

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CELORON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



An early view of the Celoron Methodist Church located in the wide open spaces of Livingston Avenue.

ON August 23, 1896 a Sunday School was called to order for the first time in Celoron. Struggling along with an attendance of less than twenty on most Sundays, and a collection which rarely exceeded in pennies the number of persons present, the little group met wherever space was available. While a record book of these early years has been preserved, there is no mention of the site of the meetings. Some say they were held in a factory west of the south end of the Dunham Avenue bridge.

Others have said the Sunday School met at times at the great ice skating arena on the western end of Celoron Park. The final meetings, before the church was built, were said to have been in one of the buildings on the south side of the Boulevard facing the park.

On August 29, 1898 the Board of Trustees of the First M.C. Church in Jamestown voted to build a church in Celoron, the cost not to exceed \$2,000. Later a contract was awarded in the amount of \$2,024 and the church was built.

Celoron Park was in its "hey day" at the time the church was established. On November 28, 1932 the legal papers were made out transferring the church property to a Board of Trustees elected by the Celoron Church. It was not until 1947 that any major project was undertaken by the church people.

At that time, under the pastorate of Dr. Lawrence M. Barnard, the church was raised and a basement was constructed underneath to house Sunday School rooms, a kitchen, and a furnace.

The money for the first

Building project of the church was borrowed from the Mission Board in 1947. It was a red letter day on October 4, 1953 when the mortgage was burned.

The excellent history compiled by Mrs. Harold (Madge) Seager chronicles the ambitious second project, which in 1957 saw ground-breaking for the \$43,000 cement block addition which doubled the size of the existing church building, which was dedicated in 1958. By 1961 the Celoron Church became, at last, after 62 years, an independent church with its own pastor and its own parsonage.

Clifford K. Cliver, Pastor

Special thanks to Ms. Pauline Lopus for her many hours of research from which this brief summary is drawn.