Many journeys. One community.

Church of the Three Crosses
United Church of Christ • United Methodist Church
333 W. Wisconsin • Chicago, IL 60614 • 312-951-7916
churchofthethreecrosses.org

Celebrating Our Heritage

A Brief History of Church of the Three Crosses
on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary
including the history of its predecessor churches:
Second Evangelical United Brethren Church (1852)
and St. James United Church of Christ (1896)

Notes
1. Church of the Three Crosses owned a number of buildings at various times, including: 1900 N. Sedgwick (the former Second Church and the Three Crosses home until 1974), 1908 N. Sedgwick (former Second Church parsonage and later used for mission/rentals), 1854 N. Sedgwick (parsonage and office for former Second Church and then Three Crosses, and later used for mission/rentals), 1718 N. North Park (former St. James Church used for rentals), 1722 N. North Park (parsonage for former St. James Church and then for Three Crosses), the “old Slomer storefront” at 1859 N. Sedgwick (used for mission), and the former Good Samaritan Church and parsonage in Des Plaines.

2. Few items have survived from the predecessor churches beyond church records. From St. James Church there exists a silver communion set from 1897 and one stained glass window. (This window, shown on page 1, has been digitally repaired for this booklet.) From Second Church, two pews, a communion table, lecturn, two pedestals and the 500-pound bell exist.

3. In 1903/4, Second Church sold some of its property on Wisconsin Street just west of the church building to the Evangelical Deaconess Society, and thus helped start the Deaconess Home and Hospital. The hospital was sold to the Salvation Army in 1943 which operated it as the Catherine Booth Memorial Welfare Center (1943-53) and the Catherine Booth Hospital (1953-1959). The building was bought by Roosevelt Hospital in 1960, and in 1981, the name changed to Chicago Center Hospital. In 1985, the hospital was sold, closed and the building eventually demolished. The property was developed as the Belgravia Terrace town homes in 1989. The present church building might not have been built if it were not for Roosevelt Hospital buying the old Second Church building in 1972; and Roosevelt Hospital would not have been where it was if the Second Church had not helped start the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital on that site in 1903/4.

Sources of Information and Further Reading
Archives of Church of the Three Crosses, Chicago, held at the church building and at the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church Archives held at the library of Garrett Evangelical Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.
Archives of the Old Town Triangle Association, Chicago, Illinois.
Archives of the Ralph Anderson Family, maintained by Robin Anderson Mahaffey, Illinois.
An Ecumenical Center Proposal, Church of the Three Crosses, Chicago, 1968.
This booklet was originally researched and produced by Barry Smith for the 40th Anniversary in 2006 and updated for the 50th Anniversary in 2016. Further updates are made as necessary to provide additional or corrected information. Please contact the church office to note corrections or to donate materials to the church archives. Cover photograph: Front yard annual garden, 2013.
©2006-18 Church of the Three Crosses, Chicago, Illinois. All rights reserved. Updated: 3.3.18
Church of the Three Crosses was formed in October 1966 by the merger of two Lincoln Park congregations which had both been founded by German immigrants: Second Evangelical United Brethren Church and St. James United Church of Christ.

The Second Evangelical Church was formed in November 1852. The church building was at Chicago Avenue and Wells Street. In 1867, this congregation divided, with the portion that retained the Second Church name moving in 1869 to the northwest corner of Wisconsin and Sedgwick in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Here its building was twice destroyed by fire, with the final rebuilt structure dating from 1937. As the result of several denominational mergers, this congregation was eventually a part of the Evangelical United Brethren churches. In 1968, The Evangelical United Brethren merged with the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church.

