

First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale

Dedication To A Working Christian Community

During the Centennial Celebration of the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale in 1975, a Centennial Year Book was created. The book was dedicated in prayerful gratitude to all those wonderful people who stood on this land one hundred years ago and pledged themselves to the task at hand. Down through the years these humble Christian people gave to the First Presbyterian Church "not of their abundance, but of their substance, in order that they and their children might grow in God's Holy Grace." Their cares and labors, their dedication and commitment, have been and shall always be a source of inspiration to those who follow after them.

Acknowledgements:

The first one hundred years of history (1875 to 1975) was put together by Thelma Caruss, as the collector of historical materials, along with Kathy Caruss and Reverend John A. Toth as editors.

The second part covers 27 years of history (1975 to 2002) and was put together by Susan York with the help of Kathy Caruss, Marianna Malkowski and Reverend John A. Toth. This section was included with the 2003 Mission Study, bringing our church history up to date after the retirement of Reverend Toth as the pastor in 2002.

1875

Our History With Christ

1975

In the year 1837, the land known as the Eaton County Territory of Michigan was opened to the public for homesteads and families began to settle in Windsor Township. The men would work together one day a week on each other's farms. Soon the women were meeting in their one-room log cabins to entertain and take away the loneliness of the dense forests around them. They decided to have a prayer circle before going back to their individual homes. The group became known as the Pray Circle and invited men to join in their prayer meeting. As local area needs grew due to sickness and hardship, the group in about 1839 formed the "Windsor Aid". Dinners were served for five cents to raise funds for needy projects. As the population grew, circuit riders were sent to the area to conduct worship services.

In 1846, Rev. Joseph Warren Smith presiding for the Congregational Ministry of Eaton Rapids met at the home of Nathan H. Pray to organize the first regular church services. In 1850, Mr. Issac Dimond started to build a dam and sawmill on the Grand River at the place called "Dimondville". At the close of the Civil War the Congregational Society and other people of the area decided Windsor Township needed a regular church building. In February 1875, the present First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale structure was begun. The land was purchased and building started. The united efforts of the men of the following secret societies ("Red Men", "Good Templers", and the "International Order of Odd Fellows") were enlisted to help build the church. In return for their help, they were to hold their lodge meetings in the new building. The structure was enclosed, floors laid, basement lathed, and wainscoted, with the material being furnished by local farmers.

According to a letter dated 1908 and written by Mrs. May Shepard, "John Sadler (Alice Williams father) and father-in-law Williams furnished rafters, roof boards, and shingles for the south side of the church. The Hetrick brothers, John and Sam, and others furnished the rest of the roof. The Prays, Longmates, and Parsons furnished the sills, studding and siding." But, the letter also said work began in February 1875. At this time only the basement was finished enough for use.

Meanwhile a Presbyterian family from Parma Center, New York, moved to the area. Mrs. J. A. Vanderbeck began to hold Bible Study groups and church services in her home. The group continued to grow until it became necessary to obtain consent of the Skinner School District for use of the Skinner

School for meetings. Recorded in the Session Records of the Dimondale Presbyterian Church, "In response to an expressed wish of persons interested in the formation of a Presbyterian Church in the Township of Windsor, Eaton County, extended to the Presbytery of Lansing at its meeting in April 1875. Presbytery after considering their application appointed a commission to visit the place and if the way be clear to make such organization". The said commission met with the people of the Church on June 11, 1875, at the Skinner School House and constituted the First Presbyterian Church of Windsor. The Rev. Henry Martin was the first pastor and he served from that June until February 1878. Thirteen of the men and women who founded this new church came on letters of transfer from Congregational and Presbyterian Churches from area towns such as Lansing, Potterville, Olivet, and Parma Center, New York. The other seven founding members joined the new church by Confession of Faith and Baptism. The organization now known as the Presbyterian Church of Windsor met in the little building known as the "Little Brown Jug School", which was located on the corner of Pine and Washington Streets. During the winter of 1875-76, the church met on the south side of town in Olivers Hall and also at the school house by the cemetery.

A grant dated October 21, 1877, of \$700.00 from the Presbyterian Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America permitted the Presbyterian Church of Windsor to purchase the partially completed Congregational Church building which had been started in February 1875.

