

OCT
2026



Celebrating 100 Years of Music

SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 10 AM

Music has been an important part of the life of Flossmoor Community Church since the beginning. The Centennial Committee has been supplying our music team with fresh stacks of historical bulletins as they continue their deep dive into the historical annals - and as we sing hymns both ancient and modern every week, you'll see some historical annotations appearing in your bulletins.

It's a beautiful thing to see that we continue to sing beloved hymns that we've sung since the beginning. Did you know we sang "When Morning Gilds the Skies" in January and October of 1926, and most recently this September? That's 100 years of greeting Sunday mornings with the refrain "May Jesus Christ be praised!" Keep your eyes on the bulletin for more fun facts about the songs we've sung through the decades and generations.

In the September 1946 issue of "The Narthex," our church's newsletter, an unattributed author (perhaps Dr. Bell?) reflects that "There seem to be relatively few hymns with which the Flossmoor congregation is thoroughly familiar. No doubt this circumstance is due to the membership's widely varied church backgrounds, with more than a score of denominations being represented."



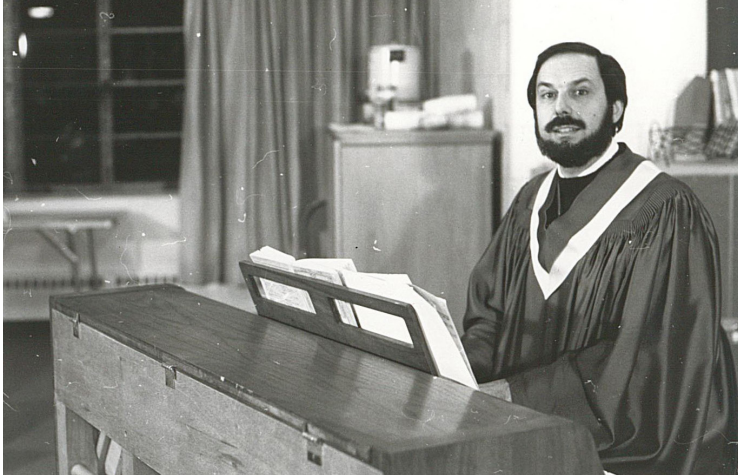
Rev. Dr. Bell (center) with Chancel Choir, 1950s

Eighty years later in present day, we continue to have similar circumstances. The beautifully diverse group of people in the pews on any given Sunday reflect all kinds of backgrounds and experiences with church traditions. Hymns that one person grew up singing are brand new and "confusing" to the person sitting next to them. Praise songs that "defined church" to one member might be strange and off-putting to the next.

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CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF MUSIC (CONTINUED)

It's a testament to our love for each other and the joy we experience as we worship that we keep on singing, keep on learning, keep on adjusting. In 2026 alone, we've been blessed with David Rice playing a Bach fugue on the organ, Jim Joyce hitting some amazing blues riffs with his electric guitar, and youth member Addie Kempe leading a chorus from her acoustic guitar. We've had the Chancel Ringers bless us with a praise song from the 90's, the Chancel Choir sing a traditional South African hymn, and the Ensemble sing a folk-music version of one of Jesus' parables.



Dr. Michael Rogers leads a choir rehearsal in the early 1980s



The Chancel Ringers rehearse, early 1980s

Throughout our 100 years, we've had incredibly gifted musicians, accompanists, singers, soloists, instrumentalists, and some very thoughtful and creative music directors.

From marimba duets in worship to Dolly Parton tributes during the postlude, from heartfelt gospel solos to intricate choral cantatas, from baroque to jazz to blues to classical to ancient to modern, Flossmoor Community Church has had a rich and vibrant history of music.

To celebrate 100 years of music at Flossmoor Community Church, our music directors are putting together a special worship service for Sunday, October 25. Typically, our "big music moments" are centered around Christmas and Easter.



Chancel Choir poses for a picture in the early 2000's

This year, we'll be pulling out all the stops in October as well. It will be "all hands on deck" for our church musicians and special guests as they lead us in joyful worship, reflecting on the beauty and power of music in our history. This service will of course tip our hat with gratitude and honor for where our church has been. But we'll also be celebrating where our church is now, the musical culture we've forged together in 2026.

