

MANUAL
OF
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF
DES MOINES:

INCLUDING THE GENESIS OF CONGREGATIONALISM, HISTORY OF
THE CHURCH, ARTICLES OF FAITH AND COVENANT,
BY-LAWS OF THE CHURCH, LIST OF MEMBERS,
* AND BY-LAWS OF THE SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1879.

DES MOINES:
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HISTORICAL NOTICE.

THE PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of Des Moines Iowa, was organized Dec. 6th, 1857, and the following persons entered into covenant at that time: Geo. S. Greene, Irene E. Greene, Edward W. Barnum, Mary E. Barnum, Henry A. Bigelow, Joseph T. Cook, Martha A. Cook, Levi Richardson, Jane B. Richardson, Jemima Lovejoy. Rev. Joseph T. Cook was installed over the church as its Pastor, March 10, 1858. Mr. Cook resigned his charge and was dismissed February 23d, 1859. The church was without a stated preacher from the dismissal of Mr. Cook, until October 1st, 1859, when Mr. J. M. Chamberlain, of West Brookfield, Mass., Andover, Class of 1858, commenced his labors as stated supply. He was ordained at Des Moines, December 14, 1859, and installed as Pastor of Plymouth Church, December 19, 1860. Mr. Chamberlain resigned his charge and was dismissed in October, 1865. The Church was without a Pastor until September, 1866, when Rev. Henry S. De Forrest accepted a call to the pastorate. His ministry continued until June, 1870, when the pulpit again became vacant. The present Pastor, Rev. A. L. Frisbie, was installed in November, 1871.

GENESIS OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

Associations and memories most precious and venerable must ever cluster around the Plymouth Church. God shook all the nations and churches of Europe to get a holy seed to plant the shores of the New World, and the names of MAYFLOWER and PLYMOUTH ROCK will always be suggestive of themes, the most heroic and eventful in all the history of time.

The compact of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower was the grandest step ever taken by man in the interests of human rights and religious freedom. It embodied the distinctive principles of the Congregational Church in this country, a perfect Democracy in government and sincere loyalty to Christ "the head" and only head "in all things to the Church." The primitive church at Plymouth was probably the first example of a pure Democracy the world ever saw, excepting the churches of the Apostolic age. So, fully recognizing the headship of Christ, they could but establish equality among themselves, since all were alike responsible to Him, as "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." So, too, must every child be educated that they might know the Holy scriptures which were to be their "higher law, able to make them wise unto salvation."

This intelligent apprehension of human rights, which they obtained from the Bible, has continued to diffuse its benign influence until the nation is permeated by it, from sea to sea, shaping and determining the institutions of the State and the church in the interests of impartial freedom. And when the same principles shall pervade the whole country, then will the long and bitter controversy of the nation be finally and forever settled on the sure foundation of eternal righteousness. And then shall the principles of the Mayflower compact, and the church first gathered around Plymouth Rock be inscribed upon every institution of our favored country in characters so luminous as to enlighten and bless the world, and then shall the work of Missions, of which this church has been the constant pioneer, and the admitted responsibility of the world's conversion, come to be adopted into the regular work of every church of Christ in the land.

EARLY HISTORY OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH, DES MOINES, IOWA.

In the year 1855, Geo. S. Greene and Samuel G. Stacy, came to Des Moines, with a view of locating here—Mr. Greene, from Detroit, Mich., and Mr. Stacy, from Madison, Wis. They met on the cars between Chicago and Rock Island, and learned each other's plans. Both had left home with the well settled purpose to secure, if practicable, the organization of a Congregational Church wherever they might settle, in case they should not find one already established. In the following year, having decided to make this place their home, and having been joined by their families, they agitated the question of organizing a church at once. They found one or two former Congregationalists here, who expressed sympathy with the movement, but thought the time had not yet come when a church could be successfully established. Rev. O. French, a Congregational minister formerly a Missionary in India, then residing in Knoxville, Iowa, being here on a visit, consultation was had with him, and he discouraged the enterprise as premature. So the matter rested until the following year (1857). Other Congregationalists who had come here about the same time, were E. W. Barnum and his wife, and Levi Richardson. The others named above, being desirous of uniting with some church, until it should be thought expedient to undertake the formation of a new church of their own order, after consultation with each other, and the Rev. T. Bird, pastor of the Central (N. S.) Presbyterian Church, decided to present their letters to that church, upon condition that, they should be free to go out from it, for the formation of a Congregational Church, whenever in their opinion it might seem expedient to do so. They were accordingly received into that church in the following order: Samuel G. Stacy and wife, from the Congregational Church, in Madison, Wis.; Geo. S. Greene and wife

