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# Perseverance Presbyterian Church

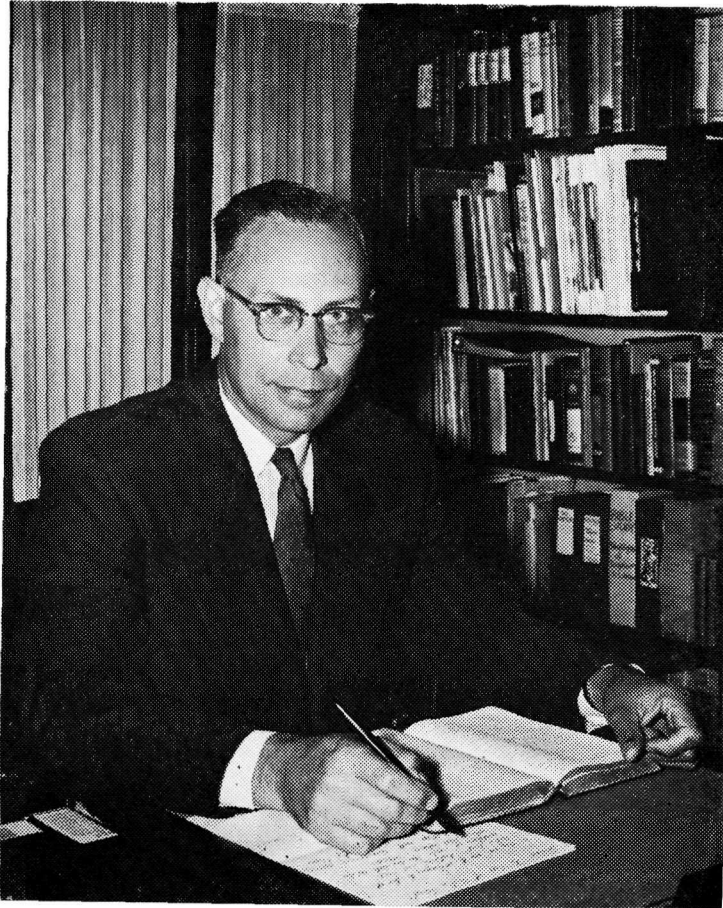
North Eighteenth Street at West Walnut Street  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



## Centennial

1856 - 1956

100 YEARS FOR CHRIST



## *Centennial Greeting*

**P**ERSEVERANCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH has a tradition of hospitality well stated in the words—"A Church for Folks." These words have appeared for years on our official church insignia.

Each generation of Perseverance members seeks to give meaning to those words in genuine hospitality to all who worship with us. This "turn-of-the-century" congregation has the unique joy of serving as hosts to the folk who will be returning to celebrate our Centennial.

It is my wish, as Pastor, that you may experience afresh the warm hospitality of Perseverance and that this Centennial occasion may renew and strengthen the ties of friendship that knit our hearts together in the Christian faith.

Most sincerely,

*D. Wayne Amsler*  
PASTOR

# Perseverance Keeps Faith

## With God and Man

1856 – 1956

**I**N THE BEGINNING God created the heavens and the earth . . . created man in His own image . . . and the Word was made flesh . . . and a vision appeared to Paul . . . come over into Macedonia and help us.

And it followed God's plan that little congregations of Gentiles in Roman Asia and in Europe were told that they too had been marked off from the beginning of the world as objects of Divine mercy.

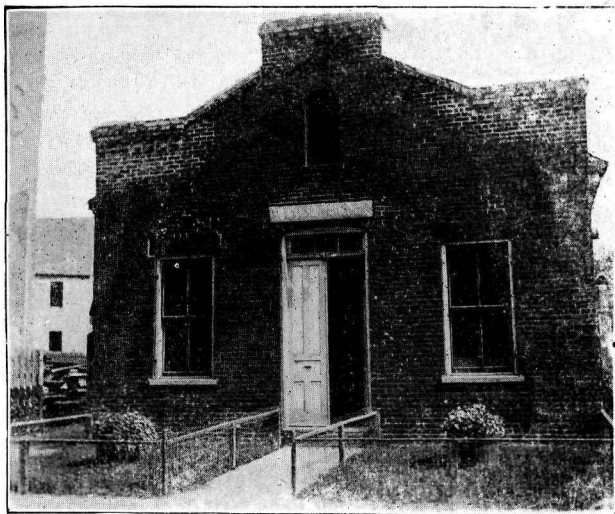
**C**ENTURIES PASSED and it was 1620 when a brave little band of Pilgrims seeking religious freedom landed on the shore of Cape Cod Bay. God's plan continued to unfold as our Christian ancestors forged their way westward through the wilderness.