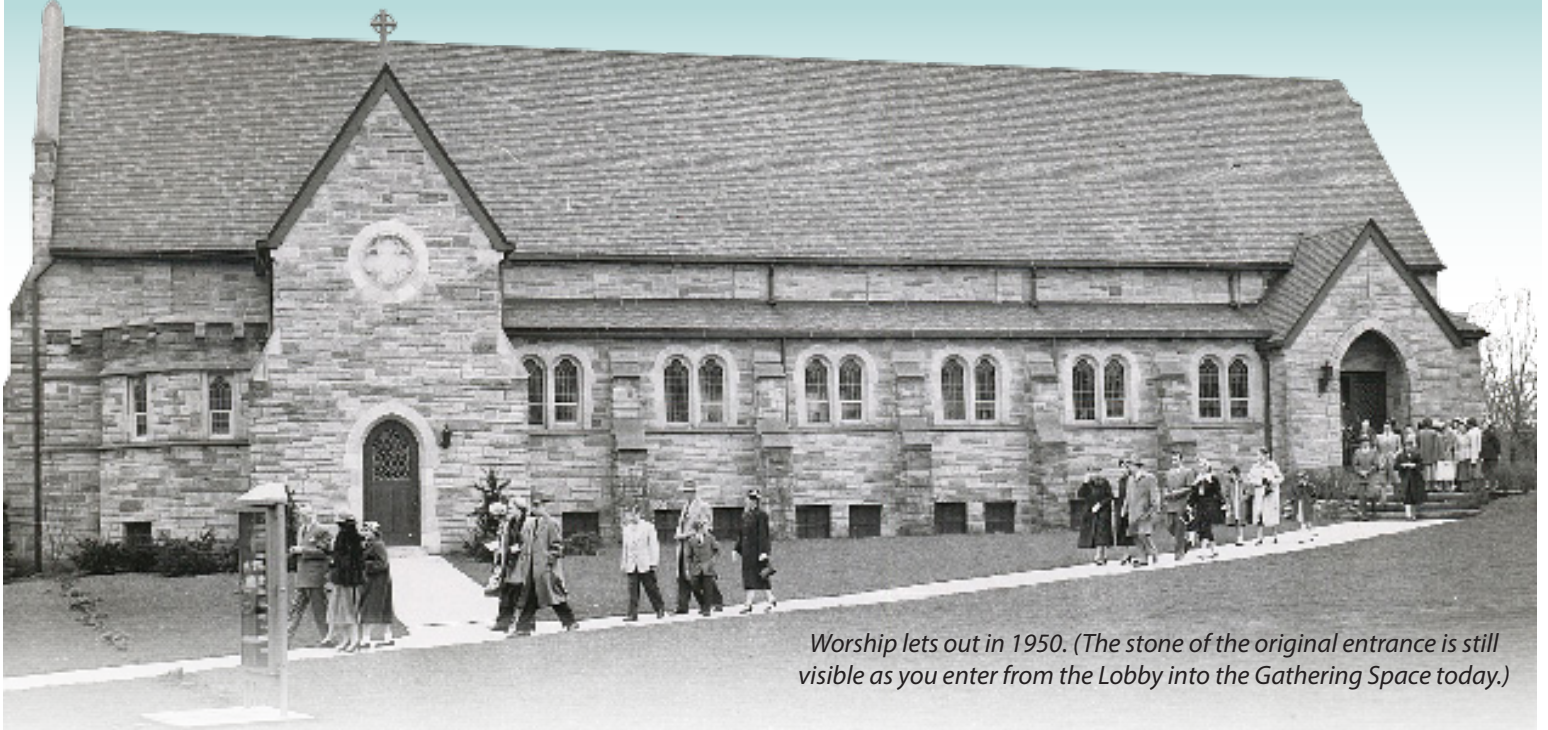
For instance, did you know that we've sung the hymn "Let Us Be Known by Our Love" (written in 2018) when we ordained and installed elders in 2025, on "Do Good Sunday" in January, when we sent off our high school graduates to their next chapter in May, and at our "Welcome Back Breakfast" in September? It's a song that's growing to define us and bring us together around the calling we've been given as followers of Jesus.

On September 8, 1946, Dr. Bell preached a sermon about church music, and said, *"While we are learning new hymns, let's select those that are meaningful and that are set to music both good and singable."* Our musical service on October 25 will celebrate the music "both good and singable" that has defined us in the past and the music that's calling us forward into the next 100 years! Through the ages, this congregation has demonstrated a willingness to try new things while carrying forward treasures from the past. Come worship with us on October 25 to keep that tradition going as we celebrate the love of God through music.



FCC APPROACHES 100th BIRTHDAY

Our History: the 1950s - 1960s



Worship lets out in 1950. (The stone of the original entrance is still visible as you enter from the Lobby into the Gathering Space today.)

Last month, we explored the early days of Flossmoor Community Church in the 1920s & 30s. In this issue, we dive into a period of great growth for the congregation and the physical plant: the 50s & 60s.

The 1950s were an era of stay-at-home moms and men with heavy work schedules. Families centered their lives around church and FCC families were looking for connection, guidance, and support. In response, several groups were formed by FCC to meet those needs:

- The Parent Education Groups (PEGs), co-founded by Helen Bell, were designed to support parents and advise them in raising children in Christian homes. Senior Pastor, Robert K. Bell, and Helen structured the groups based on the age of the oldest children in the home. These groups met monthly and explored relevant topics, bringing in special speakers. Besides regular meetings, PEGs hosted social events like Mother-Daughter Banquets, a Swap Shop, the PEGs Christmas House Walk, and hosted a huge annual craft show, the PEGs Bazaar. PEGs thrived for several decades.
- The men of the church formed a Men's Forum that met monthly on Tuesday evenings. They hosted speakers that discussed topics from politics to business.
- A Sunday Evening Club for high school students featured discussion of topics teens faced in the 50s and held a wide variety of social events including dances and hayrides.
- Two couples' groups were active in the 50s and each planned elaborate evenings out for their members. Often held in Fellowship Hall, these groups hosted dances, themed dinners, and card parties.
- The Woman's Association, which formed in 1929, kept many things running at FCC. They served as church hostesses, and fundraised to purchase kitchen equipment, tables, dishes, and choir robes. The group even underwrote the \$24,500 needed for the pipe organ in the Sanctuary as a celebration of their 25th Anniversary. They raised money through rummage sales, and a "Trading Post" which became the Bargain Box Resale Shop in 1958 (operational until 2020).