The St. James United Church of Christ began in November 1896 as the St. James German Evangelical Congregational Church. Some of its early members are believed to have been German immigrants from Russia. The church building, located at 1718 N. North Park Avenue in the Old Town section of Lincoln Park, was purchased from another congregation in 1897. In 1957, two congregational denominations, including one of German evangelical heritage, merged to form the United Church of Christ. Thus, the name of this congregation became the St. James United Church of Christ. By the 1960s, both congregations had retained little of their original German identities and were facing demographic changes in Lincoln Park, including urban renewal plans for the Old Town area. In 1962, Second Church was offered the opportunity to build a new building in the “Ogden Mall,” which was to be land created by the removal of Ogden Avenue. Both Second Church and St. James Church expressed the need for new life, and after several years of

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**Celebrating Our Heritage…**

*O God, you have been our dwelling place from one generation to another. Psalm 90:1*

**Church of the Three Crosses**

**How To Depict Three Crosses?**

Most of the logos since 1966 and year when first used.

<table>
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Window saved from the St. James building.
Pastors of Church of the Three Crosses and Its Two Predecessor Churches, 1852-Present

**Second Evangelical United Brethren Church (1852-1966)**
- 1852-1854 J.P. Kramer
- 1854-1855 Christian C. Kopp
- 1855-1856 J. Jacob Esher
- 1856-1857 John Riegle
- 1857-1858 Elias Musselmann
- 1858-1859 G.M. Young
- 1859-1861 George Vetter
- 1861-1863 George W. Lechler
- 1863-1864 Andrew S. Heilman
- 1864-1866 W.F. Walker
- 1866-1868 J. George Esher
- 1868-1869 Jacob Himmel
- 1869-1871 John Miller
- 1871-1873 Henry Hintze
- 1873-1874 Amos Gockley
- 1874-1876 W.F. Walker
- 1876-1878 J. George Esher
- 1878-1880 Theodore Alberding
- 1880-1883 Christian Ott
- 1883-1884 H. Rohland
- 1884-1886 Martin Stamm
- 1886-1887 Michael Heyl
- 1887-1888 Amos Gockley
- 1888-1891 William Goessele
- 1891-1893 John C. Kiest
- 1893-1896 Matthias Hoehn
- 1896-1897 W.C. Frey
- 1897-1900 Henry Hintze
- 1900-1904 John C. Kiest
- 1904-1908 John Wellner
- 1908-1910 Julius A. Giese
- 1910-1912 John B. Elfrink
- 1912-1918 Frederick Schwartz
- 1918-1925 George C. Gasser
- 1925-1926 William E. Grote
- 1926-1930 Lester H. Laubenstein
- 1930-1934 George D. Nielsen
- 1934-1936 Arthur J. Byas
- 1936-1938 John G. Schwab
- 1938-1942 LaRoy Huntley
- 1942-1947 Romaine W. Tenney
- 1947-1949 Howard E. Grime
- 1949-1953 H. Allen Maxwell
- 1953-1960 Carl J. Zager
- 1957-1963 Hector Navas**
- 1960-1964 Daniel Overmyer
- 1964-1966 Larry G. Dutenhaver
- 1965-1966 Daniel Alvarez**

**United Church of Christ (1896-1966)**
- 1897-1901 Niklaus Bolt
- 1901-1904 Jacob F. Grove
- 1904-1909 Oscar H. Kraft
- 1909-1916 Frederick J. Berghoefyer
- 1961-1964 Stanley Gerald Roat
- 1965-1966 Willard Spence

**Church of the Three Crosses (1966-Present)**
- 1966-1968 Daniel Alvarez** [EUB]
- 1968-1970 Larry G. Dutenhaver [UMC]
- 1970-1972 Larry G. Dutenhaver [UMC]
- 1972-1975 Corydon E. Friedrich [UMC]
- 1975-1984 William T. Roberts [UMC]
- 1984-1991 Lark J. Hapke [UCC]
- 1992-1993 Leona N. Tichenor [Interim/UMC]
- 1993-2001 Norma Lee Barnhart [UMC]
- 2000-2001 P. Dawn Chesser [UMC]
- 2018- Brittany M. Cox [UMC]

The predecessor churches are listed here by their names as of 1966. Earlier names, reflecting a location or previous denominational affiliation, are shown on the timeline pages. For the Second EUB Church, there are other published lists with slight differences; this list is from one certified by John G. Schwab.