In February of 1878, the Rev. James A. Malcom, a lay missionary became pastor, and he served until July 1879. According to the Session Records dated February 6, 1878, the Church was officially dedicated on February 6 by a Commission of the Presbytery of Lansing. Sixteen new members were added to the Church roll at this time. On February 13, 1878, the first Elders were elected. Prior to this time the Elders were previously ordained from other Presbyterian churches. The Elders gave the Ladies Christian Society for the church the "key" and care of the basement and kitchen. We must note that this group was first called the "Ladies Christian Association of Windsor Township", later "The Ladies Benevolent Society of Windsor Township", then in 1880 they settled on the Ladies Aid Society. This group played an important function in helping the Church to survive, and lead to the Presbyterian Women's group of today.

The first piece of furniture was an elevated oven cook stove for the kitchen. Tables were made and the women brought plates, cups and silver from their own cupboards to get the church in shape. According to May Shepard's notebooks "dinners held for five cents a person." The first pews were from a church in Lansing. The walls were plastered, woodwork painted, and the pulpit desk made. The stained glass windows were installed, a new walk, porch and steps to the basement constructed.

In July 1879, the Reverend B. Franklin came from Lansing and served as pastor until December 1880. Session Records show a steady increase in membership in the church. From December 1880 to November 1881, the Reverend J.R. Stevensen from Eaton Rapids served as temporary supply pastor. Mr. Stevensen resigned due to his poor health on November 1, 1881.

For the next year, Mr. George Paddock supplied the pulpit. He was a graduate of Olivet College and licensed to preach by the Congregational Church. He served jointly here and with the Potterville Congregational Church. Mr. Paddock left in November 1882, to continue his study for the ministry. During the past year the ice house was built and the Ladies Aid knitted, pieced quilts, and carried out other projects to earn money. According to the Ladies Aid minutes date January 20, 1882, the bell was raised and the men were busy filling the ice house.

From November 1882 until September 1883, the Reverend Finley John Malcom served as pastor in connection with the Potterville Congregational Church. Each church paid half of his \$700.00 per year salary. A Communion Set was purchased for \$23.44 and tables were built for the church. The February 1883 Session record notes that, "the trustees be instructed not to let the basement for political or immoral meetings."

The Session minutes of November 1883 say: "It was voted to hire L. H. Phelps for one year for \$700.00 to be paid quarterly." Mr. Phelps served from November 1883 to May of 1884. He resigned "For want of a suitable house to live in." as quoted by A. C. Baker, Clerk of Session.

The Session secured the Reverend Edward J. Jamison as pastor at a salary of \$650.00 per year. In 1886, his family had typhoid and the Ladies Aid hired help to take care of them. The men had work bees cutting wood for the church stoves. The ladies bought a lamp for the font of the church and purchased hymn books for the prayer meetings. The money was earned from their sewing.

From 1887 to 1889, the Reverend Albert Lott was pastor in a shared situation with the Holt Presbyterian Church. The Sunday School attendance reached eight-two. In 1889 to 1890, the Reverend E. M. Landis served jointly with the Holt Church at a salary of \$600.00 per year and free use of the Holt Parsonage. During this period the Ladies Aid paid for the construction of the horse sheds because "it was inhuman to let horses stand out in the cold while the people were housed inside for worship." The project cost \$92.55.

From September 1890 to August 1892, the Reverend Charles McKinney of Olivet College served as supply pastor at a salary of \$400.00. The Ladies Aid purchased three dozen dishes and new church pews at a cost of \$320.00. In August 1892, Professor Charles Horn of Olivet College was hired as supply pastor. He stayed until June 1893, when the Reverend Ernest Bourden Allen of Olivet College was hired as supply pastor at \$400.00 per year.

From 1894 to April 1896, the Reverend Helmus H. VanAuken came from Alpena as pastor for a salary of \$520.00 per year. His parents were early pioneers of the West Windsor Area.

From 1895 to 1900, three pastors supplied the pulpit, the Reverend VanAuken, Reverend Allen and Reverend Winfield S. Sly. During this period new carpeting was bought for the sanctuary by the Ladies Aid. The Christian Endeavor Youth put a roof on the basement entrance and purchased a three tiered table to be used for a pulpit.

In January 1901, the Reverend Herbert H. Parker became supply pastor until January 1902. He organized an orchestra and was paid \$500.00. During the period from 1902 to 1905, the Reverend Winfield S. Sly and Reverend Parker supplied the pulpit. In 1905, the Reverend Carl Borton supplied the pulpit and Reverend Allen returned to supply in 1906.

