

Venture Into Faith

1954

FIRST BETHANY
EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH
DETROIT, MICHIGAN



*In the Name of the Father, and the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

. . . When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for the present delight alone.

Let it be such work as our descendents will thank us for; and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time will come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say, as they look upon the labor and wrought substances of them . . .

“See! This our Fathers did for us.”

—John Ruskin.

To the present Churchfolk,
who will build,
and to our children and their children,
who will use what we build,
this booklet is prayerfully dedicated.



Where your treasure is . . .

there also will your heart be

There is one privilege, joy and blessing which every Christian should experience once. That is the joy of helping to build a church. Most of us are using a church which our fore-fathers have erected through their faith, prayer and sacrifice.

There are five characteristics of a true Christian: He is a Church - Member, a Church - Attender, a Church - Supporter, a Church - Worker, and a Church - Builder. Now the venture into faith and the challenge comes to us. Not in some distant future, but NOW. We need to act and provide at this time the facilities so necessary to our Branch Church and the welfare of our congregation.

If we have a vision, a dynamic faith, a prayerful heart and a sacrificial spirit, God will prosper us. With whole-hearted cooperation and undivided loyalty, let us go forward in His name and in the spirit of the "Faith of our fathers." They did, and we can, if all of us help.

In His service,

E. N. Krafft

E. N. Krafft, Minister

The word "growth" was one which was often upon the lips of our Lord Jesus. Many of his parables of the Kingdom of God are similitudes of natural growth.

Growth is something which is constantly in evidence in country-side and in city living. At present our suburban life is witnessing rapid and immense population increase.

The St. Clair Shores Community has been touted as the fastest growing community in our state, and recent school district surveys show the area in which our Branch Church is located to be the fastest growing of all.

Our challenge is to act as quickly as possible, albeit wisely. The challenge is to be there in time with the most and the best that we can. Through meeting this opportunity and challenge, we will find further development in our own spiritual growth.

Sincerely,

Arnold R. Lambarth

Arnold R. Lambarth,
Minister

Our Heritage . . .

We who are members of the Evangelical and Reformed Church have all reason to be justly proud of our rich heritage, even as other Christians can rejoice in what has come to them from the past.

Since our forefathers came from the middle-class of people, they did not leave us great material wealth, but we did inherit a glorious spirit which in a very practical way manifests itself in its devotion to the cause of Christ our Lord and in its relationship toward others who love and serve Him.

We are a church of the common people: we believe in a practical Christianity. We rank among the first in bringing relief to the needy sick, the widows, the orphans. These, with our many schools, colleges and academies give evidence of our concern and interest in education and in the development of Christian leadership.

Since the name Evangelical and Reformed is composed of two words, it is significant to know just what they mean and why the two denominations merged twenty years ago. The Evangelical Church has always stressed the evangel, (the good news) and has as its motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." The Reformed Church adopted that name many years ago to in-

dicating that it was not a "staid and put" fellowship but that it was ready to reform or change its thinking and actions according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Both churches had a most decidedly democratic spirit and therefore had little patience with any form of autocracy in the affairs of church administration. The spiritual and cultural background of the two denominations were very much akin.

Leaders in other Protestant faiths have said: "If Protestants want to unite and look for a platform on which to merge, they can find it in the Evangelical and Reformed Church." We are active participants in the National Council of Churches in America and in the World Council of Churches; and in many other phases of church life have shown a magnificent spirit of cooperation.

The attitudes prevailing in our denomination can be traced back to the rich heritage which our fore-fathers have left us. In the strength of our fore-fathers we go, but not in their tracks. We follow their stars, not their dead campfires.

Our heritage is a rich one of which we may be proud. Our heritage is a challenging one which we dare not fail.



D. K. Badertscher
Initial Gifts



Franz Georgi
Canvass Chairman



Wm. Ludwig
Special Gifts



J. Brotz
Teams Chairman



James Keith



George Schonle



Paul Berry



Orville Bethman

Our Momentous Decision

We have made a momentous decision in the history of our Church — that we shall go ahead to raise more than \$125,000 for the first unit of our new building to house our Branch Church, our Sunday School, and to provide facilities for our many other activities.

This will not be easy. Great things are never easy to achieve. The Christian way of life, itself, is not represented as being the easy way. A considerable number of our members have been working long hours in the organizational part of this Canvass.

We are asking you to cooperate with us. Token pledges will not build the new buildings. However, if each and everyone of us will give serious thought to our goal and decide, as many have already, to make a truly Christian sacrificial pledge, we will be sure of reaching our goal.

The men who will call on you in your homes have not only given generously of their time but also of their money. They will call on you, not to ask for money, but to give you the opportunity to make your important investment in your own spiritual life. Receive them into your home, and prayerfully make your own decision on this important event in your life.

Won't you read this booklet carefully, in the quiet of your home, with an open

mind not filled with skepticism; and then, after talking it over with your family, decide how MUCH you can give? You can never regret a generous gift to such a cause.

We Are But Stewards

Remember, we are but stewards of all that we have. Our Daily Bread includes everything necessary to our human existence, and it all comes from God. He asks little from us for our stewardship, — only that we return unto God the things that are God's: a portion of His gifts to us. "The tithe is the Lord's."

