

Banning United Methodist Church

Church History

1885-1968



Methodism began in Banning in the parlor of Mrs. Samina G. Carpenter in 1885. A year later, Rev. I.G. Sigler came here for his health. Services were held two or three times that year in the Union Church building on the southwest corner of Ramsey and Murray streets on open Sundays. In 1886, Rev. L.L. Rogers preached both in Banning and Beaumont a few times, and such a large response was given him at Beaumont, that a request for a minister was made at the Conference in 1887.

Sunday, October 14, 1887, Rev. W.F. Wenk from National City held services for the first time in Banning, preaching in the Union Church. The third Sunday of each month was allotted to the Methodists, the other denominations using other Sundays. On November 20th, five charter members were received into the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Banning. One of these was Mrs. Carpenter. On October 30th, the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Beaumont was organized in Rev. F.F. Sigler's parlor with ten members. The pastor's promised salary was \$700.00, \$600.00 to be paid by the Beaumont charge and \$100.00 by the Banning congregation. At the close of the year, Rev. Wenk reported for the circuit, 23 full members and 5 probationary members.

For several years the Banning congregation met in the Union Church and in the Town Hall on the southeast corner of Livingston and Murray. According to Tom Hughes' "History of Banning", on Sunday, November 17, 1889, a Methodist Church on San Gorgonio was dedicated (this may be confused with the building built in 1892). During this period, baptisms were performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing in such places as Highland Home and Gilman Reservoirs.

On July 16, 1892 the Methodist Episcopal Church was incorporated. At the same time a promise of a \$250.00 gift and a \$250.00 loan was received from the Church Extension Society. A brick foundation was begun in September on San Gorgonio, north of Ramsey and south of Hays. The first service in the new building was held November 20, 1892.

The records indicate a serious financial panic in Southern California in 1892. The Banning Church paid two tax assessments in 1893, one to San Bernardino County for 52 cents, divided into two installments, and one to Riverside County for \$5.25, also in two installments. The Church was valued at \$1,730.00, indebtedness \$500.00. The trustees met in September to consider purchase of pews, lamps, stove, and to "procure and set hitching posts for the church." In December, they authorized one of their members to take a loan of \$250.00 from his mother-in-law at 10% to complete payment of the contract.

Under the pastorate of Frederick Miller, a successful revival was held in 1896 and many were converted. Under the same ministry, a parsonage for the pastor was secured at Third and Williams.

In 1890 a Young People's Society was organized which grew into a very popular organization, which nearly all the young people of the community joined and attended. It had a marked effect in offsetting evil tendencies toward which they were drifting. A Junior League was organized which most of the children in the neighborhood joined.

1899 saw the pastor of the Banning congregation assisting the Presbyterian pastor in meetings in Beaumont. The following year, 1900, the members of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Banning united. The story is told by old-timers that in the horse and buggy days, the Presbyterian pastor from Beaumont and the Methodist pastor from Banning would pass each other going to preach in the other's field, whereon they would discuss the futility of too many little churches. Eventually the Methodists sold their property in Beaumont to the United Presbyterians and they have no church in Banning.

In 1907, the Methodist Church building was moved to the southeast corner of Second and Ramsey. The old structure was located at the rear of a new building and used for Sunday school classes.

Five lots were purchased in 1927 at the corner of Second and Williams at a cost of \$3,000.00. In 1928, the old church site on Ramsey was sold to the J.C. Penny Co. for \$17,500.00 and the congregation moved to its present location to "get away from the highway." In this move, the church spent \$23,000.00 for a building, \$3,000.00 for furniture, and \$5,000.00 for the 651-pipe Hinners organ. The cornerstone was laid in 1928, and the church building, with mahogany pews, was dedicated April 14, 1929.

In 1932 the property was sold to the State for tax delinquency, but was redeemed later. Over the years, several re-modeling projects have taken place. A name change to Community Methodist Church came about in 1948. The educational facilities and offices were constructed in 1964. The name was again changed in 1968 when the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist church merged. At that time the name became Banning United Methodist Church.