and E. W. Barnum and wife, by letter from the Congregational Church, Detroit, Mich. Deacon Henry A. Bigelow came to this city to reside in July, 1857. He was a member of the North Congregational Church, of Portsmouth, N. H., and he, too, had come with a similar design. Soon after he came the question of forming a church was again discussed, but the brethren thought it best to defer the organization until the indications of Providence were clearer, and their strength still further increased. Mr. Stacy's health failing, he went East, and died at Syracuse, N. Y., October, 1857.

During the same fall, Rev. J. T. Cook came to Des Moines, and engaged in teaching as Principal of the Public Schools. He was a Congregational minister and favored the formation of a Congregational Church here. He also expressed a willingness to preach in connection with his other labors, without charge to the society, for six months, and a few other Congregationalists having settled in the city, it was regarded as a favorable time for the organization of a church.

To this end, letters of dismission were requested and received from the Central Presbyterian Church by those who had united with it, and a church of ten members was organized, under the name of the "Plymouth Church," by Rev. J. T. Cook, as set forth in the following certificate:

"On the 6th day of December, 1857, at their own request, I, a regularly ordained minister of Jesus Christ, and a member of the Des Moines River Association of Congregational Churches and Ministers, organized the following persons into a Congregational Church, known and styled 'The Plymouth Church,' of Des Moines, Iowa, by the adoption of the 'Articles of Government,' 'Articles of Faith,' and 'Covenant of Record' herein, and by ordaining all the customary usages known as belonging to such organizations among the primitive churches. Names as follows:

- "Geo. S. Greene and his wife, Irene E. Greene.
- "E. W. Barnum and his wife, Mary E. Barnum.
- "Levi Richardson and his wife, Jane B. Richardson.
- "Henry A. Bigelow.
- "Mrs. Jemima Lovejoy.
- "J. T. Cook and his wife, Martha A. Cook.

"And they are hereby declared to be a regularly constituted

church, having all the qualifications, rights and privileges of any of the sister churches of the same order, to the fellowship of all of whom it is most cordially recommended.

"ATTEST: J. T. COOK, *Pastor.*"

"December 7, 1857."

Articles of Government and of Faith, and a Covenant, were adopted the same day by the church, and one person, John B. Robertson, was received upon profession of his faith.

Henry A. Bigelow and Geo. S. Greene were elected deacons, and on the following Friday evening Levi Richardson was elected clerk, and Geo. S. Greene treasurer, of the church.

On Sabbath, Jan. 10, 1858, the church was increased by the addition of nine new members, viz.: Mrs. T. G. Stacy (widow of S. G. Stacy), Miss Mary A. Whittemore, Mrs. Eliza R. Rawson, Mrs. Andrew W. Rollins, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Bailey, Galen T. Kilburn, and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Carr. Mrs. Carr united upon profession of faith; the others were received by letter. Mrs. Rachael W. Bigelow united with the church by letter in March following, and Mr. and Mrs. Teesdale were received by letter in May of the same year.

During the two years following but four new members were received, whilst more than that number were lost by removal and death, leaving the church small and feeble.

On the first of January, 1858, the first subscription for the pastor's salary was raised, Deacon Greene signing one hundred dollars. Whole amount, six hundred and thirty-two dollars.

On Monday evening, Jan. 18, 1858, a meeting was held for the purpose of forming a society "to act in connection with the church in sustaining the gospel in this place." And on Feb. 1, "Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws" were adopted by the society. The names of the corporate members of the society, not then members of the Church, are as follows: F. H. Waterman, Joseph A. Stickney, Oliver H. Baker, James L. Smith, Stacy Johns, George W. Cleveland, C. C. Dawson and Franklin Woodruff. The two last named have since united with the church, and all the others, except Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Johns, have removed from the city.

