

**October 25, 1896** - First church service was held in King's Hall, corner of Bridge and West Pulteney Streets.

**February 24, 1897** - The church was organized and incorporated, and named "Grace Methodist Episcopal Church". Rev. Frank H. VanKeuren was named first minister.



**September 21, 1897** - Solicitation began for building our original church on Bridge Street, total cost \$5,000.



**April 14, 1898** - Cornerstone of original church was laid.

**August 28, 1898** - First service was held in the church.

**September 18, 1898** - Grace Church was dedicated.

**September 13, 1903** - the mortgage on the church was burned at a Jubilee Service.

**October 1903** - A parsonage at the corner of Bridge and Hazel Streets was purchased for the sum of \$1,800.

**January, 1905** - Gas was installed in the church building.

**March, 1907** - The first Women's Foreign Missionary Society was formed.

**September 29, 1919** - A meeting was called to discuss plans for a new church.

**April 4, 1921** - Parsonage was moved to a lot at the corner of Ellicott Street and Sly Avenue.

**October 30, 1922** - Cornerstone was laid for new church!



**October, 1925 - January, 1928** - The beautiful stained glass windows were placed and the basement of the church was completed.

**1931** - Steam heat was installed in the basement.

**February 21, 1932** - Celebration of the 35th Anniversary of Grace Methodist Episcopal Church was observed. At this time, the building was two-thirds completed and being used for Sunday School classes, suppers and social functions.

**1938** - Revitalization program started for finishing the church.

**1938, Palm Sunday** - First service was held in the new sanctuary - 16 years after the laying of the cornerstone.



**October, 1938** - Dedication services and week of celebration.

**1938 - 1947** - During these years, the "old" church became the Parish House, and remodeled to be used as an educational unit for Sunday School and as a social and recreational center.

**February 23, 1947** - The Fiftieth Anniversary and Debt Clearance Celebration was observed - the final clearance of the original debt of approximately \$145,000.

**March, 1951** - The old parsonage at the corner of Ellicott Street and Sly Avenue was sold and new parsonage at 154 Reynolds Avenue was purchased.

**June, 1951** - Grace Church was co-host with First Church, to the Genesee Annual Conference.

**1955** - The Women's Society of Christian Service had the Parish House interior redecorated and purchased new banquet tables, chairs and dishes.

**1956** - The interior of our sanctuary was redecorated and grille work placed around the organ chambers. The outside of the building was weatherproofed and storm sashes were placed over the beautiful stained glass windows. The furnace in the church was converted to gas.



**1957** - The first Study Committee was formed to consider the needs for a new educational unit. **1960** - The property and house at the corner of Bridge and Maple Streets was purchased for use as church school rooms and meeting place for various organizations. The store building which was between the Parish House and this property was demolished to clear the way for proposed new building and landscaping project.

**June, 1962** - Due to changes made in conference boundaries, Grace Church became part of the Elmira District of the Central New York Conference.

**April 7, 1963, Palm Sunday** - The 25th Anniversary of the first worship service in the "new" sanctuary.

**November, 1963** - A Building Committee was named by the Official Board to advance plans for a new educational unit - a goal hoped for by 1966.

**May - September 1964** - Looking forward to housing the Church School while the new educational wing would be under construction, and use of the lots for parking space upon completion of the building, the Greene, Sparling and Grimes properties on Bridge Street were purchased.

**November 8, 1964** - The first "Great Day of Methodist Singing" was observed in Grace Church, with about 200 singers from choirs of the Sub-District met in the Parish House, processed in choir robes to the sanctuary, and together with the congregation sang a service of hymns, prepared by the National Foundation of Methodist Musicians. On the next night...

**November 9, 1964** - The Parish House, built in 1897 as the original Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, and remodeled in 1938



to serve as Church School and social and recreational center for the church and community, burned to the ground. The Church School was moved into the building purchased earlier for that purpose, and plans were readied and brought up to date for the construction of the new unit.

**January, 1965** - A Building Crusade was conducted by a representative of the Department of Finance and Field Service of The Methodist Church and the response of the entire membership enabled a total of \$156,578 in pledges to be made.

**June, 1965** - Construction was begun on the new building.

**October 10, 1965** - Cornerstone Laying Service was conducted as part of the morning worship service.

**November 21, 1965** - Consecration Service for the new educational building and first meeting of Church School Classes in the new facilities, which have continued to be fully utilized for many and varied purposes.

**1967** - The youth of Grace Church gained recognition when four high school seniors were elected to the Official Board.

**June, 1968** - The Bethany and Grace United Methodist Churches were merged into one congregation.

**June, 1969** - A well-deserved testimonial dinner was tendered Mrs. Paul R. VanEtten who resigned after 35 years of dedicated service as Music Director of Grace Church.

**Also in 1969** - Our Pastor and family moved into the new parsonage at 160 Reynold Avenue which was purchased from the Harry Hosier estate, and the property at 154 Reynolds Avenue was sold.



**June 23, 1972** - The flood caused by Hurricane Agnes resulted in approximately \$189,000 in damage to our church and parsonage.

**March, 1973** - Rev. Nelson R. Reppert joined the staff of Grace Church as Associate Pastor.

**June 17, 1973** - Dedication of the Educational Unit as the mortgage was paid off.

**October 6, 1974** - Dedication of the new Moller organ.

**1988** - New hot water heat system was installed in the church.

**1990** - Organ repaired.

**June, 1996** - The sanctuary is repainted in anticipation of the centennial.

**October, 1996 - October, 1997** - Centennial Celebration, kickoff dinner at Corning Community College. Three musical programs, children's T-shirt contest, a visit from the Bishop, a reunion choir, Ice Cream Social for the community and family picnic.

**1998** - Air conditioner and furnace replaced in the parsonage.

**1999** - Roof repairs on the sanctuary.

**2000** - Completed a handicap only parking lot.

**2000** - Successful capital funds drive to refurbish parsonage and church.

**2001** - Refurbished parsonage before arrival of new minister with over 2,000 hours of dedication by members.

**2001** - Pointed and sealed outside of church building.

**2002** - Youth group painted Reed Hall. The outside of the Educational Building was sealed.

**2004** - New boiler and heating units were installed in the sanctuary.



**2005** - New sound system was installed.

**2006** - Purchase of a new industrial dish washer to replace the original from 1965.



Children's Story during worship



2006 United Methodist Women's Christmas Party



2006 Advent



Ashley Tubbs Baptism



Church Luncheons



Scouting



Youth Membership 2006



Trustees spread the dirt at the parsonage, 2006



Employee Recognition, Fall 2006



## Grace United Methodist Church

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*The people* of Grace United Methodist Church are its history and its future. The insight and faith by those who came together one hundred and eleven years ago, to the faith and dedication of today's members are the elements that allowed Grace Church to grow and serve.

## A Brief History