

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Iowa City, Iowa

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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(Groundbreaking for new church in Iowa City)

IOWA CITY, IOWA -- Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church of the First Presbyterian congregation here will be held at 4:00 p.m. Sunday (March 31) at the Rochester Avenue - Mt. Vernon Dr. site in east Iowa City.

The congregation plans an \$800,000 structure, furnished, to be completed in late 1975. The congregation has voted to sell its quarter-block property near downtown Iowa City to The University of Iowa after the church completes removal of its present sanctuary from the lot surrounded by University property. The University's offer of \$140,000 for the cleared site was accepted by the congregation January 6.

Participants in the groundbreaking will include Dr. Ellis Butler, executive officer of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Minneapolis, of which Iowa City is a part, and church members representing groups within the congregation.

Architects for the new church are Thorson-Brom-Broshar-Snyder of Waterloo. The contractor is Burger Construction Co. of Iowa City.

A Y-shaped, three-wing structure is planned with a split level,

conforming to the southward slope of the site. One wing comprises the 350-seat sanctuary at the rear of which, at balcony level, will be space for choir and organ. Another wing will house a 250-seat fellowship hall and a kitchen. The third wing at the main floor level will house the choir room, lounge and church offices.

The lower level wings will house the library, a total of 10 classrooms for church school, toddler and crib rooms, a workshop, an apartment and a youth fellowship area.

The new church will be the third for the 134-year-old congregation in Iowa City. The congregation's decision to build on a new site was reached after more than 10 years of consideration involving prospects for continued use of the 118-year-old sanctuary on Market Street, and plans for a new structure on the downtown site. In October, 1968, the congregation rejected plans for new construction on the downtown site and subsequently moved into planning for a new church at a different site.

Also among participants in Sunday's groundbreaking beside the pastor, the Rev. Jack L. Zerwas and Robert Sierk, past president of the Corporation, will be Mrs. Anita Mercer, who became a member of the First Presbyterian Church in 1914 and now holds the longest membership among those still active in the church. Other participants will be Dr. Keith Long, chairman of the building committee; Larry Bruner, president of the church corporation; Mrs. Pat Schnack, mem-

ber of the Board of Deacons; Dr. Duane Thompson, member of the Christian Education Committee; Dr. Loraine Frost, representing the Music program; Lerna May and Jerry Moyers, representing children and youth of the church, and Mrs. Sharon Raffensperger, president of the Women's Association.

There is one other Presbyterian congregation in Iowa City, St. Andrew, formed in the late 1950s. The church is in University Heights in west Iowa City.

3/27/74