**The Revs. Hector Navas and Daniel Alvarez were appointed as part-time pastors by the EUB Conference to lead the separate Spanish congregation. This congregation existed from 1956 to 1968.**

Initially, Church of the Three Crosses met in the Second Church building. In 1973-74, the present building, with its open and multi-use space, was erected at the southwest corner of Wisconsin and Orleans Streets, designed by architect Ralph Anderson. The building was pivoted to align with the “Ogden Mall.”

In keeping with its heritage, this congregation is affiliated with both the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.

This booklet presents a timeline of events at Church of the Three Crosses and its two predecessor congregations from 1852 to 2016. What this booklet cannot fully show is the wealth of worship, education and fellowship that have nurtured the faith communities which called these churches “home” for so many years, and the mission and advocacy that have sought to serve neighbors in Chicago and around the world.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of God forever.
Psalm 23:6

On Christmas Eve, the closing circle of light is a symbol of carrying God’s light into the world.
The Predecessor Churches: Second and St. James Churches

November 8, 1832: A group of members at Chicago’s First Evangelical Church (of the Evangelical Association denomination), then located at Wabash and Monroe, voted to establish the Second Evangelical Church for members living north of the Chicago River. Rev. J.P. Kramer was pastor.

1833: Second Church erected its first building at the southeast corner of Wells and Chicago Avenue.

June 5, 1853: Second Church erected its first building at the northwest corner of Wisconsin and Sedgwick at a cost of $8,000. Rev. John Miller is pastor. Membership is 70.

October 3, 1856: Settlement of the Evangelical Association south of the Chicago River. The name Second Evangelical Church to reflect its location on Wisconsin Street.

October 9-10, 1871: The Great Chicago Fire destroyed two-year-old building of the Wisconsin Street (Second) Church. 26 of 40 families lose their homes.

Fall 1872: New building of Wisconsin Street (Second) Church erected on foundation of earlier structure at cost of $9,000. Sanctuary seated 400.

Annual “Blessing of the Animals” in the park amphitheater. This space has been utilized for special worships and concerts over the years.

“Evening in the Park,” a monthly, summer music series in the amphitheater, runs 3 years.

Historian appointed and church archives created on site.

Membership is 70.

The Illinois Conference of the Evangelical Association held at the Wisconsin Street (Second) Church. The two Illinois conferences reunited on March 31, 1927.

April 10, 1890: Schism in the Illinois Conference of the Evangelical Church. One of the two factions formed a separate conference at a meeting held at the Wisconsin St. (Second) Church. (The two Illinois conferences reunited.)

Rev. Dawn Chesser urged congregation to adopt new worship technology and subsequently a digital projection system was installed in sanctuary.

World Communion Sunday. Rev. John Hobbs invited all forward to share communion and light candles to honor diversity in the world.

Main level of building was air conditioned.

Wrought iron fence installed. Landscape plan developed.

Tagline adopted: Many journeys. One community.

Sponsored homeless families by paying rent subsidies (through 2015).

40th Anniversary of the Church Building celebrated with architect’s family present.

Publicly affirming “Black Lives Matter” at Clark & Wisconsin Streets.

Fellowship during this era included: bowling parties, Advent events, progressive dinners, summer patio dining, Grant Park concerts, theater/sports outings, young adult events, and potluck meals.

First same-gender union service celebrated for Rev. John Hobbs and Barry Smith.

Congregation voted to host and celebrate same-gender unions and marriages.

New logo designed. Metal logo and lettering installed on two sides of building.

Anti-torture statement approved and signed.

New double-paned windows installed.

New chancel furniture purchased with Memorial Funds.

Started marching in city’s annual Pride Parade.

New tile and carpeting installed on main level.

New logo designed. Metal logo and lettering installed on two sides of building.

Celebration and Remembrance Wall dedicated.

Involvement with RefugeeOne.

Hired consultant from Center for Progressive Renewal.

50th Anniversary celebrated Oct. 16.

