

## Churches have played important community role

The worship of God, in one way or another, has been a part of the Village of Gaylord almost since its inception. The first organized religious work came with the arrival, in 1874, of the Congregationalists. Rev. James McKay was the first pastor, serving in a small building in the west section of Gaylord.

The Rev. Abraham VanAuken took over the work in 1878, and the present church on the corner of West Second and South Otsego was built in 1889. A part of this very first church is still a part of the present building.

In the church's more than 100 years of ministry in Gaylord, it has been served by 28 ministers. The Rev. Mr. Charles Hastie is the present pastor.

### United Methodist Church

In 1879 a missionary, Mr. T.M. McBride started the Methodist Church. The first meetings were held in a schoolhouse on the west side of Gaylord, and then in 1882, plans were made for a regular church building to be built at South Oak and Main Streets. This location proved to be unsatisfactory, and in 1898 another church was built on the corner of South Court and Second Street.

A parsonage was built next to the church. Later it became known as Glidden Hall, and was used for Sunday School purposes. A new parsonage was built on East Second Street in 1964.

In 1962 the first plans were formulated for the building of a new church. The Shipp Block, between 1st and 2nd Streets and Center and Elm Streets, was purchased and a new church was erected.

In 1968 the Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Brethren Church united, and the church then became the First United Methodist Church. The present pastor is Dwayne Summers.

### St. Mary's Catholic Church

St. Mary's Catholic Church was founded by Jesuit Missionaries in 1880. The Rev. Francis Szulak supervised the building of the frame church in 1884, and the church bell used at that time is still in use today. A frame rectory was built, and the first resident priest was Rev. Opyrocholski.

In 1893 Rev. Casmir Skory instigated the

building of a two-room frame school, with a second floor auditorium. The present church was built in 1900 and 1901, and the old rectory was remodeled for the Dominican Sisters. They assumed the responsibility of teaching in 1910, and the present rectory was built the same year.

The Rev. Francis T. Kaminski came to Gaylord in 1928 and continues to serve as priest at St. Mary's. In 1939 the first convent burned, and the present building was erected in 1940. In 1949 the tower clock was rebuilt, and electrified.

In 1954 the Catholic high school and the gymnasium were built at a cost of over \$300,000, and following the grade school fire in 1960, the new school was built during '61 and '62.

In July of 1971 the Diocese of Gaylord was created. This included the 21 counties the northern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The Most Reverend Edmund Szoka, D.D. is the presiding bishop.

A Teen Center on West M-32 was remodeled for office facilities for the diocese, and at the present time a new cathedral is being built on North Ohio Street.

### Seventh Day Adventist Church

This group of people were worshipping in Vanderbilt as early as 1884, with R.C. Horton serving as the pastor. Meetings were held in the member's homes, with the quarterly regional meetings in schoolhouses. The Davis School in Elmira was used for this purpose.

The present church on North Illinois Street was established in 1894 under the guidance of J.M. McQueen, C.P. Corless and Joseph Jessup. In 1944 the building was moved to Onaway, and meetings were held in the local homes. The present church on fifth street was built in 1954, with the present pastor being the Rev. Jess Nephew.

### Reorganized Church

#### Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

The four Hartnell brothers and their families formed the local nucleus of this church which is first recorded back in the 1890's. Meetings were held in the Elliott Building, at Main

and North Center, the present site of the Alpine Flower Shop.

The church building at Second Street and South Center was built in 1940, with extensive Alpine style remodeling being done in 1973. The branch president is now Elder Harry Richmond, following 15 years of service in this capacity, by Elder Ted Engel.

### St. Thomas Aquinas

#### Church in Elmira

This place of worship was built in 1946 when Father Jerome Szydowski became the first resident priest. A parsonage was built at the same time, both buildings being constructed on land donated by Darius and Charlotte Buell. The Rev. David Demund is the present acting priest.

Polish Catholics settled Elmira in the late 1800's and at that time they built a small frame church. Member of the Franciscan Fathers, of Petoskey, provided Sunday services each week.

### Trinity Lutheran Church

The Lutherans of Gaylord first worshipped in the Seventh Day Adventist Church back in 1933. At this time Pastor Harold Ott of Cheboygan, came to conduct the services. The church operated in this manner until 1941.

Following a four year recess, services were resumed in the local VFW Hall. In 1946 after a constitution was adopted, the local church formed a parish with the Bethlehem Lutherans of Lewiston.

Property on South US 27 was acquired in 1946. The house located here later became the parsonage, and services were held in a nearby building. During 1947-48, the white church with the bell-tower was built, and in 1971 Gaylord became a separate parish with its own pastor.

In 1970 the church building committee was appointed and the beautiful new church, with a touch of old-world style, was built and opened for worship. The Rev. Ivan Schalla is the pastor.

### The Evangelical Free Church

A former dance hall was purchased from the Otsego County Fair Board in 1938 by Clinton Hill. It was converted into a church and parsonage and was known as the Gaylord Gospel Center. Rev. J.W.

