

**Bethel Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**



536 North Euclid Avenue
Ontario, CA 91762

**100th Anniversary
March 22, 1985**

1885

1985

BETHEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

A church in old Ontario
In eighteen eighty-five
Was congregational in form,
Would grow and would survive.

Its name was Bethel from the start.
It moved to Palm and "A",
But later on the Euclid site
Would find it there to stay.

The corner stone says 1912.
The church was occupied
In January the next year
With satisfaction, pride.

A later building to the south
Would house the Sunday School.
This gave much space and modern style
And proved a useful tool.

The huge stone building has an air
Of permanence secure
And stands unchanging through the years.
Long may its faith endure.

We owe so much to those who built,
Who worshipped and sustained.
It is our task now in our turn
So this church is maintained.

More than the building must endure.
A congregation strong
Must find new fellow-worshippers
Who feel need to belong.

By
Marjorie Bowler

Ontario: The Model Colony

Ontario was founded by the Chaffey brothers, George and William, in the fall of 1882. The brothers named their Model Colony after their home province, Ontario, Canada. Ontario means "the city on the side of a mountain."

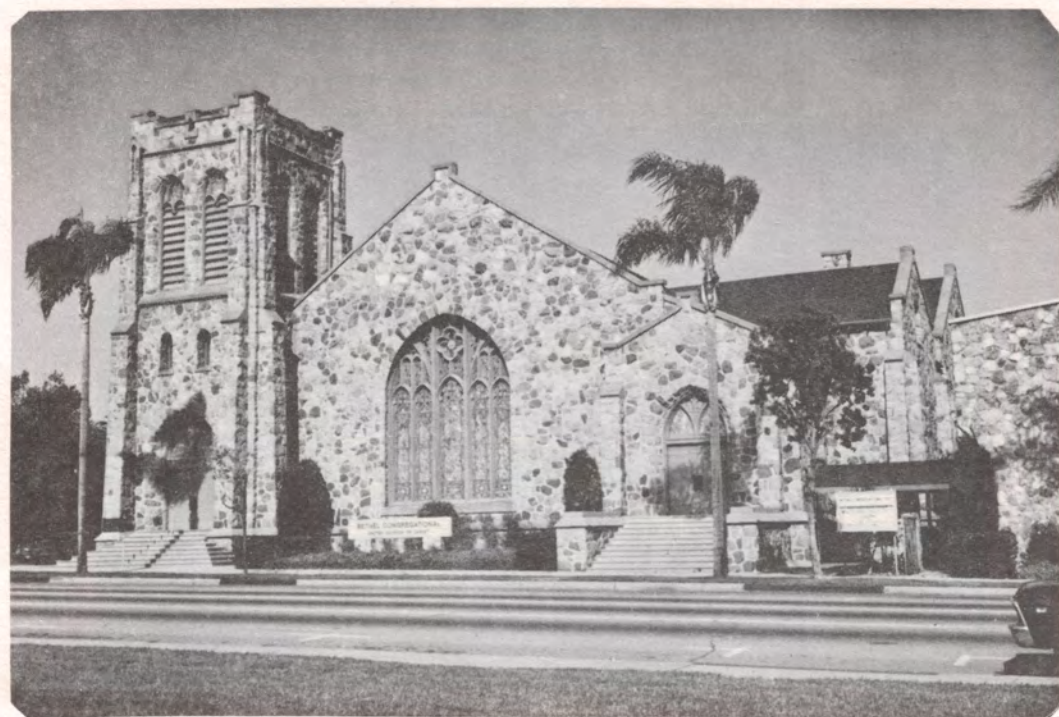
The Chaffey brothers purchased approximately ten thousand acres to be divided into ten acre farm lots. A two hundred foot wide avenue with a parkway in the center extended from the Southern Pacific Railroad to the base of the mountains. George Chaffey named this avenue Euclid, after the mathematician.

To attract people to Ontario, the availability of water was proven by having a fountain by the train tracks. At one time it was someone's duty to turn the fountain on before the train arrived and shut it off after the train left the station. According to the news report in the "*Ontario Fruit Grower*." Ontario's first newspaper, seventy-five trains passed through Ontario in one week. Thus travelers saw water with their own eyes and The Model Colony grew.

