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In Their Own Words

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The Eagle United Methodist Church held its final service on Sunday, December 29, 2024 and was decommissioned on December 31, 2024. Former member, Mike Rice, reflected, "Though the building stands silent and still, its spirit lives on in the hearts of those who found comfort within its walls. The memories it holds, the love it has witnessed, and the community it has nurtured will remain etched in their hearts forever. The old church rests, a venerable relic of the past, but its legacy will endure in the stories and memories of the people who loved it." In 2000, Carol Boyden wrote this history of the church.

Eagle United Methodist Church

Methodism has had a presence in Eagle since the 1830s. It was then that Methodist preachers fanned across the sparsely settled Wisconsin territory bringing the Word of God on horseback. These circuit riders, as they were called, traveled over poor and unmarked roads in all kinds of weather. They moved from settlement to settlement, stopping to preach wherever they could gather a crowd. They held meetings in homes, schools, and even barns. Nice days would find them leading worship under the trees. The lack of a formal church setting did not dampen their enthusiasm. All that they needed – a Bible, a hymnal, and perhaps a copy of John Wesley's sermons – they carried in their saddlebags. These men in their broad brimmed, flat crowned felt hats and plain black clothes dedicated their lives to help Christians maintain their faith and to bring the gospel news to those who had yet to hear.



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By 1845, the settlement at Eagle had grown. One of the newcomers was John Hage, a lay preacher from England. He and his wife settled on a farm near Eagle, and John began preaching in schoolhouses at Eagleville, Palestine, and Jericho. By 1860, the schoolhouse was abandoned, and Hage bought it to use as a permanent church. He preached there for several years, eventually selling the building to the congregation.

This served until the 1870s, when the faithful decided to build a new church. Thomas and Sarah Pittman deeded the lot on Main Street for this purpose, and the church was built in 1871.

In 1914 the Ladies Aid decided the wood chunk stoves in the corners had to go. They were willing to pay for a new furnace. All the men had to do was provide the basement for its location. The basement was dug and the furnace installed. It was only then that the ladies discovered they were short of the needed funds. A bank loan was secured and payments were still being made in 1917.

In 1957 an education wing was added to the back of the original church. This provided more Sunday school space, a larger fellowship hall, bathrooms, and in time, a larger, more efficient kitchen for church dinners. It is hard to believe that dinners were once served on wooden boards stretched across the pews in the sanctuary, or that food was heated on an oil stove in the back of this same room. The horse sheds and outhouses are gone. There is a paved parking area where ice cream socials were held in the past.

A favorite hymn reads, "The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place. The church is a people."

