**Campbell Speech [EZ Speech No. 16465]**

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Remarks by Mr. James Campbell at the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church.

needless to say, our little church wasn’t immune to the privations and challenges of the great depression. it is, to me, a miracle that we survived at all. but survive we did, and through faith and strength and dedication, we even made progress.

under the incredibly creative leadership of [first name] williams, who served as pastor from [years of his tenure]. as it is said in scripture, “the people had a mind to work,” and work they did. and so, during reverand williams’ stewardship, and that of his successors, a number of improvements were made both inside and outside the church. a beautification club was formed, and it’s members set to work enhancing the building’s exterior and grounds. sidewalks were laid in front of the church where the old parsonage once stood . . . electrical fixtures were modernized throughout the building . . . and the huge stained-glass window behind the choir stall was replaced after the original was destroyed in a violent storm [no.] years earlier.

the good reverand williams was also deeply interested in children and in their journey to god, so he organized a junior church and a Young women’s missionary society. both organizations were energetically active throughout his tenure, and in the years following.

when the depression hit, our church was struggling with a massive debt that hadn’t been paid for some time. but even despite the hardships of the era, the congrega-tion finally managed to liquidate the church’s indebted-ness by [year], a happy, happy day for everyone, and certainly the crowning achievement of reverand williams’ ministry.

over the following half-dozen years, our church was blessed by the stweardship of three dedicated and innovative pastors, including D. W. Demps, Thomas Huger, and Fernon Welch. among the improvements that were accomplished during this period, the congregation was able to fund construction of a dining room in the [location of dining room]. both the interior and the exteior of the building were thoroughly renovated. The first water fountain was installed in the vestibule, and the first electronic organ was installed in the santuary. a new area for holy communion was created. the church as finally able to purchase a bus in [year], which was an absolute boon to our elderly members who otherwise would have had a tough time getting to services. and all this during a period when not a few members sometimes had to wonder where their next meal was coming from!

during this same period, the church’s’ play area was fenced in, a second church choir was organized, and new robes were purchased for everyone.

by 1953, the need for some modern office space became sorely apparent, and under reverand [first name] weeks’ innovative leadership, part of the main auditorium was partitioned off and repurposed as the church’s adminis-trative offices, which are still located there.

but perhaps the most notable achievement of reverand weeks tenure was his dogmatic courage in advocating for equal rights. in [year], the alachua country school board sponsored a free dental health program for youngsters in the county. but it was open only to white kids. this didn’t sit well with reverand weeks, and so with all the powers of persuasion he was well-known for, he was able to convince the school board to include black kids in the program as well. reverand weeks’ commitment to fairness and community activism has remained a cornerstore of our church’s philosophy right down to the present day.

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