No. 1



Welcome to the first installment of our 2013 bi-centennial chronicle of facts, foibles, trivia and fun! New installments will be published in our Sunday worship bulletins every week of this year, so be sure to collect them all. There will be a test at the end of the course. (only kidding!) Well, what are we waiting for? Let's get started.

Question ~ Who was the pastor of our church seventy-five years ago when the congregation celebrated its 125^{th} anniversary?

Answer ~ Dr. S. Wilmer Beitler. He served First Presbyterian Church from 1923 to 1942. For the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary in 1938, he wrote a history of the church entitled "Through Succeeding Years: A History of the First Presbyterian Church, Butler, Pennsylvania, 1813-1938." There are still a few copies of that book circulating within our congregation, and it is also available for

your perusal in the church library (a book of 142 pages handsomely-bound with a brown and gold embossed cover.) In case you hadn't noticed, a framed portrait of Dr. Beitler hangs in our Church Library, across the hall from the Ladies' Lounge.

Question ~ When was the "Sarver Wing" built and dedicated? Prior to its erection, where were the Church Office and the Pastor's Study located? **Answer** ~ The Pastor's Study occupied what is the Ladies' Lounge today, and the Church Office was located across the hall in the present Library. Both rooms suffered extensive damage in a fire which ravaged the building on Sunday, December 11, 1932. The suspected cause was an overheated furnace pipe or faulty wiring. Dr. Beitler's Study was swept away when part of the ceiling collapsed. His valuable books shelved on cases lining his study were almost completely destroyed. He said, "My library can't be replaced. And the other things I lost represented a lifetime of work. They were gathered from the four corners of the earth." Above the study in the sanctuary, pews were blistered, stained glass windows cracked, pulpit furnishings were ruined, a piano wrecked, and the organ warped. Estimated loss exceeded \$40,000 in 1932 dollars.

For many years the congregation had hoped to erect a building to meet increasing demands of the Christian Education program. But the lean years of the Great Depression intervened. Finally in 1938, by the providence of God, Mr. A. H. Sarver, for whom First Church had been his old home church, provided funds to build what was called the "Sarver Memorial Church House." It was dedicated to the memory of his wife, Ottie Pillow Sarver, and his daughter, Eleanor Sarver Allen, on December 15, 1940. Dr. Beitler conducted the service, and A. H. Sarver was present.

In addition to Christian Education classrooms, rooms were provided for the Pastor's Study and the Secretary's Office. The Fellowship Hall, with its stage, its recreational facilities, and its spacious kitchen, was described as "splendid." G. Edwin Howard, Jr., who is well remembered by many of today's members, was the Supervising Architect. The construction started on February 22, 1940. The building was described as resting on "solid rock," reminiscent of Jesus' story of the man who chose to build his house, not on sand, but on rock. The cost was \$86,000 and Sarver gave \$50,000 in hand for its construction, with the balance being met from additional gifts and bequests.

No. 2



Question ~ Who is the man pictured here?

<u>Hint</u>: he was a member of First Presbyterian and a prominent leader, but not a pastor.

<u>Another Hint</u>: Born: December 10, 1784 in Edinburgh, Scotland

Died: December 14, 1868 in New York City

<u>Yet Another Hint</u>: He was once married to Amelia, the daughter of the first pastor of our church, the Rev. John McPherrin.

Answer ~ Walter Lowrie.

Walter immigrated to the United States in 1792 with his parents, who settled in Huntingdon County, Pa. before moving to what was to become Allegheny Township in the northern part of Butler County (near Scrubgrass Presbyterian Church). They were among the area's earliest settlers.

His parents being devout Presbyterians, Walter was carefully trained in that faith, and at an early age entered upon a course of study with the ministry in view, pursuing the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages under the tutelage of the Rev. John McPherrin, pastor of Concord Presbyterian Church. In 1807, Mr. Lowrie began teaching in Butler and soon afterward was appointed clerk in the Commissioner's office. He was later elected a member of the Board, and also filled the office of Justice of the Peace.

> <u>Much more</u> will be written about Walter Lowrie in the weeks to come.

Question \sim What minister's daughter served as Organist here at our church?

Answer ~ Sara Beitler

Question ~ Name the two professional *magicians* who were once members of Covenant.

Answer ~ John Krisco and his daughter, Patty

Question \sim Where was the "secret staircase" entry to the old choir loft?

Answer \sim at the front of the chancel under the organ pipes on the right (east side), facing front.

Question \sim What famous President of the United States once used the "secret staircase" to enter the church?

Answer \sim Trick question. The answer is "none." You didn't fall for that, really, did you?

Question \sim When was the sanctuary remodeled to have a single center aisle?

Answer ~ 1947/1948



Question \sim When did the Covenant Youth Bell Choir play along with the Butler Symphony Orchestra?

Answer ~ Not a trick question! The young people in the bell choir were on the program with the symphony in December 1958.

Help us on our journey back along Memory Lane... write a few questions (with answers, of course) and we'll publish them soon. Call the church office or email us: <u>covenantupchurch@aol.com</u>

No. 3



A Stop on the Underground Railroad

It was noted in church planning and program documents in the early 1950's that our church (First Presbyterian) was one of the few racially integrated churches in the area at that time.

Our congregation's commitment to racial justice has a long history. Tradition has it that the church was a stop on the *Underground Railroad*. The Rev. Loyal Young, (pastor from 1833 to 1868) and

church members were thought to have hidden runaway slaves in their homes as well as the basement crawl space under the sanctuary, until it was safe for the fugitives to travel to the next station on their way to Erie and then to Canada.

No written records were kept of these activities, of course, so First Presbyterian was never mentioned in county histories or recorded as having participated in this effort to give passage to those who were seeking to be free. Once, when Loyal Young was discovered helping a family of runaway slaves, he said to his son Hall, "If you ever say a word about what you have seen to anybody, even your own brothers, you will put us all in great danger. Shut all this tight in your own heart and never whisper a word of it."

Challenge ~ Read the activities printed on the reverse side, then try to guess what year (or decade) these things happened. The answer will be given next Sunday. Remember... *Patience* is one of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22 \odot

When Did This Happen?

- Our World Mission Map in the Board Room was painted by Elder E. Bertrum Shaffer, assisted by Stephen and Andy Tamaska and Elder Emil Rosenzweig.
- Kenneth Neill, Richard Roe and Rodney Shoaff are serving as acolytes for May.
- The Council of Churches Slow Pitch Softball League is about to get under way the week of May 26. Last year our church had to forfeit some games due to lack of players. Let us try harder to be well represented this year. If you are willing to play, please notify the church or call Harry Bassett (56-185).
- Elder Lawrence I. MacQueen leads our prayers at 7:15 this evening (Sunday) in the Assembly Room. Dr. J. Calvin Reid will bring his special message at 8 pm in the sanctuary. This is "Youth Night" with the Westminster Choir, Choraliers and Presbychoir singing, with Andy Hunt and Peter Heilman at the organ. Assisting in the service will be Mrs. G. Daniel Little, a former member of First Church Youth; and Rev. Seth P. Staples, the first son of the congregation to enter the ministry in over a generation.

Overflow facilities are ready in the Assembly Room. Babysitters will be on hand. Invite your friends. Let us make this a great spiritual upsurge in our prayers and devotion to Christ.

✤ A few of the people mentioned in the bulletin insert who were *Received Into Membership* at the 11 am service:

Virginia Heckathorne	Ruth Duffy
Thelma Mary Foringer	Joseph D. Purvis
Charles C. Burnham	Howard Irvin Roe

Note: Total Active Membership as of this date = 1,113

No. 4

As a rule, we tend to think of "history" as "what happened long ago." But of course, history is also evidenced in the headlines of each day's news. A dictionary definition of history is:



"A usually chronological record of events, as of the life or development of a people or institution, often including an explanation of or commentary on those events."

The <u>most recent historical event</u> in the life of First/Covenant Church occurred earlier this month, when on January 16, 2013 by action of Session, the "meeting room" at the east end of the 2nd floor hallway in Sarver Wing (formerly the "Senior High Room") was officially named:

The Shaffer Memorial Room In memory of E. Bertrum & Esther J. Shaffer

Bert and Esther were faithful members of Covenant Church who, having served faithfully and well here on earth, have since departed to their heavenly reward. Mr. Shaffer died on July 30, 2010; Esther died February 5, 2003. Both are fondly remembered for their love and friendship and Christian devotion.

The naming of the "Shaffer Room" is intended to honor Mr. & Mrs. Shaffer for their years of loving service to Covenant Church, as well as in gratitude for the generous bequest from the Shaffer estate. Some of Bert's paintings will be displayed in this room, along with other historical items. The room is frequently used for meetings of Session, committees and community groups.

Bert Shaffer was ordained and served several terms both as Deacon and as Elder at First/Covenant Presbyterian Church. Just a little more than a year ago, another historical event connected with the Shaffers took place here: the re-lighting of the cross on our steeple, shining each night and visible again within the city to distinguish Covenant as "the church with the lighted cross."

Excerpt from the Article published November 23, 2011 in the

Butler 💓 Eagle

Beacon in the Night – Lighted cross tops church

By Sandy Marwick, Eagle Focus Editor

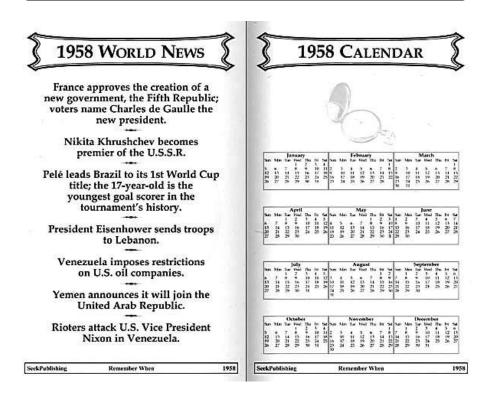
With the flick of a switch Sunday, Covenant Presbyterian Church began to shine a little more brightly. But decades of events foreshadowed the church's steeple lighting on East Jefferson Street, where a bagpiper and 30 some guests gathered for the occasion.

Of those, some attended to witness the lighting, a throwback to the 1920s when a lighted cross was mounted on the spire, which measures 178 feet from the ground. A service of worship was held in memory of E. Bertrum and Esther J. Shaffer, whose bequest to the church was used to complete the project.

During the service, visitors shared fond memories of Esther Shaffer and her husband "Bert," a longtime educator and administrator in the Butler School District and later, academic dean at Butler County Community College. Shaffer died at age 95, leaving gifts to Covenant Church, BC3 and others. Esther Shaffer, also an educator, died in 2003.

Decades-old bulletins contained the slogan "The church with the lighted cross," which inspired the idea. "We wanted to do something that would be remembered in the community," Rev. Swanson said. "That's why we chose to light the cross." Contractor Gary Neff of Oakland Township said it took three days and multiple ladders to rewire the steeple and install the halogen lighting system, which illuminates the cross at night.

No. 5



Answer to Last Week's Challenge Question ~ 1958

Do you remember last week's litany of church events... slow pitch softball league, the painting of the World Mission Map in the board room, worship leadership by Rev. Seth P. Staples, etc.? Well, all those things were listed in the worship bulletin of May 18, 1958. The pastor at the time was W. Carl Bogard, who wrote: "This is Re-dedication Sunday for our congregation. We, not the church building, are the church. So if there is to be a rededication, it must be of ourselves, not of the sanctuary, the church house, or its facilities. We, our bodies, are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let us then rededicate our bodies a 'living sacrifice, holy, acceptable in His sight, which is our spiritual worship.'"

The Horrible State the Economy

Are you fed up with the problems in our nation today? Does it seem like the economy has never been worse? Then take a few moments to read these comments (complaints) made in the 1950's. How sobering to realize it was only six decades ago!

✤ I'll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$10.00.

✤ Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before \$1,000 will only buy a used one.

✤ If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit. 20 cents a pack is ridiculous.

✤ Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging 7 cents just to mail a letter?

✤ When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 25 cents a gallon? Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage.

✤ I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying "Damn" in *Gone With the Wind*, it seems every new movie has either "hell" or "damn" in it.

✤ I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now.

✤ There is no sense going on short trips anymore for a weekend. Do you know it costs nearly \$2.00 a night to stay in a motel?

♦ No one can afford to be sick anymore! At \$15.00 a day in the hospital, it's too rich for my blood.

Pot Roast: \$.43 lbEggs, doz.: \$.61Gum Drops, 1½ lb. pkg: \$.29Potatoes, 10 lb. bag: \$.53Nylons, pair: \$1.00Coffee: \$.93 lb		
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Household Costs in 1955

No. 6

A brief introduction to **Walter Lowrie** was offered in Bi-Centennial History Page No. 2. This week we return to the man who, many years ago, was at the center of what may be arguably the "biggest scandal" in our church's past.

Walter's father, John Lowry, was a devout and loyal Christian who helped organize the Scrubgrass Presbyterian Church and was one the first elders to be elected there. His son, Walter (born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1784) came to live with his father on their farm in Allegheny Township, Butler County in 1797. Sometime later, young Walter joined Rev. McPherrin's congregation and began attending the subscription school operated by the pastor to prepare for the ordained ministry.



Now the plot thickens...

Rev. McPherrin's daughter, Amelia, and Walter Lowry fell deeply in love, however Amelia's daddy (the good reverend John) was not at all approving of the company his lovely daughter had decided to keep. Sensing no way to change McPherrin's mind, Amelia and Walter decided to get married *without* his approval and rode off on horseback to Butler, where they eloped on January 14, 1808.

Rev. McPherrin, meanwhile, was determined not to overlook such a violation of the rules of good Christian conduct and sought the censure of the newlyweds by his presbytery – an action which brought an abrupt end to Walter Lowrie's hopes of becoming an ordained pastor. It is recorded in the Minutes of the the Presbytery of Erie on August 23-24, 1808 that "charges were made by a parishioner of the Rev. John McPherrin against Walter Lowrie for carrying off Amelia McPherrin from the farm to the town of Butler, where they were married." In the historical account penned by the Rev. Dr. S. Wilmer Beitler (*Through Succeeding Years*, 1813-1938) he writes: "Some time later reconciliation took place and the irate parent lived to see his son-in-law advance to high places in civil life."

Walter ran for the Pennsylvania state legislature on the Democratic ticket and won, serving from 1812 to 1819. In 1818, he was elected by the people to be U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania, a position he held until 1825. During Senate debates, Lowrie made anti-slavery speeches advocating dissolution of the union rather than permit extension of slavery into the newly settled western territories. He was also one of the organizers of the Congressional Prayer Caucus and Congressional Temperance Society.

Senator Lowrie served under presidents James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. It is reported that he never lost any election for which he ran. As a result of his considerable political acumen, Walter was invited to run for President of the United States in 1836. Since Andrew Jackson, a Democrat, was already in office, there was little doubt Lowrie would have won. But he declined the offer, choosing instead to accept election as Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. Walter continued to serve for thirty-four years as head of the Missions Board until his death in 1868 at the age of 84.

Three of the eight children of Walter Lowrie and Amelia McPherrin gave lives of distinguished service in the ministry (*more about them will be written in a future BiCentennial Insert*). Mr. Lowrie retained his interest and involvement in First Presbyterian Church, Butler, first serving as Trustee and then, during the Reverend Loyal Young's pastorate, as a Ruling Elder (ordained August 21, 1836). Amelia died November 5, 1832 at Bedford PA, en route to Washington D.C. and lies beside her father, the Rev. John McPherrin, in North Cemetery, Butler.

Walter Lowrie's life is an inspiring record of devoted service to his God, his church, his family and his country. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

No. 7

Last Sunday's history page recalled the distinguished life and career of one of First/Covenant Presbyterian's most celebrated congregants: Walter Lowrie (son-in-law of the first pastor to service our church).

Although Walter's early goal of becoming a minister was dashed - when he "stole" the pastor's daughter \odot – he went on to do more good for the cause of Christian mission than we may ever know. Not only did Mr. Lowrie serve in the halls of government (Pennsylvania representative and senator, as well as U.S. actually Senator). he turned down an opportunity to run for president of the United States to become Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions from 1836 until his death in 1868.

Walter Lowrie is buried in a crypt at the First Presbyterian Church of New York City, while his first wife, Amelia, is buried with her father, the Rev. John McPherrin here in North Cemetery, Butler.

Walter Lowrie was twice married. His first marriage was, of course, to Amelia McPherrin in 1808. After her death, he married Mary K. Childs. The children of his first marriage to Amelia were eight in number:

John C.	Matthew S.	Mary
Eliza	Walter Macon	Jonathan R.
Reuben M.	Reuben P.	





Although every one of Walter and Amelia's children accomplished much in their lives (Jonathan, for instance, was a highly regarded attorney in Hollidaysburg), three of their sons and one daughter-in-law were of special note, for they answered God's call work for the cause of Christ in the mission field:

- The Rev. Dr. John C. Lowrie spent two years in missionary work in India, then returned to New York and was appointed assistant to his father in the office of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. On the death of his father, he succeeded him as secretary, a position he filled continuously for more than 28 years.
- The Rev. Walter M. the third son of Walter and Amelia Lowrie, was born in Butler on February 18, 1819. He served as an evangelistic missionary in China (Canton and Ningbo), 1842-1847. His mission work included Bible translation and preaching to Chinese Christians.

Walter M. drowned on August 19, 1847, during a pirate attack on a small vessel on which he was traveling from Shanghai to Ningbo. A Memorial stone was erected to him in Ningbo. (*more information about him next week*)

Reuben M. – The younger brother of Walter M. Lowrie, Reuben was inspired by his brother's martyrdom and volunteered for service in China as an evangelistic missionary in Shanghai, from 1854-1860. According to historical accounts, "he died in the field, falling victim to overwork in China."

Mrs. Reuben Lowrie (Amelia Tuttle) – While in Shanghai with her husband, Amelia also labored in the mission field doing "women's work." After his death she returned to China with her son, James, to continue her work in Peking from 1883-1907.

No. 8

In last Sunday's history page we met **Walter Macon Lowrie** and learned that he was the third son of Walter and Amelia Lowrie, born in Butler on February 18, 1819. One of the "sons of our congregation," he answered God's call to be a missionary in China (Canton and Ningbo), 1842-1847.

Walter was educated at Presbyterian schools: Jefferson College in Canonsburg, PA, and Theological Princeton Seminary. He was ordained as an evangelist in 1841 and left for China in 1842. It is fortunate that a vast collection of his letters and diaries compiled were and published by his father in 1849 – *Memoirs of the* Rev. Walter M Lowrie: Missionary to China.



In the Preface to this impressively large volume, we find:

"The Editor of this Memoir has done little more than to select and arrange the papers of his beloved son. His letters for the most part were hastily written, many of them in the confidence of Christian and endeared friendship."

When Rev. Macon arriving in Hong Kong to begin his foreign mission work, he wrote a letter to the Second Presbytery of New York, describing the situation in China as he saw it and clearly expressing his goals: "The eyes of all the world are turned to this empire at this moment, and the facts that I mention are known to all. There is then, at this time, a two-fold contest going on in China. One is conducted by the British nation, the other by the Christian world. The object of the former is to open China for commercial purposes. order that a market may be found for in manufacturers and productions, and a mine be opened from which the inhabitants of other nations may dig stores of this world's treasures, which all perish in the using. The object of the latter is to overthrow the power of Satan in this empire, to scatter the beams of Heaven's own light on the thick darkness that envelops it, to save the souls of our brethren who inhabit these ends of the earth."

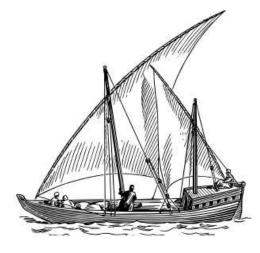
Lowrie spent his first two years at the Presbyterian mission in Macao, learning Cantonese, preaching, and traveling whenever possible. In 1845, he went to Ning-po, a port city on the southern shores of the Hangzhou Gulf of the East China Sea. On his list of things to accomplish were a Chinese-English dictionary that would enable the Chinese to study the Bible, the establishment of a Chinese printing press for publication, a translation of the New Testament into Chinese, and translations of Chinese classics into English so that the Western world might better understand China.

In August of 1847, Rev. Lowrie was attending a conference in Shanghai, just north of the Hangzhou Gulf, when he was called back to Ning-po. The land trip would have been long, so he chose the direct route back across the Gulf by boat. He was traveling with a servant and one other Chinese assistant, when about 12 miles out to sea, their boat was set upon by pirates. As the craft approached, the Walter went to the bow of the boat and waved a small American flag which he was carrying. The pirates, unimpressed, responded with gunfire and the Rev. Lowrie went below to his cabin.

When the pirates boarded ship and began to ransack his belongings, Lowrie gave them the keys to his truck and boxes, to spare them the trouble of breaking them open. (The pirates had stripped the crew of clothing but no one touched Walter.) When the pirates began tearing up the floorboards of his cabin, he moved again, returning to the deck where he began to read the Bible. At that point, the pirates concluded their foray by disabling the boat, taking away its rudder and cutting its sails. However, before they departed, a "complication arose."

In a letter to Lowrie's parents, the Rev. A.W. Loomis of the Ning-po mission diplomatically wrote, "something seemed to have awakened a fear in the minds of the pirates, lest when he [Lowrie] reached Shanghai they would be reported to the authorities."

But it wasn't "something," it was "someone," who changed the pirates' minds about leaving... and that someone was the Rev. Walter Macon Lowrie. From the bow of the ship he informed the pirates in his excellent Cantonese that he recognized some of them, and would give information against them as soon as they reached land. One can easily imagine the exchange of glances among the pirates. They briefly debated whether Lowrie should be killed where he stood, or tossed into the ocean. The ocean won and two men were dispatched to throw him overboard.



According to the account of one of the crew members who was unharmed and later told the story: "One might wonder if, in his last moments. Lowrie thought that perhaps he should have kept his mouth shut and his plans to himself. But there was so little time." As Walter struggled with the two pirates, he kicked off his shoes.

A third man joined the struggle and, at the last moment, Lowrie turned and threw his Bible to the deck, lest it fall into the sea. In a very short "walk of the plank," the Rev. Lowrie was soon overboard and floundering in the water. One pirate was given the job of keeping him away from the side of the boat with a long pole capped by an iron hook. Lowrie struggled to return to the boat, but the waves were high, and he "soon sank." The crew survived, and returned to tell the story of what had happened.

The Rev. Walter Macon Lowrie was only 28 years old at his death. He never married. Walter was memorialized at Ning-po, the Princeton Theological Seminary and Silver Bay. In 1849, his father published his sermons and letters.

Walter Lowrie's **Bible** – Bagster's edition in Hebrew, Greek and English – was returned to Ning-po, then later to the United States. It was known to be on display at Montreat Presbyterian Conference Center (North Carolina) among other historical artifacts.

Two of Walter Lowrie's brothers – John Cameron, and Reuben – also served as missionaries to foreign lands (India and China).

What follows is a sample of one (typical) letter written by young missionary Walter Macon Lowrie to his father:

Ningpo, December 31st, 1845

My Dear Father,

I have today finished a first revision of a little Tract on the Sabbath. It will be only four or five pages, and consists of Gen. i., and some remarks on the Fourth and Second Commandments; all of which I first put into such Chinese as I was able, and then submitted to my teacher for a thorough revision. He had previously read Morrison's Gen. i.; and after reading mine... I asked which he would rather use. "Oh," said he, "it don't make much difference, they are both very obscure!"

However, in writing it over, he left very little of the poor thing in the dress I had given it at first. I almost despair at times of ever getting through the labyrinth of Chinese literature. How glad I am that it was not my own choice that brought me here. To know the will of Christ is enough to keep me going.

No. 9

Was First Really First ?

As you may be aware, there are some in our community who believe that our church – First Presbyterian – was *not* actually the first church organized in Butler. They contend that Saint Andrews United

Presbyterian Church is "older."



So... let's take a look at the evidence and decide.... #1 or not?

Source: *History of Butler Co., PA* R. C. Brown Co., Publishers, 1895

The Presbyterian Church is the <u>oldest congregation</u> in <i>Butler. The records of the church actually post-date its organization 20 years and the settlement of Presbyterians here by at least 33 years.

In 1836-37 Rev. Loyal Young, acting on instructions of the Synod of Pittsburg, compiled an historical sketch of the origin and growth of the local church from its beginning to 1833. According to that account, a few years before the close of the 18th century, there were found among the settlers within the bounds of what are now called Butler and Concord congregations, a few individuals who, though ridiculed by the world, maintained the domestic and social worship of God and were members of the Presbyterian church, though not yet regularly organized as a congregation.

