

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Stephen Lee arrived in Green Oak Township from New York State in the fall of 1830. Benjamin Curtis and his family also arrived about the same time. In June, 1831, the Curtis family joined with the Lees at the Lee home (just south of town) and were led in a worship service by Rev. Moses Gleason, a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Gleason left the area because of the Black Hawk War but to him goes the distinction of having conducted the first religious service in the Brighton Area. Since there were no regular classes in the Area, many Methodist residents attended services when Rev. W. A. Clark, D.D., (of St. Paul's Episcopal Church fame) who was a resident since 1836, preached.

During the early 1830s the Methodists met in a part of a new store on Grand River owned by Wm. R. Cobb. By 1843 religious meetings were held at the newly constructed home of Daniel C. Marsh on the corner of Grand River and Ann Arbor Roads (Rickett Road). Worship services were conducted by local residents and circuit riders.

In 1854, the Brighton congregation was separated from the Milford charge and given a separate appointment, the Rev. Wm. Haviner. The Society organized itself under Michigan law as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Brighton. After a school house was erected on Grand River, services were conducted there until subscriptions were secured for a church building which was dedicated in September, 1856. The church contained a balcony and had a handsome steeple containing a bell and one large and four smaller spinacles.

Under the supervision of Wm. Walker Gray, pastor 1902-06, the original church was razed and a new one erected. This was a frame building with a seating capacity of 150. In 1915, approximately, the church was closed for several years and the parsonage rented. Following World War I, new interest arose and by June, 1920, the Ladies Aid Society had raised \$400 toward support of a pastor and improvement of the property. The minister served Oak Grove Methodist Church and later Novi Methodist Church in addition to the church in Brighton.

In 1962, the east unit of the present church was built. When completed, the wooden church and parsonage on Grand River in front of the new building was razed. The home and land immediately to the north of the church was purchased in 1963. The most recent addition has been a church school facility to the west which was completed in 1977. Additional property on Brighton Lake Rd., known as the "Green House" was acquired in 1981.

For the past 154 years, the Methodists have been worshipping in Brighton. In 1984, their Christian witness is still evident. (Excerpts from "History" of the church.)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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NO SUCH NUMBER