From September 1907 to April 12, 1908, the Reverend W. B. O'Neill was secured as a resident pastor. The Allan Sparks System of Lighting was installed in the audience room and the church hall on November 11, 1907.

During the summer vacation periods of 1907 and 1908, the Reverend E. Blake McDonald supplied the pulpit. He received \$12.00 per Sunday. He also conducted a house to house Church Survey in Windsor Township while here.

In 1908 and 1909, the Reverend Carl D. Borton and Reverend Paul Allured supplied the pulpit. In September 1909, the Reverend Helmus H. VanAuken returned. During 1910, the church held a homecoming to earn money for a Manse Fund. Church dinner prices were raised from five cents to ten cents per person.

During the period from January 22, 1911 to January 1913, the Reverend David Howell, D.D. was pastor. He was the first minister to live in the new manse built by Homer Murphy. The Ladies Aid gave \$550.00 to help pay for the manse.

In October 1913, the Reverend Winfield S. Sly filled the pulpit. In 1914 through 1918, the Reverend James G. Young came from Ireland to fill the pulpit. He died while here in Dimondale.

The Reverend David Campbell served in 1919. Through 1920 to 1924, Wade L. Frost was the lay minister. He lived in Lansing. The manse was rented. The Ladies Aid dishes were purchased for \$113.00 and the manse was rewired. The pulpit was made wider. The \$700.00 granted fifty years earlier to purchase the church was paid back to the Presbyterian Denomination. The church was redecorated throughout. In 1922, small rugs were made from the worn out sanctuary carpet and sold at the Aid Fair.

In September 1924 through 1932, the Reverend Charles P. Bates filled the pulpit. He earned \$1600 per year and use of the manse. On June 11, 1925, the church celebrated the Golden Anniversary.

From September 1932 to April 1938, the Reverend Frank Henry Bayles came as pastor. It was "Depression Time". He earned \$500.00 per year. The Ladies Aid held penny suppers to earn money for the church. Mission Aid to the church amounted to \$600.00 from the Presbyterian Mission Board. The Friendly Folk Class was very active in helping the church.

From 1938 to May 1946, the Reverend William Yauch came as pastor for our church and the Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church in Lansing. LaDell Bett organized a Junior Choir in 1939.

In May 12, 1946 to August 31, 1952, the Reverend Paul Hurrell of Sturgis served as pastor for \$1200 per year. On August 11, 1946, the Carillon Tower Bell was dedicated in memory of Samuel and Sarah Ann Martin, presented by Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Martin. The basement was dug for the Sunday School rooms in the back part of the church property. Construction was done by church members. The Friendly Folk Class held dinners to pay for the building. The oil furnace was installed. A new organ was purchased for \$1,036. The Dimondale School System rented the Sunday School rooms for two years.

In August 1952 to December 1961, Mr. Harold McKinney Jr. became the resident lay minister. Mrs. McKinney started three choirs; Cherub, Junior and Sanctuary. In 1954, Richard Bayles was sponsored by the church to attend Olivet College. The Ladies Aid provided a scholarship fund. The church sponsored two softball teams totaling thirty-five boys. The coach was Stuart Warren. A new organ was purchased in 1958. A nursery was started during worship hour so that mothers could sing in the choir.

The Reverend James Rodda arrived in 1963 and was ordained here. He served as pastor for two years. Sunday School attendance reached 130 and the youth ministry was at a high.

In 1965 to 1969, the Reverend William Nethery came as pastor. The upper parlor and music room were added over the back basement in 1966. In 1967, a major portion of the church building was remodeled. The United Presbyterian Women began to serve Lions Club dinners.

In 1969, the Reverend John A. Toth arrived as pastor. Mr. Toth served previously at the Gatun Union Church in the Panama Canal Zone. In 1970, the Sabin House (Clark property) and two lots were purchased by the church from the sale of some Gerber Stock. This amount doubled the church property. The Senior Citizens Club was sponsored by the church and also a Co-operative Nursery School. In 1971, new dishes were purchased for the church. In 1974, the kitchen was totally remodeled.

As written by Reverend John A. Toth during the creation of the 1875-1975 Centennial Yearbook: "In reviewing the history of our church we have found that many people became very dedicated to the Dimondale Presbyterian Church family. If ever there has been a Church built by the involvement of many people doing things, Dimondale stands as that tribute. In service to the Lord Jesus Christ the people over the past one hundred years have joined together their hopes and ambitions, their works and efforts, and with the help of God produced a century of prayerful growth in this community. Truly it has been '100 years of serving Christ'."

