

Copy of the back page of the 90th Anniversary church bulletin, dated May 17, 1953 of The Peters Memorial Presbyterian Church, Sidney and Minnesota Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. The corner stone of this church was laid by Frederick P. Baggerman. William J. and Emma L. Baggerman were members there for all of their married life. William J. served as an elder and was chairman and treasurer of the building committee which built the later church building in about 1932.

29.

### *A church with vision . . .*

In the archives of the church there is an old book with a worn leather cover. On its cover is inscribed "Sessional records of the First German Presbyterian Church O. S., St. Louis, Mo. 18th day of May 1863." The first act recorded is the following:

"The committee appointed by the St. Louis Presbytery, O. S. to organize a German Presbyterian congregation O. S. in the city of St. Louis, Mo., consisting of the Rev. J. H. Brooks, Rev. W. H. Parks and A. G. Edwards, elder, met at 7½ p.m. in the basement of the Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis."

Beginning in 1847 there was a small group of Hollanders who met for worship in the home of one of their number. People of German and Swiss descent soon associated themselves with this group and Peters Memorial Presbyterian Church, then known as the First German Presbyterian Church, was organized sixteen years later.

Rev. Adalbert Vander Lippe, D.D., accepted a call to become the first Pastor of the church. Through the stormy days of the Civil War he and his faithful congregation persevered. When financial assistance came from Pastor Vander Lippe's relatives in Central Europe the congregation left their store front church and built their first sanctuary at 10th and Rutger Streets. One of the early obstacles was the payment of a debt which would have defeated many a congregation. \$6,200.00 remained to be paid of the original cost of \$10,000.00, when a tornado inflicted damages of \$1,200.00. Add to this the fact that the congregation had just spent \$1,500.00 in remodelling the building, plus an interest rate of nine per cent, and you begin to appreciate the perseverance of this early congregation. That debt was paid off, a manse was built next door to the church, and the church prospered in every way. A pamphlet, "Das Palmblatt", published in 1891 shows the church had a membership of 180. Twenty-five new members had been added in that year. Average attendance at the School was 119, and the congregational expenditures amounted to \$3,449.68.

Another momentous decision was to change the location of the church and to hold all services in the English language. By this time the city was expanding at a rapid rate. For many years Jefferson Avenue had been the city limits. Members were now establishing homes west of this boundary. At its best, transportation by street car was inconvenient. The younger generation was no longer familiar with the German language. The decision to relocate the church and to use the English language is a clear evidence of progressive attitude of the people who are usually looked upon as very conservative and slow to adopt such far reaching changes. So in 1916 the First German Presbyterian Church became the Sidney Street Presbyterian Church at Sidney and Minnesota.

In 1929 the present sanctuary was built and the educational facilities were expanded. A fine Kilgen organ was given to the church by the Peters family as a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Peters. In recognition of the devoted service over a long period of years which Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Peters gave to the church the following resolution was enthusiastically adopted by the congregation in 1930. "BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Peters, whose loyalty and faithfulness to the cause of Christ in this part of the Kingdom was greatly responsible for the privileges and blessings we now enjoy, we take immediate steps to incorporate our new church under the name of the Peters Memorial Presbyterian Church. . . ."

We give thanks to Almighty God on this ninetieth anniversary that we are the heirs of such a goodly heritage. We give thanks too for the blessings which have come to us in the fellowship by which we are bound to Christ, our Lord. We earnestly pray that we may be worthy of these blessings, and that we may show our worthiness in loyalty to Christ and His Church.

...and courage!

Bob