

## KENMORE ALLIANCE CHURCH HISTORY

The first meetings of a small group of Christians were held in Alliance Hall at 351 Main Street in Buffalo in 1890. In 1895 the church moved to 95 West Genesee Street. They then worshipped in various places until 1912. When Rev. R. J. Foster came as pastor, they met in the Y.W.C.A. on Mohawk Street. In May of 1915 the group became officially organized and incorporated. At this time they were meeting in a little store building on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, near Rhode Island. In the Spring of 1915 they moved to 411 Connecticut Street. This building was a little dwelling place until the time this move was made. When the church purchased the building Mr. John G. Seeger began to labor and give of his time and income to rebuild the cottage for church purposes. At the Dedication Services of that church, November 14-28, 1915, the guest speakers were Dr. A. B. Simpson, founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Dr. R. J. Zimmerman from Toronto, Canada and G.V. Brown of Wilmington, Delaware.

Following Rev. Foster's ministry, Rev. J. H. Boon was called in 1917. He served until 1925. Rev. W. W. Morrison was called in 1926. He served two years and was followed by Rev. Robert Burns, Rev. R. M. Gray, Rev. H. L. Kennedy, Rev. E. M. Esterley, and Rev. L. C. Tennes, Rev. H. R. Ronson 1940-1943 and Rev. Charles Wilson 1944-1950.

After the sale of the Connecticut Street church property in March, 1949, services were held in the parsonage at 28 Ripley Place until August 28, 1949. On that date the first meetings were held at 66 Somerton Ave., Kenmore, New York. This building, a house, was the previous place of worship of the St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Rev. Wilson was followed in 1950 by Rev. Paul R. Brittin who ministered until the Fall of 1958. Rev. Stanley Goble was called as pastor in November, 1958. It was during his ministry that a sanctuary was added to the Somerton building. This addition was dedicated April 25, 1965 during Rev. R. A. Canberg's ministry which began February, 1964 and continued for two years. Rev. Clair Nelson came as pastor in March, 1966 and ministered until September, 1970. The church was on the verge of closing. The numbers were down to about 7 people. Rev. George Hall was called to assume ministerial duties in December, 1970 and served until September, 1974. Under Rev. Hall leadership the church was able to reestablish itself as a viable ministry.

In January, 1975 Daniel R. Richter was called to a growing congregation. It was obvious that more room was needed to have an effective ministry in the community. In March of that year the church board set a goal of \$10,000 for the building fund to be reached by June 1. This goal was reached and exceeded. A building committee was formed and various options were considered. Plans for enlargement of the sanctuary on the Somerton Avenue building were approved and a ground breaking ceremony was held May 9, 1976. Construction began the same month. The Lar-Don Construction Company built the exterior of the addition. The congregation did all the finish work. This addition was dedicated October 9, 1977.

Rev. Robert and Marge Searing, missionaries on extended furlough, had an effective and crucial ministry with the youth. Many of who entered fulltime ministry. Rev. H. Russell Graf served As Associate Pastor beginning July 10, 1980. In 1981 the five plus acres at 175 Bonnett Avenue became available for purchase at approximately \$18,000 per acre. Though there was interest, the price was unattainable for the 200 plus congregation at that time.

Miss Betty J. Daughenbaugh became Director of Christian Education in February, 1983. Rev. Richter continued as pastor until March, 1983. Rev. Robert E. Jueckstock became pastor February 26, 1984. Because of continued growth, the Somerton Avenue church was sold and space was rented at the Phillip Sheridan School in 1984.

By the stroke of God's hand the property at 175 Bonnett Avenue became available again for purchase. This time the propert was available from the tax rolls for \$23,000. The property was purchased. A building committee was formed. The building at 175 Bonnett Avenue was built during 1985. It was occupied and dedicated April 21, 1985.

Betty Daughenbaugh left her ministry as Christian Education Director, July, 1985. Rev. Daniel J. Richert was called as Assistant Pastor July 6, 1986. Rev. William D. Brown, Sr. became Youth Pastor September 7, 1986. He served as Youth Pastor until November 2, 1987. Rev. Jueckstock served as pastor until January 10, 1988.

After consideration of some candidates, Rev. Daniel Richert, who was serving as Assistant Pastor, was called as Pastor and began in that capacity on May 7, 1989. Miss Kathleen A. Marshall was called and began June 5, 1989. Her ministry included the areas of Christian Education, worship and secretarial work. Dennis Kunselman was called as Youth pastor and began his ministry on August 1, 1989.

Rev. Richert resigned his ministry November 5, 1989. On March 4, 1990 Rev. Charles R. Holmes after finishing three terms as a District Superintendent in Ohio began his ministry as Pastor. Kathleen Marshall left her ministry on August 12, 1990. Dennis Kunselman after an effective ministry with the youth left in July, 1992. Jonathan L. Schuerholz who for the previous year had been Dennis Kunselman apprentice took over in July 1992 as Youth Pastor. Charles Holmes had an effective ministry from 1990-1994. Kenmore Alliance Church grew 25% and paid off much of the debt. He accepted a call to his home church in Mansfield, Ohio in the Fall of 1994.