Among these were James McCurdy, John Lorimer, Alexander Hamilton and Andrew Christy, who met every Sabbath for the

purpose of a prayer-meeting. They met in their own dwellings, the distance between the extremes of their four homes being twelve miles. It is thought that Rev. Mr. Gwinn was the first minister of the gospel who preached to them, in

the fall of 1797. Rev. Mr. Moorehead preached here in 1798, and he was followed by Revs. Samuel Tait, William Wylie, Robert Lee, Mr. Cummins, John Boyd, Elisha McCurdy, Joseph Stockton, Mr. McClear, and perhaps some others. These men preached during the season of the "Bodily Exercise," which prevailed throughout the country, and to some extent in this place, particularly in 1803 and 1804. The gospel was now preached, for the most part, at Thorn's tent and Russell's tent -- the former within the bounds of Butler congregation, near the house where William Kearns resided (in 1837), and the latter was within the bounds of the Concord congregation.

The church of Harmony was organized in 1805, by Rev. John McPherrin, with William Neyman, Mary Neyman, Alexander and Rachel Hamilton, Robert and Sarah Grham, James and Margaret McCurdy, Robert and Prudence Thorn, James and Catherine Moore, Peter Peterson, James Roy, John Roy, and Richard Miller. The new congregation had been called Thorn Ridge congregation, then Salt Spring congregation; but at organization was called "Harmony," with house of worship five miles north of Butler. When the first sacrament was held Rev. Samuel Porter assisted Mr. McPherrin.

On April 7, 1813, Rev. John McPherrin was installed pastor of the churches of Butler and Concord by the Presbytery of Erie. He began preaching in the court-house at Butler, to the newly organized church of this borough, devoting three-fourths of his time to it and giving one-fourth to the church at Concord. In 1815, a stone meeting-house was erected, on the site of the present building, and in it the pioneer preacher held regular services until his death, February 10, 1822.

In the fall of 1814 the movement to erect a house of worship was inaugurated. On December 12, of that year, John Neyman was awarded the contract for \$1,500.

Origin of the Current Saint Andrews United Church

United Presbyterian Church -- This is the <u>second oldest church</u> <u>organization in the borough of Butler</u>. At a meeting of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of the Monongahela, held at "Yough Meeting House," June 25, 1804, a petition was presented for "supplies of gospel ordinances" from the congregation of "Butler-town." So far as any records that are extant show, this was the origin of the United Presbyterian congregation (renamed Saint Andrews following the denominational merger of 1958).

Doubtless the number represented by this petition was not large, for we learn that very few persons had settled within the bounds of Butler county up to 1803, at which time the town of Butler was laid out. In the statistical table submitted by the Presbytery on May 15, 1805, we find Deer Creek, Glade Run and Butler town all in Butler County, joined by a bracket and marked at the foot of the page to indicate, "nearly ripe for a settlement."

September 3, 1805, the Presbytery "received a petition from the congregations of Butler town and Deer Creek praving to be united and have as frequent supplies of sermons as can be afforded." This petition was granted and these two congregations declared "one united congregation." On April 9th of the following year a call was presented from Butler and Deer Creek addressed to Rev. Mungo Dick, the young licentiate who had preached for them during the previous summer. However, it was to the disadvantage of the Butler congregation that Mr. Dick had received other calls; for after due consideration he decided to accept the call to another charge. Although disappointed in securing a pastor the congregation of Butler did not become discouraged. They continued to ask and to receive "supplies of gospel ordinances." The statistical table of 1806 has Butler and Deer Creek marked, "ripe for settlement."

It was during the fall of that year, and only a few months before this petition was presented, that the first houses were built in Butler. While we cannot give the names or tell the number of these early petitioners, we may judge from this one act something of their character. They were men and women who had come from Christian homes --- some of them from neighboring counties, as Allegheny and Westmoreland, and some from Ulster and Caledonia across the sea. They were brought up under the influences of the stricter sect of the Presbyterian faith, who sought for themselves and their children not only a home and a fortune in the new land, but the privilege and blessing of the Christian religion.

They must have pressed their petition very earnestly, for the Rev. Joseph Kerr, a young man who had just been ordained, was appointed to supply the charge. On March 27, 1811, a call was laid on the table of the Presbytery for Rev. James McConnell to serve the congregations of Butler and Deer Creek; but for some reason the Butler branch of the charge did not prosecute this call. Strangely, thereafter, the records show a request "from the society of Butler praying for the dissolution of their connection with Deer Creek and the establishment of a connection with Slippery Rock." The Butler congregation with its new partner at once put forth an effort to obtain a pastoral settlement, and on April 10, 1811, a call was presented to Rev. George Buchanan. But again the expectations of this persevering society were doomed to dissapointment [sic], for on presenting the call to the candidate, he would not accept."

At length the prayers of this people were answered, and their persistent seeking rewarded. On May 17, 1819, Rev. Isaiah Niblock, a licentiate from the Presbytery of Monaghan, Ireland, presented credentials, on the credit of which he was received as a probationer under the direction of Presbytery. When he arrived in Butler two days before Christmas, he preached in the courthouse on the last Sabbath in the year. He made such an impression on them, that on May 5, 1819, a call from the united congregations of Butler and White Oak Springs for Rev. Niblock was presented and accepted. It was the 17th of November, 1819, that Mr. Niblock was ordained and installed, when for the first time the Associate Reformed Presbytery met in Butler.

The congregation was small, two elders and nine or ten members, and Butler was a village of perhaps twenty houses; the country around was thinly settled and only a small portion cleared for farming purposes. There was no church building. Services were held in the groves, private houses, and the court house.

No. 10



Gentle Reader:

If perchance you've had your fill of 19th century church history for a spell, you'll welcome this change of pace ~ for the next few weeks, we'll be sampling more recent fare (from 1938 to the present.)

What follows is not a "history" of our church; rather, it is a reminiscence gleaned from old records, bulletins, newsletters, newspaper clippings, and the like, compiled by a dedicated member of our congregation who seeks no recognition for her work.

This account draws from the memories of those for whom First Church/Covenant Church has been, and continues to be, a true spiritual home.

Dr. S. Wilmer Beitler served First Presbyterian Church in Butler from 1923 to 1942. For the onehundred and twenty-fifth anniversary in 1938, he wrote a history of the church entitled <u>Through</u> <u>Succeeding Years: First Presbyterian Church, Butler,</u> <u>Penna.</u> (That book may be perused in our church library.)

What follows is intended not to "re-write" our church history, but to "extend" Dr. Beitler's well-documented history of our congregation from then until now.

1940 The Sarver Memorial Church House

For many years the church had hoped to erect a building to meet the requirements of the Christian Education program. But the lean years of the Great Depression intervened. Then in 1938, by the providence of God, Mr. A. H. Sarver, for whom First Church had been his old home church, provided funds to build what was called the "Sarver Memorial Church House" (or sometimes, simply "the Sarver wing." It was dedicated to the memory of his wife, Ottie Pillow Sarver, and his daughter, Eleanor Sarver Allen.

In addition to Christian Education classrooms, rooms were provided for the Pastor's Study and the Secretary's Office. The Fellowship Hall, with its stage, its recreational facilities, and its kitchen, was described as "splendid." G. Edwin Howard, Jr., who is well remembered by many of today's members, was the Supervising Architect. The construction started on February 22, 1940. The building was described as resting on "solid rock," reminiscent of Jesus' story of the man who chose to build his house, not on sand, but on rock. The cost was \$86,000 and the Church House was dedicated at a service on December 15, 1940. Dr. Beitler conducted the service, and A. H. Sarver was present.

1942-1970 The Pastorate of W. Carl Bogard

Dr. Beitler was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. W. Carl Bogard, who was installed on July 30, 1942. Dr. Beitler participated in the installation service and provided the "Charge to the Congregation." At the time Carl Bogard began his ministry here, the church was still known as "First Presbyterian." Sixteen years later, however, a merger took place of the two largest Presbyterian denominations in the northern U.S. -- the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, descending from the Philadelphia presbytery of 1706, (this was the denominational affiliation of our church from its founding) ... and the United Presbyterian Church of North America, (the affiliation of our sister church across the street. Saint Andrews). In 1958 these two strands of Presbyterianism came together to form The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPC-USA).

Following the merger in 1958, it was decided to change the name of our historic "First" Church in Butler to reflect our identity within the new "United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." Several options were considered, with Rev. Bogard urging (quite strongly, it is remembered) the adoption of a name he suggested: "The Church of the Covenant." Although that exact title was *not* approved, it was decided to use the name *Covenant* and to legally change the name of "First Presbyterian Church" to "Covenant United Presbyterian Church." The change to our charter was duly executed in the courthouse in May of 1960, and since then we have been "Covenant" instead of "First" Presbyterian" of Butler.

Bogard was of Dutch ancestry and was nurtured in the Reformed Church of America, in Pella, Iowa. He transferred to the Presbyterian Church because he wanted to attend Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1936. Carl volunteered for national mission work and spent some time in Arkansas, then returned to Princeton Theological Seminary for a year of graduate study in homiletics. During his ministry at First/Covenant, Dr. Bogard chaired the presbytery's committee on Christian Education and conducted its first Young People's Conference at Grove City College. He was the first president of the Butler Council of Protestant Churches, and served as Chair of the presbytery's National Missions Committee.

Pastor Bogard and his wife Alice had five children altogether; four of them (Nicholas, Phyllis, Roger, and Carol) were born and raised during the time they lived in Butler. Carl was well regarded for his homiletics. However, desiring to devote more time to pastoral counseling and small-group life than to the pulpit, he left Covenant to became Associate Pastor of the Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, DE in 1970, where he served until 1978.

Tennis was always a passion for Carl Bogard, but especially so in later life. He competed on the courts, both as a singles player and in mixed doubles with Alice, and won numerous trophies. (At the age of 70, he began competing in the Super Senior Tennis Tournaments in Florida. He was a finalist in the National Grass Court for 80 year olds at Longwood in Boston, and was ranked 3rd nationally in the U.S. in the 85 Year Olds Division in 1994.)

During Dr. Bogard's long ministry, music and Christian Education were vital parts of church life at First/Covenant. The church's many musical groups included the Oratorio Choir, Westminster Chorale, Celtic Ringers I and II, Presbychoir, and Carol Choir. Ours was the first church locally to employ a full-time choir director/organist, Miss Gladys Diehl, a graduate of the famed Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. The *Loyalty*, *Fellowship*, *Connell*, and *Westminster* classes were well attended and promoted the enlightenment and learning of all adults. For example, among the study groups, the *Highlanders Class* was studying the philosopher Albert Camus in 1968! Not many congregations can make such a claim.

A predecessor to the *Covenant Chronicle* newsletter, called "Life at First Church" first appeared on December 5, 1945. Some financial trivia from the "Life at First Church."

- ✓ In December 1945, there were 134 pledges for 15 cents or less per week, 300 pledges for 50 cents or less per week, and 21 pledges for \$2.00 or more per week. Of 960 members, 460 did not pledge.
- ✓ The January 1947 newsletter reported per member giving during 1945-46 was \$30.46, slightly below the denominational average of \$31.76.

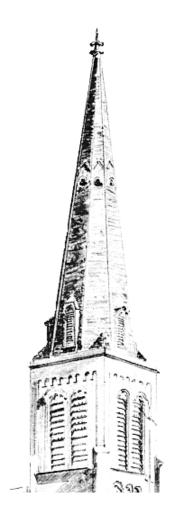
<u>Note:</u> Our congregation's reported average contribution per member in 2011 was \$2,246 – significantly higher than the 2011 average for all PC(USA) congregations, which was \$ 1,169.94.

- ✓ Some other historic trivia-- In 1957, the minister's salary was \$8,000
- ✓ In 1968 Covenant had two ministers, 21 ruling elders, 18 deacons, and 9 trustees
- ✓ In 1958 the reported membership of First Church was 1,113. By 1971 the membership had fallen to 966, but the salaries for the two ministers totaled \$34,966.10

The May, 1947 issue of "Life at First Church" shows a "battery of volunteer typists," (ten are pictured in a photograph) preparing letters inviting people who had indicated an interest in the church to attend worship and expect a home visit.

NEXT WEEK: Major Renovations to the Building

No. 11



1942-1970 The Pastorate of W. Carl Bogard *Continued*

PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

For some time, the church had considered the purchase of a parking lot across Jefferson Street from the church. In May, 1956 the parking lot was purchased for \$37,468. Ralph Nicholas, Chair of the Parking Lot Committee, wrote in his report, "As parking problems intensify in the future for all downtown churches, we at First Presbyterian will not wither on the vine and die, due to the vision and action of these folks" [those who donated to and worked on the project.]

Extensive renovations were undertaken to the building beginning in August, 1957. The eleven foot cross on the north chancel wall, the

communion table signifying the Last Supper, the new pews placed in parallel rows, the re-leaded and replaced stained glass windows, and the cherry red velvet carpet were among the numerous renovations in the sanctuary mentioned in a May 9, 1958 *Butler Eagle* article. A new self-operating elevator, new kitchen equipment, along with yews, rhododendrons, azaleas, and holly plantings in the church yard were among the additional improvements. A rededication service was held on Sunday, May 18, 1958. Former Pastor S. Wilmer Beitler assisted Dr. Bogard in the service.

In 1998 the Bogards moved to Willow Valley Lakes Retirement Community in Lancaster, PA. Carl died on March 5, 2010 at the age of 100. Death came peacefully to Alice Hollowell Bogard, age 91, on August 18, 2011. "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

1961-1972 The Pastorate of Samuel Jeans Phoebus

The Reverend Samuel Jeans Phoebus (Sam) was installed as Associate Pastor in Christian Education on April 7, 1961. A graduate of Greenville College, Illinois and Biblical Seminary, New York City, he was ordained by Lackawanna Presbytery in 1950. Church camping was his specialty. He was representative to the Three Presbytery Camp Board at Westminster Highlands.

At the time of his installation at Covenant, Sam and his wife Dorothy were the parents of one son, Samuel Mark Phoebus. Their daughter Sandy was born while Sam served at Covenant. Rev. Phoebus caused quite a stir when he performed the infamous "motorcycle wedding." Following the rather unusual ceremony, the wedding, the parties rode off on their motorcycles... and of course, the story made the front page of the *Butler Eagle*.

Of interest to those who may not be aware, Sam Phoebus was very involved in the civil rights movement of the 60's, marching with Martin Luther King in Washington DC. in 1963.

During his ministry, Rev. Phoebus served----in addition to Covenant Church--- Rochester Mills, Gilgal, Plumcreek, Center in Creekside, Washington and Rayne Presbyterian. He was conferred the status of "Honorably Retired" in 1988; however, in the years to follow he launched a second career as a part-time chaplain at Torrance State Hospital and continued to be active in that endeavor until his "2nd retirement" in 2010. Shortly thereafter, he died on September 1, 2011, at age 87 and entered the company of those who comprise The Church Triumphant.

No. 12

The Reverend Robert D. Taylor, Dr. Robert A. Macoskey & "the Seekers Class"

The Reverend Robert D. (Bob) Taylor came to Covenant in 1970. He had been pastor of Mt. Jackson Presbyterian Church in the New Castle area. In an interesting coincidence, Covenant's current pastor, Jim Swanson, shares the same history of having served previously as the pastor at Mt. Jackson Church before coming to Butler.

While at Covenant, Bob and Nancy Taylor adopted their only child, Matthew.

The Rev. Robert Taylor graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and brought many skills to his pastoral ministry at Covenant, which was unfortunately a short one. Bob was a fine scholar and an accomplished theologian. After leaving Covenant in 1973, he engaged in independent theological/philosophical research and acquired skills necessary for gathering and translating research data (notetaking and language study.) He then entered Duquesne Law School in 1976. Nancy developed a home-based transcription business during his law school years.

Bob was so successful in law school that he was invited to become a professor at Duquesne Law and taught there for thirty years. Among other subjects, he taught Civil Procedure, Philosophy of Law, Comparative Law (Europe) and Law and Religion. Bob received many teaching awards during his career and in 1998 was named the Thomas W. Henderson Distinguished Professor of Legal Ethics, an endowed chair. At some point during his time at Duquesne, both Bob and Nancy converted to Roman Catholicism.

As our pastor, Bob Taylor valued education and taught the Seekers Adult Sunday School Class. He once defined Christian Education as "education for Christians." Bob was interested in Eastern religions and taught courses on these, particularly Buddhism and the Sikh religion. A great friend of Bob Taylor was Dr. Robert Macoskey, Professor of Philosophy at Slippery Rock State College (University). Dr. Macoskey was an American Baptist who had formerly taught at Crozier Theological Seminary in the Philadelphia area (Media, PA).

With Bob and Bob as teachers, the Seekers were privileged to enjoy many and varied offerings, including series topics such as Nietzsche, the origins of Christmas customs, and the Alter Project. Bob Macoskey developed a passionate concern for the environment and founded the Alter Project at Slippery Rock. Today the Macoskey Center for sustainable systems at Slippery Rock honors his memory.

Dr. Macoskey continued to participate in the Seekers and to worship at Covenant until his untimely death in 1990. His wife, Vivas, continues to attend the Seekers Class and other Covenant programs and she regularly worships here. Vivas shares Bob's passion for the environment and reminds us of the consequences of neglecting and abusing our earth.

Protecting the environment and demonstrating stewardship of God's earth have been concerns at Covenant for many years. Our church recycles glass and metal containers and strongly discourages the use of plastic and paper plates, plastic communion cups, and the like. We hope to do more.

The Seekers were later led by Dick Young, Bill Wilson, David Blewett, and Betty Anderson. Many speakers came and continue to come to the Seekers Class. From Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, we welcomed Dr. Douglas Hare, Dr. George Kehm, Dr. Samuel Calian, who served as President of the seminary and later, PTS President, Dr. William Carl. Faculty professors Stephen Tuell and Ron Tappy have been well received as recent special guests. Dr. Kang Yap Na of Westminster College is another favorite. Rev. Swanson has taught the Seekers Class and introduced us to several fine video presentations.

The Reverend Dr. Donald G. Campbell

The Reverend Frank Hainer served frequently as a preacher and pastor prior to the arrival of the Reverend Dr. Donald G. Campbell. From 1974 through 1978, the church sponsored a Korean orphan, Hon Myung Heeof the Inchon Sung Dong Orphanage.

Dr. Campbell (Don) served as pastor from 1976 until July 31, 1984. A graduate of Westminster College, Don earned a Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and a Master of Religious Education degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. Prior to coming to Covenant, he had served as pastor to churches in Easton, PA and Doylestown, PA. While serving at Covenant, he was awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. His doctoral research focused on the place of single persons in the church. Dr. Campbell represented our Presbytery at the General Assembly in Atlanta in June, 1983. This General Assembly effected the reuniting of the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches into the PC(USA).

Don and his wife Diane are the parents of three children, Caryn, Sandy, and Stephen. A signature achievement of Don's ministry was the establishment of the Covenant Cupboard. The Cupboard first opened on December 19, 1977. Don's wife, Diane, as head of the Board of Deacons, was instrumental in directing the Cupboard. Herb Enyeart was present at the first distribution of food at the Cupboard. Don Campbell realized the need for food distribution after the closing of the Pullman Plant left many out of work and in need. Since that time Jesse Hofmeister, Charlie Thompson, Les Dunmire, Orville Nicholas, Sam Peters, and David Blewett have directed the Cupboard.

A major renovation project was completed in July, 1982. Harold Kurtz and Chester Roe supervised the project which included installation of storm windows, covering Sarver Hall windows frames with aluminum, replacing the steeple slate roof with shingles and re-fabrication of a new cross for the steeple. Steps, sidewalks, and doors were repaired, lighting was improved, new heating was installed, and a new organ motor was installed. The major repairs and renovations were funded by the Wilson Purvis Fund. An access ramp for the handicapped was installed in April, 1984, financed by funds bequeathed to the church from the Millar estate.

Women have been active in the church through the years. The Women's Missionary Society was active as early as 1848. The Alice Wick Missionary Society, the Young Women's Missionary Society, the Dorcas Circle and the Eve Circle all flourished in their day. The above mentioned planning document urged more women to participate on church boards. Full participation came in 1966 when the first women elders, Alice Johnston, Margaret Ashbaugh, Muriel Thompson, and Jean Lloyd were elected. Monica Hamilton was our first and, to date, our only female pastor.

For many years, the Women's Association held bingo parties for the residents of Oakmont Home and brought Valentine candy for them. They sponsored the annual rummage sale and the annual Blanket Fund through Church World Service. Ellie Walchesky and Jeanne Schlicht participated as members of the Dorcas Circle.

Peter Gregory served as a student assistant beginning in September 1982. John Dixon served as Minister of Music during Don Campbell's pastorate until John's resignation in August, 1983. Mark Munson began his ministry as Director of Music and Education on November 26, 1983.

No. 13

In 1983, the southern-based Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) joined with the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to form a new re-united church: the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) This reconciliation ended a decades long separation which had begun during the Civil War, caused by disagreement over the ownership of slaves.





1958–1983 / UPC (USA) LOGO

1983-present / PC (USA) LOGO

Note: Although many Presbyterian Churches in the PC(USA) today continue to keep "United" in their official nomenclature, it is not really accurate. Following the reunion in 1983 the "United" is no longer part of our denominational name; therefore, we are actually "Covenant Presbyterian Church (USA)" today, even though our legal charter remains the same as it has been since 1960.

Continuing with the history of Don Campbell's pastorate...

Dr. and Mrs. Campbell both taught Synod School classes at Wilson College in Chambersburg, PA. They also taught at Westminster Highlands Camp in Emlenton. Vacation Bible schools were held regularly each summer during Don Campbell's ministry. The church newsletter, the *Covenant Chronicle*, was established during Don's time, with Roberta Pifer as its first editor.

The Reverend Milton Sage, formerly pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church in Butler, frequently worshiped at Covenant, along with his wife Mary, while he continued his ministry as a social worker and counselor.

When Don Campbell left Covenant in July of 1984, he continued to serve God in many different capacities within our denomination:

- ✓ Associate Executive Presbyter in New Brunswick Presbytery (Trenton NJ)
- ✓ Executive Presbyter for Donegal Presbytery (west of Philadelphia)
- ✓ Director of the Congregational Ministries Unit at PC(USA) General Assembly headquarters in Louisville KY
- ✓ Executive Presbyter for Mission Presbytery (San Antonio, Texas)

Rev. Campbell was conferred the status of Honorably Retired in February 2009 and now resides with his wife in Hampstead, North Carolina (Coastal Carolina Presbytery).

The Reverend Dr. Steven J. Hamilton

Dr. Steven J. (Steve) Hamilton was a musician. He graduated from Carlow College with a major in organ performance. He served as organist at Third and Sixth Presbyterian Churches in Pittsburgh before studying at Princeton Theological Seminary. After graduating with a Master of Divinity degree, he served at the Kirk in the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, near Detroit, as the Christian Education minister. In September, 1985, he was called to Covenant. Between the pastorates of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Hamilton, both of whom were awarded their doctorates from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary while serving at Covenant, the Reverend William Liebler frequently preached here.

In January, 1987 Steve arranged an agreement with East Liberty Presbyterian Church in which the organ trumpets, which were "too overwhelming" for the space at Covenant, were removed and installed there. In an even exchange Covenant was given two new ranks of pipes on the choir division, as well as the chests for the new stops. Also, as part of the transaction, work was done to re-voice other stops to make the organ more balanced. It was an excellent exchange that enhanced the quality and sound of our Möller instrument – Opus 699 (1947) III/29 1,771 pipes.

Jeff Garrison and Patrick Pettit served as student assistants during Steve's ministry. Rev. Dr. Hamilton's was a long pastorate, sixteen years, from September 1985 to September 2001. He preached his last sermon at Covenant on September 9, 2001, just two days prior to the 9-11 attacks which shocked our nation.

In his sixteen years he initiated many traditions at Covenant. Lenten and Advent organ recitals began, two of which Steve played himself. The *Service of Lessons and Carols*, based on the Cambridge University service, began in 1985 and continues today, as our beloved Christmas Eve Service. During Advent and Lent, Daily Prayer was held every weekday from 12:15 to 12:45 pm. Chapters from the Old and New Testaments were read, followed by spoken and silent prayer. At other times of the year, Weekly Prayer was held every Wednesday.

