

# A Firm Foundation

Tales of a “Cornerstone” and of a People.

A collection of many interesting facts, stories, and comments about Methodists in Chatham, NJ, interwoven with stories of the Township, Village and Borough of Chatham.

Edited and compiled by William B. Birdsall  
Member  
Chatham United Methodist Church  
October 2007

## NOTE

This "history" is not an original work. I've considered myself an editor who has gathered in one place many interesting facts, stories, and comments - - often verbatim. I have made reference to the source(s) of the information at the end of most paragraphs and have included details about all of the sources at the end of the paper.

A Firm Foundation is for the use and pleasure of those persons interested in the Chatham (N.J.) United Methodist Church. It is not for general publication.

William B. Birdsall  
October 2007

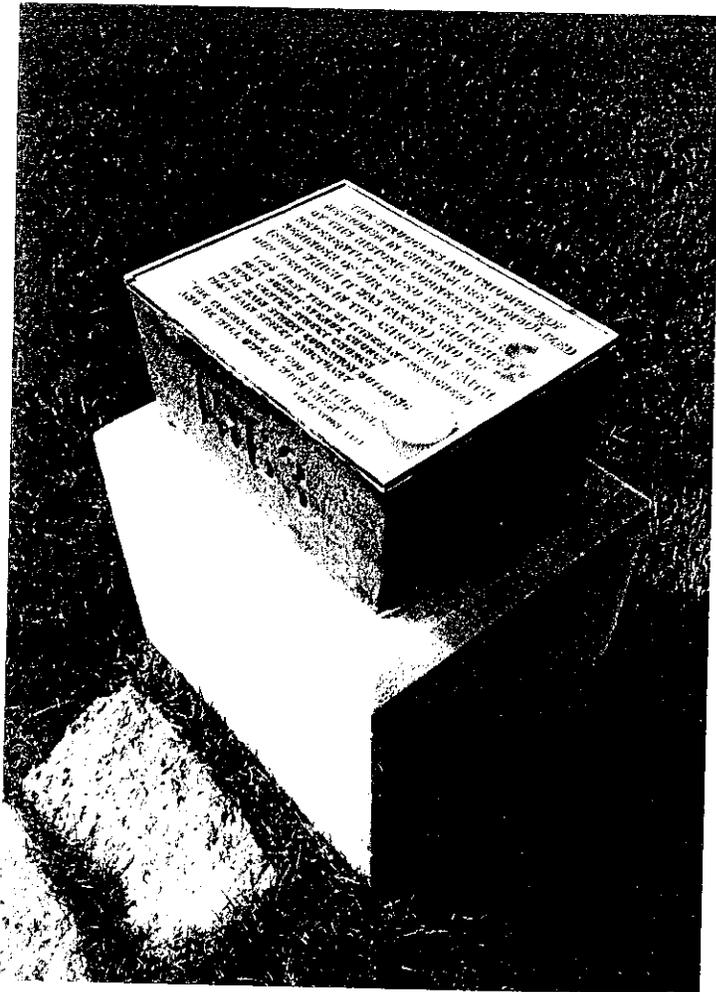
# A FIRM FOUNDATION

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# The Cornerstone



# A Firm Foundation

Tales of a "Cornerstone" and of a People.

Our Chatham United Methodist church's one "foundation" rests on the remains of the massive terminal moraine (*earthen debris*) left by the last great continental glacier (called the "Wisconsinian" in North America). The glacier slowly retreated northward 20,000 years ago and the melting ice left behind gravel, sand and rock flour. These irregular earthen formations created Long Island, Nantucket, Cape Cod and land masses that extend across northern Staten Island, westward through New Jersey and into Pennsylvania.

For a time the drainage of this melting ice was blocked (such as at Hobart Gap just east of Chatham) causing a great lake to form, "*Glacial Lake Passaic*." The Lake flooded a low region in the Newark Basin, which extends northward to the New York State border, westward to the Ramapo mountain front, and southward along the western slope of the Watchung Mountains. Lake Passaic was approximately 150 to 200 feet deep, 10 miles wide and 30 miles long. The remnants of the Lake are found in several swamps, most notably the Great Swamp. The massive area today is a valuable watershed. (City University and Dilonno)

"Chatham" was at the bottom of Lake Passaic. The floor of this lake gradually built up with sand, clay and, later, the organic material that ultimately became fertile, porous soil. Numerous rock formations evolved, including sandstone. The only visible sign of the future Borough and Township was a long *island* above the lake formed by the top of the hill on which today we find Fairmount Avenue. (Record)

Lake Passaic did gradually drain into the sea along the route now called the Passaic River. The river slowly made its winding path through valleys and marshlands. Eventually the land became habitable, roamed by mastodons and other prehistoric animals. (Record)

Six or seven thousand years ago, the first people to settle in the area were the Minsi Tribe of the Leni Lenape ("Original People") Indians, part of the Algonquin group. Native American artifacts have been found at Dickinson's farm, near the Passaic River, north of Chatham; at the Budd farm on Passaic

Avenue; at Duchamp's sandpit; and at the spring near the pumping station. Artifacts have also been found along the western bank of the Passaic River north of Main Street; on the Vanderpoel estate which stood east of the Passaic River over-looking Chatham; along the slopes near River Road; on the old Swartz farm on Southern Boulevard; as well as in many other places on the rim of the Great Swamp. (Record, Millburn and Cunningham)

## BEGINNINGS

The first Europeans in this area were probably Dutch prospectors, operating under the auspices of the Dutch West India Company, seeking metals in the hills and bargaining with the Indians for furs. Men from Sweden also came to New Jersey. However, from 1655, when New Netherlands forced out New Sweden, until 1664, the whole of New Jersey was under Dutch control. (Millburn)

In 1664, Charles II of Britain prepared to fight the Dutch for control of this area. He allocated a large tract of land, embracing all of New Jersey, to his brother James, Duke of York. The Dutch entered into a negotiated surrender and withdrew from *New York*, whereupon the English took control. (Millburn)

James' grantees, John, Lord Berkeley, and Sir George Carteret, seem to have been the first real estate developers. Berkeley and Carteret so well extolled their land that settlers soon began to arrive from Long Island and Connecticut, as well as from England. The colonists settled largely in areas they named Elizabethtown and New Ark. (Millburn)

Berkeley and Carteret's brochure was circulated throughout New England and abroad in order to attract people to the new territory. This brochure, "Grants and Concessions," later called "The Magna Charta of New Jersey," promised to men and women religious freedom, land owner-ship, right of assembly, and most of the other civil rights which today form the basis of New Jersey's legal code. (Millburn)

The roots of our community and our Protestant religious tradition were thus planted in the Mid-Atlantic region in 1664 when Elizabethtown was founded by a group of settlers from the Connecticut Colony in New Haven. The group was known as the "Eighty Associates."

On behalf of the British Crown and under the Charter, British Governor Richard Nicholls issued a grant for land to this Association whose members included John Baker, John Ogden, John Bailey, Luke Watson, Jacob Melyn, John Winans, Matthew Canfield, and Stephen Crane. The initial 1664 Charter covered land that extended west from the coast opposite Staten Island. The boundaries of the "purchase" ran from the Raritan River northward to where the Passaic River flowed into Newark Bay, a distance of 17 miles. The tract also extended inland nearly twice that distance and included all of present day Union County and parts of Morris (*including Chatham*) and Somerset Counties. (Raftis)

Governor Nicholls' grant required that the Associates have several meetings for consultation and agreements, the purpose of which would be the allotment of the lands to the Associates and the establishment of regulations for the orderly transaction of the business of the town. Each Associate was allotted several tracts of land, each of which amounted to 100 or more acres. At one such meeting on February 19, 1666, sixty-five male inhabitants took the "Oath of Allegiance" to the King. By so doing, each became a "freeman" - his right to be a "freeman" forfeited only by due process of the law. Also, at those meetings, it was decided that the parcels were to be continuously occupied for at least three years, either by the Associate himself or by his servants and that no sale of a lot could be made during those three years unless it was first offered to an inhabitant who had been a resident prior to October 28, 1667. (Union County and Raftis)

The inhabitants of the new settlement would be allowed liberty of conscience in the exercise of the Protestant religion unless that freedom was converted to licentiousness or the disturbance of others. Several townships were formed during the following decade(s), and each was permitted to make its own laws and to have the final decision on all small cases. Each township was to choose its own civil and military officers. (Union County)

The specified freedoms were quite significant, especially since they emanated from an English Crown that was exceedingly jealous of the power and privileges of the people and hostile to the religious non-conformists. (Union County)

Another group of families from the colonies in New England, under the leadership of the Reverend Abraham Pierson, also took advantage of the expanded English presence along the Passaic River. They settled and

named the place New Ark in 1667. One early writer characterized the "neighborhood" this way:

*"It is not safe to venture far into the interior. It is extremely hazardous for a few families to plant themselves on the out-skirts of civilization, as residents and occupants of that land are unprotected."*

Among the early settlers in Newark were the Bonnel, Meeker, Crane, Headley, Wade, Townley, Ball, Potter, Woodruff, Miller, Searing, Hays, Terrell, Jagers, Littell, Winans, Williams, Thompson, Earls, and Bond families. (Union County and Raftis)

As the years passed and generation succeeded generation, the population and settlements did move inland from Elizabethtown and Newark. However, for many years, people traveled back to Elizabethtown to worship in the old church, which today is known as "Old First" (Presbyterian). By 1730, they had begun to establish their own religious societies. The new parishes included Connecticut Farms (*named in honor of their former home, and later re-named "Union"*), Springfield and Turkey (*later called "New Providence"*).

The settlers in our part [*Chatham*] of "East Jersey" also came from the early Newark and Elizabethtown communities and they brought with them religious beliefs that were strongly Calvinistic. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Presbyterian churches had been established in Chatham Township at Bottle Hill (later "Madison"), in New Providence and in Hanover. Methodism was not a part of the early heritage of these settlements. (Newsletter)

The outward push of religion to "unchurched" people of the remote areas was sparked by a little group of dedicated preachers, mostly men who worked with their hands and preached as they found opportunity. (Ehrhardt)

Close family ties were maintained during these early times for many reasons, not the least of which was that uncertainty and fear abounded in the area. This account from the Summit Record of 1883 will demonstrate why this fear existed. (Raftis)

*"With the exception of a few hamlets, the surrounding country was a howling wilderness and was thought to be home to many witches. There was said to be more of them in this area than in any other part of the state. [The presence of the area we now call the Great Swamp certainly added to the mystery.] The mountains and forests surrounded it on all sides and very few of the inhabitants were ever known to have ventured into the wilderness; seldom was the face of a stranger*

seen. Why witches should have chosen this particular area for their residence is more than anyone can tell; but it had been handed down from the earliest records, that the 'evil one' had a grip here since the glacial period.

*"The story goes that not many years before the Revolutionary War, as a poor old wight was trudging along one night from Bottle Hill to Turkey, during a heavy thunderstorm, fearful sights were seen on top of Long Hill. A lurid flame was issuing from the highest pinnacle of that ancient ridge and from all quarters, horrid old hags, riding on broomsticks, were sweeping through the murky air. His ears were then assailed by wild discordant sounds, hootings, shrieks, cries and unearthly laughter. In his terror he recognized old "Mother Preakness," a hag well known in the area. She was standing on a huge rock, and her motley crew gathering around her for a Sabbath. (Raftis)*

*"Whether it was this dreadful sight, or in consequence of his trip to Bottle Hill, the poor fellow did not reach his home until days after and it was then that he told his story and pointed out the rock. The rock is still in existence, and to this day (1883), is known as the Witch Rock, and some say that the marks of the caldron can be distinctly made out.*

*"Superstitious people still shun the neighborhood at night, and it is said, every year at midnight when the harvest moon is at its full, old Mother Preakness is seen standing on the rock, and with her long, bony fingers, gathers from over the valley her crew for a Sabbath."*

"Witch Rock" still exists. It is a jutting ridge of basaltic rock, broken into two pieces where movements in the earth's crust during the Jurassic geologic period pushed it upward and deposited it; some 180 million years ago. It stands on the MacGregor property, known today as 242 Fairmount Avenue in Chatham. (Raftis and Courier)

## OUR PARTICULAR COMMUNITY

The early growth of our community came about because nature had created the river running along the western slope of the Great Watchung range and because the Minsi Tribe had already recognized the location as a good place to cross the river. The place they chose was a natural ford about 66 feet down-stream (north) from the present bridge. Here the water is shallow and the ground firm. (Strong, Cunningham and Vanderpoel)

It is difficult today to visualize the original site of our community. Today's major connection with Route 24, residential and commercial development and landfill that has been added to each side of the river, make it impossible to

visualize what attracted the early colonists to this spot. The best way to see it is to approach the river along its banks either in Shepherd Kollock Park, Stanley Park or in the Union County Park site near Stanley Park. Because of development and fill, the river is somewhat narrower today than it was years ago and the banks of the river are more abrupt than they were when the area was first settled.

The first Colonial wagon road through the area followed the Minsi's trail, which linked the Delaware River with the Atlantic Ocean. The road was one of the original "highways" of the area and became a vital route for the Colonists. *[It was not until 1801 that the New Jersey Legislature formally established the route as a "Turnpike" managed by a private group that began charging "tolls."]* Seen today, this colonial dirt road went northwest from the river, through Bottle Hill and on to Morristown; and, in the opposite direction, it went toward Springfield *(a large area, which in that time included Springfield, Millburn and Short Hills)*, Elizabethtown, and the Newark Bay. (Strong, White and Chatham Township)

By 1701, some land speculators owned tracts of land in our area. Among these was William Penn of Philadelphia. Between 1715 and 1721, John Budd, a wealthy Philadelphia merchant who owned a forge in Whippany, had acquired nearly all the land now within the boundaries of Chatham. (Chatham Township and Cunningham)

The first recorded colonial settler, along the east side of the river at the Minnisink Crossing was Samuel Carter *(in 1726, when the primitive road which succeeded the Minnisink Path was officially surveyed as a public "highway")*. Along the west side of the river, two brothers, John and Daniel Day (1728) were some of the first settlers. The Day's acquired 250 acres from John Budd. Although they were farmers, the Day brothers built a bridge at the crossing and before long the little settlement was referred to as: "Day's Bridge." (Chatham Township, Cunningham and Vanderpoel)

John Day laid out his farm of 100 acres on either side of the Minnisink Trail. It fronted on the river for 2,000 feet above the crossing and 2,000 feet below the crossing. He built a home on the south side of the Trail, a short distance west of the river. Daniel Day established his farm of 150 acres south and west of his brother's farm. In 1730, Samuel Lum, a weaver from Elizabethtown, purchased 27 acres from John Budd along the river north of John Day's holdings. Three years later he bought another hundred acres from Budd. (Cunningham)

In addition to Day and Lum, the early family names in the village were Bonnel, Carter, Muchmore (whom the Noe family eventually married into), Minthorn, Morrell, Ward, and, later, Seely. (White)

By 1750, Day's Bridge had 40 houses. The early settlers came to farm, harvest timber and to use the abundant water for grist and saw mills. The promise of bog iron in the area known today as the "Great Swamp," attracted others.

The Colonial pioneers found that this location was a natural stopping place for the early settlers. It was here, therefore, about the year 1755, that the Days built a tavern. (Strong)

During several generations before the 1770s, the village was known by various names, including the "Minnisink Crossing," "John Day's Bridge," "Carter's Bridge," and by the phrase, "On Passaic River." The names "Pisiack," "Pexaik" and "Passaic" were a corruption of the Native American's word that sounded like "Phishawack" or "Fishawack" so the little village was also referred to as the "Crossing of the Fishawack." (White)

The settlement gradually spread both east and west along the road from the river. In fact, the Passaic River was considered to be flowing through the early village. The residents recognized no such artificial political boundaries as Morris County (on the west) and Essex County (on the east). (Vanderpoel, and Cunningham)

Isolated farmers from western New Jersey brought their grain and produce to the "Crossing" and sold them, either to the mills that the colonists built along the river or to buyers who had traveled up from Newark or Elizabethtown. As a result of this activity, the community quickly became a "trading post." (Anniversary 125)

Transportation in those days, of course, was by foot, by horseback or by horse drawn wagons, which were mostly without springs. The journeys were long and tedious, so that the Crossing also developed quickly as a stopping place and location for stores, taverns and lodging. Most of the "business" was located on the east side of the river. As it expanded, the center moved westward. The western edge of the growing community was marked by two roads, one that led northward and is today "Passaic Avenue," and one that went to the south along the ridge of the [Long] mountain and is today named "Fairmount Avenue." (Anniversary 125)

In the decade before the Revolution, the community was a flourishing village, having its nucleus at the bridge, extending perhaps three-quarters of a mile in each direction, with scattered dwellings up and down the river, and containing stores, taverns, grist-, saw- and fulling-mills, blacksmiths, shops and other local businesses. (Vanderpoel)

Farms and tradesmen's places of business lined the road on both sides. Stretching back from the main road and the river, one farm joined another; they were neat expanses, marked off by rail fences. The abundant land brought prosperity from the gardens, orchards of cherry and apple trees, and fields of corn. Horses roamed the pastures, and cattle grazed in the meadows. Behind this improved land, there still lay virgin acres for expansion, especially on the hills, where there arose a dense thicket of bushes, and a heavy forest of red and white oak, and butternut. (White)

The settlers built homes in clusters. In addition to the settlers at Day's Bridge, some clusters were established in Green Village, others along the road now known as "Southern Boulevard" and still others on Long Hill. (Chatham Township)

Morris County had been carved out of Hunterdon County in 1738, due to the increase of population in Hunterdon County. In 1740 Morris County Courts convened and divided the county into three townships: Morris, Hanover, and Pequannock. The New Jersey Legislature created Chatham Township from parts of Morris and Hanover; some of which area eventually became Florham Park, Madison and Chatham. (Record)

One of the earliest churches to establish itself [Presbyterian] was in Hanover and worshippers traveled over poor roads to attend services. But in 1747, residents in Bottle Hill broke away and formed their own church. A meetinghouse was established in 1748 and a church building was erected in 1765. The congregation consisted of worshippers from Chatham, Union Hill, Bottle Hill and other nearby areas. Jacob Morrell and his family were among the worshippers. (*Morrell would play a role in ancient Methodism in Chatham.*) (Cunningham)

Foster Horton (son of the Presbyterian minister in Bottle Hill, Rev. Azariah Horton) and Jacob Morrell kept the first general stores in Chatham. These two stores were on the south side of the Turnpike, west of the river. Advertisements in the New Jersey Journal ran as follows: "Rum, wine, brandy, tea, coffee and chocolate, sugar, pepper and all-spice. Black satins, chinz and calicoes, cambric and hemp stockings, buckram, stay laces, plug

tobacco, castile soap and ginger. Gun powder and plows, halters and hammers and a quantity of alum, brimstone and snuff in bladders." (Strong)

Jacob Morrell (born on Long Island in 1728) prospered in Chatham with a business dealing in groceries, dry goods, hardware, seeds, and plants, and he could easily afford to lend money at interest. From his profits he bought a "riding chair" [a small horse-drawn buggy], and for a time he owned a slave named Hager, until she stole some clothes and goods and ran away in 1773. As property, this "young Negro wench" was worth ten dollars to him. (White)

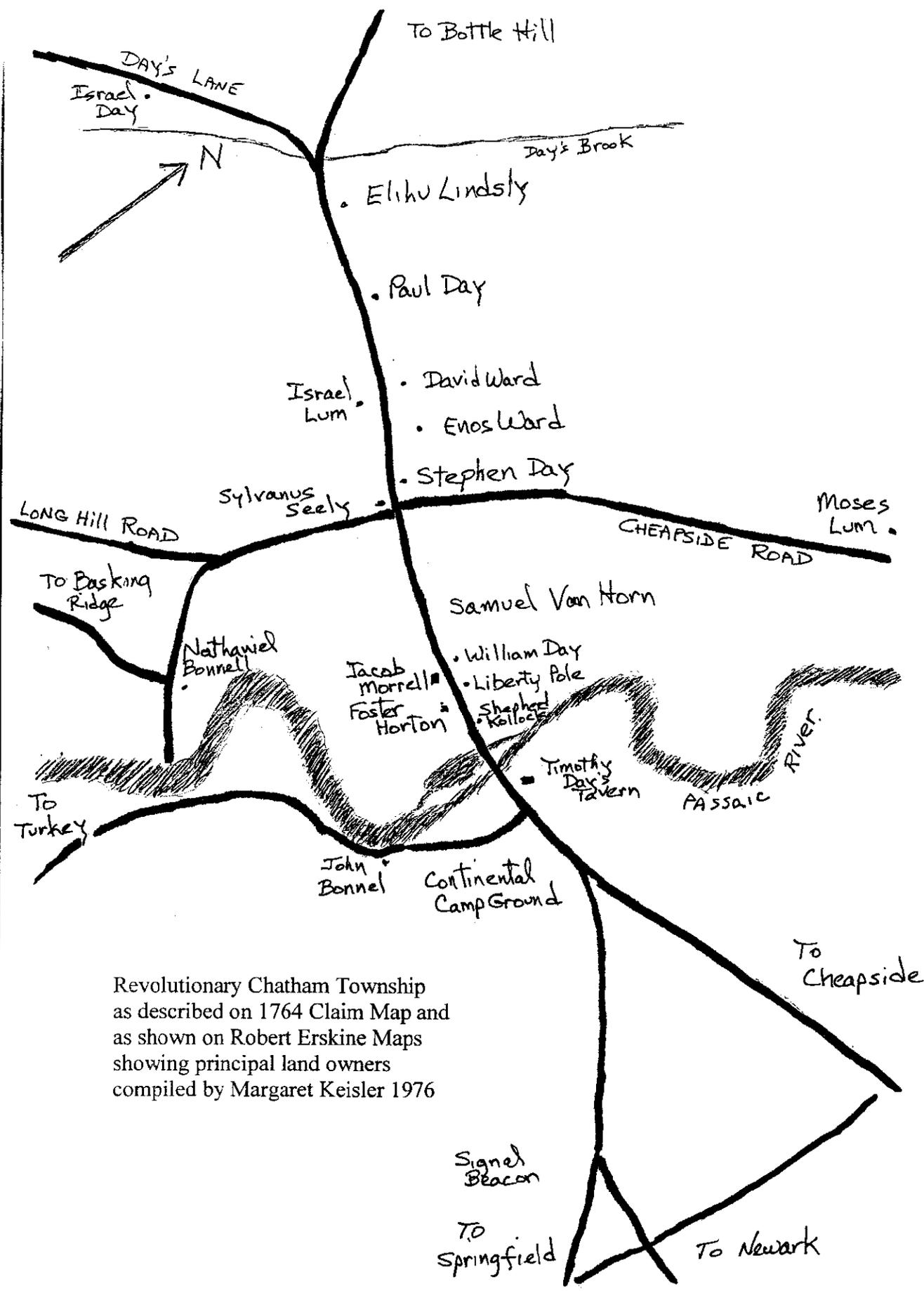
*[This is a reminder that the owning and trading of human beings was an unfortunate practice that existed in this country as far back as the early colonial days.]*

At the Bottle Hill Presbyterian Church, Morrell could afford to buy the "rights" to his own pew and pay the rent on it.

Jacob Morrell was, by many appearances, the wealthiest man in the village. He was the leading merchant who lived on the main road in a large two-story building that combined store and home [*now 63 Main Street*]. The house was built in 1740. Jacob Bonnel had originally owned it. Jacob Morrell acquired it and set up the store. From 1867 to (at least 1959), the property was the home of the Tallmadge family. In 2007, the "Morrell Mansion" is smaller than originally constructed and it is now the site of "Scalini Fedeli Ristorante." (Vanderpoel)

The present west wing of the "Jacob Morrell" house had eyebrow windows. The roof has been rebuilt with an overhang and the sculptured posts and bay windows were added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The previous "west wing," a large and roomy extension used for the store, was detached and moved away many years later by Charles Farmer, to Passaic Avenue just south of Center Place. [*In 1972, the "Farmer" house was still a residence. However, by 2007, the residence had been demolished and replaced by the Chatham Collision Garage.*] (White and Saturday Stroll)

In the 1770s new stage lines began to provide the villagers with swifter, regular travel. As early as 1771 Daniel and Silas Burnet provided service with their "Morris Town Stage Waggon," which ran overland each Thursday from Powles Hook ferry to Morristown. Sylvanus Seely applied for a Morris County tavern license in 1773, to be located at the western edge of the village [*at that time, now the southwest corner of Main Street and Fairmount Avenue*], and sought to get the patronage of villagers in competition with



Revolutionary Chatham Township  
 as described on 1764 Claim Map and  
 as shown on Robert Erskine Maps  
 showing principal land owners  
 compiled by Margaret Keisler 1976

Timothy Day, whose tavern was at the eastern edge of the village. Seely's tavern rapidly became successful. Thus, in 1775 Constant Cooper's new "Stage-waggon" stopped on each run at the door of Seely's tavern. Seely prospered enough to require the help of another resident, Matthias Winans. (White)

Besides the farmhouses and barns, Jacob Morrell's store, Timothy Day's tavern, and Seely's new combination store and tavern, the village consisted of mills along the river, not far from the bridge. The best known millers were the brothers Nathaniel and Benjamin Bonnel and other members of the large Bonnel family, which had run the business since the 1740s.

Nathaniel Bonnel was the principal town miller. He built a comfortable two-story home on a solid stone foundation near the upstream dam, at the bottom of a steep hill rising out of the lowlands of the river valley. His lands extended for more than a hundred acres. He had a gristmill and grasslands providing forage for a small herd of cattle and several horses. He was a member of the Presbyterian congregation in Turkey. (White)

The village also had a forge, on John Bonnel's property, by the river bank. Early physicians in the village included Dr. Peter Smith, born in 1748, and Dr. Stephen Ball and, from Morristown, Dr. Berne Budd. (White)

## TIME OF GROWING INDEPENDENCE

When communication with the larger villages and cities became more frequent, the term "On Passaik River," most recently used to identify the community, was found to be too indefinite. Letters and other commerce sometime found themselves delivered to other places along the 40 or 50 miles of the river. Also, the settlers decided that their town had attained a size and importance which entitled it to a more distinctive name. (Vanderpoel)

Accordingly, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1773, at a meeting held for that purpose, the community's leaders agreed to call it "Chatham," in honor of William Pitt, 1708-1778, the British 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Chatham. (Vanderpoel)

*William Pitt was first educated at Eton (1721-1726) and then was sent up to Oxford. In 1732, having left Oxford without a degree, either due to disinterestedness or because of ill health, Pitt received a commission in the "King's*

Own regiment of Horse” or, as they were known, “The Blues.” Through one of his grandfather’s seats, William Pitt entered parliament in 1735 at the age of 27. (Von Ruville)

*Pitt made a name for himself by his honesty and failure to take financial advantage of his position. Discouraged by his lack of progress within government, however, he turned to criticizing the Duke of Newcastle, and his government’s French war policy, resulting in his dismissal in 1755. However, two years later, Pitt was recalled to government at the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War to form a coalition government with Newcastle. (Britannia)*

*Pitt served very effectively as a wartime Prime Minister with Newcastle attending to domestic affairs. His policies resulted in victory over the French in India and Canada and on the seas. He sought to continue the war until France was completely defeated and to broaden the war by declaring against Spain, but he was met with opposition from other ministers and disagreement with George III. Pitt resigned in 1761 and spent the next five years criticizing the government. (Britannia)*

*In July 1766, Pitt was recalled to form and lead another coalition government. This time, he met with little success as Prime Minister. He entered the House of Lords as Earl of Chatham. His government was unable to deal with the problems in America; he supported the Americans against the King, but was not for independence. He proved incapable of governing at home as well. His most loyal ministers resigning around him, Pitt fell into depression and he resigned his office October 1768. (Britannia)*

*Pitt did not leave the political arena. He continued to speak out against British policy in the colonies and to fight for parliamentary reform, but he gained little following in these efforts. He was a statesman, not a politician. He died in 1778 at the age of 70. (Britannia)*

*William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, known as “the Great Commoner,” dominated the political scene influencing government from within and without. He is remembered for his vocal criticism of harsh British policy levied against the American colonies and for his skills as a wartime leader during the Seven Years’ War. (Britannia)*

The colonial citizens in our community wanted to acknowledge their relationship as British subjects and yet to recognize Pitt for his vigorous opposition to the taxes [Stamp Act in 1764 and Tea Act in 1773] that Britain had levied on the colonists. (White)

During the years 1775 to 1783, Chatham was still an unincorporated village in the Township of Chatham, having a population of about 288 men, women, and children, including slaves. The community was a Whig stronghold, where 55 men - - nearly three-quarters of the 74 “village” men

known to be between the ages of 16 and 50 - - became steadfast "revolutionaries." (White)

## THE WAR YEARS IN CHATHAM

The events in Chatham during those war years are, in some ways, similar to the stirrings in other communities. In fact, in some instances, our town and its inhabitants were closely involved with events that became significant to American history.

In April 1775, a group of young rebels from Chatham raised a "Liberty" pole in the village of Chatham on the west side of the river near William Day's place, as had been done in many other towns and villages across the Colonies, signifying that Chatham was united in the cause of liberty. The "Liberty" pole was a slender stake, like a flag-pole, which stood as high as the trees. (White) *(This account places the pole on land that today lies at the northwest corner of Main Street and University Place.)*

The young men also planned to take action aimed squarely at a Loyalist property owner (born in Wales), Thomas Eckley, who lived a few miles away toward the village of Hanover. When Eckley learned of the plan to "tar and feather" him, mock and beat him, and burn his home or barn, he went to Jacob Green, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hanover and a leader in the local patriot cause, and pleaded to be able to publicly recant his Tory opinions. After doing this, Eckley went to the Presbyterian Church in Bottle Hill and sought to make the public statement there, too. In this case, however, the minister, Reverend Azariah Horton, downplayed the rumors of violence Eckley had heard and did not let him read his statement. (White)

Meanwhile, Jacob Morrell [named for his uncle Jacob Morrell in Chatham], alerted Elias Boudinot in Elizabethtown, a member of the Essex County Committee of Correspondence, about the threats against Eckley. Boudinot wrote to the Morris County Committee and urgently requested that such an incident be prevented, since it would "be such a stain on the characters of the friends of liberty that it might deter good men from joining the American cause." He added that he believed, "our very Enemies in the midst of us [must] enjoy that Peace & Liberty which we so ardently wish for ourselves." The attack by the young Chatham firebrands against Eckley never took place. (White)

Another Tory was William Wright. New to Chatham in 1776, Wright owned some excellent meadowland, a good orchard, and a comfortable house, adjacent to the farms of John Bonnel and Matthias Winans. If there were others who favored remaining loyal to the King [and doubtless there were, at first], they were not as convinced as time went on. Also, they were not as outspoken nor as consistently loyal as was William Wright. *(In 1778, after two years' of residence in the village, Wright tried, unsuccessfully, to sell his property. Eventually, he and his wife abandoned it and moved away. His land was forfeited to the colony and sold at public auction.)* (White)

Over half the community's fifty-five men served in the military; either in the local militia or in the Continental Army. Local households provided food and shelter to nearby troops.

However, until the autumn of 1776, the actual conflict with the British seemed to be remote. With General Washington's disastrous campaign on Long Island, the defeat at White Plains, the loss of Fort Washington, the evacuation of Fort Lee and his retreat of the army to the Delaware through New Jersey, the Chatham villagers began to realize their vulnerability. Washington's retreat was in two columns, one of which passed through Springfield, followed closely by the British pursuers. (Vanderpoel)

Perceiving that a full British invasion of New Jersey was imminent, General Washington requested Governor Livingston in November to assemble a militia to take the place of the New Jersey troops whose term was about to expire. He also asked that the inhabitants of the state hold themselves in readiness to remove their stock, grain and personal effects upon the earliest notice. Recognizing the value to the enemy of forage, Washington pointed out that what could not be removed with convenience should be destroyed without the least hesitation. While these orders had greater impact on those residents near the coastline, the villagers of Chatham knew of the instructions and made ready themselves - - in defense and in readiness to receive evacuees arriving from the east. (Vanderpoel)

The Essex County militia was directed to guard the passes of the short hills between Chatham and Springfield. Greatest care was taken in guarding the Chatham bridge. The bridge was considered a point of vital importance, being on the direct road from Morristown to Elizabeth, and thence by water to New York. It was considered the principal point of entrance to Morris County and particularly exposed to an advance of the British who were constantly waiting a favorable opportunity to invade that part of the State for the purpose of destroying the stores and powder-mill at Morristown. (Vanderpoel)

The sentinels who kept watch from the heights above Hobart Gap and along the highpoints from Pluckemin northward to the border with New York remained alert to the actions by the British in the east. Their line of sight extended all the way to the New York harbor and, in the south, beyond Middle Brook. Whenever it appeared that the enemy was mounting an advance in the direction of the "short hills," the roads, in Chatham (and in Morristown), were lined with men who were hurrying off armed and ready to drive back the invaders. A formidable body of troops was stationed at the Chatham bridge. (Vanderpoel)

The conditions of the land surface were severe. During the autumn and winter, skirmishes broke out in various areas of Elizabethtown, Springfield, Westfield and Chatham. The colonels and majors directing this action made constant rounds of the troops and militia. The soldiers called these "mud rounds," in reference to the condition of the roads, which were alternately frozen into ruts so deep as to render them almost impassible, and thawed into veritable quagmires. It was a campaign of exceptional hardship and suffering and soldiers of lesser physical condition would be stricken with pneumonia and other fatal illnesses. (Vanderpoel)

On December 14, 1776, several thousand British troops landed at Elizabethtown. British General Howe directed Brigadier General Leslie to march on Chatham and disperse the rebels there, because he recognized that the militia had their base at Chatham, that Major General Charles Lee had taken post there and that the N.J. Militia brigade under Major General Heath was heading toward Chatham. It was not long before the alarming information of the enemy's advance reached Chatham. This was the first experience that the people of the village had in actual warfare, and the residents were undoubtedly very fearful. (Vanderpoel)

Leslie set out from Elizabethtown on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, at the head of 800 troops. The Sussex County Militia battalion lay at Chatham, the Essex battalion was posted at Springfield, and the Morris County regiment was stationed about midway between them, among the short hills. With the British just two miles away and recognizing they were out-numbered, the Essex battalion fell back to the vicinity of Briant's tavern, joining up with the Morris County militia. A battle ensued. (Vanderpoel)

This first engagement at Springfield was a draw, neither party winning a decisive victory. (*Mary Hancock and her infant, John, who was to be a significant leader in Methodism in Chatham forty years later, lived in*

*Springfield at the time. She must have been quite fearful of the growing conflict.)* Each side seemed to feel that they had suffered a defeat. Although the strength of the combatants appears to have been nearly equal, the Americans believed themselves to be greatly outnumbered, and, despairing of stopping the enemy's advance, they fell back under cover of darkness to Chatham; while the British, amazed by the stubborn resistance of the raw undisciplined militia, also withdrew during the night, abandoning all hope of penetrating the country lying beyond the short hills. This was the first instance in New Jersey when the British troops were forced to turn and retire -- a fact that eventually gave hope to the waning spirits of the patriots. At the time, however, the militia had little conception of the success of their effort and of its far reaching effect. To the contrary, they thought they had suffered a defeat and expected to be attacked and pushed back to Morristown early next morning. (Vanderpoel)

The Massachusetts Continental detachment from Ticonderoga arrived in Morristown on the 17<sup>th</sup>, enroute to join General Washington on the other side of the Delaware River. Anticipating a renewal of the conflict in Chatham on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, the Continental line was immediately ordered to Chatham to support the militia. The brigade remained in Chatham until the next day, and then, finding the enemy had retired, was ordered to resume its westward march across the state. The inhabitants protested strongly against being left without any means of defense save that of the demoralized militia. An order soon arrived from General Washington directing the Ticonderoga troops to remain in the neighborhood of Morristown "in order to inspire the inhabitants and as far as possible to cover that part of the country." Those inhabitants who were to be among the early Methodists in Chatham ten years later, surely must have appreciated the "*inspiring*." (Vanderpoel)

Colonel Elias Dayton was in command of the American troops in and about Chatham for a long time. He was a trusted friend and confidant of General George Washington. While it is not known where Colonel Dayton lived in or near Chatham during the period of the Revolution, he once owned the Todd Farm where John Muchmore lived for many years. (Vanderpoel)

*"I beg you will collect all the men you possibly can about Chatham, and, after gaining proper intelligence, endeavor to strike a stroke upon Elizabeth-town or that neighborhood; at any rate be ready to co-operate with me."* Thus, wrote General Washington from Trenton on December 30, 1776, to General Maxwell in Morristown. General Washington's goal was to drive the British out of New Jersey. Maxwell lost no time in carrying out his instructions. Over the next six months, the militia and Continentals attacked

the British with so much vigor that the British were driven out of Elizabethtown and Newark. (Vanderpoel)

Shortly after the battle of Princeton early in 1777, General Washington led his troops into winter quarters around Morristown. His force numbered around 3,000 men. While many of the soldiers were quartered around the Wicke farm (Jockey Hollow), a number of them camped in the Loantaka valley, about three miles southeast of Morristown. Some lived in rude shelters, while others were billeted in private houses. Three regiments of Colonel Vose were quartered in private dwellings in the area later known as Chatham Township. Every house throughout the region was filled to its utmost capacity with either officers or soldiers. The quarters were arbitrarily selected by the commanders. However, this was often met with willing compliance because the residents were, for the most part, patriots. Provisions (food and clothing) came in from farmers in the area and women met together to sew for the soldiery. (Vanderpoel)

The detachment of artillery that was stationed in Chatham lacked horses, harnesses and tackling. Ammunition wagons and drivers were also needed. The wagons had been drawn over hard and bad roads in the preceding summer and part of the winter, which caused many of them to be out of repair and incomplete for a new campaign in 1777. (Vanderpoel)

The community was also, for a brief time, the headquarters of Major General Charles Lee, Major General John Sullivan and Major General Adam Stephen, all officers in General George Washington's Continental Army. Each of these men served well for a time, but eventually had a "falling-out" with Washington. Washington not only had to fight a war, he also had many problems with the people chosen to lead the troops. General Washington's personal standards were high. (Vanderpoel)

During July, 1777, Chatham was occupied for a few days by Colonel Daniel Morgan and his battalion of skirmishers - - "Morgan's Rangers," as they are known in history, whose daring exploits and romantic adventures give them pre-eminence in the various commands of the Continental army.

There was a prison in Chatham. Following the surrender of the British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, at least two of his key officers, English Major General William Phillips and German Major General Baron Reidesel [*and their entourage of sixteen persons, four house servants and twenty horses*], were detained for a short time in Chatham. They were held in Chatham for a week early in October 1779, where "proper quarters" were

provided and were subsequently relocated for detention in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. (Vanderpoel)

The *New Jersey Journal* was established in Chatham in 1779. The newspaper contributed to the successful outcome of the Revolutionary War. It was a significant voice of opposition to the influence of the Tory press of New York. Some historians attribute the plan to develop a patriotic newspaper to General Henry Knox and others say Alexander Hamilton was the one to urge such a publication. In either case, the project was carried into effect by a young 29-year-old captain in a company of New York artillery named Shepard Kollock. Captain Kollock was a printer by trade and already known to Alexander Hamilton. Kollock and his wife Susannah had made their home in Elizabethtown, but moved to Turkey (*New Providence*) when it became clear that the approach of the British forces imperiled the coastal towns. (Vanderpoel)

The *New Jersey Journal* first appeared on February 16, 1779, and was continued until the close of the Revolution in the autumn of 1783. It was a weekly paper, issued every Tuesday until January 25, 1780, and on Wednesdays thereafter. Toward the end of the war Kollock announced his intention to move from Chatham to New York as soon as the departure of the enemy would permit. (Vanderpoel)

Many of our Methodist "ancestors" were familiar with and read the *Journal*. In addition to its news columns, the *Journal* contained essays, communications, poems, etc., written in a tone heartily in sympathy with the cause of freedom, and it undoubtedly exercised a potent influence. (Vanderpoel)

Shepard Kollock moved his establishment two or three times during his stay in Chatham. The final location is the one marked by an historical marker on the south side of Main Street, about 500 feet west of the Passaic River. (Vanderpoel)

General Washington was at times accompanied by his wife, Martha. "It was no unusual thing," Dr. Joseph F. Tuttle, a former pastor of the Presbyterian church at Rockaway, telling of old-timers recollections in the mid 1800s (*Annals of Morris County*), "to see General Washington and his accomplished lady, mounted on bay horses, and accompanied by their faithful mulatto 'Bill' and fifty or sixty mounted guards passing through the village of Chatham with all eyes upon them." He continued, Mrs. Washington "was a graceful and bold rider, and when the weather became mild,

sometimes accompanying her husband in his rides to the Wicke Farm or the short hills, and until recently there were those still living who remembered to have seen her riding on horseback, and by the engaging courtesy with which she bowed to the humblest soldier or other person she chanced to meet, she won all hearts to herself."

*The revolution sparked by American patriots was much more than dates and places. It was personal; the events of that conflict and the people who passed through the town surely affected the lives of those people living in the Township of Chatham. They were fresh in the memories of the residents of the area who founded our little church soon after the hostilities ceased.*

In the autumn of 1779, General Washington considered several locations for the troops' winter quarters. The area of Jockey Hollow, southwest of Morristown was again selected. Early in December the troops began to arrive. Many came from the north, but the greater part of the army marched over the short hills and through Chatham and Madison on their way to camp. Dr. Samuel L. Tuttle realistically described the passage of the troops (Vanderpoel):

*. . . . the companies of armed pioneers with their axes and other implements for preparing the way for the army; the squads of officers on horseback; the companies and battalions of soldiers on foot; the artillery, and long trains of baggage wagons, drawn by horses and oxen; with drums beating, flags flying, and the earth at times shaking under the heavy roll of the artillery and wagons and the tramp of horses.*

The winter of 1779-1780 was the severest in the lifetime of those who suffered under it. The cold, the frost bite, the snow and the wind was the worst ever seen. So greatly were the roads obstructed by the heavy fall of snow that, for several days at a time, access to the encampment, even from Morristown and Mendham, was practically impossible; provisions for the army could not be obtained; the troops were brought face to face with starvation. As soon as the plight of the soldiers became generally known, the sympathies of the people were aroused, and they responded promptly and cheerfully - many communities furnishing supplies in excess of the quantity requested. One of the local leaders to whom General Washington appealed in this emergency was Stephen Day of Chatham, who himself donated an entire beef to the army. (Vanderpoel)

During the winter of early 1780, an exchange of prisoners at the Chatham bridge spawned a lively anecdote of the war. General William Winds, who negotiated for the Americans, was angered by the boast of the British field officer who said on parting, "We are going to dine in Morristown some day."

"If you do," retorted Winds, "you will sup in Hell in the evening!"  
(Cunningham)

The privations of the troops encamped at Morristown did not terminate with the breaking up of winter, but continued far into the spring. Mutterings of discontent were followed by signs of insubordination, until, on May 25, 1780, the Connecticut troops at Jockey Hollow mutinied. With some difficulty the mutiny was put down. The news of the mutiny, greatly exaggerated, was quickly carried by spies to the British Generals in New York. The British concluded that an excellent opportunity had developed to gain possession of Morristown, destroy the stores and powder mill and to annihilate, or at least to disperse, the Continental army. (Vanderpoel)

The movement of the British army was promptly discovered by the American outposts watching on the crest of Hobart Hill and a beacon was lighted and cannon fired, arousing the entire countryside. At the time of the War for Independence, the mountains and hills had largely been stripped of wood for use as building materials and firewood and were excellent sites from which to view the movements.

Sylvanus Seely, born in 1743, was a prominent Chatham resident. He was a veteran of the French and Indian War and, early in 1776, applied for and received a commission of Captain in the Continental Army. He rose to Major and then to Colonel by late in 1777. Colonel Seely kept a detailed diary during most of the time he served under General Washington and the following entries concern the Battle of Springfield:

*June 7th 1780. Had an Alarm and the Enemy came out as far as Springfield Bridge [over the Rahway River]. The Essex County militia\* collected fast and joining [brigadier General William] Maxwell's Brigade [of Morristown, the Continental Army] stopt the Enemy and after sum Fire at long Shot the Enemy retired to a Breast Work they had threw up on an Advantagious Pice of Ground on this side [of] the [Connecticut] Farm[s] Meeting Hous. About 3 this Aftarnoon they set fire to about 30 Buildings one of which is the Meeting Hous. I had Orders and Marched my Regiment to Thompsons Mills whare we lay all Night. [The village once consisted of the church (a frame building) and eight or ten dwelling houses, besides stores, shops and outhouses.] [\*.... including Benjamin Morehouse, Aaron Edwards, John Maxwell, Jacob Edwards, John Crane, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jacob Dean and Benjamin Briant, all ancestors of Marge Birdsall from Springfield and Connecticut Farms (now Union) .... ]*

*June 8<sup>th</sup> 1780. This morning about ½ after 12 [12:30 a.m.] the rear of the enemy left the ground. About 8 o'clock received orders to follow them and on ower march receive[d] intelligence that the Enemy are going but when we got to Town*

*[Elizabeth] find a guard in the Woods back to Decon Ogdens hous and at the forks of the Road. After sum time here and being Joing by Lord Stirling's Troopes he Orders us to Advance three colloms one on the Main Road (the Continental Troops) [under Brigadier Edward Hand of Pennsylvania] Col[one]l Cortland [Phillips Cortland of Essex County, State Militia] on the Left Myself in the Centor. We Advanced and the Troop under my Command behavd Exceeding well altho at a certain time one Platoon fell back a little but after being ordered to Com up cam up and stood thare ground well. We took about 20 Prisoners and Advance Through the Woods whare the enemy open upon us with a number of Field Pieces and finding they ware towe heavy for us Hand Ordered a Retreat which was performd in good Order. [This action took place between Elizabethtown and the British landing – site of Elizabeth Point on the coast]. I had one Man Killed and Three wounded. After Retiring about a half a Mile we lay on ower Armes untill Evening and then Returned to the North End of Town and staid all night.*

*June 9<sup>th</sup> 1780. Early this Morning Recd Orders to Return to Springfield which Don[er] and men Refreshed to the Farms [Connecticut Farms, which is current day Union]. Joined G. Maxwell and lay on ower Armes all Night ...*

Reverend James Caldwell was the clerical leader of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown ("Old First"). He also served as Quartermaster for the Continental Army. Early in the war, the British raided and burned "Old First" and Reverend Caldwell moved his family to the church in Connecticut Farms for greater safety. When the alarm was given in the morning signaling the approach of the enemy, Reverend Caldwell tried to persuade his wife, Hannah, to again seek a place of greater safety. She concluded to trust Providence and remained at home under the impression that her presence might serve to protect the house from pillage and that she and her children could not possibly be endangered. (Connecticut Farms)

About 3:00 p.m., the British Army pillaged most of the buildings in Connecticut Farms, as Colonel Sylvanus Seely described in his notes, thoroughly ransacking them and carrying off most of their contents. The buildings, including the church building, were then burned down. Reverend Caldwell's wife, her two youngest children, their nurse, Catherine "Katy" Benwood, and a housemaid maid, Abigail Lenington, retreated to a little back bedroom on the lower floor of the parsonage for greater safety. On looking out of the window, the maid mentioned to Mrs. Caldwell that a red-coated soldier had jumped the fence and was coming up to the window with a gun. He was one of Hessian General Knyphausen's troops. Her youngest son, nearly two years old, playing on the floor called out, "Let me see, let me see," and ran toward the window. Mrs. Caldwell rose from sitting on a bed very near the window and at that moment the soldier fired his musket at her

through the window. Two musket balls passed through her body and she died instantly. (Connecticut Farms and Vanderpoel)

When Colonel Seely's regiment, including Quartermaster Reverend Caldwell, returned to the village of Connecticut Farms, they found the body of Mrs. Caldwell and most of the buildings in ashes. The army and militia, as well as inhabitants near and far, were enraged (for Hannah Caldwell was widely known and widely loved). (Seventy Six, Springfield and Connecticut Farms)

Eventually, the children of Parson and Mrs. Caldwell went to live with Hannah's sister, Mrs. Stephen Day, in Chatham. The Day homestead stood upon the property now owned by the Ogden Memorial Presbyterian Church. In the issue of The New Jersey Journal dated June 14, 1780, the fiery pen of Shepard Kollock damned those who had not only burned the village of Connecticut Farms and threatened Springfield, but had also cold-bloodedly murdered this innocent woman. He charged her life had been taken in revenge for her husband's efforts in the furtherance of independence. (Kollock, White and Vanderpoel)

Chatham's esteem for Reverend Caldwell is revealed in a story told of a time he was about to preach in the village street. Lacking a platform, the minister had difficulty being heard. An old soldier pushed to the front of the crowd and cried, "Let me have the honor of being his platform. Let his stand be my body. Nothing is too good for Parson Caldwell!" (Cunningham)

The British Sir Henry Clinton had decided to make *another* attempt on Morristown, this time under his own command. He first deceived General Washington by sending some soldiers in transports up the Hudson River, their objective being to feign an attack on West Point. Washington fell for the ruse and commenced a march northward, parallel to the route of the decoys. He left Major General Nathaniel Greene with two Continental Army brigades and the local militia at the short hills to guard the road to Morristown and to provide for the security of Springfield and the surrounding countryside.

Two days later, with Washington out of the way, Clinton began his advance on Morristown. (Vanderpoel)

Sylvanus Seely made this further entry in his diary on June 23<sup>rd</sup>:

*June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1780. This day the enemy came out [again] and burnt Springfield and returned about 3 O'clock P.M., Pursued by ower People. The Enemies loss this*

day is thought to be Considerable. Owers is about 15 Killed and 40 Wounded. I got home about 10 at night.

Upon receiving word of this second invasion from the lookouts atop the short hills, General Greene placed his forces at the [easternmost] bridge leading into Springfield. He also sent word to Washington that the main British force had not been sent northward, but was once again heading west toward Morristown. General Greene, 38 years old, was Washington's second in command and heir apparent if Washington were to be killed or disabled.

The British column advanced from Elizabethtown by way of the Vaux Hall (*Vauxhall*) Road to Egbeson's Bridge over the west branch of the Raw Way (*Rahway*) River at Millburn Center. There Colonel Dayton and Major Ogden's militia met them. The militia was forced back to the Vaux Hall Bridge where "Light Horse Harry" Lee (*father of Robert E. Lee*) and his dragoons helped to block the British. (Seventy Six, Springfield)

It was through the village of Chatham that the Continental army, under General Washington, passed en-route to Springfield. The patriot forces included most likely some local inhabitants of Chatham. (Hampton and Saturday Stroll)

As the battle commenced in the Town of Springfield, it soon became clear to Quartermaster Reverend James Caldwell that the soldiers and militiamen were becoming low on wadding for their muskets. The soldiers knew that the paper around the cartridge was not enough to steady the musket ball in the barrel and give the crude gun decent aim. Extra paper or wadding had to be crammed down the barrel to assure a reasonably accurate shot. Reverend Caldwell made a quick decision, ran into the old Springfield Presbyterian Church, gathered the hymnals containing works by Isaac Watts and, standing on the front steps of the church, tore out the individual pages and shouted "Put Watts into 'em boys!" Another version of this rallying cry has been, "Given 'em Watts, boys!" [*The Continental Army knew Reverend Caldwell as "The Fighting Parson" and the local militia referred to him as "The Rebel High Priest."*]

The British were obstinately opposed by the local residents and repulsed several times, but after a battle of forty minutes, involving both artillery and musketry, the Patriots were forced to yield to superior numbers of five or six to one and the British and Hessian Troops moved ahead to occupy Springfield. (Seventy Six, Springfield)

To cover their retreat, General Greene had posted Colonel Smith with a regiment in an orchard about the center of the town and had placed a small party in a stone house on his left flank. Here the British forces met with a second check and lost a considerable number of men. However, the Patriots' left was pushed back and General Greene's rear was threatened. About a quarter of a mile from this the Continental troops and militia rallied and the artillery, having been posted on commanding ground all along the hills from Hobart Gap to First (*South*) Mountain, commenced a "warm" cannonade. (Seventy Six, Springfield)

At this point, British Sir Henry Clinton seemed to lose momentum. Having reason to believe that Washington had returned and was trying to encircle his force, having been alerted of the rumor that a French fleet was approaching New York harbor and very possibly dismayed by the forbidding appearance of the short hills which now loomed before him, Clinton did not pursue his advantage. (Vanderpoel)

The British had not advanced close enough for the Patriots to use musket fire. However, seeing that the British were stopped, General Greene pulled most of his troops back about 300 yards to the rear of the artillery position where they all remained spectators to the general conflagration and looting of Springfield at the hands of the British and Hessian soldiers; all but four of the fifty houses and buildings in Springfield, including the old Presbyterian Church, were burned down. [*The home of Thomas Denman, one of Marge Birdsall's ancestors, was among those that were burned.*] The British then withdrew and the Patriots followed them all the way into Elizabethtown. By midnight, the British were safely back on Staten Island. (Seventy Six, Springfield)

The suspense of the people of Chatham must have been great. The distance of five miles which separated them from the scene of the conflict was not sufficient to deaden the frightful thunder of the artillery. Their terror was increased when dense clouds of smoke rose above the intervening hills giving indication that Springfield was in flames. At almost every house, families could again be seen loading their most cherished possessions into wagons to which oxen were attached, in readiness to seek a place of safety up the Passaic valley, or among the Morris County hills. (Vanderpoel)

Ashbel Green, who was then a 17-year-old sergeant in the New Jersey militia from Bottle Hill (Madison) and a son of the fervently patriotic Hanover Presbyterian Church pastor, Jacob Green, wrote of the June 23, 1780 Battle of Springfield:

*"My route homeward led me over the whole of this ground, and for the first, and I hope for the last time of my life, I saw the yet unburied corpses of the victims of war. Two or three of these corpses, stripped as naked as when they were born, lay at the bridge. The whole scene was one of gloomy horror - - a dead horse, a broken carriage of a field piece, a town laid in ashes, the former occupants standing over the ruins of their dwellings, and the unburied dead, covered with blood and with the flies that were devouring it, filled me with melancholy feelings, till I was ready to say - - Is the contest worth all this? I was glad to get away from the affecting spectacle. A little beyond the town I saw General Washington, accompanied only by a single dragoon, and both coming forward on a rapid gallop. Whither the General was going I know not - - probably to take hasty survey of the mischief which the enemy had done by their invasion." (Raftis)*

*[Ashbel Green went on to study with Dr. John Witherspoon and graduate valedictorian from Princeton College in 1783. He later became the third Chaplain of the United States House of Representatives from 1792 to 1800, and the eighth President of Princeton College from 1812 to 1822.]*

*[Green emancipated his family's slave Betsey Stockton in 1817, taught her and recommended her as a missionary to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, making her the first single female overseas missionary. He also published a periodical entitled the Christian Advocate.]*

Some of the wounded American forces were brought to Day's hotel near Chatham for treatment, and were placed in the barn of the tavern, where they died a few days later. (Vanderpoel)

Dr. Samuel L. Tuttle wrote, ". . . . at length, the suspense of the whole community was at an end, when an express rider came dashing up the road, swift as the wind, crying at the top of his voice, 'The British are flying; the British are flying!' and when our victorious troops were seen returning from the scene of the strife, it was impossible for them to restrain their joy." (Vanderpoel)

The battle at Springfield occasioned a more general turning out of the men enrolled for militia duty throughout the region than any other event of the struggle for liberty. Consequently, its details were distinctly remembered by the veterans of the revolution [*some of whom were our Methodist "ancestors"*], and were related by them to their children and their children's children long after other war-time incidents had been forgotten. (Vanderpoel)

Not only had the area militiamen and Continental army successfully halted the British plan to march on General Washington and the Continentals' encampment at Jockey Hollow, they also forced a significant turn in the war.

The British never again made an attempt to invade the Middle Atlantic colonies. They concentrated their remaining offensive moves of the war in the southern colonies and concluded them at Yorktown.

In the summer of 1781, while the Americans led by Lafayette were confronting the British under Cornwallis in the Virginia campaign, General Washington was engaged with Sir Henry Clinton at New York. Washington was well informed of the situation in the South, and upon learning that the French fleet was sailing for Chesapeake Bay to co-operate with Lafayette, he concluded that if the forces in Virginia could be sufficiently strengthened before the arrival of British reinforcements from New York, the defeat of Cornwallis was quite possible. (Vanderpoel)

With this in mind, General Washington developed a strategy of deceiving the British into thinking he was about to invade New York (Staten Island) via Elizabethtown and the Atlantic Highlands. He used extensive maneuvers and misinformation that "fell" into the hands of the British to successfully fool the enemy. He made elaborate preparations for what was generally believed to be a permanent encampment in the Chatham area, including the building of a bakery with very large ovens and the erection of storehouses and similar buildings. Ten days were devoted to these preparations. (Vanderpoel)

Thus, toward the end of August, Washington, then at White Plains, crossed the Hudson River and, forming four divisions (two American and two French) headed south through New Jersey. The American columns paused in the vicinity of Springfield and Chatham to gather strength and to mislead the British into thinking that it was preparing to strike eastward from Chatham to New York. The impression was made upon the entire community, and shared by the soldiers themselves, that the entire army was to be stationed at Chatham for a long time. The total American force in Washington's army was close to 3,000 soldiers. The French column encamped between Hanover and Whippany. (Vanderpoel)

General Washington made his headquarters for these several days in Chatham (August 26-29, 1781) at the home of Jacob Morrell, considered then as the "most commodious private resident in the village;" this was the longest period that Washington resided in our village. There is a record of General Washington having written fifteen letters from Chatham. Thomas Morrell, Jacob Morrell's nephew and a Major in Washington's Continental Army, had already been personally acquainted with Washington before his uncle developed a friendship with the General. It may be that Thomas was the

mutual contact. [*Four years later, Thomas Morrell was to bring the "word" of Methodism for the first time to Chatham.*] (Simpson and Vanderpoel)

Jacob Bonnel, an early resident of Chatham, said that in his boyhood he had seen General Washington pacing to and fro on Mr. Morrell's front lawn. Mrs. Sallie Crane had a similar recollection. (Vanderpoel)

The troops took their departure from Chatham secretly by night, in order that their movements and the direction of their march might not be generally known; the object being to conceal their plans to march on Yorktown as long as possible. On the preceding evening not the slightest indication of their pending departure was given. The camp appeared as usual: fires were lighted, sentries were posted, and the men retired to rest within their tents; but before the next morning they had all mysteriously disappeared, leaving nothing but the long shed filled with ovens, and no one knew when they had started, nor whither they had gone. (Vanderpoel)

The middle column of the army had moved westward through the surrounding farms and woods by way of (*today's*) Main Street and King's Road to the present borough limits, and through Madison, along the streets now known as Division Avenue (which before the railroad continued to Woodland Avenue), Woodland Avenue and Garfield Avenue, toward Green Village; reaching Bound Brook at the end of the first day's march. The left column started from Springfield, later joining the middle column. The right column moved out from Whippany. (Though Sir Henry Clinton became aware of the march on the second day, he believed it was a detachment, designed to distract him from the "primary" objective of the Americans: New York.) The two-to-three mile long army, consisting of at least 11,000 soldiers, crossed the Delaware at Trenton. (Vanderpoel)

On October 31, 1781, Shephard Kollock printed this item in the New Jersey Journal: "On receiving a confirmation of the capture of Cornwallis (at Yorktown), twenty gentlemen of this place [likely including Kollock] and the neighborhood met on Monday evening last at Mr. Day's tavern, where they supped and spent a few hours in convivial mirth and jocund festivity. Illuminations and bon-fires were exhibited on the occasion." (Cunningham)

Passions among the citizenry did not subside easily, even after the British capitulation at Yorktown in October, 1781. The prison camp in Chatham became the focal point of national and international attention in 1782. The incident involved an unfortunate young British officer, Captain Charles Asgill taken prisoner at Yorktown, who was selected by lot to pay for the lynching of

Joshua Huddy, the captain of the Monmouth County militia and a local hero of considerable renown, by rioting British-sympathizing Colonial Tories.