At the same meeting, society officers were elected, as follows: Geo. S. Greene, president; W. T. Bailey, treasurer; J. A. Stick-

ney, secretary, and Messrs. Teesdale, Greene, Waterman, Dawson and Carr, trustees.

The meetings of the sixth of December were held in the room over Mr. Allen's bank, in West's block, the room having been neatly fitted up and furnished mainly by the liberality of Deacon Greene.

No meetings for worship had been held prior to this date. The church continued to worship here until the sixth day of May, 1858. On the 13th of that month they commenced worshipping in Sherman's hall.

The church occupied this hall but one month, after which public services were discontinued until the completion of the house on Court Avenue. This was completed in October, 1858, when public services were immediately resumed. The house was publicly dedicated to the worship of God, by appropriate services, November 7, 1858.

Rev. J. T. Cook resigned his situation in the public school soon after the organization of the church and devoted himself entirely to its interest.

On February 8, 1858, the church voted to invite him to become their pastor, and Geo. S. Greene, H. A. Bigelow and W. T. Bailey were appointed a committee to extend the invitation to him, and to make arrangements for the installation.

Mr. Cook, in a suitable letter, accepted the call of the church, and his installation took place on the 10th of March, 1858.

In January following he tendered his resignation, which was not accepted by the church; but he repeated it the next month, Feb. 20th, and it was accepted by the society on Wednesday evening, February 23d.

The church, although weakened by the removal and absence of valuable members, and among them Deacon G. S. Greene, who died Dec. 14, 1859, determined if possible, to supply the place vacated by Mr. Cook.

A committee being appointed for that purpose, correspondence was opened with several clergymen both east and west. An invitation was finally extended to Rev. Mr. Fifield, of Northern Iowa, to visit Des Moines, with a view to settlement as Pastor of the church. Mr. Fifield at first concluded to come, but his own people were so earnest in their opposition, he reluctantly withdrew his

letter of acceptance, and the church remained without a pastor until the following August, when a call was extended to the Rev. J. M. Chamberlain, recently from Andover Seminary, and accepted by him.

Meanwhile the pulpit was supplied by the several ministers of the city in alternation, and by the occasional services of pastors from abroad, so that public services were sustained nearly every Sabbath.

At a church meeting on December 4, 1859, it was voted to unite with Rev. J. M. Chamberlain in calling a Council for his ordination, and Deacon G. S. Greene was appointed to act in behalf of the church. Wednesday, the 14th, was appointed as the day for the Council to sit, at 2 o'clock, P. M. The churches in Bellvue, Grinnell, and Newton, were invited, as also, the churches of this city. The Council met at the time appointed. Rev. T. H. Canfield, was chosen Moderator, and J. Teesdale, Scribe.

The examination was conducted by Rev. Messrs. Canfield and Bartlett, and was satisfactory, and Mr. Chamberlain was ordained December 14, 1859. In October of the following year, Mr. Chamberlain was invited to become the Pastor of the church, by the unanimous vote of the church and society. He accepted the call, and was installed in due form, December 19th, Dr. Ed. Beecher, of Galesburg, Ill., preaching the sermon.

The revision of the "Articles of Faith and Covenant," and "Rules of the Church," were referred to a committee in 1861, and after a very thorough discussion of each article separately, occupying the attention of the church and pastor for several evenings, were finally adopted, December 25th, 1861.

At this time the church voted to observe the "Monthly Concert" of prayer for Missions, as also, the monthly series of Mission Concerts.

Still further, "articles relating to church organization and government" were adopted, January 13th, 1864. During a part of this year, the pastor was with the army in Georgia, under the auspices of the Christian Commission. He returned from this service and resumed his pastoral work with the church; but some opposition being developed, he presented his resignation the following year, which, after much discussion and delay, was finally accepted by the church, on the 17th of October, 1865.