A dedicated weekly prayer group, the Prayer Cordon, was begun by Steve's wife, Monica. This prayer group still meets today. A day care center (Covenant Day Care) and a nursery school (Tender Tots) ran programs in our building during this time. Tender Tots later moved to Saint Andrews Church. Dr. Hamilton was awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on May 25, 1993. His research concerned the role of men in the church. Early in his ministry, Steve taught two Kerygma classes. *Kerygma* (meaning "*proclamation*") was a weekly class that lasted several months and covered the entire Old and New Testaments. Later Rev. Hamilton established the Pathfinders Class. That class set a record by studying the Gospel of John for three entire years. Later the Pathfinders studied the Confessions of the Presbyterian Church and the Six Great Ends of the Church. Steve's wife, Monica, began the Inquirers/New Dimension Class for younger adults in the church.

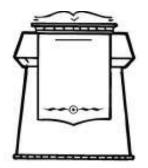
The Fellowship Hour, held every Sunday after worship, was begun during Steve's pastorate. From its modest beginnings, it has been transformed into a regular weekly time of food and fellowship sponsored by the Outreach and Fellowship Committee and enjoyed by all. Also during the time of Dr. Hamilton's ministry, Covenant's first pictorial directory was compiled.

Rev. Hamilton established a film series in which members and friends watched and then discussed outstanding films, such as the *Shawshank Redemption*, *Amistad*, *The Mission*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *Patch Adams*. Several dramas were held. The works of Dorothy Sayers were frequently performed by the congregation. And a stirring drama, the *Living Last Supper*, was presented with members of the congregation portraying Jesus and the disciples; artist Paul Means, a church member, played Leonardo DaVinci as he tried to assemble the cast as models for the painting.

Steve was a powerful preacher and a book of his sermons, "Walk with Light" was published in 1995.

Next Week's Installment: A reprint of portions of one of Dr. Hamilton's sermons preached here at Covenant.

No. 14



This week's installment features an abridged reprint of one of Dr. Steven Jackson Hamilton's sermons preached during his ministry at Covenant in the decade of 1985-1995. The complete text is available in a collection of sermons published under the title "Walk With The Light" (available in our library).

DISCOVERING YOUR TREASURES

Texts: Exodus 13:17-22, 1 John 4:7-12, Matthew 11:25-30

He didn't want to leave the cottage that particular day to go to Barred Island. I had to bribe Sam with several packs of hockey trading cards from the nearby variety store. It came to be a kind of game we played. It was good; I like seeing him happy. Also, it was important to me that he see something I had discovered there on that almost mystical island, Barred Island, the one I have spoken about from time to time. It's a place that doesn't yield its secrets without a struggle, as if it will abide the invasion of human beings, but only on its own terms and for short periods.

Yet in the end, the struggle is the island's gift to you. It demands that you enter the very rhythm of life itself. Even the approach to it is daunting -- a thin twisted footpath through forest and undergrowth whose ancient roots grab at you like traps. Coming out of this dark verdant tunnel into the light, onto the sands which the receding tides expose with unflinching punctuality, is like being birthed again. And like a newborn, we fragile cosmopolitans would perish there if forced to stay, having long ago abandoned our skill to survive too far beyond the walls of our artificially controlled environments. Crossing the bar, it's an intimidating world to enter, and bizarre in detail to our eyes which have become accustomed to an homogenized world where everything comes in one of three sizes and some favorite colors. But, on that outpost of God's creation, things come in every shape and size because life is what it is there...

Things reveal themselves slowly, powerfully, clearly, and yet so very subtly that you must train your senses to be on the alert for a revelation at any unexpected second. So it was that day Sam and I came to Barred Island. We came in search of something which had been revealed to me several days earlier when I had come to the island alone. That earlier day I walked the rocky perimeter looking for strange and beautiful shells such as I had found in other years. But something else presented itself to me by surprise. Now I wanted Sam to see it. We came and walked to the approximate spot where I believed I had seen it before, although I understood that was no guarantee, for lightning never strikes twice in exactly the same place.

The tide was higher than I had thought it might be, so we waited and talked and explored. Then we moved down to the lowest reaches of the expansive rocks which slope down disappearing into the sea. There we began our search. Sometimes our feet were soaked by surprise waves as we combed with our eyes every crevice created by the irregular surfaces of the rocks. Next we examined like prospectors the shallow caves formed by giant boulders resting on other boulders, flung there by ancient upheavals.

I was beginning to doubt our fortune, when just as before I caught glimpse of a bright color, almost iridescent orange, further down, still underwater. I knew our find was sure. Then began the pageant. "Dad, look here," Sam let out with excitement, "here is a Starfish in-between these rocks. Look at its color. Let's see if we can find more." And we did.

Starfish live where they will not be long out of the water exposed to the sun and air and predators. Sam and I came to understand that they often cling with their arms to the bottoms of rocks, only slowly, one arm at a time, coming to be right side up on the rocks below. That day we saw red and blue and purple and green and black and orange starfish of every size. And we laughed and stood in wonder and touched spirits in the joint discovery of life.

Is such an experience as this what life is all about at its deepest? I don't know of anything which can transcend it. What happened on that island was a divine revelation multifaceted in dimension. God showed so clearly His own flair for creating. No painter's palette ever held brighter colors than flashed from those starfish... God must be fantastically good and generous to offer us such astounding richness with so little cost attached.

Do you know what the word epiphany means? The dictionary definition is quite lofty. It describes an epiphany as: "a spiritual event in which the essence of a given object of manifestation appears to the subject, as in a sudden flash of recognition." What can that mean for the starfish experience? Well, perhaps, that through those amazing living creatures of red, blue, purple, green, and black, who instinctively sense how to protect themselves, we are shown that God's creation is beautiful and fashioned to survive. It was God's creatural fireworks display, an epiphany, a reminder to trust in the goodness of life.

And what of the encounter of souls Sam and I shared? Was it an epiphany too? Oh Yes. As I look back on that wondrous few moments I hear an eternal voice speaking to me through them. Of all the wonderful moments of that brief time away that experience of communion with my son, whom God has entrusted to my care for awhile, was the one which I hope I will be able to be true to throughout the future.

The truth is this - God is love. When He fashioned our souls as His children He filled them with a need to give and to receive love. He made love the deepest emotion we feel - and love that we most need. He made it the most powerful currency of human commerce. Without love our lives become bankrupt empty shells. With love, even some of the greatest privations and sufferings can be endured. When we do not love as individuals and as peoples, far more costly emotions seize the day and life is darkened with feelings of envy, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, prejudice. Without love we make war with each other, and within ourselves, and ravage and plunder the earth. God speaks to you and me through the moments when we give ourselves to each other or to noble causes which increase the presence of love in the lives of others. That's why love feels so good and hate feels so bad. One is of God and one is opposed to Him. To find and experience such transforming love do we have to go to a remote wild island amongst God's starfish? To be a part of an epiphany whose message brings us life, might we be forced to comb the shores of a refuge away from our everyday world? Perhaps yes we will be -- to begin with. I'm convinced that in a world like ours, where if we are to make it we are told to shrivel our spirits to do what it takes rather than what could bring life, we may need to seek refuge. Refuge is a place where God displays His ordering of life which will outlast and finally pass judgment on our sometimes small, and even pathetic manipulations, of things too large for us to ever really control.

We will need to come face to face with God's better truths which are more valuable than dollars and diamonds. We will need to go to any place where we can hear God Himself address us through the majesty of nature; the voice of a trusting child; in the crying need of someone whose very life would be changed by your compassionate interest; in the inner voice of your own spirit leading you to not forsake your precious soul for anything; and the sound of the waves and sight of the starfish whose futures will be set by how greatly we value their beauty and right in God's ordering of all life in this universe.

When we have been to such places, and developed our sight and hearing to sense an epiphany in the happening around us, then we will be sensitized to them as we were meant to be. Because all life is epiphanal -- a pageant of revelations of the fantastic magnificence of life.

But God does not only reveal His graceful will for creation in the wilds. He reveals them here as well, through each one of us, as we put aside our work to pay attention to those precious spirits whom God has entrusted into our care; as we offer wholeness by forgiving and forgetting the ancient and painful grudge; as we put God's will before our own priorities. "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us. " It is amazing what God will show us if we will leave the cottage, even on a bet. Why don't you try it today? Amen.

No. 15



A BRIEF HISTORY OF HYMN-SINGING

In the early days of the American colonies, the governing bodies of Presbyterians left all decisions about whether to

sing hymns or psalms up to each individual congregation. This resulted in a variety of different psalters and hymnals being used by the young congregations. Most of these collections contained words only and rarely were the tunes printed.

Early American church leaders and congregational members usually lacked a musical education. To correct this problem, singing schools were established which caused a growth in the desire for new tunes. By 1800 there were over 130 different collections of tune books in print. This meant that singers held two books, a tune book and a collection of texts. It was not until after the Civil War that most hymnals looked like the ones we use today with the text printed with the tune.

Presbyterian governing bodies resisted all efforts to form an official hymnal committee until the PCUSA General Assembly in 1819 finally granted approval. *Psalms and Hymns Adapted to the Public Worship* was first printed in 1830 and became the first official American Presbyterian hymnal in 1831. Other Presbyterian denominations continued to sing only psalms.

In 1874 *The Presbyterian Hymnal* was published by the newly reunited "Old" and "New" schools under the direction of a committee of five headed by Joseph T. Duryea.

In 1895, *The Hymnal* was published by authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. It was later revised in 1911. Then in 1933 the General Assembly authorized a new hymnal.

In 1949, representatives of the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Reformed Church in America began working together on the possibility of publishing a Psalter hymnal which would include metrical versions of the psalms plus a selection of hymns. In 1950 a committee approached the group already working and inquired about joining in the production of the new hymnal. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America also joined in the project, making it a cooperative project of five American denominations of the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition. *The Hymnbook* was published in 1955.

In 1972 *The Worshipbook: Services and Hymns* was published as a joint project of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. As the title of the book suggests, it was in two parts. *The Worshipbook - Services* was published first and was the successor to *The Book of Common Worship* (1946).

The General Assemblies of 1980 and 1983 directed that yet another new hymnal be developed "using inclusive language and sensitive to the diverse nature" of the church. A committee of 18 persons began work in April 1985 and concluded the selection process in July 1989. *The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs* was published by Westminster/John Knox Press in 1990. <u>This is the blue hymnal which we have</u> in our pews at Covenant Presbyterian Church.

As you might expect... yet another (!) new Presbyterian hymnal – *Glory To God* -- was published last year in 2012. "Presbyterians have expressed disappointment over not seeing particular favorite hymns included, but the overall feedback has been overwhelming positive," the editors have reported. One thing is certain: God's people love to sing!

No. 16



Casper Ball Remembers

It was back in 1949 or 1950, Casper can't quite remember, young Bill Winters' mother and Casper Ball's mother were talking about the boys' attending Valley Forge Military Academy. So Casper and Bill decided to go and take a look at the school. But the day before, Casper found that he couldn't go. He thinks he had broken his arm. So Bill went by himself.

Tragically, while making that trip, Bill was killed in an accident on the road. Bill's parents, Jake and Ethel Winters, were members of Covenant Church. In remembrance of their son, they decided to create the "Appointments for Worship" in what was then the Senior High Sunday School Department in the second floor hallway of Sarver Hall.

~ In memoriam ~ William Robert Winters, by his family

A plaque on the door and a photograph of young William Robert Winters can be seen in the chapel today. But many may never have known, or have forgotten the story behind the creation of this "under-utilized" part of our historic building and grounds. Over the years, the chapel has been used for weddings, for daily and weekly prayer services, Sunday School and Daily Vacation Bible School classes, and as a quiet and lovely place to pray and meditate.

The Winters family enlisted the services of Mabel Shakley, an interior designer and a member of Covenant Church, for the

project. More importantly, it was the teenager Casper Ball, then and now a life-long Methodist, whose dedication and devotion brought the idea of the memorial chapel to life.

Casper's woodworking skills were well known. He had worked with wood since he was ten years old. At Christmas time, it was decided that Casper would make pews for the chapel, which would be dedicated by Easter, just a few months away. This was no easy task. Casper called it a nightmare. He made ten pews, six feet long, and two smaller ones, four feet long, for the back of the chapel. Casper turned all the spindles, one by one. He said they were thin spindles, and he still has the pattern of each piece in his shop. He did the work at night, in his basement, and barely finished in time for the Easter dedication.

The Winters family owned a drug store on Main Street and Casper and others (e.g., Jane Hall and Nancy Moorhead) fondly remember enjoying ice cream sodas and milk shakes at their soda fountain.

Casper continued with woodworking, and taught woodshop at Slippery Rock High School for seven years, and at Deer Lakes High School for fourteen years. He later operated a lumber business.

Mr. Ball is now eighty-two years old, he still enjoys working with wood, and he remembers that tragic day, well over sixty years ago, when he lost his good friend Bill. Casper might well have lost his own life on that fateful trip, but for a broken arm, and when he had an opportunity to use his skills to memorialize his friend by fashioning the pews in Winters Chapel, he did not hesitate for a moment.

So take a walk down the hall of the second floor of Sarver Hall, look at the photograph of young Bill Winters, think of the anguish of his parents and their desire to create a memorial to their son in their church, and think of Bill's friend Casper who worked nights to finish the pews for the chapel in time for Easter. Praise God in his holy habitation... and feel the love!

No. 17



The Women of Our Church

For the past decade or two, the Presbyterian Women's Association of Covenant Church has not been as active as when our membership was much larger. This is not to suggest that our women today are not active in the work and worship of our congregation – far from it! Much the same energy, creativity and devotion still characterize the commitment of our members today. However, the "organization" has been replaced by enthusiastic volunteerism, whenever and however help is needed.

The "Women's Missionary Society" was active as early as 1848. It was in 1961 that a "Women's Association" was officially established at Covenant Church, as documented in this letter of Feb. 17, 1961 addressed to Alice Bogard from J. Campbell Brandon, Jr., the Clerk of Session:

On Wednesday evening, the Session passed the following resolution: "to authorize the establishment of a committee of twelve women (six from the Women's Society, three from the Alice Wick Society, and three unaffiliated) to study and set up a Presbyterian Women's Association in our Church." We trust this resolution will help you to have a Women's Association established by the Fall of 1961, as this has been the goal previously established. As reported in the Annual Circle Report of 1968, there were at least five active women's circles.

• Dorcas Circle. Meeting the 4th Monday at 10 a.m. at the church. Mrs. W. R. Walchesky, chair

Average attendance: 8-10 In January, valentine favors were made for Oakmont Home. They helped with cleaning the dish cupboards in church kitchens and also serving luncheon in March for the Beaver-Butler Presbytery. In July they baked cookies and assisted with the Oakmont Tea. In August the circle bought articles for Christmas Yule Bags being prepared by the Red Cross. Bandages were rolled at some meetings and Christmas stockings were filled for Warren Mental Hospital.

• **Eve Circle**. Monday of the 3rd week, 8:00 p.m. Mrs. William Beatty, chair

Meetings were held in members' homes. Average attendance is 11. They assisted with the luncheon served for the presbytery in March. Bandages were rolled at several meetings. Their biggest project came in June when they had a picnic for the children at the Rehabilitation Center on Dinnerbell Road. Cookies or money were donated for the Oakmont Tea in July. The circle hosted the Association ThankOffering Dinner in November and filled stockings in December for Warren Mental Hospital.

• Alice Wick. Meets the 4th Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. at the church. Mrs. John Dight, chair

Average attendance: 8 They also meet for sewing and have made 12 gowns and rolled 200 bandages for a leper hospital and three pneumonia jackets. Also 16 cotton print aprons and many bedpads for Oakmont. They were the recipients of a memorial bequest and gave \$100 each to Mrs. Sara E. Baker, Miss Margaret Grohman, and the Women's Association. This circle takes a "second mile offering" at each meeting to carry on with circle work. • Women's Missionary. Meets the 3rd Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at the church, with sewing the same morning from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Mrs. Richard Muntz, chair

Average attendance: 14 The circle was hostess for the February Association meeting. In April and October they sponsor rummage sales, assisted by members of other circles. These sales are highly successful and proceeds are used for scholarships, missionary work, Oakmont projects and the Association budget. The members of the circle collect stamps and coupons; made 6 dozen hospital shirts and many bedpads for Oakmont as well as 2 dozen hospital shirts for Sunnyview. They have sent good woolen clothing to Indians at Kinzua.

Other activities: helping with the Oakmont Tea, sending the *Butler Eagle* to church members who reside at Oakmont; contributing fruits, juices and jellies for Donation Day; giving to the "Sunshine Fund" and also doing something at Christmas.

• **Priscilla**. Meets the 3rd Thursday of the third full week of the month, 9:30 a.m. at the church (with a babysitter provided for those bringing small children). Mrs. John Leonard, chair

Average attendance: 14 Coffee and rolls are served from 9:30 to 9:40 a.m. This circle made Valentine favors for Oakmont in January. They assisted with cleaning the dish cupboards and served at the Beaver-Butler Presbytery luncheon in March. In April they were hostesses for the Association Family Night Dinner. The circle assisted with both rummage sales given by another circle; provided cookies and help for the Oakmont Tea; collected and mailed books to Reader's Service; collected Betty Crocker coupons; provided cookies for the UNICEF collectors; and filled stockings for Warren State Hospital.

The Bible Study for the year 1968 was on the book of Mark. The Program Study was *Encounter of the Faiths*, which called for "the responsible participation of committed men and women to put Christianity to work as God's people, and to see the world of the Muslim or Jew, the Hindu or Buddhist, the black, yellow or redskinned men with a love and understanding of need." Not all the Minutes of the Women's Meetings are easy to read. But it is probably fair to say that when you're busy sewing, baking, cleaning, studying scripture and praying... there's very little time left for penmanship. (or should that be: *penwomanship*?)

14-1912b S



The Sins of the People

Drunkenness. The first reference to intemperance in the Minutes of First (Covenant) Presbyterian Church appear in 1836. A member sent a written confession to the pastor saying "I must tell the truth. I have been under the influence of ardent spirits to a certain extent, which deprived me for a period of time from attending to my duties. I stand or fall now. I have taken up my Bible and put up a prayer to God never to use ardent spirits any more. I do not know whether I have been reported to the Session but if I have not, I should have been."

According to the *Centennial Anniversary History* published in 1913: "Many reports and cases of insobriety appear in the records. This congregation may be proud of its history along temperance lines. It has always been a pioneer in temperance work and education. The church's second pastor, Rev. John Coulter, founded the first temperance society in the county and became its president. Honorable Walter Lowrie an elder in this church, organized what was known in those days as the Congregational Temperance Society in Washington D.C." (p. 31.)

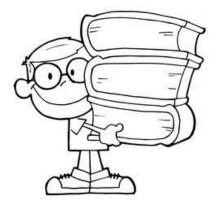
Non-Attendance. The question of non-attendance at worship services also arose in those days as in churches now. At one time the following entry was made in the Minute Book: "Be it resolved that this Session present to the Presbytery of Allegheny the following question for their decision, namely: what course should be pursued with church members who are habitually absent from the ordinances of God's House without any good reason?" It nowhere appears what answer, if any, Presbytery gave to this question.

Other Misbehaviors. As recorded, Mr. John Gilchrist appeared before Session at their request and expressed sorrow at having quarreled with and having struck William McQuistion. Session, after considering the matter, was satisfied with his acknowledgements. David Walker appeared voluntarily and stated that he feared the cause of religion would suffer because he had kept several persons at work in his brick kiln on Sabbath. The reason given was that because of a misfortune the kiln was longer in burning that expected. His explanation was accepted.

An elder who was appointed to inquire into another matter reported that a member admitted to her that she had communed with the Lutheran church, that she regretted the same and said she would not commune with that church again.

"Slander, falsehood, Sabbath breaking, intemperance and other behaviors were often subjects for frequent investigation, counsel and discipline; the decisions of Session on such were announced from the pulpit when they pertained to matters of public notoriety and affected public morals and decency." (*Centennial History*, p. 30)

No. 19



Our Story Continues...

Several Sundays ago our review of "recent congregational history" (1938 to the present) was interrupted by the exploration of a few special topics. Today we pick up where we left off – during the ministry of The Rev. Dr. Steven J. Hamilton.

Steve left Covenant in 2001 to accept a position at Princeton Theological Seminary as Director of Alumni and Church Relations. Before he departed, however, Dr. Hamilton blessed us by helping to establish the *Endowment 2000*. This campaign raised funds to enable the church to continue with its ministries into the future. The Endowment 2000 Campaign was led by Ann Morrison and, initially, Larry Sievers. A half million dollars in cash and stocks was pledged. Although the stock market fell in the dot.com bubble and in the wake of 9-11, the people of Covenant, by their generous gifts, actively demonstrated their love, faith, and confidence in the future of their church.

Steve's wife, Monica, served as Covenant's Director of Music for five and one-half years. She then attended Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree on May 23, 1995.

The Rev. Monica Hamilton served as Interim Pastor at Covenant from 2001 to 2003. During that time, Ms. Bethany Rainey served briefly as Youth Director in 2002. A major accomplishment of Monica's ministry was welcoming the Butler Montessori School to our building (first floor in Sarver Hall). The first director of the Montessori School was Mrs. Paula Mack. The Butler Montessori School is now directed by Chris Love and Joanne DeCola. It is still a very vibrant part of the Covenant scene.

The Hamiltons are the parents of one son, Sam. Sadly, Steve and Monica divorced in 2004. Monica went on to be installed as pastor of the Harlansburg Presbyterian Church (just west of Butler in Lawrence County) and now serves the Presbyterian Church of Burlington, New Jersey.

After Monica's departure, Covenant was blessed to have the pastoral services of the Rev. Dr. William A. Jamieson ("Reverend J") until our current minister, the Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson, arrived in the summer of 2004. Reverend J. retired after 28 years as pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Evans City. He preached regularly and held us together as a congregation during the time we were without an installed pastor. Bill and his wife Jennie now worship regularly at Covenant. Rev. J is frequently called upon for pulpit supply and Jennie has become a beloved member of Covenant.

Other "Honorably Retired" Presbyterian pastors whom we regularly see at worship and church gatherings are The Reverend Robert Mathias and his wife Ione, as well as The Reverend Ed Carlson, with his wife Audrey. Bob served many years at the Concord Presbyterian Church in Hooker, PA (West Sunbury); the Carlsons were formerly missionaries in Pakistan.

Music

Prior to 1947, special vocal music for the 11:00 am worship service was provided by a quartet— Edith Miller, soprano; Esther Mapes (Sarles), alto; Martin Thompson, tenor; and Lester Sarles, bass. In 1947, a volunteer congregational choir was established with Ed Book of Grove City serving as the first Covenant Choir Director. Over the years we have had many directors in our Music Program: Gladys Diehl, Harold Reichard, Jon Carlson, Herb Fowler, John Bate, John Dixon, Mark Munson, Monica Hamilton, Jeffrey Trimble, David Daugherty, Lesa Reed, Jeffrey Abbott, and Christopher Walchesky (organist) -- all have served ably and well. Covenant is blessed to have Miss Beverly Antis as our current Director of Music / Organist / Choir Director. Bev is a graduate of Westminster College; she taught music in the elementary schools of Butler for thirty-five years. At present she also serves as Staff Accompanist in the Department of Music at Slippery Rock University.

To strengthen the voices in the choir we have for some time employed trained soloists or "section leaders." Two outstanding singers who have sung with the choir are David Halin, a lyric baritone and Michael Desnoyers, a resonant bass.

David (now a member of Covenant Church) has appeared in many musical productions locally, including a recent portrayal of Lt. Cable in *South Pacific* and Seymour Krelborn in *The Little Shop of Horrors*.

Michael has sung several concerts here at Covenant while a student at Slippery Rock. One summer he studied opera in Italy, and following graduation he and his wife Stephanie moved to San Francisco, where Michael now sings with several opera companies in the Bay Area.

Secretaries

Margaret Tompsett, Rosamond Curry, and Cassie McMahon served as secretaries through the years. In 1989 Elsie Codispot was hired. She is a graduate of Butler County Community College and she has brought us in to the computer age with her secretarial and administrative skills. We hope she will serve as Covenant's secretary for many years to come. Romaine Mac Donald served as Administrative Assistant to Dr. Hamilton and Reverend Monica Hamilton from January, 1991 through 2002. Romaine has often volunteered to handle office duties when Elsie has been on vacation and is a source of great historical knowledge of our congregational life.

Treasurers

Richard Ashbaugh, Sam Smith, Joe Davidson, Jim Anderson, Mindy Gall, and now Tom Davidson have served in the exacting position of Treasurer with accuracy, skill and dedication.