*Captain Asgill, not yet twenty, was the only son of a well-to-do merchant and banker who had once been Lord Mayor of London. "Lively, brave, handsome ... an especial favourite of his comrades"—so wrote a fellow officer. (Damon)*

*Washington had confronted the question of exemplary retaliation on at least two earlier occasions, and both times he had refused to seek an eye for an eye. "Humanity and policy forbid the measure," he had written in 1777. Now as he read an ultimatum from Monmouth, he decided that the crime was too insolent and cruel to be passed over with impunity and that circumstances demanded the practice he loathed.*

*However, Washington was far from happy with the choice. Indeed, he wrote that he was filled "with the keenest anguish; I felt for him [Asgill] on many accounts." Not the least was the prospect of hanging so attractive a youth, "a man of honor and sentiment," as a substitute for "a wretch [Lippincott, the leader of the rioters] who possessed neither." (Damon)*

*He ordered Asgill to be taken to the prison camp at Chatham, New Jersey to await execution at a time to be appointed by Congress. (Damon)*

*It wasn't long before the case had become an international cause célèbre. "The public prints all over Europe resounded with the unhappy catastrophe," the Baron von Grimm recorded in his Memoirs. It "interested every feeling mind ... and the first question asked of all vessels that arrived from any port in North America, was always an inquiry into the fate of that young man." (Damon)*

*During all of this "melancholy affair," General Washington was anxious to alleviate the condition of Captain Asgill in the prison camp at Chatham and directed the officer of his guard to treat him with "every tender attention and politeness" which his rank, fortune, and connections, together with his unfortunate state, demanded, "that is not inconsistent with his perfect security." (Military Journal)*

*Captain Asgill arrived at this village early in June and remained there until the 17<sup>th</sup> of November. The captive was not required to remain at the camp in the Loantaka valley. He was allowed to take up his residence at Colonel Elias Dayton's headquarters in Chatham and was there kept under close confinement. [Colonel Dayton owned two pieces of property on the main road east of the Chatham bridge: one was a tract of eleven acres on the north side of the way, about 800 feet from the river; the other consisted of seventy-four acres on the south side, a half mile farther east. The highway now covers much of this land.] (Vanderpoel)*

*As the summer lengthened into autumn, hope everywhere began to fade. Washington complained bitterly that he wished Congress "would chalk a line for me to walk by in this business." So far they had offered him none. Time was running out; no other solution than death seemed to be at hand. (Damon)*

*In England, the Captain's mother, Lady Asgill, decided upon a desperate move in mid-July. She addressed an eloquent letter to the Comte de Vergennes, the foreign minister of France. "A word from you, like a voice from heaven, will save us*

*from distraction and wretchedness. I am well informed General Washington reveres your character."*

*Vergennes was deeply moved. In an audience with Louis XVI he showed him the letter and then, with the King's consent, communicated one of his own to General Washington. It, too, was eloquent. Washington sent both letters to Congress in Philadelphia.*

*For what must have seemed the first time in the lengthy affair, Washington's luck held. A small minority in the Congress had successfully delayed a vote through three days of argument; the courier entered the chamber on November 7, just as the roll was to be called. Quickly Elias Boudinot, the president of the Congress and a leader of the minority group, read the substance of Vergennes' and Lady Asgill's letters to the House. Their contents, he said, were "enough to move the heart of a savage."*

*Congress voted unanimously that Asgill's life "should be given as a compliment to the King of France."*

*Washington felt a great relief and he sent Asgill a passport to New York. Asgill left the prison camp at Chatham in a rush, without servant or baggage, and caught the next boat to England.*

In November, 1781, Reverend Caldwell was shot and killed in Elizabethtown by a guard named James Morgan. Reverend Caldwell's body was thrown by the British on the steps of Boxwood Hall (later named "Boudinot Hall") intending the act to be a warning to the American patriots. However, after hearing the fiery speech delivered by the Patriot Elias Boudinot, while standing over the Parson's body, the area residents were more determined than ever to get rid of British rule. James Morgan was tried for murder and hanged on Gallows Hill in Westfield. [From the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia in "Archive Photographs, 'Union'" compiled by David Alan Johnson, 1994.]

Thus, terrible things were happening right in our "backyard" during the 1770s and the 1780s. The villagers made the best they could of this difficult time.

Officially the war ended in April 1783. Peace came quietly, almost as an anticlimax to more than eight years of anxiety. Soldiers had been drifting home since Yorktown, simply walking away from camp as their enlistments ended. There were no parades, no speeches; homecoming was as personal as a handshake or a warm kiss. The veterans resumed their old places, if they had gone away as men, or made new places, if they had enlisted as boys. These boys, grown to manhood, took what jobs they could, married

girls they had known since childhood, and settled down on the banks of the Passaic River, pleased to be home. (Cunningham)

Veterans included some of the best known names in the area: three Lums, three Bonnells, three Days, two Carters, and two Millers, plus other men whose names would become familiar in the town's history. (Cunningham)

Shepherd Kollock published the following announcement in the *New York Gazetteer* in December 1783 (Vanderpoel):

The Editor, while a publisher of the New Jersey Journal at Chatham, exerted every faculty to stimulate his countrymen to oppose the galling yoke we were threatened with; and to maintain the cause of freedom and the rights of mankind even at the risk of his personal safety.

These had been heady times.

He continued:

TO BE SOLD, THE HOUSE and LOT where the subscribed formerly lived, beautifully situated in the *pleasant village of Chatham*, and an exceedingly good stand for a merchant, physician or tradesman. Any person desirous of purchasing will be allowed a reasonable time for payment.

.....

### **Roots of Methodism 1736–1816**

*[from information made available by the United Methodist Church, General Office].*

The United Methodist Church shares a common history and heritage with other Methodist and Wesleyan bodies. The lives and ministries of John Wesley (1703–1791) and of his brother, Charles (1707–1788), mark the origin of their common roots. Both John and Charles, residents of London, were Church of England missionaries to the colony of Georgia, arriving in March 1736. It was their only occasion to visit America. Their mission was far from an unqualified success, and both returned to England disillusioned and discouraged, Charles in December 1736, and John in February 1738. (History)

# John Wesley

(Illustration from the collections of the Methodist Library, Drew University)



Both of the Wesley brothers had transforming religious experiences in May 1738. John experienced his revelation in a prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. (History)

In 1739 eight or ten people who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption, came to Mr. Wesley in London. They desired, as did two or three more people the next day, that John would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. More people joined them and Mr. Wesley appointed Thursday evening as the time to meet. To these people, and as many more as desired to join them from time to time, he gave advice which he judged they needed the most. Thus rose the "United Society," later called "Methodist Society." (Probationer)

In the following years, the Wesleys succeeded in leading a lively renewal movement in the Church of England in England and Ireland. As the *Methodist* movement grew, it became apparent that their ministry would spread to the American colonies. Methodists had already made the exhausting and hazardous Atlantic voyage to the New World and, as early as 1740, had begun to informally spread the concept of Wesley's societies. (History)

Organized Methodism in America began as a lay movement. Among its earliest formal leaders were Robert Strawbridge, an immigrant farmer who organized his ministry about 1760 in Maryland and Virginia; Philip Embury and his cousin, Barbara Heck, who began their ministries in New York in 1766, and Captain Thomas Webb, whose labors were instrumental in Methodist beginnings in Philadelphia in 1767. (History)

To strengthen the Methodist work in the colonies, John Wesley sent two of his lay preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, to America in 1769. Two years later Richard Wright and Francis Asbury were also dispatched from England by Wesley to under gird the growing American Methodist societies. (History)

Francis Asbury became the most important figure in early American Methodism. He arrived in America in 1771 at the age of 26. Asbury began spreading Wesley's ideas throughout the Colonies, as had been the practice in England, by appointing "preachers" to travel by horseback from village to village, each having a group or "circuit" of villages in which he would hope to establish a congregation of people who were drawn to Wesley's message. His energetic devotion to the principles of Wesleyan theology, ministry, and



## Bishop Francis Asbury

(Painting by Frank O. Salisbury in the World Methodist Building  
at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina)

organization shaped Methodism in America in a way unmatched by any other individual. In addition to the preachers sent by Wesley, some people already in the colonies had answered the call to become lay preachers in the movement. (Centennial and History)

We know that Francis Asbury was spreading the word about Methodism in New Jersey in the fall of 1771. From his Journal: "November 6, 1771 - - I went to Burlington on my way to New York and preached in the court house to a large, serious congregation." (Bicentennial)

The first "conference" of Methodist preachers in the colonies was held in Philadelphia in 1773. The ten who attended took several important actions. They pledged allegiance to Wesley's leadership and agreed that they would not administer the sacraments because they were laypersons. People were to receive the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper at the local *Anglican* parish church. The Methodist preachers emphasized strong discipline among the societies and preachers. A system of regular conferences of the preachers was inaugurated similar to those Wesley had instituted in England to conduct the business of the Methodist movement. (History)

The American Revolution had a profound impact on Methodism. John Wesley's Toryism and his writings against the revolution did not enhance the image of Methodism among many who supported independence. Furthermore, a number of Methodist preachers refused to bear arms to aid the patriots. (History)

In fact, one of the earliest "cries" for independence came in the 1720-1740 period from Presbyterian pulpits with the words, "No Bishop!" These words were used to stress the abhorrence to "importing" anything akin to the official "Church of England," including the person of a Bishop for the Colonies.

When independence from England had been won, however, Wesley recognized that changes were necessary in American Methodism. He sent Thomas Coke to America to superintend the work with Asbury. Coke brought with him a prayer book titled "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America," prepared by Wesley and incorporating his revision of the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. Two other preachers, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, whom Wesley had ordained, accompanied Coke. Wesley's ordinations set a precedent that ultimately permitted Methodists in America to become an independent church. (History)

In December 1784, the famous Christmas Conference of preachers was held at Lovely Lane Chapel, in Baltimore, to chart the future course of the movement in America. Most of the American preachers attended, probably including two African Americans, Harry Hosier and Richard Allen. It was at this gathering that the movement became organized as The Methodist Episcopal Church in America. (History)

In the years following this "Christmas" Conference, The Methodist Episcopal Church published its first Discipline (1785), adopted a quadrennial General Conference, the first of which was held in 1792, drafted a Constitution in 1808, refined its structure, established a publishing house, and became an ardent proponent of revivalism and the camp meeting. (History)

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## EARLY METHODISM IN CHATHAM

As described above, the impact of the circuit-riding preachers had already been felt in many communities in northern New Jersey, even before the War for Independence. Small Methodist Societies were already established in Staten Island and Woodbridge (in 1740); Hackettstown (1754); Perth Amboy (1772); Kingwood and Rahway (1774); Oldwick and Port Colden (1782); Flanders (1783); Thiells (1784); and Denville and Rockaway Valley (1785). (Centennial) In 1900, Reverend Dr. William Judson Hampton said:

*"The early Methodist itinerant preachers were received with disfavor by other denominations. It is very interesting to read of the ill-usage and scant courtesy accorded the early Methodists by other denominations. We are heartily glad that those days have passed, and a fraternal spirit prevails today among Christian ministers of all denominations, and among their members." (Hampton)*

Undeterred by the sometimes less than enthusiastic greeting, approximately 60 Methodist preachers were in America by 1784. During the 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore, Francis Asbury, until then a Methodist lay preacher, was ordained a deacon. On the following day, he was ordained an elder and on the third day, he was consecrated a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (Centennial)

Elizabethtown Methodism owes much to Thomas Morrell, Ezekiel Cooper, John Haggerty, as well as Francis Asbury and others. Asbury mentions Elizabethtown and Thomas Morrell, in connection with a stop there, thirty-two

times in his Journal. In 1785, when the "Old First" Presbyterian Church was literally rising from its ashes, Bishop Asbury preached in the unfinished church. In September 1786 he preached again in the town "and [*surprisingly*] had much liberty." (Bicentennial)

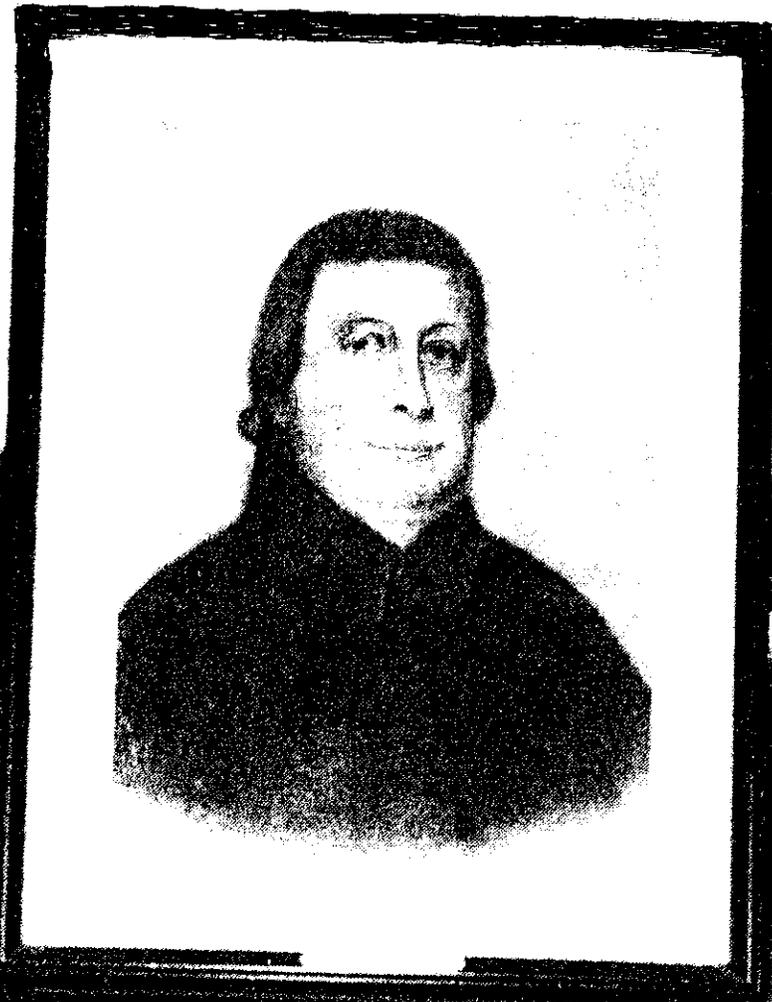
Thomas Morrell was born in New York City, November 22, 1747 and died in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, August 9, 1838. The family moved to Elizabethtown, New Jersey, when he was a young man, and Thomas engaged in business with his father until the beginning of the Revolutionary war. On receiving the news of the battle at Lexington and Concord, a militia company was raised; of which he was chosen captain. His first military exploit was the capture, about forty miles from Sandy Hook, of the British ship "Green Mountain Valley," carrying twelve guns and laden with provisions for the British army. He accomplished this without the loss of a man. His second achievement was the safe conveyance of a large quantity of powder through a hostile section of New Jersey for General Washington in Boston. In June, 1776, he was made captain in the Continental army, and ordered to raise a company of seventy-five men. Captain Morrell was severely wounded at the battle of Flatbush, and only escaped falling into the hands of the enemy by feigning death. In 1777 he was promoted major of the 4th New Jersey regiment, and was present at Brandywine and Germantown in Pennsylvania. After this he was compelled to resign on account of ill health. Returning to business in Elizabethtown, he became a member of the Methodist church in 1786; and at once began to preach (*more on this later*). From 1787 till 1803 he labored successively in New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. He preached the funeral of General Washington (likely one of many). Reverend Morrell then returned to Elizabethtown where he discharged all the duties of his pastorate until 1822. Subsequently he confined himself to preaching once a day on the Sabbath until he had reached the advanced age of eighty-one. Father Morrell at his death (91 years old) had been a preacher of the gospel for fifty-three years, and was one of the pioneers of American Methodism. (Famous and Simpson)

The Reverend John Atkinson, a Methodist Historian, quotes an interesting letter from Reverend *Francis* Morrell the subject of which was Thomas Morrell:

*"In 1785 Thomas Morrell was converted [to Methodism] in Elizabethtown under the preaching of the Reverend John Haggerty. Morrell had a lucrative business in Elizabethtown, which he was induced to give up, and, at Haggerty's earnest solicitation, he commenced preaching within 3 months after his conversion. Morrell was then 38 years old. He preached at three or four places, his appointments being made by Reverend John Haggerty as he went around the circuit."*

# The Reverend Thomas Morrell

(Portrait photo credit Rev. W.L. Danskin, St. John Church, NYC)



The letter continued, "One of his first efforts was made at the home of his uncle, Jacob Morrell, at Chatham [the place where, only four years earlier, General Washington had resided for four days and had been seen "pacing to and fro" as he planned the march southward to confront General Cornwallis at Yorktown.] Having been an officer in the army of the Revolution, twice wounded, and for several years subsequently a merchant in Elizabethtown, Thomas Morrell was widely known, and a very large assembly convened to hear the 'Major' preach in the barn behind the house. [Many were undoubtedly curious to hear him,] especially as he had joined" a religious sect that many people openly decried. "This, I think, was his third or fourth effort, and was by himself, deemed an utter failure. He then concluded that he was not called of God to preach, and would not make the attempt again. However, early the ensuing morning, while at breakfast at his uncle's, there was a knock at the door. A lady entered desiring to see the preacher of the previous evening. In a few moments another came, and then an old man upon the same errand, all of who had been awakened under the sermon deemed by him a failure. They had come to learn the way of Salvation more perfectly. He, of course, recalled his purpose [i.e., reversed his decision] to preach no more, and was encouraged to go forward." (Newsletter, Centennial and Simpson)

Thomas Morrell's visit with his uncle in 1785 represented, as we understand it, the first time the Methodist word was heard in our village of Chatham. He improved quickly in his confidence. A letter he received in 1790 from John Wesley must have further encouraged him:

*"MY DEAR BROTHER,*

*"You gave me a very agreeable account of the progress of the gospel in America. One would hope the time is approaching when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Indeed, the amazing revolutions which have [occurred in] Europe seem to be forerunners of the same grand event. The poor infidels, it is true, who know nothing of God, have no such design or thought. But the Lord sitteth above the waterfloods, the Lord remaineth a king for ever. Meanwhile it is expedient that the Methodists in every part of the globe should be united together as closely as possible. That we may all be one is the prayer of Your affectionate friend and brother. John Wesley"*

Thomas Morrell's sermons were later characterized as having accurate arrangement, deep thought, and minute analysis, bearing equally upon the understanding and the affections of his hearers. His sermons were neither passionate exclamations nor dull metaphysical speculations. He had good

common sense, sound understanding and a fervent piety. Temperate in all things, and equally removed from idleness and excessive labor, Morrell preserved the vigor of his constitution to a good old age. (Bangs)

The prejudice against the Methodists in those days was deep-rooted and Chatham, in those early days, was no worse than other places. This, of course, was a sentiment deeply in contrast to the longings of those early settlers who were granted land under the Charter from Governor Nicholls that "*allowed liberty of conscience in the exercise of the Protestant religion*" a century earlier. After the revolution, any religious thought whose roots lay in England [*such as John Wesley's Anglican Church*] was met with strong resistance in the former Colonies. (Stevens, Cunningham and Hampton)

John T. Cunningham expressed the situation this way:

*"There was little, if any, concern for separation of church and state. In Chatham, as in most small villages of the time, both town government and town education stemmed from the church. Chatham was a Presbyterian town, where even until 1800 some people felt that church and town should be one.*

*"Naturally, Chatham's Presbyterians looked askance at interlopers who threatened their serene way of life. Itinerant preachers of other denominations readily saw no fertile ground lay beside the path near Chatham bridge."  
(Cunningham)*

However, in 1786, a year after Thomas Morrell's first visit as a preacher, nine Chatham families gathered to worship God under the leadership of Ezekiel Cooper, an itinerant Methodist preacher who traveled the East Jersey Circuit in 1786. We date the beginning of Chatham Methodism to this meeting of the faithful. (Hampton)

With the exception of Jacob Morrell's nephew, Thomas, Ezekiel Cooper was the first Methodist itinerant preacher to have set foot in Chatham and he was expected by many to be arrested. Concerning this George A. Phoebus, D.D. wrote in his book, "Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America," Philips and Hunt, New York, 1887:

*"In 1786 Reverend Francis Asbury appointed Ezekiel Cooper to make a visit of two weeks in New Jersey. [He was just a few weeks short of his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.] During this visit Cooper preached at Chatham, where a Presbyterian minister demanded his authority for preaching at Mr. Clark's and Colonel Crane's, where some expected him to be arrested."*

Ezekiel Cooper was born on February 22, 1763 in Caroline County, Maryland. He was raised there in the Church of England, but at the age of 13, he became interested in Methodism. He was much influenced by the preaching of Freeborn Garrettson, a leading Methodist itinerant preacher of the time. In 1784 he was placed upon circuit under Bishop Francis Asbury, and in 1787 he was admitted to membership in the conference. His first appointment in 1785 was to Long Island, and he had that entire territory for his circuit. A year later he was assigned to East New Jersey and in 1787 to Trenton. Bishop Francis Asbury formally ordained Ezekiel Cooper on June 3, 1787, at John Street Church in New York City. Reverend Cooper subsequently served as an itinerant preacher for 64 years and was an ardent opponent of slavery. As early as 1790-91, Reverend Cooper was writing a series of letters to various newspapers arguing for freedom for slaves. He was distinguished for pulpit eloquence, logical ability, and varied knowledge. (Phoebus)

The gathering in Chatham began during the lifetime of the denomination's illustrious founder, Rev. John Wesley, who died in England in 1791. (Hampton)

Writing in 1866 about our small Methodist Society in Chatham, The Reverend James M. Tuttle, a member of this church, said:

*"I have been told by Mr. Enos Bonnel, an aged man now living in Chatham, that the first Methodist Episcopal service was held [in the building once occupied by Shepherd Kollock, the printer and publisher of the New Jersey Journal, a weekly newspaper favoring the Continental cause]."*

By 1786, Shepard Kollock had moved his office to Elizabethtown, where it thrived for over 200 years until 1991. The Kollock establishment had been located on the south side of the Main Street across from where University Avenue is now located. The structure no longer exists. Today, Parrott Mill Road meets Main Street at that spot. (Hampton and Newsletter)

Reverend James M. Tuttle also stated that, in an early period in the history of Methodism in this country, Chatham was connected with the Elizabethtown circuit. The Methodist Conference Journal for 1787 gives 240 members on the circuit, at least nine of who were members of the Chatham Society. There were 11 preachers and 1634 members in all of New Jersey at that time. (Hampton)

Jacob Morrell had sold his business in about 1781, but continued as a merchant in the village for another decade. He sold his house in 1790 and lived elsewhere in Chatham until his death in 1814, at the age of eighty-six. (Cunningham)

## A METHODIST SOCIETY IS ESTABLISHED

Chatham's main street in the 1790s was little more than a widened dirt lane. Any kind of rainy spell turned it into a quagmire; traveling was better in winter, when the ground was frozen. [It remained so until the completion of the Morris-Essex Turnpike in 1804. Gravel, stones and hard tamped earth formed the foundation of the new road.]

According to the Reverend A.E. Ballard, in the "Christian Advocate" of January 15, 1857, an early leader of the Methodist Society in Chatham was Isaac Searles (also seen written as "Saerles"). Assisting in this endeavor were Brainard Dickinson and Matthias Swain.

Isaac Searles was born at Stone Hill, New Jersey, on January 23, 1777, and was converted to Methodism at Rahway. When still young, he moved to Chatham. He had a significant role in establishing Methodist preaching in the village and in giving form to the young Methodist congregation. While living at Chatham, Searles fitted out at least two preachers, providing them with a horse and all the equipment an itinerant would need. For twenty years his home was the only home for the itinerant preachers. Among the gallant band that shared his hospitality and friendship were Bishops Asbury and McKendree, old "Father" Neall, and that eccentric genius, Reverend Lorenzo Dow. (Hampton)

According to Curbstone Press and historian John Warner Barber,

*"If ever there was a man who feverishly rowed his boat through the waters of life with only one oar in the water, it was 'Crazy Lorenzo' Dow." Dow made his reputation as a charismatic, hell-fire-and-brimstone orator in the early Methodist tradition.*

*Born in 1777, "he was thin and weather-beaten, and appeared haggard and ill-favored, partly on account of his reddish, dusty beard, some six inches long.... A tall, bony stork of a man, not unlike Washington Irving's Ichabod Crane, he affected oddity in almost every aspect of his life.*



## Reverend Lorenzo Dow

(Engraving of Reverend Lorenzo Dow at one of his outdoor sermons by Lossing-Barrett, from Samuel G. Goodrich, *Recollections of a Lifetime*. New York: 1856)

*"As odd in his appearance as he was in his behavior, Dow was described by almost every eyewitness to his preaching as not only uncouth in his person, but endowed with a harsh, raspy voice and hard, jerky movements and gestures. He liked to appear unexpectedly, surprising his audience into attention, and on a number of occasions, having made an appointment to preach a year in advance, he would suddenly materialize, like an apparition, at the very minute set. One tells about the time he finished one of his four-hour-long performances, snapped his Bible shut with a bang and jumped out an open window directly into the saddle of his waiting horse, and then galloping off down the road to his next engagement.*

*"Despite his unattractive qualities, he had a remarkable, intuitive understanding of the tastes, prejudices and weaknesses of common, country people; he possessed an unerring knack for adapting his speaking style to such audiences. There can be little question that along with his bizarre, legend-inspiring personality, the evangelist was totally committed to his mission, absolutely indefatigable in the pursuit of it and brilliantly ingenious in devising effective methods of bringing it to the fallen world through which he traveled." In fact, "It is thought that during the 38 years of his public life, he must have traveled two hundred thousand miles" in the northern and southern states, the Louisiana Territory, Canada, the West Indies, England, Ireland" . . . . and Chatham.*

Bishop Asbury also stopped and preached in Chatham during the early years. A Newark Conference Journal says that, in 1796,

*"Bishop Asbury left Dover on the twelfth of August and rode 20 miles to Chatham where he enjoyed the fellowship and preached at Brother Dickinson's."*

This was undoubtedly Brainard Dickinson [born in Springfield in 1735 and settled in Chatham as a young man]. Asbury's trip was part of a several days' journey he made in August that started in Pennington, went over Schooley's Mountain to Hackettstown, on to Dover and Chatham and ended in Elizabethtown. During the years, Asbury made many other journeys that led him through Chatham enroute to other preaching locations. (Newsletter)

In his Journal, Asbury noted,

*"Brother Dickinson is now an official character among us, and can remember, when he was a child, how godly men came to the house of his father, preaching, praying, and talking about religion, as was the case at my father's house, when I was a child."*

Bishop Francis Asbury made a total of 86 journeys into East and West Jersey and Staten Island. He covered the State repeatedly from north to south, and from west to east. His mode of travel on the dirt and stone roads was by chaise, by public stage, and on horseback. He also rode in an

elementary type of buggy, and in a box-like black-covered "Jersey Wagon," drawn by a yoke of oxen or two horses, not unlike an early version of the western pioneers' Conestoga wagons. (Centennial)

Within a few years (1790-1792), the Society of Methodists in Chatham moved toward building a Chapel. Their number was small, however, and their means limited; accordingly, they accepted a proposal made by some persons not members of the Society (*they were Presbyterians*), who offered to assist them in building the structure, provided it should be used freely by each denomination. To this the Methodists consented, one giving timber, another (Brainerd Dickinson) boards, one hauling stones (*including sandstone*) for a foundation from the nearby Watchung hills, etc. (Newsletter, Bicentennial, Cunningham and Saturday Stroll)

This first "Methodist" Church building in Chatham stood on the northeast corner of Main Street and Cheapside Lane, known today as University Avenue. Erection of this primitive two-story house of worship marked the end of the "society," which had met in homes through the formative years. [An office building (*40 Main Street*) occupies the site in 2007.]

The form of the building was somewhat longer than it was broad, the length parallel with the dirt and gravel street through the village. It was a two-story building without bell, cupola or clapboards. It had one gallery on the front (south) side running east and west and facing the pulpit. There was a singing choir located in the gallery, but no instrument. The pulpit was elevated and against the north wall. On each side of the pulpit were several pews, one side for men and one side for women, and aisles leading from the front door. The lights at night were candles brought by each parishioner. The Chorister with his tuning fork, stood to the right of the minister, and led the music. The worshippers must have been rugged, since the new building had neither heat nor light. Since there were no stoves in the church until 1820, each worshipper brought a foot warmer or suffered from the cold. (Milestones, Anniversary 125, Wallace, Cunningham, Philhower and Newsletter)

William C. Wallace of Newark, one of Reverend Ogden's Princeton classmates (Presbyterian) who had recently built a summer retreat on the east side of the river, said of worship services in the old union church:

*"[The early church (c.1820)] had very sweet and satisfactory singing; it may not have been as highly educated as at the present day [c.1850], yet the voices were as sweet and natural then as they are now. Perhaps, and I think very likely, the earlier*

generation of choristers had better tempers and [vocal] control than their successors.

*"There always sat in the side pew next to the pulpit and facing the choir gallery an old gentleman, a superannuated chorister, who was a self-constituted inspector and critic of church melody. One Sunday I saw him deliberately shake his finger at the choir. I happened to meet him next day and said to him: 'Deacon, what made you shake your finger yesterday at the singers?' He replied, 'Do you think I could sit still and hear them drop a note?' There was no answer to the old man's question.*

*"This old-fashioned choir (c.1820) showed more forbearance in being rebuked by the critic's finger publicly shaken at them, than those of the present day [c.1850] would manifest." (Wallace)*

The Methodists used this "Meeting House" regularly. The Presbyterians used it only occasionally for they still "belonged" to the Presbyterian Church at Bottle Hill. When a Methodist circuit rider, traveling on horseback, stopped in Chatham and conducted the Methodist services, his sermons were usually vigorous and the Methodists, who were known for their uninhibited participation in service, were heard shouting their loud "Amens." (Blachly, Newsletter, Hampton, Cunningham, Bicentennial and Saturday Stroll)

How the Methodists felt about expressing themselves is best shown by reading the following "hymn" from an 1807 Richmond, Virginia collection:

*"They pray, they sing, they preach the best,  
And do the Devil most molest.  
If Satan had his vicious way,  
He'd kill and damn them all today.  
They are despised by Satan's train,  
Because they shout and preach so plain.  
I'm bound to march in endless bliss,  
And die a shouting Methodist."  
(Saddlebags)*

Members lived both near the church and as far away as four miles so during the weekdays there were several small "classes" in the outlying neighborhoods and one in the village. (Blachly, Newsletter, Hampton, Cunningham, Bicentennial and Saturday Stroll)

*"The members were of the sturdy, old style type. Often the circuit preacher did not get around more than once a month, and class leaders and exhorters and local preachers, who rendered the early Church most effective and valuable service in those days, conducted the meetings. Quarterly meetings were frequently held in barns, private homes or in the open air and lasted two or three days. These*

*meetings were stirring occasions and frequently resulted in several conversions.”*  
(Hampton)

In 1794 the Elizabethtown circuit embraced Staten Island, Middlesex, Essex, Bergen and Morris Counties.

By the late 1790s or early 1800s, the group had become known, formally, as the “Methodist Episcopal Church of Chatham, a Religious Society.”

At the close of the eighteenth century, Chatham was a sparsely settled farming area as can be observed in the following commentary from the Journal of Theophile Cazeenove. Cazeenove was a Dutchman, of French descent, who came to this country in 1792 as an agent for the Holland Land Company:

*“Thursday (Oct.) 23, left Newark at 9 o'clock in the morning. At Springfield 9 miles, at 11 o'clock; pleasant journey; fresh cultivation. A wall paper factory, a large and fine tan-yard; a Liberty bonnet on a pole in the center of the village.*

*“At Chatham, 3 miles, had dinner at Day's [Tavern], very good stopping place, clean, a big Bible on the table under the mirror; district of 1 ½ miles square, from Springfield to Chatham [now Short Hills], the ground very bad, sand and broken stones; also what miserable huts. They say an acre for 3 pounds, but there are few inhabitants; some buckwheat, corn, cider.*

*“At Chatham the valley is more level, the ground better and many pastures. The ground is easily sold for 10 pounds [or \$25] an acre. The meadow yields 1 to 1 ½ tons per acre of hay, which sells at Newark for 5 pounds a ton. Two oxen haul 1 ton. Here they raise the summer grains profitably, but wheat dies in the winter from dampness and frost.*

*“Generally the farms are from 200 to 250 acres; the farmers try mostly the raising of cattle; they sell their bulls, 4 years old, at from \$50 to \$60 each; their cows, four years old, from \$20 to \$30 each for the Philadelphia and New York markets. The wood has all been cut down in this district; you have to pay 42 a cord for Walnut for burning; butter 1 shilling. A pair of good oxen for plowing brings \$50 to \$70; a horse for farm work \$60. There (as everywhere in New Jersey) all the servants are black slaves; a good dependable Negro, 18 to 25 years old, costs \$250; a good dependable Negro woman, 18 to 25 years old, \$170. You still have to pay 5 shillings for a day's work by a white workman at harvest time; 3 or 4 shillings in the spring; wages of a white farmhand, 30 to 40 shillings per year, and you must also treat him politely.”* (Newsletter)

“Chatham Township” was officially formed as a separate governmental unit in 1806. It was larger than today and included today's Chatham, Chatham Township, Madison, Green Village and Florham Park.

## JOHN HANCOCK: A METHODIST LEADER, FARMER AND PREACHER

A very significant person in the growth of the Chatham Methodist Church was John Hancock (not related to the Boston "Hancock"). Hancock was born in Springfield, N.J. in 1776. The family was devout Presbyterian, attending first the church at Elizabethtown, and then the Springfield Presbyterian Church. John's father died when he was eight months old, leaving the young mother Mary, with two babies and a very modest estate. Worse, her dower was paid in Continental currency, which soon depreciated to nothing. Mary Hancock had managed to support her children by keeping a small school. The final blow, however, fell on June 23, 1780, when the British invaded Springfield and burned the village, including the building that served as Mary Hancock's home and school. Mary had no choice but to save herself and her two children by fleeing to Bottle Hill where it was known that charitable people would take care of Springfield's refugees. (Hampton and Ehrhardt)

After four years of living in a small cabin, she married Josiah Hand of Bottle Hill and the way became easier for her. However, Josiah Hand died the following year. By this time, John Hancock was nine years old and able to make a contribution to the family. Thus, in 1785, he was apprenticed to a harness maker, Mr. Richards, of Columbia (*now Florham Park*). Mr. Richards seems to have treated John well and even encouraged the youth in his quest for knowledge. (Ehrhardt)

The experience of the Hancock family was not singular. In fact, the first (1808) preserved words in the meeting of the newly formed (in 1806) Township of Chatham concerned an "amount raised for the use of the poor," who lived legally within the bounds of the Township. A few years later the poor were "farmed out;" that is, assigned on contract between the Town Committee and a farmer who agreed to feed, clothe, and shelter them as well as provide medical care. In turn, the indigents would work on the farm; the township would pay the farmer as small a sum as possible in quarterly installments. (Cunningham)

John's mother married again when John was twenty years old. Her new husband, Robert Forrest, of Columbia, seems to have been a man of some education and much property; his interest in his step-son was generous and sustained throughout his life. The family attended the Hanover Presbyterian Church. However, the sermons of Pastor Aaron Condit seem not to have brought John reassurance. (Ehrhardt)

John was forced to give up the trade of harness maker shortly before his apprenticeship was completed, due largely to [temporarily] failing health. His step-father gave him a small plot of land in Columbia and John took up the calling of farmer, a way of life which he never afterward deserted. (Ehrhardt)

About the time of his twenty-fifth birthday (1801), John Hancock sought religious guidance elsewhere. He attended a meeting of a Methodist society in a private home in Cheapside; *[originally named by the colonists for a section of London, England, it is now a section of West Livingston near the Chatham line]*. (Ehrhardt)

The Elizabethtown circuit then embraced Staten Island, Rahway, Belleville, New Providence, Stoney Brook, Rockaway Valley, Whippany and Chatham. Two preachers had charge of this circuit. The Reverend Joseph Totten, who was preacher-in-charge of the circuit, said that the Reverend Mr. Stokes, preaching in Cheapside in 1801 "received the trembling John Hancock into the bosom of the church as a probationer." After the services, Mr. Hancock went to dine at the home of Brainard Dickinson. *[The house was still standing in 1955, at the end of Dickinson Lane in West Livingston, just south of the intersection of Passaic Avenue and Parsonage Hill Road. However, by 2004, it had been demolished and replaced by another residence.]* John was pleased with the terms "Brother and Sister" as applied to different members of the church. "This," he said, "is Bible religion. It is love." He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church [Society] at Chatham on Sunday, December 13, 1801. (Hampton)

We must remember that, probably, the most unique item in the Methodists' teachings was the need for a conscious "conversion." This may have put an excessive premium upon hysteria and led to the fantastic spirit of the camp meetings of later years. However, this method of teaching produced a generation of men who were perfectly convinced that they had received a personal commission from on high to remake the world. Early Methodism was exclusively a group of people who were certain that they had a particular calling. (Ehrhardt)

Like other able men in the community, John Hancock took his place in the militia on the training days, usually traveling to Parsippany with his musket in order to take his place in the line. It seems that it was here that John's first preaching took place. One training day in 1802 was marked by a particularly disgusting display of drunkenness and John spoke his thoughts freely on the

subject. For the first time, he discovered that he could move men with his words and the die was cast for all time. (Ehrhardt)

John Hancock appears to have been licensed as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church society in either 1802 or 1803; though there is good reason to believe that both he and Brainard Dickinson were exercising their talents in private homes and in school houses, without any formal sanction, at least a year earlier. Farmers like Hancock and Dickinson worked by day and preached as the opportunity offered. The rapid rise of Methodist societies is traceable to just this practice. (Ehrhardt)

Hancock's first "circuit" included Flanders, Paterson, Newark, Rahway and Turkey (*New Providence*). In 1802, John made changes in his own home [*on today's Ridgedale Avenue*] to better fit the structure for prayer meetings; the house continued in this use up to 1832. [*The land and home, in 1955, was still occupied by the Hancock descendents. In 2007, the house remained standing (with some modifications) at 45 Ridgedale Avenue, just north of the juncture of Greenwood Avenue with Ridgedale Avenue in the municipality now called "Florham Park."*] (Ehrhardt)

Much of John Hancock's writing is in rhyme; indeed, a great deal of his preaching and even his wedding services were conducted in a rough form of poetry. Ehrhardt says, "It seems to (me) that John Hancock's use of rhyme was exactly what one would expect of a man who had to think out his sermons and his letters while following the plow." The following rhyme is an example of John Hancock's words concerning his work as a farmer:

*"I labor where a sacred priest is rare, if ever, found;  
And toil like some domestic beast to cultivate the ground.  
My garments are well suited to a rustic peasant's fare,  
And little like the dress, 'tis true, that modern preachers wear.  
'Twas thus decreed that Adam's race in union with their Head,  
By pain, and toil, and sweat of face, should gain their daily bread.  
O, how unlike the happy state in Paradise began,  
Where sin, nor shame, nor pain nor hate annoyed the peace of man.  
Still may I hope and pine no more at toil, and grief, and pain;  
The second Adam will restore to Paradise again."*

"Father" Hancock was frequently sought by people in the young community to conduct funeral services. As a farmer-preacher, he was unhampered by the sectarian considerations that often led other clergy in those days to refuse to officiate. In fact, during these days, it was not unusual

for him to put in a full day in the fields, hold an early evening prayer meeting in his home, then travel ten or twelve miles to an outlying school house for another meeting, returning late at night with the expectation of the beginning of another day of almost brutalizing toil at sun-up. (Ehrhardt)

Every four weeks, John Hancock conducted services at the Morris County almshouse and this assignment continued almost to the end of his life. (Ehrhardt)

In 1814, John Hancock was ordained in deacon's orders and, eventually in 1833, at the age of 57, was elected to elder's orders. (Ehrhardt)

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### **The Churches Grow, 1817–1843**

The Second Great Awakening was the dominant religious development among Protestants in America in the first half of the nineteenth century. Through revivals and camp meetings, people were brought to an experience of conversion. Circuit riding preachers and lay pastors knit local groups into a connection between societies. This style of Christian faith and discipline was very agreeable to Methodists, United Brethren, and Evangelicals, who favored its emphasis on the experiential. The memberships of these churches increased dramatically during this period and the number of preachers serving them multiplied significantly. (History)

Lay members and preachers were expected to be seriously committed to the faith. Preachers were not only to possess a sound conversion and divine calling but were also to demonstrate the gifts and skills requisite for an effective ministry. Their work was urgent and demanding. The financial benefits were meager and "home" was a different location every few days. But, as they often reminded one another, there was no more important work than theirs. (History)

The deep commitment of the general membership was exhibited in their willingness to adhere to the spiritual disciplines and standards of conduct outlined by their churches. Methodists, for example, were to be strictly guided by a set of General Rules adopted at the Christmas Conference of 1784 and still printed in United Methodism's Book of Discipline. They were urged to avoid evil, to do good, and to use the means of grace supplied by God.

Membership in the church was serious business. There was no place for those whom Wesley called the "almost Christians." (History)

The structure of the Methodist, United Brethren, and Evangelical Association churches allowed them to function in ways to support, consolidate, and expand their ministries. General Conferences, meeting quadrennially, proved sufficient to set the main course for the church. Annual Conferences under episcopal leadership provided the mechanism for admitting and ordaining clergy, appointing itinerant preachers to their churches, and supplying them with mutual support. Local churches and classes could spring up wherever a few women and men were gathered under the direction of a class leader and were visited regularly by the circuit preacher, one who had a circuit of preaching placed under his care. This system effectively served the needs of city, town, village, or frontier outpost. The churches were able to go to the people wherever they settled. (History)

The earlier years of the nineteenth century were also marked by the spread of the Sunday school movement in America. By 1835 Sunday schools were encouraged in every place where they could be started and maintained. The Sunday school became a principal source of prospective members for the church. (History)

The churches' interest in education was also evident in their establishment of secondary schools and colleges. By 1845 Methodists, Evangelicals, and United Brethren had also instituted courses of study for their preachers to ensure that they had a basic knowledge of the Bible, theology, and pastoral ministry. (History)

To supply their members, preachers, and Sunday schools with Christian literature, the churches established publishing operations. The Methodist Book Concern, organized in 1789, was the first church publishing house in America. The Evangelical Association and United Brethren also authorized the formation of publishing agencies in the early nineteenth century. From the presses of their printing plants came a succession of hymnals, Disciplines, newspapers, magazines, Sunday school materials, and other literature to nurture their memberships. Profits were usually designated for the support and welfare of retired and indigent preachers and their families. (History)

The churches were also increasingly committed to missionary work. By 1841 each of them had started denominational missionary societies to develop strategies and provide funds for work in the United States and

abroad. John Stewart's mission to the Wyandots marked a beginning of the important presence of Native Americans in Methodism. (History)

The founding period was not without serious problems, especially for the Methodists. Richard Allen (1760–1831), an emancipated slave and Methodist preacher who had been mistreated because of his race, left the church and in 1816 organized The African Methodist Episcopal Church. For similar reasons, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was begun in 1821. In 1830 another rupture occurred in The Methodist Episcopal Church. About 5,000 preachers and laypeople left the denomination because it would not grant representation to the laity or permit the election of presiding elders (district superintendents). [The new body was called The Methodist Protestant Church. It remained a strong church until 1939, when it united with The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and together became The Methodist Church.] (History)

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## CHANGE: FROM THE "OLD MEETINGHOUSE" TO A NEW CHURCH HOME

William C. Wallace gives an interesting picture of our community in the 1820's and 1830s.

*"In that day there was very little machinery to facilitate building - - human skill in handling the mechanics' tools was then very important. The timber was mostly drawn in the log and hewn with the broad-axe on the ground. The lumber was carted chiefly from Newark in its rough state, and human machinery alone prepared it for its place in the structure. An expert workman was something to be observed. I have often stopped with others before a bench where a man expert with the plane was rapidly curling off the shavings and handling the boards. You could see the lines of grace in that man and in his work.*

In March 1821, a committee of Trustees of the "Meeting House" in Chatham, whose membership were both Methodist and Presbyterian, looked into repairing the church building and managing the proper care of it. Jephthah B. Munn was chosen Chairman. Mr. Munn wrote that some delays occurred because of weather, but in the fall of 1822 "materials were procured, the church was shingled, weather-boarded, and handsomely painted chiefly owing to the personal superintendence and spirited exertion of Mr. Silvanus Bunnell." (Newsletter)

Mr. Munn also wrote that a further subscription was drawn in the winter of 1823, "so as to compleat the inside of the church suitable and decent for religious worship," not the least of which was a stove for heating.  
(Newsletter)

In 1825, the congregation at the Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township at Bottle Hill [renamed "Madison" in 1834] suffered a division within the members. The members living in the western part of town wanted their church handy to their homes while the Chatham Village folk wanted it to be nearer to them. After much discussion a vote was taken and the Chatham residents lost out. That group belonging to the Village of Chatham and vicinity [38 members] formed a separate congregation known as the "Village Church of Chatham." They called a pastor and began using the old Meeting House regularly.

The "Village Church of Chatham" congregation offered to repair the "Meeting House" building and to share the cost of its upkeep. It was agreed and the church was repaired at a cost of \$800. The two congregations referred to the improved structure as the "Union Church." Unfortunately, the relationship between the two groups was not smooth. For example, friction soon developed over the timing of the services. Also, the Presbyterians outnumbered the Methodists. (Hampton, Ehrhardt, Anniversary 125, Strong and Wallace)

In 1829, the Presbyterian congregation of Chatham, one year after the calling of the young (24 years old) Reverend Joseph M. Ogden, decided to build a new church a little further west on Main Street and, a few years later, appropriated the old "Union Church" for their own use, stripping it of usable fixtures and wood. The Presbyterian society felt justified in doing this since they had been "repairing" and painting the structure during the prior 9 years. Matthias Swain and John Hancock, among other Methodists, were greatly grieved and strongly opposed the plan to gut the church; but they were unable to stop it. "Father" Hancock gave strong expression to his dissatisfaction in poetic lines, which stirred the whole community at the time. (Hampton, Ehrhardt and Anniversary 125)

Ehrhardt has provided an excerpt of Hancock's expression of his dismay:

*"In Morris County, near Passaic's flood, in Chatham town, a Chapel long has stood,  
Built by the Methodists in days of yore, and stood the test forty years or more.  
Yet built for all denominations free, on principles of pure philanthropy;*

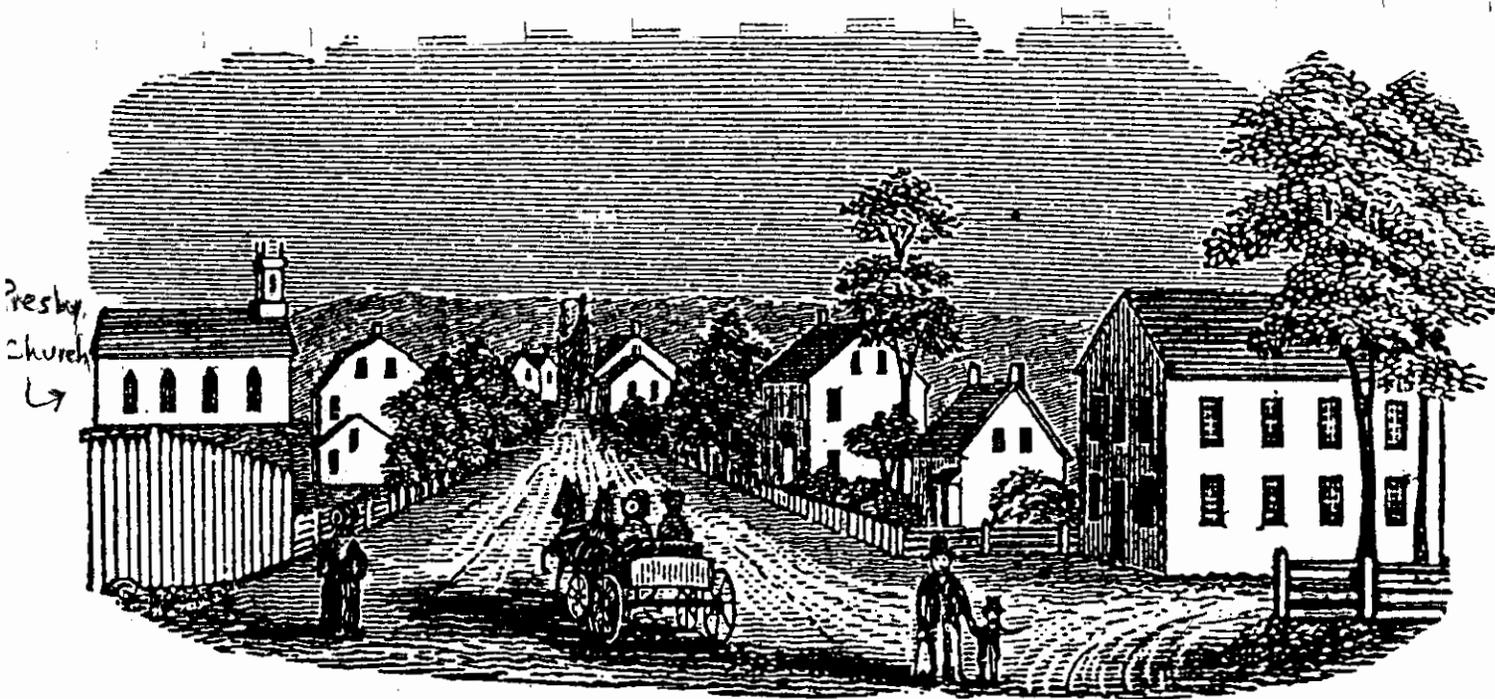
*Near Thirty years the house was occupied, by Methodists more than all sects beside;  
 But right was not denied, to sect or name, till Presbyterians usurped their claim.  
 Perhaps they think as Irish rebels thought, none should but their divinity be taught,  
 And they, in eighteen hundred thirty two, commenced a chapel of their own, 'tis true,  
 When reared and covered and adorned with paint, in imitation of a half-washed saint;  
 They held a party caucus in the town and there agreed to pull "Montpelier" down.  
 A host of men, deliberately led by men in trust and deacons at their head,  
 Proceed in purpose firm, without a jar, with one intent, did pull down the house of prayer;  
 Took out the windows and unhinged the doors, knocked off the boards and took up the floors;  
 Took off the roof and then the frame took down, and laid poor "pelier" level to the ground.  
 Then bore their booty from the spot away, as heroes do the trophies of their prey;  
 The shattered fragments advertise for sale, and I suppose will pocket the avail - -  
 I called to mind the Hittities lamb, and cried oh if I am bereaved, I am.  
 But here I rest, the bigotry or spite, leaves men to judge, if wrong was ever right - -  
 May generations yet, unborn and free, proclaim the deed to late posterity,  
 May Gospel, Christian herald, public news, the tidings o'er this continent diffuse;  
 . . . . .  
 May a new era in our history rise, to be observed – till time and nature dies,  
 May travelers of every cast and lot while passing by, point out the sacred spot.  
 And call to mind, 'twas surely here the Methodists once owned a house of prayer.  
 But Presbyterians in the warmth of zeal, with their adherents marching at their heel,  
 Pulled down the house of prayer.  
 \*These facts are true, as here presented to the public view.\**

Mont Pelier is a city of southern France near the Mediterranean Sea west-northwest of Marseille. Founded in the eighth century, it was purchased by Philip VI of France in 1349. The city was later a Huguenot center and was besieged and captured by Louis XIII in 1622

As John Hancock said, the old meetinghouse was torn down. Tradition says that the Presbyterians hitched a team of oxen to the base of the empty, stripped old building and tore it off its foundation. The Presbyterians built their new church a little further west on Main Street about four houses east of the place we now call Roosevelt Avenue (64 Main Street). (Hampton, Ehrhardt, Blachly and Anniversary 125)

The Methodists, having been forced from their old home, began to search for another. To help resolve the problem, John Hancock and his wife Phebe purchased a one acre lot from Israel Bonnel on September 24, 1832. (Hampton)

On October 12<sup>th</sup>, Hancock wrote that the following brethren were duly elected trustees: Matthias Swain, Vincent B. Budd [son of Dr. John C. Budd, father to Melissa Ward Budd (mentioned later) and son-in-law of Reverend



Presby.  
Church  
↳

← Chatham  
Methodist  
Episcopal  
Church

Main Street in Chatham, early 19th Century (c. 1832)

Looking Eastward

Hancock - - Vincent's second wife was Jane Hancock], Farrand Ward, William M. Kitchell, and Wickliff H. Genung. Then, on October 22, 1832, John and Phebe Hancock divided their newly acquired property in half and a contract was executed to sell to the Trustees the corner one-half acre parcel "upon which the new church was to stand." The price was \$100. October 22, 1832 is the date of the "incorporation" of the Religious Society and Congregation of the Village of Chatham [within the Madison Circuit]. (Hampton)  
*[Unfortunately, there is no official record of this incorporation. However, the church was reincorporated as a separate organization in 1852 and official documents do exist in the office of the Morris County Clerk.]*

The new church lot was located at the southeast corner of Main Street and "New Road." The "New Road" extended directly south from Main Street all the way to Shunpike Road, now called "Watchung Avenue." *[Many years later, when "New Road" was diverted in an easterly direction across the Passaic River, it was renamed: "Summit Avenue."]* The Church's new lot extended far enough along "New Road/Summit Avenue" to have room for a burying ground behind the church. (Hampton)

The Trustees took stones from among the few remaining in the foundation of the old meetinghouse and set them into the foundation of the new church, selecting one to serve as its "cornerstone."

The new church building had a high pulpit and old-fashioned windows, one set of double sash windows above another, like an ordinary factory. Stoves stood on either side of the meeting hall. The church was finished and dedicated on July 18, 1833. The cost of the structure was about \$1,200. It was not dedicated free from debt, but a small amount of \$100 remained to be paid. The Church had a bell. (Hampton and St. Paul's)

## THE AREA GROWS

By the 1830s, Chatham was on the main road from "here to there." It stirred to the dust and noise and excitement of the Morris Turnpike, but there was a *detachment*. Travelers were on the move toward the fertile valleys of the mid-west. Chatham lingered in the past, both in memory and in the appearance of its surroundings. The same families predominated. The same customs lingered. It was a nice village, but there were to be changes - - big changes. In the early 1830s, Thomas Gordon, passing through Chatham would only say:

*“ . . . Contains 1 Presbyterian and 1 Methodist Church, an academy, 3 stores, 2 taverns, a grist mill and a saw mill, and between 40 and 50 dwellings. [It is] a thriving village, with neat dwellings, surrounded by pleasant, well-cultivated country, watered by the Passaic River, which flows through the town.”*

Forty or fifty dwellings, and those on both sides of the river - - perhaps 200 or 250 people. (Cunningham)

William C. Wallace adds:

*“At this time (1830-1840) we were a very plain people, simple in our manner and appearance. Light carriage bodies with springs were not common - - and we never had heard the name buggy, or any of the various fancy foreign names now given to different forms of carriages. Indeed, simplicity generally prevailed in vehicles. More attention, however, was often given to the horse.*

*“The inhabitants of Chatham were an independent, high minded and happy people. They were not highly educated, but they very highly appreciated education as is strongly evidenced in their succeeding generations.” (Wallace)*

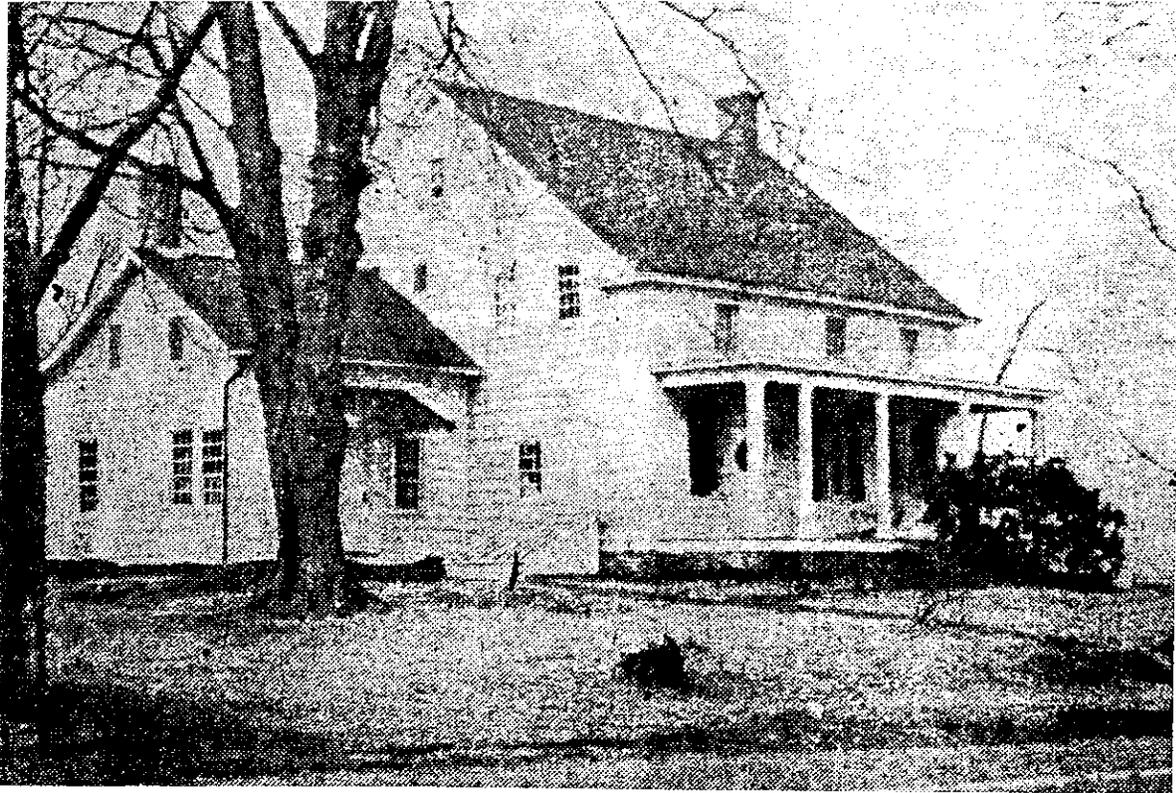
The railroad started running from Newark to Orange on November 19, 1836 and for the first year its motive power was, truly, horse power. The first steam locomotive, which had a single driving wheel and burned wood, was added to the rolling stock in 1837 when the western terminus of the line reached Summit. On October 2 of the same year, a single track (*at ground level*) reached Madison and in January of the following year was extended to Morristown. There were four station stops in Chatham. One was at the River Crossing, one was on the northeast corner of Passaic Avenue, one at Kings Road crossing and one at Division Street. (Strong)

In 1829 and 1830, John Hancock represented this district in the state legislature. One of his acts was to lead the fight against the extension of legalized horse racing. He also sponsored a bill that would have prevented the running of steamboats on Sunday. (Ehrhardt)

Father Hancock was a regular contributor to both the religious and the secular press, often using the columns of the Newark Eagle (Newark Star-Ledger). The city editor in Newark was so intrigued with the idea of a farmer/poet that a long correspondence between the two ensued. (Ehrhardt)

John Hancock could rise up with fine fighting words over changes that he considered dangerous. For example, Hancock heaped scorn upon those congregations that were following the resurgent wave in the nation of such

## The Old Home of "Father" John Hancock



The old home of "Father" John Hancock, pioneer Methodist preacher, which is still held by his descendants. The house, which stands at the intersection of Ridgedale and Greenwood Avenues, has been in the hands of the family since the Revolution, having come to John Hancock from his stepfather. First Methodist prayer meetings in this area were held in the front room of the house for many years and, in addition, the old preacher rode circuit to preaching stations as far away as Englewood. He served without pay and paid his own expenses, making a living by farming and broom manufacture.

(Comment written in 1972.)

