

Addition...the Sunday School Chapel



It was during Mr. Osmond Derr's superintendancy that the most ambitious program ever undertaken by the Sunday school was accomplished the building of the new handsome Sunday school Chapel in the year of and attached to the church proper, at a cost of around \$50,000. this was done during the pastorate of the Rev. William C. Day,

who served the congregation from 1920 until 1930.

The cornerstone of the new chapel was laid with impressive ceremonies on July 29, 1928, and the new facility was officially dedicated with elaborate ceremonies, and occupied by the school on April 14, 1929. The building committee Pastor William Charles day, L. Ormond Derr, Sunday school superintendent, Howard A. Gross, Chairman; C. Mason Hoffman, Assistant Chairman; Philip E. Flook, Albert M. Ahalt and Ira D. Ifert. The architect was Edward Leber, of York, Pa. During the depressions of the early 1930s the Sunday school was barely able to pay the interest on it indebtedness. On Rally Day, in 1931, the money was raised to pay the interest and deposited in the bank the next day. The following day the bank closed its doors. But through generous responses by its members during the pastorate of the Rev. L. Tabor, the school weathered this setback and during the ministry of the Rev. Donald F. Brake, on October 7, the entire debt was liquidated and the mortgage burned. After 16 years, the chapel indebtedness of \$25,000. Plus interest, had been paid.

When first organized, on December 2, 1827, the school was a "Union Sabbath School," operated by the three churches in Middletown at the time – Lutherans, Reformed and Methodists. This united movement by the three local congregations was reminiscent of the time some 75 years earlier, when the beginning of Christian worship in the valley was a Union endeavor, with both the Lutheran and Reformed Church members worshipping in a little log building a few miles west of what is now the town of Middletown, in the 1750s. The Sabbath School continued to exist as a Union School for the first 17 years, when the Methodists withdrew on the last Sunday of October 1844 to form their own Sabbath School, or "Sunday School," as it has been known by most individuals for many years. The class record book, in the library of Zion Church indicates at that time the school consisted of 21 classes with 165 teachers and pupils. Following withdrawal of the Methodists the school reorganized with 18 classes and 143 teachers and pupils. Three years later, on July 11, 1847, the Reformers also withdrew to form a Sunday school of their own. No entry appears from that date until August 1, 1847, when the school reorganized as a Lutheran Sunday School with 19 classes and 136 teachers and pupils. This dissolution was most amicable and appears to have resulted solely because the two congregations desired to form and develop Sunday schools bearing the labels of their own denominations.