Sextons

In recent decades, Clayton Isenburg, Mrs. Frank Sank, Claude Thompson, Robert Undercuffler, and Lars (Larry) Morrison have held the position of sexton. (Lars also serves as our resident bagpiper, philosopher and erstwhile author, having written a series of newsletter articles over the years which were titled *Sexton Sez*, a sampling of which will be featured in an upcoming Bicentennial History bulletin insert.) Nancy Moorhead briefly served as Church Housekeeper. All have expended much energy and devotion in the daunting task of cleaning, repairing and maintaining a huge building and expansive church yard.

Clerks of Session

Paul Hoffman, Phyllis Chappell Thoma (Phyllis Chappell when she served as Clerk), Alice Johnston, Mary Reefer, Romaine MacDonald, Laurie Hall, Nancy Hitchcock Rettig, and Pam Patterson have all served with distinction to take the minutes of each Session and Congregational meeting and to preserve these records in our official registers and rolls. Our current Clerk of Session is Lars Morrison, who continues the tradition of helping us to conduct our business "decently and in order."



On February 6, 1938 the church (First Presbyterian) received a most generous gift of \$50,000 for the building of "a church house" on the property. The donor was Mr. A. H. Sarver, of Detroit, a former member. As one who had regularly attended the Men's Bible Class taught by Mr. W. D. Brandon (in the room which is now the Church Library), and as a former trustee, he well knew the need for more classroom space. That year, in 1938, there were 888 members of the Active Roll with a very large Sunday School enrollment. Sarver's gift was a memorial to his wife, Ottie Pillow, the daughter of Captain and Mrs. Henry Pillow, early members of the church; and to Eleanor Sarver Allen, also a former member and church school attendee.

No. 20



Back To The Present!

Beginning back at History Insert No. 10, our bicentennial timetravel landed us in the *1938 to Present Period* of church life at First/Covenant Presbyterian. With this installment we complete that review (which, you will remember, was intended *not* as a *history* of our church but, rather, as a *reminiscence* gleaned from old records, bulletins, newsletters, newspaper clippings, and the like.

The author of the gospel of John wrote (21:25), concerning the life of Jesus... "But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." Indeed, all who sit in the pews today at Covenant could add to the present account literally pages and pages of memories and recollections. Our church history is by nature a living document, always growing. Here now, a review of our most current events.

The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson

After a difficult period without a minister, the people of Covenant were blessed when God called the Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson to lead us. Back in 1985 when our pulpit was vacant and we needed a minister, the Pulpit Nominating Committee received the dossier of Dr. Swanson (Pastor Jim). The Committee even traveled to Sixth Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh to hear him preach. But they soon learned shortly thereafter that he had just accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church in Sandy Lake, PA. It seems now that God had other plans back then for both Covenant and Jim. But in God's good time, Covenant and Jim met again. So on August 1, 2004, the Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson was installed as our pastor.

Jim grew up on a dairy and grain farm in central Illinois, briefly taught junior high science, completed graduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was awarded a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. While living in Madison, the Swansons were blessed with the birth of their first child, Daniel. (Two more children would follow: daughter Leah, born in 1979; and son Andrew, born in 1985.)

In 1977 the family moved to Chester County (near Philadelphia) where Jim taught and supervised student teachers at the Penn State--Delaware County. While there, Jim and Karen joined Doe Run Presbyterian Church, where Jim was ordained a Ruling Elder and also served for several years as Clerk of Session. It was in the spring of 1982 that he felt God's call to leave academics and begin study for the ministry at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Jim earned his M.Div. in June 1985 and was ordained and installed as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC (USA) on July 7, 1985 in Sandy Lake PA. Following that congregation, he served Mount Jackson Presbyterian Church (New Castle), First Lutheran Church (Paxton, Illinois), and Bell Presbyterian Church (Ellwood City) before coming to us.

Karen has been a registered nurse since 1992, when she graduated with a B.S.N. from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She recently retired in November 2012 from primary-care nursing at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Youngstown, Ohio. The Swansons are the parents of three children-- Danny, Leah, and Andrew. (Andy was married to his bride, Shari, in 2007 at Covenant.) We came to know and love Jim's father, Vern Swanson, who was a delightful part of our church family until his death in 2008. Danny participates enthusiastically in Covenant worship and is loved by all.

As a minister, Jim continues to be an educator. The bulletins are filled with thoughtful explanations of matters theological and ecclesiastical -- everything from an explanation of Christ the King Sunday to an overview of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program to information about "The Book of Common Prayer" to a reprint of part of a sermon entitled "The Liturgy of Abundance, The Myth of Scarcity," by Walter Brueggemann on the subject of poverty and abundance.

During his time at Covenant, Pastor Jim has also taught many Bible Classes—including one on Handel's "Messiah," one on the Psalms, and one on the Middle Eastern perspective of John Pilch (who is mentioned frequently in his sermons). The Rev. Merry Meloy, Pastor at Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church, and members of her church, joined us in some of these classes. More recently, the desire for continuing study prompted Nancy Rice to establish a learning and mission group called "People for Peace" which meets twice monthly; they study books such as "The Top Ten List for Christians," "To Do Justice," "The Will of God," and "To Heaven and Back." People for Peace is well attended and always stimulates lively, open discussion. Recent topics have also touched on gun violence and our Christian response.

Pastor Jim instituted "Discovery Trips" early in his ministry. We have been privileged and delighted to visit East Liberty Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Rodef Shalom Temple and its Biblical garden in Oakland, the Hindu Temple in Monroeville, and the Islamic Center in Oakland which we visited with the folks from Calvin Church in Zelienople. We also visited the McGuire Memorial Home in New Brighton (Danny's school) and Villa Maria Community Center in Villa Maria, PA where Karen once served as Director of Nursing.

Pastor Jim goes beyond the Sunday services and church activities. He fulfills Christ's command to care for the "least

among us" by providing financial and spiritual help to many in our community who are in need; he reaches out to those addicted to drugs and alcohol; he keeps in touch with those in prison. With Pastor Jim's leadership and encouragement, we have extended Christ's love to many of the LGBTQ community --welcoming them, affirming them and striving to help them feel loved and included.

Covenant through the years has served as a meeting place for the marginalized. We have provided a place for Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous to meet. Now the PFLAG group meets here. Pastor Jim extends his compassion to animals, as well. He and his family have several themselves, and he leads a Blessing of the Pets Service each Fall around the time of St. Francis Day.

Early in 2011, we learned that the church had received a generous bequest of over \$300,000 from the estate of E. Bertrum Shaffer. "Bert" died in 2010 at age 95; his wife Esther had died several years earlier in 2003. They were both gifted educators in the Butler School District. Bert was later Academic Dean at Butler County Community College. Both Bert and Esther were faithful and beloved members of Covenant Church.

As a memorial to the Shaffers, the Session decided to re-light the steeple cross. For many years, Covenant had been known as "The Church with the Lighted Cross." On November 20, 2011 in a tribute to the Shaffers, a Dedication Service was held and the steeple cross was ceremoniously lighted. On November 23, a stunning color photo of the church with the cross shining brightly, and with Pastor Jim standing in the doorway, appeared in the Butler Eagle.

On January 16, 2013 by action of Session, the "meeting room" at the east end of the 2nd floor hallway in Sarver Wing was redecorated and officially renamed *The E. Bertrum & Esther J. Shaffer Memorial Room*, in their memory. Some of Bert's original paintings are displayed in this room, along with other historical items. The room is frequently used for meetings of Session, church committees and various community groups. During Jim's pastorate, the church library was also upgraded: re-carpeted and refurnished with a gift from Linda and Tim Snyder, in memory of Linda's parents, Al and Arlene Pugno.

No. 21



According to Luke's account of the first Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2), the Holy Spirit gave birth to a church which has endured to this very day – a Christian church which has managed to survive the many fragmentations and divisions of two thousand years. This same Spirit of Unity is also a Spirit of Hope, for even as we face the awful reality of death, we are given the assurance of life eternal.

This Pentecost Sunday (the 200th our congregation has celebrated) seems a fitting time to revisit one of the sermons preached by the Rev. Robert Taylor (our pastor during the years 1970-1973). It was a sermon which he preached "In Honor of Richard Hobaugh, Jr." exploring what is means to be "a church" and offering comfort and hope to the Hobaugh family as well as to every believer who has "loved and lost" a family member, relative or friend.

Here are some of the points from Rev. Taylor's sermon:

"Christians are those who have placed themselves under the authority which is above them and they carry out their living on the basis of this higher authority... Only this submission will make a church. Only this surrender to a higher authority (above one's own selfish interests, petty desires, illusory hopes), only this will make men brothers. When you and I and your children and neighbors and officials submit ourselves to a higher authority--to the authority and voice of a Living Lord-we will truly become brothers and sisters. We will become a witnessing church demonstrating in our relationships the alteration which has taken place in our situation."

The sermon continues...

"Grace is the ability to do what before was thought impossible. Grace is to allow the One in our midst to take out of our hands what is there in order to put into our hands what we really need. Grace is none other than that from God which makes ordinary people quite extraordinary, that makes our faith which we carry into something that carries us. Grace is that from God which makes the dead into life and the life into life abundant.

"Not just grace, but also peace; i.e., the warfare that rages within us against God is over. The struggle to know God is over because in grace we realize God already knows us—God has us! ...This is a time of a multitude of voices, of claims and counterclaims; yet the good news is that there is One whom we can trust, a Leader given to us by God whom it is safe to follow. And it's not a matter of accepting His philosophy, or endorsing His program, but of simply letting Him take us -this means placing ourselves under His higher authority.

"So here it is! We are reminded that there is a Living One in the midst of us even now. (He walks these streets, He is in Selma, also in our halls of Congress). And this Living One is speaking now as He did speak in the past. And because He speaks, the situation is altered for all of us, as it was then.

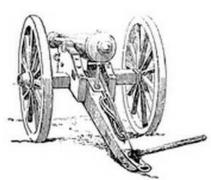
"We can learn something from the wisdom of Christian tradition. We see that it is perhaps better to be silent about God than to attempt to say what He is like... If we learn to be silent about God, perhaps this will give God a chance to speak and tell us himself who He is.

"Now having said all this, we can appreciate that of all the things that *could* be said about God, Paul says this *one thing* (in Galatians 1:1-5): God is the one 'who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.' And 'since He lives, we shall live also!'

Note: Thanks to Donna Hobaugh for sharing the typewritten copy of Rev. Taylor's sermon. Truly, Richie is not "lost" to us, but lives in Heaven and in all our hearts today, just as each of our dear departed loved ones do as well. Thanks be to God!

No. 22

From the historical account published in the "Centennial Anniversary of the Organization of First Presbyterian Church" history book (1913) written during the pastorate of the Rev. William R. Craig:



Soldiers

A notable event in the history of this church was a dinner or banquet given by the congregation in the church yard to the veterans of our community returning home from the Civil War. Many noble sons of this church heard their country's call

and served as brave soldiers in that war, among them four sons of the Rev. Dr. Loyal Young. It was a time of great rejoicing for those who returned, nevertheless saddened because some did not return. It would make a long chapter if the history of the 'Boys in Blue' who belonged to the families of this church were written.

Other "Happenings" of the late 19th Century

In 1860 Mr. Lemuel Brewster of New York offered a Bible to "any one who could repeat the answers to the questions of the Shorter Catechism at one sitting without making over four or five errors." Forty-five persons received this prize, all but four being the young people of the congregation.

As in the 19th century, we spend a lot of our time talking about the weather. But in our day, it is not typical to assume God's wrath is the cause of significant meteorological calamities. Mention is made in historical records of the church of unusually destructive frosts in the year 1859.

The minutes of the Session for June 24 refer to what was felt to be "great calamity" and revealed the theological view of that day—

The Session now recognizes the need for a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer in view of the great frosts on the mornings of the 5th and 11th which were so destructive to grain and vegetation generally and which Session views certainly as a chastisement for sin.

In 1863 at the congregational meeting a motion was made that we have but one sermon [instead of two] during the summer. *Note: until that time there was typically a morning service and an afternoon service, with "an hour's intermission for lunch and social discourse.*" It was not clear whether the custom of sermons preached at both services resumed following the summer months.

In 1893 a petition signed by the Session and circulated among the congregation was forwarded to Congress asking that Congressional funds for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago be withheld unless the management of the fair would agree to close the gates on Sundays. The gates were closed.

In 1894 new seats were installed in the sanctuary and a "reassignment of the sittings" was made. In April 1907, by vote of the congregation, the "paid pew system" then in vogue was abolished and "free pews" were adopted.

In December 1904 an order was placed with the Austin Organ Company, Hartford, Connecticut for the purchase of a pipe organ at a cost of \$4,000. That organ was installed in May 1905. Our present pipe organ was purchased from the M. P. Möller Organ Company and installed in 1947. It is Opus 699, rebuilt in 1963. Later, a new console with tonal additions was added in 1973; Lully and Adkins tonal additions in 1989; and most recently, new computerized controls installed in 1999.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the generous gift by Helen R. Ferguson which made possible the restoration and upgrade of the organ in memory of her parents—Irene and Roy C. Ferguson, and of her aunt—Georgia Jack Elliott. A service of re-dedication was conducted on Sunday, September 19, 1999 by the Rev. Dr. Steven J. Hamilton, with David C. Daugherty at the organ console.

No. 23



This week begins a series of inserts featuring personal memories of members and friends of the church.

We begin with **Orville Nicholas**, a beloved member and faithful servant of Christ, baptized here on November 3, 1929 by the Rev. Wilmer Beitler. Orville is remembered for his friendship, leadership and dedication; still a supporter of the church and a volunteer with Covenant Food Cupboard, he once directed the Cupboard and its outreach to the hungry and needy of our community. As you can tell from his recollection printed here, Orville also spent a good many years *learning* and *teaching* in our church.

He writes:

Some of my most vivid early memories are those as a Sunday School student in what is now the Assembly Room. I believe the year was 1936, when I was seven. At that time the room was partitioned off with sliding drapery curtains into either three or six Sunday School classes. My teacher that year was Mrs. Clint Ghost. At that time the side hallway along the windows did not exist, and the kitchen area was also somewhat different than it is now. (The present kitchen was updated and modernized sometime later.) I remember the old kitchen had a narrow stairway that led upstairs directly in to choir loft, so the choir members entered the sanctuary accordingly. Sometime later those stairs were removed and the kitchen area reconfigured.

As a Sunday School student I have vivid memories of the construction of Sarver Hall, the wonderful Education-Office complex. I recall standing at the hall windows and looking down into the huge excavation that would later become today's edifice. John Tack & Sons was the excavating contractor and the workers had to drill holes and dynamite the rock loose in order to remove the stone into dump trucks which drove up an earthen ramp from Franklin Street. So, you see, our church is truly "built upon a rock."

I also remember another Sunday School teacher, Jack Mellon (father of Martha Mellon Hall). He taught my brother who was in high school at the time. Later, when I was in the red brick high school, young Bob Heaton was in our group of students who came across the street for religious education at the church. Incidentally, Bob Heaton and I were classmates from 1st grade at Center Avenue School all the way through graduation from high school!

I taught Sunday School for ten years after being called by Rev. Samuel Phoebus. The first year I taught was the year of the fire which disrupted classes. That first year I taught the 7th Grade Class and our temporary location was in the present Library. Also, Bob Martin was "drafted" that year to teach 8th Grade (in the Ladies' Lounge room). Later, I moved to Fellowship Hall where large sliding curtain dividers separated the seventh, eighth and ninth grade classes.

The last four or five years I taught 6th grade classes with Rich and Donna Hobaugh. What a wonderful experience that was to have students who grew into adult members of the congregation. It is with considerable pride that I say that two of those students were my own son and daughter!

Ornille Nicholas

No. 24



This week we continue with a series of inserts featuring personal memories of members and friends of the church.

Allison (Hitchcock) Schmidt responded to a request from Bicentennial Committee member Donna Hobaugh to share some of her early memories of Covenant Church.

Allison begins: "I have enjoyed thinking back to my years at Covenant and have tried to provide some of these memories for you..." Then she makes a gentle disclaimer: "Please forgive my lack of detail, or, perhaps, inaccurate dates. I remember stories well, but not always the details." That is perfectly alright, Allison we are only too familiar with the problem whereof you speak!!

Here are the recollections of one of the "daughters of the congregation."

My family moved to Butler from Boynton Beach, Florida, in the summer of 1962. I will never forget driving up the North Main Street hill to our new home. (We lived on Muntz Avenue our first year in Butler.) What a change from the Florida landscape! Two of my very early memories are connected to Covenant. First, my family's house was just a few doors down from the Bogard family, and they were one of the first families to greet us, food in hand! They welcomed us to the neighborhood and proved to be good stewards for years to come.

Second, my family began attending church right away. We had attended and been very active in the First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, Florida. I was already missing my friends I had left behind when we went to Covenant for the first time. I remember being greeted by many children my own age and with a reception in the large room by the kitchen (the Assembly Room). I met Bumble (Patricia) Robinson, Cheri Moore, John Steenbergen , and many more who became friends throughout grade school and high school.

While it was probably standard Sunday practice – coffee and snacks following the service – I thought it wa especially to welcome us. The bottom line: I felt very much at home and welcomed by my new church family.

Here are some of the many memories I have:

- Walking all the way to the top floor for choir practice and to get our robes on the Sundays we would sing. I loved being in the choir. I think we wore a white sleeveless top over a red robe. And I remember the warm-up exercises, led by our very eager choir director. I had many friends in the choir.
- *Youth group*. One of my most vivid recollections is of the night the Beatles were scheduled to appear for the first time on the Ed Sullivan show. We had Youth Group that evening and my parents made me go, even though I begged to stay home to watch the Beatles. Much to my surprise, our youth director dismissed us all early that night so we could watch the Beatles. My prayers were answered! (If this didn't actually happen as I remember, please don't ruin a good story with the facts... I like this memory!!) Youth group was lots of fun.

• *The big map in the board room* next to the kitchen. We had confirmation classes in that room and I remember trying to make sense of the language in the Bible. That was difficult for me and Reverend Bogard was so patient. I just thought too literally at that time.

I do remember his gift for making sense of Bible stories and the ideas and ideals those stories represented. Rev. Bogard was a "formidable" man, and yet "very approachable." I recall how my parents talked about his sermons at lunch after church and I tried hard to make sense of what was said.

- *Seekers Sunday School Class.* My parents loved this class and looked forward to it for as long as I can remember. The speakers were thought-provoking and the community it represented for the participants was so significant for them.
- *Interacting with many older people*. Now, "older" is a relative term, I admit. The people I'm remembering were probably in my current age range, and I certainly don't think of myself as "older."

Anyway, I look back and really value this intergenerational interaction which I found at Covenant. Many times we had congregational dinners in the large Fellowship Hall in the basement. I remember the small stage and the big kitchen. As I sat with friends and families of all ages, I think this is one place I learned how to listen to and talk with people older than myself. I loved listening to their stories.

- *The big, old building.* I remember its massive size, and I loved exploring all parts of it from top to bottom. My friends loved to explore with me.
- *The ministers*. My father (Larry Hitchcock) chaired the search committee that invited Rev. Bob Taylor to Covenant. He was bright and exciting, especially to me, as I finished high school and entered college. It was a time when I questioned a lot about the church, and he was one to challenge "standard practice." My parents admired and respected Rev. Taylor.

Can You Guess the Year ??

Take a look at this sample section of a Sunday bulletin, and see if you can guess what year (or actual Sunday) it represents. –

Chocolate prize will be awarded for the best guess ③

SHROVE TUESDAY DINNER, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 will be hosted by the Deacons beginning at 6 p.m. This family dinner will feature Mr. Doug Bartley, who is becoming well-known throughout the area for his artistry and story-telling. Inspirational music, lights and chalk-talks will accompany each story he presents. For the first time, food for the diabetic persons will also be served. Plan to attend and bring family and friends.

NEXT SUNDAY - THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated during the morning worship service. Jesus said "I have earnestly desired to eat this provision with you before I suffer". Let us begin our observance of the Lenten Season by honoring His invitation to commune with Him.

FILL-A-PEW SUNDAY is designated for next Sunday. Please invite a friend, family member or new-comer to your neighborhood to worship God with us on the first Sunday of Lent. A special reception to welcome guests will be held immediately following worship.

COVENANT KIDS CLUB continues the Winter Session today from 5 to 7 p.m. with a special program of Mime and Puppets in which all the children will participate. Mr. David Hartle will present the program. Also, the 'Covenant Kids' will celebrate Valentine's Day by decorating cookies. Dinner is included in the activities of the day (\$1.00).

BAPTISMAL ANNOUNCEMENT - We regret that in the Baptismal announcement of Nicole Danielle Simpson in last week's bulletin we wrongly listed Mr. Timothy Simpson's name.

THE SESSION will meet on Wednesday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD of the PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN will

meet at the Church on Tuesday, February 23 at noon. If you wish to do so, please bring a brown bag lunch. Any member unable to attend is asked to contact Mrs. Ida Bean (282-6008).

No. 25

ANSWER TO LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE QUESTION:

Sunday, February 14, 1988

The historical worship bulletin featured in last week's bicentennial insert dated back twenty-five years to 1988.



This week Jim Coulter shares his memories of Sunday School at Covenant.

For those of us born in the late 1950's, Covenant was a busy place. As I matriculated through Emily Brittain Elementary School, the distinguished and popular Dr. Carl Bogard served the church as our pastor. Reverend Sam Phoebus, a kind, patient and lovable man, served as Associate Pastor. It was my impression that Reverend Phoebus was more involved with the Sunday School program. In fact, Rev. Phoebus ultimately led the Communicants Class that I participated in. Obviously, the Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church. As adults, we rely upon the pastor to lead the congregation in worship and to give each of us assistance in developing our relationship with God. I don't mean to be disrespectful; however, to the youngsters of the church between the age of 5 and 12, the pastor was not particularly important. The adult service was just too sophisticated to be meaningful to a child.

One of the most important jobs at Covenant, many would say the most important job, was that of Sunday School Teacher. As everyone in my generation will attest, Covenant Church was blessed with an absolutely amazing group of teachers.

After 45 years, memories fade. I have trouble remembering specific lessons that were taught. But, I clearly remember the teachers. Covenant was blessed with an All-Star Cast of capable, devoted, and loving adults who graciously gave their time and talents so that the next generation would learn the lifesaving lessons provided to us by the Prince of Peace.

Frankly, I am anxious about making a list of the Sunday School teachers of my generation. I am sure that I will leave out several wonderful people. But, I cannot write on this subject without thanking Richard and Donna Hobaugh, Mrs. Dorothy Hitchcock and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Goehring. All of them communicated their love for us every Sunday. They were smart, dedicated, capable and caring.

In the home of Ellen Coulter (my mother), attendance at Sunday School was mandatory and non-negotiable. If our house had been a democracy, I would have voted to stay home and watch Notre Dame football highlights. But, fortunately for me, Sunday School was one of the few absolute mandates from my Mom.

Sunday School at Covenant always involved a simple lesson based upon scripture followed by discussion between the teacher and the students. To a youngster, the teachings of Christ can be hard to grasp. If I am fortunate enough to meet our Lord in heaven, I am going to ask Him why he taught us through parables. I still struggle with parables. So, at the age of 7, the parables of Christ were downright confounding.

The Sunday School teachers of Covenant all had a close and loving relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They wanted us to share in the wonderful, lifesaving news. I vividly remember how Mr. Hobaugh would conclude class. After the discussion of the relevant parable had left most of us dazed and confused, he would close the class by giving us a concise summary of what the lesson was intended to teach us. He made the Word understandable and meaningful to a child. I hope that the reader appreciates the gravity of that statement. As he gave us his summary, his eyes sparkled. His love of God and his desire to share the good news shone through.

The Gospel of Matthew closes with the final words uttered by Christ:

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Sunday School teachers of Covenant carried out this commandment beautifully. For that, I am deeply and eternally grateful. I believe God feels the same way.

James Coulter

Does Anyone Know...

What became of our First Presbyterian Church BELL ?

Was it, perhaps, given to another congregation in Butler? Does anyone know?



The following account is taken from our 1938 church history, *Through Succeeding Years*, beginning on page 36, the section titled "Work in the Sunday School and Young People's Societies" --

When the Sabbath School was first organized is not certainly known. The Session records are silent in regard to it for many years, but we have an old Sunday School record in which we find the first entry headed as follows: "At an election held in the Presbyterian Church on Monday the 7th of March, 1836, for the purpose of selecting officers for the Sabbath School the following persons were chosen:

- For Superintendant: William Campbell, Jr. (Better known to us as William Campbell, Sr.)
- For Vice President: Rev. Loyal Young
- For Managers: Jonathan Plummer, Oliver David, J. L. Maxwell, William Beatty, John Sullivan and James Maxwell
- For Librarian: William W. Brandon

"The officers being chosen, a subscription was taken for the purpose of purchasing an additional stock of books for the use of said school, amounting to \$25.00."