The goal of this history of the years 1975 to 2002 at First Presbyterian Church, Dimondale, is to complete the history of the church to the end of the ministry of Reverend John Toth. The years 1875 to 1975 were chronicled in a history of the church written by John Toth with the assistance of Kathy Caruss and included in the church directory published for the centennial year of 1975.

Prior to the calling of John Toth to fill the pulpit of First Presbyterian Church, Dimondale, in 1969, a total of 38 ministers had served the church over the 127 year period since its founding in 1875. Until the 1940s the church was a "mission" church, supported by Presbytery rather than being self-supporting. Perhaps that partially explains the fact that the average tenure for the pastor had been only 2.5 years. Thus the ministry of John Toth was unique to the history of the church, covering a span of 33 years ; the longest previous ministerial tenure, that of Pastor Harold McKinney in 1952-1961, had been but nine years. During Reverend Toth's pastorate, the world, the community, and the church changed dramatically. The stability of having a long term minister provided the opportunity to plan for the future. Among the major changes for the church were the purchase of additional property, major improvements to the building, major improvements to the music program as the result of funds that had been acquired through the Martin Memorial endowment, the establishment of a Recycling Center serving as an informal mission of the church and producing income that sponsored many significant improvements in facilities and programs. These changes are outlined below.

During Reverend Toth's tenure, the church made buying adjacent land a priority. The Sabin property lay within 3 feet of the rear wall of the church. In 1970 the church purchased this property and the adjacent lot. At first the old Sabin house was rented, but then the church set up a cooperative nursery there sponsored by the church but with its own board, called the Dimondale Cooperative Nursery. The nursery, nonprofit and self-supporting, operated until 1984 when the building was demolished to make way for the new addition that the church later added.

The lot next to the Barrix property was purchased in the mid 1970s and is now used as the church's back drive and parking lot. Both this purchase and the Sabin property purchase were made with funds borrowed from the Martin Memorial Fund which had been established in 1944. Then in 1998 the Barrix double lot property was purchased and the Snow property in 2001, both again with funds borrowed from the Martin Memorial Fund. In each case the purpose was to facilitate church expansion if needed at a later date.

In 1976 the church bell was removed from the steeple because of concern about the sturdiness of the church's tower due to the 1000 pound weight of the bell. To house the bell for historic preservation, a bell house endowed by the Burnett family was built at the front of the church. Also that year the church was given an historical marker to commemorate its 100th year anniversary. Insulation became an early project under Reverend Toth's leadership because the church building had never been insulated. Installing insulation and vinyl siding provided such a huge energy savings that this improvement paid for itself in five years.

In anticipation of population growth in the Windsor Township area, in 1984 the church began to plan and raise funds for church expansion under the leadership of chairs Harry Adams and Jim Murton. The total cost of the building project, \$560,000, was raised with funding from the General Assembly, the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, the Synod of the Covenant, local sponsors, and bank loans as well as a grant from the Granger Foundation. In 1988 church members broke ground for an expansion that doubled the size of the building, which was redesigned by architects so that the sanctuary was re-oriented towards the west. A new steeple was placed on the church tower with funds donated by Robert Swart in honor of Rosie Swart. The dedication of the expansion took place with ceremony and celebration that fall. The program of the church was enhanced by this addition of the new great room, new offices, and a new kitchen, among other improvements.

Other building improvements occurring during Reverend Toth's pastorate included the installation of new front doors in a Celtic cross pattern, designed by Steve Parisian and John Toth and built by Steve Parisian in 1975; the installation of awnings on the new main doors and back doors in 1991; and the addition of a new wooden cross at the front of the sanctuary designed and built by member Roy Schnepf with wood from the Hettrick farm as a memorial for member Marian Hettrick. In 2002 an historic flag pole, originally on the Mackinac Bridge when it was built in 1957, was placed in the side yard of the church and dedicated to Reverend John Toth on the occasion of his retirement.

In 1946 Elta Jay and Gertrude E. Martin, who were not residents of our community but interested in helping churches to buy carillons, wanted to give the church a carillon in memory of his parents, Samuel and Sarah Ann Martin. Their generosity led to the endowment of 155 shares of Gerber Foods common stock for the church's music program. The endowment has served as a source of income for the church and funding for special projects since that time, though the company was bought out by the Sandoz Corporation in recent years and the endowment reinvested in other securities. The original carillon installed with Martin Memorial funding in the early 1940s was a keyboard at the organ. A volunteer played 5 minutes of songs daily at 6 P.M. The carillon was upgraded in the early 1970s to an automatic system that used sealed tapes and upgraded again in late 1990s to the current system with funding from the sale of Gerber stock. The Martin Memorial Fund also purchased a Baldwin organ for the church and, in the late 1990s, an electronic keyboard.

