

Michigan Territory's first Protestant congregation was the First Presbyterian Church of Detroit, organized in 1826. From that beginning developed many other Presbyterian churches in the Southeastern Michigan area, including Brighton. Rev. & Mrs. Chauncey Osborne arrived in 1852, to form a new congregation. December 11, 1853, in their home, ten persons founded this First Church within the area which would become Brighton Village in 1867. Among the Articles of Faith originally adopted was the congregation's policy of being an "anti-slavery" congregation - a hot issue in the America of the 1850s.

By 1857, a parcel of land, part of the present site, was acquired on the Plank Road (Grand River Road). March 3, 1858, a white frame building, 32x48, was dedicated. Worshipers now did not need to make use of other buildings such as homes, schoolhouse, etc.

By 1882 membership included 65 adults. In 1915, apparently for economic benefits and to strengthen their Christian witness, this First Presbeyterian and the First Baptist churches decided to federate. Some awkwardness resulted since each kept their own property. For a while there were two sanctuaries and two manses.

This joint congregation used the Presbyterian sanctuary until 1927 when the 70 year old, much altered and enlarged structure, was sold and moved around the corner to W. North Street where it served as a warehouse for many years. On the original site was built the present 'Early English Country Gothic' brick sanctuary, the cornerstone laid January 1, 1922, with completion in July of that year.

During the wintry afternoon of March 2, 1943, a disasterous fire gutted the interior of the building. Damage was so severe the original balcony was torn down and the building not occupied for many months. Altered from the original on the interior, the rebuilding was completed after specific approval (because of wartime restrictions on non-military construction) of the U.S. Congress was acquired.

In 1961 it was decided to dissolve the federation begun 46 years before and the two churches became one, January 14, 1962. In that year the Mellus Hospital next door was purchased for a classroom and office facility. Population growth in the area beginning in the mid-1960s caused the congregation, in 1974, to buy the 4½ acre site to the south for future expansion. Enlargement of the education and youth ministries required the hiring of two associate pastors at the time.

Membership growth in the late 1970s determined a need for more facilities. In September, 1980, groundbreaking occurred for a 12,000 square foot addition. Corner stone laying ceremonies were held December 21, 1980, and dedication took place February, 1981. As additional funds are acquired the structure will be completed so this congregation can continue into its second century with its mission in the Brighton area.

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