



The congregation plans to build a church to fit community needs.

Photo by Gail Folda

## Cried all day after fire

By Robert Berggren  
School of Journalism

"I felt as though I'd lost a member of my family."

That was how Mrs. Elmer DeKay said she felt after an April 14 fire destroyed Grace United Methodist Church. Mrs. DeKay has been a member of the church for 49 years.

"I was heartsick. I cried nearly all day," Mrs. Walter Hall said. "I can't think of anything I didn't do there, except preach in the pulpit and join the Boy Scouts." Mrs. Hall has been a member for about 40 years.

"It was like seeing a home burn," said Clyde McIntosh. "Your children have gone to Sunday school there and you've given some in marriage there. The sentimental value all floods before you."

### Meet in annex

Since the fire, the 185-member congregation has been meeting in the undamaged annex to the church at 2640 R St. The Rev. Dwight Ganzel has expanded his efforts to avoid overcrowding and now holds three services each Sunday instead of two.

The Rev. Ganzel recalled one Sunday shortly after the fire when 116 people came to the same service. "We had people sitting in the hall and some on the sidewalk outside," he said.

The pastor said the "firemen did an excellent job" in putting out the fire, but the large 60-year old structure could not be salvaged.

He said the congregation received a good settlement from the insurance company, but the \$350,000 awarded would not replace the building. It would take about \$800,000 for full replacement, he said.

### Become smaller

The congregation has become smaller in the

years since the church was built. The original congregation lived close to the church in family dwellings which have since become apartment houses, whose residents come and go and seldom become regular members.

Because of this trend the congregation plans to build a smaller church. It was expensive to heat the large church and it was not air-conditioned, McIntosh said.

There is no set date for construction of a new church.

The congregation has established a fact-finding committee to determine what the church can do for the community, Mrs. Neil Callam said. The members hope to avoid duplication of community services provided by other churches. Mrs. Callam said the fire might have changed us from "doing things like they've always been done."

### Room for people

She said she would like to have a church with a room for people to get together. "A place for people who are lonesome, just to talk." The congregation consists largely of older people who have not moved to the outlying areas of Lincoln.

She said she would like the church to have a place for the Boy Scouts to play ball and "do their own thing". She said she would like the new church to be a "friendly, out-going church where young people feel they have a place."

"In a matter of months we ought to have enough data and information to know what functions we can fulfill," the Rev. Ganzel said.

In the meantime... "We're just very much aware of our physical closeness," he said. At the 9:30 morning service there are two adult Sunday school classes, a regular church service and children's classes upstairs. "If you were to stand in the hall when they are all singing," he said, "you'd really get a cacophony of sound."

## weekly calender

**Tuesday, July 10**  
"Civilisation", "The Pursuit of Happiness" and "The Smile of Reason", Sheldon 7:30 p.m., Sheldon.  
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Wednesday, July 11**  
Final date for candidates for advanced degrees to deposit theses and file final report sheets for 8-week and first session.  
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Thursday, July 12**  
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Friday, July 13**  
Final examinations and end of 8-week and first session.  
General registration for second session.  
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Saturday, July 14**  
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Sunday, July 15**  
"Civilisation", "The Pursuit of Happiness" and "The Smile of Reason", 2:30 Sheldon.  
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.

**Monday, July 16**  
Second session classes begin. Late fees for incomplete registration due.  
Summer film series, "Stagecoach", 7 p.m., Union.

**Tuesday, July 17**  
Education Film Festival, Sheldon.  
"Civilisation", "The Worship of Nature" and "The Fallacies of Hope", 7:30, Sheldon.



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Summer Nebraskan photo

Fire destroyed the Grace United Methodist Church April 14.

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