Early Euclid Avenue



Church on "A" Street & Palm



Present Church "F" Street and Euclid

History of Bethel Congregational Church

Bethel Congregational Church was the second church to be organized in The Model Colony. The first steps for the establishment of a formal organization were held February 2, 1885 in the home of Mrs. Joseph Waddingham. The Rev. J. T. Ford, the Superintendent of Home Missions presided. Fourteen persons signified their intentions of becoming members of the Church, and forms of the Confession of Faith and Covenant were considered. These forms, with some slight amendments and additions, were adopted one week later at the home of Joseph G. Moore. Rev. J.D. Foster of San Bernardino acted as the moderator. The charter members were:

Mr. & Mrs. Barber
Mr. & Mrs. J. G. Moore
Mr. & Mrs. W. Joseph Waddingham
Mr. & Mrs. A. K. Holdrige
Mr. Clark B. Johnston
Mrs. E. H. Joliffe
Mrs. George Chaffey
Miss Emma Chaffey
Mrs. Margie Stillman
Mrs. Margaret Shaw

Then, on March 22, 1885 the Council of Recognition convened. The charter members entered into a covenant as a church of Christ and became Bethel Congregational Church of Ontario.

Services were held in private residences and in the L. M. Holt Adobe until funds could be collected for a church building. In 1887 land was purchased at the corner of Palm Avenue and West "A" Street (now Holt Boulevard). On March 5, 1888 the church occupied the first building of its own. In 1893 the building was enlarged, beautiful memorial windows were added, and the church was re-dedicated.

In 1911 the lot at the corner of Euclid and "F" Street was purchased for \$5,000 and a building committee was formed. The estimated cost was \$10,000 for the church edifice if split stone was used (\$3,500 less if brick was used.) During the annual meeting on January 11, 1912 were the informal exercise for the cornerstone laying of the new church.

This structure is now the oldest church building in use in Ontario. Nomination has been made to the State to recognize Bethel Congregational Church as a Historical Landmark.

Recreation for early members of Bethel included hiking into San Antonio Canyon to Camp Larkin. An excerpt from W. E. Dean's journal from August 24, 1916 read: "Went up the canyon with twenty-five Congregational people to select camp site. Hot and sultry, light rain." There were additional notations of other jobs performed at the camp during the next three months as seen in this entry from November 13, 1916: "Hauled load of lime and cement to Camp Larkin. Very windy and cold." Many groups hiked to the church cabin until the flood of 1938 washed all traces of Camp Larkin away.

*Camp Larkin about 1930
Taken by Leo Eckart*




Various women's and men's groups have been formed over the years. Ladies Aid has become three church guilds, the Cherubs, Pilgrim, and Serooby-Leyden, all of which make up Women's Fellowship. The Fellowship is a very essential part of Bethel Church.

The choir has been very active over the years under the leadership of very talented and dedicated directors. S. Earle Blakeslee served as organist and choir director over twenty-five years. Mr. Blakeslee directed the first rendition of the Community Messiah in 1945.

The Harwood Memorial Organ was dedicated in 1930. The Pilcher Organ was custom made for Bethel Congregational Church. The factory assembled the organ, tested it in the factory, then disassembled for shipment to California in its own railroad car. The shipping weight was nearly nine tons.

Bethel Church has also been active in community sponsorships. In 1915 it helped with the establishment of Pilgrim Place in Claremont, a retirement community for ministers and other Christian workers. In 1921, Bethel sponsored the Chino Mexican Church. Presently, we sponsor Pilgrim Place, Pomona Valley Council of Churches, Peppermint Ridge, Friendship House, and Samaritan Center.

Today, Bethel is part of the United Church of Christ formed by the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Churches. Bethel is associated with other congregations in the San Bernardino Association of the Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ. In Bethel Congregational Church there is opportunity for worship, learning, growing, fellowship and service in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Milestones In The Life of Bethel Church

