



In 1887, our church began life as a mission church, originally called the *Tourist Memorial Mission Church*. It was located on East Las Vegas Street in Colorado Springs. It was founded by *Reverend W. E. McCormick*, a pioneer minister who was living in Colorado Springs. At this time the church was composed primarily of United Brethren in Christ folks, but the church was not yet chartered.

*Reverend J. Oliver* became the pastor in 1895. At the same time, the church was chartered with the Conference and its name was changed to *Tourist Memorial United Brethren in Christ Church*.

The church remained on Las Vegas Street for a few years and then moved to the upper floor of an old store building on the corner of Costilla and Tejon. Property was later purchased at 417 S. Cascade and a frame church and parsonage was built. This church was later sold to the Sons of Israel.

During the year 1911, *Reverend Henry Kohler* was appointed as pastor. After selling the property to the Sons of Israel, another parcel of property was purchased at the corner of South Nevada and East Vermijo Street, for \$6000. The congregation consisted of 200 members at the time. While the basement was being dug, a big tent was placed on the lot for church services. Several times the tent was damaged by strong winds, but the women of the church brought their sewing machines, heavy cord and needles, and repaired the tent prior to Sunday services.

From 1911 - 1915 all went well, until problems erupted in the church and split the congregation. A large percent of the membership left, leaving only 27 families who worshipped in the covered basement under the supervision of *Dr. R. J. Parret*. Later, a license to preach was issued to *Reverend I. A. Chivington*. He remained pastor until 1916.

In June 1918, *Reverend W. G. Schaefer*, who had just graduated from Bonebrake Seminary, and ordained as an elder, was sent to become the pastor. The church was still called the Tourist Memorial Church, but because of the extended period of time that the basement had stood unfinished, the local community dubbed it "The Hole-in-the -Ground Church."

A plea went out from Reverend Schaefer and church members for the community to join in the campaign of "Buy A Brick", so the church could be completed. There were 200,000 bricks sold, along with many financial gifts contributed to the campaign. A loan from the Church Erection Society in Dayton, Ohio, resulted in the church being completed along with a five room parsonage. That church still stands today at Nevada and Vermijo, across from the Pioneer Museum. During 1916, the name was changed to the *First United Brethren in Christ Church*.

Church membership grew under the leadership of Reverend and Mrs. Schaefer. Everyone knew Walter G. Schaefer city wide and in the nearby countryside. He was a friend to all. Mrs. Mary Johnson attended the church as early as 1909, and she and her two daughters, Carrie and Mabel, furnished much of the church history by making scrapbooks. Organizations in the church were the Woman's Missionary Society, Cradle Roll Department, Home Department, and the Ladies Aid Society. The Ladies Aid served "Penny Dinners" on the first and third Thursday of each month. Later, the dinners became known as the famous Thursday Chicken Pie Dinners. From a penny, the price was now 25 cents per slice. the dinners paid for

many redecorating projects, mission projects, and helped the operating fund.

By 1942, Church and Sunday School membership had increased, and space was at a premium. Green Gables, two doors north of the church, was for sale. The Administrative Board voted to purchase the home as an Educational building. The purchase price was \$8,500. Sunday School membership was 475 and Church membership was 700. Many programs and activities were taking place, and the church was truly alive.

In 1946, serious talks had taken place between the Evangelical and the United Brethren Churches, with an agreement to merge the two denominations. The church then became the *First Evangelical United Brethren Church*.

In 1950, after selling Green Gables for \$60,000, the Administrative Board voted to build an Educational wing on the east side of the church. This was completed, and it was dedicated as the "Schaefer Christian Education Unit" in 1952. Again, there were more exciting times. Children's Melody Choir, Youth Choir, Chancel Choir, fellowship groups of all ages, and morning and evening services were in progress.

On May 5, 1957, *Reverend George L. and Helen Edie* were assigned to the church during the Annual Conference in Sterling, Colorado. At this time, we were conducting two church services, fellowships for all age levels, Women's Society of World Service, Children, Youth, and Adult choirs, and home prayer group meetings.

*Reverend Bruce Grauberger* ( and family) was appointed as an Assistant Pastor in 1958. Membership continued to grow. In 1960, the church sanctuary was redecorated and remodeled. The Edies were appointed to the First Evangelical United Brethren Church at Aurora, Colorado during 1963. Reverend Paul Gamber (and family) became our new pastor at the time.