For nearly a year the church was without a pastor. During this

time they extended a call to the Rev. J. G. Manly and Rev. L. J. White. But, failing to secure the services of either, in October, 1866, they voted to call Rev. H. S. De Forest, which was accepted. Under his labors the church increased in number, and during the following year a revival of religion was enjoyed, and, as the result, eighteen were added to the church on profession of their faith, on the 8th of March.

At the communion season, on the 3d of May, 1868, twenty-two were added to the fellowship of the church. During this and the year following, about sixty were added to the membership.

In April, 1870, Mr. De Forest tendered his resignation of the pastoral office, to take effect on the last Sabbath of June, 1870, which was accepted, with great reluctance.

In September of this year Rev. S. P. Sloan, of McGregor, received and accepted a call to the vacant pastorate, which failed of being consummated by his untimely death, on the 29th of October.

Temporary supplies by Magoun, Miles and others, were obtained for the pulpit, until September, 1871, when Rev. A. L. Frisbie, of Danbury, Connecticut, received and accepted a call to become the pastor of the church. He was duly installed in office by council, on the 7th of November.

A committee on hymn books reported to a meeting of the church in December, recommending a change in favor of the "Songs of the Sanctuary," by Robinson. The change was immediately effected.

After prayer-meeting, January 4th, 1872, a committee of ladies was appointed for the purpose of acting in concert with the pastor in promoting the social interests of the church, viz: Mrs. Miles, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Sparhawk, Mrs. Kissell, Mrs. Sprague, Mrs. Rawson, Mrs. Sibley, Mrs. Osgood and Miss Anna Weeks.

The sudden death of Mrs. Frisbie occurred on May 15th. Her funeral was attended from the church, Friday, May 17th, at 4 o'clock, P. M., the other pastors of the city officiating.

In the autumn of this year the pastor gave a series of lectures to young men on Sabbath evenings, which awakened a lively and general interest among the young.

Sunday, February 23, a union meeting of the city churches was commenced, under the direction of Rev. E. P. Hammond, of Conn. The meetings were held in the Central Church, and continued for

over two weeks, and were crowded to overflowing. Many expressed a hope in Christ, and united with the different churches of the city. This church received an accession of thirty-three on the 4th of May, the largest number ever received to its communion at one time, by profession.

On the 29th of July, 1873, in Danbury, Conn., the pastor, A. L. Frisbie, was married to Miss Martha Crosby. They were welcomed home August 27th, to their own house, open and made ready, by a rejoicing church.

In December, 1875, a resolution was adopted instructing the deacons to obtain and hereafter furnish for the communion table wine unfermented and free from alcohol.

A committee consisting of M. N. Miles, C. E. Wingate, and G. H. Lewis (Mr. Lewis afterward resigned, and J. M. Otis was appointed in his place), was appointed January 1, 1877, to prepare a complete history of this church down to the present time.

Preaching and communion for the last time in the old church, on Sunday, September 10, 1876. On the next Sabbath, the preaching was in the opera house, and on the ensuing Sabbath in the Baptist Church. From that time we were drifting about; part of the time with the Baptist Church and part with the M. E. Church, on Fifth street.

On the 3d day of December, services were held for the first time in the basement of the new church.

On the 14th of January, 1877, it was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the church and congregation, with undissembled joy, took possession of "their holy and beautiful house," humbly entreating a gracious God that He would make it to many souls in the long succession of future years none other than "the gate of Heaven." Dedication sermon by the pastor, and prayer by President Magoun, of Iowa College. To the very interesting services of the evening, Brethren Pickett, Gill and Berry contributed.

At a meeting held during this month, the committee on revision of the By-Laws, reported a change of the time of the annual church meeting to the last Monday of October.

The General Association of Congregational Churches of Iowa met with the Plymouth Church of this city, at their regular annual

meeting, May 30, 1877, and was opened with a sermon by Rev. James Powell, of Chicago, on Wednesday evening.

The attendance upon the meeting was larger than at any previous meeting of the Association, and the presence of several foreign missionaries, together with the meetings of the "Woman's Board" of Missions, made it an occasion of surpassing interest to our people.