The Church then after a year of looking called Rev Paul Hazlett and he began in September of 1995 after finishing three terms as a District Superintendent in the Metropolitan District. The church hired Lynn Bachman as part time Secretary. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1998 the church burned its mortgage and freed up money to hire more staff. In June 1998 the church called Rev. Jonathan L. Schuerholz to become the Associate Pastor. In January 1999, Shawn Wallace began his ministry as Youth Pastor. Rev. Pastor Hazlett decided to retire from pastoral ministry in the summer of 2000. The church called Rev. Jonathan L. Schuerholz to become the Senior Pastor. The church and pastoral staff entered a 9 month transition period. Rev. Jonathan L. Schuerholz was installed as Senior Pastor December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000 and Paul Hazlett became associate pastor until May 2001. Carol Hazlett had a major impact on the ladies ministries of the church. Carol started Evangelistic Teas. These impacted the whole church's attitude concerning outreach.

The leadership sensing attendance had plateaued decided to go to two AM worship services. The Church began having two worship services on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Shawn Wallace accepted a call to a church in Ohio in February 2001. The Church called David Irwin, who had just completed an internship at Christ Community Church in Omaha Nebraska, to be youth pastor. David began his ministry in May 2001. The Church then called Terry Gugger to become the assistant pastor, he began June 2001. Terry came from being a fulltime police officer and a part time assistant pastor in Marion Indiana. Due to increased attendance during the Sunday School hour and on Wednesday Night, and a lack of storage space. The church decided to add on to the south end of the building. On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2002, the five additional classrooms and attic storage were dedicated. Pastor Paul and Carol Hazlett as well as Pastor Charles and Ann Holmes attended and spoke. Dave Irwin resigned in July of 2003 and the Church called Rev. Evans Christian of Silver Springs, Maryland to become youth pastor. Evans and his wife Melissa were officially installed on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2003. Melissa grew up at Kenmore Alliance Church and her parents were both in leadership positions.

In March of 2004, the church decided to go to three morning worship services on Sunday 8:30, 10, and 11:30. Easter of 2004 the church had over 500 people in attendance for the first time ever. In December of 2004 Peter Courlas was hired as the church's forth pastoral staff person. He and his wife Jennifer and their three children had been attending the church for a year before Peter was hired as the family pastor. For 2005 the average attendance for Sunday morning worship pushed past the 400 mark.

In June 2006 Associate Pastor Terry Gugger left after serving for five years and moved to pursue a pastorate in the Pacific Northwest. September 2006 the church called Charles Jones to be the Assistant Pastor of Worship. Charles had been attending the church for five years and his wife Michelle for most of her life. Her family has been a pillar of the church. They have three Children. The church also hired Elaine Argo to administrate the church's expanding calendar and communication needs. While Lynn Bachman continued as bookkeeper and began assisting the senior pastor more directly.

The Elders and Ministry Board approved initial drawings for a new sanctuary in September 2006. This would significantly increase seating and provide space for continued growth. In 2006 KAC had its 6th straight year of growth. In the May 2007 The Elders and Ministry Board voted to hire Cheryl Rinker as a Fulltime Children's Ministry Director. She and her husband Tyler both have been attending KAC, Cheryl for all of her 25 years. The Church Leadership voted in June 2007 to try a Saturday Night Worship Service in September 2007 for three months. September of 2007 set a record for average worship service attendance with 597. On top of that 80+ children just attended Sunday School while their parents were in the 10am service. On the

weekend of March 1st and 2nd there were 688 in attendance at the worship services and another 80-100 just in Children and Youth Sunday School.

On March 6th, 2008 the Elders and Ministry Board called Rev. Patrick Tharp to become the Associate Pastor of church planting. Patrick and his wife Becky had been attending for four months. The Northeastern District approved substantial funds out of their church planting reserves to pay the majority of Patrick's salary. The goal is that within 18 months Patrick, his wife Becky and a good number of KAC folks will plant a church in Western New York. Easter 2008 the church had over 800 in attendance in four services.

So as of April 1st 2008 Kenmore Alliance Church had the following fulltime staff; Rev. Jon Schuerholz serving as Preaching and Leadership pastor, Rev. Peter Courlas Associate Pastor of Disciple-making, Rev. Evans Christian Associate Pastor of Youth, Rev. Patrick Tharp Associate Pastor of Church Planting, Charles Jones Assistant Pastor of Worship, Cheryl Rinker Director of Children's Ministries, Lynn Bachman Book Keeper/Executive Assistant/Women's Ministries Director. The Part time staff consisted of Elaine Argo Church Administration/Communication, Jan Erb Custodian, Adam Williams Youth Intern, and Rick Bostaph grounds.