When Reverend Toth first came in 1969, there was no pastor's office and no secretary. All rooms were used for Sunday School and volunteers staffed the church. Later his wife, Joanne Toth, was appointed the church's first paid part-time secretary, a position she held until her retirement with that of Reverend Toth in 2002. When Reverend John Toth first came, the church had a history of being a small, part-time church with a miniscule budget. The goal of achieving 200 members was achieved in 1977 and membership has remained stable since that time. Another change during the Toth era was a transition from casual to planned giving both of individual members and of the church as a body to mission. Members increasingly gave permanent endowments to the Presbyterian Foundation. In 2001 the church began a Brazilian Mission Project by sponsoring the work of Reverend Paulo Brasil, a seminary classmate of John Toth. Reverend Brasil visited the church several times to talk about his mission to youth at Youth Set Free Ministry, Mata Grosso, in the forests of Brazil.

Reverend Toth led two trips of church members and friends to the Holy Land, in 1972 and 1980. In 1975 he presided over the church's celebration of its Centennial Year. That was also the year that the first church directory, containing a history of the church to that date, was published. Church directories have followed in 1981, 1985, 1990, and 2000. In 1994 and again in 1995 the church celebrated the paying off of its loans from the National Bank of Detroit and the General Assembly respectively. Another addition during the Toth years was the purchase in 1993 of a new nativity scene for the Christmas season largely with gifts from members of the congregation. In 1996 a second, more contemporary service was instituted to attract unchurched people of the community and continued until 1998. In 2000 church members enjoyed a 125th year celebration of First Presbyterian with a church banquet. Also that year the church retained its first parish associate, Reverend Lee Filker, to provide additional support for the work of ministry.

A new project in which Reverend John Toth took the initiative, that of recycling, was started around 1974. The Girl Scout troop sponsored by the church had begun collecting glass for recycling. The Girl Scouts kept barrels of glass in the church until they started to meet in the new Junior High School and left their glass project in Dimondale. At that point the church took over glass collection. The church had already been collecting newspapers in the garage of the former Sabin house next door to help send children to camp. Reverend Toth himself had received a camp scholarship as a child, making this an important cause to him. He had noticed when he came in 1969 that no children or youth of the church were going to church camp. He started taking Junior High youth to a camp and asked the church for financial help. Lake Michigan Presbytery's Camp Greenwood was rejuvenated in the early 1970s and children and youth of the church were encouraged to go. While some members gave money for scholarships, the startup of recycling around 1974 provided monies that could be used for

camp scholarships, with the size of the scholarship depending on the money available and the number of children who wanted to go. Thus began a tradition of giving children and youth of the church a 50 percent camp scholarship, which more recently became a 100 percent scholarship (minus cost of registration).

The environmental movement was in its infancy at this time; thus conservation and recycling became an emphasis of the youth group. Though the church began the work of recycling around 1974, records were not kept until 1978, which was the official start of the church's recycling project. Soon the project became too big to store materials in the church itself and the Sabin house and the church began to use a bin under the pine trees. In 1978 it built a garage for newspapers and a shed for glass. A grant from the state enabled the church to buy a trailer that was placed at the mobile home park and monitored by several church members. In 1988 the church was forced to re-site the trailer so it was moved to church property at the time that the new building was under construction. The garage was moved to where it stands today and the church received permission to use the Masonic driveway for recycling traffic. The Recycling Center expanded into plastics and bought a plastic bailer with contributions from the Township, Eaton County, the Village and the Lions. With the Village's contribution the Recycling Center received formal recognition as a project and the center continued to increase the volume handled and processed right up to the time of Reverend Toth's retirement in 2002. In 1990 John Toth was recognized as an "earth angel" by a local radio station and in 1992 Channel 6 recognized Reverend Toth and the recycling volunteers as "unsung heroes". The church turned to employing more paid staff in recent years when the number of volunteers dropped while the volume of recyclable materials continued to increase annually.

