Peace United Church of Christ
Hartsburg, MO
125th Anniversary

Peace United Church of Christ traces its history back to 1894. Several German families, some who had immigrated and some the children of immigrants, began meeting for worship in the German language in the home of H.J. Wintermeyer. The Rev. C.F. Stoecker from Morrison officiated. On April 1, 1894, Friedens Evangelische was formed. By 1897, the congregation was admitted to the Western Missouri Evangelical Synod. With contributions from the Synod, churches in Marthasville and Holstein, and individual members the church was built with an organ and a bell on the site that it still occupies by 1898.

With the construction of the railroad and with immigration, the population of Hartsburg and the growth in church membership increased dramatically. Each month two services were held in German and two in English.

Over the years a parsonage was built, a basement added to the church, and some remodeling accomplished. In 1988, Peace church raised funds for an addition that gave the church an additional 4,000 square feet. The parsonage was removed to make way for the addition. Peace church enjoyed the expanded space for only a few years before the Great Flood of 1993.

The Missouri River has flooded periodically and Hartsburg and other river towns have had to cope with floods and threats of floods often. But the Flood of 1993, was the most devastating in history. The 25 miles of levees that normally held the Missouri back, burst in a dozen places. In Hartsburg, water covered 2000 acres of farmland in the river bottoms. All but seven homes in Hartsburg had six to twelve feet of water in them for four weeks. Peace church sustained significant damage as well. While some repair and renovation was contracted out, members and volunteers arrived from across the United States to help Peace get back on its feet again.

The generosity and compassion of so many volunteers who helped clean out the church and rebuild it, have helped shaped the mission of Peace church. Although it is a small church in a small river town, it is a church with a broad awareness of its connection the to larger world. In partnership with a Lutheran church in Columbia, Peace church members have participated in the Food Resources Bank. Farmers donated several acres of crops to help farmers in poorer countries improve their ability to grow crops to feed themselves and others.

Peach church has sponsored several mission trips to help other churches and individuals who have suffered losses by floods or other natural disasters. Peace has a great desire to pay it forward and to give as they have so generously received.