

A Brief History of Peace Evangelical and Reformed Church Potter, Wisconsin by Rev. Dr. Marc Axelrod

Peace Evangelical and Reformed Church in Potter, Wisconsin celebrated its 140th anniversary on August 22, 2014.

Students from the Mission House College in Sheboygan had a vision for planting churches in the upper Midwest. Peace Church in Potter was part of that vision. By 1881, the church had its first confirmation class. By the 1890's, it was able to support a full-time minister.

During the ministry of the Rev. Herman Schmid (1915-1926), church membership rose to about 230 active confirmed members. Rev. J.C. Rosenau ministered to the Potter Church from 1936-1945, and he transitioned the parish into having all English services. The last service in German took place in 1938.

The current building, where the church holds its Sunday morning 9:00 a.m. worship services, was constructed in 1922. The basement kitchen was remodeled in 1951. An addition to the church was added on in 1973, with Sunday school classrooms and a spacious handicapped accessible entryway. The addition was dedicated just in time to celebrate the church's 100th anniversary in 1974.

Rev. Rosenau returned to pastor the church from 1971 to 1982. After his retirement, the church was served by several ministers over the next 14 years.

The Rev. Dr. Marc Axelrod was called to be the pastor of Peace Church in July 1996, and began his ministry August 12 of that year. New hymnals were purchased. The Voices of Peace and the Potter's Clay were music ministries of the church that were raised up by the Lord in the late 1990's.

In partnership with the Voices of Peace, the church also helps sponsor the Gospel Music Fest that takes place the third weekend of August at the Hilbert Civic Park. Thousands of people attend the Fest each year.

In 2001, the church withdrew from its former denomination because of concerns over liberal beliefs and practices to become a nondenominational evangelical church. In 2005, the church repaved the parking lot and added a handicapped accessible wheelchair lift. In 2012, the church remodeled the kitchen, and in 2016, the church remodeled the sanctuary, the gathering area, and the restrooms. A new sound and high definition video system was added.

The church also has its own Vacation Bible School which meets in the middle of July. We average anywhere from 35 to 65 students.

The church gives more than \$20,000 a year toward missions. We support Samaritan's Purse, World Vision, Navigators, Cru, Outer Limits Youth Ministry, the Gideon's, Don Shire Ministries and a couple of missionaries from our own congregation.

The church has since grown numerically and spiritually. We have roughly around 375 members, and about 50 preparatory members (children who haven't yet gone through the Peace Church confirmation program). The average attendance for a Sunday service is about 145 in the summer and anywhere from 170-200 in the fall, winter, and spring. We are still growing! It's all because of God!

The church is theologically conservative without being overly strict. We believe in the Trinity, and in the Bible as the inspired word of God. We also believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the way, the truth, and the life, and that salvation comes through no one else but through Him alone. The mission of Peace Church is to bring people to Christ, build them up in their faith, and send them back to work as equipped servants of the Lord.

Even though we are conservative, we are not confining. We participate in ecumenical services with other believers in Christ.

We have Sunday morning worship at 9 a.m. and Sunday school for students of all ages beginning at 10 a.m. Our worship services are live streamed on the Facebook page of Marc Axelrod and on YouTube. Services are also televised on Tuesday nights at 6 p.m. on Charter cable channel 978, both in Brillion and in Chilton.

We have women's Bible study Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Confirmation Wednesdays 6:15 to 7:45 p.m., Thursday night Bible study at 7:00 p.m. On Fridays we have two different Bible studies one at 9:00 a.m. and the other at 3:30 p.m. Our men's fellowship and Bible study group normally meets the 1st Saturday of the month for breakfast at a local restaurant.

Pastor Marc has been with the church since 1996. He received his Masters of Divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio in 1995, and the Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2011.

The church rejoices over the privilege of being able to represent the Lord Jesus Christ in Calumet County. It is an honor to be in service for Him and look forward to many more years if the Lord tarries.