(The ownership has changed since that time and renovations have been made to the house.)

dubious practices as the sale or rental of pews, a practice that extended back (as we have seen) through Jacob Morrell's time in the 1770s:

*"Respect to persons here should ne'er be shown  
Each man should sit as though it were his own;  
The rich and poor should meet, and pray and hear,  
And no man dread, and nothing have to fear.  
The man who works for fifty cents a day  
Should have a seat, though he has naught to pay.  
And she that scarce has bread enough to eat,  
In God's own house should always have a seat.  
God's house and grace, without specific sum,  
Should be enjoyed by all who choose to come.  
Come then, and hear, without debate or strife,  
The Word of God and seek eternal life."*

"Father" Hancock also decried the "misuse" of time, such as in the playing of cards:

*"Time is a jewel, which God has kindly given  
That we may seek and find our way to heaven;  
But thoughtless men believe it is no crime  
To spend that jewel in some vain pastime.  
I saw one eve, as I passed through the street,  
A social circle around a table set;  
From all appearance, I believe they were  
Engaged at cards, and not in humble prayer.  
Then I reflected, as I passed along,  
How great the folly of this heedless throng;  
And millions more thus throw their time away,  
In sinful pleasures or in childish play,  
While God they neither serve, believe nor fear  
Till death arrests them in their wild career.  
In that dread hour, the guilty sinner's cry  
Is, "Sinful wretch, I'm not prepared to die."  
Sure, that's not harmless then, which leads to harm,  
And in death's hour produces dread alarm;  
Those recreations, too, murder time  
In God's own judgment, all amount to crime."*

By all indications, John Hancock had been in difficult financial conditions until 1837. Prior to that time, he was fulfilling obligations to the other beneficiaries of his stepfather's will and raising his own six children. (Ehrhardt)

*When John was 30 in 1806, his step-father died and John was left the entire farm. A stipulation in his step-father's will required that John pay substantial sums to other heirs. The burden of these debts weighed heavily upon him through his most vigorous years. In 1837, however, he found himself free of personal obligations and his six children well able to care for themselves. (Ehrhardt)*

He was then sixty-one years of age but looked forward to spending the rest of his life entirely with his ministry. He, therefore, applied to be admitted as an itinerant minister. He was turned down, ostensibly because of his age, though it seems more probable that the rising demand for an educated clergy in the denomination had a great deal to do with the decision. (Ehrhardt)

After some soul searching, John Hancock severed his connection with his church on November 9, 1837, first asking his children not to follow his example. However, it wasn't long before the Methodist Episcopal churches in the vicinity invited him to officiate as before. He accepted and returned. (Ehrhardt)

After toiling all day in the fields, John Hancock continued to find it a pleasure to ride eight or ten miles and preach, and then ride back to his home late in the night. (Hampton and Ehrhardt)

He kept records and his notes from 1839, when he was sixty-three years old, provide a good example of these details:

*2,406 miles traveled this year, 154 days from home, 161 meetings, \$19.33 expended in traveling expended and \$14.05 received in donations. His preaching that year cost him \$5.28. Except for donations, he paid all of his own expenses.*

In 1839, John Hancock set aside a portion of his farm as a family burying ground; he soon found, however, that others wished to share the plot and he accordingly established it as a free public burial place forever. [*This burial ground continues to exist at the juncture of Ridgedale and Greenwood Avenues.*]

Throughout this time, an ever-changing role of ordained circuit preachers had charge of our church in Chatham. In 1832, Reverend John Woolson and Reverend John Buckley served the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church. (Hampton)

*Reverend Woolson, born in Cape May, New Jersey, was 56 years old at the time. Indicating his passion for Methodism, he named two of his sons: Francis Asbury Woolson and John Wesley Woolson.*

In 1833, Chatham was the appointment of a team of circuit preachers: Reverends James Ayers, Arthur Lub, and Washington Thomas. (Hampton)

In 1834, Reverends Francis A. Morrell and Vincent Shepherd rode the circuit as preachers and, in 1835, Chatham was an appointment on the Whippany circuit, with Reverends Francis A. Morrell (son of Thomas Morrell) and Benjamin Day as the itinerant preachers.

*Reverend Benjamin Day was born and raised in nearby New Providence and was 25 years old in 1835. He was one of a family of eight children, all boys. His father Stephen Day, of New Providence, while not connected with the Chatham church, was very interested in it and was licensed to preach in 1809. Steven Day was a Methodist of the early type. His wife (Elizabeth "Betsy" Wood Day) also was a loyal Methodist and was connected with our church for over four-score years. This estimable couple gave four sons to the ministry and four other sons were efficient workers in the church their father loved so well. (Hampton and Centennial)*

In 1836, Chatham was an appointment on the Whippany circuit, with Reverends William A. Wilmer and Wesley C. Hudson the circuit preachers and in 1837, Reverends Robert Lutton and John S. Beegle served us as circuit preachers. *Reverend William A. Wilmer married a daughter of Reverend Thomas Morrell and later the couple moved to the Illinois Conference. Reverend Beegle was 26 years old and it was his first year as an elder in the Conference.* In 1838, Chatham was an appointment on the Madison circuit, with Reverend Curtis Talley (69 years old) as circuit preacher and in 1839 and 1840, Reverend Crook S. Van Cleve was the circuit preacher.

In 1841, Reverend George S. Wharton was the circuit preacher and in 1842 and 1843, Reverends Charles S. Downs and George Hughes were assigned to us. The next year, Reverends Louis R. Dunn and Israel S. Corbit were circuit preachers to Chatham.

The work of these circuit riders was supplemented, as we have seen, by three "local preachers" who frequently preached in the old Methodist Episcopal Church of Chatham: Joshua Birch (*who lived in Whippany*), Henry R. Hedges (*who lived at East Madison*) and John Hancock. (Hampton)

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## The Slavery Question and Civil War, 1844–1865

John Wesley was an ardent opponent of slavery.

*His efforts in this regard preceded and coincided with those of William Wilberforce, perhaps the best known of the abolitionists in England. Wilberforce was noted for his eloquence and charm, attributes no doubt enhanced by his considerable wealth, but he did not involve himself at first with any great cause. A sudden conversion to evangelical Christianity in 1785 changed that and from then onwards he approached politics from a position of strict Christian morality. In 1787 he became, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, the parliamentary leader of the abolition movement. (Carey)*

Many of the leaders of early American Methodism shared Wesley's hatred for this form of human bondage. As the nineteenth century progressed, it became apparent that tensions were deepening in Methodism over the slavery question. In this matter, as in so many others, Methodism reflected a national ethos because it was a church with a membership that was not limited to a region, class, or race. Contention over slavery, however, would ultimately split Methodism into separate northern and southern churches. (History)

The Methodist Episcopal Church had been able to put the slavery issue aside until its General Conference in 1844. In that year, the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions clashed. Their most serious conflict concerned one of the church's five bishops, James O. Andrew, who had acquired slaves through marriage. After acrimonious debate the General Conference voted to suspend Bishop Andrew from the exercise of his episcopal office so long as he could not, or would not, free his slaves.

As Allison O. Adams explained it in *Emory Magazine*, Autumn, 2000:

*In 1834, through the bequest of a Mrs. Powers of Augusta, Georgia, Kitty, a twelve-year-old slave, became the property of James O. Andrew, a Methodist Episcopal Church bishop and Oxford, Georgia, resident. Andrew was the first chairman of the Emory University Board of Trustees in Atlanta.*

*According to the terms of Powers' will, when Kitty turned nineteen in 1841, she was to be given the option of going to Liberia, an African colony established for freed slaves. If she decided to stay...Georgia laws did not permit her emancipation.*

*When the time came, Kitty chose to remain in Georgia. She explained her decision by saying, "I don't want to go to that country. I know nobody there. It is a long ways and I might die before I get there."*

*Because state law prevented Andrew from simply freeing her, he erected a cottage near his own home so that she could live on his property.*

*In 1844, when Andrew traveled to New York for the annual general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Kitty's decision to remain with his family would become the focal point of the conflict that split the church until 1939.*

*During the gathering at New York's Greene Street Methodist Church that spring, the 151 delegates fell into two camps over Andrew's status as a slaveholder. (...The bishop subsequently had inherited a slave from his mother-in-law and had acquired by marriage several more who belonged to his second wife.)*

*Some northern delegates maintained that a bishop "connected with slavery" was unacceptable. Andrew's defenders argued that Andrew was an "unwilling" slave owner and thus not culpable. Eventually, 136 delegates voted for a plan of separation, and fifteen voted against it. (Adams)*

A few days later a Plan of Separation was drafted, which permitted the annual conferences in slaveholding states to separate from The Methodist Episcopal Church in order to organize their own ecclesiastical structure. The Plan of Separation was adopted, and the groundwork was prepared for the creation of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. (History) This action opened what became known as the century long "Methodist Civil War."

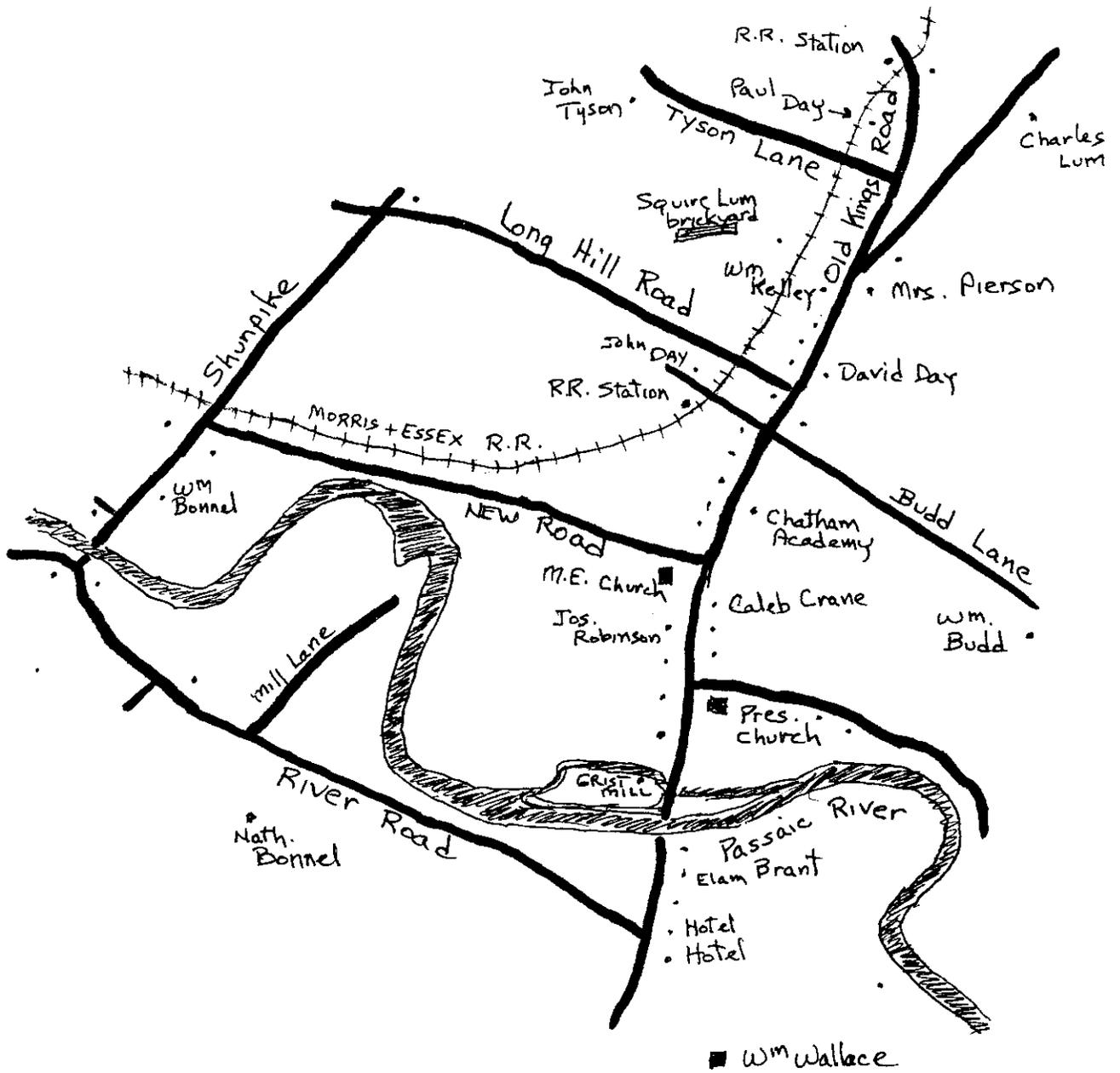
Delegates from the southern states met in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1845; to organize their new church. Their first General Conference was held the following year in Petersburg, Virginia, where a Discipline and hymnbook were adopted. Bitterness between northern and southern Methodists intensified in the years leading to Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860 and throughout the carnage of the Civil War. Each church claimed divine sanction for its region and prayed fervently for God's will to be accomplished in victory for its side. (History)

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## PASSING THE TORCH; NEW METHODIST LEADERSHIP IN AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH

The small community of Chatham continued to thrive. There was a tract of land in the middle of the Passaic River that extended quite a distance north and south of the main crossing. It was formed in the 1800s by the river and the millrace that ran Parrott's Mill. This "great island" became a favorite place for people of the community to have gatherings such as parties, Sunday

# Village of Chatham (1845)



(Copied from map drawn by James M. Littlejohn)

School picnics, children's day exercises and religious and political events.  
(Strong and Cunningham)

*[Since that time, the side of the island along which the narrowest part of the river flowed has been filled in to facilitate commercial development.]*

In 1845 and in 1846, Chatham was an appointment on the Madison circuit, with Reverends Nicholas Van Sant, Garner R. Snyder and Robert S. Harris as circuit preachers. Young Nicholas Van Sant was 22-23 years old. He was to return to the Chatham pulpit again, 39 years later in 1885, for a three-year appointment. *[In 1864, Nicholas Van Sant was a delegate to the General Conference.]* (Centennial)

Nicholas Van Sant's father (also "Nicholas") was born in southern New Jersey and was a Methodist local preacher of renown in those parts. Four sons became ministers, and two others local preachers. (Centennial)

In his book, "Sunset Memories," written in 1896, Reverend Van Sant described his 1845-1847 pastorate in this way:

*"This circuit was compact and level, comprising Green Village, Whippany, Chatham, Cheapside (aka Washington Place), with occasional preaching at White Oak Ridge, Hanover Neck, East Madison, and Logansville. Madison and Green Village each had a new church, while Whippany and Chatham had each an older one.*

*"My colleague for 1845 was Brother Garner R. Snyder (also 23 years old), a thoroughly conscientious young man, a strong thinker, and a good, though not captivating preacher. My diary contains this modest review of that year: 'The year passed away pleasantly but without any signal success of our labors.'*

*"The diary continues, 'At the next conference, held April 26, 1846, I was returned to my old charge [Chatham], with Brother Robert S. Harris for my colleague. This year proved to be one of decided prosperity, over 100 souls being converted and added to the church. The largest number of conversions took place at Green Village.'*

*"Two of our best homes [i.e., strongly Methodist] were found at Father Matthias Swain's and Mr. Israel Dickinson's, Washington Place."*

Reverend Nicholas Van Sant recalled "Father" Matthias Swain in his book (again, written in 1896):

*"Father Swain was a man small in stature but plucky, quiet, conscientious, preserving. His eldest son, John, had become one of our faithful and useful*

*ministers, and he in turn gave a son to the ministry, named for the grandfather - - Matthias. Some years before his death, Father Swain removed from the old homestead farm to a pleasant house quite near that church; where his peaceful, honored life was lengthened to almost a hundred years.*

His small house was on land in the Village of Chatham that has now become the entrance from Main Street to Roosevelt Avenue. *[Later the dwelling belonged to Elias Sturges who sold it sometime prior to 1868. The house itself was eventually moved to 21 Summit Avenue.]* (Saturday Stroll)

Reverend Van Sant continued,

*"Our services at Washington Place were held every fortnight, on Friday evening in the School-house, the families named [above], with others, attending the Sunday services at the Chatham Church.*

*"In those days the Chatham Church was very dependent upon its [outlying] supporters, Methodism having up to that time won itself but a few in the Village as members or unfaltering friends. Among those few must be reckoned General Mahon Minton and his energetic wife, Elizabeth; he not being a member, but a warm friend. Here we also had Brothers Harvey Bond, William Green, and a small number of others not far from the church who could render spiritual and financial help." (Newsletter and Van Sant)*

*"In the list of 26 probationers [prospective members, usually young people] for 1846 appears the name of Melissa W. Budd. In her early childhood she lived with her maternal grandmother Ward, who was staunchly Presbyterian, with very strong prejudices against Methodism, so common in those days. Melissa Budd's father was Vincent B. Budd, whose name is among the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church's first formed board of trustees elected in 1832. When this little girl was 12 years old, she committed to memory the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans and part of Corinthians in one year and recited them in Sunday School." (Van Sant)*

In 1847-48, Reverend John Scarlett was assigned to Chatham as circuit preacher. He was 44-45 years old at the time. A colleague of Reverend Scarlett said, "From his Celtic and Holland parents, Reverend Scarlett had inherited a physical constitution which was fibrous, alert, vigorous and intensely quick and active. He was a great pedestrian; never owning a horse on his circuits, but usually performing his journeys on foot." Reverend John W. Barrett also served us in 1847.

In 1849-1850, Reverend Joseph M. Pierson was appointed to Chatham as circuit preacher. In 1851, Chatham was an appointment on the Madison



A Circuit Rider.

circuit, with Reverend James H. Dandy as preacher. Reverend Dandy, born in Ireland, was 53 years old at the time of his appointment to Chatham.

In April 1852, the charge at the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church was separated from the Madison circuit, and Chatham first appears as a separate charge under the name of "The Methodist Episcopal Church of the Village of Chatham". The official incorporation occurred on August 5, 1852. The papers, signed by Matthias Swain, David B. Dickinson, William Day, Henry Hawley and William Oakley, were received and recorded by the Morris County Clerk on August 9, 1852 in book "A" of Religious Societies for Morris County on page 117.

The Reverend William H. Dickerson was appointed to be the church's first pastor following its incorporation. During that year the old church was enlarged by adding six feet to the front and by putting in a gallery, at a cost of \$600. Mrs. Nelson Kelley made window curtains for these old-fashioned windows by pasting large sheets of manila paper together. (Hampton)

Reverend William Charles Nelson led the congregation in 1853. He was 24 years old at the time and Chatham was his first appointment. Henry A Buttz said,

*"The method of travel was difficult during the time that Reverend Nelson served in the gospel. The minister's journeys to the work on his circuit, which were often long, were performed on foot or on horseback or by carriage." Reverend Nelson was "an able-bodied man, robust in appearance, strong in voice, and carried with him a heartiness of manner and warmth of greeting that made him welcome in the homes of the people." "His preaching was typical of a Methodist preacher at that time, and always it was simple, straightforward, practical."*

In 1854 Reverend Jacob B. Graw was the preacher in Chatham.

*The Reverend Jacob B. Graw led the founding of the Island Heights Association in 1878 to fulfill a need for a camp meeting ground for the Methodist Church. The Rev. Graw, several ministers, laymen, and prominent businessmen of Philadelphia, Camden, Trenton, Mount Holly, and Toms River felt that the island location on the Toms River was suitable for camp meeting purposes. The newly-formed Association purchased 172 acres in July of 1878.*

*After the purchase of the property, improvements were needed and the Association offered lots for sale to individuals who might be interested in locating in Island Heights. Prices of lots were from \$39 to \$390 per lot. The sale brought in \$10,000, all of which went for improvements. After much work, the Camp Meeting was opened in 1879 on a cite overlooking the Toms River. On camp meeting nights*

*worshippers numbering from 500 to 2,000 could be seen around the large meeting hall, which was a crude building with a roof but no sides.*

During the last decade of his life, Reverend John Hancock preached in various Methodist churches in the region. He preserved much of the early history of Chatham Methodism in his old handwritten church record, bearing the date of February 23, 1849. He apparently recorded it at the request of "Father" Matthias Swain, one of the trustees of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church. John Hancock lived to the age of 77 and 9 months and died on September 17, 1854. His gravestone says:

"For fifty years a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Born Dec. 6, 1776, Died Sept. 17, 1854. He, being dead, yet speaketh." (Ehrhardt)

One of the interesting things that shine through the writings of John Hancock is his insistence upon the sacerdotal and sacramental nature of his calling. The old man represented the days when the Anglican and Moravian element in Methodist thinking was dominant and, unfortunately, he was allowed to live to see his ideas ruled unfashionable. He seems to have had a keen awareness of the instancy of the Day of Wrath, when all men must account for how well they used their opportunities. (Ehrhardt)

In March 1855, Reverend Ellwood H. Stokes, pastor of the Morristown Methodist Episcopal Church, and, later, president of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, wrote a little book on the life of John Hancock: "A Pilgrims Foot-prints or Passages in the Life of Rev. John Hancock, of Madison, NJ." While Reverend Stokes cast "Father" Hancock in the model of Methodist preachers in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, he does include enough information with which to discern the true character and life of John Hancock. (Ehrhardt)

As the early evangelists were leaving the "stage," the focus of Methodism turned increasingly toward the social evils that existed in the growing society. One example, of many, may be found in the person of Reverend Dr. Jonathan Townley Crane (1819-1880). Reverend Dr. Crane served throughout northern New Jersey between 1843 and 1880. While he was never appointed to Chatham, he did serve for a period of time in Morristown and copies of his remarks appeared in "The Jerseyman."

Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson ("Bob") said, Reverend Crane "was one of the outstanding preachers of our Conference and a socially concerned author of some dimension." In 1849, Dr. Crane wrote "An Essay on Dancing."

*This book is a typical example of mid-nineteenth-century anti-dance literature. Crane takes the position that the ancients, including the Greeks and Egyptians, danced only for religious purposes. The author additionally notes that dancing in the Bible was done by "maidens and women alone." Also typical of this type of literature, the author decries the religious ceremonies of the "savage and the semi-civilized" world of non-Christians, especially the customs of non-Europeans. Crane concludes that balls have a bad effect on health and are a waste of time.*

Reverend Dr. Crane was surely known during those years by the pastors who served our congregation in Chatham and it is quite likely that the members, themselves, knew of him and his ideas through reading and through listening to sermons given by the pastors in Chatham. Reverend Crane, Bob continued,

*"focused his Christian conviction upon the kinds of social evils which, in the Christian mind of those times, degraded and destroyed youth and older ones alike. Dancing, popular amusements, and the abuse of alcohol were but a few of the subjects he examined in print." Bob added, "Crane, as was typical of his time, could belabor some of the personal vices....., but couldn't call slavery by its right name."*

[The American author, Stephen Crane, was the 14<sup>th</sup> and last child of Jonathan Townley Crane and his wife Mary Helen Peck Crane. Stephen Crane was 9 years old when his father died.]

In 1855 Reverend Philip Roden was preacher. Reverend John Foster Dodd, D.D. was appointed minister in Chatham in 1856.

Dr. Dodd was essentially a student, because he was 19 years old at the time of his appointment. He recalled his appointment to Chatham in a speech he made on September 23, 1906:

*"The members of the Church and Congregation received me with great kindness and consideration as a youth of limited knowledge and experience, contributing toward my support for the half year of the sum of \$91.63. I was boarded gratis at three homes, namely, those of Brothers Mathias Swain, Elam R. Brant and Frederick W. Carr, remaining 2 months at each place.*

*"During the winter we held a revival service which resulted in the building up of the church and the conversion of about 15 souls. I was thereby encouraged to believe that I was in the path of duty, and that God in accomplishing this work through my feeble efforts had put his seal of approbation upon my ministry.*

*"The minutes of 1857 show that I reported to the Conference: 1 Church; value \$2,200; 51 members; and 1 Sunday School, with 25 children."*

Henry A. Buttz said of Dr. Dodd, "His sermons were very carefully prepared and no detail of pastoral duty was overlooked by him." "His piety was simple, unpretentious, and all who knew him felt that he was a man of God." Modesty, quietness and sympathy were characteristics of this man. (Newsletter and Dodd)

Reverend Dr. John Foster Dodd was a delegate to the 1892 General Conference. (Centennial)

Reverend Cornelius Clark, Jr. was appointed to Chatham as the preacher in 1857.

The Newark Annual Conference was founded in 1857. Its founding was coincidental with the resurgence of revivalism and camp meeting enthusiasm especially in the eastern part of the nation. One significant source of this resurgence lay interestingly enough in the financial crash, which shook the country on October 14, 1857.

*A catalyst for the Panic of 1857 was the failure on August 24, 1857 of the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company. It was soon reported that the entire capital of the Trust's home office had been embezzled. What followed was one of the most severe economic crises in U.S. history. New York bankers almost immediately put severe restrictions on even the most routine transactions. In turn, many people interpreted these restrictions as a sign of impending financial collapse and reacted with panic. Individual holders of stock and of commercial paper rushed to their brokers and eagerly made deals that "a week before they would have shunned as a ruinous sacrifice." As Harper's Weekly described the scene at the New York Stock Exchange, ". . . prominent stocks fell eight or ten per cent in a day, and fortunes were made and lost between ten o'clock in the morning and four of the afternoon." (LOC)*

*A confluence of national and international events added to the panic: the British withdrew capital from U.S. banks; grain prices fell; Russia undersold U.S. cotton on the open market; manufactured goods lay in surplus; railroads that had overbuilt defaulted on debts; and land schemes dependent on new rail routes failed. The financial panic has been likened to a malignant epidemic, which killed more by terror than by real disease. (LOC)*

Public confidence collapsed. Industry stood still. Ruin and poverty faced many people. It was then that the practice of noonday prayer swept the nation. Known as the Great Prayer Revival, it received the support of the nation's great newspapers and touched the lives of nearly a million people. A renewed interest in Camp Meetings and Revivals developed and continued for many years. (Camp)

The 1857 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the "Dred Scott" Case earlier that year (March) may have also been a significant precipitating cause of the financial panic - - and the wide-spread practice of noon-day prayer.

*The Southern-leaning majority of the U.S. Supreme Court believed that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. In the Dred Scott Case, it ruled that any U.S. citizenship rights that states (notably northern states) offered enslaved blacks, as had been asserted by Dred Scott, then a legal resident in the Wisconsin Territory, were invalid; slaves may be citizens of a particular state, but not of the United States. The Court, therefore, stated that Scott remained the "property" of a Missouri heir of his former owner and not a "freedman" and a legal resident in Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was prohibited. (Schweikart and Allen)*

*The Northern press condemned the ruling that made the Missouri Compromise null and void as an "atrocious crime." Business and investors immediately reacted by aggressively selling the bonds of railroads that ran east-west. Prior to the Dred Scott Case, railroad builders had pushed westward confident that the proslavery or free-soil ideas had been settled and that economic stability would prevail. However, with this new ruling, investors foresaw considerable uncertainty and the prospect of a "Bleeding Kansas" recurring in every new territory as it was opened. In many cases, these securities were collateral in many major banks and the banks now found themselves in an exposed and weakened condition leading to failures such as that mentioned above. (Schweikart and Allen)*

It seems, therefore, that the resurgence of prayer in the churches related as much to the injustice of the Dred Scott decision as it did to the fear caused by the financial collapse.

Reverend Solomon Parsons served the Chatham church for one year in 1858, at the age of 26. Chatham was his first appointment.

William H. McCormick and Thompson H. Landon said of Reverend Parsons:

*"His conversion took place in Paterson in a characteristic way, as is apt to be the case where there is any character in a man. He was then about seventeen years old, and while visiting an aunt in Paterson he went to a meeting in the Cross Street Church. There was no 'revival' going on, nor any special excitement in that particular meeting, but after the sermon an invitation was given to sinners to seek salvation, and young Parsons arose and went forward alone and knelt at the altar. He was then and there converted and stayed so to his dying day." "Soon after this, while alone at his work in the woods (on his father's farm), he determined to be a minister."*

*"Brother Parsons was a muscular Christian in both a figurative and literal sense," they said. "He was possessed of tremendous physical strength which his quietness*



Reverend Solomon Parsons  
(in later years)

Pastor

1858

*of manner and unobtrusiveness concealed from general knowledge." "In his early ministry he was attacked by a big ruffian armed with a horsewhip. At the first blow the young minister took in the situation in a flash. He saw he could easily crush the fellow, but his first effort was at self-restraint; his second was to give so sudden and swift a propulsion to the bully's body that he found himself in such violent contact with the adjacent wall as not to know whether it was a torpedo or a cyclone that had carried him there. After that the young minister was not meddled with by that class of oppressors of the Gospel."*

Being a young bachelor, Reverend Parsons gained the interest of young ladies in town. One of the young ladies, Miss Elizabeth H. Magie, was a teacher at Chatham's first recorded formal education school, Chatham Academy. As with many teachers, she was not safe from her students' pranks. One day a practical joker led a jackass into the Academy and tied him to the school bell rope. When Miss Magie hurried to investigate the constant tolling of the bell, she found the animal in the classroom, tied to the rope and bearing a roughly lettered sign reading "I am Sol Parsons."  
(Cunningham)

McCormick and Landon continued:

*"During all his ministry Brother Parsons took a deep interest in the temperance reform. There was an apple distillery on his father's farm, and in his boyhood he had seen enough of the baneful effects of the traffic and the use of liquor to make 'him its enemy forever.'" He was active in the struggle against alcohol and came out some time in 1878 or 1879 an open and pronounced Prohibitionist. "He was nominated for Governor of New Jersey on the Prohibition ticket in 1883. Everyone said it was a forlorn hope, and so it was; but there was nothing 'forlorn' about Solomon Parsons and the way he fought that battle." "His ministerial brethren twice elected him, in 1880 and 1884, to represent them in the General Conference."*

The Center Street Church, built in 1899, contained a memorial stained glass window in his memory. It is one of several stained glass panels that hang today in the Main Street church. A published reference to him appears in the February 23, 1884 Burlington (NJ) Gazette:

*"Rev. Solomon Parsons was not greeted with a very large audience at the City Hall last Friday evening. He spoke quite lengthily and with considerable vim. There were about one hundred people present."*

Reverend Thomas E. Gordon served the Chatham church for one year in 1859.

John Cunningham described Chatham at the opening of the Civil War.

*“Chatham typified the somnolent innocence of rural America as the gulf widened sharply between North and South in the 1850s. The sleepy village rested beside its single track railroad, where trains rolled only three or four times a day in either direction, and seldom brought in or took away passengers. Except for temperance, the burning issues of the day passed it by. There was little incentive, and little opportunity, for its inhabitants to travel beyond Main Street. (Cunningham)*

*“The village had no telegraph wire and no local newspaper to keep it abreast of the tension mounting in Washington and Richmond. Its ministers, if concerned about the moral implications of slavery, certainly earned no reputations for fiery sermons on the subject. Abolitionist lecturers who might have ventured this way stayed on their trains and headed for Morristown or Newark, although neither of those places had reputations for deep anti-slavery sentiment. (Cunningham)*

*“Some strong-minded abolitionists within Chatham Township quietly helped slaves fleeing from Southern bondage on the secret underground railroad. There is evidence, for example, that runaways stopped at the Boisaubin house on Treadwell Avenue in Chatham Township near the Convent border.” (Cunningham)*

In 1860, a census gave Chatham Township a population of 2,960, including 105 blacks. The community consisted of a larger area than today. It still covered the area now called Chatham Township, Chatham, Madison Green Village and Florham Park. (Chatham Township and Cunningham)

Cunningham continued,

*“By mid-1860, Abraham Lincoln’s candidacy sparked argument in local stores and at the depot. Support for the Union built up slowly in New Jersey, despite the rejection of Lincoln by a majority of the state’s voters in 1860. However, when Chatham people learned from the Newark press of Southern secession and the firing on Fort Sumter, enthusiasm for the Union cause mounted quickly. (Cunningham)*

*“The first call for troops indicated that official Washington expected a short war. New Jersey was allowed only four regiments. Since these were to be composed largely of existing militia units, the chances of Chatham’s enthusiastic young volunteers seeking quick action diminished. (Cunningham)*

*“Eventually, however, Chatham Township sent more than 130 men into service, scattered through thirty-five New Jersey regiments, plus several out-of-state units and the Navy. (Cunningham)*

*“Village mothers, sweethearts and church workers worked to ease the pain and the loneliness of the men on distant fronts. They stopped by the railroad depot whenever they could to send off by express packages of underwear, stockings,*

*mittens, scarves, and other safeguards against the cold, mud and damp of battlefields. The volume of mail passing through Hudson Minton's post office picked up greatly. For nearly all Chatham people, the Civil War was the first occasion when they had ever known the need to write extensively - - or to receive mail often."* (Cunningham)

Reverend Isaac Cross, born in Devonshire, England in 1800, served the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church for two years 1860 and 1861. Reverend Cross's presence in our pulpit surely gave the members of the church a first-hand account of the conflicts that inspired the civil war.

*Reverend Cross was active in the formation in 1841 of a Union Missionary Society. Comprising forty-three delegates from more than six States, and as many denominations of Christians, white and colored, enrolled their names. The members of the Society voted unanimously "in favor of the enterprise of African Missions" and disavowed the concept of "Colonization." Joseph Cinque, and four of his countrymen, were present and enrolled their names as members of the Convention. (Colored)*

*Joseph Cinque was a West African who led a slave mutiny on the Cuban Amistad ship in 1839. It led to a celebrated trial in United States courts, which held that slaves escaping from illegal bondage should be treated as free men.*

*On June 30 Cinque incited the slaves to revolt at sea, killing the captain and cook and taking prisoner their owners, two merchants named Ruiz and Montez. The mutineers were captured off Montauk Point, Long Island, by the U.S. Coast Guard vessel Washington and were brought to New London. The plight of Cinque and his companions, jailed in New Haven, aroused abolitionist forces led by the New York merchant Lewis Tappan.*

*The abolitionists argued that the Africans, illegally enslaved, were justified in revolting to regain freedom and were innocent of any true crime in killing their captors to achieve freedom. In a dramatic appeal before the Supreme Court in 1841, the 73-year-old former president John Quincy Adams charged the Federal government with wrongful interference in the courts and obstruction of justice through partiality for slaveholders and antipathy toward blacks. The Court's decision, given on March 9, 1841, went for the abolitionists and set the Africans free. Cinque's heroic figure and commanding personality lent itself to the drama, and he was widely lionized as a symbol of the abolitionist cause. (AfricaWithin)*

J.F. Andrew said,

*"In the spring of 1862 [at the age of 62, Reverend Cross's pastoral] work in the Conference ceased." "Making his home in Washington (DC), immediately after his retirement, he served for several years, under appointment of the American Missionary Society, as missionary to the colored people. He also acted for a number of years as chaplain to the Freedmen's Hospital. In addition to these labors*

*his services extended to the Washington City Almshouse and the United States Insane Asylum."*

Chatham had been a separate charge for ten years; however, in 1862, Livingston was attached.

Reverend George W.D. White (1862-1863) and Reverend Samuel M. Stiles (1864-1865) served our church during the Civil War years. [Reverend White may have been father of The Rev. George W. White, presiding elder of the Los Angeles District of the Methodist Episcopal Conference, and University of Southern California's third president.]

The Civil War ended in 1865. John Cunningham's notes indicate that:

*"Chatham men were killed in Salem Heights, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. Three perished in the Andersonville and Danville prison camps. Others succumbed to illness and disease. Chatham men also fought in the Peninsula Campaign and at Gettysburg, The Wilderness, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. (Cunningham)*

*"The other men, who could, eventually returned home; some severely injured. Chatham's "world" had changed, however. The young men who had traveled thousands of miles away from home, across the hills of Tennessee, down the muddy Mississippi, up Lookout Mountain, had to be restless. They were well aware that beyond the boundaries of Chatham stretched an exciting new world. Out there were jobs and opportunities and land that they had never dreamed possible. They also recognized that some girl other than the one on the next farm might be a marriage partner." (Cunningham)*

The railroad through Chatham had become an important link in the east-west travel. Excitement was everywhere. Plans emerged for a vast improvement in the railroad now that the fighting was over. (Cunningham)

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### **Reconstruction, Prosperity, and New Issues, 1866–1913**

The Civil War dealt an especially harsh blow to The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Its membership fell to two-thirds its pre-war strength. Many of its churches lay in ruins or were seriously damaged. A number of its clergy had been killed or wounded in the conflict. Its educational, publishing, and missionary programs had been disrupted. Yet, in the post-Civil War period,

new vitality stirred among southern Methodists, and over the next fifty years its membership grew fourfold to more than two million. (History)

The African American membership of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, also declined significantly during and after the war. In 1870 its General Conference voted to transfer its entire remaining African American constituency to a new church. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now called The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) was the product of this decision. (History)

The *northern* Methodist Episcopal Church did not suffer as harshly as southern Methodism did during the war. By the late 1860s it was on the verge of major gains in membership and new vigor in its program. Between 1865 and 1913 its membership also registered a 400 percent increase to about four million. Church property values soared and the affluence was reflected in generally "prosperous" times for the churches. Sunday schools remained strong and active. Publishing houses maintained ambitious programs to furnish their memberships with literature. Higher educational standards for the clergy were cultivated, and theological seminaries were founded. (History)

Mission work, both home and overseas, was high on the agendas of the churches. Home mission programs sought to "Christianize" the city as well as the Native American. Missionaries established schools for former slaves and their children. Missions overseas were effective in Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Women formed missionary societies that educated, recruited, and raised funds for these endeavors. Missionaries like Isabella Thoburn, Susan Bauernfeind, and Harriett Brittan, and administrators like Bell Harris Bennett and Lucy Rider Meyer, motivated thousands of churchwomen to support home and foreign missions. (History)

Two critical issues that caused substantial debate in the churches during this period were lay representation and the role of women.

First, should laity be given a voice in the General Conference and in the Annual Conference? The Methodist Protestants had granted the laity representation from the time they organized in 1830. However, the clergy in The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, The Evangelical Association, and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ were much slower in permitting the laity an official voice in their affairs. It was not until 1932 that the last of these churches granted the laity such rights. (History)

Even more contentious was the question of women's right to ordination and eligibility for lay offices and representation in the church. The United Brethren General Conference of 1889 approved ordination for women, but The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not grant full clergy rights until well after their reunion in 1939. The Evangelical Association never ordained women. Laity rights for women were also resisted. Women were not admitted as delegates to the General Conferences of The Methodist Protestant Church until 1892, the United Brethren until 1893, The Methodist Episcopal Church until 1904, and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until 1922. (History)

The period between the Civil War and World War I also was marked by other theological developments and controversies. The holiness movement, the rise of liberal theology, and the Social Gospel movement were sources of considerable theological debate. The Methodist Episcopal Church demonstrated its regard for social issues by adopting a Social Creed at its 1908 General Conference. Social problems were also a spur in the movement toward ecumenism and interchurch cooperation. Each of the denominations now included in the United Methodist Church became active in the Federal Council of Churches, the first major ecumenical venture among American Protestants. (History)

The era closed with the world on the threshold of a great and horrible war. (History)

.....

## CAMP MEETINGS, WOMEN TAKE MORE ACTIVE ROLES, A PARSONAGE AND GLIMPSES OF LIFE IN CHATHAM

In 1866-67, Chatham became again a part of the Madison circuit, with Reverend James M. Tuttle as pastor.

A close connection between Drew University and the clergy leadership of our church had existed from the start of the University. Reverend Tuttle was among those who incorporated Drew Theological Seminary in 1868:

*From Laws of New Jersey 1868: AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.*

*Be it enacted by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, That Daniel Drew, . . . . . James M. Tuttle, . . . . . and their successors in office as herein provided for, are hereby constituted a body corporate by the name of "Drew Theological Seminary of the Methodist Episcopal Church," and by that name the corporation shall have perpetual succession, . . . . .*

*And be it enacted, That this act shall take effect immediately.*

*Approved February 12, 1868.*

In 1868, Chatham returned to being a separate appointment, with Reverend H. J. Woods as pastor. Our Church has remained a separate charge ever since, with the exception of one year, 1876, when Livingston was again, briefly, attached. Reverend John Brien served Chatham Methodist Church in 1869. (Hampton)

Within the community, the death of Benjamin Pierson Lum, Jr. in 1869 opened the way for the development of land between Lum Avenue and Washington Avenue. Irish immigrants purchased the plots and settled in town. Not long afterward, St. Patrick's Church was founded - - giving witness to new religious diversity in the town. (Cunningham)

The first All-Conference Camp Meeting in Northern New Jersey was held in August 1866 at Speedwell Lake between Morris Plains and Morristown. Some members of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church almost assuredly attended the meeting. In the tradition of camp meeting form, the services were intensely emotional. The closing evening service .....

*"..... continued until morning and . . . forty souls found peace during the night, and about seventy-five during the last twenty-four hours of the meeting." (Camp)*

The attendance at the All-Conference Camp Meetings during 1867 and 1868 was phenomenal. On the final Sunday of camp meeting in 1867, for instance, Bishop Janes preached to nearly two thousand people. In 1868 it was necessary to have three ministers preaching simultaneously in different parts of the grounds to over fifteen thousand people. (Camp)

By 1869, the site of the All-Conference Camp Meeting moved to a permanent, new location named "Mount Tabor." [*This spirit of camp meeting evangelism continued for more than 20 years (beginning in the late 1860s) seems to have ebbed by 1891.*] (Camp)

The focus on "social ills" was strong in this era. In 1869 Reverend Dr. Jonathan Townley Crane, wrote a book, "Popular Amusements." Mentioned earlier, Dr. Crane, though he was never appointed to Chatham, did serve for a period of time in Morristown and was known by ministers of our church. In his book, he discusses such recreations as the theatre, horse-racing, dancing, card-playing, billiards, the reading of novels, and social life, and he finds them all to be sources of sin and indolence. For example, he condemns baseball, which he finds to have been corrupted from an innocent game to a "ponderous and elaborate affair" centered on money. He also disapproves of chess, which he finds to be overly sedentary and distracting from more hallowed pursuits. Reverend E.S. Janes, Bishop of the Newark Conference, said in his introduction of the book, "The question of amusements for religious people is one of the great problems of the day."

Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson said,

*"As the memorial in the Conference Journal states: '[Reverend Crane] never glossed over the more unwelcome parts of our firm theology, but preached the great need of regeneration, and the certain punishment of the wicked....'" (Crane)*

In 1870, during the first year of the three-year pastorate of the Reverend James E. Lake, the Chatham Methodist Episcopal church (*still on the corner of Summit Avenue and Main Street*) was improved at a cost of \$1,058. At this time, the old-fashioned windows were removed, and modern church windows, having shutters that opened on the inside, were installed. The high pulpit was also removed and a low one took its place. A carpet, a real luxury for the church, covered much of the floor. (Hampton and Sparnon)

*The Presbyterians also made changes. They recognized that the town was growing away from them physically. Their 1833 church had been built within eight hundred feet of the Chatham bridge, close to the stores and inns. In 1874 they acquired a lot [on the north side of Main Street opposite Bowers Lane.] They erected a chapel there for Sunday School, Sunday evening services, and weekday prayer meetings. (Cunningham)*

Reverend James E. Lake took a great interest in the growing popularity of Christian resorts and Camp Meetings. He was also a great promoter of the Atlantic Highlands when he was Pastor of Atlantic Highlands First Methodist Church.

*On September 10, 1879, brothers Ezra B. Lake, S. Wesley Lake, James E. Lake, and an associate, William H. Burrell, all Methodist clergymen, sailed to "Peck's Beach" on the New Jersey shore. With Rev. William B. Wood and Simon Lake (the brothers' father, who mortgaged the farm for the initial purchase), they*



## The Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church

1833-1898

(Located at the corner of Main Street and Summit Avenue, Chatham, NJ)

established a "Christian Seashore Resort," the island city that would become Ocean City, New Jersey. Reverend S. Wesley Lake said

*"The tendency of the times was for people to take vacations and they were going for weeks. . . should [the church] stand idly by. . .? 'No.' Many people thought it was a mistake to build a city without some licensed houses (for liquor) . . . but we said, 'No.'"*

*In 1895, Reverend James E. Lake and others formed the National Park Association. It was situated on the Delaware River, south of Philadelphia.*

*[The stated purpose of the NPA was to create a religious resort community. Within one year, the NPA had purchased and sub-divided land, sold lots, and established a Camp Meeting Ground.*

*[Most of the attendees came by steamboat, trolley, or hired wagon from the Camden/Gloucester area, while others in Western Gloucester County traveled by horseback or personal wagons. Many of these people bought lots and built cottages adjacent to the campgrounds. In 1899, Reverend Lake also established the National Park First Methodist Episcopal Church.*

*[National Park flourished as a resort and eventually became a residential community.]*

Reverend S. Fielder Palmer served Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church in 1873. However, later in the year, Reverend Palmer left the church and joined with thirteen people who signed the first Congregational covenant in town - - bringing together nine Presbyterians, three Methodists, and one Lutheran. Reverend Palmer preached the first sermon at the new Stanley Congregational Church on August 31, 1873. (Cunningham)

Reverend William H. Meesie served Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church in 1874 and 1875. In 1874 the population of Chatham (800) was greater than that of Summit (700). (Strong)

In 1876, Reverend William R. Kiefer was Pastor of the church. He was 37 years old and served our church for one year.

In 1858, the 19-year-old Mr. Kiefer had attended a revival meeting while visiting in Ohio, was converted and, following his return home, became active in the leadership of Sunday Schools. Reverend C.S. Woodruff wrote, that Reverend Kiefer

*"was genial in temperament, a wise counselor and a good friend." As a young man he studied and became a school-teacher. "He taught in his home town (of*

Raubsville, Pennsylvania) and was thus engaged when he left to enter the United States service." "He was enrolled in the army as a volunteer on the twenty-second day of September, 1862, as a drummer boy (he was 23 years old). He could not be accepted as a soldier because of defective eyesight. He was attached to Company F, 153<sup>d</sup> Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, to serve for nine months. He was discharged from the service on July 24, 1863, at Harrisburg, Pa. (three weeks after the battle of Gettysburg)."

In 1864, Brother Kiefer was granted a local preacher's license and married in September of that year.

Reverend Woodruff continued,

*"(Mr. Kiefer) had a clear call to the work of the ministry. He was advised to join the Philadelphia Conference; but, as they were not disposed to receive married men at that time, he presented himself to the Newark Conference, to which he was admitted in 1868, being one of a class of eight."*

Reverend J.N. Dennison was appointed pastor of our church for 1877. Reverend Dennison had traveled a great distance in the preceding years and the congregation in Chatham must have learned much about the Reverend's experiences.

In 1874-1875, Reverend Dennison had been a circuit preacher in northwestern part of the state of Washington - - possibly a religious emissary to the gateway leading to the gold fields in northwest Canada. There is a story from the Skagit County Journal "Methodist Churches in Skagit County" that time:

*When the town of La Conner, Washington was more a thing of promise than of reality, Dr. J.S. Church, in passing along the street, found a stranger sitting on a beer-keg in front of the only business house in the place, which served the community as hotel, saloon and general store. On inquiry the stranger was found to be the Rev. J.N. Denison, a Methodist minister from the Skagit delta. Dr. Church, being himself a Methodist minister's son, made the stranger his own guest and took him to his own home.*

*The first Methodist sermon in LaConner was preached by Mr. Denison, in a small room upstairs in the home of Mrs. L.A. Conner, a devout Catholic, on Commercial Street. This was the year 1875. (Skagit)*

Reverend A.C. Ellis served us for two years, 1878 and 1879; Reverend F.T. Ellison served in 1880 and Reverend Samuel Sargeant was Pastor in 1881.

Chatham had grown significantly larger than the quiet village that existed just prior to the Civil War. The 1880 census of Chatham Township [*larger in territory than today*] reported a population of 4,277, a 46% increase in 20 years. A large hotel was built on the site of the present library and the area gradually became a fashionable summer resort with the "swells" constructing imposing estates and sponsoring elaborate entertainments. George Shepard Page (41 years old) and William A. Martin were two of the significant landowners in the southeast section of Chatham. Conflicts began to emerge between the area's town and rural elements. Disagreements over such issues as the right for livestock to graze on public roads, the rights to water and to education would lead soon to the separate incorporation of sections of the Township. (Chatham Township)

Louis M. Noe, an important name in rose-growing, built extensive greenhouses in what is known today as "*Rolling Hills*." His specialty was the American Beauty rose with a stem five feet long. At Christmas, he sent them to European royalty. In fact, Queen Victoria received fifty of them on her golden anniversary (1887). The rose-growing industry flourished locally until 1950. (Chatham Township)

Forty-five year old Reverend Salmon D. Jones arrived to Pastor the congregation for three years from 1882 to 1885. Reverend C.S. Ryman wrote of Reverend Jones:

*"He belonged to a large family (in northeastern Pennsylvania), of limited means but of industrious habits, and had abundant opportunity, early in life, to understand what Frederick W. Robertson meant by the phrase, 'The advantage of disadvantages.'" Reverend Ryman also said, "He was a man of exceptionally clear judgment, of deep convictions, and of spotless, irreproachable character."*

During his three-year ministry in Chatham, the church enjoyed a gracious revival. Fifty-two souls were converted to God, forty-one joining the church on probation. (Hampton)

On May 23, 1882, the first Woman's Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Chatham was organized. Members and friends of the church met at the house of Mrs. Mary Smack. The Society was called the "Penny-A-Day Club." [*A rough estimate would put the initial "penny" equivalent in value to about \$0.24 per day in 2007.*] Both men and women could be members of the Penny-A-Day Club, but only women could be officers. There were 34 members. Their objective was to meet monthly, to help raise money for the



Reverend Salmon D. Jones

Pastor

1882 - 1885

Parsons' lodging and food and to enjoy social gatherings. Mrs. Nelson Kelley was elected President; Mrs. Henry (Melissa W. Budd) Pierson, Vice President; Mrs. Salmon D. Jones, (the pastor's wife) Secretary; Mrs. Samuel Sidman, Treasurer. Mrs. Joseph Conklin and other women collected the dues by periodic visits to the homes of the members. Mrs. Conklin was also appointed to visit the sick. Mrs. Herring, Mrs. Spencer and Mrs. Jones were elected a committee of three on entertainment. (Sparnon)

On Wednesday evening, June 14, 1882, the Penny-A-Day Society met at the house of Mrs. Nelson Kelley. Following a brief discussion of the Society's business, a quartet club from Drew Seminary entertained the company with choice music. (Minutes)

The church celebrated its semi-centennial by special services on October 22, 1882. The following former pastors were present: the Reverends George Hughes (who served our church in 1843), James M. Tuttle (1866-1867), John Scarlett (1847-1848), Nicholas Van Sant (1845 and subsequently in 1885-1888), Solomon Parsons (1858), Cornelius Clark (1857) and John Brien (1869). Reverend George Hughes preached in the morning and Reverend James M. Tuttle read an historical sketch. All the former pastors delivered addresses. (Hampton)

Only one member attending the semi-centennial celebrations, Caroline Dickinson, had also been present fifty years earlier when the church was built in 1833. Four other persons were present who lived in Chatham at the time the church was built: Mahlon Minton and his wife Elizabeth, William Green, and Reverend James M. Tuttle. (Hampton)

Up to this time (1882), the church had not owned a parsonage; the church paid rent for the quarters of the Pastor and his wife. Prior to the semi-centennial celebrations, however, a subscription had been circulated to procure funds for a parsonage. By the close of that day, \$1,171 had been subscribed. (Hampton)

The Penny-A-Day Society continued to meet and take minutes - - all so interesting because they enable us to visualize life in the church in the late nineteenth century. For example, the Society met at the residence of Mrs. Smack on Wednesday evening December 13, 1882. The day having been very stormy and the traveling bad only a few were present and no regular business meeting was conducted. (Minutes)

The Society met at the residence of Mr. George Lees on Wednesday evening, January 16, 1883. A heavy snow had fallen during the day and the *wooden* side-walks were not yet cleared. Only about twenty persons were present, but a pleasant time was enjoyed. (Minutes)

The Penny-A-Day Society met at the house of Mrs. Pollard on Wednesday evening February 14<sup>th</sup>. The weather [again] being stormy, there were but a few present; the meeting was post-poned until Monday. On Monday, the weather was fine and there was a large gathering. The group enjoyed readings by Mrs. Bower and Mrs. Jones (the Pastor's wife), and music by Miss Garrison and brother. (Minutes)

On August 8, 1883, the Penny-A-Day Society minutes noted that the Society would schedule a "jug-breaking" to take place about January 1<sup>st</sup> and that jugs [needed to] be purchased. Three prizes would be given to those who collected the largest amounts and the whole proceeds [would] be applied to the purchase of furniture. (Minutes)

On September 17, 1883, the Penny-A-Day Society voted to pay ten dollars to Reverend Salmon D. Jones (the pastor) toward the purchase of a parsonage kitchen stove and two dollars for jugs. Mr. Lees and Sidman reported the amount they had raised for church crockery and Mrs. Pierson and Kelley were appointed a committee to purchase the same. (Minutes)

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Penny-A-Day Society decided to buy a parlor stove for the parsonage. *[Each month, the Secretary recorded in the minutes the amount collected for that month. During the past year, the amount averaged about \$17.00 per month and collections ranged between \$12 and \$22. The amount collected implies that about 50 men and women were active in the Society.]* (Minutes)

The members of the Penny-A-Day Society held a meeting after the revival service in the church on November 15<sup>th</sup>. (Minutes)

The poor winter weather forced the cancellation of the December 1883 meeting of the Penny-A-Day Society. Attendance at the meetings in January and February 1884 meetings was low for the same reason. (Minutes)

The parsonage was constructed by Joseph Conklin in 1884 at a cost of \$2,923, exclusive of the lot. We can see it today in 2007. It is #15 Summit Avenue. A commercial establishment on the corner of Main Street and Summit Avenue and the residence at #5 Summit Avenue occupy the spot

where the old church stood. The house at #9 Summit Avenue is also located on land that was part of the original church property - - specifically part of the old Methodist Cemetery; (see below). (Hampton)

When the Fairmount Cemetery was established in 1858, the remains of most of those buried in the old Methodist cemetery were moved to the new cemetery. However, not everybody made it up the hill. Mrs. Edward Taylor, who lived near the old church, remembered workmen digging the foundation for the new parsonage (at #15 Summit Avenue.) Some human bones were unearthed. (Holler)

When an effort was made to procure a mortgage of \$1,500 on the new parsonage, it was discovered that the title to the church property was worthless. In 1832, Reverend John Hancock and his wife had deeded the church property to the trustees and their heirs, instead of their successors. Henry W. Pierson, then a member of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor spent a great deal of time in clearing up the matter. Several heirs were to be seen in order to have them agree to waive their "rights." A suit was carried through the Court of Chancery in order to correct the error. The total cost was \$75. The legal counsel donated his services. (Hampton)

Reverend Salmon D. Jones was the first pastor to live in the new parsonage.

The annual meeting of the Penny-A-Day Society [was held] at the parsonage on May 21, 1884. Among other decisions, it was voted to pay \$17.23 on the mortgage. (Minutes)

The minutes of the Penny-A-Day Society for August 13, 1884 report that the monthly sociable met again at the parsonage; the group had not received an invitation to meet at another home. The minutes say that

*"a fair representation of the belles and beaux of Chatham were present while some of the older ones were detained at home by the heat of the season." (Minutes)*

The wonderful sense of humor of our predecessors is clearly evident in the minutes of the Penny-A-Day Society for October 8, 1884. The ladies took note of the pleasant company and added:

*"While the gentlemen in one room discussed all the important question of politics, the ladies in the other [room] discoursed sweet music from the piano and were afterwards [all] invited to view by lamp light Blaine and Cleveland growing side*

*by side, in a pen together. It is needless to add that Cleveland was the biggest hog." (Minutes)*

The Presidential election of 1884 was only one month away. The Democrat candidate was Grover Cleveland and the Republican candidate was James Gillespie Blaine. *[Cleveland won with 48.5% of the vote. Blaine received 48.3% of the vote, Benjamin Franklin Butler (Greenback and Anti-Monopoly Party) 1.7% and John Pierce St. John (Prohibition Party) 1.5%.]*

The Penny-A-Day Society "sociable" was held on December 9, 1884 at the residence of George W. Bower. The Society voted to pay \$42 to the Trustees which was to be applied toward interest on the parsonage debt.

*"We were afterwards entertained with vocal and instrumental music [that was] prepared for the occasion. After the program was finished, Rev. S.D. Jones played his two tunes on the organ and Mrs. H.W. Pierson sang 'Nellie Gray' followed by loud applause." (Minutes)*

Reverend Nicholas Van Sant (62-65 years old) returned to the Chatham pastorate during the three years, 1885-1888. Considerable money was raised for improvements to the church building during the three years of his pastorate and thirty-five persons were admitted on probation. A Christian Endeavor society was organized during his ministry. (Hampton)

In his autobiography, "Sunset Memories," Reverend Van Sant reflected on his pastorate with the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church in 1885-88:

*"The beautiful parsonage here was nearly new, having been occupied but about one year by our predecessors, the Reverend Salmon D. Jones and his wife, through whose exertions largely it had been built, under the wise planning and supervision of architect George W. Bower.*

*"Here I found a veteran couple, Brother Harvey Bond and wife, to whom I had ministered in my pastorate of 1845-1846. Well-preserved and happy, they celebrated their golden wedding a year or two since. Here, also, were Brother Henry W. Pierson and his wife, Melissa [Budd], previously mentioned, who were still active in church work. But in the main the membership and congregation consisted of a new generation very few of whom I had ever known, including the names, Kelley, Bower, Lees, Conklin, Hall, Hopping, Carter, Sheldon, Mesler, Ford, Muchmore, Taylor, Smith, Morgan, Fourt, Brewster, Spencer, Morgan, Broadwell, Genung, Bruen, Riker, McCarl, Hill, Ryerson, Phipps, Munson, Pollard, Sidman, Struble, Hesse and Reed. Among our best, as they were our nearest neighbors, were Mr. Edward Taylor and family, on the one hand, and Mr. J.T. Wagner and family, on the other. A member of another church, Mr. A.M. French,*



*Sincerely yours,  
N. Vansant.*

Reverend Nicholas Van Sant

---

Pastor

1885 - 1888

*Congregationalist, kindly consented to become our Sunday school superintendent, serving as such with great acceptability and usefulness." (Newsletter and Van Sant)*

The members at the Penny-A-Day Society were entertained with music that included Mrs. Brewen singing a "Scotch song, her native language." (Minutes)

On the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 1885, the Penny-A-Day Society met at the house of Mrs. Muchmore. As the night was unfavorable, there was not a full attendance; though the young people were pretty well represented and enjoyed the evening greatly in the playing of various games and social converse. The group also listened to readings by Mr. John Pheris. The hostess furnished [ice] cream and as the evening was very warm, this formed no small part of their enjoyment. (Minutes)

One of several fine features of the December 9, 1885 Penny-A-Day Society meeting was a song given by Mrs. Carter entitled "Beautiful Dreamer." (Minutes)

Reverend Van Sant's autobiography, "Sunset Memories," continued to describe his experiences in Chatham:

*"At considerable expense, provided for in advance, the church and parsonage were repainted and a substantial new drain built along the front of the former. The garden spot in rear of the parsonage was for the first time cultivated, to which was added the planting of grapevines donated by Mr. Sheldon, the fruit of which has been enjoyed by our successors. Ornamental vines were also set out before the front piazza. Mention is made of these small improvements because life is largely made up of little things.*

*"Some measure of revival influence was realized each year, adding somewhat to the numerical and moral strength of the church. Near the close of the last year we organized a Christian Endeavor Society, of which Brother M.K. Hopping became the efficient president.*

*"The parsonage here was the scene of two social events of particular interest to us. The first was the home bringing of one between whom and myself was thenceforward to subsist the tenderest of all human relationships - - that of husband and wife. The memorable date when the name of Miss Josephine L., daughter of Mr. W.W. Tunis, of Madison, became changed to mine was December 30, 1885, the Reverend Joseph H. Knowles officiating. Said an intimate friend on becoming acquainted with her soon after, 'That marriage was made in heaven;' so we believed then, and so during all the years that have since passed we and our children [from my first marriage] and friends have continued to believe. The other*

event was the marriage of our youngest daughter to Mr. P.T. Wood December 7, 1886, my sixty-third birthday. A genial company gathered to witness the ceremony and enjoy the quiet festivities of the evening. The bridal tour included a trip by ocean steamer to Florida.

