

63

U. E. CHURCH'S 80th ANNIVERSARY SHOWS

Service, Growth Outstanding

Ninety years of service to the people of Canton are being celebrated this month by the congregation of United Evangelical Church of the United Church of Christ, East Ave. and Dillon St. Preaching in a school house on the present site of the church marked its beginning in 1872 and in 1873 the German United Evangelical Church of Canton was organized. The church is known to many as Batz's Church; Rev. William Batz served it for 30 years, from 1896 until his death in 1926. Anniversary festivities include special services on two Sundays, Sept. 15 and 22, and a banquet and dance at the Sheraton Belvedere Hotel on Saturday, Sept. 21.

On Sunday, services will be held at 8 and 10:15 a.m. with the Sacrament of Holy Communion at each service. Pastor Paul A. Rasche will be assisted by Dr. Titus Lehman, pastor emeritus. The main anniversary service will be held Sunday, Sept. 22, begin-

ning at 10 a.m. The banquet and dance will feature Richard Single as toastmaster and various speakers. A program of entertainment is planned. Bob Craig and his orchestra will provide the music for dancing.

The church has a history of accomplishment; only three days after its organization in September of 1873, the congregation voted to erect a church and in October the cornerstone was laid. In April of the following year the first church on the site was dedicated and a pipe organ was ordered as were the two steeple bells still used today.

Pastor Batz was preceded as pastor by Pastors Steinhauser, Schwartz and Menzel while Rev. Franklin W. Schaefer and Dr. Titus Lehman followed him. Dr. Lehman, named pastor emeritus upon his retirement in 1961, was succeeded by Pastor Rasche.

The congregation had grown to 1,000 members and more by 1961 and as it grew so did the Sunday School enrollment. In 1928 the need for a larger educational unit was anticipated and in 1935 funds collected during the intervening years permitted the erection of a modern, fireproof, four-story building on the site of the old parsonage and a new parsonage was built on the corner south of the church.

A modern church building was erected in April, 1956, complete with air conditioning, and its \$300,000 cost was met by 1961. Contributions of the members were sufficient to cover the debt with no need of a financial campaign or individual pledging.

The church continues its strength under Pastor Rasche, operating on a combined budget in excess of \$50,000 for the current year with more than 1,000 members.