

Historical Clippings

Three Lakes Museum

April 2022

Community Collaborators

Three Lakes Churches

Many changes have taken place since the early settlers built the little wooden churches in Three Lakes in the 1890s. Most of these settlers came from foreign shores, and had little of the material things of life we now take for granted. The church played a very important part in their lives, and stood as a sign of their faith, and where they expressed their appreciation for the favors of God. In this new land they had hope for a better life for themselves and for future generations, for which they are remembered with deepest gratitude.

Irene Batagowski

from *The Pine the Plow and the Pioneer*, vol. I

In the early 1890's when Three Lakes was a community with dirt streets, wooden sidewalks, horses and buggies, formal church buildings had yet to be built. Church services were held in private homes or existing community buildings such as the Independent Order of Good Templars Hall or a school. The first permanent church building in town was the Catholic church.



In 1894, the Catholics, anxious to build a church and start a parish of their own, were given permission by the Bishop of Green Bay to begin construction and the first St. Theresa's was built where the present church stands.

Located next to St. Theresa's, the Union Congregational Church began in 1900 as a Methodist church, became the church of the Presbyterians in 1910, and transitioned to the Congregationalists between 1916 and 1918.

From the back of the postcard:

"The Catholic church. The Methodist church and Anton Ziembeneaskies [sic] house"



The tornado of September 1924 ran through the town of Three Lakes from the west to the east and in somewhat typical tornadic fashion, some buildings were destroyed while others nearby were spared. Such seems to be the case with the side by side churches.



The Congregational Church sustained damage but by 1926 repairs had been made and the building took on a slightly different look.

As Three Lakes grew through the 20th century' so did the number of churches and denominations serving the faithful of this area. Many began the same way as the two wooden churches did - a small group gathering in homes, planning for their future.

One common thread that runs through many of the stories written in *The Pine the Plow and the Pioneer vols. I and II* is the references to "church" and often includes stories of how the churches stepped up to help the community and each other -

It is interesting to note that in the 1920s, the school building ran out of room and classes were held in this church building.

Thought to have begun in the school or in Lois Swantz's garage one summer in 1948 or 1949, it quickly became housed in the basement of the Union Congregational Church where it remained for several years. (the Library?)

Nor are their efforts confined only to assisting this congregation. There have been activities held for the public - Harvest Dinner, Mother-Daughter Dinner, bake sales, bazaars, thrift sales, cookie sales, ice cream socials, to name a few - and contributions to civic activities.

In the early years, the Catholic ladies would join the Congregational ladies for card parties and the proceeds would be split.

