

Christ Church (Maplewood) UCC, St. Louis, MO – 125 Years

In 1890, Mary Marshall sold some of her property to form a subdivision known as Maplewood. This neighborhood, located right outside the city limits of St. Louis, would later become the heart of the City of Maplewood, Missouri. That same year, Christ Church was founded as Deutsches Evangelische Christus-



Gemeinde (Christ German Evangelical Congregation). Its original charter was signed on July 6, 1890. The congregation first met at Benton Hall, in an area then known as Benton Station. Rev. G.A. Kienle became our first pastor on June 1, 1890.

To help the church establish a permanent meeting place, a member donated a lot of land on which the congregation could build a church. This lot became location of the “little white church” on Manchester Road. The cornerstone of this new church building was laid on November 16, 1890. The “Little White Church” was dedicated on January 18, 1891.

In 1891, sewer pipes were laid along Manchester Road. This became a serious financial issue for the young church, for the sewer assessment was more than the cost of the building itself. The Ladies Aid Society raised money to pay the assessment by making and selling apple butter. This became the beginning of a long annual tradition for Christ Church.

By 1915, the church has started transitioning away from being a German-speaking congregation. Services were now held in both English and German.

As a modern congregation, women were now allowed to be recognized as full members of the church. You



might say this was a sign of things to come.

In 1915, Christ Church celebrated its Silver Jubilee (25 years). The young church was growing and saw a need for more space. Land

for a new church building at Bellevue and Bruno was purchased in 1915. The cornerstone of the new building was laid in 1919.

By 1920, the basement of our new building was completed and worship began at the new location. The upper church building (sanctuary building) was completed in 1925 at a total cost of \$51,518.12.



Even as early as the 1960's, Christ Church began to stand out as a progressive congregation with a commitment to human rights.

In 1965, our pastor, Rev. Gary Scheuer traveled to Selma, Alabama with one other UCC pastor and a plane load of Catholic priests and nuns. When the two UCC pastors returned to St. Louis, the other pastor was immediately fired by his congregation.

Rev. Scheuer received support from much of our membership. Although there were complaints of “representing us without permission” and “we shouldn't get involved”, and a number of members left the church as a result, the majority of the members supported him.

Our Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Carl Fritsch, made an impassioned plea to the congregation, explaining that the future of our church was more important and those who were concerned should put this matter behind them. The congregation agreed and Rev. Scheuer stayed with Christ Church for another five years.

Rev. Scheuer told us that there were only a handful of churches in St. Louis that would have stood behind their pastor at such a time. He said he would always remember Christ Church with pride as a result.

Christ Church (Maplewood) UCC, St. Louis, MO – 125 Years

By the 1990's, Christ Church had really become a progressive congregation. Like many others, we were developing a new understanding of what it means to "Be the Church". In 1997, Christ Church started its Contemporary/Informal worship service.



In 2000, Christ Church began hosting the "Doors to Success" (GED and career preparation) program through St. Louis County. Christ Church now hosts two separate high school equivalency programs, one of which has been reported to be the most successful program in St. Louis County.

In 2007, Christ Church voted to become an Open and Affirming Congregation.



Members of Christ Church are committed to the Maplewood Community. In 2012, the Westboro Baptist Church protested at our local high school's presentation of "The Laramie Project". Christ Church members and friends participated in a rally in support of our school and its students.

In 2013, Christ Church started a garden to grow fresh food for local Food Pantries.



In 2015, this project received funding by Gateway Greening and is now expanding its garden beds and mulch piles.

Our Vision Statement says who we are: Seeking to walk in the way of Jesus, we believe that all people are made in the image of God and that all are welcome at Christ's table. We aspire to be an open - minded community of faith, engaged in meaningful worship, and committed to social justice, community service, and personal spiritual growth.

