

Local Christian Scientist Reading Room celebrates its 100th anniversary

BY KRISTEN M. HAINS
Special to the Record Eagle

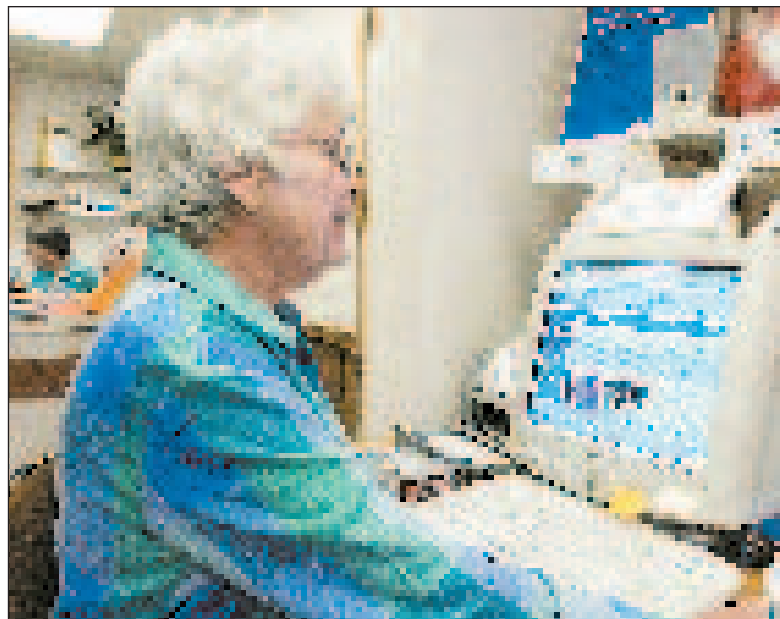
Nestled along historic Sixth Street, amidst houses that were built during the founding days of Traverse City, you will find the First Church of Christ Scientist.

A church whose history locally dates back to the late 1800s, the Church of Christ Scientists are a group passionate about their beliefs and dedicated to sharing their message through their church and reading room.

In Traverse City, the first group of Christian Scientists started holding services in 1889. Meetings were held in private homes until 1893 when they were conducted in the City Opera House, Montague Hall and the Masonic Building. In 1941 the Ebner building on State Street was completed and a part of its second floor was planned for church and reading room use. Services were held there until 1942.

In 1941 ground was broken on the church's present home at 330 Sixth Street. The first service was held there in January 1942.

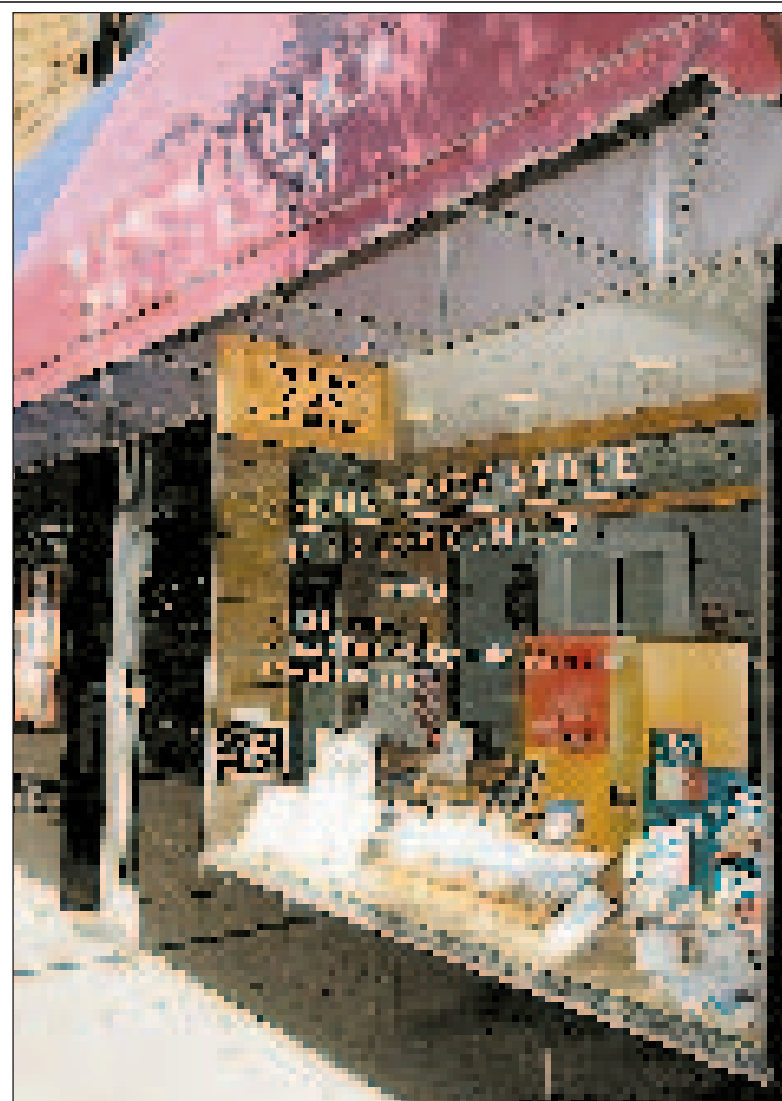
Christian Science believes in the healing of physical disease as well as sin by spiritual means alone, without the intervention of doctors or the medical world. Christian Scientists are taught that through prayer they have the capability to



heal these physical and spiritual ailments, in the same way Jesus taught and practiced.

According to Sue Schmidt, a

long-time member of the church, many people have the misconception that Christian Scientists are "those funny



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

Clockwise from top left: Sue Schmidt studies daily readings online; she also manages Traverse City's Christian Scientist Reading Room; Christian Scientist readings come from the King James version of the Bible and founder Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures."

people who don't go to doctors."

And while there is truth in the fact that Christian Scientists rely on their faith for healing, it goes far deeper than that.

"It's more than just positive thinking," Schmidt explained. "It's grounded in God's perfect creation and us being a reflection or transparency for it."

"We're reflecting his health, his harmony and his peace," she added.

One name you'll hear frequently in the Christian Science Church is that of Mary Baker Eddy. Eddy not only was the founder of Christian Science, but she also established the first church in 1879 in Boston and to this day her writings in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" and the Bible are the basis for the Christian Science religion.

The beliefs of Christian Scientists are clearly defined in Mary Baker Eddy's book. In answer to the question, "what is the scientific statement of being?" the book explains, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."

One aspect that sets Christian Science services apart from other religions is that there is no minister. Every three years the church members elect two members of the church to serve as readers.

The "First Reader" is respon-

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