John Toth was instrumental both in enhancing the financial stability of the church and in restoring the financial credibility of Camp Greenwood. The Recycling Center brought an additional source of income to the church, which has been used over the years not only to provide camp scholarships for children and youth, but also to finance needed repairs to the parking lot and infrastructure of the church, finance many program expenses, and to support many benevolent groups that have sought funding from the church. For Camp Greenwood, Reverend Toth served as a commissioner, chair of the Camp Greenwood Agency for several years, and member of the Camp Greenwood Task Force. In those roles key he was instrumental in bringing fiscal responsibility to the organization assisted by Joanne Toth, who brought better record keeping as Camp Greenwood's volunteer secretary and registrar.

The church has been and remains a community-centered church. Historically the building has been made available to community groups for meetings, including those of the Lions Club, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, and many community, village, and township organizations. When people around town talk about a meeting as being at "the church", everyone knows what that means. As the sponsor of a Boy Scout troop and a Cub Scout troop, the pastor is the executive officer of the troop and signed their charter. Early in his ministry John Toth was asked to be involved in organizing the community's traditional Memorial Day and continued as its marshal until his retirement. Church member Mike Chappell started a Memorial Day chicken barbecue sponsored by the church in the 1970s that has also become a community tradition. The church has always provided emergency aid and church committees started to collect food and stockpile it for an emergency Food Bank to serve the entire community. For many years the church also coordinated local Meals on Wheels deliveries. The Presbyterian Women's organization of the church organized and hosted the Windsor Township Retirees until they organized on their own. This group continues to meet at the church. As noted above, at one time the church sponsored a cooperative nursery that served community members. In recent years it has alternated with Dimondale Methodist Church in providing a Good Friday service for the community. Dimondale residents call the First Presbyterian Church "the community church" and a good neighbor.

Other practices and traditions at First Presbyterian associated with the leadership of John Toth have included the Baptismal candle, art in the church, communion around the table at the longstanding Maundy Thursday service, and a men's breakfast/Bible study at Mike's Village Restaurant. Wonderful Wednesdays grew out of Vacation Bible School in the 1980s and became Terrific Tuesdays in 2001.

The Young Adults Group of the 1960s and early 1970s evolved into a couples group and then Pairs and Spares. Easter breakfast was originally a community event but became a church project when the church started having two services on Easter Sunday. The meal has been prepared by Ed Dixon and his family for many years.

The Presbyterian Women have historically been very active. In the 1960s the group began circles for Bible study and provided nursery care. It started organizing an annual bazaar of holiday crafts in the late 1960s which has remained a very successful fund raising event. Presbyterian Women has a mission of serving and providing spiritual and informational programs, including the Lenten breakfast which it began in the mid 1980s. As elsewhere, the role of Presbyterian Women has changed as more women became employed outside the home. Thus, at times it has functioned as a coordination team, but has nonetheless remained visibly active in support of the programs of the church. While the program of the youth group has varied depending on the number of youth in that age group, it has also flourished at times under the leadership of advisors including John Toth, Kathy Caruss, Barb and Tim Lowe, and many others. The Church's Sunday School program has remained strong and dedicated to nurturing the children and adults of the church under the leadership of volunteer Christian educators. The Christian education director became a paid position in the 1980s.

First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale has been distinguished for its active participation in the affairs of Presbytery. Members who have participated in various Presbytery committees and commissions over the years include Kathy Caruss, Garnet Chappell, Lee Fulker, Barbara Lowe, Marianna Malkowski, Nolan Mitchell, Jim Murton, John Toth, and Bill York. John Toth served on the Synod Commission 1976-79 and 1986-88, Chair Synod Planning Commission 1973-79, Synod Development Commission 1983, Camp Greenwood 1980-82 and 1984-85, Media Commission 1983, Permanent Judicial Commission 1991-94, and Camp Greenwood Task Force 1986-88. Kathy Caruss, Nolan Mitchell, and John Toth all served as Commissioners to General Assembly. Kathy Caruss, Jim Murton, and Bill York served as moderators of the Presbytery committees of Ministry, Worship and Music, and Budget and Finance, respectively, and both John Toth and Kathy Caruss have been vice-moderators and moderators of Presbytery.

In summary, during the years of John Toth's ministry to the people of First Presbyterian Church, Dimondale, the church grew in membership, programs and service to members and community, and in its spiritual life. It grew physically, in giving, and in support of meeting the needs of peoples in the congregation, the community, and the world. Reverend John Toth led 33 years of worship and service and was honored upon his retirement for his devotion to the word of God and life in Christ and his service to the congregation and community throughout a period of challenge and change.