

## The History of the Allenspark Community Church Adapted from the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet

In the early 1920's, a log structure was built in Allenspark Colorado and became St James on the Mount Episcopal Church. During the years prior to 1972 the building also provided worship services to those residents having summer cabins in the Allenspark area. Services were only conducted between late June and early September. It was not until 1972, when the Allenspark Community Church was established, that year-round worship services were conducted in the building.

On May 14, 1972, a band of visionaries gathered in the chapel of the Presbyterian Highlands Camp. Approximately forty people were inspired to find a way to bring the church to all the people of the Allenspark area regardless of their present church affiliation. The founding group believed that a church was needed to serve all the people, including the "snowbirds" who were only in Allenspark during the summer.

The group desired a truly interdenominational community church firmly rooted in the Bible and the teachings of Christ. Dorothy Ricketts and Richard Sklar contacted the Episcopal Bishop to get permission for the new congregation to share the building. The first service of the Community Church was held in St. James on the Mount on June 25, 1972.

Even before the Community Church was established, plans were in the works to remodel the church building. In January of 1972, supporters sent out a letter stating the aims of the new church and problems with the building and requested contributions for the preservation and updating of the historical structure. As a result of this fund drive, pledges and contributions amounting to \$24,806.62 were received for the project. By May of 1972 work was underway to correct the foundation problems, construct the sacristy and vestibule, panel the chancel, insulate the ceiling of the sanctuary, improve the lighting system and install a heating system in the sanctuary.

Dedication of the remodeled church was held on August 6, 1972.

In 1973, the women were interested in obtaining commemorative stained-glass windows for the sanctuary. They received the board's permission with the stipulation that enough money had to be raised to complete all windows before installation was started. This was accomplished to everyone's surprise within a few weeks. Indeed, there were not enough windows for everyone who wanted to have a window in memory of loved ones. Jay Grooters of Estes Park made and installed the windows.

Guest speakers and priests were invited to fill the pulpit, Pastor Rex Roth among them. Pastor Rex was called to the position of solo pastor of the Community Church on February 15, 1974, and has been with us ever since. He is planning to retire in December 2011, in his 40<sup>th</sup> year.

The membership grew and in 1974 Bishop Frey of the Episcopal Diocese approached the Board of Elders with a proposal for the Community Church to purchase the building. At that time it was estimated the property was worth \$25,000.00. The bishop graciously deducted the value of recent the renovation, and offered the building to the Community Church for \$5,000.00.

Across the street from the church building was a small cafe. Word reached the citizens of Allenspark that the cafe was to be sold and operated as a bar. The church board voted to purchase the property. This resulted in much-needed restroom facilities, plus a place for Sunday School and a fellowship hall,

as well as parking. Upon purchasing the cafe, the board learned at closing that we had also purchased the Post Office (which is now leased from the church) and the building behind the cafe now used for storage and called "Old George."

The Hour of Sharing, established in 1975, was initiated to help Andy and Peg Creswell who were members of the church and served as missionaries and teachers through the Sudan Interior Mission. It was announced that \$1,000 would be enough to build a church with a thatched roof; \$2,500 would build a church with a prestigious metal roof. After the offering was counted it was found that the building could have two metal roofs, and so it was that a church was built in the Sudan as a gift from our congregation in Colorado. Our relationship with Sudanese pastors in that area continues today, although the building was destroyed in an attack.

Since that time the Hour of Sharing has traditionally been the first Sunday in August and the money has continued to be used to support our missionaries, as well as for building maintenance and local benevolence. The Hour of Sharing has continually grown; in 2008 it reached well over \$60,000.00.

In 1989 the Board of Elders began the process of determining how to solve the challenge of making room in our growing church. Although two Sunday services through the summer months had alleviated some of the strain, the suggestion was made to build a fellowship hall which would adjoin the sanctuary and allow an over-flow room for worshippers, as well as provide resources for the other needs of the growing church.

The lowest bid was \$167,842 and there was approximately \$60,000 in the building fund. The Board agreed that payments on a \$60,000 loan would be the maximum indebtedness the church could afford. This left a deficit of approximately \$50,000.

After much deliberation, the board suggested that the problem of funds and whether to build be placed before the Lord as a "fleece," much as Gideon had done in the Old Testament. In this case, the fleece was to be \$50,000. The money needed to be raised in cash or in six-month faith commitments by noon on Sunday, December 17th, two weeks away.

Everyone knew it would take a miracle to raise that amount of money in such a short time. The day before the deadline, a little over \$20,000 had been received or committed. After the collection from the December 17th service had been tallied, the total was just a little over \$42,000.

When the morning service ended at 11 AM, the congregation gathered for their meeting. It was announced by the Board Chair that we were approximately \$8,000 short of the goal. As agreed previously, since the \$50,000 "fleece" had not been met, she stated we would not build at this time.

Since the noon deadline had not yet arrived, one member stood and doubled his commitment. Another wrote a check and handed it to the treasurer. Others spoke privately to the treasurer, indicating they would increase their pledge. Before long, Treasurer Louis Tedford addressed the assemblage, stating the goal had been reached. It was 11:45 a.m. The congregational meeting was dismissed with prayer and the singing of "Amazing Grace".

God's amazing grace has continued to pour out on this little log church and the people who gather within. We are looking to Him to provide the pastor of His choosing as we move into the future, serving Him, His people, and His world through the Allenspark Community Church.