



3

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

The history of any church must begin, not with its building, but with its people. The first Episcopal congregation in Elgin met for 24 years without a building of its own at the Free Will Baptist Meeting House under the leadership of Rev. J. H. Waterbury. The Church of the Redeemer held its first service on December 27, 1857.

Several decades after the founding of the parish, H. Lee Borden, a member of another denomination but whose wife was an Episcopalian, presented the parish with the lot on which the present church is located. Mr. Borden paid \$300 for the property and made the stipulation that a chapel costing not less than \$3000 be built thereon.

Ground for the present church was broken on September 2, 1880. The structure was built at a cost of \$5,000.

However, tragedy struck the parish for the first time on early Sunday morning, October 22, 1916, when a fire swept through the church. It was doubly heartbreaking to the parishioners, for they had just completed an extensive renovating project.

Five hundred people gathered at the corner of Center and Highland Avenue on March 19, 1917 to witness the laying of the cornerstone of the new church building.

The parish experienced a period of growth. And then, just as the world was beginning to recover from the Great Depression, fire struck the church again on Palm Sunday, March 25, 1934. This time it was necessary to hold services elsewhere, and every Sunday an altar was set up in the Wait Ross Allanson Funeral Home.