

## July Bi-Centennial Moment of the Mentor United Methodist Church

Following the completion of the sanctuary in 1963 and the installation of the new church organ in the 1970s, there began discussion of what to do with the 1906 sanctuary. This 1906 structure had been condemned by the Mentor Fire Department for structural and foundation issues. The old sanctuary held many pleasant memories for many church members but it was agreed it had to go. In the late 1970s a long range committee was created to make recommendations. It concluded that the old sanctuary was to be razed, a new fellowship hall erected, plus a new kitchen and other facilities. In 1984 a Church Conference called for the creation of a new building study committee. This committee made a complete study of the entire building and made its' recommendations at the Church Conference of 1985. Roland Newman was elected chair of this committee and Ron Lingafelter was named vice. The committee was made up of a cross section of the congregation including age, gender, as well as interests. The Senior minister at the time was Rev. Don Adams and the president of the Trustees was Charles Trautman.

The result of the committees planning was the creation of a new Chapel which would sit on the exact site as the old sanctuary. The stained glass dome from the old sanctuary was preserved and installed in the new Chapel, which retained the same architectural design, Western Reserve, as the rest of the building. Much of the remaining stained glass was saved and installed around the church. The Breezeway connection the sanctuary with the chapel was enclosed. The project also included the construction of a parlor, now known as the Adams Parlor, as well as a new, much larger Fellowship Hall seating around 400. New church offices were also built. A Bride's Room was included. The new parlor was furnished through monetary gifts from members of the congregation. The cost of the entire project was \$1.2 million dollars.

The congregation continues to enjoy these facilities this day. The Chapel, intended for memorial services and wedding, also is the site for Thursday night worship services held in the summer. Fellowship Hall is now the site for the iConnect worship every Sunday. Cicirello Construction of Perry constructed the project while Phillip's Stained Glass Studio of Cleveland handled the dome in the Chapel.

Consecration Services for the project were held on July 24, 1988. The sermon was given by Bishop James Thomas. Roland Newman gave the Act of Consecration. The Declaration was given by Rev. Richard Lehto, then District Superintendent of the Painesville District and later senior minister here. In December 1988 Mentor United Methodist Church was awarded best design for its new addition by the Mentor Building Commission.

The church has enjoyed these additions for the past thirty years. They remain much loved and much used sections of the church. Eventually, discussions were held to make even more changes to the church. But that is a subject for another Bi-Centennial Moment.