

CENTENNIAL --- CHURCHES OF GRANDVIEW HISTORY

The old saying, “tell me about your churches, and I’ll tell you about your community” can be very telling.

So reads the “History of Grandview Volume I”, which we used for a lot of the history of our early-day churches. Apparently Grandview was unusually fortunate in have a splendid type of people for early settlers. Since “like” attracts “like”, it was natural that those attracted here later were also of the higher type. They did not rest until their dreams came true. It was not difficult to secure good schools and churches in such a community.

In the 1920s when the history was written, Grandview was “well supplied” with churches, with at least half a dozen denominations being active. As a matter of fact, the History of Grandview tells us that by 1928 the community had 8 churches – Bethany Presbyterian, First Methodist Episcopal, Catholic Church, First Nazarene, Christian Science, Free Methodist, Seventh-day Adventist and Church of God.

The first church organized in the Grandview vicinity was the Bethany Presbyterian Church. In May of 1903, Rev. Blackman of Sunnyside began preaching every two weeks in the Euclid schoolhouse at Euclid and Mountain View roads. By December, a meeting was held at the school, and a church was organized. The first elders were Edward McGrath, David Willson and W .J. McKim.

In the spring of 1905, plans were launched to build a church building. It went up between the end of April and September, but not in town. It was built on a lot about three miles southwest of Grandview in the Orchard Tracts at Charvet Road and Appleway. The one-room church was lit by a central kerosene lantern, and heated by a soft coal stove.

After the town was platted in 1906, the congregation voted unanimously to move the church building “to town”. The move came in February, 1908, when the church was lifted up on jacks, and placed on log skids. Volunteers actually followed the move and placed planks in front of the rollers as the team of horses pulled the building forward. The mover and his family lived in the church as it was moved, and amazingly it arrived without any cracked plaster. There were a few graves at that early church, and they were eventually moved to the Grandview cemetery.

The first Methodist Episcopal preaching in this area was in the Euclid schoolhouse in the spring of 1903 by Rev. John Williams of the Prosser church. The meetings were discontinued for a time, but by 1908 the work was taken up again by Rev. Regan of the Mabton church in the Central School building, and then Moody Hall in Grandview. They had 21 people join the church that year.

The Methodist Episcopal church officially organized in 1909, and started construction of a church building Third and Ash, which was then called East “A”. It was dedicated in 1910. By 1912 they felt the need for a parsonage, and purchased its lot for \$200.

As church groups grew, they felt the need for more space. In 1920 they built a new Wesleyan Hall, "for Sunday school, social gatherings and athletic sports". It actually had a full-sized basketball court and an indoor track, with a two-story ceiling.

By the 1950s, the church was outgrowing the original building. The congregation, led by Rev. Luscombe, built a new sanctuary on Ash Street in 1957 and it was consecrated in March of 1958. It is the First Methodist Church today, and they still have a Wesleyan Hall and an educational wing on the north side of the church.

The very first church building in the town of Grandview was the Free Methodist Church at West Fourth and Avenue D. The church was first formed at a meeting in the Bethany schoolhouse in 1907, and soon moved to the Central School building. Under the ministry of Rev. C. L. Crook, the church building, 28 x 35 feet, went up in 1908, with eight charter members. The deed to the property, originally owned by the Granger Land Company, cost \$250.

By 1924 the Free Methodists had so many attending Sunday school, they divided the class in half, and some met at the Waneta schoolhouse, which was more convenient for those living outside of town.

In a few years, a parsonage was built north of the church, while they were served by Rev. Anna Hill, a woman minister, which must have been unusual in those days. There was also a partial basement added, and a 20-foot addition to the church in 1946. Pastor Howard Spurling was a builder, and he added the tower and stained glass windows to the church. Eventually the downstairs was enlarged to include a kitchen and multipurpose room.

In 1993 the Grandview Free Methodist congregation merged with the Sunnyside church, and meets there today. The church building was sold to another congregation, and today it's the last original pioneer church in town.

Another very early church in this area was the Catholic Church. When the Catholic people in the area realized there were enough who shared the faith to need a priest, they asked the Jesuits in Yakima to send a priest to say Mass at least once a month. He would come by train to Mabton and say Mass in someone's home, often on Saturdays because he had to serve other churches on Sundays.