Helen Bell hosts a PEGs meeting, 1950s

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Couples Club members meet in the 1950s to plan an outdoor church dance - The Blacktop Hop!

- The FCC Weekday Preschool opened its doors in 1953. The curriculum focused on encouraging behaviors such as sharing, being thankful, and being respectful of others. The school was formed because the congregation believed in the value of Christian Education, even at a preschool level. The Weekday Preschool recently celebrated their 70th year at FCC!



Additions were made to our building in several phases. Pictured above are the beginnings of the Education Wing, 1960s

The building underwent several major changes in these two decades to accommodate our growing congregation and the needs of our community. The Office Wing, which included church offices and a Youth room on the first floor, and the Family Room, Parlor and a few classrooms on the second floor, were added in the 50s. By the early 60s, the Sanctuary was bursting at the seams and people were listening to services through a PA system in the Parlor. The decision was made to widen the Sanctuary and add the balcony which raised our capacity in worship from 280 to over 500. The cost of this project was around \$590,000, but also included the addition of the Music and Education wings to accommodate the explosive growth of the Sunday School.



Members of the Women's Association prepare Christmas Cookies to deliver to residents of Tinley Park Mental Hospital; 1960s

As the 60s became a turbulent time politically and socially in the United States, FCC responded by diving into meaningful outreach programs. In 1966, the church took on the plight of local migrant workers by sponsoring a "Los Amigos" program for their children. For a month in the summer, volunteers provided children with two daily meals, lessons, music and field trips. The program proved so popular that they held a follow-up program in the fall and winter on Saturday mornings.

In 1967, the church held workshops to train Literacy Volunteers. Good Shepherd Center for Exceptional Children was brought under the umbrella of FCC in the same year. Their purpose was to minister to children with physical and developmental disabilities and Good Shepherd remained in our building for many decades. The congregation also funded a part-time Community Enabler in East Chicago Heights to minister to our underserved neighbors.

Churches are often hesitant to address controversial societal issues - but not FCC. Our Governing Board felt the need to verbalize a policy against racial discrimination as early as 1963. In part, this policy stated, "*The Church of Jesus Christ can make no compromise with discrimination against, or segregation of, people on the basis of race, and still be faithful to her Master.*" In a similar vein, PEGs Council sponsored a series of panel discussions in February and March of 1969 to discuss the ethical, religious and social problems created by advances in modern medicine. Questions were raised about abortion laws, the ethical implications of organ transplants, and the issues that surround euthanasia and the artificial prolonging of life.

These decades continued the *Relay of Love* started by our founders and met the challenges of rapid growth and turbulent times with inspiring programs and a physical plant that allowed ministries to grow and impact our community.

OUR HISTORY: THE 50's & 60's (CONTINUED)



Founding Members of FCC gather prior to the Sanctuary expansion project



Members of PEGs prepare crafted items for sale at their Annual Christmas Bazaar, 1960



Rev. Bell oversees groundbreaking for FCC's expansion project in the early 1960s



1960's Sanctuary Widening Project. The original walls were once where today's arches stand. The balcony was also added.



Lights, Camera, Action! FCC is featured on NBC programming about thriving churches in 1950's



Members of the Woman's Association host the 40th Anniversary luncheon in 1967



FCC's 40th Anniversary Luncheon was hosted in Fellowship Hall on March 6, 1967. From left, D. Throop Vaughan, Mrs. & Mr. Franklin D. Barber (founding members), Omer W. Renfrow, Governing Board Chair (and father of Janet Bolton), Rev. D. Robert K. Bell, and founding members Mrs. & Mr. William C. Karnes, and Joseph Brumley



PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF OUR NEW DATE!

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2027
Centennial Celebration Dinner

FCC CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Betsy Hanzelin, Chair

Megan Adams, Alanna Cotch, Trina Hayes,
 Ann Gardner, Megan Maginity, Pam Marks

Jackie Riffice, Dodi Wians

Brooke King-LaBreck, Staff Liaison



**SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE
 CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT PRE-ORDERS
 BEGIN THIS OCTOBER!**

The Centennial Committee is excited to offer beautiful commemorative Christmas ornaments this year to mark the FCC Centennial. These beautiful 4" ornaments featuring our Sanctuary are being 3D cast in pewter by SteelBerry company (made in the USA), which commits a portion of their sales to social & environmental causes. Ornaments will cost \$20 each, and are limited to 100 - so be on the lookout for our sale to begin this month (ornaments are anticipated to be delivered to FCC in November)!