

1925: Turning the Church Around

"In 1923, when Rev. W. C. Graf was the pastor, the church celebrated its 80th anniversary. Mrs. Paul Trupke gave the history of the past 80 years. The very next day work was started. There must be electric lights! We need a basement under the church! The auditorium was too small! The Ladies' Aid had saved \$869 for a basement. Now, inspired by the anniversary, every organization of the church was astir earning and giving money for rebuilding the church.

In 1924 the building was raised and turned clockwise by 90 degrees. It was moved onto a new basement that had been dug using horses and the shovels of members. [Before it had faced the old Waukesha to Janesville Road (renamed State Highway 59, in 1924, and now known as "Old Village Road.")] It now faced Church Street.] It had a new furnace, electric lights, ample Sunday School room [in the basement] and a kitchen. A new corner stone was laid in 1925 and a rededication service was held.

By May, 1924 plans had been drawn by an architect; and that fall the building was started. While the work was in progress, services were held in the village school house (Genesee State Graded School). On Easter Sunday, 1925 [April 12], the remodeled church was ready. A triumphant note of hope for the church filled every heart.

How different this church was from the original church building: 37 x 45 feet, with a choir loft in the back, the ceiling flat, and the windows big and square. It was even different from the remodeled church of 1883, when the choir loft was removed, the ceiling slanted, arched windows put in, and 12 feet partitioned off from the front of the auditorium for a prayer meeting and Sunday School room at one side, a kitchen at the other, and a dining room overhead! Now we had a large, airy basement with kitchen equipment and Sunday School room, a more beautiful auditorium and an attractive entrance. All new! For Easter Sunday!"

[excerpts from the church history written by Miss Letitia Mason for the 100th Anniversary in 1943]