HISTORY

of

BREMEN METHODIST CHURCH
Since our church does not have records from which early history may be obtained, it has been impossible to give authentic dates. The exact date when our church was organized is not known, however the corner stone of our present building gives 1899 as the year in which the church was organized.

Many interesting stories have been told by Old Timers about our early church. The first building was erected after a tent revival. This building was on what is now a vacant lot in the old part of town. Soon after its erection it was decided to move the building nearer the center of the town (which was called Kramer at that time). Several years later this building was demolished by a wind storm. It was decided to build the new church on a lot donated by Mr. George Hamilton. Trees for the lumber for the building were donated by Dr. M. K. Phillips. Much of the labor was donated by members of the church and others interested in the church. While the building was under construction services were held in the Northern Methodist Church. The building was begun in 1899 and completed during that year. It served our community until November 1938 when the present building was completed.

The lot on which our present church stands is 140 ft. by 400 ft. It was bought for $500. The building itself is made of varigated brick walls, asbestos roof, stained glass memorial windows and maple floors. The beautiful flooring was donated by one of the life long members of the church. The pews were bought by the Woman's Society of Christian Service at the cost of $1,000.00. The entire cost of the church was $12,000. This was paid for as it was built. It contains an auditorium and ten class rooms. The first church service was held in the new church the first Sunday in November, 1938. It was dedicated in September 1939 by Bishop Decell. The deeds to our church properties contain the Trust Clause.
In the beginning our church was served by a pastor who preached at Buchanan also. At that time the Parsonage was located in Buchanan. We became a separate charge in 1920. Our first Parsonage was bought then. It was a small house having three rooms and a hall. This was partially renovated and made ready for our pastor, Bro. Carmichael. A few changes and improvements were made through the years until 1935 when Bro. W. L. Brackman came to us with his family of four boys. We realized the need for more room. The parsonage was sold for $1,000.00 and another bought for $1,500.00. This served until 1940. Bro. Bill Boring pointed out that the parsonage did not compare favorably with our church of which we were so proud. A committee was appointed - the parsonage sold for $1,800.00 and work on the new parsonage started on a beautiful lot donated by Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Bell. The building is made of brick, Mount Vernon style. It was built at the cost of $7,500.00. The Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild have added to its furnishings from time to time. As a church we are justly proud of our parsonage.

Sunday School has always been a vital part of the church life of Bremen. Certainly in the early 1890's there was a Methodist Sunday School here. Many middle aged men and women recall the teaching of Mrs. May, Mrs. C. A. Upshaw, Mrs. Summerlin, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Field, Mr. Mark Brown and many others. We have grown from an average attendance of about 50 in 1935 to an average of 240 at present.

The first Missionary Society, as such, was organized in 1936. Up until that time the Ladies organization was known as the Ladies Aid. The first W.M.S. had 14 members. The present W.S.C.S. has 72 members and the Wesleyan Service Guild between 30 and 40 members. It is not known what was donated to all causes the first year, but for the year 1950-51 over $1,800.00 has been contributed by the ladies organizations.
In the early years our church was small in membership. Consequently our pastor's salary was very meager. The earliest record shows that $300.00 was paid. This year our pastor's salary is $4,200.00. Our church operates on a Unified Budget. The regular and systematic contributions of the membership make this a very satisfactory plan.

Bremen Methodist Church has been very fortunate in having many able men to serve as pastor. Some who particularly stand out are Walter King, J. W. Veatch, W. L. Jolly, W. L. Brackman, Bill Boring, Hoke Sewell and Henry T. Smith.

During the pastorate of Rev. Jolly the church enjoyed a revival in which a large number of older people were brought into the church.

Rev. W. L. Brackman will always be remembered by our people because of his fearlessness in the fight to have beer and wine licenses revoked in our city. This was done and Bremen has been dry since 1936. He was the leader of the movement that brought about the joint revival. This was entered into by Baptist and Methodist and resulted in much good. The next year brought the Perry Brannen Revival the effects of which were still felt during the pastorate of Bro. Boring. The last revival held during the ministry of Bro. Brackman brought 86 into the church, 57 were on profession of faith, 29 by letter. It was during this same ministry that our present church was built.

Bro. Boring started the church planning for an organ and encouraged the membership to build the New Parsonage.

During Dr. Wills Jones stay with us chimes were installed in our church. The Hammond Organ was installed during Bro. Sewell's ministry.

At present under the wonderful leadership of Rev. Henry T. Smith our church is working toward an expansion program. Plans are being made and the funds are being donated to enlarge our Sunday School department. This is an extensive program but the halfway mark has already been reached and work is expected to begin soon.
At present our church membership is about 525.

A number of members of our church are sending our pastor to the Ecumenical Conference in Oxford England. The entire trip of one month will be financed by them.

Friday, June the 1st, 1951, was a wonderful occasion for our church. We entertained the entire Rome District pastors and Lay Leaders, Bishop Arthur J. Moore spoke in our church auditorium at 3:30 P.M. The ladies of the church served the guest with a Buffet supper in the evening.

We close the conference year 1950-51 with all claims paid - grateful hearts for the past year - and bright hopes for the future.