



Sunday, July 7, 2019

Midway Christian Church celebrates 175th anniversary



Rev. Heather McColl opens the service that marked the anniversary. On the wall above her was the beginning of a video from Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, general minister and president of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

"This moment has been 175 years in the making," Rev. Heather McColl told a nearly full sanctuary as Midway Christian Church celebrated a landmark anniversary Sunday. Later in her sermon, she said, "That sense of history continues to define us as a community of faith."

"Not many congregations can claim that longevity," Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, general minister and president of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), told the congregation in a video greeting.

The church on Bruen Street was dedicated on Christmas Eve in 1844, 12 years after the Lexington merger of two religious movements that still couldn't quite agree on a name. Three years later, Midway church leaders founded the Kentucky Female Orphan School, which is now Midway University. Pieces of that rich history were traced at Sunday school by John Batts, who noted how the church and its ministers led others into ministry.



From left, Sandy Gruzensky, Adele Dickerson, Rev. Heather McColl and Cindy and John Batts talked at Sunday school about the church's work.

At Sunday school, 91-year-old Lois Redden recalled her baptism in 1942 by pastor Ronald Lorimer, who was only 22 but organized food and scrap-metal drives and victory gardens during World War II and died of a heart attack two months before the war ended in 1945. The church's broad sense of community service continue with relief efforts after floods and hurricanes, Batts noted.

Today, the church's monthly community dinner "has become one of our main missions for this community," McColl told the group in the fellowship hall, where the dinners began in August 2011. She said the dinners are boons to food-insecure people and elderly people on fixed incomes.

"It's like going to a restaurant," she said. "You see people from all walks of life," including people who don't need a free meal but want the fellowship. "It's been for me and for this church a wonderful, eye-opening mission. She said the church has never asked for donations, "but people do donate, and we're not turning those down."

At the worship service, McColl announced that the church was starting a three-year capital campaign to raise \$175,000, half of of which is to be used for capital projects. The other half would be placed in the church's endowment.

At Sunday School, Adele Dickerson talked about the environmental work that has earned the church a designation as a certified Green Chalice congregation in the denomination, and Sandy Gruzensky discussed the "Food for the Soul" dinners the church has on first and third Sundays "to help us develop spiritually but also to discern some of the major issues that play in the world we're living in."



After the service and before a barbecue lunch, the congregation gathered for a group photo in front of the church.