Firsbey was the pastor. In 1943 it became the Evangelical Free Church with eight charter members, two of whom, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Johnson, survive.

A fire destroyed the building in 1944. The following spring a basement church was built on the corner of 5th and South Court, with the upper floor being built in 1949. A complete remodeling and addition were completed in 1972 during the pastorate of Rev. Chester Franke.

In April, 1975, the Rev. Charles Warren came to take over the pastorate.

### Church of the Nazarene

A small store building on the corner of M-27 and Main Street was the site of the first services held in Gaylord. Rev. Russell F. Dickinson was the pastor, and the year was 1943. By the end of that year the group had outgrown its quarters, and the church was moved to what is known as "the old Gamble Store." A parsonage was purchased in 1945 and in 1951 a basement church was constructed on the corner of 3rd and Oak. Before the year was over the top structure was completed.

The Rev. Roger Gray was the pastor when a new church was built on Old M-32 East, in 1970. At the present time the church is without a pastor.

### Christian Science Society

This Society began in 1945 with a small group gathered in a home at Arbutus Beach. In 1949 the members moved to a meeting room upstairs over Rockwell's Restaurant, which was located on the present site of the Gaylord State Bank.

From 1952 to 1970, the Society's meetings were held in the Bagley Township Hall. Now the members gather each week in the Seventh Day Adventist Church building on 5th Street.

### Otsego Lake Baptist Church

Three charter members still attend this church: Mr. and Mrs. William Brooks and Mrs. Jean Watkins Costello. The church began in 1948, meeting with Stanley Versnick. Due to increased attendance, meetings were moved to the VFW Hall.

In 1950 a house at the end of South Otsego Lake was purchased and converted

into a church. Rev. Peter Porta became the pastor in 1954, sharing his time with the Calvary Baptist Church. A new OLB Church was built in 1960, and Rev. Porta is still the pastor.

### Calvary Baptist Church

The Rev. Lewis Goslow organized this church in 1949 and served as the pastor until 1955. During this time the first building was built on South Maple and Second Streets. In 1957 Rev. Malcolm Quick became the pastor and a Sunday School addition was built during his pastorate.

The Rev. Richard Halter became pastor in 1964. Very soon increased attendance made it necessary to build a larger facility on South Wisconsin.

### St. Andrew's

#### Episcopal Church

This Mission Church began in 1949 with services held in the old Rockwell Restaurant on Main Street, every other Sunday evening.

The Rev. Charles Edinger of Cheboygan, came once a month to serve Holy Communion. His first sermon concerned Saint Andrew, hence the name for the mission.

Regular services were begun in 1953 when the Trinity Lutheran Church asked the Episcopalians to share their building. The first class for confirmation was presented in June of 1954. In 1967 the Rev. Colin Campbell became the Missioner and a year later the site for the church which now stands at the corner of Hayes Rd. and East M-32, was purchased. The church was constructed in 1961.

The Rev. Charles Hewitt is minister to the parish at the present time.

### Assembly of God Church

Built on North Ohio Street in 1960, this church was led by Rev. Daniel Kolenda for seven years. Rev. Lawrence Gross was the pastor when the parsonage was built next door to the church, in 1962. The office and educational facility were added in 1972, and in 1973 the sanctuary was remodeled.

Pastor Jerald Poehl has been the pastor since 1972.

### Vanderbilt

#### Community Church

This church was organized in 1955 as a result of the merger of the Methodist and Congregational Churches.

The Rev. Charles Maher was the first minister. In 1967 Rev. Robert Shaffer, who was the associate pastor at the Gaylord Methodist Church, became the minister and still holds that position. The old Parish Hall has been replaced by a new Fellowship Hall and Sunday School Facilities.

### Church of Christ

This church began about 1960, meeting on West Otsego Lake Drive. A model home on South US-27 was purchased and remodeled into a church, and now plans are being made to put on a new roof, in the Alpine motif. Louis E. Rushmore is the evangelist for his church.

### Holy Redeemer

#### Catholic Kaminski

Msgr. Francis Kaminski serves as the parish priest at the Holy Redeemer Church in Vanderbilt. It was built in 1964. A store building was first used as a parish hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Nowak came into the ownership of the old Methodist Church when this congregation became a part of the Community Church. The Nowaks signed the title to this property over to the Catholic parish. An addition was built and further repairs were made before the building was used. Mrs. Mike Darcy gave the church the bell which is now in use.

### BEW Apostolic Church

This church was established here in 1965, with services held in the VFW Building. The present church at 700 Random Lane was built in 1972. The pastor is Rev. Otto Mertens.

### Jehovah's Witness

Meetings were held in the Bagley Township Hall when this congregation was first started in 1971. In 1972 the Kingdom Hall was built on West-32 and the Alba Road. At present the group is being led by the elders.

### Lutheran Mission, Wisconsin Synod

In 1974, under exploratory Mission status, this group began to meet in the High School chorus room. Pastor Dayton Fritz, of Indian River, is the minister. During the month of April, 1975, the National Mission Board anticipated granting Mission status to the group, and at such time the congregation hopes to acquire land for a permanent building.