*"I must not fail to mention that the New Year's Day of 1886 was a notable one at the parsonage. Having made preparation for successive calls [i.e., personal visits], we waited in quiet expectancy to welcome them; but none came, and hour after hour passed, only to intensify our disappointment. What did it mean? Were our parishioners offended by the installation of a new wife and mother in the parsonage? No one but the daughter knew, and she skillfully concealed her knowledge by remarking in perfectly natural tone and manner, 'If no calls come I think it will be shabby treatment.' Having about settled down in quiet despair, at eight o'clock or soon after the long spell was broken by the ringing of the bell and the sound of footsteps. I was asked to wait on the door, the opening of which revealed a throng of both sexes and various ages, who had manifestly come to take possession, notwithstanding that well-known maxim of the old English law that 'a man's house is his castle.' The surprise was perfect, and to the number of seventy or eighty they entered and took the freedom of the house. Never did a company enjoy or impart more genuine pleasure. The congratulations were many and hearty; nor this alone, for an excellent timekeeper, in the form of a beautiful mantel clock, fell to the lot of the wife, while a superb adjustable chair, suitable for health or sickness, for youth or hoary age, was made over to the husband. From these and manifold other proofs of genuine friendship the people of Chatham can never cease to hold a large and warm place in our hearts." (Newsletter and Van Sant)*

The Penny-A-Day Society met on the evening of October 13, 1886 at the house of Mrs. George Bower. Many members of the Society attended a political meeting, which was held on the same evening. Therefore, there was not a large number at the Society meeting. (Minutes)

Chatham's "diarist," bachelor James Robert Littlejohn ["Jimmy"] captured in detail, in his personal diary, his observations of life in Chatham for 56 years (from 1887 to 1943). He went to church services at the Methodist Episcopal Church (until he suddenly quit in 1905). John T. Cunningham included in his book "Jimmy's" comment when he was 34 years old: Sunday, "July 31, 1887 - Missionary exercises in the ME Church in the evening. Went there." (Cunningham)

Reverend Joshua Mead (57-61 years old) followed Brother Van Sant, enjoying a pastorate of four years (1888-1892). [Reverend Mead came from an appointment in Port Oram, N.J. and Reverend Van Sant was sent, in return, to pastor the people of Port Oram.] (Hampton)

Reverend John Hobart Egbert wrote that Joshua Mead

*"was a forceful and convincing preacher of the Gospel. . . . . He was a congenial spirit, thoughtful, sympathetic, kind. One acquainted with his work in the ministry comments upon it in this terse manner: 'His preaching was Head and Heart Work.'"*

*The Reverend Mead "grew up in an 'Oldtime' Methodist home in which the Bible and the family altar were prominent features, and where hospitality in the entertainment of traveling Methodist preachers was unbounded. In this home with its religious associations, he imbibed a great love for the Methodist Church, its doctrines and its ministry."*

The May 9, 1888 meeting of the Penny-A-Day Society was held at the parsonage. Being the annual meeting, officers were elected. Mrs. Pierson was elected President, Mrs. Mead (the new pastor's wife) was elected Vice President and Mamie Kelley and Mrs. Joseph Conkin were named Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. The minutes also recorded:

*"Combined with the sociable was a reception for our pastor. The evening was very pleasantly spent. Messrs. Frank and Charles Mead favored us with music."  
(Minutes)*

During Reverend Mead's tenure, additional money was raised to apply to the debt on the parsonage. The "Penny-A-Day-Club," which had been for many years a benediction to the church, raised a large portion of this money. A sizeable bequest of Mrs. Fourett was also used to reduce the debt.  
(Hampton)

*Upon their deaths, Joshua and Alice Mead were buried in Fairmount Cemetery in Chatham (Section 1, Lot #498). Their son, Rev. Dr. Frank Mead, was raised in Chatham and became a prominent Christian author and editor of F. H. Revell Publishing Company. Another son, Reverend Dr. Charles M. Mead, became a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (Simpson)*

## SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In 1892 Reverend Gilbert Hurd Winans began a two-year Pastorate of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church. He was 59 years old at the time of his appointment.

Reverend J.B. Faulks, a theological school classmate of Reverend Winans, said, Brother Winans *"was not a stranger to the sorrows of*

*bereavement.*" His first wife, and then a second wife, had died before he came to Chatham as Pastor. One year after leaving the Chatham pulpit, his third wife died. Also, several of his children died during his lifetime. He retired in 1898. Reverend Faulks added:

*"During his forty years in the pastorate, Reverend Winans served twenty-three charges. In his pastorate, (Reverend Winans) was not a perfunctory minister, but a shepherd of the sheep. He cared for those whom he served."*

In 1893, at a meeting held at the home of Mrs. Ryerson, it was decided to change the name of the "Penny-A-Day Club" to the "Ladies Aid Society." Mrs. Frank Mead was elected President of the new Society. During the winter months, meetings were held in the homes of the various members - - all traveling by carriage to the meeting place. These were regular business meetings. Once a month, a social was held in one of the homes, to which both men and women were invited. (Anniversary 125)

A popular Strawberry Festival was held each June, under the auspices of the Ladies Aid Society; weather permitting it was held out-of-doors, on the lawn of the church. Otherwise, it was held in the Church Annex. A Peach festival was held in August with fresh peaches and home-made cake and ice cream. Mr. Henry W. Pierson was usually in charge of the Oyster Supper held in October or November. Just before the opening of the Annual Conference each year the Women's Society had a "Donation Party" for the Minister and his family. Each person attending was asked to donate something for the Pastor. Quantities of flour, sugar, potatoes and meat were accumulated this way and a purse of at least \$100 was usually added to the gifts. (Anniversary 125)

Occasionally the Ladies Aid Society put on a two-night Fair, with a play by the Intermediate Department on the first evening, and a supper on the second. The Fairs were later discontinued and a Thank Offering Sunday substituted. The Offering Sunday raised as much or more money than the Fairs, and was much less work and worry for all concerned. (Anniversary 125)

Cake Sales were held three or four times a year, netting about \$25 profit per sale - which was considered a handsome profit in those days. (Anniversary 125)

In November of 1894 the church had a glorious revival and a class was started with Brother Caleb Van Wert in charge. [Caleb Van Wert was the

grandfather of Edith Behre Van Wert's husband.] During 1895 there were ten weeks of revival and more than seventy souls were added to the kingdom and to the pastorate. (Sparron)

Edie Van Wert recalled that her mother grew up in Chatham and went to Prayer Meetings twice a week in the Parsonage right around the corner from the Old Methodist Church on the corner of Summit Avenue and Main Street; this was in the late nineteenth century and before her mother was married. (Van Wert) *(Edie's family had deep roots in this area.)*

Since the church had been served for a long time by older men, the Official Board pleaded for a younger man and the Bishop responded by sending in 1894, the Reverend John O. Sparron (31 years old).

Reverend John O. Sparron was born in England in 1863. He came to the United States with his parents when he was a boy. Reverend Sparron served in Chatham until 1899, the 5-year term being the longest so far in the Chatham Methodist Episcopal church history. He continued to serve in the pulpit of many churches until 1932. (Hampton and Sparron)

The church entered a period of sustained growth during Reverend Sparron's tenure and it became clear that improvements needed to be made on the church building. (Hampton and Sparron)

A thorough cleaning of the church and carpet was achieved at a considerable cost. The stoves, which stood on either side, were removed and, on account of the increase in the number attending, it was decided to place a furnace below. There being no cellar, a committee was appointed [consisting of M.K. Hopping, George E. Hall and the pastor] to have the excavating done and a furnace put in the new basement. In 1894, \$315 was spent on these improvements. (Sparron)

The Epworth League saw the necessity of making improvements in their meeting room, also. They carpeted and grained [i.e., they painted or otherwise finished a surface in imitation of the grain of wood, marble, etc.] at a cost of \$125. Song books were purchased and the Junior Epworth League was organized to assist the pastor in the benevolent work and the distribution of tracts. The Ladies Aid Society made much needed improvements in and around the parsonage; the home was made very comfortable. (Sparron)

The pastor's salary was raised from \$600 to \$700 in the first year (1894), to \$750 in the second year and to \$800 in the third year. (Sparron)

The church also organized a choir with Brother Samuel Van Orden as the leader.

Spiritual work included Old Peoples Day, Epworth League Day and Children's Day. A class of sixteen non-attendants in the Sunday School was organized and the pastor became the teacher. The majority of the people in the class were not Christians; however, before a year had passed, the whole class had professed conversion. (Sparnon)

Edward Taylor, a young man seeking membership in the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church in 1896, entered into the usual six-month period of learning and prayerful consideration leading to full membership in the church. He, like other prospective members, received "The Probationer's Companion," a guide for his study, on March 1, 1896. John O. Sparnon was Pastor and Caleb Van Wert was his class leader. The "Companion" provided information on the Methodist Episcopal beliefs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, such as:

*"There is but one condition required by our rules for admission on probation, namely, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins.'"*

*"Right habits make victory easy. Daily thoughtful study of the Bible and much secret prayer are the greatest duties and yield the richest benefits."*

*"Be not anxious about heaven, but only be Christ-like in daily life."*

*"Secret prayer is as vital to the soul as breath is to the body." . . . . "always pray vocally when alone." . . . . "The reflex effect of your own words spoken aloud will double the intensity and sincerity of the prayer. Do not hurry. . . . 'Wait patiently for Him.'"*

*"Be constant at [public preaching, prayer meeting, and class meeting]." . . . . "Learn to speak and pray by repeated efforts." "Never yield to the notion that you cannot."*

*"Be on your guard. Old habits will perhaps harass you." . . . . "Probably more young converts are wrecked by the evil influence of companions than by any other cause."*

*"Temptations will vex you. Everybody has them." . . . . "Temptation is not sin; the yielding is sin."*

*“Duty, not feeling, is your standard of action.” . . . . . “Fickle as the wind is feeling as a guide in Christian life.” . . . . . “Right doing develops right feeling.” . . . . . “Go to your Bible to learn duty.”*

*“Seek the aid of the Holy Spirit in living according to these fundamental principles.”*

*“[Our church’s] doctrines and type of spiritual life, we believe, will best promote your Christian growth in holy things. The measure of holy character a church tends to develop in her members is the highest evidence that she is a true Church of Jesus Christ.” . . . . . “Do not be readily moved by the appeals to an ‘easy’ Christian life.”*

*“The proper mode of baptism [sprinkling, pouring or immersion] is . . . that which satisfies your conscience.” (Probationer)*

The Probationer’s Companion also covers historic information and Church Polity in 1896, such as

*“The pastor is appointed for one year, and cannot be reappointed for a longer period than five consecutive years to one church.”*

The special doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church are also covered in the “Companion” and include:

- *Repentance (Godly sorrow for sin and a turning of the soul to God for mercy);*
- *Justification (Full forgiveness);*
- *Regeneration (the renewing of the soul in righteousness by the Holy Ghost);*
- *the Witness of the Spirit (the immediate testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian);*
- *Holiness (the perfecting and completing of the soul in all the graces of Christian character);*
- *Free Will (the freedom to accept or reject Christ as Saviour);*
- *Universal Atonement (the fact that Christ died and atoned for the sins of the whole world - - every soul is equally redeemed); and*
- *Possible Apostasy (the soul once renewed may possibly fall into sin and guilt, and dying in this state be finally lost).*

Other sections include, “Articles of Religion,” “Nature, Design and General Rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church.” The rules included:

- *do no harm;*
- *avoid evil of every kind, such as:*
  - *taking the name of the Lord in vain;*
  - *doing ordinary work on Sunday;*

- *buying, selling or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of extreme necessity;*
- *buying, selling or owning slaves;*
- *returning evil for evil;*
- *fighting or brawling;*
- *giving or taking things at unlawful rates of interest;*
- *engaging in uncharitable or unprofitable conversation;*
- *putting on gold and costly apparel;*
- *singing songs or reading books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God;*
- *becoming self-indulgent;*
- *laying up treasure on earth; and*
- *stealing.*

The rules also cite things for people of God to do, such as:

- *doing good of every possible sort;*
- *giving food to the hungry, clothing to the naked and visiting the sick and those in prison;*
- *being patient, denying yourself and taking up your cross daily. (Probationer)*

## A NEW CHURCH BUILDING ON CENTER STREET

As the area grew in population, the township form of government proved inadequate. In 1897, the citizens of the village voted to secede from Chatham Township and to form an incorporated borough. Madison and Florham Park also seceded, leaving Chatham Township at its present geographic size shortly after 1900. (Record)

In 1896 the church building on the corner of Summit Avenue and Main Street was thought to be in good condition and the members anticipated a good and prosperous time. However, in June, Brother George S. Lees came to Reverend Sparnon and called his attention to the wall of the church, which was found to be bulging in. After a few weeks of watching, they saw that it was worse. Brother Carley was instructed to investigate the cause. He found the timbers on the east side rotten and thought the church was unsafe for worship. The Trustees then called Brother George Bowers, an architect from Morristown to examine the structure. Mr. Bowers concurred with Brother Carley, declared it to be unsafe for worship and advised the board not to attempt to repair the old building. (Sparnon)

The old church had been built as a chapel in 1833. Four additions had been made, two at the front, including a new entrance on the front, a lecture room at the rear of the building and a small furnace room beneath. (Sparron)

The Trustees met and, by unanimous vote, decided not to repair but to build a new house of worship. The Trustees included George S. Lees, Henry W. Pierson, Joseph H. Conklin, Edward Taylor [father of the "Probationer"], M.K. Hopping, J.N. Ryerson, George E. Hall, Caleb Van Wert and J.L. Kelley.

William C. Wallace, who was then a prominent, broad-minded and generous member of the local Presbyterian Church, within three days after architect Bower had pronounced the old Summit Avenue church unsafe, told Brother M.K. Hopping, President of the Board of Trustees, that he would give \$1,000 towards erection of a new Methodist Episcopal Church.

The church members decided to worship in the interim in Kelley's Hall, the large room over the grocery store of Nelson Kelley & Son, which is now 252-254 Main Street. Each Sunday the congregants climbed the stairs to the Hall, pushed aside the remains of Saturday-night festivities - - since Kelley's Hall was the center of town festivity and organization - - and commenced to worship. (Sparron and Cunningham)

Some members of the church had tired of waiting and began to oppose plans for a new structure on Summit Avenue. After much deliberation, the Trustees decided to change the site of the church and a committee was appointed to investigate and report the best possible location. After five months of anxious work, the committee reported that a lot on Fairmount Avenue, nearly opposite the [Fish and Game] Club House, was available. The Committee was instructed to purchase the property. Unfortunately, a clear title could not be obtained and the Trustees were forced to give up hope of ever acquiring that property. (Sparron)

Many more months of stair-climbing at Kelley's elapsed before a terse announcement appeared in the Summit Herald of August 20, 1898: "The Trustees of the M.E. Church [in Chatham] have purchased a lot on Center Street and will build in the future." On August 29, 1898, the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in The Village of Chatham purchased from Mr. Frank L. Kelley and his wife, Lucy, the land behind Frank's store that fronted on Center Street. The Consideration was \$1,000.

By mid-September work was underway on the cellar excavation. The Deed was recorded on October 26, 1898 in Morris County, Book T-15-174.

The old corner-stone was removed from the 1832 Summit Avenue church on November 2, 1898. It was found to be solid. The stone was taken to the new construction site [*carried by wagon up Main Street past the grand, three storied, gabled Fairview Hotel to the Center Street construction site*], hollowed out and a box cut into it, lettered on the end. Appropriate papers and records were placed in the box. It was laid in the afternoon of November 5, 1898 by Reverend S.P. Hammond, D.D. Presiding Elder, Reverend E.P. Gardner, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Reverend C.E. Hesselgrave of the Congregational Church and Reverend Henry Buchtel, D.D. of Calvery Church, East Orange. (Hampton, Sparnon and Cunningham)

William C. Wallace, the first major donor, died just before the new church was completed, but his daughters, Mrs. R.H. Allen and Miss Sarah Wallace, faithfully carried out their father's intentions.

Louis Mulford Noe, Chairman of the Madison Methodist Episcopal Church's Board of Trustees and the nation's largest producer of the American Beauty Rose [*as mentioned earlier*], and his son, Louis A. Noe, later a member of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church Board of Trustees were also significant benefactors of our new church on Center Street in Chatham. Their rose company may have been Morris County's largest employer at that time, in the 1890's and early 1900's. (Sparnon)

The new Center Street Church included stained glass windows in memory of William C. Wallace and of a young girl, Edith, from the Noe family.

Many other members of the local Presbyterian Church, including the Wallace family, contributed liberally toward the new church enterprise. One can only speculate that caring persons, who wanted to "make amends" for the ill treatment the Methodists had received at the hands of the Presbyterians in 1829, may have been among those who offered these gifts.

One of the donations for construction of the new church building (\$100) was from a nearby brewery. However, when a Mr. Rush, who had joined the church and given \$200, heard about it, he withdrew from membership and requested the return of his money. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

The Center Street Church cost \$6,500 and the new site cost \$1,000. Nevertheless, the pastor believed that the church would be dedicated free and clear of debt. In fact, by the time the cornerstone was laid, nearly \$5,000 had been pledged. (Sparnon)

On Sunday, March 19, 1899, the beautiful new church was dedicated. Bishop Edward G. Andrews preached the sermon in the morning; Reverend C.S. Ryman, D.D. of Summit, delivered an address in the afternoon; and Reverend Henry Spellmeyer, D.D. of Roseville Methodist Episcopal Church, preached in the evening. The day was very stormy, with considerable rain and wind; it was one of the worst storms of the season. But nothing could dampen the ardor of the worshippers who rejoiced in the consummation of their hopes and plans. Large congregations were present during each of the three services that day. (Hampton)

In April 1899, the old Summit Avenue church property was sold to Joseph H. Conklin for \$985, which, together with the amounts which had been subscribed up to the time of and including the day of the dedication, was practically enough to cover the cost of the new church and lot. Mr. Conklin salvaged the material from the old church and built a house intending to live in it himself. However, he sold the house to his sister. This house, built on the old cemetery, is # 9 Summit Avenue. The stained glass window in the hall of that house [in 1961] dated back to the original building. (Hampton)

## A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK FORWARD

The spring of 1900 found bills of about \$600 still remaining unpaid against the new church. However, on Tuesday evening, November 13, 1900, the Board of Trustees met and at that meeting it was declared that all outstanding bills against the new Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church had been paid and that the church stood free of debt. (Hampton)

The new Center Street church consisted of the Sanctuary and a large Sunday School room alongside, separated by two big sliding doors which, when opened, increased the seating capacity of the church considerably. Behind these there were two smaller rooms. The kitchen was in the basement. When the women wanted to serve a supper, tables were set up in the Sunday School room. The food was prepared in the kitchen downstairs, conveyed upstairs by means of a dumb waiter to one of the small rooms and served from there, a system which, while excellent to begin with, became cumbersome as the popularity of the Methodist dinners grew. (Anniversary 125)

In the Spring of 1899, the Reverend William Judson Hampton, D.D., (33 years old) was appointed pastor of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church. He came to a new three-week-old church and served us for two years. His pastoral ministry had begun in 1892. His wife was Amelia Boyce Hampton. (Hampton)

Reverend G.C. Mouldsdale, wrote about Reverend Hampton's life and said that his forebears were Quaker, many of whom served their communities as Quaker ministers. Reverend Hampton graduated from Pennington Seminary and attended Wesleyan University. Subsequent studies were pursued at Columbia University and New York University, specializing in philosophy and literature, and at Drew Theological Seminary. During his lifetime, he wrote six books and over one hundred articles that were published in the religious and secular press throughout the country.

Reverend Dr. Hampton reflected on the departure of the congregation from the old Church at Main Street and Summit Avenue:

*"When the old church was sold, there were those who felt that they were about to lose a dear old friend. And can we wonder why? We become deeply attached to the dear old home where from early childhood we have most intimately associated with our loved ones. At her altars your fathers and mothers were converted. Here they were baptized; here they joined the holy communion of the saints on earth. In the dear old pews you sat as little children by their side, when their hair was still black and their cheeks fresh and smooth. The casket containing the cold, still bodies of your beloved dead have been carried through her sacred portals. Sad – Sad were the hearts of many at the loss of the dear old church. But though tears were near at hand, so were smiles. Our people were happy in the possession of their bright, new church, with its modernized improvements. The people were rejoicing in the consummation of their hopes."*

Reverend Dr. Hampton continued saying:

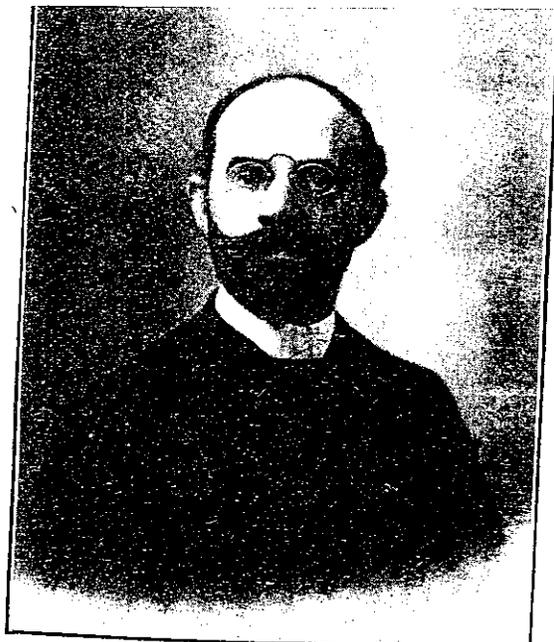
*"Of all those whose names were recorded as members of the church in 1850, [most] have either died or have removed elsewhere; . . . one whose name was recorded in 1850 as Miss Jane Wonderly is now known as Sister Jane Kelley, loved and respected by all. On November 9, 1851, her husband, Brother Nelson Kelley, was received into the church as a probationer. For nearly fifty years this couple were identified with the church. Who can tell the joys and sorrows that have come into the lives of these two faithful pilgrims in their labors of love." (Hampton)*

Also, it will be recalled that Melissa W. Budd appeared on the 1846 list of probationers. In early girlhood she lived with her maternal grandmother Ward, who was a staunch Presbyterian. She was twelve years old when she

# Reverend Dr. William Judson Hampton

Pastor

1899 - 1901



committed to memory the several books of the Bible and recited them in Sunday School. She married Henry W. Pierson and both were identified for many years with the Chatham M.E. Church. Mr. Pierson served for many years with the Board of Trustees. One other, Uncle Harvey Bond, joined the church in 1841 and in 1900 was still living, a veteran in his eighty-fifth year, weak in body, leaning heavily on his staff, yet strong spiritually. (Hampton)

In 1900, Dr. Hampton speculated about 1950, fifty years ahead:

*“When the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the Center Street church is held, a mere handful of the 1900 members would still be members of the church. One by one the people walk into the sanctuary in 1950 and take their seats. A few gray-haired, battle-marked veterans were the ruddy-cheeked boys of 1900. They would have gone through the heat and the burdens of the day. Now and then the saintly face of a matronly woman was the little golden-haired girl of 1900. The church of 1950 would not be the perfect little structure of 1900, it would be a larger church and back of the pulpit would be a magnificent pipe organ.” (Hampton)*

Also, the pastor visualized that in 1950 . . . .

*“a large congregation would have filled the spacious audience room, and a scholarly minister with an earnest face would be at his seat on the platform. The Bible would be the same. The hymns sung would be the grand old hymns of the church. The gospel preached would be the familiar simple gospel of the Son of God. The listeners’ eyes fill with tears as they hear the beautiful tributes bestowed on the fathers of the church of 1900 and as they listen to the story of their sacrifices, of their victories won.” (Hampton)*

How right he was!

In 1912, the Reverend Doctor William Judson Hampton (Chatham 1899-1901) published a book, “The Shrine Invisible.” Dr. Hampton wrote about the state of the wider church at that time. He saw many evils, but the tone of the book is optimistic. He said:

*“...evil seems the more black, when the good thrives best.”*

Many of his observations, thoughts and hopes resound down through the decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Circumstances differed, but topics he selected for chapters, such as, “Is the World Growing Better?” “Is Family Religion Decaying?” and “Is Giving a Grace or a Grind?” could be asked even today.

Dr. Hampton was concise, pragmatic and to the point. He closed his introduction to the book with the following remarks:

*"The brightest minds, the busiest brains, the best of souls, insist that 'God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.'"*

The Archives of the church include a copy of this book. It is well written and interesting. He must have made quite a positive impact on the members of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church during the short time he was our pastor. (Shrine)

## THE NEW CENTURY

At the beginning of the 1900's, there were about 1,800 residents living in Chatham Borough and about 500 in the Township. (Record)

In 1901, the Reverend Dorr Frank Diefendorf, D.D. (27-30 years old) was appointed to serve as pastor of the church. His appointment lasted for 3 years. (During his first year, he served as a "Probationer.") (Anniversary 125)

Dr. Diefendorf received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Drew Seminary in 1899. He was ordained the following year and his first charge was our church. During this time, he organized an Official Board, consisting of the members of the Board of Trustees and Board of Stewards. The first act of the Official Board was to purchase a pipe organ suitable for the church, the organ being used at a special service December 29, 1901. (Anniversary 125 and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Another accomplishment was the replacement of oil lamps in the church with lights powered by electricity. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Some of the Official Board had to sit in the back of the church to preserve order and to assist the young pastor in his work as far as possible in order to make him feel that he had the official members of his charge in full sympathy with the good works that he was doing. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

On July 16, 1902, the Trustees purchased for \$450 additional real property from Mr. Frank L. Kelley and his wife, Lucy that were designated lots No. 9

and 10 on a Plan of Building Lots. This new property was also on Center Street, on the north side of the church. The Deed was recorded on July 30, 1902 in Morris County Book A-17-48. (An additional small piece of property was purchased in 1903 from the Kelley's in order to adjust the property lines.) A new parsonage was erected on the property in 1903 [it was eventually designated "32 Center Street"]. Bids for the erection of the parsonage totaled \$4,027 and the lot cost \$450. This was partly financed by the sale of the old parsonage on Summit Avenue for \$2,750. The Reverend Diefendorf and his bride occupied the new parsonage early in 1903. (Anniversary 125)

The congregation obtained a mortgage loan to help pay for the new parsonage and borrowed additional money to cover ordinary expenses that exceeded receipts. Nevertheless, a member of the Official Board proposed, "that steps be taken to make the people understand that their presence at church was more desirable than their contributions." It was decided that the stewards devote more time to the spiritual welfare of the church, and not all of it to the financial part, for, if they could get that matter in "working order," the finances would take care of themselves. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

A "parking" problem plagued folks even in this first decade of the twentieth century for there is an account of horse sheds being built. There seems to have been a choir problem, too. One brother was moved to insist that they use their own talent, inferring that outside help must have been used. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

The minutes of 1906 show that the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church was valued at \$13,000 and the parsonage was valued at \$5,800. There were 166 members and a Sunday School with 101 children. (Dodd)

Frank L. Kelley, who sold the land to the church, was quite active in the community as well as in the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1903, Chatham's first mayor, Frederick Harvey Lum, was ailing and did not stand for re-election. The post went to his right-hand man, Frank Kelley. Kelley served for twelve years until 1915. [*This was the first record of a seated mayor of Chatham being a member of the congregation of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church.*] (Cunningham)

During the period when Reverend Diefendorf was Pastor, a Miss Glenk came to our church to speak at a morning service. She may have been the first woman speaker at the regular morning service. Miss Glenk spoke of her work as a Missionary in Korea, and made a deep impression on the congregation. She urged that the members of the church start a Woman's

Foreign Missionary Society, which was done. Mrs. Frank Kelley (Lucy) was the first President of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, and she remained President for more than twenty-five years. Mrs. Dorr Diefendorf was Vice President; Mrs. Joseph H. Conklin, secretary and Mrs. J.H. Clark was Treasurer.

The dues for the Women's Foreign Missions Society were two cents a week and prayer, but even two cents a week was hard to get in those days. Additional money was raised by cake sales and luncheons. The Society sent the money directly to foreign missions and to the Annual Conference for its work in foreign missions. (Sparron)

Jimmy Littlejohn evidently was a great admirer of the preaching abilities of the young Reverend Diefendorf. When Dr. Diefendorf preached his last sermon in the church on April 2, 1905, Jimmy noted the fact - - and if he ever again was in church he never admitted it in his diary. (Cunningham)

Many years after his Chatham pastorate, Reverend Dorr Frank Diefendorf was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity degree by Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa. He also studied at New York University. *[Dr. Diefendorf was a delegate to the 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1932 General Conferences. (Centennial)]* In 1928, at the General Conference in Kansas City, delegates from the New York Area sought the bishopric for Dr. Diefendorf; however, the delegates were unsuccessful in achieving their objective. Dr. Diefendorf also served as lecturer in practical theology at Drew University and in 1933 he was given the Chair of the Department. He authored several books.

An Assistant Pastor in one of the Churches that Dr. Diefendorf served, B.F. Dickisson, writes:

*"He was a hard, consistent worker who was as exacting for details as the insurance man he had once been. He was always very fair, considerate, and a brother in the work. He filled his church morning and night. Every month saw a number of people at the altar joining the church because the message and the messenger represented the best that life had to offer. Dorr was a fine preacher, a genius in worship and a great friend and pastor."*

His desire for perfection extended to his techniques for worship, used not as an end in themselves, but as a means of reaching the Lord. (Centennial)

Reverend George F. Jackson, Jr. added:

*"Dr. Diefendorf was one of the foremost leaders who established [the fine national reputation of our Conference]. His influence was quiet, strong and effective. His church was filled because he probed life's deepest problems with gifted understanding. For those who knew him as a professor at Drew, he opened up the vast frontiers of life."*

He died in 1953 - - and was known by Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson, a successor to Dr. Diefendorf in the Chatham pulpit and at Drew University.

Following Reverend Diefendorf's appointment to Chatham, Reverend Harry E. Curts served until 1907. One interesting thing to be found about him and his work was the establishment of a boy's club called "The Grail." (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Morris D. Church (59-60 years old) was appointed to serve the church as pastor for two years from 1908 to 1910.

Reverend Mr. Church was born in England. He had a terse, clear and forceful way of presenting the truth, leaving "his hearers to practice it on their own responsibility." His kindly face and manner, and perfect frankness, and genial spirit provided the persuasive qualities. His colleagues in the clergy believed that had Reverend Church not lived in a day when a minister's time and ability were absorbed and exhausted in the management of affairs and incidental details, he might have filled even larger pulpits. (Centennial)

Reverend Mr. Church's daughter, Marion, was a member of the Mt. Tabor Methodist Church. She gave his desk for use in the Parsonage at Mt. Tabor. It was a grand Victorian piece together with the chair. Rev. Dr. Robert Drew Simpson used it for fourteen years while he served as Pastor in Mt. Tabor. (Simpson)

In 1910, as in earlier decades, much of Chatham's local economy continued to be derived from the hundreds of thousands of roses blooming in scores of greenhouses within the borough's limits or just over the border in Chatham Township. Chatham had eleven rose growers within the borough's limits, operating about sixty separate greenhouses. Nothing pleased the townspeople more than the sight, scent and profit from the greenhouses. (Cunningham)

Rose growing had been introduced in Madison before 1860 and spread to Chatham in the following decades. The four most important Chatham-area rose growers near the end of the nineteenth century were James M. Littlejohn (Jimmy's father) whose houses were near the Chatham railroad station; Louis M. Noe, whose greenhouses were near the Shunpike in Chatham Township; Frank L. Moore, with greenhouses on Fairmount Avenue near to Watchung Avenue; and Samuel Lum, whose greenhouses were on the big farm where the Main Street Church and the Middle School now stand. Noe became the nation's foremost grower of the five-foot stem, "American Beauty," rose. He served a world-wide market. (Cunningham)

Reverend Dr. John Hobart Egbert, (66 years old), was appointed pastor of the church on April 5, 1910 and served for four years until March 23, 1914.

Reverend Edward Betterton said that Dr. Egbert was:

*"a very successful evangelist," and the church "was wonderfully blest with revivals." Reverend Betterton worked alongside Dr. Egbert during his final appointment in Somerville (1914-1915). Reverend Betterton added that "gentleness, devotion and loyalty" characterized his entire life. "Aside from his splendid success as pastor and preacher, he was endowed with remarkable literary ability. He was a regular contributor to the religious and secular press. Typical of his style and vision, and perhaps his masterpiece, is 'The Bible as a Book.' After his retirement in 1915, he lived in Chatham."*

There was much trouble with finances around 1911 prompting the Official Board to send a pamphlet to all constituents of the church asking them if they realized that:

- *it costs \$2,600 a year to carry our church and receipts amounted to \$1,600;*
- *salaries and interest must be paid;*
- *coal, electricity and insurance must be paid;*
- *occasional repairs must be made;*
- *our organ is sadly in need of repair;*
- *our furnace had to be repaired;*
- *"incidentals" amount to a considerable sum;*
- *we have 165 members and 80 contribute through envelopes;*
- *the loans have to be repaid;*
- *at present we are in arrears to our pastor and our janitor;*
- *the Thank Offering last November just paid our bills to that date.*

The congregation responded by donating additional funds that, among other things, enabled the organ to be repaired, a hardwood floor to be laid in

the Sunday School room and the piping in the church heating plant to be changed. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Ray Walden's parents had been told about the Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday School when they were strolling with him (as a baby in a carriage) on a walk along the Passaic River.

Except for only a brief interruption, Ray was associated with the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church throughout his life as a member, an active participant in the life of the church and one of many contributors of significant financial support both during and after his lifetime. (Walden 1989)

A Christmas Musical Service was given at 7:45 p.m. on Sunday, December 22, 1912: The Cantata, "The Hope of the World," by P.A. Schnecker. Included in the 18 member, four-voice, choir were Miss Rose M. Egbert (*the pastor's daughter*) (Soprano); Joseph Walden (*father of Ray Walden who became a major benefactor of the church*) (Tenor); and Mr. Emory N. Faulks (*a local banker, son of Reverend J.B. Faulks and the Sunday School Superintendent*) (Bass). Mr. Frank Mead (*son of Chatham's former Pastor, 1888-1892, Reverend Joshua Mead*) was organist.

On Wednesday, Christmas morning (1912), a Praise Service was held at 6:00 a.m. The regular Prayer Meeting was on Thursday evening. A Sunday School Christmas Festival was held on Friday evening December 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:45 p.m., during which Reverend William Hoppaugh of the Springfield Presbyterian Church spoke on "The Coming of the Christ," illustrated in hymns and Christmas Carols. On Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, Sunday School was held at 10 a.m. and Public Worship was at 11 a.m. and 7:45 p.m. The Epworth League devotional meeting occurred on Sunday at 7 p.m

On Wednesday, April 30, 1913, a Concert was given by the choir of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church, Henry D. Appenzeller, Director. Fourteen years later, in 1927, Reverend Appenzeller was appointed pastor for one year of the Seoul Union Church, following his father, Reverend Dr. Henry G. Appenzeller, as a second generation missionary in Korea. Dr. Appenzeller had, beginning in 1885, been the first Methodist missionary in Korea.

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## **World War and More Change, 1914–1939**

In the years immediately prior to World War I, there was much sympathy in the churches for negotiation and arbitration as alternatives to international armed conflict. Many church members and clergy openly professed pacifism. However, when the United States officially entered the war in 1917, pacifism faded. (History)

When the war ended, the churches were again free to expend their energies in other directions. One of their perennial concerns was temperance, and they were quick to recognize it among their highest priorities. They published and distributed large amounts of temperance literature. Members were asked to pledge that they would abstain from alcoholic beverages. The United Methodist Church still encourages such abstinence. (History)

There was significant theological ferment during this period. Liberal Protestant theology was questioned. It had been an important school of thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it was attacked by a militant fundamentalism and later by neo-orthodoxy as undermining the very essence of the Christian message. All three of these theological parties—liberal, fundamentalist, and neo-orthodox—were well represented in the forerunners of the denomination and it is not surprising that heated doctrinal disputes emerged again. (History)

Despite the internal theological differences that the churches experienced, they continued to cooperate with other denominations and acted to heal schisms that had taken place earlier in their own histories. For example, a division that had occurred in The Evangelical Association in 1894 was repaired in 1922, when two factions united as The Evangelical Church. (History)

Representatives of three Methodist bodies—The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Protestant Church, and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South—began meeting in 1916 to forge a plan of union. By the 1930s their proposal included partitioning the united church into six administrative units called jurisdictions. Five of these were geographical; the sixth, the Central Jurisdiction, was racial. It included African American churches and Annual Conferences, wherever they were geographically located in the United States. African American Methodists and some others were troubled by this prospect and opposed the plan of a racially segregated jurisdiction. (History)

The majority of Methodist Protestants favored the union, although it meant accepting an administrative structure not part of the church since it was organized in 1830. Following overwhelming approvals at the General Conferences and at the Annual Conferences, the three church groups were united in April 1939, into The Methodist Church. At the time of its formation the new church included 7.7 million members. (History)

. . . . .

## THE "GREAT WAR" YEARS

The population of Chatham was not much over 4,000 in 1914.

Chatham was a "horse and wagon" village. Kelley's grocery store was on Main Street and Mr. Kelley's practice was often to send a man with his horse and wagon to the homes in the village for grocery orders one day and for deliveries the next day or so. (Walden 1989)

During the winter, bob-sled riding down Fairmount Avenue was an exciting sport. One day the riders were coming down so fast that they couldn't stop at the railroad, which was still at ground level. Everyone ducked and they went right under a freight car stalled on the tracks. (Walden 1989)

Fairmount Avenue, still a gravel road, was the source of excitement in many ways. Bill Birdsall's grandparents, James and Elizabeth Burnett, lived in Newark with their two children, Helen and Jim. However, during several summers (c. 1914-1919), they lived in a boardinghouse in Chatham near Fairmount Avenue and Southern Boulevard. One day, his grandmother's sister, Louise Holden, came for a visit. Louise was the one exception in an extended family that was rather "Victorian" in dress and customs. She always had a twinkle in her eyes for Helen, Bill's mother, who was then about 8 years old. Helen recalled that her aunt asked if she would like to ride with her in the carriage to meet Helen's father, who was arriving by train from his work in Newark. Helen jumped at the chance to go with Louise. They rode out to Fairmount Avenue and eventually reached the crest of the hill near the cemetery. Louise told Helen to hold on tight and then cracked the whip; the horse responded quickly. Down the hill they flew, Helen screaming out in delight! The train arrived, they met her father, and Helen and her aunt kept their excitement a wonderful secret between them! (Birdsall)

The scene is filled with nostalgia for us today. Traveling on a track bed at ground level, the arrival of the train in town drew the attention of most people near it. The locomotive, releasing white clouds of steam and ringing a clear, loud bell, slowly pulled the train into the village. As it left, the familiar heavy “chugs” gave evidence that the pistons were working hard to rotate the wheels and start the train moving again.

A man named Mr. Camp had been sent to Chatham to help build the new railroad station. The elevated rail line from Summit was just then being constructed. He quickly associated himself with the church. Being an ardent Epworth Leaguer and especially fond of boys, he threw himself with enthusiasm into the work of founding a Boys’ Club and generating new interest in the Epworth League. The Sunday School was in session all summer. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

A men’s class in Sunday School was formed and a teacher training class was begun. There were 163 children enrolled in the Sunday School, the average attendance being 105. In addition to the 163, there were 30 in the Home Department and 10 on the Cradle Roll; bringing the grand total to 203. Mr. Emory N. Faulks, Sunday School Superintendent (*and son of Reverend J.B. Faulks*), pleaded “for more room for accommodating the increasing attendance.” (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Somewhat intending to reflect a contrast with other worshipping congregations in the community, there was a report that . . . . .

*“Frank Mead attended the Presbyterian morning service and was greatly impressed with the dismissal and the quietness with which it was done in the Presbyterian Church - - two or three minutes of silent prayer, after the Benediction, then dispersal without confusion.” (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)*

Reverend Frederick S. Simmons served the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church for one term, 1914-1915. He was 54 years old. Three years earlier, Reverend Mr. Simmons’ energy had seemed to fail and he was compelled to seek lighter work. His year of service in Chatham was as a temporary pastor. His health improved during this time of a reduced schedule. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Mr. Simmons was the minister who officiated at the wedding of Bob Simpson’s parents when Mr. Simmons was Pastor at Drew Methodist Episcopal Church in Port Jervis, New York. Bob said, “In a sense, he got me started toward Chatham.” (Simpson)

Reverend A.G. Schatzman was appointed Pastor in April 1915 and served until October 1916. He was very popular with the young people. Mrs. William Patterson organized the Women's Home Missionary Society in the church. The Home Missionary Society sent money and supplies to the American Indians, the Brooklyn Methodist Hospital, Ellis Island, Good Will Industries and the Home for the Aged at Ocean Grove. The Ladies Aid Society made a beautiful quilt this year, putting everyone's name on it. Some improvements were made in the parsonage and the church and nearly every organization in the church had a part in defraying the cost of these improvements. (Sparron)

During 1915 and 1916 there was a Methodist Forward Movement. Its purpose was to encourage a thousand centers of Methodism to adopt an all-year-round evangelistic program. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Mr. Schatzman was sent west in October 1916 to fill a call and Reverend Arthur F. Torrance was appointed in October 1916 to complete Reverend Schatzman's term. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

On June 5, 1917, one hundred forty-eight Chatham men registered for the military draft at town hall. A total of forty-seven Chatham Borough and Township names were pulled in the first draft. (Holler)

And, on a somber note, Bill Birdsall's mother, Helen, recalled her father getting off the train from work on Tuesday, June 26, 1917 in Chatham. He said to her mother, about the arrival of the first United States troops in France, "Well, we're in it!" (Birdsall)

As time progressed, the war days became burdensome at home. Serious coal and food shortages hit not just locally, but nationwide. Citizens were strongly urged to cut back on coal, meat, sweets, wheat, and other items. The coal shortage impacted our local stores and greenhouse businesses. Some of the churches held joint services to conserve fuel. (Holler)

Reverend Abraham L. Fretz gave two years of service to the church from April 1917 until April 1919. These being War years, there is a report on the "Flag Raising." It was also reported that the sexton was left with too many jobs and could not give enough time to the keeping of the church properties; a suggestion was made to press some of the boys into church clean-up and maintenance service at this time. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Every church in town had volunteer committees that were formed to support the war effort. Surgical dressings were made and social events were arranged for the benefit of war charities. (Cunningham)

During Reverend Fretz's ministry, the Federated Council of Churches came into being in 1918. Union services were held during the winter to conserve coal. Coal was not the only thing in short supply because of the war. Other items became scarce. Pleas were issued to give up wheat, meat, sweets and other goods; these pleas were followed by official restrictions. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Cunningham)

Also, the Anti-Saloon League, after trying several times, held an evening service in the church; the Church Bulletins were sent to all shut-ins; and a new furnace was installed and a "Wood-cutting Bee" furnished fuel for it. The volunteers sawed, chopped, split, and piled up a large stack of wood in the church yard. The organist's salary was increased a dollar making it three dollars a Sunday. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Five Chatham young men died in the Great War. This sadness was followed by onset of the Spanish Influenza. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Health ordered all public places closed, including the churches. The restrictions were eased by the end of the month. (Cunningham)

At the end of Reverend Fretz's second year, when the pastoral relations committee went to talk to him about returning for a third year, he surprised all by announcing his intention to marry Miss Grace Faulks, and thought it would be wise to seek other fields of labor. (*Grace Faulks was a sister of Emory N. Faulks and a daughter of Reverend J.B. Faulks.*) (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

After the War, the fashionable visitors to Chatham moved on to other summer retreats and city people began to flock into the area, buying many of the summer homes and 18<sup>th</sup> century farms. (Chatham Township)

In April 1919, Reverend Blair S. Latshaw came to our church and served for three years. He held an evangelistic campaign for two weeks with the help of an outside musical director. A permanent honor roll for the boys in the armed forces was bought; the Official Board promised to underwrite the cost of flowers for the church, especially at Easter; and Reverend Latshaw was insistent upon the establishment of a Pastor's "Cabinet" to help arrange a constructive program for the church. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

The Home Mission Society gave a pageant one Sunday evening in lieu of the church service. Harvest Home Sunday was observed. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

## THE 1920s

Noe Farms started a little Methodist Episcopal church on its property. It was like a community house.

Edie Van Wert recalled that around 1921,

*"My mother took us all over there and some of the boys [her brothers] were baptized in that little church. It was on the Noe Farm. People all around came there. We had to walk there. We went to that little church for a long time. We had all kinds of picnics and plays. And Frank Conger was the Superintendent of the Sunday School and his sister, Theodora, was our Sunday School Teacher. We didn't have our own minister. When the minister from Chatham or Green Village couldn't be there, Mr. Conger spoke. So that went on for quite a few years and then it burnt; somebody set fire to it one night. So then we didn't have any little place to go to, so the group used the Southern Boulevard School for a Sunday School. The School was located at that time where the King James' Nursing Home is today. Gradually the group all disbanded and we all went our way and got married." (Van Wert)*

Christa Fry described Chatham this way:

*"We came to Chatham about a year after we were married, which was June the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1927. The town of Chatham was a perfect place to live. There were no supermarkets, just a place where most of the young mothers could wheel their babies down to the store, get your groceries, have a good visit with your neighbors and then go home. But it was a great place to be." (Fry)*

Christa added, when talking about the church on Center Street,

*"We wanted to know what we should do to attract young people. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Jim Christian, Bert and Aura Gentle, Daisy Baccus, Mrs. Keiper, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Williamson, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Walters, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. John Fancher, and Elsie Otto. She, Elsie, thought we should have a young man who would help us with our young people. So she got busy on this, found a Drew Theological Seminary student and paid his salary. I guess the church has had a theological student from Drew at the church ever since." (Fry)*

Ray Walden remembered Fred Walters, Sr., who started the lumber business now called "Dreyer's Lumber." Fred volunteered as the

Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts and the church was the sponsoring organization. Ray recalled,

*"Fred converted his Oldsmobile truck so eight of the boy scouts could sit sideways in the truck body. He took us boys on camping trips to Washington, D.C., Gettysburg and Valley Forge. The assistant Scoutmaster was Frank Conger of Chatham Township."*

*"Fred Walters, Sr. never forgot," Ray said, how he [Ray] and the other scouts made up their meals "in one big pot of beans, soup, corn and anything else eatable." Ray called it "gruel" and, years later, Fred regularly greeted him in church with the question: "Do you still like gruel?"*

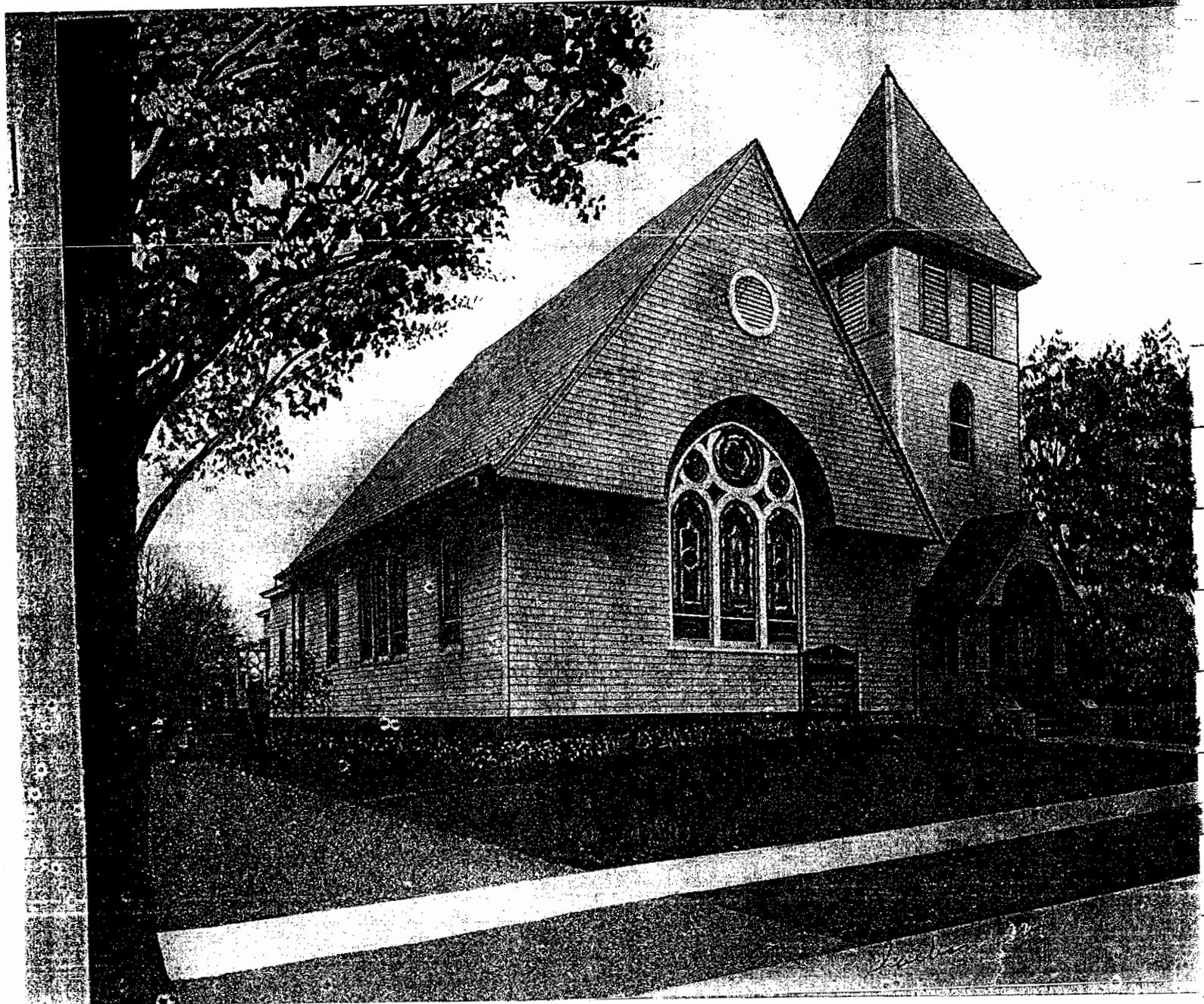
Ray continued,

*"These were outstanding men. They were businessmen in the town, they were well-liked and they took an interest in the youth of the church." (Walden 1989)*

Double trolley tracks ran down the center of Main Street. Service extended from the Maplewood Loop to Morristown with connections to Dover and Lake Hopacong. (Walden 1989)

As far back as 1915, the Church school generously took its entire membership free of charge on an annual excursion to Asbury Park. Early in the morning two or three trolleys would arrive and wait for the group to assemble on Main Street in Chatham. The trolleys went east on Main Street to (today's) Tallmadge Avenue, turned down Tallmadge, went to the river and, at that point, crossed over. The concrete supports for the trolley still stand on the banks and in the river. The trolleys entered Union County at the spot that was, until recently, occupied by the Lincoln/Mercury car dealership. They carried the group up the hill into Summit and arrived at the Rahway Valley freight station. At that point, the Sunday School excursion group boarded a New Jersey Central Railroad train that had backed up from Elizabeth. They rode this train to their destination at the Jersey shore, Asbury Park. The return trip was a reverse of the morning one with "a bunch of tired, sun-burned people." (Walden 1989 and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

The Church School began its departmentalism around this time and an Intermediate Department was organized, the room downstairs being built for the use by this department and the Boy Scouts. Church School teachers became interested in training classes presented by the New Jersey Council of Religious Education. A fine Junior Choir was organized and trained under Mrs. Grace Smith. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)



In the Chatham Methodist Church on Center Street. Ray Walden remembered that, "The Sanctuary floor sloped toward the elevated pulpit and at the left was the choir loft and organ." [Note the Glass Memorial Plaque in the lower portion of the window. Some of these plaques from the old Center Street Church now hang in the Main Street Church.]

## The Chatham Methodist Church

1899-1956  
(Located on Center Street , Chatham, NJ)

Our church joined in union services with other churches in town on Memorial Day, and Girl Scout and Boy Scout anniversaries, and Fourth of July celebrations. The churches began to rotate the location of each year's Baccalaureate Service. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Ray Walden gave us his impression of the Center Street Church.

*"The Sanctuary was on the left as you came into the vestibule. The ringing of the bell above the Vestibule always preceded worship services. The floor of the sanctuary sloped toward the elevated pulpit and at the left was the choir loft and organ. On the right wall of the Sanctuary was a long roll-top type partition and behind it was a large Sunday school room. I remember watching at least two men trying to push open the roll-top partition on days when the Sanctuary was overcrowded; at times, I helped. If you didn't get the partition started quite right, it would jam and be very difficult to bring down. Behind the Sanctuary were two smaller rooms also used for Sunday school. Later, rooms were built in the basement."*  
(Walden 1989)

Christa Fry added:

*"The [Center Street] Church was dark green in color and very uninteresting. It later, very much later, it was painted white and then people started noticing the church and started attending with us. This conversation takes me back to that time when we needed to know [i.e., 'plan'] what we were doing and what we wanted to do as a church; we started very slowly getting to know each other and getting more attendance."* (Fry)

There were comparably few changes in the church property from 1902 until 1922. Economic weakness existed during some of this period and expenses, although very low, were difficult to meet. However, between 1923-1929, the men of the church with the financial backing of the newly formed Entertainment Committee (later called the "Fellowship Society") built a new kitchen at the back of the church on the main floor of the building. The work was accomplished at a very low cost because of the cooperation of the men in volunteering the labor. The Committee also built a rest-room and did other things such as paying for coal for the winter of '26-'27, purchasing chairs for the choir loft, repairing windows and giving two dozen chairs to the Intermediate Department. Great improvements were made to the parsonage, too. The Masonic League, the Anti-Saloon League, and others were allowed to use our church for services. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Anniversary 125)

The Fellowship Society continued for many years as an active organization in the church. [In 1951, for example, practically 30% of the

active members were Charter members of the Society. The Society was eventually disbanded in the 1990s, having served for many years as a means of fellowship among older members of the congregation.]

A budget of \$6,256 was adopted in 1923. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Edward Betterton, ThD. (40 years old) was appointed pastor in April 1922 and served for six years in that capacity. The six-year appointment was the longest that the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church had received to that date.

Reverend Betterton also had much to do with the establishment of the Community Vacation School of Religious Education. The first Father and Son dinner was held; then a Mother and Daughter banquet. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

When Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson entered into ministry, Reverend Dr. Edward Betterton was Pastor in Butler and near retirement. "When I was appointed to the Chatham Methodist Church," Bob said, "Ed would often talk with me about his fond remembrances of Chatham folks." (Simpson)

Looking back on the life of Reverend Dr. Betterton, Reverend Charles F. Post recalled that Dr. Betterton had to withdraw from his regular schooling as a teenager when his father failed in business.

*"Ed joined his brother in the photo-engraving business in New York City and found his vocational direction somewhat be-clouded by a surprise success in that business. He was 30 years old when he was ordained to the ministry, which by average standards is a late start, but he still managed to give 58 years of his life to it."*

Reverend Post added:

*"As a man and as a minister, Ed Betterton was not one who could be passed by unnoticed. Strong, forceful, hard-working, conscientious, effective are all suitable descriptions. No one needed to puzzle long over where he stood on any issue. He was a decisive and forceful leader."*

This description applied both in and out of the pulpit.

## A SMALL TOWN AND A DEDICATED MEMBERSHIP

By late 1930, the Depression had settled into our small town of Chatham. Businesses closed and others went on slow schedules. All workers faced either loss of jobs or cuts in pay. In December 1932, eighty-four Chatham adults registered at Borough Hall as unemployed. Morale was low. (Cunningham)

For children, however, life went on as usual.

"In 1931," Wes Conklin recalled,

*"I, as a boy, enjoyed the Epworth League on Sunday evenings from 7 to 8 p.m. The Pastor [Reverend Warren Roberts Neff] led the program each Sunday evening, and as a lad, I would hop on my 'Ivor Johnson' bike and pedal down from my house at 544 Main Street to enjoy this youth program. (The house where I was born is on Main Street, three doors east from Garden Avenue and about a mile away from the Center Street church.) The Reverend was a bit long-winded and would extend the meeting about 15 minutes past the hour. This would normally be all right, of course, and if the program ended on time, I could get home fast enough to catch 'Charley McCarthy' on the radio saying his first words right after the commercial! The Reverend promised to end the meetings on time - - a promise he never kept! - - until one Sunday evening. I had brought my new portable radio, a heavy affair about the size of a small travel case. That evening the back half of the audience listened to Charlie and the front half listened to the Reverend! After that he became a very punctual Reverend!" (Conklin)*

Edie Van Wert said that she joined the Center Street Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1930s.

*"My husband lived in Chatham almost all his life and was active in the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church. [His family] came from Summit to Chatham when he was very young and they lived in the 'William Pitt' house for quite a while and then they moved up to live on Cherry Lane. My children were baptized in the Center Street Church. All my children went to Sunday School every Sunday. We had a car then. The Center Street Church was very quaint, don't you know; however, it was drab looking. There was an organ in there that came from Coney Island. Charlie Miller and a few others drove with a horse and wagon to get the organ from Coney Island." (Van Wert)*

*"My husband and I always went to church. Mrs. Cook got me interested in a women's group. The Fellowship Society was a big crowd; it was couples. The Stouts, Mrs. Frankie, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Clark, quite a number of them were very active in it. There wasn't any women's Society then, but there was a group called the Opportunity Club and before that it was called Epworth League.*

*"The ministers changed often. The church had Children's Day in June and they only Baptized once a year, on Children's Day. I imagine if you requested it, they would have a Baptism earlier. We always went out into the country and picked daisies for Children's Day; life was simpler then." (Van Wert)*

Dot Bennett recalled that she and A. K. ("Benny") Bennett moved to Chatham in the fall of 1930. They joined the church when Ed Callender was pastor (1937-1944).

*"We joined the church a few years after we came to Chatham. It was a much smaller town then. The business section was quite small, too. We lived on Main Street right across from where our church is now. The house where we had our apartment was 100 years old at that time. A nursery, all shrubs, existed where our present Main Street church building is located. There was a swimming hole behind the nursery, the present site of the middle school." (Bennett)*

*"The people in the town (many of whom were Presbyterians) referred to the Methodist Episcopal Church as 'that little old church on Center Street.' They seemed to feel sorry for you if you belonged to it. However, I always felt at home in the Methodist Church, although I came from a Presbyterian family. It seemed to me that, at that time, the Methodists were [a warm congregation]. I hope we continue to have that feeling." (Bennett)*

Christa Fry remembered a delightful story about her son, Charles, when he was in the beginners' department of Sunday School.

*"We always had an artificial cake for the children's birthday with lighted candles and sang the birthday song, but I wanted the children to learn to say thank you before they "ate." I don't think some of the youngsters knew what it was all about until we got to doing it. (It was a new experience for them.) We would say thank you and blow the candles out and I gave them cookies, which seemed to make them a little happier, because they hated to see the artificial cake and get nothing." (Fry)*

During this time the Church School reported an enrollment of 171 with an average attendance of 105. This is the same average attendance as in 1916. The School was handicapped by the lack of teachers and teacher training. The turnover in the teaching staff was discouragingly high. More room was needed for the Sunday School program and the members' social activities continued to require more space. At a meeting of the Official Board Mr. Fred Walters, Sr. suggested, "a room be added to the church which would extend the present end of the kitchen along the wall of the Beginners' Room until [it is] even with the rest of the building's rear." This plan was approved and

during the summer of 1939 the "Green Room" came into being. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Christa's son, Charles, remembered particularly all the men getting together and working on the addition to the [Center Street] church:

*"Mom wasn't so excited about telling this story, but in the old church down on Center Street it came time to have more Sunday School space and I guess the Walters donated some lumber and the men all went down on weekends and worked hard to construct more classroom space. I remember those things when I was growing up and saw all the men in the church work together; it made an impression on me. While I was in Sunday School, there was plenty of room. You could open the doors to the sanctuary and that allowed for quite a bit of overflow capacity."  
(Fry)*

Christa Fry's son also recalled his memories about church in springtime:

*"You walk down to church and smell the spring flowers. There was sometime in the early spring when the Sunday School would give pansies to all the children. We would come home at Easter time with a little pot with pansies in it. There were daffodils and things that grew around the church. Every time spring comes around I remember the church on Center Street."*

*"The message for people in the church is to be sure to continue to make those experiences for really young children, for elementary school kids, because they'll never forget them. If those experiences are good, the young children will stay close to church." (Fry)*

For a number of years in the 1930's there was always an Election night supper served by the church women and attended by many families. Mrs. Edward W. Stout (Clara) organized those suppers in the Center Street Church. There was one cold water faucet and it came out of the floor just as a pipe with a faucet on the end of it. That was their source of water. It was a big chore to get a supper together with that limited facility. (Walden 1989)

Christmas celebrations turned into Christmas Vespers. Watch Night Services were held. World Communion Day, a union service of the Women's Church Groups in Chatham, came into being. Vacation Church School was continued. Recognition of the services of the choir was started in the form of a dinner. Much talk and discussion went on about the enlargement of the Church School rooms. Shrubs were planted along the walk. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

*"There was a choir and Mrs. Smith, who lived on Watchung Avenue in a stucco house that I believe is still there, played the organ and then Alpha Beers played it. The service was pretty much the same over the years." (Van Wert)*

Two new stewards were added to the Official Board: Thomas Smith, whose long service in other churches brought him into our official family with a full understanding of the spirit of Methodism; and a youthful candidate, Fred Walters, Jr. was elected with gladness by the members, as a recognition of his faithful interest in the welfare of the church and its services. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

The treasurer's report for the period 1931-1932 indicates that the Pastor's annual salary was \$3,000. This salary is roughly equivalent to \$42,000 in 2007 (and, of course, the comparison excludes the changes that have occurred in the regional costs of living). *A decade later, in 1944, the Pastor's salary was still around \$3,000.*

The treasuries of Church and Church School were combined to inculcate in the minds of the young a feeling of interest in and loyalty to the Church, as well as to cultivate the habit of systematic giving. The new edition of our Church Hymnals was purchased. It was a hymnal that ranked high in church music, not only for words, but also for the use of inspiring music. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

In 1935, the Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies combined, informally, and had their meetings together. One month the group would take up the work of the Home Missions and the next month, the work of the Foreign Missions. Mrs. J.H. Clark was President of the combined societies. (Sparron)

Evening worship services were discontinued except for special occasions. Sunday evenings were turned to Bible study. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

In the late 1930s the active church membership stood at about 258 and inactive members numbered 131. (Anniversary 125 and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Warren Roberts Neff served during the years of 1929-1932, a period of economic turmoil. He was 64 years old at his appointment and remained until he was 67. In 1928, he had been a delegate to the 1928 General Conference. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Centennial)

Reverend Roland L. Luerich said that Warren Neff left school as a teenager to work for the next 10 years in a cloth-finishing factory. Reverend Luerich also said of Reverend Neff:

*"His desire for further education led him to Centenary Collegiate Institute where he graduated with honor in 1891 (when he was 26 years old). In the fall of that year he entered Wesleyan University." "His funds were meager. He worked at night and studied by day. He graduated in 1895 with a degree of B.A. In April of 1895, he was admitted to membership in the Newark Annual Conference" and received his first pastoral appointment. "For the years 1913-1927 he was Conference Treasurer and President of the Board of Stewards 1924-1937. His early business training gave a practical slant to all his work in the Conference and in the Churches he served. Twice he was a delegate to the General Conference."*

One of Reverend Mr. Neff's first actions upon his appointment to Chatham in 1929 was to promote a canvas of the town by the Official Board to interest inactive members and to win new members. He emphasized coming into the church as families. In some cases the wife belonged and not the husband. Sometimes it was the children and not the parents. During this year, a bulletin board was placed on the east side of the Bank on Main Street in order to call attention to our church. A drive to increase attendance at prayer meetings went on continuously. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Mr. Neff urged closer cooperation between all organizations in the church. Appeals came from the Church School Superintendent for increased room because two classes of primaries were meeting in the kitchen. The parking problem arose again. "No Parking" signs were ordered to be set in front of the church curb. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Curtis Bayley Geyer (37-38 years old) was appointed pastor in 1932 and served for two years. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Mr. Geyer was born in Boston, the son of a minister. He graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1919, taking time out for overseas service in World War I with his college Field Hospital outfit. He graduated from Boston University School of Theology in 1922.