There is no list of scholars recorded, but in 1836 there were eleven classes and in 1842 twelve classes, with comments here and there, "Fair day, large number in attendance."

Dr. Beitler commented (in 1938): "We are not able to tell much of the result of the Sunday School work during the early years, but within the memory of those living and who have been in close touch with the church's work it has sent a continuous stream of young people into the church... The chief regret is that it is not attended by more of the adult members of the congregation as well as by the children for its influence and usefulness in the work of the congregation and in the up-building of character and instilling in the minds of the young a knowledge of the Truth and a correct standard of true morals.

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No. 26



Veronica writes:

This past week a very nice letter was received in the church office from **Veronica (Tamaska) McConnell**, who lives in Butler. Her name may not be familiar to you at first, but as you read on you may recognize the chapter in our church history to which she belongs.

"I just read the article in the Butler Eagle about your church and send congratulations on its 200th anniversary. I have a story to relate which tells how the church has affected myself and my family in previous years and I thought it might be of interest to you. The pastor at that time was the Rev. Carl Bogard. I have many wonderful, inspiring memories of my time spent in the church. It has given me a solid Christian foundation... Thank you for this opportunity to tell my story."

Enclosed was an article titled "It's A Dream Come True," first published in 1955 in Pullman Standard's newsletter *Carbuilders*. (Veronica was just a tiny baby at the time.) A major portion of the article is reprinted below:

Bewildered, Steve and Irene Tamaska, with little six months old Veronica in their arms, pressed down the busy gangplank from the huge ocean liner. It was a warm and beautiful day on the New York City waterfront that 19th day of April in 1951. Blazing in the early morning sun, the Statue of Liberty was their first glimpse of America. In the distance, the Tamaskas could see the gigantic skyscrapers, the endless streams of cars and buses, and the maze of television aerials jutting from nearly every rooftop. A little later, at closer range, they marveled at the plentiful store displays of refrigerators, stoves, bathroom sets, automobiles and TV sets, the likes of which they had never seen. A new world had been opened to this little family.

Just eleven days later, Steve sat down to his drawing board at our Butler, Pennsylvania, plant. He was now a draftsman in the die engineering department.

Today, nearly four years after that eventful day in April, 1951, if you were to ask Steve and Irene how they feel about their adopted land, your heart would be warmed by all the good things they would have to say. "It's a dream come true," is their appraisal of their new life in this Western Pennsylvania community.

Steve Tamaska was born in Alsovadasz, Hungary, a small agricultural community noted for its grapes, flax, fruit, tobacco, and its excellent hunting. His parents, since deceased, both were teachers in the high school, his father retiring as superintendent. A brother, Andrew, a lawyer and member of the administrative gendarme, and a sister, Mary, still live there behind the Iron Curtain.

After the war, Steve decided he would remain in the French zone of Germany, rather than return to the wretched conditions and insecure political situation of his own country. Accepting a job as draftsman and illustrator in the French Military School, he was later given the position of Controller of foreign languages in fourteen displaced persons camps. At all of these camps, the DP's gained a speaking knowledge of the language of the country to which they wished to immigrate, thus enabling them to get a start in their new countries. But in all these dismal years in the DP Camps there was one "bright spot," for it was in one of the camps that he met and fell in love with a pretty little brown-eyed girl from far away Chisinaut, the capital city of Besarabia. Irene was a secretary in a DP organization and she, too, had known the terrors and privations of war and the camps. Shortly after they married in December, 1949, Steve and Irene decided to begin a new life together in a new country. On the application for immigration they indicated the United States, Canada and Australia as their first, second and third preferences.

Since his youth, Steve had always wanted to come to the U. S. His correspondence with an English Boy Scout, and his contact with American students at Heidelberg and with our armed forces deepened this longing. But the Nazi propaganda machine almost wrecked Steve's concept of our country. For example, innocent pictures of young people jitterbugging were described "as race riots." Fortunately, the kind and considerate actions of our conquering armies restored his faith in what one day was to be his new homeland.

After a year of plodding through official red tape, the young couple was OK'd for passage to the U.S.A.

Little Veronica's arrival just before their appointed sailing date delayed them another six months. But finally, after a total of nearly two years of waiting, the Tamaska family arrived in New York. They were to have made their home in New York City, but another refugee family had apparently missed the boat in Europe so the Tamaska family chose to take this family's place and thus were headed for Butler instead. They boarded the night train for Pittsburgh. With his wife and daughter safely tucked away in their berths, Steve went searching for a snack in the dining car, ending up by ordering a complete meal. It was so delicious -- his first real meal in many years! Travelling at an amazing clip by European standards, it was no time until the sleek train was braking for Pittsburgh.

The Tamaska family was met at the Pittsburgh depot, and brought to Butler by members of the First Presbyterian Church which sponsored them.

They soon were initiated to some strange sights. "What's that? A pop-up toaster?" It was the first time they had ever seen one. "How scandalous!! -- a doctor's son raking leaves for pin money?" "A minister's daughter working as a secretary?" Yes, these were indeed strange. Such things just couldn't happen in Hungary. It wasn't according to custom. But this was America, and these Americans just wouldn't be bound by such customs.

It's all behind them now: the long years of bare existence, of unbelievably poor living conditions in the DP camps; whole families forced to live in a space no larger than a Pullman berth. No plumbing or refrigeration, and little heat. A black market bleeding the people of their few possessions. (Steve once saw an old fellow yank a gold tooth out of his mouth to trade for a loaf of fresh bread.) All of these conditions are now only memories. The Tamaskas are truly happy in their new land!

Steve is taking an active interest in the community that gave him a 'new start.' He has been a guest speaker at various Butler organizations' meetings. An accomplished artist, his recent painting of a Butler scene won an honorable mention in a local art exhibition. He sings in his church choir and serves as a committeeman for Troop 15, Boy Scouts. He acts as translator for his pastor and is presently tutoring a young lady from nearby Indiana, Pennsylvania, in the German language, preparatory to her studying music on a scholarship to Munich.

The "American way of life" is more than just a phrase to the Tamaskas. It's the grocery cart loaded to the gun'ales without restrictions, it's the speaker's platform unchallenged by informers, and the church chimes unmuted by tyrants.

'Tis is truly "a dream come true."

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No. 27



Parking Lot

Parking has been (and continues to be) a problem for downtown Butler churches. At present, our lot on Jefferson Street is in need of repair, but serious consideration is being given

by the Session to the changing needs of our congregation before any major improvement is undertaken. This installment of bicentennial history takes us back to 1956 – the year when the Jefferson Street lot was purchased.

The following details were given in a Report to the Congregation on June 8, 1956 by Ralph A. Nicholas, Chair of the Parking Lot Committee

The possibility of a parking lot on this property first occurred to me about two years ago when the owner (Mr. James T. McCoullough of Kittanning, Pennsylvania) placed it in the hands of several realtors for sale at \$65,000. This price was beyond all reason, and no consideration was given to it until October 1955, when we learned that the price had been reduced.

The Butler Savings and Trust Company appraised the land at \$45,000 and was willing to lend us two-thirds of the cost of land plus improvements, to be amortized over 15 years at 5% interest. We had a meeting of the forty-five officers of the church on Sunday, December 18, 1955 authorizing the purchase of the land and on January 18, 1956 the congregation approved the purchase of the lot for \$37,000 and the building of a filling station, to help pay for the lot.

After two months' negotiation with two major oil companies, we executed a 15-year lease with Sun Oil Company for a rental of \$335 per month. The building of a filling station was purely a matter of expediency. However, we three on the committee (Dick Abrams, Chuck Snyder and myself) were not happy about it.

On April 18, with the approval of the other committee members, I went to Mr. [Ed] Humphrey and told him we did not wish to go ahead with the idea of the filling station. I asked whether he could underwrite the projected payments (\$335) and we would attempt to get sufficient returns from monthly parking fees to equal that amount. He agreed to \$100 a month, and then a week later told us that he and Mrs. Humphrey were providing in their wills that the entire balance would be paid in full by their estate. Therefore, we promptly cancelled our agreement with Sun Oil.

The Humphreys have the very sincere gratitude of the entire church as well as that of the committee. They have been very helpful as well as generous in helping us plan the whole thing.

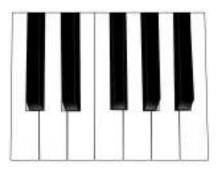
The parking lot will accommodate 52 cars. It will be graded from Jefferson Street to Birch Street, the grade being almost 10%. We were apprehensive of this grade at first, and planned instead to pave three different levels, but that would cost an additional \$13,000 for walls, with no real advantage. Our engineers all insisted that a 10% grade is negligible, and we adopted their plan. An electric gate, coin and key operated, will be installed at the entrance on Jefferson Street and another on Birch Street. The lot will be free to First Presbyterians on Sunday and available to the public during the week for 25 cents a day or monthly rental of \$6. We fully expect to make more than our monthly bank payments. Lighting will make evening parking possible.

We sold the barn and the stone on the property for \$825. Louis Hepfl is low bidder on the blacktopping. With the cost of paving both alleys, the grading, gates, lights, fence and drainage basin, the total cost will be \$52,000 - or \$1,000 a car-space. By comparison, the average for the six city municipal lots is about \$1,720 per car-space, so we have done a real service for the church in holding costs down. As parking problems intensify in the future for all downtown churches, First Presbyterian will not wither on the vine thanks to the vision and action of our leaders.

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No. 28

Recently we were delighted to receive a wonderful letter (dated June 20) from Mark Munson, former choir director and organist here at Covenant Church. He is now the Director of Choral Activities & Professor of Music Education at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Mark writes:



Dear Friends at Covenant: Congratulations on your 200th anniversary! I happened to pick up a copy of June 13' s *Butler Eagle* while on an annual family vacation at Moraine State Park and enjoyed reading the extended article about Covenant. The information about the underground railroad was especially interesting to me.

During the time that I was a young choral music teacher at Moniteau High School I served at Covenant for two and a half years as choir director and organist. In the fall of 1983, I joined the staff and enjoyed working with Don Campbell for several months before he and his family moved to New Jersey. Then, for about a year and a half, I made what was perhaps my most significant contribution to the church as I worked with a variety of guest pastors during a pastor search process.

Steve Hamilton was hired in the fall of 1985 and I continued to serve for a few months before deciding that it was time to move on. I finished my work at Moniteau several months after that and then moved to Ohio where I eventually earned my doctorate in choral conducting at the University of Cincinnati and was subsequently hired at Bowling Green State University. Realizing that my service at Covenant is at most a footnote in the long, 200-year history, I can assure you that said service is a bigger footnote in my personal history. I was experiencing significant spiritual growth between 1981 and 1985 through a variety of activities. My work at Covenant provided opportunities for me to learn and experience many things that helped me grow not only as a musician, but also as a person.

I have fond memories of serving at Covenant and of many people with whom I served there. Best wishes to all as you begin a third century!

> Sincerely yours, Mark Munson

<u>Note</u>: Peter Gregory served as a student assistant beginning in Sept. 1982; John Dixon was Minister of Music during Don Campbell's pastorate until Aug. 1983. Then, Mark Munson began on Nov. 26, 1983. As we would all agree, Mark's service here was certainly much <u>more</u> than just "a footnote in the long, 200-year history" of our church. We've been blessed with an amazing legacy of talented musicians, and we trust that this will continue for many years to come!

Also in touch with us ...

Jim Thompson, of Cape Coral, Florida, emailed the church to offer some additional information about our "organ history." The organ that preceded the Möller, Opus 7440 (installed 1947) was an Austin 2 manual 14 rank instrument, Opus 130 installed in 1905 (which Austin rebuilt to the original specs after the 1932 fire). It had gold facade pipes and was probably centered across the back of the chancel, where the big cross is now located.

Thanks to Mr. Thompson for sharing what he knows! Jim adds at the end of his email that he was: "Baptized by Carl Bogard, 1954; sang in choirs through 1979 under many directors; took organ lessons from John Bate, 1969-1971; went to Westminster Choir College 1971-1975, and graduated with a B.Mus. degree."

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Historical Events of Interest 200 Years Ago (1813)



- The first pineapples are planted in Hawaii
- Americans capture Frenchtown, in "Michigan Territory"
- The novel *Pride and Prejudice* is published in the United Kingdom
- Federal vaccination legislation is enacted
- The first U.S. raw cotton-to-cloth mill is opened in Waltham, Massachusetts
- Congress authorizes use of steamboats to transport mail
- Captain John Lawrence utters the Navy motto "Don't give up the ship"
- The first U.S. religious newspaper is published (*The Religious Remembrancer*, which was later renamed *The Christian Observer*)
- Stephen A. Douglas (U.S. congressman, senator, and presidential candidate) is born in Brandon, Vermont
- a jewelry theft in 1813 in New York City leads to the establishment of a legal argument about religious freedom in America

(see next page for details)

A landmark 1813 case is the earliest known constitutional test of freedom of religion and the "priest--penitent privilege" in American law.

Oddly enough, it came about as a consequence of a trial for petty jewelry theft escalated into an argument for religious freedom when the local priest was subpoenaed to testify what he had heard in confession.



In *People v. Philips*, lawyer William Sampson — a banished political exile from Ireland, and a Protestant — argued on behalf of the Trustees of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in New York City before the presiding judge, Mayor DeWitt Clinton. Attorney Sampson's experience of religious-based intolerance in Ireland propelled him to persuade the court that America should not look to British common law for legal precedent when dealing with Catholics, at that time a small but growing minority in America.

The *expectation of confidentiality* places a duty on clergy not to disclose information shared with them in private. It is the ethical and often legal responsibility of the pastor to safeguard congregation members from unauthorized disclosures of information given in the context of a confidential pastor-parishioner relationship. Historically, pastors have had a moral obligation to maintain the confidentiality of information given to them by congregation members. But, as a result of the precedent set 200 years ago in the case of *People v. Philips*, every pastor's obligation to maintain confidentiality is not only a moral obligation, but also a legal one as well.

(*Note*: If the counseling is "pastoral" or "spiritual" in nature, in many states the only exception for divulging information is the mandate for reporting child abuse. If the counseling is mental health counseling, lawyers can argue that the exceptions of the mental health provision would apply, and the court could compel the counselor to divulge pertinent information.)

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No. 30

This week we take a look back at the ministry of Rev. Dr. Loyal Young, the third pastor of First Presbyterian Church-Butler, who served from 1833 to 1868. His "Farewell Sermon" was printed in the Centennial History of the Church, from which the following is abstracted:

That God sent me here to take charge of this flock, I never had



serious doubts. Though many a tear have I shed over my short-coming and want of zeal in my blessed Master's service. But this one thing I can testify: that his service has not been a hard service, but it has always been attended by a present reward. Now that I am leaving you, I have the same confidence that God is ordering my steps.

Dearly Beloved members of the congregation of Butler: being no longer your Pastor, (for the Presbytery has severed the pastoral relation), permit me to give you my parting blessing, and a few last words of advice.

It has for many years been a cherished ambition with me to live and die among this people. Between eight and nine years ago, I preached a Quarter Century Sermon on the text, "I dwell among mine own people." The affection felt for you then has not abated, but increased. I had hoped, if God should spare my life, and if it should be the pleasure of this church, to continue to be your Pastor fifteen years more; and then, at the close of a 50 years pastorate, to give up my charge to another. But there may have been something wrong in this ambition.

And as I now close by ministerial labors here, I may use the language of Moses to Israel, when about to leave them: "... I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose

life, that both thou and thy seed may live." In my feeble way, have I for about 35 years set life and death before you. Thirty-five years is a short period of time. It seems but yesterday when in the vigor of youth, I came among you. I was then 27 years of age. My family consisted of myself, my wife, and an infant son. Now my beard is frosted with age; and of 8 children that God has graciously given me, the most have already gone out from the parental fireside. Large families that I found here, happily sitting together at the table or fireside of their parents, have in many instances all been scattered. The young men and women and even children of that day, are now the fathers and mothers of numerous households.

Of the 105 church *members* on the roll when I came, but 18 remain. Of the 80 *families* then on the roll, but few remain among us, and these are broken and wasted. We are hereby reminded of the transitory nature of all things below, and that the fashion of this world vanisheth away. God has been gracious to us and added some to the church every year. There have been received to the communion of the church on examination, 431 persons, averaging 12 ¹/₄ per year. We are not satisfied with this result; but God's name be praised for what has been done. God has several times graciously revived his work amongst us. In the year 1836, there was an ingathering of 26 souls. In 1843, we received 24. In 1851, there were 26. In 1853, there were 22. The greatest revival was ten years ago. In that year (1858) 56 were added to the church on examination.

Three years ago (1865) there was a precious work of grace principally among the youth of the church, and especially in the Sabbath School, 39 were added in that year on examination. We may therefore recon six seasons of special interest on the subject of religion, resulting in the conversion of nearly 200 souls, while no year has passed without hopeful conversions. Almost everyone has remained steadfast. We have lived in the greatest harmony. And even during the late season of civil strife in our country, when thousands of churches were rent with feuds, we were enabled by God's grace to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

Death has invaded every family of those connected with the congregation at my coming, except that of the Pastor; and the most of the older families, since connected with us. Your parents, and wedded companions, and brothers, and sisters, and children, have many of them passed over the Jordan before you. And on the other side they are beckoning you to come.

When I came to Butler, there were 70 of the 80 families that had both parents living. Now there are the remnants of but 15 of those 80 families living among us. We have raised up 7 ministers of the gospel, since I came, six of them Presbyterian and one Methodist; and they are now diligently engaged in the great harvest.

I would speak of one labor of my hands that has given me great satisfaction. I speak of my efforts for the Witherspoon Institute. I have had the co-operation of my friends in all my labors for it. But the work of first calling the convention, of preparing the charter, of raising the money, of starting the school, taking the position of Principal when necessary, of procuring teachers and a library, has principally devolved upon myself. I am thankful that it is rivaling the very best Institutions, and bids fair to take a still higher and more honorable position. It needs my help no longer

I have united in the bands of wedlock 203 couple, beginning with Thomas Welsh and Mary Cunningham, and closing with Wm. Sefton and Prudence Jane Thorn, on last Thursday. Of the funerals which I have attended, I have kept no accurate record. I have been with you on those mournful occasions very often; and the memory of many that have gone to the grave will be very precious to me while life shall last. Nearly 700 infants and 60 or 70 adults have received baptism from this right hand.

Since my coming to Butler, I have preached in the bounds of the congregation 2,920 times, besides delivering addresses at prayer meetings, funerals, and on other occasions. Elsewhere during that period I have preached 1,151 times; making 4,071 sermons. Add to these the 137 sermons preached before coming to this place, and it amounts to 4,208. The average has been a little more than 116 sermons each year. My ministerial work among you has been accompanied with great imperfection, wherein I have failed I ask your forgiveness, as I trust God has forgiven me.

I now see where errors might have been avoided, and a greater good accomplished. We learn by experience, and we ought to become wiser and better by what we learn. This flock which the fathers committed to me 35 years ago, I have now given back to their successors in the Presbytery, all my juniors, and to the Chief Shepherd.

This house of praver is to me, next to my own late fireside, the dearest spot on earth. A thousand sacred associations cluster around it. And you, the dear people of my charge, I cannot forget. I shall think of these faithful Elders, and these other venerable, gray headed men and women, who have been to me as fathers and mothers, as brothers and sisters. I shall think of these young fathers and mothers now trying to rear their sons and daughters for God and his church. I shall think of these Sabbath school teachers, working for Christ, these sweet singers, these dear youth and children just entering upon a busy life. And I am glad as I leave you, to believe that I have the good will of every member of this congregation, and also of this whole community, toward myself and my family. Your many, many tokens of kindness I can never forget. But I could part with you more cheerfully if I had a confidence that you are all seeking my blessed Savior. Some dark shadows fall on my heart lest I shall never meet some of you on the heavenly hills, and beside the river of life; lest you wander away.

In the language of an aged minister's wife whose family had not been broken by death, I might say, "the greatest unsolved mystery in my life, is God's goodness to this family. I can understand his gentle rebukes and merciful chastisements -- but his goodness? It is from everlasting to everlasting; he has preserved us, prospered us, led us through perplexities, showered upon us great and innumerable benefits, so unworthy and so blest; so faithless, yet so cared for."

I have remained with you till all my children, eight in number, have confessed Christ before men, and had their names recorded on the list of your members. It is sufficient to say, so far as my prospects are concerned, there is a door of usefulness opening up in West Virginia which I hope now to enter; and may I have grace to be faithful. The time for separation has now come. The fathers who gave me this flock to keep and feed, have gone over the Jordan. The flock, as first entrusted to me, have principally followed. I leave the flock much larger and stronger than I first found it, though two other churches have been organized principally from members of this flock; and hundreds more have migrated to inviting homes in the West, and to the more inviting home above, to which the Great Shepherd has called them.

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By the time our church's 125th anniversary history was recorded in the volume <u>Through Succeeding Years</u> (1938), First Church of Butler, as it was known (or more correctly: the First Presbyterian Church) had given birth to five daughter churches and one Christian mission in Butler County. As with most families, once the children are grown and on their own, each of these neighboring congregations have matured and become a strong Christian witness in their own style.

Though we may tend to think of our Covenant history as limited to the buildings and programs and pastorates which have been located here on Jefferson Street, we must acknowledge the fortitude and determination of our ancestors who took seriously the mandate of Christ to "go and make disciples..."

This week a brief history is offered of our extended church family: North Butler, East Butler, Summit, Unionville, and Second Presbyterian churches, as well as the Lyndora Mission.

THE "PLANTING" OF OTHER CHURCHES

That our church has fulfilled its mission as a leader in thought and influence for Christian living is perhaps best shown by the record of its sons and daughters who served in the ministry and the churches that have sprung from our "First Church."

NORTH BUTLER

A petition was presented to Presbytery by citizens in Donegal and North Butler Townships requesting the organization of a congregation on April 14, 1846. It began under the leadership of Rev. John Coulter, at Concord on October 6, 1847.

In 1860, after the church became somewhat disorganized, an appeal was made to Presbytery to unite with the Butler Church, which had assisted largely in its organization. This request was refused, which apparently stirred up new interest... and so North Butler continued its association with the mother church (and later with the East Butler congregation.)

The first North Butler church building was erected in 1848 on the present site purchased from Fergus Hutchison. That building, about five miles northeast of Butler, was burned before completion and a second one was completed in 1881. It is located about a mile northeast of the original location of "Thorne's Tent" on the Robert Thorne farm, near Five Points, referred to as a "preaching-point" as early as April 10, 1798, in the minutes of Redstone Presbytery.

SUMMIT CHURCH

December 20, 1858, the session appointed Mr. C. N. Boyd and Mr. Thomas Martin, elders, together with Joseph Graham to secure a location for a church for our members who lived south of Butler. In January, 1859, the committee purchased land on the Butler-Saxonburg Road, five miles south of Butler. The congregation was organized from members of the Butler and Middlesex churches and first known as Jefferson Summit. That church was dedicated June 22, 1867, and has been loyally supported by its members ever since.

UNIONVILLE CHURCH

On October 30, 1877, the Unionville Presbyterian Church was organized largely from members of the nearby Muddycreek Church, through the efforts of Rev. Samuel Williams, who served the Muddycreek congregation from 1857 to 1895. In 1870 Rev. Williams started to preach in the school house at Unionville, and later he helped the congregation to organize. He continued to serve there until his death in 1895. (A few select members left the Butler Church to help organize and finance the Unionville Church in those early days.)

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BUTLER

In December 1894, discussion about organizing another church to meet the needs of our growing congregation resulted in submitting the question to a congregational meeting. Being "loath to see any division of the congregation so closely bound together in service over a long period of years," no action was taken at that time.

The membership of First Church continued to grow from 528 in 1890 to over 700 by 1897. A committee of three, namely, D. L. Cleeland, R. A. White and J. E. Byers, M. D., was named May 12, 1897, for the purpose of organizing another new church. Quarters were secured in the Butler Y. M. C. A. and the first service held

June 6, 1897, with James D. Moffat, D.D., President of Washington & Jefferson College, officiating. Miss Alice Wick, our famous "sweet singer of spiritual songs," was put in charge of the music. According to the published history, "this movement was successful from the start."