Mass was also celebrated at Belma School. Father Shiel of Prosser said the first Mass in Grandview in 1915, and a year later Father McCarthy actually moved to Grandview, where they had services in the Keck building downtown. According to old records, he had plans for a big church, but parishioners had other ideas. The church donated \$500 and an altar, and met in the home of Thomas Lechman at first. Eventually they rented a room at the Odd Fellows hall, and the men made pews, kneelers and an altar.

By 1918, Blessed Sacrament Church, with about 150 members, built a church on Cherry Lane near the Orchard Tracts. When Father McCarthy left, they were without a priest for a time, until Father Conway was appointed. He decided the church was too far off "the beaten path", so had it moved to the east

end of Second Street. It was placed right in the middle of the street so people in town couldn't miss it!

Unfortunately, Father Conway also moved the parish to Sunnyside, and Grandview became a mission of St. Joseph's church. They still held Mass twice a month in their little building, until it was sold to the Baptist Church. It was many years, until 1954, that Grandview became a parish again. For a time Sunday Mass was held in Harriet Thompson School. Father Mulcahy became the first resident priest. They organized a fund drive, and in 1955 built a beautiful Blessed Sacrament building and parish house at Missouri and Velma Street.

From 1975 to 1985, Father John McDonnell served as Grandview's priest, and when the large new parish hall was built, and it was dedicated in his name.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Grandview was organized by W. H. Thurston in 1919. They bought a place to worship from the early Christian Church, located on A Street. Later Jasper Evans was elected Local Elder, and served for many years, being relieved by A. D. West, Charles Schoepflin and Wm. Schoepflin. The church purchased the old Lincoln School from the school district in 1937, and it became part of their church academy. Their sanctuary on North Elm was built on North Elm Street in 1952, and the old church and Lincoln School were used as their academy.

When Grandview was still a very young community, a young woman named Annie Archibald came to Grandview as an elementary teacher. She was an ardent member of the Church of the Nazarene, and felt the need for a local congregation. She would take young people to services at the Yakima First Church, and finally persuaded the District Superintendent to hold services in Grandview, which were successful. At the end of those meetings, in Sept., 1921, the Grandview Church of the Nazarene was organized with 18 members.

According to old church records, street meetings were held in Grandview, Prosser and Zillah. Pastor Anglin, their first pastor, would lead hallelujah marches around town on Sunday evenings, and a number "were saved".

By 1922, R. D. Inman, a pioneer in the valley's irrigation, donated four lots, valued at just over \$1,000, to the church. They had been meeting in an old Ford garage, but could not afford a whole new structure. Instead of a "tabernacle", they voted to build their basement first, which they did at Third and Division. The "spud cellar" as it was sometimes called, was dedicated in 1925, and they had a church membership of 70.

It would be 1938 until the small flock could afford to begin the superstructure above, which was finally dedicated in Sept. of 1942 under Rev. Eplin. Land for expansion was eventually purchased on North Elm Street in the 1980s, and a new church was built. That has also been added onto with a fellowship hall and gymnasium. They are currently led by pastors Hal Perkins and Gary Schenck.

The Christian Science Society was organized in July of 1920 in Grandview as a branch of the Mother Church in Massachusetts. Their first services were

held in the Odd Fellows Hall. Today there is not an active Christian Science church in town.

The Church of God came together in Grandview with a few members, on July 4, 1926. They organized a Sunday school, with Melvin Bishop as superintendent, and had 60 in attendance. In January of 1927 the church was organized as the Church of God of Grandview and elected as trustees: Melvin Bishop, J. R. Mott, C. E. Davis, E. V. Heater and Henry Maib.

The church's first pastor was R. W. May, and they were proud of having 50 members. A church building was constructed downtown at the northeast corner of Third and Division in 1938.

The church underwent a remodeling and enlarging project in 1959. At that time, Rev. William E. Todd announced a 20-foot extension to lengthen the building to the east, and another addition for a church office, pastor's study, six new Sunday school classrooms, a nursery, and large Sunday school worship room. They also enlarged the basement area, and added a new street level entrance with glass panels. Today that original building has been sold, and is now The Paris social hall.

