**Reflections of the Service of Organization of Christian Community Presbyterian Church**

**By Joan Burdett—April 2012**

Fifty years ago today, on Sunday, April 21, 1962, Christian Community Presbyterian Church became a reality. Since Gerry and I attended the service of organization and became charter members, I was asked if I could share memories of this special day.

The service was held in Peoples Drug Store building, which was located in what is now Marketplace. CCPC was given permission to use it since it was the only place in Belair-Bowie that was big enough to accommodate the number of people expected to attend. It was still under construction. The good part was it was enclosed and the lighting was installed and working. The not so good part was the building was not heated and the cement floor was not completely dried, which made it very cold. Never the less, we were grateful to have what we had. A group of CCPC men, including Gerry, picked up the building debris inside and cleaned out the dust and dirt, preparing for the service.

The Service of Organization of Christian Community Presbyterian Church began at 3:00 PM with 350 people in attendance, including the ten pastors and two elders who were participating in the service. My best memory was the choir walking by in a procession, wearing new robes and singing “Crown Him with Many Crowns.” It was soul stirring! Later in the service “The Church’s One Foundation” was sung by all. It, too, was very moving. My lasting memory was pledging my commitment to The Covenant of Charter Membership with 200 other new members.

What made this day so important was the realization of all the hard work and direction that got CCPC to this point. Prayers of praise and thanksgivings were given for what had been accomplished. Then, two hundred and one people stated their desire to be constituted and organized as a church to be known as Christian Community Presbyterian Church. They all declared The Covenant of Charter Membership and became members of CCPC. There also were nine members nominated to become Elders. Following the election, the Elders were ordained and installed. Everything was in order to be declared organized. The Rev. Jack Boelens, Acting Chairman of the Organizing Commission of the Presbytery, did us the honor.

The Advisory Committee needs to be mentioned. Elders from nine sponsoring churches made up the committee. For the Service of Organization, they provided child care, flowers for the service, and put on the reception following the service. Two of the elders participated in the service. Previously, they assisted in developing the church school and music programs for our church.

Dewey Dodds was called by the Presbytery of Washington City to be the organizing pastor of our church. He requested that the church be named Christian Community Presbyterian Church. His request was honored. Dewey was a great leader. This was a period when the community was growing fast. Dewey was there to welcome everyone moving in to their new homes and to invite them to CCPC. There were 40 to 50 homes delivered each week. The Presbytery bought three Levitt homes, one for the manse and the other two for a temporary church and church school. Soon, two more houses were purchased because of the rapid growth and great need. The Dodds family moved into the manse and ten days later on December 11, 1961, the first service was held in their living room. Approximately 40 adults and 15 children were in attendance. By April 1, 1962, much of his hard work was visible. Two months after the Service of Organization, he was installed as CCPC’s pastor.

The growth and direction for CCPC was very challenging. Only with the help of God’s support and direction could CCPC succeed in doing His work. CCPC’s people, with faith and commitment, were ready for the hard work and tasks ahead.