In regard to a *place* of worship during these early years, it should be said, the church first assembled in the room over Allen's Bank, and then, for a short time, in Sherman's Hall.

During the ministry of Mr. Cook, in the summer of 1858, a small house, 26 by 42, was erected on Court Avenue, near the present post-office, but the land was leased. And during Mr. Chamberlain's ministry this building was removed to the society's lot, on Locust street. It was repaired and enlarged at different times, and continued to be used until the fall of 1876, when it was torn away to give place to the present structure.

Early in the year 1875, the subject of the erection of a new church edifice began to be seriously entertained, and committees were appointed upon the subject of "plans" and "style of architecture," upon "location" and "cost of construction."

At an adjourned meeting of the Society, on the 29th of March of this year, it was moved and voted unanimously, that the corner lot adjoining the old site, be purchased from Mr. Coggsall, and the church erected thereon.

At a meeting held on the 3d of May, it was decided, on motion of Mr. Frisbie, to receive sealed bids for the construction of a building after the present Gothic style.

A building committee consisting of J. P. Foster, John Browne, J. R. Rollins, C. H. Atkins, and J. H. Merrill, was appointed on the 12th of June.

Several other meetings were held in the course of the year to decide upon the cost of the structure, and on the 20th of March, 1876, on motion of Gov. Merrill, the building committee were instructed to proceed and erect a church building substantially in keeping with the latest Gothic plans submitted, the cost not to exceed \$22,500.

Accordingly in May contracts were made with Messrs. Robert-

son and Stickles to erect the house. Mr. Robertson to do the masonry, and Stickles the carpenter work.

The cost of the structure, as usual, greatly exceeded the estimates, and was found, including the expense of the site and all incidentals, to amount to very nearly thirty-seven thousand dollars.

COPY OF THE FIRST SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE SUPPORT OF
PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

For the purpose of paying the salary of the pastor of the Plymouth Church, and the current expenses of said church for the term of one year, commencing on the 1st of January, 1858, we the undersigned promise to pay to the Trustees of the Plymouth Congregational Society, the sums set opposite our names, respectively; said sums to be paid in quarterly payments, the first payment to be due on the 1st day of April next:

Geo. S. Greene.....	\$100 00	G. T. Kilburn.....	\$20 00
Henry A. Bigelow.....	50 00	Gustavus Washburn...	35 00
E. W. Barnum.....	25 00	J. Teesdale.....	25 00
Levi Richardson	25 00	A. W. Rollins.....	20 00
C. C. Dawson.....	25 00	J. L. Smith.....	20 00
G. W. Cleveland	25 00	D. Harris.....	20 00
Oliver H. Baker	35 00	J. R. Rollins.....	25 00
F. H. Waterman.....	25 00	Andrew W. Rollins...	25 00
S. V. White.....	25 00	Jemima Lovejoy.....	12 00
J. A. Stickney.....	25 00	F. Woodruff.....	15 00
W. T. Bailey.....	25 00	Mrs. A. Y. Rawson....	10 00
Daniel Carr.....	20 00		

CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT.

I. NAME.

This church shall be called "The Plymouth Congregational Church of Des Moines."

II. ORGANIC PRINCIPLES.

1. A Congregational church is any number of believers associated by a mutual covenant, for the maintenance of the worship of God and the ordinances of the Gospel, and for the cultivation of holiness.

2. The Bible is the sufficient and only constitution and the supreme law of such a church, and on all questions of doctrine and practice, is the only standard of appeal, though each church has its articles of faith, setting forth the essential doctrines of the Gospel.

3. A Congregational church is not subject to any superior ecclesiastical power, but is subject only to Christ himself; and yet is associated with other churches, especially those of the same order, by the ties of christian fellowship and affection, and ought to be ever open to the influence of their fraternal advice and admonition, which also ought to be sought in important and critical cases.

4. It is the right of the church to frame and administer its own government and laws; to elect and qualify its own officers; to order and conduct its own worship; and to control the admission, discipline and removal of its members, according to its own understanding of the word of God, independent of all other ecclesiastical bodies.