At the General Conference in 1968, held in Dallas, Texas, the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist church merged, and the new denomination was named the *United Methodist Church*. Because *First United Methodist Church of Colorado Springs* had been established in 1895, we were asked to change our name. Member's submitted suggestions, a vote was taken, and in March of 1968 we became known as *Central United Methodist Church*.

At this time, our membership was beginning to drop and many of our members were moving to the northeast part of the city. In 1970 *Reverend Tom Bennauzar* (and family) was appointed to Central United Methodist Church, anticipating the retirement of Reverend Paul Gambee in 1971. At the same time, the Administrative Board, Rocky Mountain Conference, and church members were discussing a move for our church from the downtown area.

In June 1971, *Reverend Keith Spahr* was appointed to the church. By this time, a search for a new location had become serious, and plans were made to sell the building and buy property in a new area. A "For Sale" sign was placed in front of the facility, and we were beginning a new era in the life of the church. It was sold to the Police Training Academy in 1973. In the meantime, we were holding services in the Roosevelt Elementary school building. Sunday School was held in the gym, followed by church service. Property at the corner of Murray and Pikes Peak was given to us by the Rocky Mountain Conference, but after further study it was determined this property would not meet our needs and requirements.

December 1975 resulted in a temporary move to the Seventh Day Adventist School at 5300 Palmer Park Blvd. where Sunday School and church services were conducted, while we worked on acquiring property north of Palmer Park Boulevard. Neighbors in the area opposed having a church built in that area; consequently 2 and 3/4 acres were later purchased at Emory Circle and Galley Road. Then another move in September 1976 when we transferred our services to Wilson Elementary School, remaining there until the Sanctuary was completed at our new home, 4373 Galley Road

On 24 December, 1976. The Christmas Eve Service was a celebration to be remembered. We began to grow immediately, and children's Sunday School classes were held behind dividers in the Sanctuary, along with adult classes. Youth classes took place in the Secretary and Pastor's office.

April, 1984, witnessed construction of the Fellowship Hall. Many functions, including the Children's Sunday School department, were then conducted there for 7 1/2 years. Still in need of an educational unit, we put it on our want list. Reverend Spahr remained our pastor for 17 years and was then appointed as pastor at First United Methodist Church in Ogden, Utah.

*Reverend Marvin Vose*, his wife Caroline, and two children (Chuck and Ginnie) were welcomed into the fold during July 1988. We experienced growth in worship and Sunday School. New adult classes were organized. Children's choir and three bell ringer choirs plus a very active chancel choir, were in progress. A "Building Together in Faith" campaign was launched with plans for a new educational wing. We also decided to remodel both the chancel area and Fellowship Hall. One of the highlights of that campaign occurred when the entire congregation had their names written on small stones and they were able to gather around and place the stones in a bucket that was used to mix the first batch of cement. That cement was then used to lay the foundation of the Educational Wing. What an exciting day February 7, 1993 was, as we moved our Sunday School classes into their new classrooms. Consecration Sunday was held on March 21, 1993, with *Bishop Mary Ann Swenson* delivering the morning message. Central was "on the move" again, but this time we remained at home building together in Christ.

In June, 1994, *Reverend Marv Vose* was appointed as the District Superintendent of the Peaks and Plains District of the Rocky Mountain Conference. We said goodbye to the Vose family, and on July 1, 1994, *Reverend George "Skip" Perry* became our pastor, with his wife Mary and children Mark and Laura. Looking forward to the year 2000 and our 120th birthday, we adopted a Vision Statement that read: "*God is calling Central United Methodist Church to establish such a dynamic and vital 'Center of Caring' that those seeking Christian fellowship and family are drawn to this place where God is joyfully celebrated as faithful and alive.*" From 1994 until 1998, we also conducted a "Revisioning Campaign," continued small group Tender Loving Care (TLC) Bible study groups in individual homes, implemented a contemporary (third) service during Sunday morning worship, and in the beginning of 1999, we also implemented a Tele-Care ministry program under the direction of Pastor Skip Perry.

In 1999 *Reverend Richmond "Rich" Stoakes* and his wife Susan began their tenure at Central United Methodist Church.