- 1885 - March 22, Bethel Congregational Church formally recognized by the "The Congregational Council", there were 14 charter members. (W.B. Chaffey was the first signature on the Articles of Incorporation.)
- 1888 - Frame building constructed on corner of "A" and Palm.
- 1910 - September, site purchased on corner of "F" and Euclid for \$5,000.00 for new building.
- 1911 - 1912, New stone building constructed on site at cost of about \$40,000.00 (Brick would have cost \$3,500.00 less.)
- 1913 - January 12-17, Dedication Services of new building, addresses by President James A. Blaisdale of Pomona College, Merton E. Hill of Chaffey Union High School and others.
- 1920 - 1929, Ordination and Sponsorship of Mrs. William Laidlaw who served in Narod Church, Ontario.
- 1921 - Sponsorship of Chino Mexican Church by Bethel.
- 1957 - The John Howes' Commissioned to Mexican Mission.
- 1958 - May 1, James N. Cavener Ordination.
- 1961 - April 30, Adoption of United Church of Christ Constitution.
- 1962 - Completion and dedication of New Christian Education Wing, \$175,000.00 total (furnishings and building).
- 1962 - May 22, Lloyd Fellows Ordination.
- 1963 - June 23, David Reed Ordination.
- 1967 - Dependency Prevention Commission, Day Care Center opens in Bethel Church.
- 1974 - October 26, Dedication of the church ramp.
- 1976 - Handbells were purchased and a handbell choir formed.
- 1980 - November 23, Re-dedication of the restoration on the Harwood Memorial Organ.
- 1980 - Re-roofed and painted the outside trim of the church. Members donated and loaned money for these projects.
- 1981 - Re-paid all the loans in one year!
- 1984 - 1985, Established the Heritage Room.



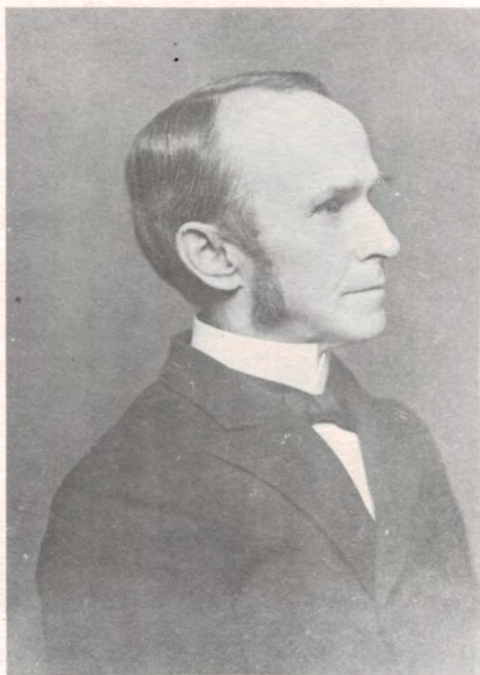
1917 Special Meeting



All Church Picture October, 1984



Rev. W.H. Wolcott
April 29, 1885-April 25, 1888



Rev. A.E. Tracy
July 15, 1888-January 1, 1898



Rev. Allen Hastings
October 30, 1898-December 9, 1900



Rev. John N. Barstow
January 1, 1901-April 25, 1901



Rev. Ralph B. Larkin
June 25, 1901-Jan. 10, 1907 & Oct. 24, 1915-Aug. 1, 1917



Rev. Charles H. Secombe
January 12, 1907-January 1, 1909



Rev. Dr. Jean F. Loba
September 24, 1909-April 28, 1915



Rev. John B. Toomay
September 1, 1917-June 30, 1929



Rev. Charles L. Knight
August 12, 1929-May 12, 1947



Rev. Donald W. Head
July 1, 1947-December 31, 1954



Rev. Thomas M. Walker
June 1, 1955-December 31, 1962



Rev. Dr. St. Elmo Nauman
March 15, 1963-June 10, 1965



Rev. Gordon K. Blunt
March 15, 1966-September 15, 1971



Rev. Dr. Melvin Dollar
April 14, 1972-May 15, 1978



Rev. Dr. Paul R. Gaston
April 1, 1979-May 1, 1983



Rev. Jay Lemke
September 1, 1983-

Interim Ministers

Rev. Dr. Harley Gill
Rev. Charles Scofield
Rev. William Schurr
Rev. Lincoln B. Wirt
Rev. Dr. Andrew Craig

Associate Minister

Rev. John Flucke

Anniversary Committee

Mary Ann Reed, Chairperson
Kyra Ault
Marjorie Bowler
Judith Brockway
William Dean
Alma Hofman
Laura Hofman
Marilyn Latham
Lucinda Machen
Rev. Paul Rasche
Bob Schmidt
Ellen Vandre
Georgia Lee Zanin

There are many others who helped and we thank you all.

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| Historian | Miss Ellen Vandre |

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