

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

The Erlanger Christian Church

from

Their 90th Anniversary
Celebration Program

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THE ERLANGER CHRISTIAN CHURCH ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the year 1899, there were a number of people in Erlanger who had been members of the Christian Church elsewhere. In 1899, due largely to the activities of Mr. Connor Yeager, a Sunday School was started by those who had been affiliated with a Christian Church. This group met in the Town Hall on the second floor of Scott's Drug Store on the corner of Commonwealth and Lexington Pike. The people soon became enthusiastic and for preaching, they had occasional help from J.A. Lord, F.M. Rains, A. McLean, J.W. Rogers and George A. Miller.

On November 26, 1901 the Erlanger Christian Church was organized with 34 charter members. At this time, Edgar DeWitt Jones, who had been preaching in Erlanger, Petersburg, Point Pleasant, Bullittsville and Florence, was engaged to hold a meeting for his newly organized church. At the close of the meeting, there were 47 members. Mr. Jones accepted the invitation to remain as the church's first minister.

This newly organized church continued to meet in the Erlanger Town Hall from 1901 to 1904. After accepting the call as minister Mr. Jones began a personal solicitation for funds to erect a church building. About two-thirds of the amount needed was soon in hand with an additional sum covering the expense of three large memorial stained glass windows. The church edifice was completed and dedicated in January 1904. The dedicatory sermon was preached by F.M. Rains, a former missionary to China.

In the summer of 1903, Mr. Jones accepted the call to become the minister of the Franklin Circle Christian Church in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1907, he returned to Erlanger and held a meeting resulting in about 30 admissions. This stimulus spurred the congregation on to continued growth and development. The people continued to be enthusiastic in the years that followed with emphasis on the Sunday School program, missions, and women's place in the church. Much credit must be given to the successful undertakings of a class of women, still in existence, known as the Henrietta Circle and named for its first teacher, Henrietta Riggs, a charter member of Erlanger Christian Church.

Through the years many outstanding men served the Erlanger Church. None reached higher acceptance than its first minister, Edgar DeWitt Jones, who not only ministered to local congregations but became an outstanding Church Universal leader, lecturer and author. Dr. Jones spoke on many platforms, lecturing on Americana and especially in the realm, Lincolniana.

Due to both the growth of the Erlanger Church and the town populace the need arose for housing for the minister. In the early 20's plans were under way for erecting a parsonage. The Price family had given the original ground on which the church had been built and generously contributed an adjoining lot for this purpose. In 1924, the parsonage was completed. F.M. Stanbaugh, minister at the time, and his family were the first residents.

November 25 and 26, 1951 Erlanger Christian Church celebrated its Fiftieth anniversary, a glorious event, with the return of Edgar DeWitt Jones as guest speaker, Winston C. Bell being minister. It was an exciting and joyous occasion.

The 50's saw the walls of the church bulging as Sunday School classrooms were overcrowded and the need for additional facilities was realized. A three phase building program was soon instigated. Monies for the first phase provided for a portion of a new educational plant, and under the direction of Kenneth A. Bowen, minister, in 1956 this new building was proudly dedicated.

The people continued their enthusiasm, their determination, and their desire to maintain an adequate educational program. Under the leadership of Claude R. MacDonald, minister, the second phase of the building plan was completed, and in May 1965 the completed Educational Plant and Spire was dedicated.

1976 was a significant year for us: commemoration of 200 years as Americans and celebration of the 75th anniversary of Erlanger Christian Church with the dedication of a new church building.