
CARRINGTON UCC



In the early 1900's the community of Carrington left a lasting impression on a traveler. Upon returning to New York State, he published an article in the newspaper stating, "In North Dakota I came upon a little cathedral on the prairie." That Cathedral on the Prairie was the Congregational Church of Christ, which today is known as the Federated Church.

The congregation was first organized about 1883 when citizens in the community from Canada, England, Scotland, and the U.S. wanted to establish a place of worship. The first sermon preached in Carrington was delivered at the H.S. Soliday residence to about 70 people. Present were Methodists, Baptists, Dunkards, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians. In those days citizens believed that nothing could advance the best interests of a new community more than a church. After considerable discussion, the group unanimously adopted the Congregational creed, which seemed best suited for such a diverse group. On June 13, 1884, the first service was conducted in the new church, across the street from its present location.

By 1902, a new church was planned. A lot was purchased in 1905. Pledges totaling \$17,000 were secured. It was estimated the church could be built for about \$20,000. An Irish stone mason, Joe O'Leary, was put in charge. The cornerstone was laid on August 14, 1906. O'Leary was known as the best-- he was an artist in cement work and a master at cutting stones. Every block in the church was made by hand. For three

winters, blocks were made, and in the summer, they were placed into the construction under O'Leary's direction.

According to those who knew O'Leary, he in later years, walked arms folded behind his back with his Wellington pipe in his mouth gazing admiringly at his church--all the way to its towering belfry. With pride and satisfaction, he would say, "She's as sturdy as ever." In 1972, experts who checked the building commented, " ... truly the work of a master mason."

In 1938, the Methodist Church and Congregational Church joined to form the Federated Church. A large educational wing was added to the church in the 1960's. The hundredth anniversary of the church was celebrated in August of 2006.



The beautiful building contains many wonderful and unique surprises. The church was painted and re-shingled in 2005. The newly painted sanctuary enhances the beautiful wood columns and other wood accents. The unusually large, old pipe organ stretches across the front of the sanctuary creating an impressive backdrop for weddings, baptisms, and other events. Architects and organ specialists from New York designed the pipe organ, which was installed in 1915. The scaled-down dimensions fit this particular church. The women's organizations in the church raised \$2500.00 for the special organ project. The organ remains in good working condition and is maintained by the church guild, which has historically supported the music program at the church. Perhaps the most beautiful attraction is the group of old stained glass windows located throughout the sanctuary. Some date back to 1906 and they are priceless treasures.

The Federated Church has a rich and interesting history. Although the church membership has decreased throughout the years, the congregation is diligent and dedicated to Christian beliefs. Encouraging signs of vitality are evident in the church. The small congregation is responsible to two denominations. Expenses continue to rise; however, generous stewardship provides funds to meet obligations. The youth group is growing, a work group has been established, the women's organization remains committed, the board is active, and various groups provide leadership as they are engaged in the business of the church.