



# Parsells Church

Christ saves. We serve.

## Parsells Avenue Community Church: 2011 in Review

The year 2011 was a difficult year for Parsells Avenue Community Church, as we tried to maintain ministries while also maintaining a large building with a leaky roof.

The church had already been given landmark status (in 2010). In 2011, we received another designation. The American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region, at its November executive board meeting, designated Parsells as a "Region Mission Center" similar to that of Cameron Community Ministries.

Our organ is no longer a silent piece of furniture. It is an historic Skinner Company "Opus 560" pipe organ which was installed in 1925 (when the sanctuary and tower were added to the original 1909 structure), but for a long time it has not been played. That has changed.

On April 10 and November 6, we hosted an organ recital featuring Eastman School of Music students. They played our organ as part of the Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative. Every year, students from the Eastman Organ Department perform a series of community recitals in the Rochester area, the aim of which is to bring diverse styles of organ music to the community, as well as to showcase magnificent organs to the public. We are proud to have been included in their program.

And the pipe organ was played for Sunday worship for the first time in about thirty years, beginning on Easter Sunday.

During the summer months, we promoted the "Sounds of Parsells," which were a series of concerts held at the church. The performances were great; attendance was not. The first concert was held on July 9, featuring the Jimmie Highsmith, Jr., Smooth Jazz Experience, along with Rev. Dr. James Evans and the SLT (St. Luke's Tabernacle) Jazz Ensemble. Our next event was held on July 24, featuring the Levanto Winds Ensemble (a group from the Eastman School of Music, with Jessica Smithorn on oboe, Norman Gonzales on flute, and Jessica Wooldridge on bassoon). Then on August 21, the Dunnemans of Binghamton, NY, performed Christian Gospel and praise music at the church.

We are always looking for ways to minister to the community. In October, we launched the Good Shepherd Ministry, with a Palmer Grant from ABC/USA. It provides homework help three days a week (Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday), focusing on computer literacy, reading and math skills; and a fun night on Fridays featuring physical fitness activities and intergenerational fellowship.

Even though we created a new logo the previous year, we modified it in 2011 (as seen above) to better reflect our mission.

In November, we launched the "Save the Building to Save Souls" campaign. This was designed to raise money to repair the church roof and to raise awareness of our historical structure.

In securing financing for the roof project, we were given a matching grant from the landmark conservancy. We also received a loan from the Mutual Assistance Fund of ABC/RGR for \$17,500 at 4% interest to be repaid over 20 years.

We also had to make extensive repairs to the heating system (the boiler).

We continued to “go into all the world” with our Beechwood Cross blog. Since the blog’s inception in May 2009, we have had over 26,000 pageviews in the year and a half ending in December 2011. We’ve had readers all over the globe. The top ten countries are: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, India, Philippines, Australia, Romania, Germany, Brazil, and the Netherlands. The most popular posts have been those dealing with Biblical mysteries:

“Why Does the Heart Symbolize Love?”

“Seedtime and Harvest”

“Why did Jesus Call James and John ‘Sons of Thunder’?”

“What are the Keys to the Kingdom?”

“Why Did Jesus Change Simon’s Name to Peter?”

Pam Grinion (the pastor’s wife) conducted a workshop on January 29 as part of the American Baptist Women’s Ministries of the Rochester/Genesee Region retreat at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. The theme was, “Women Destined for God’s Purpose.”

We held an Ash Wednesday Service on March 9, a Maundy Thursday service on April 21, and a Good Friday service on April 22. We also participated in a tenebrae service at St. Ambrose Church on April 18, sponsored by the North East Church Cluster.

Parsells was a checkpoint along the route for the CROP Walk on May 1, as it has been for several years.

We held rummage sales in June, July, and October.

We ran a summer camp at the church during July and August for the neighborhood children.

We held a neighborhood block party in September on the Denver Street side of the church.

On November 20, our Sunday School conducted a play during worship, which was followed by a special Thanksgiving meal for the congregation.

We worshipped Christ both on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as the holiday fell on a Sunday.

We ended the year the same way we had begun it: with a Watch night service ringing in the New Year.

God has allowed us to survive another year – a trying time financially, a praiseworthy time spiritually.