On September 20, 1897, D. L. Cleeland was appointed to present a petition to the presbytery, signed by more than two hundred, asking for the organization of the church. A committee appointed by Presbytery met with the petitioners on October 11, 1897. From the mother church, 163 members were received, from other churches by letter 39, and by confession 27. The official name selected was the Second Presbyterian Church of Butler, with the total membership of 229.

This daughter of our church prospered, first under the pastorate of Rev. Edwin R. Worrall, 1897 to 1906, and since that time under the leadership of Rev. George C. Miller, D.D., until its membership was 1,141 in 1938. The corner-stone of the present building on the southeast corner of the Diamond (now the *Grace* @ *Calvary Lutheran Church*) was laid June 29, 1902, and the building was dedicated to God's service on its sixth anniversary, October 1903.

EAST BUTLER

As the village of East Butler developed commercially, its religious life grew. Under direction of our session, Mr. C. N. Boyd and Mr. R. D. Stevenson, elders, supervised the early work in this field.

On September 27, 1908, a committee named by Presbytery organized the East Butler Presbyterian Church with twenty-five charter members. The Second Presbyterian Church joined with our church in giving financial aid to the congregation for the erection of its church building and carrying on its work.

At the present time both the North and East Butler Presbyterian churches are pastored by the Rev. Mary Kitchen.

LYNDORA MISSION

With the advent of the Standard Steel Car Company in Butler in 1902, the town of Lyndora sprang up, composed largely of foreign speaking residents. It soon became apparent that "some organized religious work was imperative." So it was that in 1904 a Sunday School was started under the direction of Mr. C. N. Boyd, a beloved elder of First Church. Butler Presbytery realized the need of the people in Lyndora and supported the effort, employing teachers for them.

The Rev. William O. David took charge on May 5, 1912, and organized both the Sunday School and church. In 1919, Butler Presbytery authorized the building of a community house to meet the needs of the mission.

QUESTION: Does anyone know the location of this mission church, or whether any remnant remains today?

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No. 32



Last week's installment celebrated the many "daughter churches" in our area which grew from First Church plantings. The list was inclusive but not complete. Up to 1938, there were six "births" --Summit, Unionville, North and East Butler, Second Presbyterian Church and the Lyndora Mission.

Question ~ Since 1938, were any other churches in Beaver-Butler Presbytery started with the help of First Church ?

Answer ~ Yes, there were at least two. The Lyndora Mission actually led to the founding of Trinity Presbyterian Church (near the V.A. Hospital); and Faith Presbyterian Church (near Clearview Mall) is also one of our offspring !

Question ~ Which former pastor served our church longer than any other ?

Answer ~ If you guessed *W. Carl Bogard...* you're close, but you are wrong. (Remember: "Close only counts in horseshoes.") Actually, Dr. Bogard holds the record of having served second-longest (28 years). It is the *Rev. Dr. Loyal Young* who takes the honors, having led First Church for 35 years (1833-1868).

Question ~ Which pastor's son was known as "the Mushing Parson" because of his missionary work and books about Alaska during the days of the Klondike Gold Rush?

Answer ~ ? Come on, take a guess. Then turn the page...

Answer ~ S. Hall Young, D.D. (Rev. Dr. Loyal Young's son).

As a boy he heard of the tragic death of Walter Macon Lowrie at the hands of pirates in the China Sea (see Bulletin Insert no. 8). Upon completion of his seminary training, Hall was advised by the Rev. John C. Lowrie (who himself had been forced to end his missionary work in India due to ill health) to "give up any idea of mission work," feeling that the young man's constitution was not suited for it. But God had other plans.

To use Young's own words, "Just before Christmas there came to the Seminary a stubby, little, sawed-off man with grizzled beard, who put before us a new and neglected heathen country within the boundaries of our own continent." That man was Dr. Sheldon Jackson, a western pioneer who told of a new raw land in the far Northwest, dubbed "Seward's Folly" and "Uncle Sam's Icebox." According to Dr. Jackson, there were some 35,000 "heathen natives" for whose evangelization nothing whatever had been done by any Protestant denomination.

Who would have guessed that Sheldon Jackson's visit would inspire a frail divinity student to dedicate his life to the people of Alaska, and through untold hardships and discouragements to bring the gospel of hope and and life to its natives!

In 1878 Hall Young was approved by the Board of Home Missions and began his long trip to the great Northwest. His own published autobiography is a complete record of the work he did there in Alaska, translating the Bible and leading the people to faith. Ten years later, he resigned his post and returned to the States, serving in several churches, and teaching Biblical History at his alma mater, Wooster College (1888-1895.) But the Klondike gold rush in the late nineties served to lure him back to Alaska again – not for the gold which was drawing so many others, but for the golden opportunity of ministry in that booming frontier.

Dr. Young wrote a book, *The Klondike Clan*, relating many thrilling tales of his life and mission in the north country.

During his life, spanning almost 80 years, Dr. Young saw Alaska grow and prosper. Making many trips back and forth, he served as General Missionary for Alaska until his death. Hall Young is remembered as an authority on Alaskan life, as well as faithful, devoted, and tireless worker for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Ironically, after surviving the many dangers of life in the frozen North, he was killed "in the traffic of civilization by an electric car" near Buckhannon, West Virginia on Sept. 2, 1927.

As a son of the congregation, S. Hall Young was known to many from his boyhood days at Witherspoon Institute, as well as from his frequent visits back to the Butler church he loved so well. The Rev. Dr. S. Wilmer Beitler wrote (in *Through Succeeding Years*):

"A vivid scene comes to mind of [Hall Young] showing pictures of polar bears and their young to the children of the Sabbath School, with whom he was a great favorite. It was with a great thrill of joy that we as a church unveiled a bronze tablet to his memory on September 16, 1928. A headstone was set at his grave by the congregation in the spring of 1938."

Extra-Credit Assignment ~ earns a second trip to the snack table during Fellowship Hour today ③



Can you find the location in our church building where the *bronze* tablet is mounted?

(Hint ~ it's on a wall in plain sight!)

In 1868, S. Hall Young's father bade farewell to his Butler congregation after almost 35 years of service. At 60 years of age he went back to "the home of his childhood," to a charge at French Creek and Buckhannon in the West Virginia Presbytery. With no friction in the church (and dearly loved by the congregation and the town where he had reared a family of eight children), it seemed strange that he should feel called to take up new work.

Of this move, his son, S. Hall Young, later wrote: "His leaving Butler was a mistake of the gravest character." It is doubtful whether Loyal Young was ever completely satisfied until, retiring from the ministry, he returned to Butler to live in peace and wellearned rest the remainder of his life. He died in Butler in 1890, at 85 years of age. Many of the residents of Butler in that day spoke freely of the kind-hearted and benevolent pastor who came to typify to them what it meant to be a "genuine Christian." There were many stories told, as well, of the large family of children – seven sons and one daughter – trying to live within a pastor's salary, partly paid in grain and produce by the congregants.

Among Dr. Young's papers, found after his death, was an unfinished poem, his farewell message of sorts:

> Let me die working, Still tackling plans unfinished, tasks undone, Clean to its end swift may my race be run. No lagging steps, no faltering, no shirking. Let me die working.

Let me die thinking, Let me fare forth still with an open mind, Fresh secrets to unfold, new truths to find, My soul undimmed, alert, no question blinking. Let me die thinking.

Let me die laughing, No sighing o'er past sins; they are forgiven, Spilled on this earth are all the joys of Heaven. The wine of life, the cup of mirth still quaffing. Let me die laughing.

> Let me die giving . . . ? Let me die aspiring . . . ?

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No. 33

\$150 REWARD.

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Monday the 11th July, a negro man named



about 30 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; of dark color; heavy in the chest; several of his jaw teeth out; and upon his body are several old marks of the whip, one of them straight down the back. He took with him a quantity of clothing, and several hats.

The next in our bicentennial year lineup of special events will be held this Saturday, August 17, 2013. On that day we will hear and learn much about the Underground Railroad in Western Pennsylvania as we celebrate our church's role in aiding fugitive slaves on their escape to freedom in the 1860's. How did the "railroad" get its name, and how widespread was it in our area?

To begin, let's look at a few early references to the Underground Railroad. The first mention of slaves running away and receiving aid to escape dates back to George Washington. He himself was a slave owner, having inherited ten slaves from his father (at age eleven!!) By the end of Washington's life, more than 300 African-American slaves lived and labored at Mount Vernon.

In a letter dated April 12, 1786, Washington mentions a Mr. Dalby of Alexandria, Virginia, who was traveling to Philadelphia to file a lawsuit involving one of his slaves who had escaped. The slave had been aided in his effort to gain freedom by the Quakers (Society of Friends). Washington wrote in his letter that if the Quakers' practice of helping runaways did not stop, anyone visiting Philadelphia with a slave ran the risk of losing his "property."

How Did the Underground Railroad Get Its Name?

Exactly how the effort to help Southern slaves flee to freedom came to be called the "Underground Railroad" may never be known with certainty. However, it is said that in 1831 a fugitive slave by the name of Tice Davids was fleeing from Kentucky with his former master in hot pursuit. When he came to the Ohio River near Ripley (Ohio), Davids dove into the river and swam to the other shore. According to legend, Davids' owner was chasing him in a boat when he lost sight of his swimming slave. The owner thought Davids must have taken an 'underground railroad'. That comment was reported in the press, and the term has been used ever since.

A slave in 1850 didn't have many choices in life. He could stay on his master's plantation, resigning himself to a life of hard labor, often brutal physical punishment and possibly a broken family as he watched his loved ones be sold away. Not all slaves had a terrible life (house servants were generally well treated), but those who were beaten and abused had only one alternative – to try to run away. Escaping was a very uncertain prospect. The master would either hunt the slave himself or send brutal slave hunters to track him down. If caught, not only did the runaway face almost certain death, but the rest of the slaves on his plantation were often witness to his execution and were punished themselves.

And life on the run was difficult, to say the least. The fugitive had to be wary of everyone -- strangers could recognize him as a slave and turn him in, and other slaves could rat him out to curry favor with their masters. He would have to travel at night, following the North Star when the weather was clear and sleeping in hay lofts, caves, cellars, basements (and often churches) during the day.

If the runaway did make it to a Northern state, there were still perils. Plenty of people, white and black, wanted the reward money they could receive for turning him in, and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 (which was made even harsher in 1850) meant that if his master could find him, he could bring his "property" back South as a slave again -- if the master didn't kill him, that is. So a runaway's best hope was to get to Canada.

With all the danger, the odds were generally against successful escape, yet many hundreds did make it to freedom! According to at least one estimate, during the 1800s, more than 100,000 slaves would take their chances to start a new life. Author James M. McPherson states in *Battle Cry of Freedom* that several hundred slaves escaped per year throughout the mid-1800s, while the National Park Service Web site says that between 1820 and 1860, "The most frequent calculation is that around one thousand per year actually escaped." Yet, another article in the *Journal of Black Studies* estimates that between 1830 and 1860, only about 2,000 escaped using the Underground Railroad.

Historians do agree that, especially early on, most fugitives escaped from the southern border states -- Maryland, Kentucky and Virginia. Very few made it out of the Deep South, where conditions were often the most harsh, for multiple reasons. First, the journey North was much longer -- those who left usually went to Spanish-controlled Mexico or Florida. Second, when the government banned the African slave trade in 1808, slaves became much more valuable (due to a lack of supply). So in the Deep South, where the larger cotton plantations required more labor, masters were that much more inclined to control their "property." And finally, because slaves in the Deep South were farther away from the free states, they didn't have as much access to information about escape and what life was like in freedom.

A "Ride" on the Underground Railroad

Each trip was different, but most of the travel occurred during the mid-1800s, which was the height of the Underground Railroad movement. Free blacks would first send a *field agent* – often a traveling minister or doctor posing as salesperson or census-taker -- to make contact with a slave who wanted to escape.

The agent would arrange for the slave's initial escape from the plantation and then hand him off to a *conductor* for the first leg of the journey. The conductor guided the fugitive to the first *station*, usually a house along the route. Stations were typically spaced a day's journey apart. The head of the household, known as the *stationmaster*, usually had the responsibility of keeping the slave safe. Homes often had secret passages and secret compartments for hiding multiple fugitives.

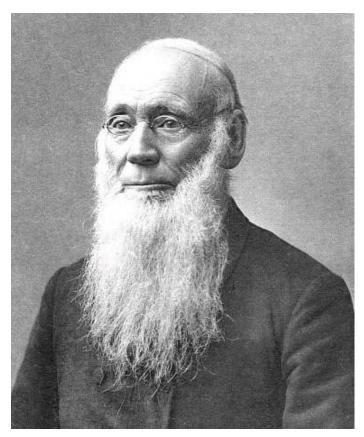
At the station, the fugitive would be fed, sheltered and often given a disguise. It was quite common to dress a runaway as a member of the opposite sex. In Wilbur H. Siebert's definitive work, "The Underground Railroad," he tells of one fugitive, disguised as an upper-class white woman, being lent a white baby to make her disguise more believable.

Once in a while, slaves were actually provided with *tickets* for travel! One conductor in Virginia named John Fairfield aided slaves escaping through Pennsylvania by first disguising them as Southern gentry, using makeup and wigs. Then he would buy them actual railroad tickets in Harpers Ferry on a train that made a regular run to Pittsburgh. From there, the fugitives would go on to Cleveland, then to Detroit, and finally to Canada and freedom.

Runaways usually didn't travel alone -- conductors typically accompanied them from one station to the next. They would have to move at night and hide during the day. While clear nights were best for traveling, rainy days were also helpful because fewer people were out. The *branches* or "lines" of the Underground Railroad were purposely convoluted and zigzagged to confuse slave hunters, but this also sometimes hindered the fugitives. There are numerous stories of runaways getting lost and going weeks out of their way or heading further south by accident.

All of these activities were funded by abolitionists known as *stockholders*, who gave generous contributions for the purchase of bribes and other expenses. It took many resources and a lot of cooperation to make the railroad run!

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Rev. Loyal Young, D. D.

In this installment, we get a glimpse of the earliest days of congregational life here at the "Presbyterian Church of Butler" by sampling portions of the "Quarter-Century Sermon" preached by Rev. Dr. Loyal Young on January 2, 1859 (marking the 25th year of his pastorate.)

A QUARTER-CENTURY SERMON.

"I DWELL AMONG MINE OWN PEOPLE." -- 2 Kings 4: 13, last clause.

THESE words of the Shunamite, expressive of contentment, I take as a motto, rather than as a text needing elucidation.

The dial's face, which slowly numbers the cycles of time, indicates to-day that another division has been passed, by the shadow of the gnomon. Another year, with its interesting reminiscences, has gone. If" 'tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours, and ask them what report they bore to heaven, and how they might have borne more welcome news," then, surely, the beginning of a new year is a suitable period for such inquiries.

On this occasion, however, let us go back beyond the particular year that has just closed, and refer to our happy relationship and communion as pastor and people for the last quarter of a century. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since, in this house, I was solemnly ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and installed as your pastor. It was to me an interesting hour. It was the consummation of long cherished hopes. It was a prize for which I had long toiled, to be made a minister of Christ. It was an answer to the prayers of pious parents, now in heaven, whose highest ambition for their son was, that he should be a minister of the Gospel.

In view of taking the charge of this church, I felt that a responsibility rested upon me to which before I had been a stranger; and ever since, this sense of responsibility has at times come home to my heart with oppressive weight. The care of souls! Who can estimate its vast importance?

After completing my engagements in North Carolina, I returned to Pennsylvania, and preached here on the first Sabbath of July, 1833, since which time I have continued my labors here without interruption, never having been absent two months at a time. Being unanimously elected by the congregation, and seeking direction from the Great Head of the Church, I had but little difficulty in making up my mind to accept the charge; nor have I ever had doubts since that it was the will of God that I should labor in this part of His vineyard. Our natural attachment, and the uniform kindness which you have ever shown me, constrain me to say in the language of my text, "*I dwell among mine own people*."

That kindness has been exhibited in many private tokens of regard and affection, and in large public donations; the last of which was your recent contribution of more than four hundred dollars, to assist in repairing my house, consumed last April by fire.

While "I dwell among mine own people," it is not the same identical people over whom I was installed twenty-five years ago. The angel of death has been among us, and that mighty impulse which is carrying our population to the Great West, has exerted its influence here. Of the seventy-eight families composing this congregation a quarter of a century ago, but thirty-nine, or just one-half, have any representatives among us now.

But, my friends, look at our pews! What a change do we see here! Where are the most of those who sat at the head [of their family pew] on the first Sabbath of January, 1834? If we number the seats as numbered now, we find on our left hand, No. 3, with the same man at the head that then occupied it. In the middle block, we have on the left, Nos. 23, 24, 29 and 30, with some of the same occupants as the head then; while in No. 31 a son has advanced to the head of the seat then occupied by his father. On the east tier we have Nos. 52, 55 and 57, with the same men at the head.

On such an occasion as today, it may be proper to go back beyond a quarter of a century, and survey this Church in its origin and progress. I shall necessarily repeat some facts stated five years ago, and published by Dr. Van Rensselair, in the Presbyterian Magazine of September, 1857. About sixty years ago, Northwestern Pennsylvania had but few inhabitants. But the glad tidings of salvation echoed among the hills and forests, as the pioneer ministers gathered the few settlers around them and proclaimed the Gospel. Those first ministers were Guinn, and Moorhead, and 'I'ait, and Wylie, and Lee, and Cummins, and Boyd, and M'Curdy, and Stockton, and M'Clean. All North-Western Pennsylvania was their missionary field; and no denomination but Presbyterians had yet an existence in this region.

Thorn's Tent was the first preaching place in this immediate neighborhood, about a mile and a half north-east of Butler, on the side of the hill, east of the Connoquenessing. Rev. John M'Pherrin came to Butler congregation, A. D. 1805. Butler Church was organized, A. D. 1813, and Mr. M'Pherrin was installed as pastor, on the 7th of April. He was pastor of the church about nine years, till his death, which occurred Feb. 10th, 1822. He was an able, faithful and laborious minister of the Gospel. He was succeeded by Rev. John Coulter, who was ordained and installed, Sept. 10th, 1823. Mr. Coulter was the esteemed pastor of the church between nine and ten years, when he resigned the charge, confining his labors to Concord and Muddy Creek, which had before been united with Butler in one pastoral charge. His communicants were more than doubled in that time.

Mr. M'Pherrin first occupied the courthouse as his place of preaching, and continued to do so for two years, when a stone church was erected a few rods.above the place where this church stands. The stone church continued till this church was ready for being occupied, in the fall of 1833. Your present pastor preached in it from July to December, when we entered this place for worship.

'The first movement toward erecting the stone church was in the year 1814. A subscription paper, now in my possession, was circulated, on which I find sums subscribed, ranging from fifty dollars (subscribed by the pastor) to a single dollar. To insure the success of the enterprise, we find an obligation, in the handwriting of Rev. John M'Pherrin, bearing date Dec. 12th, 1814, in which he and twelve others "agree to pay an equal share of whatever may be lacking to the trustees of Butler congregation, for building a meeting-house." Their names were set down .in the following order: John M'Pherrin, Wm. Neyman, James M'Curdy, John Neyman, John Gilmore, Alexander Hamilton, David M'Junkin, Robert Thorn, Wm. Beatty, Robert Scott, Andrew Speer, John M'Quiston, James Martin. The stone church cost \$1,500 and John Neyman was the contractor. (The present church edifice, built A.D. 1853, cost about \$3,200.)

As matter of statistics, but as not at all remarkable, it may be mentioned that since the present pastor came among you, he has preached in the congregation two thousand two hundred and one sermons, and elsewhere seven hundred and sixty, making in all two thousand nine hundred and sixty-one. These added to his previous sermons make the number, since licensure, three thousand one hundred and three. He has married one hundred and forty-three couple, and baptized about five hundred persons.

But have we been making any progress as a church, during the last quarter of a century? There were on the roll of the church, January 1st, 1834, one hundred and five members. Since that time there have been received on examination three hundred and seventeen members, or an average of nearly thirteen per year. During the same time there have been received on certificate one hundred and eighty-two members, making in all four hundred and ninety-nine.

We now have on the roll *two hundred and fifty-one* church members. We have not experienced such remarkable seasons of refreshing as many other churches have enjoyed. But God has graciously bestowed several seasons of ingathering during that period. The years of greatest prosperity were those of 1836, 1843, 1851, 1853, and the year which has just closed. We have received to the communion in 1858, on examination, fifty-six persons, for which large accession we give all the glory to God.

"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be the praise." Our increase has not been rapid, but it has been steady;

and though large numbers have from time to time emigrated from us, and their homes occupied by families of other denominations, there has been a constant though slow advance in strength and numbers. In loss by emigration, we have only shared the common lot of Western Pennsylvania.

With sister denominations we have lived at peace, though we have not, for the sake of peace, shunned to uphold our own Scriptural doctrines and usages. We are Presbyterians by choice and by conscience. We "unchurch" none because their ordination is different in its circumstantials from ours. We reproach none because their psalmody differs from ours. We pronounce no one unconverted because his zeal is not of the same type with ours. In respect for and love of the Word of God, we yield to none. "Jesus Christ and him crucified," has been the great central theme of the Gospel message here, as you can testify.

I am grateful to God that I have had my birth, and training, and ministry in the Presbyterian Church. I cast no reproach upon other Churches. I claim no exclusive immunities for my own; but I bless God that *I am a Presbyterian*.

Consider the glorious ancestry from which our church has descended; the high position that she has always occupied in fostering colleges and schools; and the Scriptural soundness of her public teachings, and of her adopted standards. Though her membership is not as numerous as that of other churches in the United States, it is believed that no church excels her in influence. And every year that influence is augmenting. Within the period of my ministry here, we have seen the Presbyterian Church embarking in various benevolent enterprises, which previously had been carried on only through other agencies. We find her now sending forth her six hundred and ten domestic missionaries, supplying nine hundred and ninety churches and stations, principally in our expanding and destitute West. We find her supporting two hundred missionaries and assistants in heathen lands. For increasing her ministry, we find her supporting three hundred and eighty-five young men, candidates for the ministry, but whose pecuniary circumstances prevent them from otherwise securing an education. We find her embarking nobly in founding and endowing academies, colleges and theological seminaries. We find her building churches. We find her distributing annually three hundred and thirty-seven thousand volumes of books, containing truths of priceless value, and two and a half millions of pages of tracts. Such is a part of the work now being done by the church of our choice, besides the more silent deeds of love and kindness in every congregation where our people are scattered. In all these things, they only go hand in hand with the good and the pious of various other denominations.

But what part has this church taken in advancing the kingdom of Christ in the world, during the last twenty-five years? By the grace of God, she has done a little. She has contributed of her means, not with the munificence of wealthy churches, not in proportion to the high claims of heaven, but with some degree of liberality. Besides supporting the Gospel, the members are known to have contributed upward of five thousand three hundred dollars to various religious causes, near one thousand seven hundred dollars of which was given for foreign missions.

But we have furnished better than money -- we have sent out men. While father Coulter was pastor, Dr. Scott, now president of Washington College, was received into this church on examination. Rev. John O. Lowrie, D. D., Rev. Walter M. Lowrie, the martyred missionary, and Rev. Reuben P. Lowrie, now in China, had their birth and baptism here. Rev. A. B. Maxwell, Rev. Alonzo Linn and Rev. Alexander S. Thorne, now missionary to the Kickapoos, had their birth and baptism here. Rev. Samuel M. Anderson and Rev. John F. Boyd, had their spiritual birth and baptism here, and were received into this church on examination. Seven of these nine have been brought into the ministry during the last quarter of a century; and four of the nine became missionaries to the heathen. God has wooed us with loving kindness. His Gospel has come laden with proffers of mercy. Under the great commission of Christ, heathen lands (Turkey, and now China, and even Japan) have opened their gates and welcomed God's ambassadors.

This leads me to say that the most important event for good for the last twenty-five years is the gracious visit of the Holy Spirit. The set time to favor Zion has come! Marvelous things have been done for the Church. Marvelous things will no doubt occur on earth before another quarter of a century closes. God must do great things for this country, or we rush on to a fearful doom!

At the past rate of increase, the United States will soon have a population of about sixty millions. Statesmen and orators and poets (it may be) will arise to add to the glory and renown of our land. Improvements will continue to be made, perhaps more wonderful than those of the past. But the progress of the Church and of religion, will be our greatest glory: It is this that we should look for with the deepest and most prayerful interest. It is a momentous question, whether the teeming millions of our land shall be led to take shelter under the cross, and thence, refreshed by its power, go forth to battle for the King of Glory; or whether they shall be overspread with darkness and error.