Reverend Arthur Brown said:

*"A deepening interest in the social aspects of Christianity led him to spend the following two years in graduate study at the New York School of Social Work. At the same time he served as director of Boys' Work and Community Work at the Spring Street Neighborhood House."*

*"It is hard to convey to one unacquainted with (his work in the Newark Annual Conference) an adequate idea of how varied it was. To his army experience is due the service he rendered in veteran hospitals, his chaplaincy in several local posts of the American Legion, and a two-year term as State Chaplain. From this stemmed also his deep concern for international understanding and all the work he did in behalf of peace. Articles by Reverend Geyer were published in 'International Journal of Religious Education.'*

*"He had a profound sense of community. By that he meant living together in creative brotherhood. This feeling sprang from his early social studies and experiences. His Child Welfare work, his co-foundership of the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council in Newark, and his services in behalf of the Red Cross, which brought him national attention, were but examples of causes to which he gave himself with ceaseless interest. He worked happily and harmoniously with all cultural, racial and religious groups.*

*"Nearly every summer found him engaged as an instructor at Youth Conferences or busily promoting Vacation Bible Schools. Annually he lectured at Drew University on pre-marital counseling. Religious drama was another field in which he did original work of a fine order.*

*"Add all this and much beside to the established work of the church and its only explanation is to be found in a disciplined mind, an unusual power of expression, an enormous capacity for work and a devoted spirit centered on God. One who knew him well has this to say of him: 'He was one of the happiest people I have ever known and the best integrated. His personality did not permit any neurotic frustration in matters large or small. His mind in a wonderfully sane and creative way immediately set about facing situations and solving problems.'"*

Reverend Geyer was a younger man than Reverend Neff and his energy was infectious. The community became aware that the Methodist Episcopal Church was a growing force in Chatham during his tenure. The young people took an interest and joined with the young people in other churches in combined study groups. They attended conferences near and far to help them in worship and leadership. The young people learned to think of others and brightened many a day for shut-ins. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Geyer inherited a large church debt. He made a budget and tried to get the church to live within it. Consequently, some of the loans were paid off. There was a membership of 400 people. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

During the brief two-year pastorate of Reverend Curtis B. Geyer, the church marked in 1932 the centennial; it represented 100 years from the date of incorporation as an organized church in Chatham and the construction of

the Church at the corner of Main Street and Summit Avenue. The celebration was held during the week of November 13-20 and special meetings and fellowship gatherings were held each evening during the week closing with Thank Offering Sunday. (Anniversary 125)

Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson recalled:

*"Curtis was my Pastor in Port Jervis when I was still in the Grade School. His son, Don, was my best friend and later we were each other's Best Man. Curtis was a sincere social activist, and in a sense 'marched to the beat of a different drummer.' He would be right at home in ministry at Chatham today!" (Simpson)*

Reverend Warren P. Sheen served us for the next three years, 1934-1936. He assigned committees to look after the finances, so he could devote more time to the Church Program, and spiritual welfare of the church. Attendance dropped off during the mid-1930s and it was a matter of much concern to Reverend Sheen that only fifteen percent of the membership regularly attended divine worship. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Bob Simpson knew Warren Sheen very well. Reverend Mr. Sheen was in Denville when Bob was serving at Mt. Tabor Methodist Episcopal Church and they became close friends. Bob said, Warren "was deeply interested in politics and often expressed his political views from the pulpit."

Years later, when Rev. Dr. Simpson was serving as Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church, Rev. Mr. Sheen expressed amazement at the size and growth of the church. Reverend Mr. Sheen said that, when he was Pastor in Chatham, there was a significant lack of support and interest in the church. In fact, Warren said,

*"Bob, I remember the Official Board meeting with the District Superintendent here in Chatham when I was Pastor. Things were so bad that we discussed whether or not we should disband and close the church." (Simpson)*

However, a small group of dedicated people struggled to keep going. (Simpson)

Change was all around Jimmy Littlejohn. Not inclined to "loaf," Jimmy went back to work in March 1935 at the age of eighty-two. The economy was improving slightly. However, in June of that year, Jimmy declared in his diary, "Old Chatham is gone."

Reverend Edward D. Callender arrived in April, 1937. After looking over our situation in Chatham, he decided that pastoral calling, better coordination of organizations and better ushering were among the greatest needs of the church. Reverend Callender served us for seven years. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Callender was born in Taylor, Pennsylvania (near Scranton). He attended Boston University before receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from Columbia. Later he received a Master of Science degree from Lafayette College and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Drew Theological Seminary. In 1925, Ed Callender received his first appointment to the Newark (NJ) Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was ordained deacon in 1926 and an elder in 1928. During these years he was assigned to the Fort Lee Methodist Episcopal Church. He served as pastor in several churches, simultaneously, and, in 1933 was appointed to the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in Clifton for four years. (Courier)

*"My wife, Eleanor, has helped me immeasurably," Ed said. "It is beyond the understanding of many people of the parish just how much time and effort she puts into helping me run the parish. She does a great deal of work with youth and directs the Youth Chorus." Eleanor and Ed married in 1927 and they have two sons, David and Stephen. (Courier)*

The Reverend Callender formed the Women's Society of Christian Service at the Chatham Methodist Church on September 18, 1940. The new organization formally combined the work of the Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies. There were many objections at first, as the Ladies Aid and the Missionary Societies didn't want to give up their organizations. However, to their surprise, it became a great success. Eleanor Callender became the first President and did a splendid job of organizing the WSCS. Alice Dochtermann was elected to be the first Recording Secretary. There were 84 Charter Members. One innovation was the idea of having officers for two years only. The old custom of keeping a set of officers for twenty-five years or more was abolished. This made it easier to get officers and gave more people a chance to participate in the leadership. (Anniversary 125)

The University of Life, a series in which the Protestant churches of Chatham joined together in discussions, was one of the young people's activities. The Men's Club was active and a local pack of Cub Scouts was organized to expand the Boy Scout activities at the church. Church debts were reduced and the parsonage was renovated by the women's organizations. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Ray Walden (then 28 years old) recalled that Ed Callender enjoyed playing softball in the evenings at the school on Fairmount Avenue with a team of church members:

*“Steve Brown, A.K. (‘Benny’) Bennett, Fred Walters, Jr., George Ort and myself were some of those members. We were part of a town league, other teams being from the Chamber of Commerce, the firemen, and so forth.” (Walden 1989)*

Fred Herrigel, Jr., a Layman from our church, was a delegate to the 1940 General Conference. (Centennial)

Ever since its founding in 1786, our church had been known as the Methodist Episcopal Church; the name used by the majority of churches that traced their heritage to John Wesley. In 1939, however, our denomination shortened its name to the Methodist Church in conjunction with the “reunion” of the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. (Centennial)

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### **Movement Toward Union, 1940–1967**

Although Methodists, Evangelicals, and United Brethren each had published strong statements condemning war and advocating peaceful reconciliation among the nations, the strength of their positions was largely lost with American involvement in the hostilities of World War II. However, throughout the war many churches continued to express their disdain for violence and their support for conscientious objection. (History)

As the war ended, the churches actively worked to secure world peace and order. Many lay-people, pastors, bishops, and church agencies supported the establishment of a world organization to serve as a forum for the resolution of international social, economic, and political problems. In April 1945, their labors, and the dedication of many others, contributed to the founding of the United Nations. (History)

During this era, 1940–1967, there were at least three other important matters that occupied the attention of the churches.

- First, the churches maintained their concern for ecumenicity within the Wesleyan tradition and for church union. On November 16, 1946, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, The Evangelical Church and The United Brethren Church were united into The Evangelical United Brethren Church, after twenty years of negotiation. At the time of union, the new church included about 700,000 members. The Methodist Church was also interested in closer ties with other Methodist and Wesleyan bodies. In 1951 it participated in the formation of the World Methodist Council, successor to the Ecumenical Methodist Conferences that were begun in 1881. As expressions of their wider ecumenical commitment, Methodists and the Evangelical United Brethren became active members of the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948, and the National Council of Churches, founded in 1950. These assemblies provided a means for their members to engage in cooperative mission and other ministries. The two churches also cooperated with seven other Protestant denominations in forming the Consultation on Church Union in 1960. (History)
- Second, the churches demonstrated growing uneasiness with the problem of racism in both the nation and the church. Many Methodists were especially disturbed by the manner in which racial segregation was built into the fabric of their denominational structure. The Central Jurisdiction was a constant reminder of racial discrimination. Proposals to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction were introduced at the General Conferences from 1956 to 1966. Finally, plans to abolish the Central Jurisdiction were agreed upon with the contemplated union with the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968, although a few African American Annual Conferences continued for a short time thereafter. (History)
- Third, the churches debated the issue of “clergy rights” for women. The issue was especially critical in the creation of The Evangelical United Brethren Church. The Evangelical Church had never ordained women. The United Brethren had ordained them since 1889. In order to facilitate the union of these two churches, the United Brethren accepted the Evangelical practice, and women lost their right to ordination. Methodists debated the issue for several years after their unification in 1939. Full clergy rights for women were finally granted in 1956, but it took a decade more before the number of women in seminaries and pulpits began to grow significantly. When Methodists and the Evangelical United Brethren united in 1968, the right of women to full clergy status was included in the plan of union. (History)

As this period ended, negotiations between The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church were proceeding toward their anticipated union into The United Methodist Church. (History)

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## ON THE THRESHOLD OF CHANGE

For the thirty years, 1914-1944, very little growth had been recorded in population and housing in Chatham and the surrounding country. The boom period of the late 1920's had been discounted by the depression of the early thirties. Chatham was just beginning to recover when the second European War began and the Japanese attacked the U.S. at Pearl Harbor. Civilian construction activity was severely curtailed when the economy was converted to a war footing. (Anniversary 125)

Christa Fry remembered a story from this time:

*"I will tell you about the Christmas Pageant we sometimes had. They were all pretty good. Charles had a part he didn't like; he didn't [want to] wear a skirt. He played the part of a Roman Centurion and that (1941) was the last Christmas Pageant we had."*

Charles, who was in the room with Christa, added that,

*"We were rehearsing in the church on Sunday afternoon, December 7<sup>th</sup>. When we came out of the church we learned that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. John Fancher and I were the two young boys in that play and we swore we would never be in another Christmas Pageant. Of course, when the War came along, there were no more Christmas Pageants for a while. So, that really was our last Christmas Pageant."*

*"Christmas Pageants were a big thing. Dad made shepherd's crooks for them over the years while we participated in a lot of things. Dad was an electrical engineer and he made a very exotic dimmer so he would get the proper lighting effects." Christa continued: "That reostat was from the Bell Laboratories in New York City. He lugged it home from there and had it installed. I don't know how many people knew who did this, but I think everybody liked it." (Fry)*

Chatham's vital statistics turned wildly upward in 1941. In 1940 the town had fifteen marriages. A year later the number of weddings soared to fifty and in 1942 hit an unprecedented sixty-one. Inevitably the birth rate soared.

Babies increased from a total of sixty-nine in 1940 to ninety-seven in 1941 - - 110 in 1942, 96 in 1943, 103 in 1944. Young women took jobs in war plants, as did many of their mothers. Young men enlisted or went to Fort Dix with the draftees. By April 1942, Chatham had nearly 150 men in uniform. Chatham suffered its first war death in July 1942. By the end of the war, 725 Chatham people had seen service in the armed forces. Twenty-one Chatham men died in uniform, in all theaters of the war. (Cunningham)

Reverend Edward D. Callender commented in the Annual Report that the general state of the church was good and that the finances were in excellent shape. "There is a sense of deep loyalty on the part of a large number of the members."

Mr. Edward W. Stout, President of the Board of Trustees, added:

*"I feel that I can say without fear of contradiction that we have just closed on of the most, if not the most, successful year (1941), financially and spiritually, in our church history. To hear the report of our Treasurer state that the end of our fiscal year all bills paid, all Conference Apportionments met and a balance in the bank of \$369 was something unheard of, at least since I have had any connection with the finances and then to see the large number joining our membership last December, was a most impressive sight making one feel our church is in reality fulfilling its mission in our community."*

He continued,

*"The Woman's (sic) Society of our church deserve a well earned vote of appreciation for the splendid piece of work they had done and paid for in the parsonage this past year. With new hardwood floors downstairs and the floors of the other rooms scraped and varnished, modernizing the kitchen and installing some new electric fixtures, they have certainly made a very a very attractive home for the present occupants..."*

Mr. Stout, writing these comments on March 10, 1942, just three months after the United States had joined the war against the aggression by Germany and Japan and one month before Doolittle's raid over Tokyo, concluded,

*"These are the bright spots of our church in the year just past. We are facing a year, or years, of great uncertainties. It is simply impossible to predict what a day may bring forth. All that I can see is that we will have to try and adjust ourselves to the new situations as they arise, trusting and praying that this war will soon end with a Peace of Freedom and Justice given to all peoples."*

Circles were formed by the women of the church and a general meeting was held once a month. The Circles sewed for the Red Cross during the war and knitted for the British Relief. *[A decade later their efforts went to cancer dressings.]* A Lectern Cloth was given in memory of one of our boys killed during the war. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

During those years and in subsequent years, the pews of the Chatham Methodist Church were occupied by men and women who served in the armed services in World War Two. These people included: Laurence Warner (patrolling the Panama Canal), Art Wenzel (part of the June 6, 1944 D-Day invasion on the beaches at Normandy), Margaret Knoecklein (Nurses Corps in Burma), Sam Colegrove (islands in the South Pacific), Doug Davis (bomber pilot over Europe), Louise Seward (secretary in Washington, D.C. for General George Marshall's office at conferences where plans for D-Day were developed), George White (bombardier in the South Pacific), Jim McGown (Marines on Guadalcanal), Cal Coats (bombardier over Europe), and **MORE !!!!!!!**

In March, 1943, Reverend Callender remarked in the Annual Report that

*"Many of you already know that I believe it is more important to count the congregation than the collection. While last year the average attendance increased 9%, this year the average attendance stands at 133 as contrasted with 134 last year. However, this is still an increase of 97% in six years. We can blame selective-service [the "draft"] for taking some regular and faithful worshippers and the war-effort for the removal of some of the families from our parish."*

Recalling her activity and volunteer work at the church, Edie Van Wert said:

*"One of the things that I did for the Church was to help with Communion for many, many years, 25 years or more; Mrs. [Clara] Stout got me involved with that. We had to wash the glasses, you know, and prepare the tablecloth. Many people helped me over the years. At first, there was only one service at the Center Street Church; but, when we had two services, we had to hurry up and wash the glasses in between the services. I had to give it up when my husband got sick." (Van Wert)*

And Dot Bennett remembered:

*"Mrs. Stout, bless her heart, did a lot of arranging of flowers. I hesitated to do the job because she had done such a good job for such a long time. The first few Sundays that I did it, I hoped that they would not fall apart; of course, they never did. We used flowers from people's gardens for a long time. I'll never forget that*

*the first time a person offered to buy an arrangement from a florist and send it to church, I was overcome with joy. More people came forward to do that. Now (1989) you have to wait a long time before you find a Sunday when you can give some flowers; often you [have to] share the date with someone else." (Bennett)*

In 1943, the Church funds were augmented by the receipt of a legacy of \$6,000 bequeathed in the Will of Miss Anna Wilcox. About half of this amount was used to cancel a mortgage made necessary in 1925 and which had been carried for many years. In June 1943, the Official Board held a "Mortgage Burning Ceremony." Once again, the church property was "free and clear." (Future and Anniversary 125)

Hopes were expressed (*even at this early date*) that endowment funds ought to begin accumulating for the construction of a larger church building, which most assuredly would be needed at some time in the future. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Helen Joiner, Chairman of the Girl Scout Community Committee, wrote in part about the activities of the girls at this time:

*"There are three Girl Scout Troops meeting in this church on Monday and Thursday afternoons. The youngest of these groups - - the Brownie Scouts - - has a membership of 27 girls aged 8-10.*

*"The two older groups have a membership together of 30 girls and 5 adult leaders.*

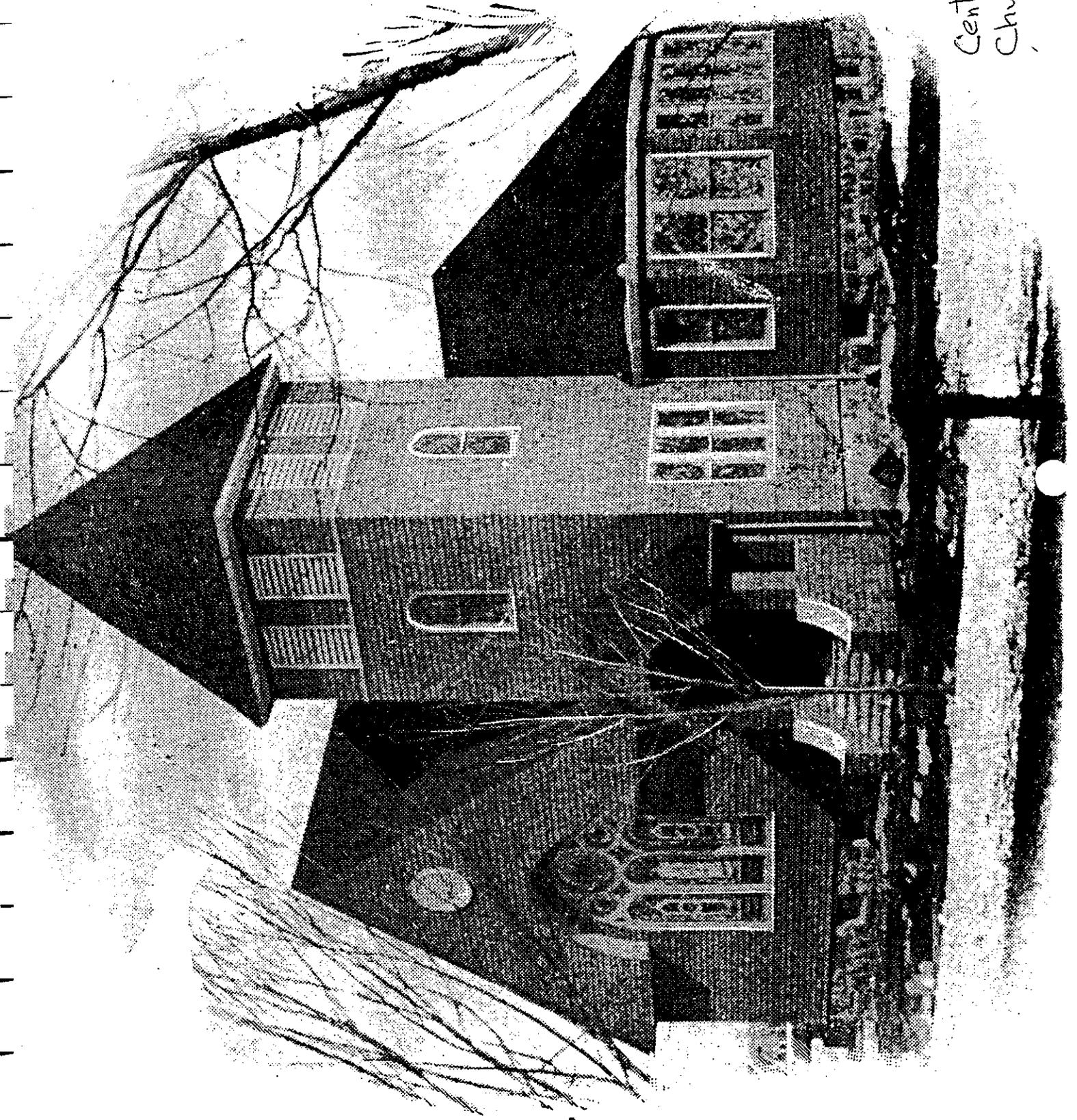
*"Community Service is a primary interest to all of these groups, especially during these days of war. Toys for hospitals, training in First Aid, collecting clothing for the ..... Relief, and helping with the church letters are typical of the work these girls have done."*

The Choir had a very successful year under the leadership of a new director, Mr. John Schwartz. Splendid assistance was provided by Mrs. Grace Smith, organist. Frank Norton, Chairman of the Choir Committee, wrote in the 1944 Annual Report: "We are very happy that a new organ fund has been started this year. Our present organ was a second-hand one over forty years ago and it did not seem advisable to attempt major repairs to it at this time."

When Reverend Edward D. Callender was concluding his term with us in March, 1944, he wrote:

*"It is difficult in a civilization which emphasizes in importance of material things to adequately report on the intangible, but eternal, realities. We have no technique of*

Center Street  
Church



*measuring the effectiveness of a sermon or a pastoral call comparable to that of measuring physical size and power.*

*"When I am asked, 'How is the church progressing?' I usually reply, 'There are two answers to that question.'*

*"1. 'Very well' - - as the factual reports indicate." For example, "attendance has increased at the service of worship in spite of the members in the Armed Services and the removal of families to other places of residence. Financially, we are out of debt. In fact, we have not borrowed any money to pay bills for the past seven years but have paid off the indebtedness, which had accumulated during the previous thirty-five years. The decrease in pledges for current operating expenses is the first such decrease in the last seven years. But this is partially offset by an increase in the pledges for benevolences.*

*"2. But there is another side; the Church can never be satisfied with a comparative standard. We can never say, 'Things aren't going so well but thank the Lord the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists aren't doing any better.' The Church School Superintendent notes the fact that there are youth who ought to be in the Church School but they are not there. On Easter Sunday the ushers counted an attendance of 277. There were a few guests who were visiting in the homes of the parish who were included in the congregation, but most of them were our own people. In spite of the fact that the average attendance has increased 104% since the year 1936-37, there is a large gap between the 137 average attendance for the year and the 277 Easter attendance." (Annual Report)*

In April 1944, Reverend William B. Kelly came to the Chatham Methodist Church for two years. He concentrated on the Sunday morning worship service and in the organization of the Methodist Young Peoples Fellowship, which was a combination of the Young Peoples Department of the Church School and the Youth Fellowship. With guidance from Mrs. M.T. Otto and Reverend Kelly, the group turned into a forceful organization. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Kelly urged that a strong stand for temperance be taken. He pleaded for a lighted bulletin board outside our church. He also urged that the Church establish a better system of keeping its membership lists. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

## THE CHURCH IS RENOVATED

The close of the war in 1945 and the adjustment that followed it led to an enormous change in the population and the public services available in

Chatham and the surrounding area. After a five-year construction ban during World War II, home-hungry young families moved into the area. The population of the Borough of Chatham increased by 50% between 1940 and 1950 (almost all of that increase coming in the second half of the decade). Former rose farms became two major shopping centers at the corner known as Hickory Tree. *[The "hickory tree" started to grow around 1813.]* (Anniversary 125 and Chatham Township)

Until this time, construction of new homes had been limited almost entirely to single houses, built one-by-one by local builders. As the demand for additional housing increased, professional contractors came to Chatham and vicinity and often built homes on speculation. (Anniversary 125)

Crowded conditions developed throughout the community in all phases of youth education. In 1945 the Board of Education of Chatham requested the permission of the churches to temporarily use large rooms owing to crowded facilities in the schools. All the churches gladly provided the space, as it was considered to be an emergency. (The "emergency" lasted for three years.) (Anniversary 125)

As the young families, largely of the Protestant faith, moved into town, they often sought membership in one of the churches. Charles Buesing, a new resident in town in 1948, wrote about a friendly "warning" he received from an acquaintance concerning the Methodists. Charlie said:

*My acquaintance "warned me, privately of course, that, 'the Methodist Church sanctuary is structurally unsound,' 'the Church School is divided into three undesirable locations,' and finally, 'you will find no Chrysler Imperials, Lincolns or Cadillacs parked in front of the Methodist Church on Sunday mornings.' 'It is the oldest and yet the poorest church in town.'"* (Buesing)

In contrast to the purpose of the "warning," Charlie's interest in the church was piqued by the description he received. In spite of the "warning" he and Ann joined the church. Years later, he said:

*Our "decision was the right one, [because] the people were gracious, most friendly and helped us get involved in the church life."*

The Men's Club, the Men's Softball Team, the Church Bowling Team and the Women's Society of Christian Service were very active at this time. (Buesing)



The Reverend D. Arthur Zook

Pastor

1946-1949

The pastorate of Reverend D. Arthur Zook began in April, 1946 and lasted three years. Born in India of missionary parents, Mr. Zook taught in public schools in Iowa for five years after graduating from the former John Fletcher College at Oskaloosa, Iowa. In 1935 he dedicated himself to the Methodist ministry. In 1940 he received a bachelor of divinity degree from Drew Theological Seminary. (Anniversary 125)

Before he was appointed to our church, Reverend Zook served two small Protestant congregations in Lafayette, New Jersey - - one week in the Methodist church and the next week in the Presbyterian church; both congregations were worshipping together. Reverend Zook was very interested in formally combining the two congregations and it was through his efforts and guidance that the two Sunday Schools were consolidated. During his ministry the pattern for the federation was formed. The Christian Endeavor Society and the Youth Choir were welded into two strong groups. However, after much consideration, the congregations felt that they were not yet ready to federate and the plans were shelved.

During the three years that Reverend Zook served our church, he stressed that we should do all in our power to help the needy in other countries. This emphasis in foreign ministry was quite possibly an outgrowth of his background in India and the opening of the post-war era. He also stressed the importance of music. The Carol and Chapel Choirs were organized and the adult choir took the name: the Chancel Choir. A Westminster School student took charge of the organ and trained the Chancel and Carol Choirs, while Mr. Zook and his wife trained the Chapel Choir. A service of song and lovely music was heard at 11:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve welcoming Christmas day with praise and thanksgiving. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Devotional booklets were prepared to suit three age groups. Reverend Zook made friendly calls on new people in the community, even if they were not of our denomination, in order to develop friendships with people in other denominations. During the ice storm of December 1947, our church took care of an out-of-state crew of electricians for a two week period. The crew was making repairs to broken wires throughout the town.

R. Bruce Poynter was appointed Assistant to the Pastor and took charge of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, doing a splendid job. It turned out that his

work, two decades later, would again involve ministry to young people. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

*R. Bruce Poynter's experiences in the church began when he was named Assistant Pastor in the Chatham Methodist Church while he was attending seminary. Before entering the Seminary, Bruce completed a bachelor's degree at Upsala College with a background in engineering and mechanics. He had been subject to the draft after high school (The Pennington School) and served two years in the U.S. Navy through the end of World War II. During his service in the Navy, his college years and finally in seminary, Poynter said was a common factor. When it came time to choose a vocation, he considered clinical psychology; but music and the pastoral ministry were calling, he said. His father was also a Methodist minister.*

*By 1969, Reverend Poynter served as Pastor of the Bethesda (MD) United Methodist Church; that year he was appointed Chaplain, American University. The university chaplain job description did not include the prospect of situations such as violent protests or tear gas being used on the campus by police; but for Poynter, the conflicts presented new challenges and opportunities. "To come from that kind of situation to this was a major jolt for me," Poynter said. "I didn't have a whole lot of experience dealing with students."*

*"I remember looking out the window of my office down there at the Kay Spiritual Life Center and somebody had stacked up a whole stack of rocks, you know, fist sized rocks. What for? To throw at the cops when they came to Ward circle," he said. "We gathered up the rocks and brought them inside and put an end to that."*

*Bruce added that the chaplains on staff were just trying to do whatever they could to help calm the situation. For example, one service that the staff offered was draft counseling.*

*Counseling students was not Poynter's only proud memory from the era. For a time during the protests, Poynter said the Kay center maintained the only free press machine on campus. "We had a mimeograph machine. That's the way we used to crank out papers," he said. No other offices on campus would allow students access to duplicate their flyers, editorials or newsprint broadsides, but "we did, and we had that thing going year-round," he said.*

*One of Poynter's strengths was his "consideration for students and their views, and putting that forward to the administration," Faith Leonard, the current dean of students, said. Though it was his first experience in an academic institution, Poynter says he ended relating well to students.*

*Reverend Poynter left the American University Chaplaincy in 1985 for his first retirement. He is now (2007) serving as Minister Emeritus at the large Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. In 2003, the R. Bruce Poynter Endowment was established at American University to support annual lectures by people who seek a more compassionate world through academics and daily actions. (Internet)*

The Chatham Methodist Church made many improvements in the parsonage in 1948, some of the work being done while the Zook family was on vacation. In addition, the Zooks were quite handy and made other improvements by doing the work themselves, the material being furnished by the church. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Zook's "Pastor's Report" on May 14, 1948 included these comments:

*"We have had, during the past year, the finest [Youth Fellowship] group in many a year. Much of its success has been due to the leadership given by Charles Fry, Youth Fellowship President, and Richard Taylor, assistant to the minister. Mr. Taylor is a Junior student at Drew Theological Seminary and came to us from the plains of Kansas, via the U.S. Navy and the engineering world. He has won his way into our hearts."*

Recognizing that the growth in church membership was placing a strain on the size and condition of the church facilities, Reverend Zook and two leading members of the laity, A. K. Bennett and Cameron S. Toole, wrote a letter to the congregation on April 20, 1948 encouraging them to join in financing improvements in the church. The letter said, in part:

*"If the church is to fulfill its larger mission in this community and is to meet the challenge of our time, it must have the assistance of many of its members and friends to accomplish fully the sanctuary beautification project under way.*

*"Every member of the church will be given an opportunity to give proportionately to meet the cost of the renovation, estimated to approximate \$7,500, of which almost \$4,000 is now in hand.*

*"Some of you can and will want to support this project through a special gift or memorial." (Zook)*

In 1948, membership had grown to 426 and, using the additional donations, the Sanctuary was remodeled to accommodate the growth. In addition to extensive renovations and alterations, a new electric organ was installed. (Milestones, Conversation and Walden 1989)

Christa Fry remembered,

*"Somebody thought we could keep the old pipe organ in service, take it 20 miles or 50 miles away and give it to a little old church that didn't have anything. But, you know how impossible that would be; it couldn't be done. So Mr. Zook and my son, Charles, tore the old organ out and threw it away. Charles still has two pipes from*

*that old organ. It's hard to understand that things wear out. They seem never to completely wear out in our minds. We like it as long as we remember what it was like. That's the way we remember that old church." (Fry)*

The new organ for the church was electronic, built by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., of North Tonowanda, New York. It was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Walters, Sr. The organ used wind-activated reeds as the basis of its tone production. The impulses were transmitted through a series of tone screws and electrical cables to the tone cabinet, where they were amplified. The organ was a well-balanced ensemble. It had stops taken from all four of the major tone families of the traditional organ - - Diapason, Flute, String and Reed. Each stop was carefully voiced to reproduce the rich timbre of its pipe organ counterpart. (Sanctuary 1948)

The organ was played from a console, which was located in the east side of the chancel. The tone cabinet was concealed behind the dossal. The console was built according to the specifications of the American Guild of Organists. Any organist could immediately feel at home as he or she sat to play. (Sanctuary 1948)

A lot of changes were made to the Chancel area and it was painted all white. This was a major change from the dark woodwork, which had previously dominated the Chancel. While the updating of the Chancel area didn't go with the wood shingle outside, all in all, it was an attractive little church. The renovated Sanctuary was designed to be as rich in meaning as it was beautiful in appearance. Something of a Colonial atmosphere was created.

The new physical arrangement assured that there was an unobstructed approach to the altar from the center aisle. The choir, ministers of music and worship, and congregation, formed three sides of a hollow square, all facing the altar in worship. (Sanctuary 1948)

The altar cross was polished brass. On the altar, beside the cross were two candles, lighted while worship was in progress. The dossal was hung behind the altar; it was a rich damask, woven by artisans in England. (Sanctuary 1948)

The lectern was on the left side of the chancel. The pulpit was on the right side. The baptismal font was at the east side of the chancel; it was balanced on the opposite side by the stand on which rested the Book of Remembrance, recording memorials and gifts which were given to the church from time to

time, indicating the names of the persons memorialized and the donors.  
(Sanctuary 1948)

There were beautiful colored windows in the back of the church sanctuary.  
(Fry)

John Halvorsen, Minister of Music and Organist, led the organ dedicatory service on Sunday, October 10th. Both he and William Holby, who had previously played the organ in Chatham, played various pieces in order to show the versatility of the organ. Gordon Meyers, of New York City, was the Vocal Soloist, a baritone, whose voice thrilled all who were present.  
(Sanctuary 1948)

The renovated Sanctuary was dedicated on Tuesday, October 12, 1948. At the eight o'clock service 21-year-old Clair Hardenstine of the Westminster Choir College, organist, played the Prelude.

*Clair was a very sensitive, soft-spoken, reflective person. He later received a master's degree from Northwestern University and became the organist and choir director for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Paterson. During his career of 50 years, he also headed the music department at Montreal College. Hardenstine was introduced to the theater at age 7. He directed, acted, produced, and designed and painted scenery, and served as musical director in various productions.*

Reverend D. Arthur Zook spoke the Invocation; John Halvorsen, Minister of Music, led the Chancel Choir in an Anthem; R. Bruce Poynter, Assistant to the Minister, read the Scripture; Reverend LeRoy A Martin, District Superintendent, gave the Prayer; Mrs. Viola Shaw was the guest Offertory Soloist; and Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam gave the sermon. (Sanctuary 1948)

"..... YES, WE ARE THE CHURCH TOGETHER"

Paul and Mary Emler recalled their early experiences and impressions of Chatham:

*"We moved into our house, 98 Center Street, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949, when our furniture arrived. Paul had previously made contact with [Reverend] Arthur Zook and he had helped us find a house and acquaint us with the area. On the day we moved in, Wilma [Zook] sent our supper down. They were wonderful people. [The*

*Emler's old house is on a corner and it is now identified as 49 Weston Avenue.]  
(Emler)*

*"In some ways, Chatham was different from other places in which we had lived. While Chatham was not exactly a village, it was still small. We found it very friendly and, although most of the men commuted, in many ways it was not too unlike some of the places we had lived before. We moved here from Tiffin, Ohio."*

*The Chatham Board of Education was "building a new grade school on Milton Avenue. One of our sons, Paul, Jr., went to the old school building on Fairmount Avenue that is now Town Hall, for fourth grade, and the other one, John, went to the Presbyterian Church for first grade. Sarah was a baby.*

*"Downtown had a grocery, a department store or two, and a 'five-and-ten cent' store, so you could get everything you needed without going out of town. The high school was on Lum Avenue. We lived within walking distance of the church and the grocery stores where we needed to shop and the railroad station where I [Paul] went. A little later we joined the Fish and Game Club where the children played tennis, swam, and that was in walking distance, too. It was a very convenient, really quite a wonderful place to live."*

*Paul and Mary Emler continued, saying, "The town probably was (as it has been for many decades) homogenous in its makeup and nature, a good place to raise children and to participate in things. In many ways it was what we were looking for. My work [Paul] was in New York City and I had no intention of raising family in New York City even though the Chairman of our company [American Electric Power Company] thought that I was crazy to consider any place except Manhattan. He had always lived there.*

*"We joined the church very soon after we moved to Chatham. The church was very attractive inside, because they had just redecorated it. Reverend Zook was the one that instigated all the redecorating and I think it led a lot to the growth of the church, because it was so very attractive. The pew ends were all painted white; the altar rails were white and the lectern. It made it so light and cheerful when the stained glass windows showed such nice contrast with the white paint, like a colonial New England church."*

It is interesting to point out that the phrase "one's Sunday best" had a significant meaning in these days. The clothes you wore to church were special - - usually reserved just for Sunday. Women usually wore hats (some of which had a light veil), white gloves, some jewelry and heels. Men wore fresh shirts and usually had on polished shoes. Children wore clothes they would see only on Sunday - - the Saturday night bath being almost a ritual.

Mary and Paul Emler also recalled:

*“There were a number of people who came here just about that same time as we did. In fact, there was a lot of growth in the church. Some of the people that we volunteered with over the years were the ones that had been members of the church for a long time. Many others were new people, like us, who fit in nicely. I think the first three years that we were here, maybe just in the first year, there must have been a dozen families who came in that have been quite active in the church over the past four decades.*

*“As far as I’m [Paul] concerned, we had no negative experiences in being welcomed into the life of the church. There were so many new people, that we could all have ‘overpowered’ the established congregation, but I don’t believe that was the case.” [Bob Simpson commented, “It was a problem within some churches when the growth in population in the ‘suburbs’ brought many new people into their midst. They couldn’t handle newcomers.”] Mary added, “A lot of the people already in the congregation had come from other places, too. And there were often connections among us, such as: ‘oh, I lived so and so miles from there.....’*

*“I remember many fine people back in that time. Edward and Clara Stout come to mind, Cam and Maxine Toole, and A.K. and Dot Bennett, Fred Engleman, Elizabeth Williamson who was President of Woman’s Society, Fred and Catherine Walters and Fred’s father, Fred Walters, Sr. and his wife, although she was not too particularly active.*

*“I remember Gladys Miller very well. She was Phyliss’s mother. I remember when Phyliss and Colin were going together and when they were married, her mother thought she would never see her again. Phyliss and Colin went to Australia for a while after they were married. Then they came back here.” [Bob Simpson said, “Colin (eventually became) Dean of Yale Divinity School and now we end up with a second Dean (of Yale Divinity School) coming out of our church in Chatham (the most recent being Tom Ogletree).”]*

*Mary continued, “The Beers, George Beers’ mother and father, and his sister were very active in the church. Of course, Dave Fry and Mr. Russell Doran, a tall dignified man, and his first wife who was such a beautiful, lovely woman; the Rileys, Jeff and his wife.*

*Bob Simpson said, “There were some older families in the church, such as the Beers; Alpha [Beers’] family, the Vances, went way back.” Mary said, “Yes, I knew her mother. I knew the Elmendorfs right from the beginning. The Taylors [Bob and Adrienne] moved here just before we did. The Buesings [Charles and his wife, Ann] moved in just before we did. The Ehmans [Connie and Bill] came soon after we did. The Warners [Larry and Ruth] came about the same time, from Summit. The Hemmerlys had been here. The Dochterman’s [Warren and Alice] had been here. The Fanchers were very active and were wonderful people. Of course, Pete and Iona Henry were very active. They hadn’t come too long before us, but they had come from Kansas, of course, so, like us, they were not natives of this area.”*

Reflecting upon these many names, Bob Simpson remarked:

*"It is clear from those names that the church was gathering right there the leadership for the construction of the church on Main Street."*

Thinking of other dedicated people in the church, Mary Emler said:

*"We remember Barney Kent, a retired businessman, who was custodian of the church. He was a wonderful old man. All the children loved him. His wife was Janet. He died of a stroke that he had at the church."*

*"I also recall Norman Dennis who was the Sunday School secretary for years and years. He did many nice little things. I think of Norman the time that Mr. Lum died. It was after we moved out to Rolling Hill Drive. I was driving up Washington Avenue and he was walking along because he could never drive, you know, because of his epilepsy, so I said 'can I give you a ride, where are you going?' He said he was going to the Lum's because he had heard that Mr. Lum died and he knew Mrs. Lum would need him to help." Bob said, "Norm is still living (1990), we still hear from him. He is a fine fellow; he had hoped at one time to prepare for the ministry, but his health broke, or something like that."*

In 1949, Reverend D. Arthur Zook was appointed to a fourth year at the church. In September, however, Rev. Mr. Zook was asked by Drew University to become administrative assistant to Fred G. Holloway, president of Drew University. After prayerful consideration, Reverend Mr. Zook decided the church needed him in that field and accepted the position. A "Wish You Well Tea" was given for the Zook family in late September. *[Reverend Mr. Zook soon became Vice President of Drew University and in 1955 he was named president of Kansas Wesleyan University at Salina, Kansas and served in that capacity for fourteen years.]* (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

## BILL RODDA BECOMES PASTOR; THE CHURCH BURSTS AT ITS SEAMS

The congregation was very happy in our lovely renovated church on Center Street. Two hundred new families moved into Chatham during 1949 and, by 1951, the combined population of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township had become nearly 10,000. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Buesing)

The Pastoral Relations Committee went hither and yon, listening to ministers, and trying to decide who would best fill Reverend Mr. Zook's place. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Reverend William F.B. Rodda and his family arrived to begin their ministry with us. A reception was held on October 11th to acquaint the membership with the new pastor. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

Reverend Mr. Rodda had begun his pastoral assignments (*in 1942, as a student*) at the Chapman Quarries Methodist Church in Bath, PA. In 1943 he was appointed to the Methodist Church in West New York. He served there until 1946, at which time he was transferred to Belvidere Methodist Church. After three years in Belvidere, he was assigned to Chatham.

"Bill" Rodda recalled [in 1959] that shortly after his appointment in 1949 to the Chatham Methodist Church the District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. LeRoy A. Martin, said,

*"I fully expect to see some day up on Main Street a new Methodist Church that will be adequate to meet the needs of this growing community."*

Reverend Rodda had long considered Rev. Dr. Martin a prophet, but he believed that this was too visionary a concept for him. (Martin)

On November 20, 1949 services were held to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Center Street Church. These services consisted of a special program both morning and evening. The morning service was a special Thanksgiving period with the congregation's new pastor, Reverend Mr. William F.B. Rodda, preaching. In the evening a special feature was the presentation of former pastors. (Anniversary 125)

Years later, members of the church described Reverend (later "Dr.") Rodda this way:

*"He was known as 'Bill.' He was young, with two small children, and a young, lovely wife, Anne. Dr. Rodda's sermons rang with sincerity, just as he did himself. They were not profound, nor was their significance obscure. In fact, Dr. Rodda had the ability to take a profound subject, and, with some very incisive language, cut away the haziness around it so it became vivid and understandable."*

Ray Walden added, *"The sermons before the time of Bill Rodda were often so long that it was hard to keep the main theme in mind."* (Walden 1989)



The Reverend Dr. William F.B. Rodda

Pastor

1949-1965

Reverend Rodda believed that his principal pastorate was the community in which he served. He would visit each new family that moved into the area. Also, he grew to know the congregation very well and it was widely recognized that, as the years passed, he could look out from the pulpit and see in the faces of the worshippers the concerns and joys each person was experiencing at that time.

He also spoke out about concerns of the world, as he saw them at that time. For example, in January 1952, Reverend Rodda wrote to the congregation a letter that raised several issues of current importance. After a comment urging regular attendance at the Sunday worship service, Reverend Rodda said:

*"We are determined to keep our freedoms; freedoms which are not enjoyed in lands dominated by the Roman Church. The framers of our Constitution never intended that this nation should establish diplomatic relations with the head of any church. Evidently pressure to do this is just terrific on the President. Therefore, if you are opposed to such an appointment, the time to write your senators is between now and January 20<sup>th</sup>. This matter is to be discussed before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at that time."*

*In the same letter, he quoted Frank Laubach, "the apostle of literacy" who said: "I'm more certain than ever that there is only one solution for the world's misery, and only one way that will beat Communism. That is Christian service." Reverend Rodda agreed and wrote, "Amen. We talk too much, too few do too much and too many do too little. The time has come to act, march forward under the Christ and His Church."*

Connie Ehmann recalled that they moved to Chatham in October 1950 and joined the church immediately.

*"My husband, Bill, and I had always belonged to Methodist Churches. Our minister in Newark, at Trinity Methodist, Warren Sheen, had been a minister at Chatham. My husband, Bill, had grown up in the Trinity Methodist Church. Reverend Sheen forewarned Bill Rodda that we were on our way. Reverend Rodda called on us almost immediately and we began to attend church right away.*

*"We came from Irvington, New Jersey and it was very urban. We felt that we were moving to a country town, although Chatham was growing rapidly. We came in the immediate post war years and, as I recall, many of the people in Chatham resented the growth.*

*"The Methodist church in Chatham was a small frame building on Center Street. We came from a large stone edifice in Newark, but the congregation was dwindling and many of the people were moving to the suburbs. The crowd in this small*

*church in Chatham impressed us. It felt very vital; people were glad to be part of the church, one that was growing so rapidly.*

*"I was very involved with raising three small boys and teaching at the same time and did not take much of an active part in church aside from attending. However, my husband, Bill, began to teach Sunday School almost immediately. He taught in the Junior Department and Catherine Walters was the Junior Department Superintendent."*

The capacity of the church sanctuary was often inadequate at the regular 11 o'clock service so that in 1950 the two-service system, with identical services at 9:30 and 11 o'clock, was adopted and proved very popular. (Anniversary 125)

In 1949-1950, the members of the church established a long-lasting social group, "Friday Nitters." *[Even in 2007, the "Friday Niter's" group continues to give members an opportunity to come together and enjoy fellowship.]* On Friday evening once a month, between September and May, the young couples of the church would meet for a social half-hour, a covered-dish dinner and entertainment provided by energetic, imaginative and talented member of the church. From time to time, outside guests would come to give a program such as on Music Boxes, a Trek to Mt. Everest, Political Issues, Old-Time Movies, Square-Dancing, Christmas Music, Scottish Bag-Pipes, Archaeology, the Sound of Humor, Scuba-Diving in the Bahamas, an Evening of Jazz, Hypnosis and Meditation, the High School Band, Tall-Sailing Ships in New York Harbor, and many other subjects.

Alma Beers (Mrs. George) became the church organist in 1950.

Connie Ehmann reflected on the changes between the 1950s and the 1990s by saying,

*"I do feel that the Church today [1990] competes with many secular interests. It did not, when we came to Chatham in the early 1950s. Our social life revolved around home and church. We didn't participate in clubs. There were not the kinds of scheduling of activities, which interfered with Sunday morning worship. Peoples' lives were not as fragmented as they are now. I don't feel that [people] were as upwardly mobile as they are now [1990]. I think the desire to 'keep up' is very important to young adults today."* (Ehmann)

Regarding leadership in the church, she said:

*"The people that I remember who were in leadership were the Bennetts (A.K. 'Benny' and Dot), of course. Even then, Benny was always greeting and he did when we moved to Main Street. The Walters, the Fanchers, Polly Hetherington was President of the Women's Society and Mary Emler was Circle Leader, in the first Circle that I went to. I also remember Janet Kemp, whose husband, Barney Kemp, was the Church Sexton. They lived out on Passaic Avenue, out toward Florham Park. And I remember the Taylors, of course, Adrienne and Bob. Those are the names that come instantly to mind.*

*"Adrienne Taylor was 'Mrs. Methodist.' She was involved in an active way in all aspects of the church.*

*"Bill and I wanted to join Friday Neters. I was 35 years old, which from this vantage point looks very young. And Adrienne told us we were too old for Friday Neters, that we should join the Fellowship Society, which was for the 'older' people - which I did not appreciate." (Ehmann)*

Bob Simpson remembered that Adrienne was the first woman from our Annual Conference to be elected a delegate to General Conference and he always felt that Adrienne, if she had been part of another generation, would have been President of Standard Oil (now "Exxon") or something like that - - she was so well organized and dynamic. Bob had known Adrienne years before he was appointed to the Chatham Methodist Church.

*"The Methodist Church always had a BIG turkey dinner on election day and the whole town came. It was something that everyone looked forward to. They had three or four seatings and people roasted the turkeys at home and brought them in and the men were there to carve. It was quite an occasion." (Ehmann)*

On February 19, 1951, the Church officially changed its name from the "Methodist Episcopal Church of the Village of Chatham" to "The Chatham Methodist Church." The papers showing the change of corporate name were recorded on April 18, 1951 by the Morris County Clerk on page 28 of Book "C" of Religious Societies of Morris County.

A report on the Sunday School accommodations revealed the following:

- 1. There were 19 separate classes in the Church School.*
- 2. Eleven of these classes received their Christian education in rented halls; the American Legion Hall on Passaic Avenue and the Odd Fellows Hall on Main Street.*
- 3. Seventy-five small children engage in activities that did not have careful separation.*
- 4. The converted storage room in the cellar near the furnace housed two classes.*
- 5. Classes were so closely packed that children had to sit back-to-back.*

6. *There was no unity of assembly.*
7. *The Church School attendance was twice what it was eight years earlier.*

By 1951, it was evident that the existing structure could no longer be altered or enlarged economically to meet the ever-growing demands placed upon it; the people in full membership had increased to 504, with almost an equal number of children. (Milestones and Walden 1989)

Accordingly, the Committee on Conservation and Advance requested that there be in the budget for the year 1950-1951 "an amount equal to a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 20% of the Current Expense Budget, the said sum to be used for a new building at this or at another location or for the adding to this building. This fund was not to be used for alterations, repairs or maintenance of the present building."

A Storage Room in the cellar became a game room and was used by many organizations. A partial list of the organizations that used the game room and other facilities in the church were the Girl Scouts, Cubs, the Boy Scouts, Hi-Y Groups, as well as our own Methodist Youth Fellowship, the Couples' Club Fellowship Society, the Women's Society of Christian Service and the Men's Club. There was seldom a day or night that some part of the church was not being used either for our own church groups or others in the community. (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

*"The sanctuary area," Mary Emler said, "was separated from the Sunday school area by sliding doors. I think all the older churches had that physical arrangement. I remember teaching in that room one year. Then we rented space in the American Legion, it was right behind the church, and I taught over there one year. When I taught in the church building itself, Catherine Walters was Superintendent of the junior department and when we were at the American Legion Hall (they pulled a curtain across the bar), Adrienne Taylor was the Superintendent of the junior department. They also had Sunday school in the Odd Fellows Hall. They had classes everywhere; in the kitchen, in the furnace room, everywhere."  
(Emler)*

The Church School began double sessions for lack of adequate space and outside facilities (such as space in the American Legion Hall in 1952 and in the Odd Fellows Hall in 1953) had to be used on Sunday. One group of children had to pass by cases of wine and spirits as they mounted the stairway to the lodge hall above the liquor store, located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Passaic Avenue. Another group gathered in the Legion Hall on North Passaic, about 200 feet north of Main Street. A drapery masked the bar area, but could not eliminate the odors of stale beer spilled

# The Chatham Methodist Church

(c. 1952)

IN THE STORAGE ROOM



A CROWDED ASSEMBLY



on the wooden floor or tobacco odor permeating the air. A third body of children assembled in the musty church furnace room. This arrangement was very unsatisfactory. The idea of a unified Church School was entirely lost and the teacher problem was with us continually. (Milestones, Walden 1989 and Buesing)

Another major concern was the structural integrity of the building. The weight on the roof had caused the north wall to bow out. Fred Walters, Sr. said, "The walls are not adequate to support a heavy slate roof and heavy wet snow." (Conversation and Buesing)

Other Chatham Congregations were facing similar challenges. Over the next ten years: the Congregationalists built a parish hall and remodeled the sanctuary; St. Patrick's constructed a whole new church building; the Episcopalians enlarged, and then replaced their church building; and the Presbyterians at Ogden Memorial Church erected a new Education building. (Cunningham)

## THE QUESTIONS AND THE SEARCH BEGIN

In the May 1951 Annual Report, Reverend Bill Rodda gave an indication of the level of his activity:

*"As your pastor, I have averaged three [in home] calls per day, plus the innumerable phone calls and conversations concerning church business." "Twelve funerals have been conducted, sixteen baptisms administered, and four weddings performed." "I am personally grateful for the helpfulness of Miss Jane Neary, our church secretary." "The reorganization of our Official Board, utilizing the Commission form of administration, has proved worthy of the effort. Mr. V.B. Henry and his committee have greatly increased the efficiency of our Board, and have thereby released your minister from an overload of detail. This church is developing lay leadership." "....., we have been making progress in building mature Christian personalities and effecting Christian social service and thus strengthening the Christian Church, . . . . there is a group of leaders and a body of persons here who believe in the Christian Church." "I am personally indebted to 'Cam' Toole, for he has been of inestimable help to me, particularly when I first came to this place. His 'Keep slugging, Boss. We're all behind you,' always gave [me] a lift."*

In the same Annual Report, Doug Davis commented about the high level of activity in the Friday Niters' Couples' Club. He said,

*"Included among [the programs] was a U.N. speaker; a poet, Vicar Kumm of the Episcopal Church; a hobby demonstration night; a memorable Halloween Costume party; and a motion film program on Palestine. The meetings were often preceded by covered dish suppers or dessert in members' homes." "The Club's project is raising funds to support a Chinese student at Foochow Theological Seminary, and the goal is in sight."*

In November of 1951, it was estimated that church membership and the local communities' population would double in the next 15 years. Therefore, the congregation approved a program for expansion and steps were taken that would lead to the building of a new church. [By 1958, the growth was exceeding those expectations.] (Future)

Charles Buesing's report/story of his experiences in the planning, siting, financing and construction of the new church is very interesting and is found separately in the Church's Archives. (Buesing)

Until recently, we had been a small church with a membership of less than 500, an active membership somewhat less, and an annual budget of less than \$20,000. [In May 1951, membership had risen to 536. By the time the decision was made to proceed with a new church, the budget had grown to somewhat less than \$50,000. Incidentally, the percentage going to world service/missions was higher at that time than it has been for a long time.] (Conversation)

Connie Ehmann remembered,

*"We were having two services even then, because the church building was so small; and there was talk of three. Everyone congregated on the sidewalk after the services to greet each other and talk. I can see people standing out there talking and sharing a conversation: 'How have you been,' and that kind of thing, while we rounded up our families who were going to Sunday School in the coal bin in the basement and the Legion Hall, which is now the Chatham Community Players' Playhouse and the Odd Fellows Hall, which was over what is now a Pizza Parlor on the corner of Main and Passaic Avenue. I had three children in three different departments and we'd have to round the kids up; they'd meet us, on the sidewalk in front of church." (Ehmann)*

There were a few people who thought that the church was adequate both then and for the future. Still others opposed the idea because the Center Street church was "home" to them. Consideration was given to buying a lot or something next to it and trying to add to that lot. However, that didn't seem

practical to do since the old frame building had structural problems. Parking was on the street and it was completely inadequate. (Conversation)

Therefore, a committee was appointed late in 1951 to find a site for a new Methodist Church in Chatham. The Committee consisted of William Tarpley, Harold Nelson, Fred Hetherington, Stephen Brown (Mayor of Chatham Boro), Donald Weber and A.K. Bennett. They went around town and took note of about eight possible sites for the church. In January 1952, the Committee reported their findings to the Congregation. One was a site at the northwest corner of Coleman Avenue and Main Street, 0.94 acres. However, it was just not large enough to do everything we wanted. One was up on Fairmount Avenue at Red Road (southeast corner), 1.1 acres. However, this, too, was not big enough; the rear terrain was rocky and people said we might have to also buy some of the houses around it. Other sites included one on Washington Avenue where the Washington Avenue School was eventually constructed; a 2.0 acre site on the east side of Elmwood Avenue near Weston Avenue; 2.4 acres on the south side of Main Street about 250 feet east of Garden Avenue; 0.9 acres on the southwest corner of Main Street and Bowers Lane (opposite the Library); 1.63 acres on the south side of Main Street, opposite Hedges Avenue; 1.5 acres on the south side of Main Street where Kings is now located. All of the sites presented problems of size, cost or availability and the congregation rejected everything that had been proposed. (Conversation)

Connie Ehmann said,

*"I remember vividly the congregational meetings at which we debated and debated whether or not we should move and where we should go. A search committee was sent to look for plots. The air got 'blue' at some of those meetings while they discussed the advisability of one plot over another." (Ehmann)*

*And Ray Walden wrote that "Bill Rodda had to use a great deal of diplomacy to keep the various factions together. Charles Buesing and Cam Toole were very helpful and influential, too." (Walden 1989)*

A new committee was appointed. And they worked with several other sites, although perhaps they looked again at some of the ones they'd seen before. The new committee finally came back with a recommendation for the purchase of the site we now have at 460 Main Street; a site that had become available after the first committee's work had been completed. The site was occupied by a nursery, called "Chatham Nurseries," owned by Georgina and Paul Hanschitz (pronounced: "Hanskitz") and was available for sale. Mr. and Mrs. Hanschitz had emigrated from Austria to England and then to America,

being in the nursery business in all three countries. (Conversation and Buesing)

Several congregational meetings were held before the final choice was made.

## THE LONG PROCESS BEGINS; YET THE RHYTHM OF LIFE CONTINUES

Negotiations for the property were carried on by a committee headed by Charles J. Buesing and assisted by Mrs. Warren Dochtermann (Alice), and Mrs. V.B. Henry (Iona).

Cameron S. Toole of Main Street was general chairman of the church expansion committee. Mr. Buesing was chairman of the fund-raising sub-committee and A.K. Bennett was chairman of the sub-committee on building plans.

V.B. "Pete" Henry was lay leader of the church and was most active in all the work leading up to the taking of an option on the property.

The owners had already received offers for the site that were substantially more than the church could pay; this was because the Hanschitz's had initially planned to sell all of their property, including their house, which was situated on the west side of the nursery. (*The offers were from Esso (Exxon) for a gasoline service station and from RCA for a light manufacturing facility.*) However, the Hanschitz family was interested in our offer because we were a church and because we would allow them to retain the house as a place where they could live. They said they would enjoy looking out of their window and seeing a church, rather than a gasoline station or commercial building. They knew they could sell the house separately and the total of what they were able to get for that property, plus what the church paid for the nursery site, was almost as favorable as selling the whole property at one time. [The house is still standing and is on the west side of the drive into the school.] (Conversation and Buesing)

As Charles Buesing said,

*"Paul and Georgina Hanschitz were a lovely couple, practical, smart and Christian. They were members of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Following negotiations for sale of the property that resulted in a fair price to them and to the*

*Church (\$32,500), the couple made a pledge amounting to \$1,500 for the construction of the Church."*

The contract to purchase the Hanschitz property was signed on April 26, 1952 and closing was initially set for November 1, 1952. The Hanschitz's and the Church agreed to an extension of the closing date to November 1953 and then to November 1954. Title policy was obtained from New Jersey Realty Title Insurance Company.

