ministers, have made Plymouth a powerful influence in the life of this community and for the Kingdom of God.

A Church of Many People

IN eighty-one years, the membership has grown from 11 to 1504. (Warning: Statistics do not tell the real story about a church!)

During the last year, we received into our fellowship 119 new members. In the past nine years, 795 new members have joined Plymouth.

People from seventeen different denominations are included in our fellowship.

Plymouth people go to church. Our total attendance at Sunday services this last year was 23,847. Our average attendance was 533, which is our best record to date. We are happy that so many young people are included in our attendance.

We hope that Plymouth people find it easy to worship when they go to church. The beautiful Gothic architecture of our sanctuary, the excellence of our music, the simple dignity of our ritual, the reverence and participation of worshipers, all help to create, we hope, an atmosphere conducive to worship.

tivities. It is widely used now. It ought to be even more widely used.

The present church was built in 1927 at a cost of \$475,000. The indebtedness has been materially reduced over the past years. Our present indebtedness is \$183,275. When the depression came, this debt was a cause of much difficulty and anxiety. We have at last, however, reached a satisfactory settlement with the first mortgage bondholders, who hold \$149,375 of the total bonds. They have made concessions. They have reduced the interest from $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ to $3\frac{1}{2}\%$. They have agreed to accept from the church the sum of \$6,500 annually, which covers interest payment and reduction on principal. This agreement holds good for ten years.

This arrangement lifts the burden of uncertainty from our minds. We know now where we are, financially speaking. We also know that this is an obligation that we can meet.

Furthermore, it gives us opportunity to make an attempt at meeting our obligation to the second bondholders (holding \$33,900 of the total bonds). They have been most cooperative and have all agreed to accept a reduction in interest from 6% to 3%. And we are going to do our best to pay off the principal, as quickly as funds allow.

With this new financial set-up, we can now look forward to improvements that need to be made and to an expansion of our work that needs to be achieved. We ought to have a full-time paid director of religious education. We ought to be using our social and recreational facilities more widely. There is much additional service that we could render, if we had more funds.

We need no longer feel hampered by the size of our building debt. We need no longer be discouraged by uncertainty in regard to it. Now we can go forward!

Now is the psychological moment for going forward. Now is the time to increase the income of our church, so that we can go forward. Now is the time for all of us to cooperate toward that end.

Plymouth Church is a church worthy of our highest enthusiasm and our utmost support!