If our country improve her moral resources, what may she not do for the world? Let her eagle take her flight to all parts of the earth, bearing in her talons not only the olive branch of peace, but the blessed Gospel of peace, and plant, as did Ezekiel's eagle, the cedar branch, in every "land of traffic," "among merchants," and "beside great waters," that it may increase and scatter its fruit for the healing of the nations. Seed is now being sown in our country and by our country, which, ere other twenty-five years shall end, "will ripen into a glorious harvest." And as every little streamlet contributes to swell the mighty river which rolls its flood to the ocean, so every church is to contribute its influence in the great cause of religion and humanity. *May the Church of Butler ever be one of these streams, to make glad the city of God!*

First Presbyterian~Covenant Presbyterian Bi-Centennial History Page

No. 35



Discipline of the Flock

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of two parts, namely: Part I ~ The Book of Confessions, and Part II ~ The Book of Order, itself consisting of three sections: Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and Rules of Discipline.

Historically, all have figured prominently in the belief, governance, worship and personal conduct of the congregation and its members. It has been several decades, however, since the *Book of Discipline* was used regularly to settle disputes and to adjudicate charges of improper Christian conduct within the congregation. First Presbyterian, not unlike most Presbyterian churches a century ago, had its share of "church trials" – which, by the way, were conducted "decently and in order" according to prescribed guidelines.

To illustrate, consider the following account of judicial proceedings taken from our church's archives, (pg. 186 ff. in the Minutes of Session 1892-1915) beginning Oct. 18, 1909:

The committee appointed at the last meeting of Session to investigate statements made by Mrs. Minnie Gillespie brought its report. Allegations were made pertaining to the Christian character of Nellie C. Oller, a member of the church. The committee having visited personally with Nellie C. Oller and Minnie Gillespie, the parties concerned in this matter, it is the judgment of the committee that there is probable ground for a formal accusation against said Nellie C. Oller, charging her first (1st) with C<u>onduct unbecoming a Christian</u> and member of the church, and tending directly to bring marriage and family relations into disrepute, contrary to the Word of God. Second (2nd) charge: <u>Falsehood</u>. The committee of investigation therefore recommends that Session appoint a committee of prosecution to conduct the case in all its stages under the provision of the Book of Discipline, Section Eleven.

Signed, J. C. Redick, J.S. Wick, R. M. Anderson

Charges and Specifications

Charge One. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the prosecution, charges you Miss Nellie E. Oller, a member of First Presbyterian Church of Butler, Pa., with the sin of bringing into disrepute, marriage and family relations, contrary to Holy Scripture and the rules and regulations of the church founded thereupon.

Specification One. That the said Nellie C. Oller has accepted from time to time from Mr. T. H. Gillespie, a married man and known to her at the time to be such, valuable presents. Among said presents are:

- One gold purse of the value of \$ 170.
- One three-stone diamond and sapphire ring about Christmas 1908 of the value of \$ 250.
- One necklace of the value of \$ 100, and which she still retains.
- ~<u>Witnesses</u>:

Dr. R. B. Greer; Mr. Stoup of Hardy & Hays Store.

Specification Two. That the said Nellie C. Oller, between the 1st day of December 1908 and the 2nd day of August 1909, wrote various letters (and received replies to them) addressed by her to Mr. T. H. Gillespie, a married man and known by her at the time to be such, which letters were of an affectionate character, wholly improper under the circumstances and a grave offense against the

marriage relation then existing between the said T. H. Gillespie and his wife. Among the letters so written by her and received by him were letters bearing dates as follows: February 9th, 1909; March 15th, 1909; March 29th, 1909; May 7th, 1909; May 20th, 1909; and July 1st, 1909.

~<u>Witnesses</u>:

Mrs. Minnie Gillespie; John S. Robb, Jr.; Louis Jamison; and the letters themselves

Specification Three. That the said Miss Nellie C. Oller kept up and encouraged an intimacy and familiarity with the said T. H. Gillespie, a married man and known by her to be such, during the past year and prior thereto, which was offensive to the wife of the said Mr. Gillespie and persisted after protests were made by her against the accused.

~Witnesses:

Mrs. Minnie Gillespie; Wayne Walker; Louis Jamison

Charge Second.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the prosecution, charges you Miss Nellie E. Oller, a member of First Presbyterian Church of Butler, Pa., with the sin of Falsehood.

Specification One. That the said Nellie C. Oller on the 29th day of September 1909 at the home of her father during a meeting of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Butler Pa., stated that she had not received from Mr. T. H. Gillespie as a present a valuable gold purse or a valuable diamond ring.

~<u>Witnesses</u>:

Dr. R. B. Greer; John S. Robb, Jr.; Mr. Stoup of Hardy & Hays Store; J. C. Reddick; R. M. Anderson; J. S. Wick.

Specification Two. That the said Nellie C. Oller on the 29th day of September 1909 at the same time and place and in the presence of the Session, said that she had not written any letters to Mr. T. H.

Gillespie, a married man and known by her at the time to be such, save one letter written to him by her and a friend jointly.

~<u>Witnesses</u>:

J. C. Reddick; R. M. Anderson; J. S. Wick; John S. Robb, Jr.; Mrs. Minnie Gillespie; T. H. Gillespie; Louis Jamison.

What happened next...

The accused, Miss Nellie C. Oller, and the Committee for Prosecution (W. D. Brandon & P. W. Lowry) appeared before Session on November 3, 1909 at 9:30 o'clock A.M. in the lecture room of the church. The accused made a voluntary confession acknowledging the truth of the charges and specifications, except as to Item 2, Charge 1, Specification $1 \sim$ that she does not now possess the ring; and denied Item 3, Charge 1, Specification 1.

On motion, recess was taken until 2:30 P.M. for consideration by Session of the form of censure to be taken. Absent was the Rev. W. E. Oller, moderator of session.

At 2:30 the Session reconvened to announce its verdict: "Whereas the accused, Miss Nellie C. Oller, has appeared before the Session in obedience to a [second] letter of citation and admitted the charges and confessed her wrong, expressing her sorrow for it and asking forgiveness of session in the matter; therefore, be it resolved that we accept her confession and find her guilty of the charges. Resolved, in view of her confession, the session does *not* deem censure by dismissal or suspension necessary, but we regret and direct the moderator in the presence of the session to admonish and rebuke the accused for her conduct in the matter."

Case closed... almost. If you were wondering whether the aforementioned Mr. Gillespie would be called to account for HIS behavior in this scandal... he was. He voluntarily appeared before session and also admitted his wrong in the matter. He too was "admonished" but not censured for his un-Christian behavior.

No. 36



DATED APRIL 6, 1862

On motion of James Campbell and at the request of Dr. Young, the salary of Dr. Young was reduced one hundred dollars. This gesture was accepted with gratitude by the trustees who then unanimously agreed to proceed immediately to make contracts for the rebuilding of the church.

DATED MAY 6, 1862

Trustees met at the store of James Campbell. The contract entered into with Wm. Fouzer (?) for the brick and stone work for the building of a new church was ratified by the trustees for \$1400. Also the contract has been entered into with S. G Purvis for the woodwork of the same for \$2300.

Resolved: that 25 per cent of the amount of subscriptions be called in and paid to the treasurer on or before the first day of June next.

DATED JUNE 14, 1862

On motion it was unanimously agreed upon that we build an entire <u>new church</u> instead of building on the old foundation, and the building be erected on the North end of lot - so as to be on level ground.

On motion a committee consisting of James Campbell, Wm. Campbell and R. C. McAboy (?) was appointed to enter into a new contract with Samuel G. Purvis Esq. for the entire Wood Work & Materials for the same at \$2725. And also with Wm. Fauset for the Stone and Brick Work entire including all materials for the same (and that he have all the brick and stone in old church) at \$1700.

MARGINAL NOTE, SAME DATE. Contractor will be paid when stone is removed from lot and following extras allowed:

Stone arches in front	\$ 35-
Stone engraved for front	10-
Extra allowed for brick wall	
in basement	50-

DATED NOVEMBER 23, 1863

Resolved: That all persons purchasing pews in the new church shall be subject to such adjustments as the Trustees may make from year to year – for the support of our pastor and any other expenses such as light, fuel and pay of Sexton; and any one refusing or neglecting to comply with the terms will forfeit their seat.

DATED JANUARY 11, 1873

According to previous announcement the Congregation of the Butler Presbyterian Church met to consider the subject of enlarging and improving the Church Building. The Chairman called on Rev. C. H. McClellan to open the meeting with prayer. On motion the Congregation voted in favour of proceeding at once to enlarge the Building by extending the South Wall and erecting a Spire. W. L. Graham, Esq. then moved that a subscription be opened with a view to raise seven thousand (\$7000) dollars for that purpose which was sec'd and carried. The Trustees were instructed to enlarge the Building by extending it South from twenty to thirty feet at their discretion, and erect a Spire thereon.

Note: Before adjourning on January 11, a committee of four men was appointed to raise subscriptions (donations) for this project by canvassing the membership. The next entry in the Minute Book appears two weeks later:

DATED JANUARY 27, 1873

The meeting of the Trustees was called to order in the Lecture Room at 2 P.M. to hear the report of the committee appointed at a previous meeting. The Finance Committee reported the amount of Subscriptions taken to that time to be three thousand (\$3000) dollars, with the majority of the Members unsubscribed. After a few suggestions for the benefit and information of the Trustees the meeting was adjourned.

DATED APRIL 7, 1873

The annual Congregational Meeting was held. Chairman of the Trustees reported that the lowest Bid for the enlargement of the Church is over \$6000, more than the whole subscription to date. On motion the Trustees were instructed to contract for the Stone and Brickwork, with the necessary Carpenter work to put it under Roof, not to exceed the amount of the deposits of \$5225.

DATED MAY 12, 1873

The Board of Trustees met to consider a Bid for carpenter work made by Mr. Riddle for \$2900 as received. After duly considering the matter it was unanimously agreed <u>not</u> to go on with the enlargement of our Church Building at present.

DATED JULY 14, 1873

It was decided to raise the Member Subscription to twelve thousand (\$12000) dollars "for the purpose of erecting a house of worship that will amply accommodate the increased wants of this Congregation, and in the event the same is raised the Trustees will feel at liberty to proceed with the building next Spring."

- By 1874 the new addition with its impressive steeple was completed and the congregation had a few good years of balanced budget and strong financial support.
- ✤ By August 1887, however, a number of property issues began to strain congregational finances severely. The roof had to be replaced and Dalzell Brothers, slate roofers of Youngstown, Ohio, did the work. Also in that month "the secretary was instructed to ascertain from the Gas Company the probable cost of putting in gas pipes from main to furnace and the approximate cost per year for heating the church."
- By October 1887 several "budget reduction" actions were attempted – one of which was to ask the janitor to take a cut in salary. Apparently, this was not received very well, as evidenced by the Oct. 11, 1887 minutes: "Mr. White, the janitor, would not agree to do any additional work for the same salary nor would he do the same work he had been doing for a less salary than he is now receiving." Mr. White's salary was capped at \$150 per annum, as a result.
- By 1888, the minutes reflect no reversal of deficit spending and an increasing number of property items requiring repair or replacement. At a special meeting on May 2, 1888 the Treasurer reported a balance of \$293.74 after bills had been paid. The subject of repairing the church was discussed, and the following resolution was passed: "That no repairs be made on the church building until the money to pay for such repairs is in the Church Treasury."

No. 37



WITHERSPOON INSTITUTE

Witherspoon Institute was really a child of our church. It was a very significant contributor to the educational life of the Butler community for more than thirty years.

A convention of Presbyterians was assembled on February 6, 1849, to consider the establishment of an academy within the bounds of the congregation. An executive committee consisting of Charles C. Sullivan, William Campbell, James Campbell and Samuel M. Lane, leading members of the congregation, raised \$5,000 for the school. In September 1849, seventeen ministers and elders obtained a charter for "a literary and religious institution under the control of Allegheny Presbytery" and it was officially named the "Witherspoon Institute."

Rev. Young was the first principal of the institute and Rev. David Hall, not yet licensed to preach, was assistant principal. The school opened May 13, 1850, in the basement of our church (the 1833 building). The next year, in 1851, the first structure was erected on North Main Street in Butler (now the First English Lutheran Church). In 1864 two wings were added, with the state [Commonwealth] appropriating \$2,500 toward the expense of the improvement.

As described by Rev. William Craig in Centennial Anniversary History which was published in 1913, "For over a quarter of a century this place was the center of great educational activity and of moral and religious power... there was always a minister of deep religious convictions and of the requisite educational qualifications at its head."

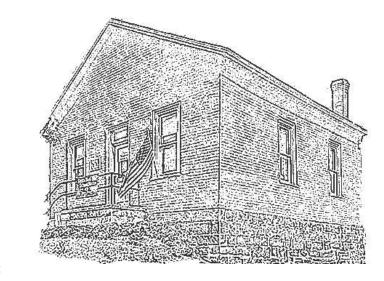
There were two "departments" in the school – the <u>English</u> and the <u>Classical</u>. The Classical department "was of a high order and many young men were not only prepared here for a college course but because of its religious atmosphere were led to a choice of the ministry." The tuition was one dollar per month for the common English branches and two dollars for the classical branches.

In the department where the English branches were taught, there were two grades: primary and advanced. The higher grade prepared scholars for college courses and also for teaching in the public schools. More public school teachers were sent out from the Witherspoon Institute during this period than any other institution in the county. The roll of graduates contained the names of many men and women who became famous as educators and in various other avocations in life. After the Witherspoon closed it was not long until Slippery Rock Normal School was opened to continue this work and in a sense became a step-child of the First Presbyterian Church, from which the Witherspoon Institute had sprung. Under the administration of the Rev. J. S. Boyd a musical department was added. Rev. Boyd and his wife were both accomplished musicians. They directed the choir at First Presbyterian for several years; Mrs. Boyd was "an excellent organist."

In 1877 the Witherspoon building and site downtown were sold (to the English Lutheran Church) with a view to a new and larger location. It was later noted in the histories of the church that "this marked the downfall of Witherspoon Institute." It was under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Brugh that the institute "prospered greatly and under whose administration it gained perhaps the greatest usefulness and power in its history." He had ambitions to develop it into a college...

...but when a much larger building was undertaken (on a new site of about 4 acres, property owned by the Butler Silk Mill Company, known now as Institute Hill) it marked the "beginning of the end." The Presbytery struggled to support the new and enlarged institute, but finally withdrew its support from the enterprise and the property was sold to W. H. H. Riddle, at which time it passed from the ownership of the Presbyterian church.

In April, 1879, Witherspoon Institute was taken over as a nonsectarian school by Professor P. S. Bancroft. Under his direction the school flourished once again, until in 1882 it boasted of 172 students and a corps of seven teachers. Bancroft directed the Institute until the fall of 1887, when a lack of patronage induced him to close it. During the time he had charge, the winter terms were held in a leased building nearer the center of the city because of the difficulty experienced in properly heating the Institute, and complaints of students of its distance from their homes in town. Its loss of patronage, however, was principally due to the higher prices charged students for board in Butler than in other towns where academies were conducted.



The Little Red School House

was constructed in 1838, and was the first public school built in Butler as a direct result of the Public School Act of 1836. It was used as a classroom until 1874, when a larger facility was built. The building was then used as an office, Butler's first public library, a meeting room, and a center for the Red Cross during World War II.

In 1966, the Butler School District permitted the Butler County Historical Society to use the building as a museum, and it continued in that use until 1991, when it closed due to structural deterioration. The school district then deeded the building to the Society in 1993, and a restoration project began to return the building to its original one-room school condition.

The site is now a "living history museum," which recreates the one-room school experience for school classes. The school house is located at 200 East Jefferson Street, just west of our church property beyond St. Peter's Anglican Church.

Group tours are provided by special arrangement. Admission fees: \$3.00 per adult, \$1.00 for youth ages 5-17, and free for children under 5 and Butler County Historical Society members. Call 724-283-8116 for tour information.

No. 38

How Much Do You Know?

This week will be a test of memory (for those who have one) going back just a few decades or so. Don't cheat. Read the questions first... then try to come up with the answer before you skip down to see if you're correct.

[if you wish to dispute an answer, you'll have to take it up with Jane Hall, to whom thanks belong for her recollections.]



- Q. 1 Where were Sunday School (Sabbath School) classes held before the Sarver wing was built and dedicated in 1940?
- Q. 2 Who was the first pastor in our church (within your memory) to wear a robe in the pulpit?
- Q. 3 How did the Connell Room get its name?
- Q. 4 How many members of First Presbyterian (Covenant) served in WW I and WW II but did not return because they were killed in combat?
- Q. 5 Who painted the mural of World Mission sites in the "board room" (where the door to the handicap ramp leads into the church) ? And why is it known as "the board room"?

ANSWERS

{1} The "Little Light Bearers" class (ages 4 & 5) met in what is now the Library. At that time the room was actually the church office (secretary's room). Sunday School children ages 6-7-8 met in what is now the "board room" except there was no door for access to the handicap ramp (and no ramp either). It was called the board room because that was the designated space where Session (and other boards and committees, i.e. Trustees, Deacons) regularly held their meetings.

All other classes, both children and adults, were held in the Assembly Room. Boys and girls were divided into separate classes (which probably prevented a lot of pig-tail pulling).

Sunday School always began with "Opening Exercises" – hymns and songs, scripture memory verses, announcements, etc. – before class began. (Does anyone remember.... did Sunday School *precede* Worship, or was it conducted *following* the morning service?)

{2} It was most likely Carl Bogard who first wore a robe in the pulpit to preach (at least in the 20th century); he was installed as pastor on July 30, 1942 and served until 1970.

{3} It was named after John T. Connell, who taught the adult Women's Sunday School Class. In the community he served as Superintendent of Schools and was quite progressive in his approach to education. According to one historical record, Superintendent Connell "called for drastic revision of educational practice when required." On March 6, 1940 he met with the Worth Township School Board to urge the updating of textbooks, stating that "the health and hygiene texts you are using were published before bacteria were discovered."

{4} Astonishingly, only one man was killed (of the dozens listed on the two bronze plaques in the front hall entrance). He served in World War I. Who was he? Check the plaque for his name!

{5} E. Bertrum "Bert" Shaffer (1914-2010), a member and elder of First Presbyterian – an artist and also a school administrator.

No. 39



Seasons of Communion

Although the celebration of the Lord's Supper has been (and always will be) one of the central and most significant aspects of Christian worship, the sacrament has changed somewhat in Presbyterian form and practice over the years. Our custom at Covenant has been to celebrate communion 10-12 times per year, alternating between "seated (in the pews)" and "come forward" for the distribution of the elements. Two hundred years ago, the communicants would not have received the sacrament in the pews, nor at an altar rail (since there is no "altar" in a Presbyterian church, but a "communion table" instead). They would, in fact, have been seated on benches at a narrow table, specially designed for the purpose. This practice of spreading tables and seating the communicants for the Lord's Supper was followed at the Butler Church until sometime around mid-1850, after which communicants were served in the pews.

The Scottish reformers strove to rework the essential actions, language, and setting of the Catholic Mass. They dedicated themselves to eliminating the elaborate ceremonies of the Mass and to re-creating Christ's Last Supper as they envisioned the disciples and Paul having received it. They argued, too, that Christ had not distributed the bread and wine to each of the disciples individually, but that the apostles had divided the elements among themselves. This example, the Scottish reformers believed, ruled out priestly [pastoral] distribution to each of the communicants; instead those seated at the table were to handle the sacred elements themselves, passing the bread and wine from one to another.

Two centuries ago communion was not celebrated as often as we celebrate it today. One reason was because the services of the ordained clergy were not available each and every Sunday. In fact, observance of the sacrament may have been limited to only two or three times per year... so when word went out that the pastor had set a date for an upcoming communion, friends and relatives of the church members would travel great distances and arrange to stay in the area for several days before and after Communion Sunday.

> The descriptions of early communion practice which follow are excerpted from an excellent book by Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs* (2nd Ed., 2001):

"Holy Fair" was a common phrase in the West of Scotland for just such an observance (an interesting combination of holy day and holiday.) These were the high days of the year, marking what came to be known in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as "seasons of communion." Lengthy events, usually lasting four days or more, these evangelical festivals were rich in spirituality and ritual, similar to "revival" services.

The reformers moved away from discrete, unleavened hosts, substituting instead shared, leavened loaves of bread. They eliminated as well the altar screens and rails that separated the priests from the laity and replaced them with "fences" -- usually made out of words, but sometimes out of wooden palings -- that separated the faithful as a whole from the ungodly.

Announcement of the communion was typically made a number of weeks in advance, and the pastor set about examining the candidates as to their qualifications for this "sacred feast." Did they possess sound, catechetical knowledge of the doctrines of the faith and the meaning of the sacrament? Had they experienced "a work of grace in their souls?" Were they living a godly life? Catechesis and examination were careful and extensive.

As the sacrament approached, preparations increased. Church members first gathered a little over a week prior to the fast day for a special meeting of prayer and instruction. On "the Preparation Sabbath" -- that is, the Sunday preceding the sacramental Sabbath -- both the morning and afternoon services were devoted to expounding on the Lord's Supper, its powers for the worthy and its dangers for the unworthy.

The following Wednesday was appointed as "a day of public fast and humiliation." Sins were reviewed; each of the Ten Commandments expounded; "the great work of selfexamination, and secret personal renewing their covenant" enjoined; psalms sung; and confessions of iniquity made. At the close of this solemn, penitential service all were to return home, continuing their fast "without touching any refreshment till after the sun was down."

Preparations were to go on privately in family worship, secret prayer, self-examination, personal covenanting, and meditation. Public readying for the sacrament resumed on Saturday afternoon with a sermon on "the dying love of Christ" and further elaborations of who was invited to the feast and who was not. Near the close of the service the minister would come down out of the pulpit, stand by the communion table, and "then pour out on the table a great number of small pieces of lead" -- tokens for admission to the Lord's Supper. Handing these with great solemnity to each communicant one-by-one as they came forward to the table, the pastor then announced the importance of the token as a guard against the unworthy, a sign of the covenant, and a pledge of steadfast devotion. The next day on "Communion Sunday" the tokens would be collected by the assisting elders as a surety of one's qualification to receive the sacrament.

The tables, carefully arranged and "decently covered with clean linen ... all met and joined in the midst, just before the pulpit; in the centre was set a square table to which the others joined." Here on this central table the sacramental bread and red wine were set, punctiliously ordered, and "covered from public view" by fine napkins. Prayer, psalm singing, and a sermon were followed by the words of institution. Paul's account of Christ's origination of this ritual was read from 1 Corinthians 11. This passage was explicated at length -- "verse by verse" -- to suggest once again the various meanings of the feast.

Then with an awful solemnity the minister fenced the table; that is, he debarred "in many particulars all those under the three classes: ignorant, unbelieving and prophane." Again the Ten Commandments were reviewed; thereafter all believers and "true penitents" were invited to come freely and partake.

When the table was "fenced," a psalm was sung, and the worthy came to sit at the long tables to commune. The bread was broken and the wine poured out from a flagon into cups. At the central table the minister and elders communed; from them, the bread and wine were passed along the tables until all had partaken. As a psalm was sung, the communicants retired to their seats, and a new group filled up the tables again. The dispensing of the elements was repeated as many times as necessary until all had been served.

The high point of the five-day ritual (beginning with fasting, prayer, examination and confession) culminated on Sunday with the Lord's Supper, but the celebration continued even after the receiving of the bread and cup.

Following communion, the minister(s) addressed the communicants in their varying states, from the most unworthy to the most comforted saint. Those who had not come to the table -- "the spectators" – were addressed, as either unprepared

Christians who had missed a great blessing or as unconverted sinners who should hasten to the blood of Christ for regeneration. The exhortation also moved the congregation into eucharistic thanksgiving. This became the dominant theme of the services Sunday afternoon and on Monday as well. Thanksgiving sermons were preached on both occasions; the blessings of the great feast were enumerated and extolled. Finally, the "holy fair" closed on Monday.

This pattern, moving from penitence on the fast day through thanksgiving on Monday, was essentially the same from place to place. Most congregations celebrated without other ministers assisting, but it was not unusual for extremely large "revivalstyle" festivals to be conducted outdoors with "many ministers, sermons by the dozens and crowds in the thousands."

There were generally two "seasons of communion" (coinciding with the agricultural year) – spring and summer. While winter was experienced as a time of deadened spirituality and distant faith, the festal communions of spring and summer were welcomed as renewals of life and revivals of spiritual energy.