*[A Deed for the property, dated January 8, 1955 and recorded by the Morris County Clerk on January 12, 1955 in Book Y-57 page 567, contained an error and a corrected Deed dated March 2, 1955 was recorded April 9, 1955, in the Clerk's Office of Morris County in Book M-58 page 245.]*

A front page article appeared in the Chatham Courier on May 8, 1952:

*"The Chatham Methodist Church had contracted to purchase a large tract of land on Main street near Van Doren and Lafayette Avenues and opposite the Acme Stores center, for the ultimate erection of a new church and church school facilities.*

*"With a frontage of 360 feet on Main Street and a depth of 200 feet, the property to be acquired will be one of the largest [Methodist] church plots in the eastern region and the largest in this Methodist conference area."*

The new church was considered one of the most forward-looking projects undertaken in Chatham in recent years. Adequate space was available, not only for its future church structure but also for incidental play and parking facilities and it was prominently situated.

Asked to comment on the action taken by the church, the Rev. William F.B. Rodda, pastor, said: (Courier)

*"On this property will one day rise a physical evidence of the intense spiritual devotion this congregation has to the advancement of Christ's kingdom."*

*Dr. Rodda continued: "In many aspects of our church life, our present physical facilities have become inadequate. The service to be rendered by a Christian church today to a community, a nation and a world is far too badly needed and far too important to be thus handicapped.*

*"Our congregation is determined that this service shall not be handicapped for long. As its pastor, I can view only with humility and pride this determination which will involve much sacrifice in money and labor for several years to come.*

*"I can not permit this opportunity to pass without a word of appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Hanschitz. It is no derogation of the excellence of Mr. Buesing's*

*negotiating powers to reveal that these fine people entertained our committee more in the spirit of civic and Christian co-operation than in bargaining. They are as desirous as any member of our congregation to see a church built on the land and have made this property available to us at considerable financial sacrifice to themselves. They are indeed our friends."*

Thus, the long process of building the new church had begun. (Buesing and conversation)

The 2.1 acre site was on the north side of Main Street opposite Acme Market (now CVS). There were greenhouses on the rear of the property. The owner's house was on Main Street and there was some thought that it could be used as a parsonage. The site was large enough to accommodate a modest parking area. Site preparation costs would likely be small since the lot had only a small slope front to back. *[Forty-nine acres of the property, extending back through the Middle School location, had been owned and farmed by Samuel Lum back in 1903.]*

Halsey Brothers, Engineers and Surveyors, Maplewood, New Jersey, completed a survey on May 10, 1956 and the Mortgage Indenture of July 13, 1956 contains the following details:

"BEGINNING at a point in the northeasterly side of Main Street at a point therein distant 183 feet westerly from the intersection of the said northeasterly side of Main Street and the westerly line of Van Doran Avenue, and running thence (1) along the said northeasterly side of Main Street north 46 degrees 13 minutes west 360 feet to a point which is distant 556.86 feet easterly from the southerly corner of lands formerly of Percy B. Lum; thence (2) north 43 degrees 51 minutes east 200 feet; thence (3) south 46 degrees 13 minutes east and parallel with the said northeasterly side of Main Street 360 feet; thence (4) south 43 degrees 51 minutes west 200 feet to the northeasterly side of Main Street and the point and place of BEGINNING."

The area near which the site is located has some soil problems. *(Sand underlies the CVS site and also existed behind the School before that area was filled in for the athletic field.)* Test borings of the Hanschitz property, however, showed that it was satisfactory for building. Just to be sure, the church was built on piers, which were put down with footings under them. (Conversation)

*"We had a good group to work with," Paul Emler said. "There wasn't a heck of a lot of money available; nobody was real wealthy. It was an exciting time, however." (Conversation)*

The treasurer's report for the period 1952-1953 indicates that the Pastor's annual salary was \$4,800. This salary is roughly equivalent to \$36,000 in 2007 (a comparative figure that, of course, excludes changes that have occurred in the regional costs of living).

In November 1952, a special Fund Raising Drive for pledges [The first Financial Crusade] covering a thirty-month period to May 1, 1955, secured pledges and cash amounting to \$89,082. (Anniversary 125)

Paul Emler said,

*"The first campaign was headed by Charles Buesing and it was in 1952 and many of us made three-year pledges towards the buying of the land and beginning the building. Local people did it all, but they all had to work very, very hard and the men took a lot of time from their businesses to do it. But it was a wonderful experience." (Emler)*

Connie Ehmann said that she and her husband, Bill,

*"pledged \$10.00 a month and we were extending ourselves as far as we could go."*

Others did about the same. Paul said, *"It was an act of faith."*

Connie added,

*"We built our house in 1950 for \$21,900, and we were extending ourselves to go for that house. I would say that our income was about \$7,000, certainly not more! That puts some perspective on it." (Conversation)*

Frustrations with the building campaign soon developed, however. In March, 1954, Cam Toole wrote a letter to the congregation:

*"Approximately 16 months ago the active campaign for funds with which to pay for land and a new church structure was begun.*

*"Today no spade has turned the earth; there is no ring of the mason's trowel nor pounding of the carpenter's hammer.*

*"Already disappointment on the part of some has become evident. Their disappointment has in some instances led to criticism. In nearly every case, however, these have been people among you who have backed up their impatient enthusiasm with cold hard cash in proportion to their ability.*

*"But the cold hard fact is that more of both – cash and enthusiasm – are needed. Since they create a chain reaction, enthusiasm begetting cash and cash in turn begetting enthusiasm, which begets more cash, I have no fear of the end result.*

*"However, lest impatient enthusiasm lead to discouragement instead of mere disappointment," Cam reviewed three goals that had been established 16 months earlier.*

*"One was a multiple-phase project, which in the long run involved such a great expenditure, that we could then think only of the possibility of bringing into existence one phase in the reasonably near future.*

*"The second goal was \$125,000 in cash and pledges which was established to be about one-half the cost of the first phase." [This \$125,000 is equivalent to \$933,000 in 2007 dollars, assuming one is talking about the same building codes and same relative land values. Looked at another way, a new car in 1954 cost about \$1,200; a new car in 2007 costs about \$27,000. This implies that the \$125,000 or "one-half the cost of the first phase" in 2007 dollars would amount to \$2,790,000! Quite an undertaking for a congregation whose membership in 1954 was 628!]*

*"The third goal was a date, July 1, 1955, when we would break ground." (Annual Report)*

In this way, Cam tried to calm some tempers.

The Men's Club pledged to raise a significant amount of money for the Building Fund. Beginning in 1954, the men partly fulfilled this goal by annually producing and selling during Lent many dozens of chocolate-covered eggs, all made in the kitchen and classrooms of the Center Street church. *(More below.)*

Early in May 1955 a new drive was launched to cover another 150 week period with a goal of \$120,000 as minimum, including unpaid balances from the first canvass which still had some time before completion. The success of this second drive, with pledges received of about \$130,000 together with the amounts received (\$89,000) from the first canvass, enabled the Finance Committee to make arrangements for a loan whereby contracts could be signed for the actual erection of the new [Education Wing]. The financing was based on the pledges that we had and would be replaced by a construction loan. When we got that done, we went out for more pledges. (Anniversary 125)

Paul Emler said,

*"Altogether, there were five drives. The church leaders led the first drive. Somebody from the National Board of Missions headed the next two. Eventually, we hired a fundraiser to help us with the last two drives. Each of those drives was a three year drive." (Emler)*

Throughout these early years of preparation for the new church, the rhythm of life continued.

Reflecting on events in 1952, Mary Emler said,

*"The tragedy of the Henry family is one of the major things that happened. It just made the whole church stop." Pete and Iona Henry were very active in the church and Pete was the Lay Leader.*

*"First it was [their daughter] Jane's death of cancer and, just a week later, Pete and their son's deaths and Iona's life-threatening injuries all as a result of an automobile crash in the midwest. The church just came around and they raised the money and sent Bill Rodda out to be with Iona. And then Warren Dochtermann, M.D. flew out to talk to the doctors to be sure she was receiving every care she needed. Everything just seemed to come together." (Emler)*

In her book, Triumph Over Tragedy, Festival Books, 1957 and Abingdon Press, Iona tells of her struggle to find purpose and meaning in life following the death of her daughter, Jane, to a brain tumor, and a few days later, the death of her son, Jack, and husband, Pete, in an accident at a railroad crossing in the Midwest which also left her near death. She recalled that the sequence of tragedies was overwhelming. Lying in her hospital room she wondered for what purpose she continued to live. She often wished for and prayed for death. But in the routine of the hospital, day by day, she began to heal, both physically and emotionally. Then the day came when she was able to leave the hospital. But what could she do? For twenty years she had been a wife and mother. Now her husband, her fourteen-year-old daughter and ten-year-old son were gone. How do you so radically change from being wife and mother to being neither. She went back to school to retrain. But there, among the cynicism of college students and professors, her faith in God began to falter. Maybe they were right. The universe was without reason or plan. Her despair even led to thoughts of suicide. There would be no need to struggle any longer.

The struggle with "Why?" became the most painful and difficult struggle in her life. Why would God take from her those people she loved most? Was God a capricious God who struck out by creating pain? It was a letter that had come to her that helped her begin to recover what she called her "Easter Faith."

The letter said:

*"God is as sad over this as you are. It is not God's will that such things happen. Amid the many circumstances of life, some things happen because we belong to an imperfect world. But God's will is for life to be lived to its fullest. We Christians believe in immortality. Whatever is commenced here will be completed there. Nothing is lost out of God's care."*

Iona heard that and began to move beyond her tragedy beyond the question "Why" to accepting that she was where she was and with God's help and love, she could love and move on to where God would have her be. She wrote:

*"The question now is not 'Why did it happen?' but 'What do I do now? Sit and fight it all the rest of my life? Sit and rebel and weep and gnash my teeth?' It would not help at all. The thing to do was to ask 'What can I make of it? It is to do the very best I can and leave the rest to God.'"*

Life did go on for Iona. The hopelessness and despair of the difficult years never returned with the same power. She taught at the college. She found others whom she could help. The years were fulfilling. Through the grace of God she made meaning again out of misery and tragedy; she did live again.

Our Church maintained a close relationship with Iona during the rest of her long and fulfilling life. She eventually married again, her new husband being Rev. Dr. John McLaughlin.

Within the Chatham Methodist Church, worship, music and life continued unchanged over the years. For example, the following is a description of the December, 1952 music programs:

*"A choir of over 40 voices will present a concert of Christmas music in the Chatham Methodist Church at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 14. The Sanctuary Choir of the Grace Methodist Church of Kearny will include the Chatham Methodist Church in its annual Christmas season tour of church concerts.*

*"With the exception of three selections, the singing will be entirely 'A Cappella.'" The notes mention the particular pieces.*

*"The combined 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. choirs under the direction of [the new] Organist-Choir Director Mr. Alfredo E. Silipigni, present a Christmas Eve Candelighting Service at 11:00 p.m. on Wednesday evening December 24<sup>th</sup>. A violin, harp, and organ prelude, soprano soloist, harp solo, and carols and anthems by the 25 voice choir highlight the program toward the close of which each person in the congregation receives a light from the Christ Candle in the 'Feast of Lights.'*

*"Miss Christian Blair, harpist from Orange, and Professor William T. Eicher, violinist and church member here, play Handel's 'Largo' with Mr. Silipigni at the organ. Miss Maria DiGerlando, winner of the Metropolitan Auditions of the Air is the soprano soloist. Verdi's 'Ave Maria,' Bach's 'Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light,' Adam's 'O Holy Night,' Handel's 'And the Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed' from 'The Messiah,' and many well-known and beloved choir and congregational Christmas carols comprise the music. Scripture readings and candlelight add to this service a wonderful spirit appropriate for your worship on the eve of the Savior's birth." (Chimes)*

*(In 1960, Miss Maria DiGerlando sang the role of Anna Gomez in the film version of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "The Consul;" about which a critic said: "This is theater - any theater, not just opera - at its best. The realism is stunning, the message chilling, and the music perfectly suited.")*

Alfredo E. Silipigni became the organist and choirmaster at the Chatham Methodist Church in 1952. He was also the director of the Village Chorus of Millburn and led an amateur troupe, the Opera Theater of Westfield. Nan Canfield said she was part of that group. Al Silipigni had studied at the Westminster Choir School, the Christiansen Choral School and the Julliard School of Music. He has been a conducting student of Alberto Erede of the Metropolitan Opera Company. He was also instrumental in promoting opera in New Jersey by means of radio broadcasts, opera performances and opera in concert form.

*"He had a wonderful Choir," Mary Emler said. "They loved to sing under him. Isabel Clymer started singing in the choir and our son sang in the choir -- a lot of high school boys sang in the choir. Harold Nelson and Scott and Nevin Brown were in the choir, too. Sometime, Al Silipigni would have some of his professional friends that were hard-up financially who would come and sing solos. It kind of wrecked the music budget, but it was lovely music." (Emler)*

Alfredo Silipigni went on to become a very significant figure in the world of opera.

*Maestro Silipigni made his Carnegie Hall debut, with the NBC Symphony of the Air (former NBC Orchestra) in 1956, at the age of 25. In 1965, the amateur troupe, the Opera Theater of Westfield, asked him to take charge, and he set about turning it into a professional organization. Many singers with big reputations chose to sing with Mr. Silipigni and his modest company, such as Beverly Sills, Birgit Nilsson, Anna Moffo and Placido Domingo.*

*In 1967, the Opera Theater of Westfield evolved into the New Jersey State Opera and Alfredo Silipigni became the principal conductor and artistic director. He continued in that position until his death in 2006. The international reputation of NJSOpera was been built on his authoritative performances.*

*In addition to his association with the New Jersey State Opera, Alfredo Silipigni appeared as guest conductor with companies ranging from the Vienna State Opera, the English National Opera, and the Liceo Barcelona to L'Opera de Montreal, and with many symphony orchestras.*

*Maestro Silipigni conducted Puccini's Turandot when the New Jersey State Opera company made its house debut at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (Newark) in February and March of 1998. He conducted the NJSOpera in performances of Verdi's Aida and, and, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the great composer's death, Verdi's Macbeth in 2001; Tosca, Madama Butterfly, Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci, and Lucia di Lammermoor. Maestro Silipigni was the Guest Conductor for Teatro Grattacielo's Lincoln Center productions of Mascagni's Guglielmo Ratcliff and Giordano's La Cena delle Beppe. In December, 1999, Maestro Silipigni was made a Cavaliere in the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy by proclamation of the government of Italy.*

The Chatham Methodist Church Choir was very fortunate to have his leadership during the early years of his professional life.

Hilda and Ed Druback moved into town in 1953 and Hilda recalls receiving a visit, shortly after they got settled, from Bill Rodda. She said, "Our daughter, Diana, was four and our son, Edward, was in the crib. Dr. Rodda visited every new family just after they arrived. He was very pleasant and we liked him. We joined the church immediately."

The programs of the Senior Methodist Youth Fellowship in the 1953-1954 were quite varied - - a characteristic of the MYF programs in the 1950s. The President of the group, Guy Buesing, described some of the programs in the Annual Report.

*"Our first speaker remains anonymous as he spoke about the Alcoholics Anonymous, and how they are helping a large number of people today. Next we had Dr. Conger and his wife who told us of their missionary work in India and how it is really needed. Mr. Zimmerman addressed us on The Missionary Challenge in the World Today. He and his wife were going in a few months to Malaya for five years of missionary work. Dr. Frankson talked to us on Interdenominational Relations, especially Catholics and Protestants intermarrying. Dr. Rodda told us about the Meaning of Life After Death. Mr. Nevin Brown and Mr. Howard Hemmerly led us in a discussion of Character Building Through the Church, School and Home. Our group also saw Martin Luther, a really wonderful and thought provoking movie."*

Guy also wrote:

*"There has been a great spiritual change in our group since we started. Most of the members have come to realize that we exist for a serious purpose as well as for good fellowship."*

On February 28, 1954, total membership of the church amounted to 628 people.

At one of the General Meetings of the Chatham Methodist Church's Women's Society of Christian Service in 1955, it was reported, "Mrs. Fry's circle made new curtains for the [Center Street] church kitchen." A motion was made and seconded to send \$50 for African missions and \$50 for undesignated missions. It was suggested that a general chairman be appointed for the Fall Bazaar as well as a chairman for each booth. Mrs. Hetherington volunteered to contact members for these jobs. Adrienne Taylor was elected President for the next two years. "Mrs. Kent announced that the Fellowship Society was having a food sale Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, at Swanson's hardware store and urged all to participate." (Minutes)

## OUR NEW CHURCH HOME

The whole construction project had been divided into two phases. When we looked at the initial designs for the new church and started to price it, the cost was way, way beyond what we wanted to spend. These numbers were based on a design that had the church looking somewhat similar to the one we already had. We decided, therefore, that our immediate needs for the first structure were for space in which we could educate the children and for a multi-use room that would serve as a sanctuary, meeting room and social room. So, the first building was built and designed to get as much as we could possibly get for the money we spent. (Conversation)

*"There were several groups involved in the building of the new church," Paul Emler noted. "There was the Planning Group, the Building Committee itself, and then an overall 'Executive Committee,' that guided the whole thing. It was an interesting experience, because we were moving from a location that was home for a lot of people. We came from a number of different areas and we had a number of people, particularly some of the older members, who felt that anything that was not a New England Colonial structure was not a church. We moved primarily because of the growth of our young people. They had completely outgrown the facilities and we moved, I think, for that primary reason. So we needed facilities for that purpose, we needed as much as we could get for as little money as possible and that dictated pretty largely the type of structure that we built for the Education unit."*  
(Emler)

Every group within the church was canvassed for their requirements. For example, the women were approached and asked, what kind of a kitchen would they like, what would they want in the kitchen; and the Sunday School Superintendent and teachers were asked, how many classrooms would they need and that kind of thing. Those responses and others were written into the package that was given to the architect, Drake, Tuthill, Convery and Cueman. (The contractor was Adams and Erickson). (Conversation)

All of the classrooms had folding partitions between them and there were, therefore, a lot more classrooms than we now have. *[Years later, we went through a period later when we didn't need all this space and the partitions were taken out.]* (Conversation)

The first building was, thus, a very practical one costing a limited amount of money; in fact, when we decided to go ahead, we didn't have the money. We started construction when we did not have enough pledges to finish it. (Conversation)

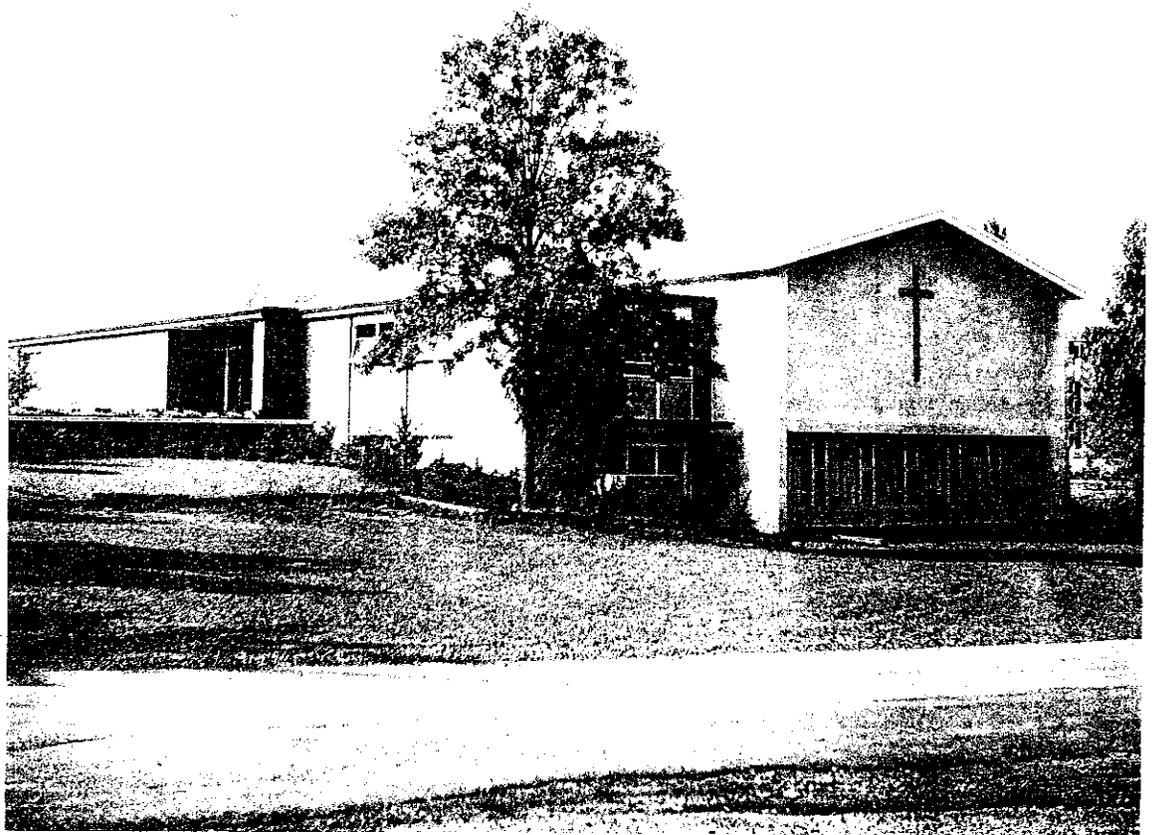
We didn't know how long we'd stay in the "Education" building. There were no plans to proceed immediately into the Sanctuary and we knew that we might be stuck in that one multi-use building for a long time. (Conversation)

The Second Financial Crusade brought in \$121,358 for church expansion. The contracts were signed with the general contractor on May 26, 1955. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new education building were scheduled for June 5, 1955. It was noted that membership had increased almost 50% (to 698) since the 1951 decision to build. (Milestones and Martin)

Connie Ehmann recalled that,

*"Groundbreaking day was most exciting! We all went to the church on Center Street and then we marched as a group up Main Street, the entire congregation, carrying shovels and flags, and the little kids came with trowels. We had a big celebration, instrumentalists, and devotion; and then they broke ground. Everybody took a turn digging, including the kids with their trowels. It was an exciting time!"*  
(Conversation)

The construction went along pretty much according to schedule and, considering what we spent, we got our money's worth; we met the needs of the congregation at that time pretty well. (Conversation)



## The Chatham Methodist Church

(Constructed in 1956)  
(Located at 460 Main Street, Chatham, NJ)

*"Few details were left out in designing and furnishing the new worship site in the Fellowship Hall," Christa Fry remarked. "For example, I would like to tell you about the draperies for the new Hall [at Main Street]. Dot Bennett and I covered a lot of territory and visited a lot of shops trying to find suitable materials for the right price. We looked here and there and everywhere and finally landed at Pearl's in Morristown. We had found a fair price and it seemed that their working ability at that time was good. We asked people to come in and look at them before we made the final decision. I think a member of every Circle was invited to come. There was a bunch of people there and Pearl brought down the samples and at great haste told them what she would do. No one said they didn't like it. It seemed to be a satisfactory thing, but it was a big job." (Fry)*

The time for the move to the new church was approaching and more preparations, however tentatively, were made. The February 28, 1956 Official Board meeting has the following Minute:

*It was decided that a tentative date be set to move and hold services on May 13. Considerable discussion centered around this as some felt we should wait until the building was completely finished and all equipment installed before we moved in. Mr. [Bill] Ehmman, Church School Superintendent, said he was willing to do without drapes and things of that nature and wanted to move in as soon as possible, as he was anxious to get the children out of The Legion Hall and The Odd Fellows Hall. The motion was made by Mr. Rowland that we wait until next month to set a definite date for moving. This motion was seconded and carried.*

In March 1956, Reverend Dr. Rodda briefly described the new church:

*"Our new Church School building is designed to serve the educational needs of our congregation, and we anticipate with pride and pleasure its bright, roomy, and attractive facilities. The Fellowship Hall will quite adequately serve as our place of worship until the Church Sanctuary is built. Our recent growth emphasizes the real need we have for these facilities." (Annual Report)*

Mary Emler recalled,

*"In moving during 1956 from what was considered not only the home church, but a very beautiful, small homey church to something that was not [so familiar], it surprised me to find [the new center of worship] very attractive; [this was made possible] because a number of things [in the new church] were [transplanted with us] from the old church. The stage in the multi-use room (Fellowship Hall) was turned into a chancel that was beautiful in its simplicity. (Conversation)*

*"We took the pretty altar rails with the cushion, the lectern, and the electric organ; all these things were moved to Fellowship Hall. Part of the background, the dossal, also came from the old church. The Hall was arranged with a very worshipful atmosphere and was really quite lovely." (Conversation)*



Opening of the Education Building of the Chatham United Methodist Church,  
460 Main Street - May 26, 1956

Left to right: Dr. and Mrs. William F.B. Rodda; Mrs. and the Rev. Olin Shute

And Christa Fry said,

*"Many people loved the beautiful colored windows in the back of the Center Street Church," Christa Fry recalled, "but it was impossible to reset them in the new building. The dedication plates from many of the windows were saved, however, and now hang in the Main Street Church." (Fry)*

All of the church members participated in the raising of funds for the new church. At the April 2, 1956 Official Board meeting, it was reported that,

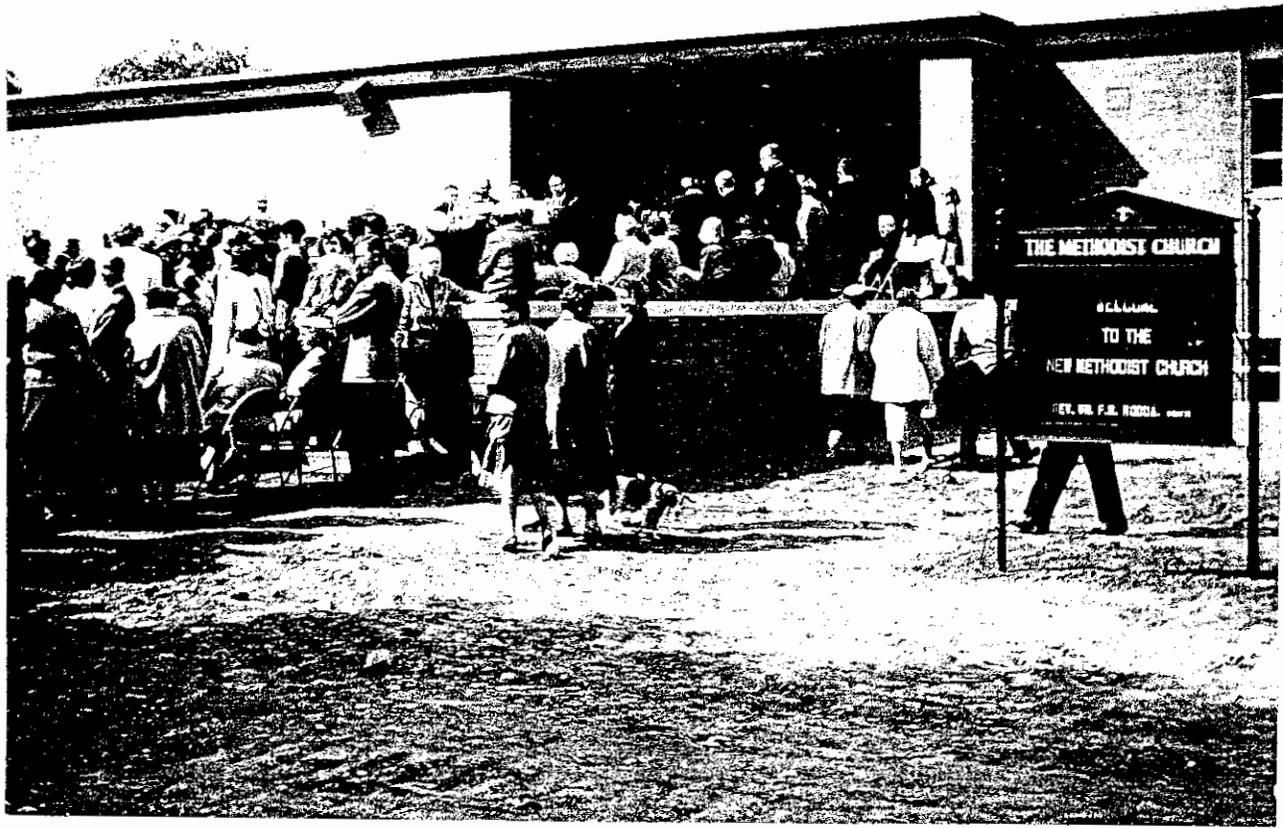
*..... children of the Sunday School had sold 700 pounds of Jelly Beans to help pay the Sunday School pledge to the Building Fund. A Tom Thumb Wedding will be held on Friday or Saturday to further help.*

Again, at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Bill Ehmann "asked for information as to when there is a possibility of getting in the new building." The Minute shows:

*Mr. [Cameron] Toole said that the contract calls for May 15, but the contractor is a very cautious person who will give no idea as to when we will be able to get in. Mr. Toole said he agreed with the Trustees that we should not move in until the building is turned over to us by the contractor, since [it] would be jeopardizing our rights if we attempted to do this. Mr. Ehmann answered that last Sunday morning 88 children were jammed in the Primary Room downstairs and one of the gas radiators was accidentally turned on letting gas in the room. Since this was not the first time this had happened, he said he was in constant fear that some tragedy might happen. If it [is] just the kitchen which is holding us up from getting in, he felt we could do without a kitchen for a while. Mr. [Bill] Fry explained that a lot of things had to be taken out of the church and refinished before taking [them] up there. He would like permission to move some of these things before the last Sunday. The motion was made that the Equipment Committee be given permission to start moving furnishings before acceptance of the building. The motion was seconded and carried.*

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies to open the new education building were [finally, and to Bill Ehmann's relief] conducted May 26, 1956 by Reverend Dr. William F.B. Rodda. A Service of Consecration was held on Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Rodda's sermon in Fellowship Hall [many years later named "Rodda Hall"] was "The Sanctuary Speaks." Alfredo Silipigni, Organist and Director, led the music ministry. Membership now amounted to 764 people.  
(Milestones and Martin)

The total cost of the site, the Education Building, Fellowship Hall, the Kitchen and Equipment was \$302,706.



Opening day of our new Church on Main Street in 1956

Early in 1956, several antique dealers and exhibitors had a show at a neighboring florist shop, Lloyd George's Florist Shop, which was located in the Montgomery Ward building on Main Street. Edith Franklin and a friend visited with the owner, Lloyd George Schoor, and the conversation drifted to the nearly completed Church Education Building. Mr. Schoor stated that it would be an ideal building in which to have an antiques show because of its interior layout. He offered his services to organize a show stating that he knew many dealers whom he would be able to get as exhibitors. (Franklin)

Edith then called Ruth Swenson, who had previously managed an antiques show in Hackensack, and asked her to be chairman if the show were approved by the Executive Board of the Women's Society and the Official Board of the Church. Ruth agreed. Edith called Adrienne Taylor, then president of the Women's Society, who obtained the approval of the two Boards. (Franklin)

On May 9, 1956, the Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) had a General Meeting. The minutes of the meeting include the first reference to an Antique Show. The minutes said:

*"Finance Committee recommended that W.S.C.S. sponsor an Antique Show about next February. Mrs. [Ruth] Swenson elaborated on the subject. She stated that Mr. Lloyd George Schoor, florist, has offered to contact dealers. It was voted upon and accepted that we sponsor same - - considering further investigation."*

The first meeting of the Antiques Show Committee was then held with Lloyd George, Ruth Swenson, Edith Franklin, Adrienne Taylor, Grace Ferrell and Agnes Peterson comprising the Antiques Show Committee. Plans were formulated and committees designated. The first Chatham Methodist Antiques Show, scheduled for February 1957, was underway. (Franklin)

On another subject, the Library Committee, formed in 1955-1956 and headed by Mrs. Cameron Toole (Maxine), established the Church Library on March 4, 1956 with the acquisition of sixty books. Some of the books offer spiritual encouragement, some help in program planning and some are novels with a religious background.

## GROWING FAST; WORKING TOGETHER

Paul Emler remembered,

*"There were different groups that were going to purchase the old Center Street church, such as the American Legion or one of the Lodges. However, some members of the congregation 'raised up holy horror!' when they learned that some of the organizations would have a bar in the old church. They said they'd rather have it torn down! So, the church was sold to the Borough for \$15,000 and the Borough tore it down to make a parking lot. Just like that!" (Conversation)*

Just prior to the sale in 1957 of the Center Street Church property, the cornerstone, was removed and its contents were noted. They included a History of the pastorate of Rev. John O. Sparnon from April 18, 1894 to November 5, 1898, signed by the pastor; a short history of the travels of the cornerstone; a list of the members of the church at that date; a list of church officials; a list of donors and pledges toward the Center Street Church; copies of the current issues of the Christian Advocate; the Christian Herald; the Chatham Press; and several other items of interest, including 29 coins, one Campaign Button and one Postage Stamp. Of the list of 126 members as of November 1898, only four were living and were members of the church in 1957; they were Mrs. Sarah Allen, May Ford [Mrs. John H. Clark], Mrs. Frank Mead and Miss Mary Ellett. (Anniversary 125)

Very soon after we moved into the new facility in 1956, Dr. Rodda received the following letter from W.E. Whidden; a letter that reflected, not only the vagaries of nature, but also the international tensions of the Cold War: .

*"The Defense Welfare Services division of the Civil Defense organization, with the cooperation of all the churches in Chatham, has planned to use the church facilities in times of disaster for the emergency feeding and lodging of evacuees from devastated areas. [Notwithstanding these requirements,] it is important [to all of us] that the church property be properly utilized and maintained without interfering with the religious activities, which are so important in critical times.*

*"I would appreciate it very much [therefore] if you or the Board of Trustees would grant us permission to use your new Parish Hall on Main Street for emergency feeding and lodging of disaster victims. I would also appreciate it if you would appoint one or two members of your staff or congregation to serve purely in a supervisory capacity and who will be in complete charge of the church property in times of the emergency occupation."*

Cameron Toole and Larry Warner trained and served as Lay Speakers of the Church. These men, together with The Reverend Lewis Benjamin, retired Methodist minister in our congregation, and Reverend Donald R. Griffith, student Director of Religious Education, assisted the Pastor during Communion Services.

Chuck Weisel, Lay Leader, wrote in the 1957 Annual Report about something that was becoming increasingly clear:

*“Looking ahead to the coming years, our continued growth brings with it new challenges. We have been a small, friendly church. As we become larger, all of us must strive to preserve this atmosphere. More of us must help in the activities of the various organizations. .... Our Pastor will require additional assistance in calling on the enlarged membership.”*

By 1957, there were 216 members of the Women’s Society of Christian Service. Mrs. Hazel Sheffield was President. The Society had an annual budget of \$1,417 raised by individual pledges. The WSCS also raised a large amount of money for the new Church Building Fund, by special projects such as dinners, catering for weddings, etc. and a big Bazaar held in the early winter. Eight groups of women [“Circles”] each met monthly in homes and once a month in the Church for a General Meeting. (Anniversary 125)

With the new church facilities on Main Street now having the space, the first Antique Show occurred in February 1957. The weather was good and the receipts exceeded expenses by \$1,926, a very substantial sum in those days and far exceeding the expectations of the Committee. The proceeds went to the church building fund, helping pay off the mortgage. The Antique Show and Sale grew to become a yearly tradition of fine antiques, good food pleasantly served, beautiful flowers and familiar faces. The hard working volunteers who organize and run the Show have raised significant funds that the United Methodist Women applied to missions and to capital projects and improvements within the church building and the parsonages. (Franklin)

The following year, in 1958, Lloyd George resigned as Manager and Ruth Swenson began her tenure as Manager which lasted through the 1961 show. When Ruth and Bill moved to Maryland, Edith Franklin became Manager and served in that capacity through the 1968 show. Rosalie Gollinott became Manager for the 1969 Show, a tenure that lasted until 1986.

On the occasion of the Show’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *in 1981*, Edith Franklin remarked that:

*There have been only three (Shows) where snow actually interfered with the success of the Show, and those years were 1967, 1972 and 1979. There has been a total of \$83,028.23 [net receipts] made on the Shows during the 24 year period.*



The church continued to have a great need for money to pay for the new facilities. Well-organized fundraisers contributed significantly to the raising of this money:

*"Elaine Johnson started and organized two major fund raising events before we left the Center Street Church and continued them in the Main Street Church. She was the spark plug. (Ehmann)*

*"One was the 'Tom Thumb Weddings.' We had two of them. [Connie Ehmann didn't] recall if they were a year apart or a couple of years apart, but they were BIG affairs involving all of the small children and Doug, (her) youngest, was in one of them and (her other son) Dick was in both of them. Dick was a participant in the 'Wedding' in the first one and sang in the choir in another one. (Ehmann)*

The "Tom Thumb" weddings were remembered for a long time. They were wonderful affairs.

Tom Thumb weddings had been popular for over seventy-five years and are still occasionally performed in some parts of the country today. They were quite common in the early 1900-1950s, being a sort of pageant staged as a social event. (Tunney)

In fact, there was a Tom Thumb Wedding in the 1930s in Chatham run by Miss Switzer, a well-known person in the community. (Bennett)

*There is no doubt about what started the Tom Thumb wedding phenomenon in America. The American showman, Phineas T. Barnum, "discovered" the original Tom Thumb, whose name was actually Charles Sherwood Stratton. Stratton was born on January 4, 1838, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. (Tunney)*

*With the permission of the child's parents, Barnum took custody of him, gave him the stage name of "General Tom Thumb," and taught him to sing, dance, mime and act. By the age of ten, Tom had already been the guest of President Polk, Queen Victoria, Isabella of Spain, and King Louis Philippe of France. (Tunney)*

*Tom Thumb eventually attained a height of 33 inches and weighed 70 pounds. On February 10, 1863, when Tom was 25, he and Lavinia Warren, who was also a little person, were married in a fashionable wedding at New York City's Grace Episcopal Church. The newlyweds stood atop a grand piano and received 2,000 guests. (Tunney)*

*It wasn't long after Tom and Lavinia's spectacular wedding had taken place that parents began dressing young children as bride, groom and bridal party and organizing a re-enactment of the famous nuptials of Tom and Lavinia -- hence the name "Tom Thumb wedding." (Tunney)*

No one recalls how the idea developed in our church, but it is clear that Elaine Johnson did a wonderful job in coordinating the event and managing the large number of children who took part in it. While the purpose was to raise money, many people primarily recall the excitement of getting ready for the production.

The children's roles included being "guests," part of the wedding party, the minister, the choir and the bride and groom, Lavinia Warren and Tom Thumb. As each of the guest couples were ushered up the center aisle, their names were announced, the "names" being that of one of the well-known couples in the church. For instance, the youngest Carnahan boy and Dale Gollinott were announced as "Mr. and Mrs. Cameron Toole." Some of the boys and girls resisted holding arms. All the girls wore long dresses fitted to their size, many of which came from the attics in Chatham or from rummage sales. (Gollinott)

Elaine Johnson also started our annual Bazaars.

Connie Ehmann said,

*"We had election day dinners until the time we started the Bazaars. When we made the decision to build a new church, the Women's Society decided that they would hold a Bazaar in November, under Elaine Johnson's creativity and leadership, to raise money toward the new church. The church halted the election-day dinners because we had to begin working way ahead of time on the Bazaar and we couldn't get ready for both things. (Ehmann)*

*"Elaine was the first chairman; it was a Christmas Bazaar. After she had been chairman, I took over as chairman, with Dot Bennett as my co-chairman, and ran two of them before we yielded to someone else. (Ehmann)*

Mary Emler said,

*"I was Chairman of one Bazaar 'Booth' as we called them for several years and I began working the first of April and was busy planning and preparing for it on at least one day a week, every week, until the Bazaar in November." (Emler)*

And Edie Van Wert added,

*"One Bazaar ran one day when we had a big snowstorm; nobody came. So I said let's run it the next day; this was the only time we ran it for two days. That was a Christmas Bazaar. I've worked on most of the dinners. (Van Wert)*

Eventually the Bazaars became too big and difficult to have in the old church and after we moved to the new church, we just had one, organized by Alice Daily, in the year (1965) that Bob and Megan Simpson came to

Chatham. Alice thought it would be good if we had some major event during his first year here. (Ehmann)

We had a fashion show of wedding gowns down at the Center Street Church, too. [Edie Van Wert remembered] that some of the young women modeled their wedding gowns. We had other fashion shows in Fellowship Hall in the new church and we would model clothes of different stores. [Edie] modeled and Ruth Oeschlager modeled a larger woman's size. We had these shows on two or three different occasions. (Van Wert)

Rummage Sales also became a major semi-annual fund-raiser organized and run by the United Methodist Women. The Spring and Fall Sales have raised money that the women applied to capital improvements in the church and several missions endeavors. Over the years, the Rummage Sales have been led by Rosalie Gollinott, Elizabeth Monks, Marilyn Schindler, Helen Bryant, Marge Savoie, Carolyn Palma and Liz Boyer. Many women and some men, too, provided tremendous assistance.

Bob Simpson remarked:

*"It's interesting, isn't it, that when people begin talking about their remembrances of the church our minds go quickly to the things we do in the church, or did in the church? So often it isn't profound theological discussions that we remember, but the fun things we did in raising money to serve God and build churches and to send missionaries here or there. Over the years that's what I've found people's minds turn to. I think it's one of the strong aspects of our 'community,' within the church."*

Paul and Mary Emler added,

*"That's when we get to know one another well, when working with them. During such times the people of the church are probably closer together. As a matter of fact, I, (Paul said), begin to think that every church should never get out of debt. When we're working that hard to accomplish something - - we're close together. When we get out of debt, we're all comfortable and, while we push on to other things, there isn't that community of interest that you have when you're working on one big project." (Emler)*

The story of the chocolate-covered Easter eggs remained part of the church "lore" for many years. While still at the Center Street Church, A.K. "Benny" Bennett and some of the other men organized a group who gathered each year in the kitchen several weeks before Easter to make dozens of chocolate Easter eggs. These were sold by church members and helped



"Dough Rolling" at the Chatham Methodist Church on Center Street in March 1956.

raise funds to build the new church. Ray Walden, for example, long remembered selling dozens of eggs to his office associates.

The men purchased chocolate, sugar, butter and coconut at wholesale prices. A member of the congregation, whose business was the manufacture of specialty tools, created the hand-operated molds. Another member visited professional candy manufacturers and learned the intricate process of temperature control of chocolate so the eggs would retain their rich brown color. The chocolate was cold when dipped.

The Men's Club reported that, in 1954, 650 dozen chocolate-covered Easter eggs were made; the amount increased each year thereafter: 1,239 (1955), 1,662 (1956) and 2,215 (1957). As a result of their efforts, over those four years the making and sale of 5,766 dozen chocolate-covered Easter eggs raised \$4,786 [after expenses] for the building fund. (Annual Report)

Dot Bennett said,

*"I guess it was Eugene Cook," said Dot Bennett, "who came up with the ideas of making Easter eggs. I worked on that probably longer than anyone else. We had to process the chocolate, we had to mold the Easter eggs and the Fancher family made up molds that you could use to improve the shape of these eggs. We then dipped them in chocolate. We would work well into the night on the eggs. This was a Men's Club project. I was made a special member of the Men's Club for their project for making chocolate Easter eggs. We made the eggs in the old Center Street church and, later, in the new church. We sold them for a dollar a dozen and had no trouble finding interested purchasers. My husband [Benny] learned how to process the chocolate by visiting somewhere in Jersey City; it became my job to do it. Some young people were told not to help any more because they 'were eating up the profits.'" (Bennett)*

*"In fact," Connie added, "my youngest son loved to go down and help; because he began to eat many of them, they finally had to tell him he was no longer wanted." (Ehmann)*

Jean Baird recorded the recipe for the "Men's Eggs – Butter Creams" in the Church cookbook "Loaves and Fishes and Other Dishes." Here is her entry:

*"A candy for anyone who remembers all of the Easter Eggs made by Chatham Methodist Men's Club members and helpers.*

*2 lbs. confectioners' sugar  
1 ½ sticks butter*

*¼ cup light cream  
Dark chocolate for dipping*



## Making Chocolate-Covered Easter Eggs

A. K. Bennett

½ tsp. vanilla

*"Cream butter, then add sugar, vanilla and cream. Chill until firm. Mold into small egg shapes. Melt chocolate. Roll each egg in chocolate to coat."*

The fame of the Chatham Methodist Church chocolate covered eggs spread widely and as persons who had enjoyed them had moved further away, orders arrived even from overseas. (Walden 1989)

*"Whole families would go down the one night a week they would work on the candy,"* Mary Emler recalled.

Bob Simpson said that the men continued making chocolate-covered Easter eggs for another nine years. He remembered making Easter eggs in 1965-1966 and hearing the "great story" about some kid putting a penny in one, whereupon they had to spend the rest of the evening going through dozens and dozens of eggs until they found the one that had the penny. (Emler, Baird and Davis)

The church's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary was marked on October 6, 1957 by evening services modeled on an 1832 order of worship. Dr. William F.B. Rodda was the Minister of the church. The ladies were seated on the left side of the church and the gentlemen on the right. Four young people, Dick Ort, Dick Wind, Tom Johnson and George Whitehead dressed in the costume of the 1830's took the offering, thus adding greatly to the historical atmosphere. Bishop Herbert Welch, Senior Bishop of the Methodist Church of America and a vigorous 95 years of age, preached the sermon, "The Church in our Times."

*"Another wonderful time in 1957 was Iona Henry and John McLaughlin's wedding. That was a very special time." Mary Emler said, "We were privileged in that we had the reception afterwards in our house for them. Another very gala party was the book signing party that we had after Iona's book, Triumph Over Tragedy, [Fleming H. Revell Co. 1957] was published." (Emler)*

Representatives of the congregation described the church in a 1957 brochure:

*"We hold services, usually identical, on Sunday mornings at 9:30 and 11:00. This is both necessary and convenient. Our total attendance exceeds the facilities for a single service. The two-service arrangement is especially helpful to parents with children in our church school which meets at 9:30, for the whole family can come at once - - an old and still wonderful practice. The early service is also*

*popular with men who want to devote long, uninterrupted hours to home gardening, general home care, golf and other week-end activities.*

*"You may certainly bring small children to church. But if either they or you are inclined to suffer under those circumstances, we have at both services a nursery under competent supervision where they may be cared for while you worship.*

*"We do not have evening services in the traditional sense. Occasionally we have a vesper service - - a delightful hour devoted to music. At regular intervals we have 'family nights,' - - very informal combinations of Sunday night supper and interesting entertainment, arranged both as to character and time to suit families of all ages.*

*"Our music is good! Our director has great talent and wide professional recognition. Our volunteer choir has been molded into an enthusiastic unit of real musical accomplishment. There is musical opportunity for the children, too, in our Youth Choir.*

*"The Church School is crowded, thank goodness! Our modern classrooms and assemblies are excellent facilities and the children are proud of them. We adults are proud of them, too, but even more proud of the fine work our teachers do. Christian Education is an attractive fact at Chatham Methodist. There is room in it for your child or children and a hearty welcome.*

*"Our minister's name is Dr. William F.B. Rodda. It is also 'Bill.' He is still young. In remaining so he is greatly aided by his young, lovely wife, Ann. His two children insist on it. He expresses it in a fine, effective interest in young people, their problems and their development. His sermons ring with the sincerity you recognize in him. We think you would like them.*

*"There is more and more social life for young couples. The 'Friday Neters' is an active group of young couples, a few admitting to forty. They have a program, which has given the group increasing strength. There are dances, formal and informal, round robin buffets and programs both entertaining and instructional.*

*"The Woman's Society of Christian Service is known for its activity. Its smaller units are known as 'circles' and some meet in the afternoon, some in the evening, to make it possible for every woman who will to take an active part. Of course there are monthly meetings of the whole society.*

*"On Sundays there are meetings of the Junior Methodist Youth Fellowship and of the Senior Methodist Youth Fellowship. These are growing groups, corresponding to the Junior High and Senior High divisions. They have achieved a stimulating balance between the social and the serious, and are rightfully regarded as among the most important activities. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops are sponsored by and meet at the Methodist Church. There is also a Hi-Y group, which is the local basis of participation in YMCA activities.*

*"For the 'mixed, more mature' there is the Fellowship Society which meets monthly for a programmed evening. For the men of all ages there is a Men's Club.*

*"There is always a real welcome for you at the Chatham Methodist Church."*

The church continued to grow rapidly. For example, membership stood at 841 on March 31, 1957, up from 782 the prior year; average attendance was 335. (Annual Report)

Charles A. Woodworth, Student Assistant Minister served our church during the 1958-1959 Church calendar.

For the year ending April 6, 1959, membership amounted to 1,035; ninety-six more than on March 31, 1958. Average attendance at Sunday worship was 457. Total Church School membership amounted to 779; average Sunday School attendance was 396. These were remarkable figures.

Music Director and Organist, Mr. Alfredo E. Silipigni, resigned his position in the middle of 1958.

## LEOLA ANDERSON JOINS US; PLANNING FOR MORE GROWTH

In January, 1959, Leola Anderson came to Chatham Methodist Church to serve as organist and Choir Director. Bill Gurgel and John Rowland recruited her, having heard her in Dover where she led a Christmas Cantata. Leola had previously heard that Chatham wanted a man Director of Music and questioned Bill and John about that. Leola recalled,

*"Bill and John got red in the face when I asked them about it and they admitted that had been their intention. However, they said that they had a bad experience with a man Director/Organist during the previous six months and were now interested in trying a woman."*

Though Leola good-naturedly considered herself to be the "second choice," she accepted the position after attending a few of our worship services in Fellowship Hall and determining that her music and liturgical interests matched those of the congregation. (Oral History – Leola)

Miss Anderson had become the church musician in her hometown of Jamestown, New York, at the age of twelve. She later studied at Julliard in New York City for 5½ years and graduated first in piano, then in organ and

church music. She also attended the Union Theological School of Sacred Music and Dalcroze School of Eurythmics in New York City. She served in several other churches before coming to Chatham. [After 30 years of service at the Chatham United Methodist Church, Miss Anderson retired in 1989.] (Oral History – Leola)

Leola remarked,

*“At the time I came to work for the Chatham Methodist Church,” Leola said, “there was a Chancel Choir who sang at both services, but which left during the second service at the Offertory time. There was a Junior Choir of about 35 children grades three through six. There were three boys and the rest of the Choir was girls. I thought that more boys would join if there were a boy’s choir, so I started one. The boys’ choir grew until there were about 28 boys. Unfortunately, the following summer about 11 of the boys moved away. Nevertheless, the boy choir continued to be active for quite a number of years. Of course, the girls’ choir continues [in 1989] to be strong. Also, the very next summer, I started the Praise Choir for grades one and two; it also became large.”*

In fact, very soon after Leola Anderson came to our church, the number of people active in all of the choir groups grew to be more than 200. Nan and Dale Canfield were among those who, in 1963, were drawn to the church by Leola’s musical leadership. This was at a time when the Sunday school program had 300 to 400 people in it and average attendance at the Sunday worship services was about 450. (Oral History – Leola)

Connie Ehmann recalled another story that remained part of the church history for years:

*“By the time we moved into the Main Street building I had begun to sing in the choir. The choir rehearsal room was a little room [one-half of the room that is now behind the elevator.] It was a large closet really with a piano and we would crowd in there and stand around Leola while she rehearsed on the piano. This was for Sunday morning rehearsal. We did rehearse on a weekday in one of the Sunday School rooms. Well one Sunday morning, we got in there and we were rehearsing and as we began to rehearse, her dog, Joey, of whom she was very, very fond was there with her on the floor by the piano. None of us knew it and all of a sudden there was this ‘ooooowwwwww!’ and Joey was protesting. That should go down as part of choir history!” (Ehmann)*

Leola Anderson was responsible for starting some very special music programs. Among these were: The Happenings at the Cross, the Program for Special Children and the Handbell Choir, which she started around 1975.

The Program for Special Children ran for 18 years and Leola loved it and the children very, very much.

*“One time,” Leola said. “a group of five high school children came to me and asked that I help them sing as a choir.” She gladly did so. “The students called themselves the Trinity Singers. The group increased in size over the years and became the choir that regularly sang at the first service.”*

“The Happenings at the Cross,” was a special program to emphasize the messages at the cross. Leola would continue it throughout the Sundays in Lent, each Sunday involving many people in the congregation to help give the messages. The Handbell Choirs became very active and she had as many as three choirs going at one time. (Oral History – Leola)

Miss Anderson also started the Kindermusic program, which involved children of nursery school age. She and the children considered it a music-playtime. (Oral History – Leola)

*“My goal was to proclaim the message of Christ through music in as many ways and for as many people as possible,” said Leola.*

In September 1959, R. Bruce Blake joined the staff as student Assistant Minister. He remained for three years, leaving in 1962, at which time he was ordained.

On October 4, 1959, Bishop Frederick B. Newell presided over the dedication of the first building [Christian Education Wing] and the burning of the mortgage that helped to finance it. The first building, including site, structure and equipment, was completed at a cost of \$302,706. (Milestones)

The Boy Scout program was very active at the church. For example, in 1959, 35 boys were Cub Scouts, 57 were Boy Scouts (Troop 23) and 25 were Explorers. Thirty-four adults were active in one way or another. Herbert Schnek was Cubmaster, Lauren Warner was Scoutmaster and A.T.C. Peters directed the Explorer Post. (Annual Report)

By 1961, the Women’s Society of Christian Service had grown in size to 264 members. The Society continued to support the home and foreign missions, but it also raised a significant amount of money for the building fund. The WSCS was divided into nine groups of from 23-28 women; some women didn’t belong to a “Circle.” Each group had meetings once a month in



Dedication of Fellowship Hall and Education Wing    October 4, 1959  
Top: Harry Harcher, Randy Gritzen, Chuck Weisel  
Middle: Cam Toole, Len Swenson, A.K. Bennett  
Bottom: Rev. Bill Rodda, Iona Henry MacLaughlin, Paul Emler, Ray Ramsey, Jeff Riley

one of the Circle members' homes. A General Meeting was held at the church once a month.

The church had experienced further growth by this time. Membership reached 1,225, an increase of 799 members in 13 years (up from 426 members in 1948)! Again, double sessions in the Church School were necessary. It was clear that by 1961 the "new" facilities would be taxed to the limit. (Future and Milestones)

On May 10, 1961 Cam Toole wrote a letter to members interested in helping to run the next "Crusade" to raise more funds:

*"The Chatham Church's crusade to raise \$200,000 toward the cost of a new sanctuary is well underway. The callers have been recruited and the training conference in which they received their instructions was held Tuesday night. The kick-off dinner for the staff and workers will be on Thursday night. Next Sunday morning the workers will be commissioned, and in the afternoon will begin their visitation of the congregation. We have the confidence to know that when these good people come to your door to present this very important enterprise you will receive them in the same fine spirit in which they came to you. . . . ."*

*"You have already received the brochure which tells the story of the crusade program. The workers will be prepared to clarify the program and answer any questions you may have. . . . ."*

*"We are suggesting a pledge to the Building Fund of not less than \$1.00 a week for every \$1,000 of annual income, payable over a period of three years. Why not go beyond that . . . . . ?"*

*"God has a will and a way for each of us . . . . ."*

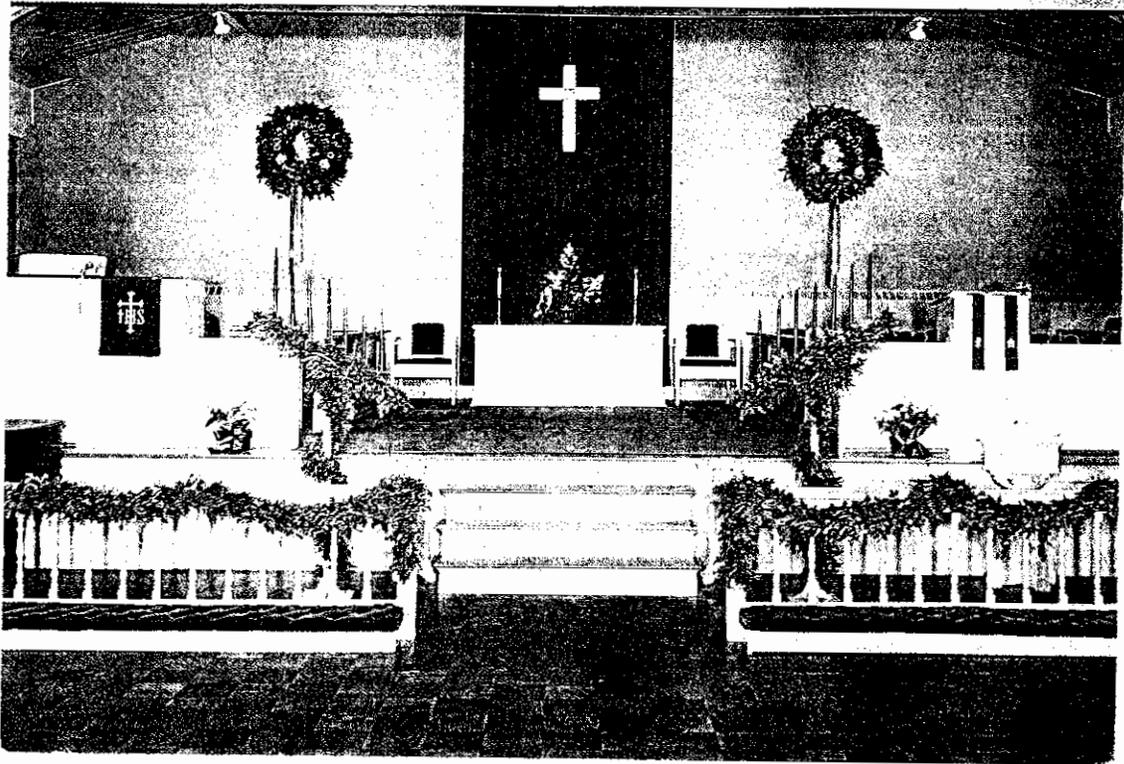
The congregation responded; this fourth Financial Crusade brought in pledges of over \$202,000, making it possible to start construction of a new sanctuary. (Future and Milestones)

In the Spring of 1962, a "Policy Committee" developed various recommendations for the program of the church. The recommendations give a picture of the focus and concerns of the congregation at that time. Among the recommendations were:

- Eliminate unnecessary meetings;*
- Understand our role as Christian citizens and missionary supporters;*
- Conduct a person-to-person every member canvass;*
- Provide for separate ministers for JYF and MYF who will plan carefully;*
- Encourage social recreation in Chatham on weekends;*

# The Chatham Methodist Church

c. 1960



Christmas

*Establish after-school recreation for high school youth at our church;  
Give consideration to providing permanent housing for a second minister;  
Ask people to assume no more than one major responsibility in the church;  
Promote youth and adult athletics, drama and social activities;  
Enable pageants and drama through the church school;  
Create father-son and mother-daughter activities;  
Have more family-centered programs, crafts, etc., that include older youth;  
Encourage continuous religious study and discussion for adults and youth;  
Schedule Wednesday evening worship services during Lent;  
Give high school youth a Lenten program – “Questions about religion and college;”  
Promote visits with foreign students at Drew and Christian neighbors in urban areas.  
(Annual Report)*

## TOWARD A NEW SANCTUARY

Reverend Lawrence D. McIntosh (“Mc”), a native of Australia, joined the staff in 1962 as Assistant Minister. Reverend McIntosh, a doctoral candidate at Drew University, came to us by way of Haverstraw, New York, where he had been Minister of that Methodist Church the previous year. Luther E. Sturtevant was Youth Minister for the Junior High program (*and in 2006 serves as Pastor of a small United Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon*) and Richard W. Fisher was Youth Minister for the Senior High Youth Fellowship.