Our congregation is now far-flung. Our duty is to build a new church in the new territory, that we may carry the teachings of our denomination to our members and to others who may join us in the new field.

We need to build to provide facilities for our present Branch Congregation, and in addition to give space for a growing church family.

This is your Challenge — a Challenge to live up to your Christian requirements, through the three basic principles of our church — Faith, Prayer and Sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Franz Georgi

Canvass Committee
Chairman
for the Committee.

Canvass Plan . . .

An Organized Intensive Plan for Pledges

In order to raise more than \$125,000 which is our minimum Branch Building Fund Goal, it has been agreed that we will conduct between now and May 15, 1954,

AN ORGANIZED

INTENSIVE

FACE-TO-FACE

SOLICITATION IN THE HOMES

FOR BUILDING FUND PLEDGES

OVER A 150-WEEK PERIOD.

PLEDGE PAYMENTS BEGIN JUNE 1, 1954

Solicitations will be limited to member families, prospective members, parents of Sunday School and Church-member children, parents of day-school children, and families who consider themselves affiliated with our Church but who are not communicant members.

“Individual face - to - face solicitation” means that there will be no solicitations in groups or meetings. Instead, a sufficient number of our Church men have been enlisted, qualified by making their own sacrificial pledges and organized as canvassers to visit and solicit each family individually and privately in their own home.

“Intensive” means that we will concentrate our efforts to obtain pledges from every family during an intensive two-week solicitation period, which will avoid the necessity for a long drawn-out follow-up program.

This will be primarily a Canvass for pledges over a period of 150 weeks. Families pledging more than \$1,500 may consider quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments if they prefer. But families pledging \$1,500 or less will be encouraged to use the 150 - week payment method. Contributions in a lump sum in place of pledges, and even initial cash payments on pledges will be discouraged during the Canvass period.

The use of pledges over a \$150-week period is a basic requirement of this Canvass. It has been proved many times that the only manner in which members and friends of a Church of our size can provide more than \$125,000 for a building program is not by cash contributions, but by subscriptions to the payment of SACRIFICIAL amounts weekly over a three-year period.

To Do Our Part . . .

There is nothing complicated or high pressure about our present building fund plan. We are simply asking that every member and friend of First Bethany Church set aside a generous and sacrificial portion of their income each week for a period of 150 weeks, and that they give the Church a true priority on their contributions during that period of time.

These gifts must be **OVER AND ABOVE OUR PRESENT CONTRIBUTIONS** to the regular operating budget. The program of the Church must go on, and any decrease in our giving to that would not benefit the Church.

Shortly after you have received this, members of the congregation will start calling on all families who are in any way affiliated with First Bethany Church, to give them an opportunity to make their investment in this great program.

The words "pledge" and "promise to pay" will not be found on the card which will be offered for your signature. The wording will be "I promise to try to pay", and a further statement will appear on the card that the agreement may be revised or cancelled should circumstances make it necessary. Therefore you will simply be promising on your faith as a Christian to do your fair share in the building of this new House of our Lord.

The share of each of us would be a large amount if considered as one payment. Total gifts can be much larger if weekly payments are kept in mind. If your income is based on some other period of time, as monthly or quarterly, your promise to try to pay may be adjusted accordingly.

Until each of us has made at least one sacrificial gift toward the building of a church, every time we use a church we are increasing our indebtedness to an earlier generation and have not met our full obligation to build for the Kingdom of God. Those who have already helped in the building of a church are given an opportunity to increase their investment and to show further their appreciation for the stewardship of the blessings their God has given them.

This is the Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity for most of our members to have a part in a church building enterprise. Most of us will not have another such chance to do that for which our children and future generations may say with joy, "See! This our fathers did for us!"

It is our Christian responsibility to give the matter of our individual pledges serious and prayerful consideration. We may need to revise upward our original thinking two or three times before we reach a final conclusion. With each of us making a truly sacrificial pledge, we can not only assure the success of the building program so needed, but each of us will feel such a spiritual uplift and a revitalized interest in our Church as we had not thought possible.

y To Our Branch, We Grow In The Kingdom.

ion Now Meets Here



**Suffer the little Children
to come unto Me,
And forbid them not . . .**

Church Will Be Built Here



**Kindergarten in Our
Branch Sunday School**





From First Bethan

Our Branch Congregat



Some Day Soon Our Branch

**Will you do
your share
in building
on this lot?**



Canvass Prayer . . .

Our God, profound in wisdom, generous in the out-pouring of goodness and blessings, and constantly concerned for the welfare of all Thy people; we humbly praise and thank Thee for Thy gracious providence of which we have been recipients through the years, and not the least for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We honor Thee, Our God, for the heritage of religion from our Fathers who through loyal faith in Thee accomplished much good that abides in our Congregation and in our very lives.

Visit us now in season with that self-same Spirit of willingness, earnestness, and zeal for Thy Kingdom that will enable us to extend the Holy Church and the Saving Grace of Christ Jesus.

This we pray, now and again beseeching Thee to forgive all our sins, shortcomings and lack of brotherly love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Our Growing Responsibility . . .