Communion Tokens

Communion tokens were an essential part of these sacramental celebrations. The markings and shape of these tokens varied from place to place; they were small, coin-like bits metal (circular, oval, rectangular or square.) Though the minister's initials were a common stamp, the tokens were regularly imprinted as well with letters that suggested the congregation in which the Supper was being administered or with dates that indicated the year of celebration.

Whether plain or elaborate in their inscriptions, tokens were tangible objects that defined membership in the Presbyterian community. These tokens were badges that expressed belonging to a church. They helped define who were among God's covenanted people and who were not. Without a token, no approach to God's table was possible. With one, access was granted. The communion token regulated membership in the community of saints. Those who had one were knit "together in the bonds of love," but conversely those who did not have one were visibly excluded from the circle of faith.

The care with which the evangelical Presbyterians constructed the boundaries defining their community was even more evident in the solemn ritual of *fencing the table*. A stern warning was issued to all those who were not fit to partake of the Lord's Supper. In a highly ritualized speech, the pastor reminded the flock of the solemnity of the Lord's Supper: "This is the most solemn day of approaching to God that we have while we are here travelling in this world." He would then proclaim his obligation to "set a Rail about the Table, that none, who have no right to the Table and Children's Bread, may come near unto it."

Debarring "in Christ's Name" all "prophane sinners," the minister enumerated with great care what sorts of people fell into this broad category. This litany, shaped by the Ten Commandments, frequently lasted "an hour or more."

Not to be admitted to the sacred Table were (to name a few):

- ✓ All atheists, deniers of the Trinity, enemies to Christ; all witches, charmers, and warlocks; all who were in "compact with the Devil"
- ✓ All "ignorant Persons who know no God;" all "worshippers of Images"; all who follow contrary ways of worship; all "Cursers, Swearers, Tearers of God's Name"; all Sabbath breakers of whatever stripe."
- ✓ The fifth commandment --"Honor thy father and thy mother" -- disqualified "all such as are disobedient to your natural parents or civil parents" from the feast, and the sixth debarred all murderers.
- ✓ The seventh commandment invited condemnation of sinners of the flesh, namely: "all adulterers, unclean persons, effeminate, incestuous persons, guilty of bestiality, guilty of

self pollution, or guilty of sodomy" as well as "gluttons," "drunkards," and "promiscuous dancers."

✓ The list went on... "All thieves, robbers, oppressors, unjust persons, and cheaters of their neighbours"; "all liars, back¬biters and slanderers"; and finally "all covetous persons, that cannot be content with their own state and condition" were each condemned in turn by the eighth through tenth commandments.

After this exhaustive enumeration the minister turned from debarring to inviting. "All penitent souls," all who were ready to part with their sins and "turn their back on the Devil" were bid to come forward as were "all thirsty panting souls" and "all poor doudy believers." "O come, come" was the strain of the concluding exhortation. The opportunity for repentance and salvation was held up to all.

The congregants then proceeded to the scrupulously guarded tables where elders collected the tokens. The saints -- whether penitent, anxious, or already exultant -- rose up and separated themselves from the "crowd of spectators" (those who had no token). One narrator observed that it was "like the division in that day when Christ shall separate the assembled multitude to the right hand and to the left." First in word and then in action these evangelicals created the boundaries that defined themselves over against the worldly, drawing unmistakable lines that distinguished good from evil, the pure from the defiled.

It must be acknowledged that the threat of exclusion sometimes overshadowed the sacramental call to unity, for the Lord's Supper could serve itself to draw divisive lines -- ones that, instead of bounding and safeguarding Christian communities, cut through them. In this way, communion could be used as "a wedge to drive on and fixe a rent" within the community of faith.

In the summer of 1713, for example, Robert Wodrow at the height of one particular theological controversy, lamented that:

"our Communions, that used to be our pleasantest and sweetest times, have become times of distraction and division." Usually, these controversies were healed in a matter of time, and when things had simmered down, communions were once again, Wodrow assured, "sweet times of refreshing." Still the sacramental season always carried the risk of deepening strife and division instead of healing it.

Even so, evangelical Presbyterians always held out hope that through their communions they would find lasting cohesion and community. Ultimately they hoped that the rituals of the sacramental occasion would extend outward and shape the way people lived day-in and day-out. One Scottish preacher, in commenting on the scriptural verse "This do in remembrance of me," suggested how the impressions created by the sacrament were supposed to linger: "This Remember is not confined... unto the very time we sit at the Lords table," he explained, "but in all the times of our life. It is not a bare naked historical remembrance or one as we may have of a previous event... but this remembrance is a practical remembrance when you are going through your fields and when you are at your employments and at all times."

As another season of communion came to a close, another "holy fair" concluded, the believers had to re-enter the world and take up those daily challenges and responsibilities that still awaited. Coming down from "Pisgah's top" into "life's darksome vale" and "scenes of toil," they knew that compromise all too often followed upon communion. A few of the saints, it was lamented, might "fall away in a day or two;" others would persevere until "the next month, or the next year." All that aside, if human weakness was inevitable, so was the approach of another season of communion. Though not always fulfilled, the promise of revival, renewal, and community was continually harbored in the hearts of the faithful. There would be, after all, *another* sacramental season to be celebrated before long!

No. 40



A Glimpse of Church Life From The Minutes of Session

... Session granted the request of the Pennsylvania Antisaloon League that their Dr. F. W. Hoffman be permitted to address the congregation at the morning service on World Wide Temperance Sunday, October 28, 1945.

... Elder Wm. L. Cross reported that the Organ Committee has made some preliminary investigations about a new organ for the church. On motion, Session approved the naming of a Selection Committee to investigate the necessity and desirability of making changes in the front of the sanctuary when a new organ is installed. [November 21, 1945]

... The Session noted average church attendance for three years (both Sunday morning and Sunday evening services):

	A.M.	P.M.
1944	243	126
1945	253	126
1946	278	139

... In Rev. Bogard's Annual Report to Session on July 19, 1950, he listed among "Advances in the Service of the Church" an increase in average attendance to 310 and "the largest membership in the history of First Church: 1,007"

How did Covenant Church get its name?

From the time of its organization in 1813, our congregation was known variously as the "Butler Church," "First Butler," "First Church" and "First Presbyterian." The word "United" did not appear until after the merger of two separate Presbyterian denominations in 1958 which created the "United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA)." That denomination existed from May 28, 1958 to 1983 when our present denomination, the PC(USA), was born.

Most of us living today remember well the merger of 1958. Our sister church across the street – Saint Andrews Presbyterian – was previously known as "First Church" also, but they were First UNITED Presbyterian Church. (one of the so-called "U.P." churches, more conservative than we.)

Following the merger of '58 both churches had a problem – each was called "First" and now each needed to incorporate "United" into their name, reflecting national denomination ties. Therefore, new names had to be selected. Our pastor at the time, Carl Bogard, favored the name "Church of the Covenant, United Presbyterian, Butler, Pa." (COCUP?) As reflected in the Minutes of the Corporation Meeting of January 21, 1959 and in the Session minutes following, the preferred choice of the elders and pastor did not prevail.

Under the direction of Chairman Boone the proposed new name selected for the church by the Session, "Church of the Covenant, United Presbyterian, Butler, Pa.," was discussed as was its method of selection. At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary read to the group a legal opinion from Attorney Zeno Henninger dealing with the proper method of accomplishing a change of name. Stanley Rider proposed a wider range of choice be given the congregation in the selection of a name which resulted in the following motion by himself and Marion Nicholas: "That the Session select eight appropriate names to be submitted by mail to the congregation for vote. The two most prominent names as a result of this balloting are to be submitted to a special Corporation meeting for final vote to choose one name." This motion failed to carry. A new motion proposing that the matter of church name selection be returned to the Session for further development through an opinion poll of the congregation was made, seconded and carried.

Sunday, April 5, 1959, Butler, Pennsylvania

A corporation meeting of the congregation was held in the sanctuary following the regular worship service for the purpose of selecting the new name for the church. Elder Peter J. Boone acted as moderator.

Prepared ballots listing the suggested names, and permitting write-in names, were passed to the members of legal voting age. The first ballot showed a total of 181 votes cast with a <u>necessary</u> <u>majority of 92</u>.

THE COVENANT UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BUTLER, PA. received 79 votes.

This tally, concurred in by the Clerk of Session, was short of a majority. The other votes were:

The Pioneer United Presbyterian Church -37The Church With The Lighted Cross, -21United Presbyterian, Butler, Pa. The Church Of The Resurrection, United Presbyterian -14The Westminster United Presbyterian Church -10Calvary United Presbyterian Church -5The Colonial United Presbyterian Church -4Prince Of Peace United Presbyterian Church -2The Jefferson United Presbyterian Church -2Christ's United Presbyterian Church -2 The following names received 1 vote each: The Hall Young United Presbyterian Church Olivet United Presbyterian Church; Christ United Presbyterian Church; The John Calvin United Presbyterian Church; The Church Of' The Redeemer; St. Luke's United Presbyterian Church

On a second ballot of 148 votes, with a necessary majority of 75, THE COVENANT UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BUTLER, PA. received 86 votes, sufficient for ratification.

Note: The minutes of the meeting were signed by the Clerk of Session – E. Bertrum Shaffer. The other votes were:

The Pioneer United Presbyterian Church – 29 The Westminster United Presbyterian Church – 13 The Church With The Lighted Cross, – 12 United Presbyterian, Butler, Pa. Jefferson Street United Presbyterian – 4 Church Of The Resurrection, United Presbyterian – 3 The Jefferson United Presbyterian Church – 1

At a duly called meeting of the Corporation on June 11, 1960, Mr. John Henninger made a motion which was seconded by Mr. J. Campbell Brandon that "the trustees … be instructed and authorized to file amendments to the charter in the Court of Common Pleas of Butler County changing the name from The First Presbyterian Church of Butler to 'The Covenant United Presbyterian Church of Butler, Pa.'"

No. 41

Our Mission and Goal Statement Adopted in 1978

One of the primary mission objectives for Covenant United Presbyterian Church is to be a sustaining and supportive community for members and constituents. It is our mission to create a community of believers joining together because of our concern for one another and for others and because of our loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is our conviction that a spirit of fellowship grows out of fidelity to the goals of our caring and concern.

We must not permit ourselves to believe that our choices ultimately lie between tradition and change. Both processes are vital. "Without change there can be no growth. Without tradition there is no civilization."

We believe this mission objective will be met as the following four goal statements are achieved.

- We become a sustaining and supportive community through corporate worship as the gospel is proclaimed in preaching and as the sacraments are administered in our midst.
- We become a sustaining and supportive community when through the pastor, and as pastors, we minister to individuals and families in time of crisis, sorrow, and joy.
- We become a sustaining and supportive community when we encourage and foster intellectual and spiritual growth by providing opportunities for Christian education.

We recognize an obligation to provide an opportunity for developing spiritual growth through both individual and group study. We become a sustaining and supportive community when, as a sensitive institution, we maintain a place and develop a realistic organization for all the above to happen. We believe that as part of our overall commitment to Christ and His Church, we must have in generous measure a combination of time, talents and financial support from each of us.

The other primary mission objective for Covenant United Presbyterian Church in 1978 is to join as a body in God's creative working for liberation, and justice, and hope for all human beings.

We believe this mission objective will be addressed when as corporate and individual bodies, we proclaim the need for change in the world's social and other structures so that the Community and Kingdom announced in the Bible and by other prophetic voices may become reality among mankind.

We believe this mission objective will also be addressed when we achieve the goal of becoming a prophetic witness to Christ and his proclaimed mission in both the church, the community and the world.

As a particular congregation of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. we also acknowledge "The Great Ends of the Church" (Form of Government, 33.04) which have withstood the test of the most difficult times, have served as the landmark statement of our purpose as a Church, and which are in fact our reason for being; namely:

The proclamation of the gospel of salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

No. 42



For the next few weeks, we'll sample some of the news from past issues of the Covenant Church newsletter. We begin by turning back the clock three decades to 1982.

At a Rededication Service on July 25, 1982 special recognition was conferred upon Harold Kurtz and Chester Roe, the "tireless shepherds" who spent countless hours supervising the project. Serving with the two honorees on the Session's Building and Grounds Commission during the renovation were William Johnston, Richard Hall, Edgar Butler, Eddie Butler, Mrs. Donald (Mary Elizabeth) Goehring, Idris Mackevrican and Richard Young, present chairman of the commission.

Elder Young reviewed the major repairs and renovations, funded for the most part by the Wilson Purvis Fund – installation of insulating storm windows and covering Sarver Hall window frames with aluminum; replacing the steeple's slate roof with shingles and fabricating a new cross for the steeple (Dave Johnson); repairing steps, sidewalks and doors; improvements in lighting for added safety and security; new large fans in the sanctuary for summer/winter comfort; and most recently, a big new organ motor (after burnout).

August 1982

We beam our Chronicle Spotlight this month at MISS ELEANOR F. BOYD to give special recognition as the oldest member of our congregation. The serene 94-year-old's crown of silvery hair and smiling face brighten the back pew on the right side of the church on most Sundays.

Miss Eleanor was employed by Health Officer Robert Fowser long before Butler grew from a borough into a city in 1917; from her office on the second floor of the old Municipal building, then located on North Main Street where there's now a parking lot (adjacent to First English Lutheran Church), she doubled as telephone girl for the three borough policemen. She retired from her post there on January 1, 1956.

Eleanor joined First Presbyterian (now Covenant) Church in 1902, along with Florence Oller (daughter of the minister), Edna Roessing and Belle Wick. Her Sunday School teacher was Clara McJunkin, librarian at the Little Red School House, where Butler Public Library originated. Her father, Henry Harvey Boyd, was a church trustee. Eleanor recalls his lament to his wife and family upon returning from one particular session meeting where he learned that the painting of the church exterior would cost an "exorbitant \$150"!

Other recollections of church life include riding to services in the family surrey; joint opening exercises for all Sunday School classes in the present Assembly Room; and beginner's classes in our present board room. She has fond memories of Miss Belle Lowry, church organist, who played with the aid of the boy who "pumped" the organ; and of church librarians Molly Wing and Clifford Wick "doling out books to children through a pass-through window."

Time has brought some hearing and vision problems for Eleanor, but with weekly calls of a visiting nurse and Meals On Wheels supplying her with two meals a day, she continues to be vital and energetic, a credit to her community and an inspiration to her fellow church members.

Also appearing in the August 1982 Chronicle:

THE ZUERCHERS REPORT

The Rev. John M. Zuercher and his family write the happy news of their settling in at their manse at 114 Beverly Street, Kingwood, West Virginia. They express appreciation for the gift certificate and flower arrangement from their friends at Covenant and for our care and support as he prepared for full time service of the Lord. John served his first communion July 4, officiated at a wedding for the first time July 17, and was Installed July 25. He invokes God's blessing upon us and prays that we be guided to ever increasing levels of ministry and service.

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

Those interested in providing floral arrangements for the sanctuary, as memorial to or in honor of a-loved one, have several options. The Deacons' Flower Committee can order an arrangement of fresh flowers from a florist at a cost of \$14; the donor may make a donation to the Hunger Fund, symbolized by an arrangement of wheat and white grapes, or to the Peacemaking Fund, in which case an arrangement of red poppies will be placed on the Communion Table. Deacon Mrs. Richard (Effie) Young (283-2086) may be contacted to arrange a specific date and other details.

COVENANT CUPBOARD

Deacon Mrs. Don (Diane) Campbell alerts those who have been generously contributing to Covenant Cupboard to new demands for that community service. She indicates that the Cupboard is now being used an average of once or twice <u>each</u> <u>day</u>, rather than the five or six times per month recorded in the past. She suggests that this reflects the severe economic conditions our country is facing, especially as unemployment benefits begin to run out. She asks us to consider this changing situation as we make our donations of food to the Cupboard.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY (Don Campbell, Aug. 1982)

Endings and Beginnings ---- If I had to give a title to the church's ministry, this would be it. We know life ends, but thanks be to God who has assured us of His promise that life continues beyond death. Announcements of graduations, receiving invitations to attend reunions and other milestone anniversaries help all of us to realize that the celebration of these endings merely marks new and more challenging beginnings.

Personally, it was my privilege and responsibility as Vice-Moderator to represent the Presbytery at the Service of Dissolution of the Lyndora U. P. Church. It truly marks the end of an era, and it completes a page in the history of our own congregation, since we helped to establish this church for non-English speaking Presbyterians. And yet their action to be dissolved as a church carried with it an action that will use the assets of that congregation for the continuing work of the broader Church. The presbytery will establish in their name two loan funds. One will be to assist Seminary students seeking to be ministers, and the other will provide other churches with capital improvement loans to further their ministries.

As a pastor it is my privilege to share God's Word in situations where the faithful are experiencing endings. It is my joy to share with you that the faithful do not view life as having beginnings and endings, but through the gift of Jesus Christ they see in every ending a new beginning! In Christ life continually begins anew!

Question: When was our ritual of "Passing the Peace" (greeting one another during worship) begun?

Answer: On Pentecost Sunday, June 7, 1987 (during Steven Hamilton's pastorate).

And we're still enjoying it today!

No. 43



Again this week, we sample some of the news from old issues of the Covenant Church newsletter, with particular attention to the excellent staff and willing volunteers who have been the strength of our congregation, past and present.

October 1987

Our church secretary, Rose Curry, is retiring September 30, after thirteen years of faithful service. We will all miss her, for her services have gone far beyond preparing the bulletins, answering the phone and typing the many communications from the office. She and Jim plan to travel, visiting family members in Florida, Minnesota and Arizona. Many thanks to both Rose and Jim for their dedicated service to Covenant.

Mrs. Catherine "Cassie" McMahan now enters the Secretarial service of the church. She brings with her previous experience in this capacity and we look forward to giving her support and encouragement in this position.

December 1987

We will honor our retiring Church Treasurer, Joe Davidson, at the Fellowship Hour after worship on Sunday, Dec. 6. A special presentation will be made to Joe in recognition of his five years as treasurer and his many years of service to the church. Mr. Davidson is resigning in order to more fully retire. With him go our best wishes and gratitude for many years of faithful service. He celebrates <u>fifty years</u> of membership in our congregation.

Note: If you do the math (1987 – 50), you'll discover that Joe joined First/Covenant in 1937; therefore he can claim <u>76 years</u> of membership this year in 2013 ! !

Praise God !

Following Joe Davidson as Church Treasurer will be James Anderson. He brings with him a considerable business background, having been in the coal mining industry a number of years, from which he is now retired.

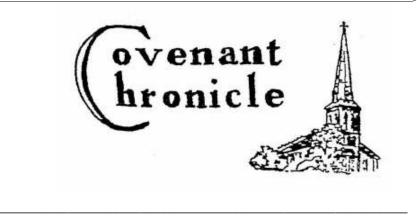
Robert Undercuffler began the full-time position of Sexton a year ago on January 1, 1987 and has provided yeoman's service around the building and grounds throughout the year.

May 1988

Covenant teachers and helpers are among the unsung heroes at Covenant. Many actively participate in our Christian Education program by giving time and talent to the Nursery, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and Kids' Club. We will honor them on Teacher Recognition Sunday, May 22.

Among those included in this dedicated group of men and women are: Ida Ballon, Sue Blatt, Carol Butler, Loveina Butler, Vicky Butler, Rosamond Curry, Jennifer Divers, Helen Ferguson, Beth Flick, Jeff Garrison, Elma Hall, Mark Hall, Sherry Halm, Monica Hamilton, Steven Hamilton, Emma Hilliard, Denise Hobaugh, Jodi Johnston, Margaret Johnston, Terri Kasmoch, Tim Kasmoch, Pam Kroh, Romaine McDonald, Carmen McGallis, Cassie McMahan, Shannon Mortimer, Pam Patterson, Mary Reefer, Eleanor Ritts, Linda Ruben, Roberta Ruff, Lee Sandora, Paula Saylor, Jeanne Schlicht, Connie Schwarzfeger, Don Schwarzfeger, Joan VanDeusen, Ola Vensel and Cheri White.

No. 44



November 1982

Use of the food cupboard greatly increased during the summer, with 24 families (36 adults, 41 children) fed in July; 21 families (32 adults, 37 children) in August; and 11 families (16 adults, 14 children) using the cupboard in September.

The unemployment situation in Butler is expected to generate a continuing surge of need for the cupboard, so we have made adjustments to meet these needs. We are ordering generic foods by cases from a local store and continue to order meat in large quantities, then package and freeze it ourselves.

We may need to set a schedule of times that the cupboard will be open each week and ask for volunteers to come to help stock the shelves and distribute food. With people coming two and three times *daily*, our church secretary can't be "on duty" at all times. We currently need baby food, disposable diapers, crackers and dry powdered milk as well as the other items needed to provide families with a simply but nourishing meal.

Thank you for your help.

Diane Campbell, Chr. of the Board of Deacons

Update on the Cupboard ~ September, 1983

Our cupboard continues to operate and to receive referrals from various agencies in Butler (primarily from the Coalition for the Unemployed and from Community Social Services). The Deacons' Covenant Cupboard is now chaired by Eleanor Walchesky, who coordinates our outreach effort. We have set up a separate bank account for the cash contributions received for the cupboard; Effie Young is our "financial whiz" who handles the money. Mary Lois Johnston is in charge of keeping the cupboard well-stocked, and Leila Roe coordinates the volunteers. All have contributed greatly to the smooth operation of the project. Our records for calendar year 1983 to date show a trend of increasing need:

- --In Jan., Feb. and March we served 103 family units, including 178 adults and 148 children
- --In April, May and June we served 105 family units, including 183 adults and 169 children
- --In July and August *so far*, we have served 111 families, including 201 adults and 175 children

We thank Hill U. P. Church, St. Peter's Episcopal and First United Methodist for both contributions and volunteers. Also contributing food and money have been Faith Presbyterian, Bethany U. C. C., Saint Andrews Presbyterian and the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

from the Chronicle, November 1982

Connell Class Dissolved

After more than 50 years as a pillar of strength in the Adult Department of Covenant's Sunday School, the Connell Class voted to dissolve. The majority of its members can no longer attend because of ill health or advanced age. The class was named for its first and longest-serving teacher, John T. Connell. The last teacher of the class was Daniel Ripper, who retired for health reasons a few years ago after many years of service.

Library Note

As weather grows colder and days become shorter, young folks read more. Our library staff recommends <u>The Witch and the</u> <u>Wardrobe</u> and other volumes in a series by C. S. Lewis for the Age 10-14 group; and for the 10-16 sports enthusiast, we have books about the Olympics, football and a variety of other sports. Adult fiction readers are reminded that <u>The Thornbirds</u>, a story about Australia, will soon become a television mini-series featuring James Franciscus and other well known stars.

Christmas Parade Float

Approximately 25 masked, smiling wet-headed youngsters swarmed into the alley behind Covenant Church about 7 p.m. on October 17, while inside, adult leaders surveyed a newspapercovered floor with six parts of a giant cardboard Christmas tree. The tree, designed by Carol McKinney, had just been painted by the young people in preparation for their participation in the Butler Thanksgiving weekend Parade.

This was the second meeting of the Joint 5th-6th Grade Fellowship of Covenant, Hill and Saint Andrews churches. A worship service, led by Peter Gregory, student assistant at Covenant, concluded the evening. Earlier a meal was provided, after which the students enjoyed ducking for apples, getting better acquainted and working together on special creative activities.

The group will meet again for more painting of props for the float as well as to put the finishing touches on their costumes for the parade.

from the Chronicle, April 1983

Richard Young, who has served as president of Adult Seekers Class for the past ten years, will retire from office at the end of the 1983 Spring Term. Thank you, Dick, for a job well done! The outgoing president has named David Blewett to chair a Perpetuation/Steering Committee which will provide future leadership and program arrangements for the class.

from the Chronicle, September 1983

A special new entrance for the handicapped is nearing completion at the church. The old walkway between Covenant and St. Peter's Episcopal Church has been widened so that wheelchairs, strollers and people walking side-by-side can enter the building.

Are we putting a "new" door in the side of the building? Actually, as long-time Covenant members will recall, we are just reopening a door that has been there all along! We will announce the "grand opening" so that you will know when to spread the word and invite those for whom easy access makes the difference between deciding whether to attend church or stay home. Our "easy entrance" will end trudging up the hill from the parking lot and climbing all those stairs for any who are physically unable to do so.

Editor's Note: First of all, have you ever tried "walking sideby-side" on our handicapped ramp? People must have been a lot thinner back in 1983, because I have never found this to be an option. Secondly... how, exactly, does the ramp and handicapped entrance door eliminate "trudging up the hill from the parking lot"?