The early days of the Grandview Assembly of God church date back to 1937, when Mrs. Fink came to town, and started preaching in a garage on Avenue "A". The first worship services were in a building on Highway 12 (now Wine Country Road) and were pastored by Rev. and Mrs. Tigner and Rev. and Mrs. Kononen.

Construction of the church's current site at West Fifth and Concord was started in 1954, and continued under Rev. and Mrs. Alvin Isaak and Rev. and Mrs. Franklin Schneider. The building was dedicated in 1963. In the 1990s, under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Chuck Inks, the superstructure over the educational wing and other outside work were completed. Currently Pastor Jonathan and Joddi-Jay Babcock minister the Assembly of God congregation.

In the 1920s there were families of the Lutheran faith living in Grandview, and there was even a Lutheran Ladies Aid that worked for the children's homes and nursing homes. But there was no organized church. In 1945 Mr. and Mrs. John Listoe moved here, and together with their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Emerson, petitioned the district to start a church. They first began meeting in 1947 in the music rooms of the high school.

In 1948 they officially organized as Immanuel Lutheran Church, with 92 members. Rev. Milton Wilson was the first official pastor to be called. The congregation voted to complete a parsonage first, and built one on West Third Street in 1950. They started building their church on Euclid Road in 1951, and it was dedicated in November. The brick exterior was added a few years later. The church acquired the bell in its belfry thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Igna Listoe, who got the bell donated by the Union Pacific Railroad from an old steam engine. Seems kind of appropriate, since railroads were what brought Grandview into existence.

In 1989 the church broke ground for a new fellowship hall and kitchen south of the existing building on Euclid Road. It was dedicated in 1992, and later that same year a new narthex and pastor's study were added. They have been served by me (Pastor Gary Rhode) since 1984, the longest time any minister has served the Grandview congregation!

In 1945, just at the end of World War II, Rev. John Runyon of the Prosser Christian Church came to Grandview and conducted services in the American Legion Hall. At the end of one of the early services, an invitation was given, and the 22 who responded became the charter members of the new Christian Church of Grandview. Its elders were John Nall and Clarence McClure, and deacons were C. C. Andrews, Gilmer Lange and C. T. Worley.

By October of 1946, building lots were purchased at West Fourth and Euclid, and over two years money was raised and a new church basement was finished. When it was completed, work began on a 40 x 75 foot superstructure, which was finished and dedicated in March of 1952 under Rev. G. B. Schmidt. In 1953 the church purchased the Schmidt's property at Fifth and Euclid for its parsonage. That was eventually sold to a gas company, and they bought a parsonage on Stassen Way. Today Pastor Dennis McDonald serves the Christian Church.

There have been many other changes for Grandview churches, which are really too many for us to tell. In 1950 a First Baptist church was organized, and by 1951 Grandview had 13 churches in town. A Southern Baptist Church, and Church of God Full Gospel and First Brethren were also added. In 1956 the Baptists built a new church at Bonnieview and Hiway 410, and today that's the Valley Fellowship Baptist Church. In the 1970s the original Bethany Presbyterian building was removed, and a new sanctuary building dedicated in 1972.

The original Nazarene Church building on Division Street was purchased by the Salvation Army in the 1980s, and has been their home, and that of the Grandview Food Bank, ever since. The Church of God also became the Grandview Community Church in the 1980s. Today there is a new Grandview Community Church on Wine Country Road.

We have several new congregations that have purchased former churches and businesses, including that original Free Methodist church, and developed new congregations. Currently we have 21 churches represented in the Grandview Ministerial Association.

So as Grandview celebrates its Centennial year, we can reflect that there are some community churches which have been here as long, or longer, than our community, such as the Bethany Presbyterian, First Methodist, Free Methodist, the Catholic Church and the Seventh-day Adventists.

As our community has grown and evolved, we have gained and lost some congregations. But we do continue to be a community that has faith at its roots. We know many of you have early memories of your own home churches, and we hope you share those with each other, and enjoy some of our photos. Thank you for attending tonight.