40th Anniversary of the Church

Building celebrated with architect’s family present.

Publicly affirming “Black Lives Matter” at Clark & Wisconsin Streets.

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Church of the Three Crosses...

Mildred Vannorsdall compiled first thorough inventory of all church records.

“Raise the Roof” concert funds major roof repairs.

Records of both Second and St. James Churches, and early years of Three Crosses, are deposited at United Methodist Illinois Conference archives at Garrett Seminary.

Pastor’s office moved to second floor and old office became part of sanctuary. Organ removed.

First detailed history of congregation prepared.

Second floor is air conditioned.

Rev. Lark Hapke urged congregation to undertake mission projects to look beyond consuming legal issues.

Final settlement of five-year legal struggle to receive full payment for sale of former St. James building. About $223,000 was ultimately realized minus some legal fees, with most legal fees waived.

St. James Church (rear) and parsonage, at 1718 and 1722 N. Wisconsin Street.

From the Church Council minutes: “Bell to be rung eight times before prelude to get people to sit down”

Saluted 25th Anniversary.

Parsonage was donated and moved from Dearborn Street as a German Lutheran congregation about 1897. The Parsonage was sold netting $1,200.

The arrival of electricity.

The Messiah Sunday, December 8, 1928
Church of the Three Crosses
332 W. Wisconsin
Rev. Norma Lee Barnhart

Helped develop use of the arts in all aspects of church life, including music events like the Sing-Along-Messiah.

May 5, 1996: Dedication of the remodeling of main level: new ceilings, carpet, lighting, fans, including build-out of: East Room, coat area, storage rooms.

Annual fundraiser at Old Town Art Fair nets over $10,000 for first time.

Annual Halloween party for church and neighborhood kids including children from our mission partner church, Lincoln United Methodist in Pilsen. Through 2006.

Rev. Leona Tichenor leads a visioning process that produced the document: “The Promised Land.”

Funds from the sale of parsonage and former St. James Church form main portion of new endowment fund.

Volunteers began serving monthly meals at Deborah’s Place.

The first thorough inventory of church records. Mildred Vannorsdall compiled all church records.

Complete renovation of the church and parsonage at cost of $120,000.

“Raise the Roof” concert sold in 1903/4 to the Evangelical Deaconess Society for its new hospital.

The March 8, 1931: Pipe organ dedicated.

English began to replace German in church life. German prayer meetings continued till 1927.

Up to 1937, four members have been ordained from Second Church.

Rear lots on Wisconsin Street sold in 1903/4 to the Evangelical Deaconess Society for its new hospital.

The Dedication of new structure built.

To the United Evangelical Church, merged with the United Evangelical Church to form the Evangelical Church.

The pipe organ in the new building and burned the note during this service.

After fire, worship is held at Deaconess Hospital while new structure built.

Rev. LaRoy Huntley was one of 35 pastors to sign a letter to President Roosevelt and Congress urging an end to world conflict and misery.

Rev. Fred Berghoefer and the St. James congregation in prayer. One of the few photos showing church interior.

Motto of the congregation was: “Be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22

Parsonage converted from gas lights to electricity.

Services began to shift from German to English.

November 26, 1896: A German congregation meeting at the Sedgwick Chapel, a mission of the New England Congregational Church, voted to form St. Jacobi (James) German Evangelical Church with 50 charter members.

Parsonage converted from gas lights to electricity.

Three Crosses, are deposited at United Methodist Illinois Conference archives at Garrett Seminary.

Era in which six members were in seminary or in the ordination process.

Children at Three Crosses Christmas program.


Various self-help groups utilized the building for free or low cost throughout church’s history.

Prayer Group formed (met till 2009).

Era of financial difficulties in which the building is rented to other non-profit organizations to help raise funds for the church, e.g., Waldorf School, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Search Development Corp., Early Intervention Program of Children’s Memorial Hospital, and various neighborhood music programs.

Children at Three Crosses program.

