

Grand River Baptist has 60-year history

By Margaret Miller
staff writer

SIXTY YEARS have gone by for Livonia's Grand River Baptist Church, and the year of celebrating that event is almost completed.

With a coffee fellowship scheduled at noon this Sunday following worship, the congregation that started as a mission Sunday School will finish out events of the 60th anniversary year of 1982.

On hand for this event, and for a dinner that marked the milestone earlier, will be several members around from the beginnings and still enjoying the fellowship of a church in its third home.

Vera Weinhold, Ora Lee, Evelyn Ankorn and Wilmet Holben gathered for some 60th-year talk in the sanctuary of the newest building on Six Mile west of Farmington Road.

That structure became home to the congregation in 1969 when Michigan's highway department took over its Detroit property when it built the Jeffries freeway.

WEINHOLD WAS one of the 34 persons who in 1922 signed the charter for the Monnier Road Baptist church in northwest Detroit.

It was her mother, Anna Surline, who had a year earlier organized a Sunday school in the three-room Monnier school in Greenfield Township, not yet a part of Detroit.

Fifteen years of age when the church was chartered, Vera Surline Weinhold taught Sunday School in the early days and later became the church's historian.

She was the one who placed a history of the fellowship in the cornerstone of the building that was laid in 1927. The building being erected then was at Littlefield and Grand River, and the congregation had moved from the schoolhouse to a storefront on Grand River and was finally getting a real church home.

By that time it had also taken the name Grand River Baptist Church. That happened because an earlier church using that name had been involved in a merger.

Ora Lee is the daughter of Emma Lee, the other charter member still living. Emma, now 95, is in the Farmington Nursing Home. Weinhold remembers Ora as "one of the little children" when the church began, but she and Ora now are both residents of Baptist Manor, a retirement home in Farmington.

ANKORN AND Holben, both of Livonia, have memories of a different sort when they look back 60 years.

They were members of the Warren Avenue Baptist Church, which merged with Grand River Baptist right after it dedicated its new building on Littlefield.

Vera Weinhold's history mentioned the reason for that merger.

"Their neighborhood had changed to apartment buildings and rooming houses," she wrote. "They had a fine young minister, Roy Williamson. We had the lovely church and had just lost our pastor, Rev. E.J. Parsons. With the help of the Detroit Baptist Union, we got together."



Vera Weinhold (right) and Ora Lee, early Grand River Baptist members and now residents of the Baptist Manor in Farmington Hills, enjoy looking over old clippings.

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Holiday menus for diabetics offered free

The American Diabetes Association-Michigan Affiliate has available a free leaflet of holiday menus to help the hostess entertain guests with diabetics. The leaflet includes menus that are

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