

Benzonia

BENZONIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

The church at Benzonia was officially started in Feb. 1974. Six people were in attendance. Attendance at first was variable, with numbers in the sixties at times.

August 1974 was the time of the first VBS, with attendance ranging from 100 to 150. Traverse City assisted in this effort by bringing their busses and some staff. Some staff was also here from Lincoln Park.

The church got off to a heavy start, with large expenditures of money and effort for publicity, but due to very inadequate facilities and lack of experienced personnel, it suffered setbacks which are yet being felt.

Late in 1974 some land with a new shell building on it was bargained for and a bond issue was floated. We are now in the building and it is quite presentable and adequate for the foreseeable future.

As is sometimes the case with such efforts, the church here is financially over-extended and somewhat insecure at this time. The elders at Lincoln Park, Plymouth and Traverse City are working together to secure the necessary monetary help to enable us to survive till some solid local gains can be made.

As of this date, I am the only wage earner in the congregation. Lincoln Park and Plymouth are supporting me along with some part time earnings of my own.

Everyone else is on, unemployment, ADC, part time job, welfare or disability benefits. Summer time should improve this picture.

As soon as the necessary legal and financial arrangements can be made, we plan to sell some of the property and reduce the bond obligation. Right now the problem is keeping everything together till this can be accomplished. We are sincerely grateful for the assistance we have already received from various sources, and pray for its continuation.

The work at Benzonia has been approached from the financial and cultural as well as the spiritual point of view. It has been slow, but noticeable gains are being made in each area. (We are putting our whole selves into this effort. G.F.)

Attendance has held solid 25 each service through the winter and is now picking up. The return of some delinquent members appears eminent, and one girl was baptized April 21. A number of handicapped persons are attending Sunday School, being bussed in from a local foster home. The management of the home has been good to us, with gifts of money and materials for the building.

This report does not appear in the regular book being furnished; because at the time of its assembly there were so many uncertainties that a proper report could not be compiled.

As of this writing, (April 23) Bro. Tom Ullom is in the hospital awaiting serious heart surgery, scheduled for May 13th. This will surely affect what we can do this summer so far as VBS or other such efforts are concerned. We need your prayers for sure.

(Cards will reach Tom at Oliver Hospital, Frankfort, Mich.) until the date of surgery, which will be done at another place.

In the meantime we must and will go on some way.

Gordon French, for the church at Benzonia.