In the growing youth choirs, there were 122 young people: the Trinity Singers (21 High School girls and boys), Chapel Choir ( 15 Junior H.S. girls), The Wesley Boy Choristers (21 boys), the Carol Choir (31 girls) and the Praise Choir (34 six and seven year old children). As Miss Leola Anderson pointed out, the singing by these youth was “inspirational and even more important, a means for our youth to grow closer to the life of the church.” For the first time (1962), a Family Christmas Eve Service was held. A hundred Youth Choir members sang, accompanied by a harpist. (Annual Report)

A total of 568 pupils were enrolled in the Church School program and average attendance throughout the year was 365. Total Adult Membership of the Church was 1,224 on April 10, 1963. All of this activity, including the morning worship services, was confined to the first building, which today we call the Simpson Christian Education Building. The Sanctuary, church offices, Asbury Room, Youth Lounge and Choir Room had not yet been completed. (Annual Report)

# The Chatham Methodist Church

c. 1962



“Ground Breaking” for the Sanctuary  
(Dorothy and A.K. Bennett)



During 1962, John Wood joined the staff as Custodian. In addition to excellent custodial work, Mr. Wood painted portions of the outside and inside of the building, saving the church substantial amounts of money that would have otherwise been spent on using outside contractors. Mr. Wood also brought with him his own floor waxing machine which was in excellent condition and which he donated to the church. (Annual Report)

Social justice issues did not subside during these years. In fact, the Pastors of the Protestant churches of the Chathams and Green Village embraced many of these concerns. In one example, they jointly wrote a pastoral letter in 1962 to the Christian people of Chatham that said in part:

*"As the Christian church fulfills [its] mission, we believe that there is placed upon her ministers a special responsibility that can be discharged only by a full, free, and unfettered preaching of the will of God as God gives His ministers to see His will.*

*"We, therefore, are compelled to affirm our belief that any discriminatory doctrine, attitude, or practice of whatever kind that is based on a person's race, religion, color, or national origin and that for any of these reasons deprives any person of equal and open opportunity in education, work, housing, and social, cultural, or religious pursuits is contrary to the will of God."*

The congregation developed preliminary plans for a Sanctuary wing. The architectural firm of Drake, Tuthill, Convery and Cueman again served us well. (Martin)

Dr. Rodda pointed out that the sanctuary construction project "is the second major phase of a long-range program on which the church embarked in 1951. Lay members of the church managed the project. Dr. Charles A. Weisel was general chairman and E.M. Cook, vice-chairman. Paul Emler headed the building committee; Harold A. Harchar, publicity committee; J. Randall Gritzan, crusade-finance committee; and Matthew Ruffle, subcommittee on follow-up. (Courier)

Paul Emler remembered:

*"There was a lot of disagreement about the design of the Sanctuary structure," he said. "Many people wanted a colonial look with a colonial steeple that fit the origins of the town. They did not like the 'A' frame design. However, you couldn't build the 'Colonial' type of sanctuary and get as much space as we now [1990] have in the Sanctuary. Another consideration was that we had already built a building, which began to set an architectural pattern that needed to be followed. In the meantime, the school had been built on the lot behind the church. When you*

looked at it from the vacant lot, it was a very nice, but very modern building. Some people reasoned that unless you built something that was high and looked like it had some volume, it would be lost visually, sitting in front of the large school building. (Conversation)

*"Therefore, the major considerations were to get as much space in the Sanctuary as possible, get the feeling of height from the 'A' frame and follow the same architectural style already shown in the education wing. The large exposed arches were proposed in order to get a little better approval from those wanting a traditional look. There were people who didn't like the design, but they stilled their voices to go along with the majority." (Conversation)*

*"Some people wanted a large cross to be placed on the front lawn and others were strongly against it," Connie Ehmann recalled. "They eventually incorporated the cross into the doors." (Conversation)*

Paul continued,

*"There were a lot of ideas that came through and each one was discussed. A number of compromises were made to try to please people and if it didn't really make that much difference, we were willing to go along. Substantive issues were discussed, sometimes heatedly." (Conversation)*

As before, various groups were asked what they needed in the Sanctuary wing. The congregation said it would approve up to \$600,000 (including the organ). There had been a lot of objection to that amount. A lot of people thought that was more money than we could reach. (Conversation)

On November 29, 1962, The Chatham Methodist Church borrowed \$300,000 from the National Newark and Essex Bank as a one-year, secured construction loan at the rate of 5-1/2%, for the purpose of erecting or completing buildings or other structures. Raymond Walden, President of the Trustees, signed the Note for the Church.

The initial plan for the Sanctuary stipulated:

*"The sanctuary will be located on the ground level of a two-level structure. The nave will be 4,400 square feet in area, seating approximately 414 persons in pews. Overflow space for temporary seating of an additional 148 worshipers in chairs is provided in the low-roofed side areas. The narthex, or vestibule, will be 680 square feet in area; opening off it [to the east] will be a parlor whose area will be 1,250 square feet including a women's meeting room and a bride's room. The chancel will have an area of 1,350 square feet, with the altar as its focus. A magnificent pipe organ will be provided. The organist will be able to reach the console from the side of the chancel and depart without disturbance. Choir members will also have easy access to the space provided for a 40-member permanent choir. The communion*

*rail will be at the first ascending step, the pulpit built into the next two ascending steps, and the lectern will be free-standing. The sanctuary and the parlor will be air-conditioned. The same equipment can be switched over when the sanctuary is not in use in order to air-condition the multi-purpose room below ground level.*

*"A recreation room 4,200 square feet in area will be provided in the lower [below ground] level. Side areas of 1,600 square feet can be used as classrooms. There will be two activities rooms, of 574 square feet each, with finished floors, acoustical ceilings, and built-in storage units. The choir room will be 713 square feet in area, plus 500 square feet of storage space and a lower level bathroom. A maintenance shop, mechanical equipment and storage space will take up the remainder of the area.*

*"In addition to the sanctuary, the new structure will house many of the functions now taking place in the existing building, releasing space for assembly, classroom and storage areas. The number of classrooms will be increased to 22, plus 8 in the recreation area, plus kindergarten and nursery. The existing building as well as the ground level of the new structure can be closed off without blocking any of the adequate exit facilities. The office area will be large and strategically located between the sanctuary and the education section. An interior garden can be viewed from the nave and entered from the parlor and office area. The exterior of the new structure will be of the same brick as the existing structure, richer in material and in some cases with colored glass. The roof of the sanctuary will be of Ludowici tile, a material attractive in appearance and tradition. The triangular end walls of the sanctuary will combine dark-colored and obscure glass between metal-covered upright members. The main entrance will be from a large plaza between the building and the sidewalk with a ramp access as well as stairs." (Milestones, Conversation and Martin)*

The lowest bid came in \$150,000 higher than the limit the congregation had set. So, in the matter of two months, \$150,000 was cut out of the project. The below ground recreation room was eliminated, as was the lavatory next to the choir room and the parlor east of the Sanctuary. The chancel was redesigned. The air conditioning and storage space on the lower level was compressed into the area to the west of the Choir room and the office space was made smaller. Except for these changes, the final structure closely matched the earlier design. (Conversation)

In the design phase of the work, Leola Anderson wrote up the specifications for the pipe organ and it included a design for a "Positife" organ. Paul Schantz was the head of the company in Ohio that built the organ. Her design proved to be too expensive (\$75,000) and she had to cut it down to \$50,000. Nevertheless, she said,

*"One of my loving feelings that I have about the church involves the pipe organ, which I myself think is a very beautiful one and one on which all kinds of music can be played." (Oral History – Leola)*

The architect's plan for the chancel area was a conventional arrangement for the choir. The architects wanted the choir across the back with the organ out in front of them, pretty much as we had it in the old church. Bill Rodda, our Minister, said that he did not want the choir in back of him during the service. The attention should be focused on the pulpit area and not on a lot of people sitting in the back. Leola also did not like the proposed arrangement. There was considerable discussion about how this was going to look. Paul Emler recalled,

*"I finally built a model of that area and made these little people to scale. We then had a committee meeting at [our] home around the table. The architect was there, the minister was there, and Leola was there and I forget who else was there, and for one whole evening they pushed things around. Leola wanted to be close to the choir and to be able to have eye contact with all members. They decided that the organ should be positioned so that she could see the choir on either side and they could see her. The present design came out of that kind of a session." (Conversation)*

*"All the way through this crazy thing, the project was run on faith and some friendly bankers that were willing to lend money on pledges! A lot of people knew Cam Toole, Dave Fry, Ray Walden and A. K. Bennett. They were very instrumental in maintaining a good relationship with the bankers." (Conversation)*

During the construction of the Sanctuary, several things needed attention before the builders got them right.

*"For example," Paul said, "the forms for the concrete wall down in the lower corridor, opposite the choir room, were put in and the contractors were ready to pour concrete when I found out that they were out of line by 18 inches! At my insistence, they tore everything out and put it back in;" correctly, this time. "And one night I found that the base for the windows on the roof was 4 feet or more farther forward than they should have been." It was corrected, "before it was too late." (Conversation)*

*"There was some vandalism. Someone wrote with tar on some of the bricks." Also, "Some kids came in, as they did several times, and upset the scaffolding. It came clear down and the stuff (tar paint) splashed all over. The contractors finally had to hire a night watchman." (Conversation)*

*"There is another story about the heating system," Paul added. "It's automatic and, until recently, an oil system. The building inspector said if we ran the heating system during the construction phase, we must hire an engineer and put him on the job, 24 hours a day, every day of the week. So we went out and rented individual propane heaters." (Conversation)*

Paul continued,

*"The main arches came as individual, completely finished pieces." Each arch "came in by rail from Wisconsin, or someplace. I don't remember whether we got each of them on one railroad car or two cars, but they were delivered to a rail siding down at the Atlantic Building Supply place where we now have recycling. They were carried by truck from there. We had lots and lots of interesting comments because each piece was individually wrapped in plastic or something for protection from the weather, each wrapping being a different color! There was red and there was yellow and I don't know what else! And so, when the arches were put up before the roof covered the structure, we had all these different colors reaching into the sky. Everybody thought that's what it was going to look like! 'This is ridiculous!' some people said." (Conversation)*

All the arches had been stained dark brown before they left the manufacturer. *"As I recall," Paul added,*

*"there was a little problem with them. They were supposed to be finished all the way around, because the bases sat out from the wall. But, when they came in, the straight side, which is out from the wall in our sanctuary, was not even planed down. They were rough, because in most buildings they were set in or against the wall. So, we finished the back of them by [planing and sanding the surface and] nailing relatively thin wood up against them." Then the wood was stained the exact same color as the rest of the arch. (Conversation)*

The upper windows, above the chancel, were designed so that at no time of the year would you have direct sun light in the morning during the service. It was important to minimize the distractions during the services. The overhang provided by the roof was carefully calculated so that the direct sunlight would not shine through the windows until shortly after noon on the day when the sun was lowest in the sky.

*"The builders did not have the dimensions quite right at first," Paul said, "and I made them correct it." (Conversation)*

Mary Emler reflected on a couple of interesting things that happened when Paul was inspecting the sanctuary every day during the construction phase:

*"He went down one night; when he came home and was talking about something they had done wrong and I said, 'how do you know that?' He said, 'well, I climbed up on the scaffolding.' And I exclaimed, 'you climbed up on the scaffolding, at night, in the dark, all alone?!!' And he said, 'yes.' I could imagine him falling off the scaffolding and laying there until morning. I said, 'never will you go down there again alone! I will go with you!' So, when he went at night, or the weekend when no one else was there, I went along!" (Emler)*

*"Good for you!" Bob Simpson said. "Anyone who's gone off after retirement and done an archaeological dig in Israel [as Paul had], you have to watch him!" (Emler)*

Recalling the magnitude of the project, Connie Ehmann said,

*"My husband, Bill, was involved in the Sunday School and also in the building program. Every Sunday after church, and this was a ritual; we would walk to the end of the Education Building and go through the partitions into the new building to see how much progress had been made. It was like stepping into a cathedral. It was SO BIG and SO TALL and SO HIGH you just felt it can't be that we were building something so big, so magnificent!" (Ehmann)*

Mary Emler recalled,

*"The day before the church opened for the public to come, a lot of us were down helping get the last minute things done, and one of the foremen was talking to a group of people and he said, 'You really have a wonderful church building, much better than most churches. You know, you had a Chairman of the building committee [Paul] that didn't let us get away with anything.' He didn't know who I was, but I knew of at least two instances where they had to undo things that had been done wrong and do them over again." (Emler)*

On September 22, 1963, the last morning worship service was held in Fellowship Hall of the Education wing, which for seven years had served so well as our church sanctuary.

## WE SETTLE IN; BILL RODDA LEAVES

Mary Emler and Connie Ehmann remembered,

*It was a beautiful fall afternoon when we dedicated the Sanctuary. The choir sang several anthems out on the front steps of the Sanctuary and all the people waited outside. Then we cut the ribbon and went in. People went down the aisles and, as we moved in, the sun came out from behind some clouds. Since it was*



Our New Sanctuary - 1963

*afternoon, the sunlight was perfectly illuminating the cross with its rays coming through the upper windows - - as though it had been planned that way. It was a very emotional time, so symbolic and so beautiful! (Conversation)*

On September 29, 1963, the first service was held in the new Sanctuary. Dr. Rodda preached a very fitting sermon on "The Significance and Symbolism of the New Sanctuary." The Sanctuary was consecrated on October 20, 1963.

The Pulpit was dedicated on November 7, 1963. The copy of Dr. Rodda's sermon, preached on this occasion, states that

*"the Pulpit was given in the memory of Vivian 'Pete' B. Henry by his wife, Iona S. Henry McLaughlin, and his friends. Pete served in many capacities in the church. At the time of his death, he was the Lay Leader of the Congregation and one of the influential architects of the plan, which resulted in the erection of the education wing and sanctuary. 'Pete' Henry was respected and admired as a family man, as a friend, as a business associate, and as a son of the church who served with unassuming and loving integrity."*

The Sanctuary's new Schantz Organ was dedicated with a Dedicatory Recital by Robert Baker, D.S.M., organist and Director of The School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. The Recital included pieces by Du Mage, Vivaldi, Boyce, Bach, Berlinski, Milford, Franck, Roberts, Delamarter, Messiaen and Vierne.

The organ is a three-manual installation by the Schantz Organ Company of Orrville, Ohio. The instrument was designed to serve the church in supporting the congregational hymns, accompanying the choirs in service music and oratorio and as a solo instrument of brilliance capable of bringing to life the greatest music written for it. As noted earlier, Leola Anderson, Minister of Music, and Dr. William Timmings, organ consultant for the church architects, developed the specifications. Nicholas DeFrino was the company representative in charge of the installation and John Schantz was responsible for the tonal finishing.

In March, 1964, Dr. Charles "Chuck" Weisel, Chairman of the Expansion Program reported that,

*"Although the building is complete, approximately \$200,000 remains to be paid on an investment of over \$900,000 for the combined Educational Building and Sanctuary [this is equivalent to over \$5.3 million in 2007 and probably near \$9*

*million when allowing for the changes in land values and the building code].  
(Annual Report)*

*"A Fifth Crusade Committee has been formed to embark on a three year program to clean up this debt." (Annual Report)*

Based on rough figures, the total investment required to build the Education Wing and the Sanctuary was equivalent to approximately 15 times the total annual church budget. "It was a group of very hard working, committed people," Paul Emler remarked. (Conversation)

The parsonage was still located at 32 Center Street in 1964. Other than memorial gifts, there were no endowment funds owned by the church.  
(Annual Report)

We introduced a new Methodist curriculum into our Church School through the effective leadership of our Assistant Minister, Rev. Laurence D. McIntosh, whose work in our school [and in pastoral visitation] was extraordinarily helpful. We also utilized drama in our youth programs. Mr. Philip M. Polhemus, Student Assistant Minister from 1963 to 1965, not only served our youth well but he also greatly assisted Bill Rodda in the area of pastoral responsibilities. One of the major revisions Mr. Polhemus made in his first year with us was to establish a Fall Retreat for the Senior High Fellowship, changing the fall gathering from a planning retreat to a spiritual life retreat.  
(Annual Report)

*Reverend Philip M. Polhemus has maintained his interest in youth. In 2006, he was a retired United Methodist clergyman with 40 years in the parish and related appointments. He and his wife have five children and 12 grandchildren. Since 1966, he has been connected with the Wanakee United Methodist Center in Meredith, New Hampshire. Wanakee is a Christian Adventure camp and retreat center providing an eight week summer camping program to children and youth (4-18 yrs). The Center's emphasis is small groups designed to further growth in mind, body, soul and strength. Phil recently said, "Wanakee is so important to the spiritual development of our children and youth I want to do all I can to make that happen."*

Mrs. Corinne Whitlow joined the staff as Church Secretary. Her husband, Ray, was completing divinity studies at Drew University.

Jesse W. Benton, Jr. and Otmar Schreiber completed their training during 1964 and joined Cameron Toole and Lauren Warner as Lay Speakers. As Cam Toole said, Lay Speakers "assist the Pastor in the service of morning worship, particularly on Communion Sundays."

Don and Priscilla Haberstroh came to Chatham in November 1964. They chose Chatham because "it had a center to the town, good schools - - children could walk to school." There was a small A & P grocery store in the center of the town. Also located in the center of the town and within walking distance were a bakery, a small department store and a butcher. The town was attractive also because there was no highway nearby and a medium-sized open-air shopping mall existed where the Short Hills Mall now stands. (Haberstroh)

Leonor (Lee) Cunningham discussed the prior year's activities of the Woman's Society of Christian Service on May 4, 1965. The total membership of the WSCS was 256. "We are divided into eight circles," she said, adding,

*"Our [General Meeting] programs have been meaningful and varied and covered topics such as 'The Church's Mission among New Nations,' 'The Inner City,' [a] report on the School of Missions, Mothers in Other Cultures, and many other thought-provoking programs. We were all inspired by a beautiful Service of Prayer and Meditation prepared by our Spiritual Life Chairman. We also were privileged to have Dr. Rodda conduct a study course on 'Genesis' which was a very rewarding experience."*

Lee continued, "Ten percent of money earned from our special projects is earmarked for our support of the Conference Society project in the Inner City." The balance of the Special Projects' funds was used to meet the WSCS building fund pledge.

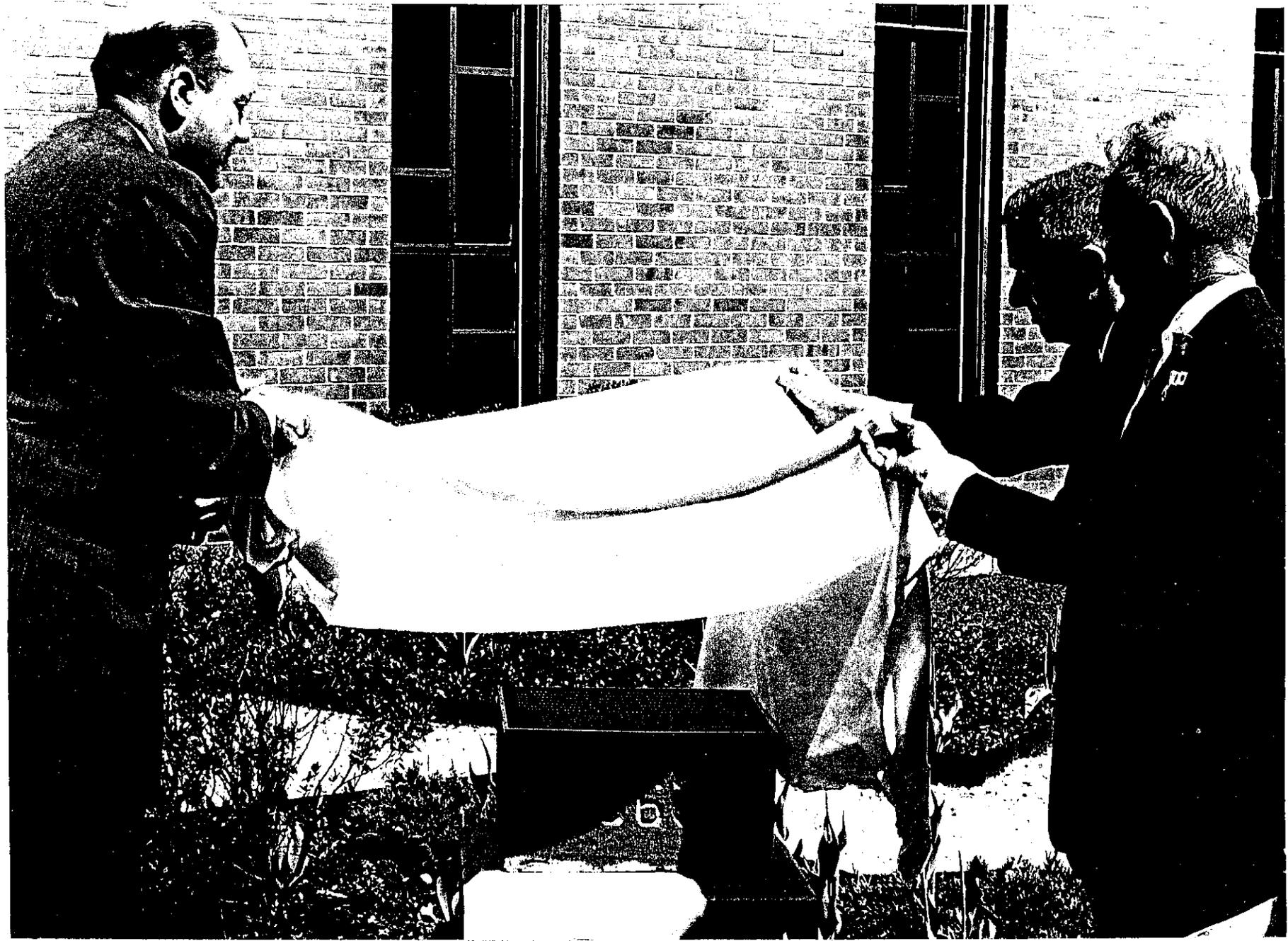
On Sunday, May 23, 1965, church members and friends witnessed a *three-memorial* Dedication Service held outside in the Memorial Garden.

First to be dedicated was the original corner stone from the 1832 Church located on the corner of Main Street and Summit Avenue. This stone had also been used as the corner stone of the "1898" Church on Center Street. "1956" on the corner stone is the date of completion of the Education Building, and "1963" marks the completion of the Sanctuary.

The inscription of the top plate says:

*"The struggles and triumphs of Methodism in Chatham are symbolized by this historic cornerstone. Reverently placed here it is a reminder of our former churches (from which it was taken) and of our heritage in the Christian faith.*

1786	<i>First visit by Itinerant Preachers</i>
1832	<i>Summit Avenue Church</i>



Unveiling the Corner Stone  
May 23, 1965



Following the Dedication Service --  
Interested Members and Children

1898                    Center Street Church  
1956                    Main Street Education Building  
1963                    Main Street Sanctuary

*The Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them. Revelation 22:3*

Following this came the dedication of the carillon in memory of Mr. Elmer A. Twaits, given by his family and friends.

The third dedication was of a flowering pink dogwood placed in front of the Education Building in memory of Mrs. Gladys Fancher, who was a most faithful and capable superintendent of the Primary Department in the Church School and a devoted worker in the Church for many years.

During Dr. Rodda's leadership in Chatham, beginning in September 1949, our church had become one of the outstanding Methodist Churches in the area. In addition to his pastoral duties, Dr. Rodda served on the Board of Directors of the Madison Area YMCA, was an active Kiwanian and had been a member for many years of the Methodist Juvenile Conference Committee. He was one of the ministers who worked to establish a Chaplaincy at Overlook Hospital, and later served as President of the Overlook Chaplaincy Board of Trustees. Articles written by Dr. Rodda were published in "Christian Advocate," "Zion's Herald," and "The Pastor." In 1953, a book authored by him was published: "An Explanation of the response of Organized Protestantism in an Expanding Commuter Suburb," New York University; it seems to have been the thesis he completed as part of his doctoral studies.

In June of 1965, after 16 years of service, Bill left our church to become senior minister of the Morrow Memorial Methodist Church in Maplewood. He served there for 14 years, from 1965 until his death in 1979.

Dr. Rodda said in his Pastor's Report,

*"I wish to record my gratitude to the members and friends of this church for the unfailing loyalty and patience so graciously shown to me and my family. Thru all these wonderful years, during which it was my high privilege to be the pastoral leader here, I had the feeling that I worked not alone but with the constant support of a great company of fellow-Christians, men and women who believed in the Church and in its cause in the community and the world. This is the memory of the Chatham Church which will remain with me always."*

Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson said of Dr. Rodda,

*"Bill was my best friend in University and was my mentor and model in ministry as well. I recognized his skills as a Pastor and preacher, never dreaming that I would follow him in Chatham. To think that his 16 years in Chatham and my 25 years represented nearly a half century at Chatham United Methodist Church. Bill's death was a major grief for so many of us. But Rodda Hall remains a memorial to his ministry." (Simpson)*

## A NEW ERA BEGINS

The Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson was appointed to the Chatham Methodist Church in 1965 and began a pastorate that lasted for 25 years until his retirement in 1990. Bob had served the Community Methodist Church in Mt. Tabor between 1946 and 1960, a period which saw sustained growth in church membership and attendance, and the construction of the main church building.

Reverend Dr. Simpson recalled that after Rev. Mr. Zook went to Kansas Wesleyan University in 1951,

*"I took over at Drew University doing what Art could not finish. I worked one day a week and continued serving at Mt. Tabor Community Methodist Church. I remember the day Art called me and tried to convince me to join him at Kansas Wesleyan to serve as Chaplain and Professor of Religion. It was a turning point in my ministry for I realized that my commitment was to the local church as a Pastor."*

Following Mt. Tabor, Bob served the Vincent Memorial Methodist Church in Nutley, New Jersey, from 1960 to 1965.

Bob Simpson was born in 1924 and grew up in Port Jervis, New York. He graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Drew University in 1945. He is the grand nephew of Daniel Drew, the founder of Drew University. Bob and Megan Blanche Demarest, also a graduate of Drew University, were married in 1946.

In 1948, Bob earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Drew Theological Seminary, magna cum laude. He continued graduate studies from 1948 to 1950 at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York City. In 1950, Bob was received into Full Membership in the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference as an Ordained Elder. He returned to Drew University to complete a Ph.D. degree in church history and literature in 1954, also magna cum laude.



The Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson

Pastor

1965-1990

Megan was born in New Jersey and spent her childhood in Oradell, N.J., a town only a few miles away from where her ancestors had settled in the late seventeenth century. She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Drew University.

Bob and Megan had three children when they moved to Chatham and became part of the Chatham Methodist Church family.

Between 1950 and 1960, Bob he served as a member of the Civilian Defense Committee in Mt. Tabor and between 1952 and 1960 he was a member of the Parsippany-Troy Hills Juvenile Conference Committee.

Peggy and Perry Philp had joined the Chatham United Methodist Church at the end of 1964. The main attraction was Bill Rodda's preaching, enhanced by the friendliness of the congregation. Ray Lauver visited the Philps several times to convince them to join. When Bill was appointed to Morrow Memorial Church they thought, "How could this fellow Simpson ever replace him.....?"

By March 1966, the Trustees recognized that a new parsonage was needed for the Simpson family. After a long search, a suitable house was finally located at 20 Oak Drive. It was built around 1951 and the asking price was \$55,000. Few houses of this kind were available and were generally sold within a few days from the time they went on the market. Some of the trustees felt that the asking price was more than some members of the congregation might want to pay for a parsonage; but in view of the good location and well-constructed home, which came very near to meeting the Trustees' specifications, a price was negotiated at about \$53,000 and a bank loan was arranged. [*The Deed is recorded by the Morris County Clerk in Book 1995 on Page 136.*] The Simpsons moved into their new home in the fall of 1966, together with their children Gwen, Gary and David. (Milestones)

Mrs. Corinne Whitlow, Church Secretary, left the staff in 1966 and the position was revised to "Administrative Secretary" and was filled by Mrs. Viola Sutherland.

Reverend Lawrence D. McIntosh completed his work in Chatham during 1966 and with his wife, Pam, and their children, returned to Australia and assumed a ministry there. Dr. Simpson wrote in the Annual Report,

*"Mc' has been a strong right arm to me this year, a true 'brother in Christ.' His knowledge of the Church, his counsel and encouragement, his unusual leadership have aided my beginning here and enriched my personal life."*

[Years later, after the death of their spouses, Viola and "Mc" became reacquainted. Reverend McIntosh was by then retired from his pastorate in Australia. They married and moved to his homeland (around 2001).]

Reverend Robert H. Clark became the first full-time Minister of Christian Education of the church in 1966. He replaced Rev. Lawrence D. McIntosh who had completed four years with us on a part-time basis. Rev. Clark was brought into the staff to develop a broad program in Christian Education. Rev. Mr. Clark's work led to the Sunday morning Adult Seminars and programs celebrating the importance of art in ministry. Bob Clark and his family were given the parsonage on Center Street. (Simpson)

The Center Street parsonage had been built in 1903 and, in view of continued and extensive expenditures, it had become a financial burden. After a search, a suitable residence was found at 1 Sussex Avenue in 1967. The church bought it. *[The Deed was recorded by the Morris County Clerk in Book 2071, Page 861.]* The Church sold the Center Street parsonage to the Borough of Chatham. *[As it had done with the old Center Street church, the Borough demolished the house at 32 Center Street and turned it into a parking lot.]*

Reverend Bob Clark, his wife, Joyce, and their two daughters moved to the newly acquired Associate Minister's parsonage. Reverend Mr. Clark remained with us for five years. (Milestones)

The Men's Club continued to be active during this time. Referring to a dinner held the previous weekend, the minutes of the February 14, 1967 meeting said, in part:

*"A roast beef dinner was the menu. A nice sized crowd was present due to the type of entertainment. There were a number of young people who attended.*

*"Our President, Jerry Bell, opened the meeting. He requested help for the ladies to get ready for the Antique Show. On Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> Mr. Fred Kirschner is to be the speaker. His talk is entitled 'Saints and Members.' This is to be a dinner affair. Jerry also talked on our coming Easter Egg Project.*

*"Mr. George Brown introduced the speaker for the evening. There were three in the group. It was a display, which seemed to be very interesting.*

*"Sunday March 12<sup>th</sup> is to be a breakfast meeting." (Minutes)*

In the 1966 Annual Report, Dr. Simpson reflected on the nature of the community and the Chatham Church. He said:

*"Because of the sociological make-up of the Chatham area there passes through this Church a high percentage of children, youth and adults who will be, or are in places of considerable leadership in the business-political-educational-scientific communities. I believe Christ would have us effect a Christian witness through them in those communities. Therefore, the ministry of the Church needs to provide provocative opportunities for renewal in faith and belief. Our ministry together needs to deepen, or create, where it does not exist, the understanding that whether we are in the Presidency of a company or the production line we are ministers. The Church in any moment is representative where we are. To take this task seriously is one of our common goals in the year before us."*

By (approximately) 1966, the membership had risen to a peak of 1,520 and our church was the largest Methodist Church in the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference.

Mrs. Fred H. Van Wert, Jr. (Edith) was leader of the Communion Committee for many years. She noted in 1965-1966 that Holy Communion was served six times with 375-425 taking part each time.

Miss Leola Anderson, Director of Music, was instrumental in beginning the "White Gifts Service" that continued to be an annual tradition until about 1995. Miss Anderson explained that,

*"according to an old legend of Cathay, the people of the country loved their wise and just ruler so much that they celebrated his birthday by bringing white gifts to show their love and loyalty. The rich brought carved ivories and the poor brought white pigeons or a handful of rice. The ruler did not regard one gift above another. This is the story of love that around 1900 inspired the first White Gift Service in an Ohio Methodist Church."*

Leola designed the service and the costumes for the adults and the children and the animals. Three adult soloists, each singing a stanza from the hymn, "We Three Kings of Orient Are," and bearing gifts, proceeded up the center aisle of the Sanctuary to the Chancel. Once there, the three "kings" received donations of goods and money from members of the congregation, each gift wrapped in white paper or contained in a white envelope. During the following week, the gifts were distributed to four places suggested by the Committee on Missions.

Miss Anderson scheduled the first White Gift Service during the period of Epiphany, on a Sunday afternoon early in January at 4:00 p.m. *Partly because of a conflict with the football playoffs and the Superbowl, by 1973, the Epiphany and White Gift Service had become an integral part of the 9:15 am and 11:00 am services on the second Sunday morning in January of each year.*

## A LARGE CHURCH: LIFE WITHIN AND OUTREACH TO OTHERS

Dot Bennett recalled:

*"My husband, 'Benny,' was a regular greeter: 'Mr. Methodist Church.' He began to do that when we were at the Center Street Church and continued for many years in the Narthex at the Main Street Church. He never missed a Sunday. I joined him in the early years. I do think that greeting is a very important thing for a church. You would see newcomers and be able to talk with them. Dr. Rodda or Dr. Simpson would then call on them. I think the same greeters should be at the doors for several Sundays in a row, not new greeters each week." (Bennett)*

Benny also took note of who was missing on a particular Sunday. If he saw you around town during the following week, he would chat with you and learn that you had been out-of-town, ill or had been otherwise detained. It was a friendly greeting, one that let the person know you were truly missed.

Guy Cunningham was also a regular greeter for many years, only in his case at the rear outside entrance (many years before the elevator was installed). Priscilla Haberstroh said, "When my son, David, was young, he would look for Guy at that entrance and would not go in without first seeing him there and greeting him." Al Gollinott was a regular greeter at that back entrance for 10 years or so, after Guy died. Always a familiar face and a warm hand, Al was there in spite of the occasional very cold weather. After 2000, Cliff Conner stepped into the role - - only this time he would be seen regularly greeting people inside on the second floor at the junction in the hall between the education wing and the sanctuary. Guy Cunningham's wife, Lee, then assumed the role as greeter at that location - - willingly giving an occasional warm hug.

A program to enrich adult education within the church moved beyond the experimental stage in 1967 to one that became fully established as a way to

enrich the faith of many persons. Two new adult study groups were formed and the church library grew larger and encouraged private study. (Annual Report)

We continued the practice of receiving Drew Theological Seminary students to work with the youth. Reverend R. Dennis Bowers was one such student who possessed unusual leadership and energy. Under the direction of Rev. Dr. Simpson, Mr. Bowers rapidly developed a senior high youth program in 1965 and 1966, which eventually numbered 140 high school students and included youth from Chatham Borough, Chatham Township and Madison. The average weekly attendance was about 80. The group had a real sense of mission. (Simpson)

For example, the youth joined similar groups from three other churches on a weekend field trip to help repair, paint, clean-up and restore material in several an inner city churches. (Annual Report)

Recognizing a need for youth activities in the larger community, especially on weekends, Mr. Bowers led the youth in developing a monthly dance program including a live band, which allowed time for meeting. The activity was called "The Grotto." The evening of contemporary music and dance was a huge success drawing crowds as high as 700. [One evening, there was fear that the Fellowship Hall (now "Rodda Hall") floor would collapse.] The Grotto was a place to come on Friday nights. The youth did all the work. In addition there was community outreach among the youth, which made the youth program the largest in the history of the Chatham Methodist Church before and since. (Simpson)

The expanding youth program received national attention through TOGETHER magazine.

The racial tensions of the 1960's in our nation were reflected in the Chathams – a homogeneous suburb, almost totally white. (Simpson)

When Rev. Dr. Simpson became Pastor in June 1965, he found the community struggling with the issue of whether or not to permit a "Fair-Housing" committee to have a float in the Firemen's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. The float was finally allowed, but local clergy were harassed because of their individual positions regarding fair housing in the community. (Simpson)

Another major conflict of the 1960's grew out of the 1967 Newark race riots, which came as a response to the assassination of Martin Luther King,

Jr. That period was a devastating time and demanded a response by people of good will. Dr. Simpson recalled marching with bus loads of people (many from Chatham) in the street in Newark. Police were on the roof tops armed with machine guns as these concerned citizens marched. There were no untoward incidents. To the contrary," Bob said, "the curb sides were lined with black local residents greeting us warmly, many with tears in their eyes." (Simpson)

Very soon thereafter, the clergy and many lay people formed the Chatham Interfaith Council (in 1966-1967) with the purpose of facing together the social issues arising from racial tensions and other problems in our communities. Specifically, the CIC was dedicated to serve as "a coordinating, mediating and reconciling agency among the various governmental, economic, religious and social components in the community." Across the next 23 years of Rev. Dr. Simpson's years in Chatham (*and beyond*), the Chatham Interfaith Council has been a strong agency for the people in our churches to educate and cooperate in addressing many important concerns such as fair housing, hunger in the local and county areas [through the "Crop Walk"], ecumenical dialogue, housing for the elderly, the use of alcohol by youth, the Vietnam War, and numerous other issues. (Simpson and Annual Report)

Our Methodist Annual Conference faced these racial tensions with constructive programs encouraging local churches to take creative action. Our church responded by adding a staff member in 1968, Reverend K. Charles Cannon ("Chuck"), who would work half-time in Newark developing ways in which we, as a local suburban church, could become active in Newark. His other half-time appointment was to work with our youth. Chuck held these positions for three years. (Simpson)

Mr. Cannon made a considerable impact on the development of linkages between the suburban community and the urban needs. The racially-charged riots in Newark in 1967 had made it very difficult, in the following years, to recruit volunteers to serve in the city. With Chuck's leadership, we established a partnership with St. Matthews United Methodist Church, a sister church in Newark. We joined their people, hands on, in redecorating their sanctuary and in renovating their basement to become a Day Nursery, which allowed mothers to have child care and for the mothers to become employed. (*In succeeding years, Chuck was very active in Hospital Chaplaincy in Pennsylvania and in 2007, Chuck is Pastor, Calvary United Methodist Church in Johnstown, PA.*) (Simpson)

Larry P. Isaacson became the new youth minister in 1968. (Simpson)

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## **Developments and Changes Since 1968**

At the 1968 General Conference, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged and adopted the name: United Methodist Church. The action represented the confluence of three streams of tradition: Methodism, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and The Evangelical Association. (History)

When the United Methodist Church was created, it had approximately 11 million members, making it one of the largest Protestant churches in the world. (History)

Since its beginning, United Methodism has experienced a number of changes in its life and structure. (History)

It has become increasingly aware of itself as a world church with members and conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. While its membership in Europe and the United States has declined noticeably since 1968, membership in Africa and Asia has grown significantly. (History)

An increasing number of women have been admitted to the ordained ministry, appointed to the district superintendency, elected to positions of denominational leadership, and consecrated as bishops. In 1980 Marjorie Matthews was the first woman elected to the Church's episcopacy. (History)

The United Methodist Church has endeavored to become a community in which all persons, regardless of racial or ethnic background, can participate in every level of its connectional life and ministry. (History)

United Methodism has struggled with a number of critical issues. It has created and refined theological and mission statements. It has discussed and acted on matters of social importance such as nuclear power and world peace, human sexuality, the environment, abortion, AIDS, evangelism, and world mission. (History)

The Church has been concerned with the faithfulness and vitality of its worship. (History)

It published a new hymnal in 1989, which included a new Psalter and revised liturgies for baptism, the Lord's Supper, weddings, and funerals. Its 1992 General Conference authorized a new Book of Worship. A Spanish language hymnal, *Mil Voces Para Celebrar*, was published in 1996. (History)

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### CHATHAM IN 1968-1971

The youth programs within the church continued to be very active in 1968. On the fourth Saturday night of every month the youth lounge was transformed into a coffee-house for the MYF. It provided a time for the youth to get to know each other better in a relaxed atmosphere within the church, with the added enjoyment of refreshments and folk-music entertainment. However, with success came challenges. One of those challenges was to assure that these senior high school youth programs focus primarily on the development of the youth of the community into responsible, Christian adults. (Annual Report)

Enrollment in the Church Sunday School program amounted to 627 pupils, slightly more than half being in the kindergarten to fourth grade levels. Average attendance was 351 in 1967-1968. The core church school staff was dedicated and had good curriculum materials, physical plant and audio-visual materials. However, it was, as is always the case, difficult to obtain substitute teachers and assistants. (Annual Report)

In 1969, a group of leaders from our church established the Chatham United Methodist Nursery School. Stan Bess recalled that the group creating the Nursery School was a great committee - - and they had fun doing it. Reverend Bob Clark was an important leader in this effort. Betty Stockley was the first Director, Nancy Blank was next, then Peggy Littlejohn who was followed by Pam Green and, currently, Carol Bardon.

A program was established called "Mothers' Morning Out." This program provided babysitting for twenty-two children between the ages of one and walking, up to three years old. Children play and learn to share, have a snack and do simple activities. The program was offered September through May on Wednesday mornings from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. The cost was \$4.00 per session [in 1989] and reservations were required and filled on a first-come-first-served basis. The program continued for more than 15 years, but was discontinued by 2000. It was re-established in 2004.

Marge and I [the Editor/author of this record] bought our first house in Chatham in 1969. Our first-born son was an infant and we had decided it was time to put down roots. We chose Chatham largely because of its location as the first stop on the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad line after Summit. I commuted to New York City each day and the time that it took to travel between home and work, while not desirable, was tolerable. The house we bought was on Lafayette Avenue and was affordable, especially when considering we had saved money working two jobs and I had put away considerable overtime pay. We had to make a decision on a house quickly, because even then houses were selling within days of their being put on the market.

Though life-long Presbyterians until then, we found the congregation at the United Methodist Church warm and friendly. We also found a fine network of young families with whom we developed a close friendship. We were also drawn by the congregation's pro-active involvement in the concerns of the larger urban and suburban communities. Finally, Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson was quite welcoming and his sermons were like conversations with each person in the congregation; conversations that applied the Christian message to our daily lives and that stayed with us throughout the week.

There were still many locally owned restaurants and clothing, hardware, fabric, toy, general merchandise and other stores that we could patronize; national chains were limited largely to food stores and department stores. Acme Food Market was across from the church and A&P was down at Hickory Tree.

Bantam's general merchandise store was at Hickory Tree, Park's Pharmacy was across from the church, Swanson's Hardware was in the center of town and the William Pitt Restaurant was in the "old part" of Chatham; none of these has survived the passage of time. *[The William Pitt Restaurant was destroyed by fire. It had, for years, been an eating-place with colonial décor, enjoyed by families from a wide area. It existed for many years on Roosevelt Avenue, just north of Main Street; the site is now a parking lot for a new group of stores and offices.]*

The Morris and Essex Turnpike (now Route 124) climbed out of Springfield and up over the gap to Main Street in Chatham. Cobblestones had covered the road up the hill to Summit until shortly before we settled in town. In order to get to the Garden State Parkway, we would drive down the Morris and Essex Turnpike, through Springfield, to Union, where we met the

Parkway. To get to the Newark Airport [*which was small and confined to today's "North" Terminal*], we would go the same way and meet Route 22. We sometimes went through Millburn and down Vauxhall Road to Route 22. Route 78 did not exist; Route 287 came north only as far as Bedminster.

There were no "bike trails;" "parks" were limited to school playgrounds and Loantaka Pond; leaves were burned in the autumn and "recycling" did not exist.

Chatham still had many traits of the small town it once had been. The pressure of growth was evident, however, in the push of new housing along the south end of Fairmount Avenue and down Meyersville Road. The Mountainview Elementary School was very soon to be constructed and traffic, including long-haul trucks, was growing on Main Street in Chatham.

## DEDICATION

On March 19, 1972, six-hundred and ten persons gathered to celebrate the early full payment of the church sanctuary mortgage, its official "burning" and to dedicate the new sanctuary. A Service of Dedication was held in the sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. and presided over by Bishop Prince Taylor. A Service of Music was held at 4:30 p.m.

The Service of Music was offered as a memorial to those who had helped in the building of this church and in the expansion of its mission. Compositions by Jean Langlais, Lauda Sion, Marcel Dupre and Oliver Messiaen were part of the Program and Leola Anderson was organist. Gabriel Faure's "Requiem" comprised the principal music of the afternoon. Lois Green, soprano, and Jay Thompson, baritone, were supported by The Chancel Choir and instrumentalists that included, among many others, Amy Franklin, Tympani and John Leister, Trumpet. (Dedication)

The Dedication Program for March 19, 1972, included a physical description of the completed new facilities:

*"The sanctuary, church parlor and church offices, all air-conditioned, are on the main floor. On the lower level are a large activities room, choir rehearsal room, music storage room, two robing rooms, a large general storage room and heating and cooling equipment.*

*"The nave, 4,400 square feet in area, seats about 400 in pews. Additional seating for 150 can be provided in the low-roofed side areas using folding chairs. The chancel is 1,350 square feet in area. The organist can reach the console of the magnificent pipe organ from the rear of the chancel. Choir members also have easy access to the space provided for a 60-member choir.*

*"The church parlor facilities include a small worship center, book cases for the church library, and a kitchenette. A garden can be viewed from the nave and from a cloister connecting the building with the church's education building. There is also an exterior covered walkway between the two buildings.*

*"The architects were Drake, Convery and Cueman, of Summit, with Harvey Convery in personal charge. General contractors were Paul D. Adams & Co., Montclair, the work having been directed by Louis J. Tatarko. The pipe organ was built and installed by the Schantz Organ Co., Orrville, Ohio." (Dedication)*

The Chairman of the Dedication Committee was Cameron S. Toole ["Cam"] and the Minister was Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson ["Bob"]. The other members of the Committee were Mrs. A.K. Bennett ["Dot"], Mrs. Stephen R. Brown ["Gudie"], Mr. Calvin Coats ["Cal"], Mr. Guy Cunningham, Mr. Paul W. Emler, Miss Amy Franklin, Mr. Dirk Kuyk, Mr. Albert L. Parker, Mrs. Robert N. Taylor ["Adrienne"], Mr. Raymond J. Walden ["Ray"] and Miss Leola Anderson, Organist and Choir Director. (Dedication)

On March 22, 1972, Reverend Doctor Robert Drew Simpson, Minister of the Chatham United Methodist Church sent a note to Ray Walden that said:

*"Dear Ray,*

*Thanks so much for your part in planning for the dedication on Sunday. It was just a great sorrow that you were not able to be present. I know what this has meant to you down across so many years and it was the one bad feeling about the whole day for me that you could not share in it personally. I know you were here with us in spirit. No one could begin to thank you for your great generosity toward this church and the fact that you are a constant and regular spirit of good will and support. I know this brings you great satisfaction to serve the Lord in this fashion. I want you to know that it brings others of us great satisfaction as well to observe your witness. Sincerely, Bob"*

An insurance appraisal was completed on the church in 1973. It also provides a good physical description of the Chatham United Methodist Church at 460 Main Street:

*"Quality: A+*

*"Condition: Very Good.*

*Age: Original construction 1956 with addition 1963.*

*Square Feet: 33,844.*

*"1956 construction includes bearing walls with concrete ground level floor. Upper floor is concrete pan. Floor covering includes asphalt tile and hardwood. Masonry interior partitions [many of which were subsequently removed]. Standard plumbing including kitchen facilities. Ceilings include plaster and acoustic block. Oil fired heating system with combination air-conditioning. Concrete block and brick exterior walls. Electric standard. Built-up roof, insulation and steel girders. 'Rodda Hall' area includes laminated arches.*

*"1963 addition is the sanctuary with predominant 'A' frame roof. Basement area under [front of] sanctuary. Construction finishes basically the same as original section. Roof is steel frame, wood decking and exterior tile. Interior includes laminated arches. Flat roof area is 4 inch concrete slab, insulation and wood decking. Built-up roof covering includes slag."*

[Subsequent major projects have included conversion to gas-fired heating system, removal of an oil tank from the front lawn, filling and capping of a smaller oil tank behind the building, removal of asbestos through-out the structure, installation of stained-glass windows in the sanctuary and the addition of an elevator and rear entry foyer.]

## DIVERSE INTERESTS AND SERVICE

The Sixth Street Players from New York City were part of the "Implosion III, Arts Festival," at the Chatham United Methodist Church on April 26, 1969. Artists throughout the area joined in exhibiting their works. The United Methodist Youth Fellowship hosted the affair and served refreshments. The Art Show continued for three days.

The Friday Niters of the Chatham United Methodist Church spent the evening at the "circus" on May 16, 1969. "Circus Barker," Don Norfolk; "Clown," Julia Speer; and "Ringmaster," Gene Cowell entertained those who attended. Also on the program were a snake charmer, lion tamer, jugglers and a tightrope walker.

On one such a Friday Niters' skit/occasion, Ruth Oeschlager came up the aisle in Fellowship Hall wrapped in a large towel - - and, some believe, nothing else. Ruth was a very high energy person who invested her spirit in Friday Niters and in welcoming people (with a warm hug) in the sanctuary and other places around the church. Many people, even long-standing members, looked forward to getting a hug from her and giving one in return.

On December 12, Friday Niters held a "Midnight Ball." Dinner was at 7:30 and dancing continued until midnight.

Reverend Bob Clark related the following story.

*As one Friday Niters' event got underway, he and Bob Simpson passed through the kitchen. The meat for the evening was ham. As always, the Friday Niters' Committee for that evening prepared the meat and the attending members brought a wide variety of salad, vegetable, starch and dessert dishes. While in the kitchen, both men detected a smell from the kitchen that seemed distasteful; the meat seemed to have spoiled. The evening's program had drawn an exceptionally large attendance (over 200 people) and the members were already enjoying the food. The ministers became quite alarmed. Unsure of what to do, they consulted a medical authority. He said that the meat would likely be OK, because it would have been cooked well. His advice to the ministers was to watch the diners and see if any distress developed during the next hour or two; fortunately none did, but the two men were very anxious throughout the evening and, as a precaution, had none of the meat themselves!*

A drama, "The Little Prince," was produced by the youth of the church.

On April 13, 1971, it was announced that the Pastoral Counseling Service of Northern New Jersey had established an outpost of its service in the Chatham United Methodist Church. The Reverend Kenneth Austenberg was on call one day a week at the church office. Reverend Austenberg had been specially trained in individual and family counseling. Counseling, referrals, education and training were available under Ken's service. He assisted individuals with personal difficulties; he helped them gain understanding, provided them with an atmosphere in which emotional growth might develop and supported their spiritual quest. The P.C.S. developed a network of counselors and programs to serve throughout Northern New Jersey. It also provided low-cost counseling together with training for clergy in pastoral care and counseling. *[Ken continued in this service in our church for 30 years.]*

Associate Minister Reverend Bob Clark and his wife Joyce left the church in 1972 and moved to Madison. Reverend Clark became Executive Director of the Morris County Association for Mental Health.

*Bob went on to found and become Executive Director of the Kairos Institute in Madison, a non-profit organization established to provide support, consultation and in-depth educational opportunities to professional medical, mental health and religious communities and to promote assistance, consultation and care to families of exceptional children.*



Church Staff

1972

Left to right: Rev. Dr. Robert D. Simpson; Leola Anderson,  
Irma Hofmockel; Reverend Robert Boettner;  
Lois Gneen; John Wood; Vi Sutherland

( Damaged Photograph )

*Reverend Clark became one of the country's leading authorities on spiritual psychotherapy, a professor in the Medical Humanities Graduate Program at Drew University and founder of Clergy Consultation Services.*

Reverend Robert Boettner joined the staff as an Associate Minister, taking over the direct ministry to the youth and their families, the adult education program, and with the assistance of Irma Hofmockel, coordination of the entire program of Christian Education. Bob and his wife, Janice, are both graduates of West Virginia Wesleyan University. He did his theological work at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

An Endowment Fund had been established in our church several years earlier to serve as the depository for unrestricted gifts and bequests to the church; this was one way in which the congregation began to prepare for the future. (Annual Report)

In 1973, Fred and Catharine Walters established an endowment called the "Family Fund," which was to be used to provide financial help in personal emergency situations caused by illness, loss of income or other catastrophe among members or constituents of the church, or others in the community. Generally, it was intended that such funds would be advanced as non-interest bearing loans; however, they may be disbursed without repayment provisions. Twenty-five percent of the undisbursed annual income is to be given to the Missions Work Area to be used for benevolences at their discretion. (Annual Report)

A group of cooks and organizers in the church developed and started a program in 1973 of weekly luncheons in Fellowship Hall [later named "Rodda Hall"] for senior adults in the community. Drivers often picked up seniors at their homes and brought them to the church. The idea was suggested by Reverend Bob Simpson who felt there was a need to provide a hot meal and fellowship to the many senior citizens residing in the apartment buildings in Chatham. In a short time, the program mushroomed and the organizers approached other local churches and organizations to assist in the Food preparation and serving. These groups responded quickly and the program thrived for many years.

During these years, the Art Committee of the church had a couple of "clothes line" Art Shows that included work from Sunday School and the Nursery School. On several occasions, the Art Committee organized Adult Hobby Shows. It was a pleasant surprise to see the variety of interests and the creative talent that resided in the membership of the church. For

1974  
*Our Church Staff*



Minister  
Associate Minister  
Minister of Music  
Church School Director  
Church Secretary  
Asst. Secretary  
Building Supt.  
Asst. Supt.

Robert Drew Simpson  
Robert L. Boettner  
Leola Anderson  
Irma Hofmockel  
Viola Sutherland  
Lois Green  
John Wood  
John Godjas

*Our Pastors*



The Simpsons



The Boettners

example, the results of knitting, needle-point, quilting, woodcarving, cabinet and furniture-making, painting, sketching and cooking were displayed. We saw model railroads, door knob collections, stamp collections and photography collections (lighthouses, nature and travel). (Haberstroh)

The Christian Approach to Urban Suburban Encounter (CAUSE) was firmly established during 1974, our church being one of the Charter members. A further outgrowth of our church's concerns about the isolation that had grown between the urban and suburban cultures, CAUSE is a vehicle for our activities with the Christ United Methodist Church of Jersey City. Over the succeeding years, CAUSE has been the means for personal visits between the two cultures, tutoring opportunities in the urban environment and the establishment of a nominal cost food pantry and clothing thrift shop in the city.

During 1974, five clergymen were members of the Chatham Charge Conference, but were serving in broader capacities throughout the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference. These men were: The Reverend K. Charles Cannon; The Reverend Dr. Theodore C. Linn, Dean of Student Life and Chaplain, Drew University and later, St. Lawrence University; The Reverend Dr. John R. McLaughlin, General Secretary of the Commission of Chaplains in the 1950's and 1960's; The Reverend Nishan J. Najarian, Dean of Students at Fairleigh Dickinson University and personal and family counselor; and The Reverend Lewis Benjamin, retired. (Annual Report)

On Christmas Eve 1975, the youth of the church presented, "The Juggler of Our Lady." The drama is a French Medieval Christmas story based upon an old French legend.

Reverend Boettner concluded his service with us in 1976, when he was appointed to his own charge in western New Jersey.

#### DALE FORSMAN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR; ENERGY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

Reverend Dale Henry Forsman was appointed to the ministerial staff as Associate Minister in 1976. His energy, Christian faith and love immediately captivated the members of the church, especially (*but not only*) the youth.

Dale spent his childhood years in Basking Ridge and majored in history at Duke University. He received a Master of Divinity from Drew University. His

ministerial career included Basking Ridge, Westfield and Cranford (1970-1973) where he was devoted primarily to youth and service within the community. His next appointment was as Minister at Lake Hopatcong (1974-1976). He was ordained a deacon in 1970 and an Elder, in full connection, on June 9, 1976.

Reverend Forsman was, in 1976, Chairman of the Morris View Nursing Home Ethics Committee. The Morris County Board of Social Services formed the Committee in 1976, in response to the New Jersey State Supreme Court decision of March 31, 1976, "In the Matter of Karen Quinlan, an Alleged Incompetent." Dale continued to be a member of the Morris County Board of Social Services for many years, during which time there was an evolution in the legal, medical and social ethics involved with treating terminally ill persons. Dale served as Chairperson of the Morris County Board of Social Services between 1979 and 1982.

In addition to his ministerial duties, Dale also served as Chairman of the Commission on Camps, Conferences and Retreats of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. He led Drama Camp at Aldersgate for many years and was very active in program work at the Camp. Reverend Forsman was active in many capacities with the Chatham high school and the community.

On January 28-29, 1977 Tom Behr, Leola Anderson, Dale and Carol Forsman, produced and directed "Amahl and the Night Visitors," by Gian-Carlo Menotti. The singers and the players were all members of the church. The play is the story of the composer's dreams, as a child, of the three kings and the gifts they brought to his village. In the opera the three kings arrive at the home of Amahl, a lame beggar, and his mother, on the way to Bethlehem. The contrast between the rich gifts of the kings and the simple gifts, which Amahl and his mother have to offer, provides the audience with a timeless message.

On May 6-7, 1977 "The Miracle Worker," by William Gibson was directed by Reverend Dale H. Forsman and produced by his wife, Carol Forsman. The Student Director was Tanya Linn [later "*Bennett*"]. This was the first production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship.

The notes on the Program said:



### Church Staff 1977

Standing, left to right:

; John Wood; Rev. Dale H. Forsman; Gayle  
Woodman; Rev. Dr. Robert D. Simpson; Carol Forsman

Seated, left to right:

Marion Schmitter; ; Joy Bland; Grace DeRosia.

*"Dale Forsman and Carol Jennings met on the stage at Duke University in 1964. They have worked together on over a dozen musical theater productions, and between them have worked in over 30 different productions. Representative works are: West Side Story, My Fair Lady, Camelot, The Sound of Music, Oliver, King and I, and Inherit the Wind. Carol has over 15 years of dance training for plays and Dale has a background in voice. Theater has become a total part of their lives.*

*"Dale has been the leading player, chorus member, director, and technical member of many companies, from professional summer stock companies to amateur productions. He has been musical director in Cole Porter's Out Of This World and acted in Can-Can, Kiss Me Kate, Showboat, and The Mikado.*

*"In addition to acting in and choreographing productions, Carol has directed and choreographed the musicals at Governor Livingston Regional High School in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey." [In 1980, Carol returned to her profession and began teaching Social Studies at Watchung Hills High School.]*

During 1977, The Reverend Robert H. Clark joined those other clergymen who were members of the Chatham Charge Conference, but were serving in broader capacities throughout the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference. Bob was specializing in Pastoral Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling and Individual Psychotherapy in Morris County. (Annual Report)

Ten years after the Newark riots, tensions still existed between the city and suburban areas. Through the imagination and energy of leaders in Newark and suburban communities, the Suburban Cultural and Education Enrichment Program ("SCEEP") had been established in 1973. It was an outgrowth of the Protestant Community Centers of Newark (formed in 1965). Volunteers in suburban churches tutor, on a one-on-basis, 18-20 fourth-grade students coming by van from Newark. Our church joined this program in 1977. One day a week, during the school year, the students and volunteers meet for a two-hour period. The first hour is spent on some academic pursuit, such as reading, arithmetic or spelling, and the second hour is spent in recreation, arts and crafts or a visit to the library. The coordinating leader at our church was Marilyn Schindler. Not only did she arrange guitar lessons, she arranged a church sleepover. Marilyn said, *"There is something about the intimacy of this project that enables us to talk with the children about their lives, their hopes, their future."*

The Boy Scout Troop 23 continued to be sponsored by the Chatham United Methodist Church in 1978. However, not many years later, the Troop was dissolved and the Ogden Presbyterian Church, Stanley Congregational

Church and the Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township carried on this worthy program.

A new "Associate Minister" parsonage, at 11 Mercer Avenue, was purchased in 1978 to replace the one at 1 Sussex Avenue. Reverend Dale H. Forsman and his family, Carol, Carl and Sarah moved to the new parsonage after it was cleaned and some repairs were made. The new parsonage provided the family three additional rooms, including a study and a family room, both of which made the home much more livable and usable for meetings and counseling.

This was the time when some of the church members with children and youth began to take an increased interest in the United Methodist Church Camp "Aldersgate." Reverend Dale Forsman had been Chairman of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference committee that supervised Camp Aldersgate. The young families in the church organized an annual weekend retreat of fun and worship at the Camp in January. Also, several of the youth attended summer week-long camps at Aldersgate. Reverend Forsman and his wife Carol led some of these week-long camps that emphasized drama and Christian ideals expressed in drama.

During 1978, Reverend Henry Gventer and his wife, Sharon, began a Bible Study class at the Chatham United Methodist Church that was to continue to 1999. Henry had taken leave from the ministry to work in industry; nevertheless, he continued to fulfill his calling in many ways.

"David and Lisa," a play by James Reach about two very special young persons was produced in May 1978. It was the second production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship, under the guidance of Reverend Dale Forsman.

In the summer of 1978, the church's high school age youth participated for the first time in "The Appalachia Service Project" which is centered in Whitesburg, Kentucky. Reverend Dale Forsman and Ken Bennett were the principal leaders from our church. For many years, the Service Project had invited youth from schools and churches to join in the repair of homes belonging to families in a poor region of Kentucky. Over 10,000 people participated annually.

Each year, the Confirmation program for our youth was creative, instructive and for many youth, quite meaningful. As Amy (Harrison) Ball recalls,

*I grew up in our church during the '70s. It was a very experiential period for me. Reverend Dale Forsman ran it and I loved Confirmation. We did a lot of comparative religious study and visited other religious homes to attend services. A main focus was on God's love helping others and kindness. (Ball)*

January 1979 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Leola Anderson's service at the Chatham United Methodist Church. On Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, the congregation surprised her by holding a covered-dish dinner in Fellowship Hall in her honor.