It is only necessary to point out to you that which you already know, — that a great opportunity for church expansion lies in the territory of our Branch Church, — to let you realize the great responsibility of First Bethany in its future.

With our Branch Congregation meeting in the School Building, we have a goal set for us to provide a home for them in their own building. In this fertile field, our Church has the great opportunity of establishing a strong and leading unit of our Faith, ready to assume its proper place in the life of the growing community. The venture must be made now, lest others take from us the position we have begun to assume.

Those of our congregation who are meeting in the Branch Church know their limitations until they are in their own church home, and those who are meeting in the Seminole building undoubtedly realize their obligation to assist in building up the Kingdom of God by helping in the new venture into faith.

We must go forward, or we go back. We cannot stand still. We **must** be ready to take care of the new families who will build the new community into a greater one. We must be prepared to help these other Children of God who come in search of the Way, the Light and the Life.

What Is My Part . . .

The question is not, "How much does my Church need?" Rather, it is, "How much do I, as a faithful Christian, need to give?" The effect of a generous, sacrificial gift on your spiritual life and your interest in your Church means much more than the receiving of it does to the Church. The inner joy you will know will more than repay your giving, and the sacrifice can then be known as "giving unto God the things that are God's."

The Christian Standard of Giving begins with a tithe, which is \$2.00 per week for each \$1,000 of annual income. Those with capital resources should consider giving to this building fund five percent of their wealth. This kind of giving calls for strength of will and courage to sacrifice, which in turn comes through prayer. It is a real challenge to our Christianity.

Only SACRIFICIAL Giving will enable our Church to raise more than \$125,000 during the 150 weeks of these pledges.

Sacrificial giving is the kind we do for those we love. We think in terms of HOW MUCH we can give to those we love. Selfish giving asks HOW LITTLE we can give and get by.

Sacrificial giving results in a pledge for a larger amount than we had ever thought possible. In our present Building Fund Canvass, our pledge should be for the largest amount we have ever given; and for those of us who are over sixty, it will probably be the largest amount we will ever be able to give.

Our pledges will reveal our gratitude for God's blessings, and our appreciation and our concern for the work of His Church.

How Much Shall I Give . . .

The possibility of our Church raising more than \$125,000 in Building Fund pledges will depend entirely upon the size of the pledges, because the number of potential subscribers is limited to member and friend families who are interested in our Church activities.

There will be no high pressure solicitation, but instinctively we will not pledge more than a fraction of the amount to be raised unless we recognize that:

1. "Giving" is a habit — usually a weak "token-giving" habit.
2. "Pocket-book-protection" — "PBP" is an instinct, — usually a strong one.
3. Our interests follow our dollars — better-than-token giving will increase our interest in our church and in our spiritual lives.
4. It is not easy to start giving sacrificially; it is easy to find reasons why we should not.
5. Until a Christian family has made at least one sacrificial gift to the building of some church, it is living on the generosity of an earlier generation which built that which we have enjoyed, — it has not lived up to its full responsibility for building the Kingdom of God.

The amount of my gift, considering my means, comes down to the question of how I feel about God and His Church and my own spiritual welfare. I shall know that I have given enough when I feel that I do not have to apologize for my gift to God or man.

In proportion to our giving ability, let us give.

My Pledge Should be . . . One about which I can talk to others without apology.
One that brings an inner conviction of satisfaction.
One determined after prayer for God's guidance.

Our Objectives . . .

1. To obtain 150-week Building Fund pledges in excess of \$125,000 for the Branch Building fund, and also budget pledges for the remainder of the fiscal year 1954.
2. To obtain sacrificial pledges which will produce a dynamic and lasting spiritual impact.
3. To work and give with such devotion that all members become better acquainted and learn to love each other better for their weaknesses as well as for their strengths.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 Matthew 6: 20-21

The following table will enable you to determine the amount of your 150 - week pledge on the basis of weekly or annual contributions.

WEEKLY FOR 150 WEEKS		ANNUAL FOR 3 YEARS	
\$10.00	-----\$1,500	\$5,000	-----\$15,000
8.00	----- 1,200	3,333	----- 10,000
7.00	----- 1,050	2,666	----- 8,000
6.00	----- 900	2,000	----- 6,000
5.00	----- 750	1,666	----- 5,000
4.00	----- 600	1,333	----- 4,000
3.00	----- 450	1,000	----- 3,000
2.00	----- 300	800	----- 2,400

“Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.”

Our parents pledged themselves when they had us baptized, and we pledged when we joined our Church. We pledged for our purchase of a television set, an automobile, a home or a busines. We pledged for something we wanted, and now we are asked to pledge for something else we all want — a modern and adequate building for our Church, Sunday School, and other activities at our Branch Church.

For you who have property, real or personal, you may pledge a portion of it. Real estate, stocks or bonds may be transferred to the Church, for the full fair market value of it, and deductions up to 20% may be taken on your income tax, without having to take a capital gain on your income. The full fair market value may be deducted on income tax reports, within the 20% limit of your income.

**You cannot make your gift
too soon
because you cannot know
how soon
it will be too late . . .**

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