

Friday, October 9, 1981

REV. MATTHEW H. WORTHMAN

Rev. Matthew Henry Worthman, 83, of 1309 Mix Ave., a well-known Adams County religious leader for many years and a minister for 56 years, died at 5 a.m. today at his home of a heart attack.

A native of Adams County, Rev. Worthman was born in Preble Township on February 6, 1898 to Lewis and Sophia Bloemker-Worthman.

He attended the Rupright and Magley grade schools, and in September of 1913, entered the former Mission House Academy College and Seminary in Plymouth, Wisconsin; the school is now known as Lakeland College. He graduated from that institution in 1923 and was ordained into the ministry on July 15, 1923 at St. Paris, Ohio.

He entered the Christian ministry of the Reformed Church, which became the Evangelical and Reformed Church and is now the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Worthman served as pastor in St. Paris for 14 months, then was transferred to Poland, Indiana to the Zion Church, serving as pastor until 1931.

He married Emma Dettinger June 18, 1925 at the Salem United Church of Christ in Magley; she survives.

In 1931, he moved to Bluffton, Indiana and served in the First Reformed church there until 1956, when he transferred to Indianapolis to serve the Immanuel church until May 1, 1970, when he returned to the Salem church as pastor.

He was pastor of the Salem church until his retirement on May 1, 1979. His final sermon was given at the church on April 29, 1979; after services that day the congregation held an Appreciation Sunday for Rev. and Mrs. Worthman.

Ironically, the Salem church was the centerpiece of Rev. Worthman's life, since he was baptized there, confirmed there, married there, ministered there and will be buried there.

He was given the title of Pastor Emeritas of the Salem church June 17, 1979, and October 4, 198?, was the guest of honor at Lakeland College and was presented with a plaque by his old school.

Among his positions were president of the Indianapolis Classis from 1930-31, president of the Fort Wayne Classis from 1933-34, president of the Michigan-Indiana Synod from 1948-51, trustee of Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio from 1951-54, member of the Central Publishing House board in Cleveland, Ohio from 1931-34 and director of the board of Fairhaven Home in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

Among other activities, Rev. Worthman played baritone horn and the organ; sang in quartets; directed Christmas cantatas; and organized, directed and played in the church orchestra while at the Zion church in Poland, Indiana.

He was a well-regarded speaker and gave many Baccalaureate and Commencement addresses. He was also a teacher for several summers at Camp Mack.

Rev. Worthman, at least up until 1979, had not missed attending Sunday School and morning worship services for his entire ministerial life, except for a six-week period in 1940 when he was recuperating from an illness.

He was a 32nd degree Mason at the Bluffton lodge, a member of the Scottish Rite in Fort Wayne and a Worshipful Master of the Bluffton lodge. He also served as a Worthy Patron of Crescent chapter 48 Order of the Eastern Star of Bluffton, Indiana.

Rev. Worthman served on the Wells County Public Welfare board for seven years, was a member of the Kiwanis Club and was a supporter of the Boy Scouts.

Other survivors include one son - Richard Matthew Worthman of Indianapolis; three daughters, Mrs. Robert (Francile) Anderson of Pontiac, Michigan, Mrs. Robert (Geraldine) Irwin of Pontiac, Michigan, Mrs. Arthur (Dorothy) Chantler of Lake Forest, Illinois; two sisters, Amanda Worthman and Ella Scherry, both of route 2; 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Four brothers and two sisters preceded him in death.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at the Salem United Church of Christ, Magley. Burial will be in the church cemetery. Friends may call at the Zwick, Boltz and Jahn Funeral Home from 2 until 9 p.m. Saturday, and from noon until 9 p.m. Sunday, and at the church from 10 a.m. until time of services Monday. Preferred memorials are to the church.

The following will officiate at the services: Dr. Harry Bredeweg, who is president of the Indiana-Kentucky conference of the Church of Christ; Rev. Lawrence Balleine, pastor of the Decatur Zion United Church of Christ; and Rev. Ruben Eversman of Huntington.

"Salem United Church of Christ in Magley" by Lila Kruetzman Rauner

Transcribed by Karin King