In 1812 a fur trading post was established at the mouth of the Milwaukee river. In 1828 Wisconsin had its first Presbyterian pastor and erected what is believed to have been the first Protestant church building on Wisconsin soil—serving the Stockbridge Indians midst hardship and evil influences of white traders.

In the area which later became Milwaukee, only two white families lived until 1833. Hardy and adventurous Christian laymen, followed by Christian families—rapidly began to populate the area. The first Presbyterian Church (Immanuel) was organized in 1837.

Eight years after Wisconsin was admitted to the Union as a state, (four years before Abraham Lincoln became President and five years before the Civil War began) a group of Hollanders, in the year 1856, felt the need of an organized place of worship and met at the home of Mr. Andrew DuMez, 823 Galena Street, in the northwest section of the city—then two years old.

**T**HIRTY-FIVE MEMBERS formed the First Holland Presbyterian Church and met for Sabbath services in a brick schoolhouse still standing today at 1430 West Fond du Lac Avenue. This little schoolhouse was 'home' for about a year and many of the names recorded in the records of these very early years have been faithful pillars down through generation after generation—and are familiar ones today—Toussaint, Adrianson, DuMez, Bril, Christiansen and many more.



In 1858 the faithful service and devotion of the little group came to the attention of one of the city pioneers—Mr. John Plankinton—and in the year of the great economic panic—when banks failed—mills and factories closed—and thousands of unemployed paraded the streets demanding "work or bread"—he donated two lots on the corner of 18th and Walnut—the site of our present church.

To build a church in those days when money was scarce meant self-denial, courage and perseverance in its true sense. A subscription list was started and those who could not give money donated ten days' work—culminating in the erection of a frame building about thirty feet by fifty feet. In 1859 the Holland Church moved into its new home.

**T**ROUBLES APPEARED on the scene and on January 12, 1862—during the Civil War—this beloved house of worship was destroyed by fire and the result of self-denial and sacrifice was a total ruin. It was a discouraging period in our history but the strong desire for a place

to worship turned the tide. By June of the same year they were worshipping in a new building.

In 1863 the first of a number of offshoots of this young parent church took root elsewhere. During the century several more were fostered and grew to serve ever widening horizons of service.

**T**HE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE occurred January 26, 1871—and in the same year our church was again completely destroyed by fire. The addition had just been completed at considerable expense and suddenly all was seemingly lost. But the congregation's Dutch resourcefulness came to the front and within ten days a congregational meeting was called to formulate plans for the future. A decision was reached to purchase the church building at 4th and Galena owned by the German Reformed Church and move it to the 18th and Walnut site.



A succession of pastors followed—each leaving his mark on the constantly growing church. During this period—in 1877—the telephone was invented and Milwaukee was proud of its subscriber list totalling

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fifteen. The church became known as the Milwaukee Holland Presbyterian Church and in 1879—the year Thomas Edison produced his first electric lamp—the good Dutch consented to allow the English language to be preached at Sunday evening services. During the same year—indicative of its character and victory over past obstacles—the name became Perseverance Presbyterian Church.

**T**HE ENGLISH LANGUAGE gradually began to take preference over the Holland tongue as the younger generation came into more prominent participation in church affairs and the inevitable came to pass with all services being in the English language.

In 1891 an addition identified as a Sunday School Hall was constructed. Before the turn of the century—at the time of the Spanish American War and when the first automobiles were just beginning to chug along muddy streets—our Sunday School boasted 644 members. A continued succession of devout pastors and lay leaders added many inspiring and spiritually rich activities to the church life—serving the member families and the growing community with consecrated Christian influence. In 1908 a manse was built. In 1912 an overtaxed seating



capacity resulted in plans for a new church edifice. One year later—prior to World War I — the present auditorium of our church was dedicated to the Lord.

**T**HE BOHEMIAN GROUP was offered our church facilities in 1916. With their own pastor they worshipped on Sunday afternoons. In 1918, they dissolved their organization and 64 members united into our fellowship. It is to the credit of the Holland membership—knit by ties of tongue, family and homeland—that whoever believed and practiced the fundamental teachings of the Bible was always welcomed into their fellowship.

New groups and new activities were added to the curriculum. Special emphasis seemingly was placed on serving the spiritual need of every single individual—regardless of age—with one or more activities. The Sunday School expanded—Bible Classes were formed for all older groups—there were three Christian Endeavor Societies—three choirs—two Girl Scout troops—a Boy Scout troop—a gymnasium on full time operation serving many functions — and Perseverance truly became an outstanding example of successful Christian activity at home and in the mission field.

