

## ***1978: A New Beginning***

The year 1978 was a time of transition and "New Beginnings" for Genesee Church. In 1978 the church was redecorated, new blue carpeting was installed and the interior walls were repainted. The pews were rearranged! Prior to 1978, if you had walked into Genesee church and went straight forward you would run into the back of the back pew. From 1851 onward there had been two aisles, one to the left and one to the right. We rearranged the pews to create a single center aisle – perfect for weddings. That is why, to this day, some short pews are paired together to make one longer pew.

1978 was also a time to restructure the way the church was run. Prior to 1978 there was no overall governing body. The church did, and still does, have the final vote in any big issues that affected the life of the congregation, but there was no central governing board that committees would report to. That changed in 1978. In the fall, we created an "Executive Board" which would have a representative from each of the various committees. There were some areas of church life that weren't being addressed by a committee. We also created an "Outreach Committee" and a "Christian Education Committee." Other committees such as "Stewardship" and "Music" would follow. There had always been "Deacons" and "Trustees" from the very beginning.

Another turning point came on September 10, 1978. That was the date of the first Rally Day at Genesee Church. Up until the spring of 1978 the Sunday School had met at 10 AM, following the 9 AM service. It was more than apparent that parents were "dropping off" their children for Sunday School at 10 AM, and not coming to the 9 AM service. The first day of Sunday School for the 1978-1979 year was on September 17, 1978. Beginning that Sunday the children came with their parents to the 9 AM service. After the Children's Message, they would follow their teachers over to classes at the Education Center. Classes would last until 10:15 AM, allowing time for the parents to attend a "coffee hour" following the services. Within two years, attendance doubled! The 1978 average attendance was 38.8. In 1980, our church reached a high average attendance of 79.1 people per Sunday! Some of the increase CAN be attributed to counting the children who were now present in the services. More than half of the increase, however, was attributed to having the parents in the service; and to those added to our attendance by the renewed spirit in the church!