



## SPRING LAKE CHURCH HISTORY

Spring Lake Church was incorporated in 1989 under its original name: The Bay Free Church, an Evangelical Free Church. It was founded on three principles: Church services should not be boring, should be applicable to our daily lives, and should never ask for money. The mission statement for The Bay Free Church was "To glorify God by reaching the unreached and building believers into the likeness of Christ." All of those principles have served us well over the last few decades, and they still hold true today.

Our church grew rapidly in those early years, doubling in attendance almost every year. We bought a house with 11 acres of property in 1994 and moved the offices there shortly after that. Our church's name was changed in 1998 because there were churches in the area with names similar to its original title, and the term "Free" was confusing to many people who were unfamiliar with the Evangelical Free Church of America. Also, because the church property was on the shore of a spring-fed lake, the church's name became Spring Lake Church. The mission statement was also changed to "Becoming a People of the Beatitudes", and the church focused on the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5. In succeeding years, the focus of the mission statement remained the same, but the wording was later changed to "Becoming a people of character, with hearts for the world", and the core ministries focused on cultivating Christ-like character.

The first sanctuary and lobby were added on to the house in 1999, and we started meeting in our present location. We continued to grow in numbers, and additions and expansion of the church campus have occurred. The first addition included an educational wing comprised of several multi-use classrooms with dividers in the upper level, and another kitchen and large multi-purpose meeting space in the lower level. We also purchased additional property, bringing the total acreage to 15. A few years later, the sanctuary was expanded, and a lobby/meeting area and two nurseries for infants and toddlers were added.

We went through some difficult challenges in 2011 and 2012 and grew spiritually as a result. After that, we adopted a new mission statement: "Loving God, Maturing in His Character, Reaching the World". We also restructured our leadership to include a Steering Team network which provides better communication and organization across all of our ministries.



Here is a timeline of our milestones:

1986 - A Bible study began in the private home of Rev. Orlando Kreuger, a retired EFCA pastor from Manitowoc.

1987 - Rev. Mark Pietscher, a church planter, was called as the church's first pastor.

1989 - The church was incorporated as The Bay Free Church and began meeting in a rented facility. The mission statement was "To glorify God by reaching the unreached and building believers into the likeness of Christ".

1992 - Rev. Paul Garrison succeeded Rev. Pietscher as senior pastor.

1994 - The church purchased a house and property on Klondike Road and moved its offices there.

1998 - The church changed its name to Spring Lake Church and changed its mission statement to "Becoming a people of the Beatitudes".

1999 - The church added a sanctuary and lobby to the offices and began to worship at the Klondike Road facility.

2003 - The church added the education wing to the facility, and the church changed its mission statement to "Becoming a people of character with hearts for the world".

2006 - The church expanded the sanctuary and lobby in the facility. Two nurseries were added.

2011 - Several staff members were added throughout the years, bringing the staffing level to its largest number in history: 6 Pastors, 1 Children's Director, and 8 Support Staff.

2012 - Rev. Paul Murphy and Rev. Gene Heacock succeeded Rev. Garrison as the Interim Lead Pastor and Interim Executive/Preaching Pastor, respectively. Steering teams were formed, and the mission statement was changed to "Loving God, Maturing in His Character, Reaching the World".

2013 - Rev. Paul Murphy resigned as the Interim Lead Pastor leaving Rev. Gene Heacock as the Interim Executive/Preaching Pastor.

2014 - Rev. Jack Guerra succeeded Rev. Gene Heacock as Lead Pastor. The church continues to grow under his leadership today.