In 1927 Perseverance was remodeled to accommodate its growth at an expense of more than \$20,000.00—a figure equivalent to several times this amount today. A new kitchen and a large dining room were provided. A 'modern' heating system was installed—a three-story brick addition was built on the southwest corner—enlarging the dining room—adding a Beginners' room and an attractive Ladies' Parlor on the third floor.



A new manse to replace the one which had served its pastors' families well for many years was purchased in 1948.

**T**HE FINEST products of our century-old ministry are the many sons and daughters of this church who have dedicated their lives to full time Christian service. As pastors, pastors' wives and Christian career workers across the land, it is with thanksgiving that we see our own bear fruit for His kingdom.

**P**ERSEVERANCE has always persevered in serving the Lord without deviation from God's Holy Word. Missions have always been foremost in the minds of its members. Great and far reaching are its works through the lives of a century—living testimony to the works of nearly a score of consecrated pastors — witnessing to the great and everlasting values of a dynamic and glorious 100 year old church.

And now we look forward to a still more glorious future. Eight lots have been purchased in a growing and relatively unchurched area in the far northwest side of our city—at North 82nd and West Melvina Streets. Having outgrown the facilities of our present location, we will follow the migration to the northwest part of the city of the larger part of our congregation. Our present building has been purchased by Milwaukee Presbytery to serve as a Mission Church in this changing neighborhood. It is planned that our new church edifice will cost approximately \$250,000.00 for the initial unit—seat 450—and designed for an expected growth several times this number.

Perhaps the little band of Hollanders did not realize the terrific impact their modest beginning would have on thousands upon thousands of impressionable children and adults—and in our hundredth year this is yet but the beginning. In harmonious unity let us commence our second century with the same determination to worship, serve and grow as did our forefathers. As Paul admonished the saints at Ephesus—"watching thereunto with all PERSEVERANCE and supplication."



## PERSEVERANCE PASTORS THROUGH THE YEARS

Rev. W. Van de Vere—1858 to 1859

Rev. Cornelius Van de Vere—1860 to 1863

Vacant—1864

Rev. Frank Schroeck—1865

Rev. John Van de Luyster—1866 to 1868

Rev. Jacob Post—May 1869 to July 1873

Rev. Gerrit Huyser—September 1873 to June 1874

Rev. J. W. F. Roth—September 1875 to June 1877

Rev. Evert Bos—July 1877 to March 1878

Rev. Jacob Post, D.D.—April 1878 to May 1890

Rev. Gerald D. Heuver, Ph.D.—June 1890 to June 1895

Rev. Oliver H. Chapin—November 1895 to November 1899

Rev. Frederick L. Selden—November 1899 to December 1902

Rev. John W. Eltzholtz—January 1903 to February 1906

Rev. Robert S. Donaldson, D.D.—July 1906 to May 1917

Rev. Archibald R. Wright—January 1918 to April 1919

Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D.—September 1919 to April 1922

Rev. James H. Miller, D.D.—December 1922 to November 1947

Rev. Donald Wayne Amsler—May 1948 to

(No record for 1856-1857)

## PERSEVERANCE

Many years this Church has stood  
Where Eighteenth meets Walnut Street;  
This place so dear to all our hearts,  
Where we each Sabbath meet.

We love this old church of ours,  
With its hallowed memories,  
'Tis here we hear the gospel preached,  
And grace and strength receive.

Now many sons and daughters  
Are gathered from far and near,  
To honor Perseverance Church,  
On this Centennial Year.

Now forward Perseverance!  
To your heritage be true,  
Yours a century of service,  
Yours a new work now to do.

Dear Lord, for Perseverance  
Earnest prayers now rise to Thee,  
As this work is undertaken,  
May it for Thy Glory be.

—Submitted by One of Our Own

## DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN

Twentieth and Walnut was the end of the line and terminal — complete with turntable—for horse-drawn streetcars.

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Pew rent was the source of the minister's salary prior to 1869 and the minutes report \$98.00 collected for one year.

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Some living today recall standing on our church site and looking westward across farmlands to see north and south trains pass across the countryside at what is now about North 30th Street.

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Records say that a beloved pastor departed for greener pastures when the congregation refused his request to raise his annual stipend to \$600.00.

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At one time—if you didn't attend church regularly or desecrated the Sabbath in any way—you had to answer for your misdeeds before the trial board. Profuse apologies sometimes brought reinstatement but if not acceptable, communion and church attendance were denied.

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Session minutes were in Holland for many years—then compromised with two sets—one Holland and the other English—and finally the latter gained acceptance as the sole record.

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National Park—now the location of streetcars and buses—at 27th and National—was the favorite scene of early church picnics—the first one being held in 1875.