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St. James Church (rear) and parsonage, at 1718 and 1722 N. North Park Avenue. The church building was purchased from a German Lutheran congregation about 1897. The parsonage was donated and moved from Dearborn Street to its present site in 1902. The parsonage is now a private residence; the church building is now three condominiums.

The arrival of electricity.

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The Predecessor Churches Merge... Church of the Three Crosses is Formed...

- From 1956 to 1968, an Hispanic outreach ministry created a separate Spanish speaking congregation. Shown is a language class, one of many mission activities.

- 1946: The Evangelical Church merged with the United Brethren in Christ Church to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

- Second Church

- Rev. Dan Overmyer initiated use of church building to house Lincoln Senior Center.

- Second Church

- Rev. Carl Zager initiated use of church building to house Lincoln Senior Center.

- 1964: Department of Urban Renewal awarded site on “Ogden Mall” for new church. (Sale completed: 1973.)

- Church of the Three Crosses

- Meetings with area churches to consider merger(s).

- October 16, 1966: St. James and Second Church congregations worshipped together and approved merger; adopted constitution and bylaws.

- October 23, 1966: Congregation met to vote on new name.

- October 30, 1966: Bulletin for first time carried name “Church of the Three Crosses.”

- November 13, 1966: Procession from St. James to Second Church; stopped at site of proposed new church building.

- December 1966: Groundbreaking for new building.

- April 8, 1973: “First ringing” of bell during rededication service. The bell, originally installed in the steeple of the Second Church in 1873, had just been reinstalled at the new building of Church of the Three Crosses.

- First year of worship in new building.

- Long legal battle began to recover funds from sale of former St. James Church.

- May 25, 1980: “First ringing” of bell during rededication service. The bell, originally installed in the steeple of the Second Church in 1873, had just been reinstalled at the new building of Church of the Three Crosses.

- Sale of former St. James Church with complicated financing plan nets $50,000 downpayment, monthly interest income, and many legal problems in the years ahead.

- May 24, 1961: Congregation voted to change name to St. James United Church of Christ to reflect 1957 merger of two congregational denominations to form the United Church of Christ.

- “A Cross in the Heart of the Old Team Triangle” St. James logo used in the 1960s.

- Under Rev. Gerald Roat’s leadership in the early 1960s, Saturday night hootenannies, films and drama offerings attracted a new generation of young people and created some tension with established members.

- July 19, 1966: Serious merger discussions with Second Church began and a union committee was soon formed.

- Serious planning and fundraising for new church building.

- Ogden Avenue removed as part of Urban Renewal Plan thus paving way for future new building.

- 1968: The Evangelical United Brethren Church merged with the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church.

- From 1966 to 1974, Church of the Three Crosses used the old Second Church building. Here the congregation gathered in the sanctuary which had been rearranged in 1969-70 to encourage inclusiveness and interaction.

- Rev. Larry Dutenhaver (left), Rev. Charles Guigle (right) and other clergy carried cross from Church of the Three Crosses as a reconciling symbol amidst the police riot in the park during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The cross, originally from the former St. James Church, was lost in the ensuing melee.

- Help start the Night Ministry.

- Sale of building at 1834 N. Sedgwick pays off $50,000 mortgage on new building.

- Roosevelt Hospital buys old Second Church building for $85,000.

- Book written by a former member is primarily about Church of the Three Crosses in the 1960s/70s, and how congregants shifted from passive observers in worship to more active participants.

- April 8, 1973: Groundbreaking for long-planned, new building at 333 W. Wisconsin. Wood from pews in the old Second Church building was used to make small souvenir shovels with the Three Crosses logo in use at that time.

- First active participants.

- June 28, 1970: Merger with the disbudding Good Samaritan United Methodist Church of Des Plaines, Illinois. The sale of this property was to provide funds for the Three Crosses new building.

- Long legal battle began to recover funds from sale of former St. James Church.

- August 22, 1974: First worship service held in new building.

- Sale of former St. James Church with complicated financing plan nets $50,000 downpayment, monthly interest income, and many legal problems in the years ahead.

- First year of worship in new building.