Pastor Stoakes and his wife Susan were involved in all aspects of Central's ministry. Susan taught the 5th and 6th grade Sunday School class, served as a Stephen Minister, was active with Vacation Bible School each year, and was a member of the Missions Ministry Team. In addition to preaching, Pastor Rich taught a Sunday morning adult class focusing on the text for that day's proclamation. He also taught Bible study classes (such as Disciple Bible study) on Wednesday evenings, and Thursday mornings. Additionally, Pastor Rich also supervised our Stephen Ministry program to provide counseling as needed to individuals that had experience trauma or grief in their lives.

Central United Methodist Church has a tradition of releasing white balloons on Easter morning. The Children put their name and address inside a balloon, then release them to see which one will travel the greatest distance. On Easter Sunday, beginning in 2002, we had our first ever Sunrise Service at the home of Stacy Rummel and James Carpenter. Fifty-five people attended, with breakfast following the celebration.

A visioning process that began in 2000 called *Focus 21* resulted in identifying several priority items for the church including a van for ministry, air conditioning, and an associate pastor. We got the much needed air conditioner in the sanctuary and Mr. Bob Teets graciously donated a van for ministerial and transportation needs. Our prayers and a lot of hard work were rewarded when Reverend Judy Owsley was hired in February, 2003. She and her husband, Bud, joined us from First United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs, and they both immediately became a vital part of our ministry. As our Minister of Congregational Development, Rev. Judy has fostered groups for young adults, families with children, grief recovery, and Bible study, as well as leading our Stephen Ministry program.

The years (2002 - 2003) were a great year of growth, innovation, challenges, and change. Central United Methodist Church recognized two of their 50 year members for the many contributions and involvement in the church by renaming a portion of the church as the "Paul and Lucille Sams Christian Educational Wing."

During Holy week of 2003, we had a Seder Meal conducted by Rabbi Don Levy from the USAF Academy, coordinated by Ms Jan Stoddard of the worship committee. Also, during 2003 we celebrated with a "Living Last Supper" presentation of Maundy Thursday when the disciples came to life as they re-enacted what may have occurred on that last evening together and later served communion to the congregation.

Our "Memorial book" was finished to depict the many contributions that friends of Central have donated, or bequeathed to the church, as a perpetual testimony to loved ones.

As always, it's a traumatic event to learn that a new pastor is going to be assigned, but the momentum and direction Pastor Stoakes began at Central was immediately complemented and continued by Reverend Granville D. Smythe, Jr. and his wife Charlene as they joined us in July 2003. Rev. Gran's ministry has encompassed 40 years of serving the Lord, including churches in Loveland, Limon, Parker, Longmont, and Colorado Springs.

Rev. Gran and Charlene truly define the meaning of teamwork. Gran balances

**Bible-based sermons with messages dealing with real life issues and problems. In addition to teaching an adult Sunday School class, he also teaches a mid-week class most recently completing a 12 week study of the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. Charlene has been active in the visitation program as well as the Stephen Ministry program, serving as a Stephen leader. In 2004, she received an appointment as a local pastor, to serve the Bethel UMC in Pueblo, Colorado, and as a chaplain at the Youth Offender System.**

**In October 2004, Rev. Judy Owsley made her 12th trip to Novgorod, Russia, representing the Russia Initiative of the General Board of Global Ministries. Central UMC had joined the Rocky Mountain Russia Initiative as a partner church in September, 2003. Upon her return, Rev. Judy has two PowerPoint presentations describing the mission of this four-person team who led Bible study for adults, met with directors of six children's organizations that have been recipients of humanitarian aid from churches in Colorado Springs, and conducted Bible School in an orphanage. Our church looks forward to future trips as we develop our mission in Russia.**

**During 2005, numerous improvements were made to our church home under the very able leadership of our Trustees and their chairman, Bob Morris. Improvements included the painting of the exterior of the building, installation of a drainage system to remove water from the south side of the church, a new roof, improved signage, etc.**

**What a grand day April 24, 2005 was as six youth made a public profession of faith and were received into the membership of the congregation. The specialness of the day was heightened by the recognition of those members who have been a part of this church for 50 years or more, and the "passing of the torch" by the older members to the confirmands.**