Through years of Leola's creative leadership, the Epiphany White Gift Service, outdoor musical worship services, Advent Celebrations and a Christmas Eve candle light procession became established programs. Many other wonderful events occurred, such as a production of "Amahl and The Night Visitors;" Drew University Theological School Choir, singing the old and the new in music for worship; a Festival of Moravian Music; and a "Great Day of Hymn-Singing," when Christian Hymns from around the world were sung [all in 1977-1978]. In her 1978-1979 Report, Leola said,

*"Others, like the Medieval Advent procession were offered in December after a hiatus of a few years. As a musical contribution during Lent, the Chancel Choir, with chamber orchestra, sang one of its most loved works, the Faure 'Requiem,' and the Chapel Choir and Trinity Singers (junior and senior high youth) sang 'On the passion of Christ,' a cantata by David H. Williams. In October the festival of Hymns lifted up hymns based on both Old and New Testament scripture."*

Such musical opportunities were very characteristic of Leola's work during this period of the church's history.

The third production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship, "The Diary of Anne Frank," was given in May 1979. The play was directed by Carol Forsman and produced by Dale Forsman. The student director was Lisa Hintz.

Reverend Marie Burger and Reverend R. Douglas Merriam joined the Reverends Cannon, Clark, Linn, McLaughlin and Najarian in 1979 as Members of the Chatham Charge Conference who served the wider church apart from our congregation. Reverend Merriam graduated in the Chatham High School Class of 1929, along with Mr. Ray Walden and Mr. Franklin Clark. [In 2007, Reverend Marie Burger was active leader within the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference United Methodist Women's Division.]

Mr. Neil Eriksen completed training as a Lay Speaker of this Charge Conference.

The 1979-1980 Friday Niters' season had an interesting array of programs; the list is an example of many seasons before and after this one.

- *Fred Kolb, mentalist; a highly respected author and local entertainer who presented a program on extra-sensory perception [ESP].*
- *Progressive Dinner, with a social hour beginning at 6:45 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.*
- *Square Dance led by Bruce Vertun.*
- *Christmas music including "The Aldersgate Experience," a women's handbell choir, and Bill and Elaine Watson, who played and sang a selection of Christmas songs.*
- *Millicent Fenwick, U.S. Congresswoman from our District, the program drawing well over 200 people, setting a Friday Niters' record.*
- *"Melody's Paintbrush," a barbershop quartet, with songs of love, hearts and flowers.*
- *George Meade, WOR's traffic helicopter pilot with a program on traffic conditions and aviation.*
- *Betty Pate's program on "New Jersey Ghosties."*
- *"Nostalgia Night at the Movies," with film clips from Shirley Temple, Laurel & Hardy, W.C. Fields and Harold Lloyd movies.*

"The Nativity, A Musical Drama" was presented in the Sanctuary in December of 1979. The composer, Randall Thompson, was one of America's most eminent composers. The orchestra was directed by Leola Anderson, Dale Forsman produced the drama and Carol Forsman choreographed it.

In May 1980, "Harvey" was the fourth production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship. This is a lighthearted play that asks, "Who's really crazy?" The profits of the play went towards the United Methodist Youth Fellowship's third summer of participation in The Appalachia Service Project.

Throughout his ministry, Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson remained a man of the people wholly dedicated to bring the Word of God to people and people to Christ. His messages from the pulpit were clear and, as a result of the way he expressed his thoughts, people in the congregation sensed that he was talking personally to them.

Bob's sense of humor, in casual venues, in committee meetings and in the pulpit, made many people feel that he was completely open when engaged in

communication with you. His sense of humor also brought out your own sense of humor.

Priscilla Haberstroh recalled,

*Don and I served as ushers once every four to six weeks. It was my practice to look directly at Bob as we (four ushers) advanced down the aisle with the day's offering collection during the singing of the Doxology. My reason for doing this was to stay aware of what he wanted us to do when we reached the chancel. Well, we were ushers one April Fool's Day. After the collection that day and before the Doxology, we gave all the money collected, except \$1.00, to the Head Usher. The \$1.00 was put in my offering plate. As usual, I looked directly at Bob as we approached with the four plates and he looked directly at me. When I got right in front of him, I blinked and looked at my plate. He followed my eyes and gave a soft gasp - - after which I whispered "April Fool." I thought he was going to burst out laughing right there. (Haberstroh)*

A new program for Older Adults began on January 14, 1981 at the Chatham United Methodist Church. An Ecumenical Drop-In Center featuring several interesting groups and programs met weekly under a committee headed by Roxy Frey. Older Adults were invited to bring a sandwich for lunch and share in useful activities and growth opportunities while enjoying old and new friendships. The group met on Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. *[The program has endured on a more limited scale and continues as recently as 2007.]*

In February, 1981, the Annual Chatham United Methodist Antique Show reached its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Receipts exceeded expenses over the years, providing the United Methodist Women with an aggregate of \$83,028 for use in service to the church, the community and the world. (Franklin)

During the summer of 1981, the youth and adults from Chatham United Methodist Church became involved in a program they named RISE [the Risingville (New York) Intercommunity Service Effort]. Under the energetic and creative leadership of Reverend Dale Forsman, RISE started as a joint effort between youth and adults in Chatham and Caryl and Noel Sylvester of the Risingville, NY United Methodist Church. Risingville is located in Steuben County in the southern tier of the Appalachians in New York State. *(Caryl was formerly a member of the Chatham United Methodist Church.)*

RISE is a work service project offering "hands-on" experience in a Christian setting. Volunteers repair homes, making them warmer, drier, and safer, for those who are physically or financially unable to do so themselves.



## The Reverend Dale Henry Forsman

Associate Pastor  
(1976-1996)

(Photograph taken in 1980)

In the early years, for example, during two one-week periods, a total of 40 “young volunteers [worked] on seven sites, including two churches and five homes, each of which [was] much in need of paint or repair.” More recently, over 200 volunteers from 14 churches worked from 6 central locations over a 3 week period.

RISE has been a very positive experience for our teens. After participating in RISE, many young people developed a strong interest in serving the community.

In the church’s Annual Report, Reverend Dale H. Forsman characterized the RISE program in this way:

*“Our direction is three-fold: we are a missional program with an educational emphasis which is seen in general as a program of Christian discipleship for youth and adults.” “The program is designed intentionally not only to serve others, but to help those who perform the service to grow in their understanding of others and of the basic intentions of the Christian faith.”*

Over a dozen churches in Chatham and nearby communities soon recognized the merits of the Chatham United Methodist Church’s RISE program. RISE, though based at our church, eventually became a separately organized and funded program. It remains a mission program of the Chatham United Methodist Church. Through 2007, over 1,200 volunteers, high school youth and adults, have repaired hundreds of homes.

Mary Kashmanian, one of many adults who are active in RISE, related that

*One of the individuals her work crew helped was a woman disabled by bad arthritis. Even though the woman had a motorized scooter she was homebound, because she couldn’t get the scooter out of the house to use. The woman couldn’t stand for a long period of time and could only lift her arms shoulder high. She had never even been in her own backyard. (News)*

*“We built two ramps, widened a door to make it accessible, did some house painting, laid some patio stones and worked in the garden.... We enjoyed getting to know her and learning of all the things she had done in her active life as a nurse. She said having us there was like having Christmas.” While in the area, the workers slept in Hornell High School on the floor of the wood shop. The YMCA allowed them to use its facilities to shower every evening after work was done. (News)*

Mary Kashmanian is one of many dedicated adult and youth volunteers in the church. (Mary)

In 1981, Claire Strandberg was our student assistant minister. She led our Bible Seminar on Sunday mornings and made extensive calls and pastoral visits.

Also, in 1981, the church produced "Gospel in a New Key, Jazz Settings of Liturgical Texts" by Reverend Bruce Talbert. It was based on Reverend Talbert's "A Jersey City Jazz Liturgy" and his "Reflections of God's Glory." Reverend Talbert was a close friend of Reverend Dale Forsman and, though blind, was a very active and talented musician.

Early in 1982, the Family Life Council in our church organized our first Family Retreat, using the Conference Camping Center, Camp Aldersgate, in Swartzwood, N.J. As Associate Pastor Reverend Dale Forsman said,

*"Families need the time together, set apart, to study, relax, worship, and share in the joys of family life."*

In the Spring of 1982, the church women started a class for mentally impaired special children. The 11 a.m. program for the handicapped allowed parents to attend any church of their choice and then return to pick up their children. Some time ago, Leola Anderson had started a class in music for such special children.

Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson preached in England during the summer of 1982.

An endowment fund, called the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund, was established in June 1982. The example of the principal grantor (\$20,000) was followed by donations over several years from many members of the congregation. In addition to the initial gift, the principal donor also provided a three-year challenge gift. The donor would give an additional \$1.00 (up to \$80,000) for every \$3.00 donated by others. Reverend Dr. Simpson said,

*"What a splendid birthday gift for our church in its 150<sup>th</sup> year!"*

The anonymous grantor and the congregation recognized that the economic environment of the Chathams and the surrounding communities might change over the long-term. The purpose of the Fund is to assist future congregations in maintaining the programs and projects that have made our



A WALK WITH METHODIST HISTORY IN CHATHAM 1982

At the Cornerstone in the Memorial Garden.

Left to right, front row: Gwen Simpson (back to us), -, Ray Lauver, Kay Lauver, Beth Haberstroh, Helen Benatre (in blue), <sup>Cherette (Pic. 4.10)</sup> Chris Plambeek, Dick Plambeek, Carol Schroppe, Floyd Schroppe, Dale Forsman (Associate Pastor), Bob Simpson (Senior Pastor, speaking). Left to right, in the back: Megan Simpson (behind bush), -, -, Don Haberstroh, -, Tyler Engelman (in red), Susan Hinderliter, Bob Stannard, Barbara Plambeek, (Leola Anderson (Director of Music, hidden), Lee Hinderliter and Enid Sternberg (hidden)).

church such a vibrant factor in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Towards this end, the income from the Fund was to be reinvested during its formative years and the principal was to be invested in such a manner as to provide a satisfactory measure of capital appreciation. (Annual Report)

On Sunday, September 26, 1982, some of the congregation took a walking tour of Chatham, visiting the Morrell house on Main Street where the first Methodist gathering occurred in 1786; the spot where the "union" church stood; the site of the 1832 church on the corner of Summit Avenue and Main Street; and the place where the Center Street Church stood for almost 60 years.

As part of the continuing year-long 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 1982, the Church members had a birthday party on Sunday, October 31, 1982. The party was held at 10 a.m. between the two worship services, replacing the church school and adult seminar programs scheduled for that time. Twelve birthday cakes in 12 different locations in the church helped people who were born in the same month enjoy a party together.

The party atmosphere was enhanced by the launch of many balloons carrying messages of greeting, followed by the "cake eating." There were also commemorative plates and tiles sold in the church office during the week honoring the anniversary.

Reverend Donald D. Ostroth joined the staff as assistant minister. He particularly assisted in pastoral visitations and outreach to prospective new members. He had been pastor in four other United Methodist Churches and had served for 13 years as the pastoral counselor of Marble Collegiate Church in New York City, under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. (Don retired early in 1984.)

During the 1982-1983 church year, the Chatham United Methodist Church made a special effort to reach out to the handicapped. Elizabeth Gventer, a student at Drew University and a member of the church signed for the deaf at the Sunday morning worship service. Her brother, David, is totally deaf and she learned how to sign in order to communicate with him. Also, large print hymnals were made available for visually impaired people.

In May 1982, "Go Ask Alice" and "Flowers for Algernon," were the fifth and sixth productions of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship.

THE  
CHATHAM  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH

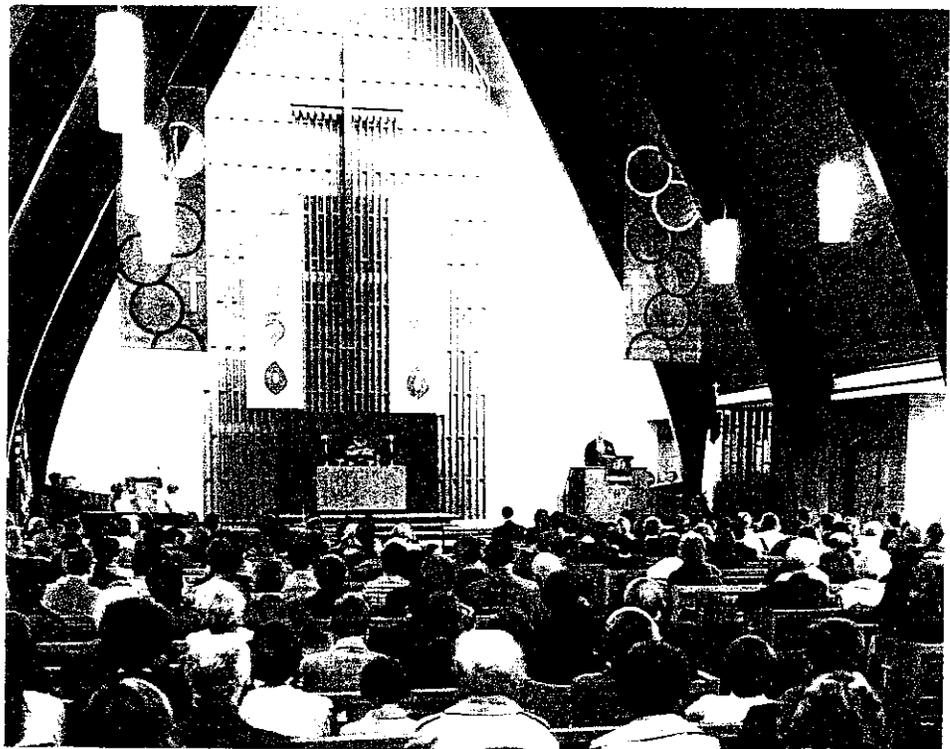
150th  
ANNIVERSARY  
1832 - 1982



CHURCH  
STAFF

Minister  
Associate Minister  
Assistant Minister  
Director of Music  
Director of Christian Educ.  
Adm. Church Secy.  
Asst. Secy., Treas.  
Lay Visitor  
Building Supt.  
Assistant Supt.

Robert Drew Simpson  
Dale H. Forsman  
Donald D. Ostroth  
Leola Anderson  
Faye Kennedy  
Joy Bland  
Marion Schmitter  
Pat Davis  
Richard Colburn  
Sal Sandoval



In November, 1982, Kathleen A. Stolz, a young wife and mother in the church, responded to a "call" to ministry. Her decision came following a journey to places of reconciliation among the people of Northern Ireland. During the ensuing years, Kathy earned a masters degree from Drew Theological Seminary and was ordained a Diaconal Minister. (Annual Report)

The "Easter Eve Vigil" was first performed on Saturday evening before Easter in 1983 and has now become a tradition at the Chatham United Methodist Church. The Easter Eve Vigil is a worship service that was the conception of Reverend Bruce Talbert, a jazz pianist and pastor of the Grace United Methodist Church in North Plainfield and Jay Duke, jazz musician. The Program notes said:

*"The Vigil, joined with New Orleans jazz, is a wedding of two long-standing traditions. The Easter Eve Vigil, one of the earliest Christian services, properly brings together Good Friday and Easter Day. The New Orleans Jazz Funeral, practiced in America for over a hundred years, allows for mourning the loss of a loved one and celebrating that person's (as well as our own) new life in Christ with depth and richness. The Reverend Dale H. Forsman, Associate Pastor of the church, was instrumental in producing Mr. Talbert and Mr. Duke's creation in the Chatham United Methodist Church."*

The Easter Eve Vigil incorporated Bible readings and traditional hymns, such as "Amazing Grace, "Nearer My God to Thee" and "The Old Rugged Cross," with selections by the six-piece jazz band. At the conclusion of the service, the congregation marched behind the band, holding umbrellas overhead, from inside the sanctuary, out to the street sidewalk and then into the church Fellowship Hall, as the musicians played "When the Saints Go Marching In" and other joyous spirituals. More music and singing, as well as refreshments, were enjoyed in Fellowship Hall.

In May 1983, the Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship produced Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." This was their seventh production.

In the 1983 Annual Report, Reverend Dr. Simpson related an encounter he had with a visitor in the church:

*"A visitor from another church in the community paid our church a wonderful compliment. I met her at one of our affairs which draws community-wide interest. Her words were: 'We are wearing out your church!' It is a marvelous tribute to the way our church is open and serving. One Sunday evening during Lent as I was*

leaving the church, I looked up at the building. The lights were on from one end to the other. People everywhere! From the Junior and Senior Highs, to the A.A. Group, to the Lenten Hymn Sing - - good things for people were happening."

Bob continued on a prophetic note:

*"But all the activities we share together ought not close our eyes to very real concerns we need to face in the life of our church and community.*

*"For one, I am [aware that there is a change occurring in the] nature of the communities we serve. For instance, from what small samplings we have, there is a growing non-Protestant population in our area, while at the same time there is more than adequate church programming for the current Protestant community.*

*"A second concern is directly related to another dimension of change. It is the decline in the number of children available for Christian education. This may be documented by citing the closing of schools in Chatham, Chatham Township and Madison."*

*"A third concern, not unrelated to the others, has to do with slowly declining church membership (now at 1,311) and attendance. This is already happening, and the answer is obviously not to be found in reaching the unchurched as had previously been thought."*

*"My final concern I have has to do with the facilities in which all our activities occur. These buildings are getting older, and we all need to take seriously the strong leadership our Trustees are giving in building care and maintenance.*

Bob closed with comments that looked beyond the concerns:

*... beyond them "lies the greatest treasure of all - - our people dedicated to Christ. Such is reflected in the hundreds who give of time, talent and resources to make this church so great."*

A pictorial directory of the church members was published in 1983.

*Reverend Dr. Robert Simpson was Senior Pastor, Reverend Dale Forsman, Associate Minister, and the Assistant Minister was Reverend Donald D. Ostroth. Leola Anderson was Director of Music and Organist,*

*Faye Kennedy was Director of Christian Education and Reverend Kenneth Austenberg, Pastoral Counselor.*

*The Church Administrative Secretary was Joy Bland and Marion Schmitter was Assistant Church Secretary.*

*Richard Colburn was the Building Superintendent and Sal Sandoval was his Assistant.*

Chic Hansen joined the staff of the church to direct a Junior High Choir and the Genesis Choir, an intergenerational group including senior high students and adults. Robin Hansen, Chic's wife, also led choirs.

*Chic and Robin were especially keen on including high school age youth who were interested in singing in the Chancel Choir, many of whom were not members of our church. Robin had a special relationship with the youth because she also directed the choral music program at Chatham High School. For example, Debbie Behling said, "Our daughter, Sue, thoroughly enjoyed the singing. She also felt very welcomed by the other choir members. She continued to sing in church choirs, largely due to the positive experience in high school."*

"Journey To The Day," a sensitive drama about mental health, was produced on June 21-22, 1984. The program notes said:

*"Using humor, powerfully presented, and true to life, it gives the good news about how persons are helped each day to return to full lives of meaning and purpose. It is a play by Roger O. Hirson and is the eighth production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship."*

In 1984, Reverend Henry Gventer began a program at the church called the "Morris Experiment." When he learned that several members of the church were unemployed, he decided to do something concrete for them and for others in the community like them. The purpose of the weekly meeting was to discuss whatever job related problems the group wished to discuss, such as problems encountered when preparing resumes or handling an interview and, later, how to handle a difficult week at work. The group did not function as a job resource service, but it provided an opportunity to talk problems over with somebody who had nothing to gain by listening and offering suggestions or feedback. The group was small and attendance varied with the economy throughout the 12-15 years during which Reverend Gventer offered the program.

Our Lay Speakers in 1985 were Neil Eriksen, Jesse Benton and Otmar Schreiber.

Saralou D. Caliri was Director of Christian Education in 1985-86.

## "SEASONED" MINISTRIES

Reverend Dale Forsman remarked in the 1985 Annual Report,

*"Our education program continued to be one of the largest and most wide-ranging [United Methodist] programs in the northeast. We have well over 900 persons involved in the work of growth in faith together. [The programs encompass*

*people from the youngest children to the oldest adults.] Our new Director of Christian Education, Saralou Caliri, has brought energy and real theological verve to our church school."*

The physical property required a lot of attention in 1984-1985. The United Methodist Women funded several major projects over the years. In 1984, these included waterproofing the Mercer Avenue parsonage basement, a major over-haul of one of the church air conditioning units, and the replacement of the largest refrigerator in the church kitchen. Additional projects around the church included repairs to the parking lot, painting the outside trim of the sanctuary and interior painting in the nursery school area.

During 1984-1985, the UMW's three special projects (Fall and Spring Rummage Sales and February Antique Show) provided not only with fellowship, but also raised approximately \$11,000. One-half of these funds was used during the year to help pay for maintenance, repairs and replacements within the church and the parsonages. The remaining funds were donated to inner city needs, the New Mexico Navajo School and missionary work.

On June 16, 1985 the church celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson's appointment to the Chatham United Methodist Church by giving a surprise party for him. The following "Tribute," written by Bob Thompson, captures the tone of the party:

- Twenty years is a long, long tour - - To survive with sanity was your goal, I'm sure.
- I think you've done it - - with room to spare - - Kept a smile - - but lost your hair.
- You've kept us together through thick and thin. The straight and narrow - - and free from sin?
- Forget the bad times and remember the good. It doesn't get easier - - no one said it would!
- You've touched the lives of many - - that's true! You're always there when we're feeling blue.
- Baptisms, funerals and marriages too - - You've done it all - - Praise the Lord for you!
- Although the hours are long and the meetings are many - - You've made us watch our every penny.
- Author, scholar, counselor, jogger and preacher, golfer, gourmet, jokester and teacher.
- You're all these things and such a 'big wheel' - - Words can't express - - just how we feel.
- You're greatest asset is the personal touch. Your jokes, however, are a bit too much?!
- What else can you say to a real great guy? You're the best Bob, and that's no lie!

- So here's a gift from all your friends. Our love for you just never ends!

The Christmas Eve Family Service in 1985 was a musical drama, "Why the Chimes Rang." Becky (Gibby) Dembo scripted the story and Charles "Chic" Hansen and Joan Hazen composed the music.

During 1986, the Reverends William and H. Virginia Jackson-Adams became affiliated with our church. Virginia ("Jenny") is the Chaplain at Drew University and William, after years of pastoral appointments, took a position with the Theological School designed to foster closer ties between the School and its United Methodist constituency. (Annual Report)

Kathleen A. Stolz began duties in 1986 as Director of Christian Education in September. She and her husband, Richard, are the parents of three children. During this time, Kathy was attending Drew University Theological School in the Master of Divinity program on a part-time basis.

Approximately 200 children and youth were attending church school classes in 1986.

A brief publicity release outlined the program of the church for 1986-1987. This serves as a profile of the church's service to the congregation and the community-at-large:

*"Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson and Reverend Dale H. Forsman, serve as ministers. Leola Anderson is the Organist and Choir Director, Charles Hansen is Director of the Covenant Choir and Reverend Kenneth Austenberg serves as Counseling Minister.*

*"There are choirs for adults and children of all ages, beginning with Kindermusic.*

*"A luncheon is held for older adults in the area each Monday, September through June. Church members and service groups in the community prepare the luncheon on a rotating basis. A drop-in center is also available for seniors each Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. A retired men's group meets the third Thursday each month.*

*"A program called 'Horizon' – a young adult group for ages 18-30 has over fifty active members from Churches in the Chathams and surrounding communities. SCEEP, a tutoring program for under-privileged children in Newark, is held weekly and members from the church volunteer to work with individual youths.*

*"The church youth program involves sixth through twelfth graders in JYF or MYF, with 100 active young people participating. Approximately 30 youth and adults*

travel to New York State for a week each summer to aid needy families in home repairs under the RISE program.

*"Approximately 200 United Methodist Women have general and circle meetings each month. Their work and benevolences are partially supported through large fall and spring rummage sales and the Annual Antique Show in February. Two services of worship are held each Sunday - a less formal family service at 9 a.m. and a traditional service at 11 a.m. A crib nursery for children from birth to age three and preschool care are available from 8:50 a.m. to 11 a.m. Church School and Senior High Seminar begin at 9:50 a.m. An adult seminar, Beginner's Bible Seminar and Bible Fellowship are held each Sunday between the two services. A Class for Special Children is available at 11 a.m.*

*"Various program committees, the Trustees, the Finance Committee and other committees meet monthly to plan, organize and direct the many activities of the church."*

In May 1986, the Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship offered their ninth dramatic production, called "Glimpses." Reverend Forsman said,

*"This is a collection of the works of many talented, young playwrights. Through the characters, the playwrights share their thoughts and ideas, their dreams and hopes, sometimes through unusual and often outrageously bizarre humor of today's youth. The work takes the form of monologues and short dramatic pieces, each one of which is composed by someone who is adolescent and is designed to be acted by someone who is also adolescent."*

Until the late 1960s, the church gave a large proportion of its benevolence funds to the formal (and generally impersonal) world and national missions. Reflecting on the changed emphasis in our mission giving, Mary Emler said,

*"Now, so much goes to directly to urban actions that are really missions to which we can relate. It's a different form of mission, because that's where the need is, we feel, and you can see it, right there; the homeless, the children that are in trouble, the needs of the food pantries, the SCEEP programs, the LINK Community School in Newark. (Emler)*

*"One group comes to mind. Babyland is a program in Newark to encourage mothers to be able to go out to work. Childcare." Bob Simpson remembered in the midst of the Newark riots going down taking furniture to that first Babyland apartment. "We have supported it through our mission program for years and years. That's the kind of emphasis that our church has picked up." (Emler)*

On Sunday, June 15, 1986, the church celebrated the anniversary of ten years of ministry by Reverend Dale Henry Forsman at the Chatham United

Methodist Church. The youth were primarily responsible for, as Dale put it, "the nice things that happened to me." He added, "The comments, funny and serious, were so terrific!" "If I've been some of the things everyone spoke about, it's because I've worked with truly great folks like you." The youth leading the tribute were Keith Larson, Kirsten Thompson and Marcie Doll.

A twelve member sub-committee of church leaders developed a report in 1986: "Strategies for Growth, A Profile of Chatham United Methodist Church with Goals for Growth."

The report provides an excellent description the church and the community in 1986:

*"Chatham United Methodist Church has a membership which is dropping slightly each year, although not at as large a rate as the national average. However, in spite of a numerical decrease in book membership, attendance is growing each year. This increase in attendance can be attributed to the present excellent staff leadership, and the many diversified programs and opportunities for service. The congregation is very transient reflecting the nature of the community of which it is a part, with members moving in and out of the community with great frequency. Membership is drawn from a white, middle to upper class socio-economic group, from several communities, but with the largest part from the two Chathams. The largest single-age group of the congregation is the 30-45 category (28%)."*

*"The church is located centrally, with many apartments close by which house largely senior adults, widowed or unmarried. The church serves these seniors with a meaningful variety of programs; drop-in center, weekly luncheons, and as a meeting place for the Chatham Borough Senior Citizens Club."*

*"The Chatham United Methodist Church is served by a staff ministry. Special ministries include music, youth and education. We are at present fortunate to have on staff a Director of Christian Education who works closely with the Associate Minister who is directly responsible for programs for youth."*

*"Our prospects for membership growth are not strong, for we lose members, who move away, as fast as new ones come into the congregation. The Chatham Interfaith Council is presently studying the unchurched segment of our population. The single young adult group seems to be the group for which our programs are weakest. The family church image projected in a suburban church such as Chatham is a definite barrier to this age group, and to newly married childless couples as well. For any prospective members, an outdoor sign with church name, directional signs within community, signs locating parking, church maps posted within the building, floodlights on sign and/or steeple (none of which currently exist) and more community publicity with pictures are all seen as attention getting and would be helpful in attracting visitors."*

*"Church school attendance is growing, against a declining church membership. This growth can be attributed largely to the adult seminar program. Seminar offerings on Sunday mornings, held between the two morning worship services and while children are in Sunday School, offer a choice of two or three programs by skilled professionals, and are an important strength in the overall church program. The church school is strengthening under the leadership of the present director. It offers a high teacher ratio, diversity in types of learning situations, a consistent curriculum, team teaching, a dedicated staff of teachers and is rebuilding numerically.*

*"The community is fairly homogeneous; non-ethnic, suburban. There is an under-current of class consciousness between township and borough, and between certain geographical areas of the borough which should be recognized. The Roman Catholic segment of the population is the largest in the community, 60% and growing. Chatham has the youth problems common to today's society of both parents working, of increasing vandalism, of the rising usage of drugs and alcohol. There are a growing number of single parent homes within the community. Possible merger of the school systems of the Chathams could cause youth problems in which the church could exert a strong influence to create and maintain harmony. [To the contrary, the merger was supported by the youth and occurred smoothly and without event.] Increasing inflation and rising cost of living has increased the number of financially needy citizens."*

**The report concluded:**

*"It will be a challenge in the coming year or two to improve our ministry to young singles - - unmarried and single parents. Programs to meet their needs must be developed and implemented in order that this segment of our congregation and community will feel the love and concern of a church home.*

*"The newly created Church and Society Work Area needs the support of the Council-on-Ministries that it may develop and grow and offer to the congregation exploration and study of the needs of today's society. Chatham United Methodist Church should show itself to the community as a concerned church and should offer to its members opportunities for action upon the concerns of us all. Increased interaction with local community groups will help us to achieve the Work Area's objectives.*

*"Our membership goal should be to maintain numerical strength, while offering deeper personal growth. This can be accomplished by a strengthening of personal evangelism and a clearer identification of the church's programs through publicity."*

During November 1986, the Chatham United Methodist Church celebrated 200 years of Methodism in Chatham. Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, was declared Heritage Sunday. Special music was presented at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services. At 11 a.m., the Chancel Choir sang the "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi. Soloists were Lois Green and Connie Hall, sopranos, and Robin



## Church Staff - 1988

Back Row, left to right:

Doug Davis; Boris Borecki; Rev. Dale H. Forsman; Kathy Stolz; Pat Davis.

Front Row, left to right:

Cynthis Wieboldt, Leola Anderson; Ellie Ball; Grace DeRosia; Rev. Dr. Robert D. Simpson; Marion Schmitter.

Hansen, contralto. Strings and organ accompanied the work and Leola Anderson was director. The special music at 9 a.m. was under the direction of Chic Hansen. At both services, Dr. Robert Simpson preached a heritage sermon, "Major Morrell Returns." In the evening, the annual Charge Conference was convened at which time the congregation discussed, "The 12 Keys to Becoming a More Effective Church."

On Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, between the worship services, the members of the church had a 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration when many historical artifacts were displayed in Fellowship Hall. (Two-Hundred)

"Here and Now," the tenth production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship, was given in May 1987.

Ted Hatten, a student at Drew Theological Seminary, joined the staff of the Church. His wife, Lana Lyddon, a dancer of New York experience and a particular interest in liturgical dance joined him.

*Ted had a great influence on the high school age youth at the time he was at Chatham United Methodist Church. Debbie Behling recalled that when Ted began his student ministry here, the Senior High Sunday School program was languishing. Ted not only led a meaningful education hour, with a religious basis, he also proved that you can be "cool" and Christian at the same time. (In 2007, Ted was pastor of Farmers Chapel United Methodist Church, Indianola, Iowa.)*

Barbara Knox joined the staff of the church in 1988. She was a student at Drew University Theological Seminary. Her ministry with us was immediately directed to the senior citizens of the church. Being a woman of some years herself, she was able to bring the wisdom of years and trials to her caring. Among the other ministries that she gave us, she re-awakened for us the power and beauty of the Psalms. She often referred to the great help which Psalm 139 has given her during her struggle with a life-long physical handicap. Barbara was ordained a Deacon in 1989 and was appointed to serve in New York State.

Marjorie G. Eriksen, long a member of our church with her husband, Neil, was ordained Deacon in 1989 and received an appointment within the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference. (Annual Report)

Kathy Stolz continued to grow in her ministry among us. By 1988, her work toward a Master of Theological Studies was nearing completion. She

# Church Staff - 1989



Robert Simpson, Minister; Barbara Knox,  
Asst. Minister; Dale Forsman, Assoc. Minister;  
Ted Hatten, Asst. Minister



Chic Hansen, Director of Music;  
Robin Hansen, Choir Director;  
Rob Porachan, Organist, Choir Director



Kathy Stolz, Director of Christian Education



Rev. Kenneth A. Austenberg  
Pastoral Counselor



Boleslaw Borecki, Building Superintendent  
Doug Canfield, Rick Kiley,  
Greg Klotz, Tina Kauppinen, Associates



Cynthia Wieboldt, Church Secretary  
Marion Schmitter, Admin. Secretary

decided to move toward Diaconal Ministry as a lay person and received the approval of the congregation on May 1, 1989. (Annual Report)

The Reverend Dr. Thomas Ogletree became affiliated with our church in 1988. Tom recently became Dean of the Theological School at Drew University and Professor of Theological Ethics.

An extensive repair on the roof over Fellowship ("Rodda") Hall was one of the many projects completed in 1988. (Annual Report)

## WE ENCOUNTER A TIME OF TRANSITION

Bob Simpson, Senior Pastor, indicated privately to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee in the fall of 1988 that he expected to retire at the end of the 1989-1990 appointment year.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee immediately commenced a church-wide survey that focused on describing the existing programs of the church, defining the needs of the congregation and citing the strengths and areas for improvement in the church and in the community. This study would be of great help to the church leadership. In addition, the Committee hoped that the results of the study would assist Bishop Neil Irons, the Cabinet and our District Superintendent, Rev. Betty Lou Young, in selecting a senior pastor to replace Bob Simpson who would best meet the requirements and circumstances of our church in 1989 and beyond. A sub-committee was selected to lead the study and a report was completed and issued early in 1989. *[This Report is in the Archives.]*

The Friday Niters' programs continued to be very interesting and well-attended. For example, in the 1988-1989 season, the programs included:

- *Dr. Robert Bull, Professor of Church History at Drew University as discerned through archaeological research: "Search for Caesarea."*
- *Blue Ribbon Cloggers, Appalachian folk dance demonstration with audience participation.*
- *Chatham Community Band, Christmas program.*
- *Alice Hughes, costume coordinator for the Papermill Playhouse: a program on costumes showing how they dress and change quickly, complete with actors and song writers.*
- *Dr. Douglas Simon, Professor of Political Science at Drew University: "Predictions for the '90's."*

- Richard Kane, Audubon Society: "Wild Australia."
- David Shipler, Pulitzer prize winning journalist [a son of this church]: *Prospect for Democracy in the Soviet Union*.
- *Progressive Dinner in members' homes.*

The attendance at Friday Nite's ranged between 80 and 150 with an average of 125, the exception being 300 who heard David Shipler speak. David Shipler had grown up in our church during the 1950s and 1960s. Shipler started with The New York Times in 1966 and reported from Saigon and Moscow before serving as Jerusalem Bureau Chief for The Times from 1979 to 1984. He later joined the Washington bureau of The Times. He also wrote many books, including "Arab and Jew -- Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land" in 1986.

On January 10, 1989, the Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson formally announced in a letter to the congregation that he would retire from pastoral ministry in June of 1990.

His letter to the congregation said, in part:

*"I am now past my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday and have been pastor of a church for nearly 44 years. We have worked together in Chatham for 25 of those years, more than half of my ministry. The time seems right to turn to some other avenues of ministry where, on a less rigorous schedule, I may be able to make some contribution as the Lord directs.*

*"My 25 years in Chatham have flown by. Chatham is home to me and my family. The richness of Christian fellowship and service I have been privileged to enjoy among you is beyond description. All of you will continue to be very much in my mind and heart. Because we have shared together both joys and sorrows, our bond of love will always last.*

*"Chatham Church, in my opinion has never been stronger. We know who we are and where we are going. It is an ideal time for new leadership to join this congregation in moving Chatham United Methodist Church into the 90's and beyond.*

*"I plan to assume some responsibilities at Drew as the university looks toward an exciting time in its history. I will also pursue my interests in Methodist historical research and writing. Megan will continue teaching at Drew, where she is an Assistant Professor in the English Department. Such continued involvement will be possible because we will not be far away. We will be living in Branchburg Township in Somerset County. Be assured, we will continue to be interested in CUMC and in each of you.*

*"Faithfully, Bob"*

The church had a surprise party on January 29<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Miss Leola Anderson's 30 years as Organist and Music Director of the Chatham United Methodist Church.

As part of an Arts '89 Festival on May 12-14, the Chatham United Methodist Church held an art exhibit featuring many of the artists from the church. On May 13, 1989, Leola Anderson directed a children's production "Welcome to an Adventure in Agapeland" which had "The Music Machine" as its centerpiece play.

Also, on May 13-14, 1989, the youth produced "You're A Good Man Charlie Brown," by Clark Gesner, a musical show by the Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship and directed by Carol Forsman. This was the eleventh production of The Fellowship Players. (*"You're a Good Man ...." was produced again over 10 years later, also by the Fellowship Players Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship.*)

A pictorial directory of the church members was published in 1989.

*Reverend Dr. Robert Simpson was Senior Pastor, Reverend Dale Forsman, Associate Minister, and two Assistant Ministers were Reverend Barbara Knox and Ted Hatten. Chic Hansen was Director of Music, Robin Hansen was Choir Director and Leola Anderson and Rob Porachan were Organists.*

*Kathy Stolz was Director of Christian Education and Reverend Kenneth Austenberg, Pastoral Counselor.*

*The Church Administrative Secretary was Marion Schmitter and Cynthia Wieboldt was Church Secretary.*

*Boleslaw Borecki was the Custodian and four church youth, Doug Canfield, Rick Kiley, Greg Klotz and Tina Kauppinen, were Assistant Custodians.*

A few humorous stories concern the portable microphones. The ministers and others occasionally left the microphone on just prior to, during, or shortly after the worship services. For example, on one occasion the congregation overheard sounds emanated from the washroom. At other times, a less than "good" singing voice was picked up; certainly not from Dale, however, as he had a wonderful singing voice.

Our church was home for twelve temporarily homeless persons during the week of July 23-30, 1989. This marked the Chatham United Methodist Church's first experience as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network for the Homeless. Reverend Dale Forsman, Kathy Stolz, Hilary Stannard and Marge Birdsall guided the new effort. The week-long guests lived in the classrooms on the first floor and ate in Fellowship Hall. Many volunteers from the church

helped in various ways to convert the classrooms to bedrooms, prepare and serve food, remain on hand to host the guests and stay overnight on cots. The church served as home for guests four times a year. *[The church was continuing to participate in this program as recently as 2007.]*

Marge Birdsall remembered:

*"The Interfaith Hospitality Network had been started a year earlier by Kathy Olsen in Summit and we became one of the founding churches. On the first day, Kathy Stolz and I were anxiously waiting for the first guests and Pat Davis had prepared a nice dinner. Nobody arrived. We even looked out of the front kitchen window to see if anyone was coming. We expected that they were coming from the Madison Area YMCA, where they showered, and might be walking. We joked about getting into the car and driving around to pick up people who looked like they might be searching for the church. However, since nobody had arrived, we decided to sit down and enjoy the good dinner Pat had prepared. It was only later that week that our first guests arrived."*

New United Methodist Hymnals arrived during the summer of 1989. The hymnal contains most of the hymns that were in the 1965 hymnal, plus nearly 60 of the hymns contained in the Supplemental Book of Hymns and a large number of hymns from other ethnic traditions. New services for Baptism, Marriage and Communion were included. Also, the Psalter, which is read responsively, was designed to be accompanied by the music and words for fitting antiphons.

Bob Simpson reflected on the church's growth and position around this time by saying:

*"I feel that the community is changing significantly [as noted earlier] and, though the Church has grown to become the largest one in our Annual Conference, it is a church that is regional, that is, people come to the church from many communities because of the program and that, I feel, is essential."*

An evening of tribute to Leola Anderson was held later that year, on Friday, September 22, 1989. She was retiring this year after thirty years of service as Organist and Choir Director.

At the time Miss Anderson came to Chatham, there was a Chancel Choir of men and women and a Junior Choir of about 30 children. Over the years of her service, she made various changes and additions to the music program. The Praise Choir, Carol Choir, Wesley Boy Choristers, Junior and Senior Choirs and Kindermusic were established as essential parts of the

music program for children and youth. Miss Anderson was especially proud of her program of music for special children, which continued for 18 years.

Miss Anderson invested a lot of her time in the children of the church. As was expected, she taught them songs and hymns for the worship services. However, she went way beyond this discipline. Leola also instructed the children and youth in notes, tonality, music symbols and phrases, and various instruments. Many people felt that she gave the children and youth a comprehensive music education. She also tutored many youth in piano and organ music.

During the 30 years of her music ministry at Chatham, Leola had about six or seven organ students. In a 1990 conversation Leola said,

*“Two of them, Diane Mahoney, now Pivamik, and Norma DeMott, now Doyle, became so interested in organ music that they decided that was what they wanted to do with their lives,” she said. “Norma got her Master’s in Church Music at Southern Methodist University, was a church organist and married a trumpeter from West Point, and that is where they now live. Norma has had the opportunity to play on that mammoth, huge, wonderful organ at West Point Chapel. Diane was the Organist at Susquehanna University and got her Masters Degree at Montclair State. Diane is now (1990) the Director of Music and Organist at the United Methodist Church in Madison.” [In 2006, Diane is the Minister of Music at the New Providence United Methodist Church.] (Oral History – Leola)*

Leola Anderson started many beautiful worship services in the Chatham United Methodist Church, such as the White Gift Service, the Family Christmas Eve Service and the Thanksgiving Procession. You could find Miss Anderson in the church at all hours of the day and many evening hours; well beyond the schedule outlined in her “terms of employment.” She would be with students, working on her programs, plans and music and, occasionally, helping keep the church a lovely place in which to meet and worship. She always crafted the music of the worship services to match the special meanings of the day.

While at Chatham, she received a Masters Degree in Theological Studies at Drew University. Leola lived in Madison.

Miss Anderson said that she wanted the congregation to know that she truly loves them.

*“I want [the congregation] to remember,” she said, “that I did introduce people to music which, in my estimation, was always good music and music that had a reason*

*for being; music that was appropriate and fitting to the service, music that was a challenge and music that widened horizons - - all because we sing about music for the whole world. We talk about music of the spheres and I think that music is just part of living and is one of God's ways of loving us, giving us music." (Oral History – Leola)*

On Saturday, September 23, 1989, 119 church leaders [were invited to and most] attended a Leadership Encounter to reflect and develop their collective vision for the Chatham United Methodist Church in the coming five to ten years. The report from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee formed the starting-point for the discussions. A goal was set to be "Vibrant and Alive in '95."

On October 27, 1989, Peggy Melvin, Debbie Smith and Kathy Stolz sent a letter to the "Friends of Dr. Simpson" saying: "In celebration of Dr. Simpson's 25 years of ministry in Chatham, a commemorative quilt is being planned." We will supply you with one or more 10 x 10 squares of white muslin on which you may draw or stitch something memorable ... depicting personal, church and historic interests from Dr. Simpson's life" in ministry "during the past 25 years." Hilda Druback, Elise Davis, Joyce Wenzel, Marge Savoie and several other women completed and assembled the quilt. The result, finished in 1990, was a large, beautiful quilt.

Reverend Barbara Knox concluded her two-year ministry to the senior citizens of the church in 1990. Upon graduation from Drew University Theological Seminary, she was appointed to a church in the state of New York. We missed her friendship and warmth.

Ted Hatten also graduated from Drew University Theological School with a Master of Divinity degree. He had served as our assistant minister for two years. "He will become a probationary member of the Iowa Conference and will be ordained a deacon there."

Reverend Dr. Simpson again reflected on the past 45 years:

*"I think of the changes that have evolved over my years of the ministry for 45 years. I reflect on that very often. [For example,] when I started in Mount Tabor in my first Pastorate, if any particular Sunday we had had young people, young women doing religious dance, we would have all ended up in jail; that would have been the end of the line! Today it's looked upon as an important religious art form." (Emler)*

Paul Emler said (in 1990):

*"One of the things that encourages me, when we came [to the church in 1949] we had a group of people that were here, and I'm sure that some people at the time thought that when this active group disappears, things will go down hill. But they were replaced, not gradually, but quickly, with another group of people who worked with them but finally took their place. [Over the years, I, too,] have thought several times when active members have left, how can we ever replace them; but we have been fortunate in the kind of church we have had and the kind of leadership [willing] to replace them. I look around now and see the kind of younger families that we have and the kind of leadership that is developing and if we can keep that up, we have no problem with the future of the church." (Emler)*

Connie Ehmann gave a similar testimony:

*"My years in the choir meant a lot to me. I got great personal reward from the music. Aside from that it's been in my retirement years that I really felt that my service to the church has been most rewarding to me and also that I feel I've accomplished the most in the church. I spent [years] actively leading the United Methodist Women in the church, as leader of Worship Work area and as Lay Leader. I think being Lay Leader was most rewarding; I just thoroughly enjoyed that time. I think it was only because I have the time in retirement that I could give. I sort of felt that I was carrying on trying to do some of the things that [my husband] Bill had done while he was alive. Those years in church leadership are coming at the end of my time here and have been very, very satisfying."*

Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson, senior pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church during the last 25 years, retired on June 10, 1990 from his 45 years of ministry in the pulpit. For many years during his pastorate in Chatham, he was an Adjunct Professor at Drew University Seminary in the area of Pastoral Ministry.

A press release added, in part,

*"Dr. Simpson has served on the United Methodist Board of Ordained Ministry for the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, as well as on its archives. He is editor of their annual publication. He also served as trustee for the Morris County Jail Chaplaincy Council, the Overlook Hospital Chaplaincy Council and was founder of the Morristown Memorial Hospital Chaplaincy."*

Bob continued to serve Drew University as a Trustee for a total of 28 years - - a period of time continuing well into his retirement. He served as head of the student life committee and was a member of the search committee, which

led to the presidency of former Governor, Thomas Kean. In retirement, Bob worked on research at the United Methodist Archives located on the Drew University campus.

Many of Bob Simpson's historical reviews, articles and books have been published, including *'The Life and Journals of Freeborn Garrettson,' American Methodist pioneer*, the definitive biography of The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, one of the founders of American Methodism. His research and interest in history have led to his becoming known as one of the nation's experts on the life of Garrettson and Bishop Francis Asbury as well as the life of Rev. Thomas Morrell, a Revolutionary officer and a founder of Methodism in the Chathams. He also became one of the nation's most knowledgeable experts on Thomas Nast, cartoonist.

Sometime after earning a Bachelor of Arts at Drew University, Megan Blanche Demarest, Bob's wife, earned a Master of Arts at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison. She returned to Drew University and received the degree of Ph.D. in 1980, her dissertation focusing on the persistent use of nature imagery in the poetry of W.H. Auden. Megan was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Megan has been a member of the English Faculty, first at Fairleigh Dickinson University and then as Assistant Professor in the English Department at Drew University. She taught courses in both literature and writing. Megan was founder and director of the Drew University Writing Center.

Megan's poetry has been published in literary magazines and two anthologies. A book of her poems, Moving Mountains, has been published. She has edited and co-authored several published works with her husband, Bob. Their book, Minding God's Business, The Stories of United Methodist Women, was selected for the Reading List of the United Methodist Women's Division and went into a second printing.

A month earlier, on May 6, 1990, the church held a celebration of Bob Simpson's ministry. It began with a service of worship in the sanctuary at 3:30 pm. Following the service, a dinner and retirement party was held at the Brooklake Country Club in Florham Park. Four hundred and fifty members of the church joined in honoring Dr. Simpson and his wife, Dr. Megan Simpson, and their three children and families. The order of the evening was humor, led by Bob Thompson and Jerry Cunningham. Many people made

presentations to Bob and Megan of gifts and memories. The women of the church made a quilt for them that consisted of many individual 10-inch squares, each with a design created individually and depicting some aspect of the church and family life directly involving Bob and Megan Simpson and the members of the congregation over the past 25 years.

Reverend Galen L. Goodwin, Bob Simpson's successor at Chatham United Methodist Church, was appointed as Senior Pastor in June 1990.

Galen Goodwin came to Chatham after service as minister in Woodbridge, Fairfield, Montgomery Township, Sparta, and, most recently, as Associate Council Director of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference. In Woodbridge (1970-1972), Galen helped bring a congregation badly split over issues like Vietnam and civil rights into reconciliation and he saw the membership grow from 60 to 200. In Fairfield (1973), the congregation was faced with selling an historical church to pay for their new one. The financial burdens were too great, however, and the church and congregation decreased in size. Reverend Goodwin had a different experience in Montgomery Township (1974-1982) where a new sanctuary was funded and built and the membership almost tripled. The Sparta congregation's goals (1983-1986) were to rebuild the music program and revitalize the church and its overall program. As Associate Council Director (1987-1989), Galen helped the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference and individual churches in planning and setting a vision for the future. He was also responsible for the Conference mission program.

Son of Methodist minister Reverend Robert Goodwin, Galen grew up primarily in Madison, receiving his bachelor's degree from Drew University. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. Galen's gentle manner and his great knowledge quickly won the support, respect and love of our congregation.

Galen and Judy have two children, Kevin and Jennifer. Beginning in 1987, Judy worked full-time at Prudential and, by 1994, she became Coordinator of education and training for a staff of 200 in the Eastern Disabilities Claims Division. While in Chatham, Judy retired from Prudential.

With June 1990 being a point of transition, it might be interesting to read a few of the thoughts of Reverends Simpson, Forsman and Goodwin. (Annual Report)

From Bob:

*"As we conclude twenty-five years together, I suppose there is some expectation that I should offer a 'State of the Union' address. I will not. Rather, I want to spread on the record the Simpson family's 'thanks' to all of you for being our larger Christian family across the years.*

*"In particular, I want to 'thank' you for allowing me to work out God's calling to ministry in your midst. We have laughed and cried together. We have grown together in the faith. We have been privileged to build together upon the foundations laid by other Chatham Methodists over 200 years. . . . .*

*"As I've said so often, my first years in Chatham saw a period in which the community was still predominantly Protestant. A class of new members was received nearly every month. Such has changed dramatically, I believe, not because of the church, but because of the change of religious affiliation in this area. Although the Roman Church is having its struggles at large, in Chatham there is a strong influx of Roman Catholics.*

*"Although I have no statistics, I believe there is a larger percentage of non-church people in the community. There is no longer the quickness to affiliate with the churches that there used to be. Our population has become more involved in a growing 'leisure explosion' which readily gains popularity and priority in the lives of many. Having made such observations, I would mention positively that we are just beginning to see a slight turnabout in church school growth. This is encouraging and leads me to make three final observations.*

*"First, given the importance of reaching out to the unchurched, it is vital to invest energy and finance in the program and mission of the church locally. Full-time direction in Christian Education and the development of creative worship experiences are essential. People are hungering, and the Gospel of Jesus offers the saving help needed.*

*"The second observation is directed toward personal outreach. It must be a total congregational commitment – open and sensitive to visitors and to those new in our neighborhoods. This church has so much to offer in enrichment. It must not be left to Membership and Outreach Committee alone.*

*"Thirdly, there is nothing wrong with fewer members. People need smaller groups and personal support. I've seen significant depth, especially in recent years with covenant groups and the like. Some get distressed with decline in membership. I believe if a church is energetically engaged in all the forms of appropriate ministry, that church is strong regardless of numbers.*

*"I could not begin to express appreciation for all the support and cooperation given me by the laity over these twenty-five years. I just hope you have benefited from your serving.*

*"I thank God for a marvelous staff; especially, I express my profound brotherly love for Dale Forsman. His commitment and loyalty are boundless." (Annual Report)*

From Dale:

*"Since coming to Chatham in 1976, I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Robert Drew Simpson, and only Dr. Simpson. So, as everyone knows, this has been a year of anticipation and some sincere uneasiness and concern. As Dr. Simpson announced his retirement, and we begin to plan for a new minister's arrival, I was faced with all the anxieties that this change might mean for me personally.*

*. . . . . Reverend Galen Goodwin was appointed and unanimously accepted by the church . . . . . "AND, there ended my time of anxiety.*

*"Galen and I have known each other for many years; and, as he and I have met, we believe that not only can we work together, but a genuine excitement and eagerness have been growing.*

*"No, it will not be the same. Dr. Simpson and I had a unique and loving relationship. He showed me so much respect and gave me so many opportunities. Bob had the ego strength required to allow others to accomplish things on their own. He realized that it was to the good of the whole church when our staff members have identity with various elements of the church's program. So, he allowed persons like Kathy Stolz, Ted Hatten, Barbara Knox, Rob Porachan, and Chic and Robin Hansen to develop programs on their own. He challenged me in the same way. While always being conscious of the total program of the church, he encouraged and stimulated all of us to respond to the needs of our people, to be actively resourceful and stimulating, and to move ahead with plans for our ministries.*

*"I believe that Galen Goodwin will continue and foster this tradition. He brings a wealth of knowledge to us. He comes with a clear understanding of the challenges facing us in the future. He knows how our communities are changing, and he is prepared to meet these challenges. He is a hard-working and vigorous person who will help us all to meet whatever challenges come our way.*

*". . . . . I see myself principally as an educator/minister. I have loved the opportunities to work in this church with our children, youth, adults and families educationally. I have loved the opportunity to develop RISE, our service project in New York State. I have loved the chance to work in the community with the Morris County Board of Social Services, the Youth Development Council of the Chathams, the Juvenile Conference Committee, and many other agencies. I could only have done these things in the position, which I currently hold. So, I want to be your associate minister, and hope I can go on doing that for some time to come. (Annual Report)*

From Galen:

*"You and I, as congregation and pastor, are entering our fifth month of our shared ministry. My perception is that we have made a good beginning, and are moving along in strength and expectation.*

*"Our church has always provided a wide variety of programs and ministries to meet the spiritual and social needs of our people. You have my sincere gratitude for providing the necessary leadership and coverage for me to enter the scene and move along with you.*

*"In a day when 'church' is just another option in society's vast arena of time-consuming activities, we need to develop exciting new ways to inform the community of the richness and value of being involved in church life. While we continue to do what we do well, we must search for new ways to respond to ever-expanding needs in the community.*

*"In a church of our size, we need to provide ways to meet each other and deepen our commitment to one another and to Christ." (Annual Report)*

## WE MOVE FORWARD WITH REVEREND GALEN L. GOODWIN

The Worship Work Area was very active at this transition point (1990) in our history. For example, the Annual Report noted:

*We spent "a lot of time on things having to do with music. We tried to continue some of the many projects and programs that Leola Anderson handled so capably before her retirement. Among these were the Thanksgiving Procession, the White Gift Service and the preparation of the palms for Palm Sunday.*

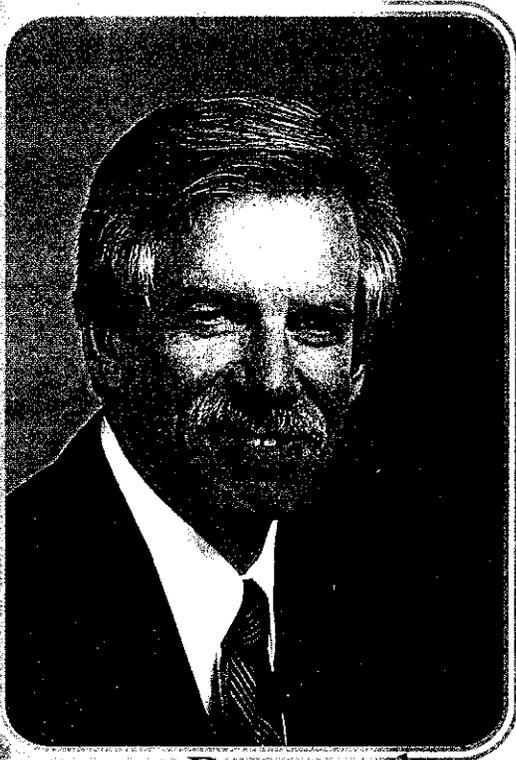
*"Rob Porchan was appointed organist and director of the Chancel Choir. Chic Hansen continued as director of the Genesis Choir. Robin Hansen began working with the children's choirs and started a program to introduce music into the church school experience.*

*"The new hymnals arrived and were dedicated on Thanksgiving Sunday.*

*"A beautiful stained glass window was installed in the narthex in memory of Ruth Gilbert by the Gilbert family. Plans are underway to place additional windows in the sanctuary. A new carillon was purchased from memorial funds . . . and was played for the first time on Easter."*

The Church and Society Work Area mentioned briefly in the same Annual Report some of the efforts church members were making to help address issues of needs and justice:

# through Our Leadership



Reverend  
Galen L. Goodwin

Pastor  
(1990-2000)



## A Word of Celebration

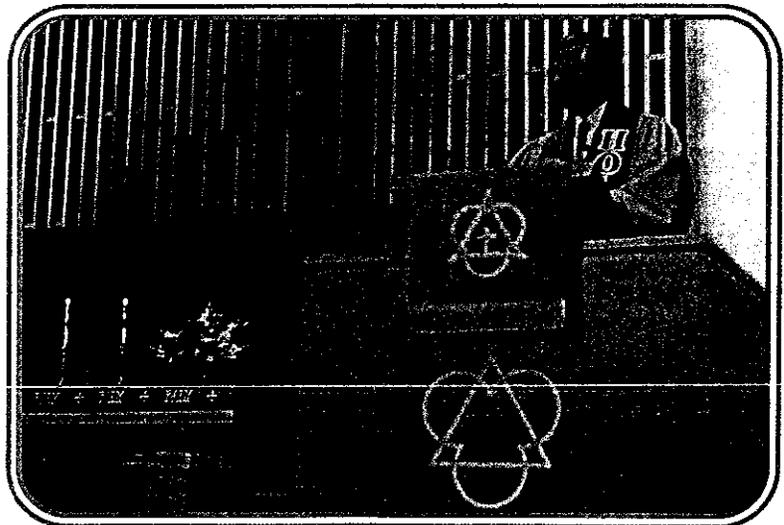
A church is the people. It is so important to know each other as we gather to be the church, to be in ministry with and to each other, and to reach out to the world in witness in Christ's love.

A pictorial directory enables us to know each other better. As we get to see each picture, we are helped to remember names, remember relationships, and remember who we are as a congregation. The faces of children, youth, adults, individuals, and families become more familiar through this resource, and strengthen our ties together.

Our thanks to those who made this gift possible, and to all of you who had your pictures taken. I am sure you will use this resource often! And as you use it, give thanks to God for each of the people shown here. With you, they are the church. And as we look into the faces of these, our friends, we celebrate the fact that God has brought us together in this place. Keep smiling!!

In Christ

*Galen L. Goodwin*  
Galen L. Goodwin



*"This year 1989-1990 saw the successful beginning of the Interfaith Council for Homeless Families of Morris County. Our church was the host for guest families during two separate week-long stays. We rotated this responsibility with other churches in the County. Many volunteers helped set up rooms in the church in which families could live comfortably while they tried to stabilize their income and find a reasonable place to live.*

*"We were actively involved in an effort to persuade the governments of the two Chatham counties to join the Governor's Alliance Against Substance Abuse.*

*"The Parent's Communication Network provides a forum for parents of elementary school-age children to educate themselves on parenting skills and substance abuse prevention."*

The Work Area also sponsored a Blood Bank drive, enlisted volunteers for the Community Food Bank in Newark, aided Chatham families in hosting children from Northern Ireland during the summer and actively promoted a greater awareness of environment concerns.

In all of these (and many other) endeavors, we lived our faith by focusing our attention and action on improving the lives of others.

The Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson (retired) joined those clergy members from the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference who are associated with our Charge Conference.

In December 1990, Marion Schmitter described the Christmas "week" and New Year's Eve worship opportunities in the following press release. It is a good description of the church services during this season throughout many years, 1975-2007 (and continuing).

*"Christmas Sunday on December 23 at the Chatham United Methodist Church will be celebrated with worship services at 9 and 11 a.m. The Reverend Galen Goodwin will preach on "Images of Expectation: God, the Person," using Luke 1:26-38 as his text. Special music will be presented in the sanctuary decorated with poinsettias, greenery, and banners made by church members depicting scenes from the Biblical story of Christmas.*

*"Between the services approximately 10 a.m., church school children, youth, and adults of all ages are invited to an Intergenerational Christmas Sing-Along in Fellowship Hall. Each family is requested to bring two-dozen cookies to share and return their filled red stockings for the Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn, which will be hung on the Christmas tree.*

*"On Christmas Eve at 5 p.m., a pageant 'Journey to Bethlehem' will include children, youth and adults to celebrate Christ's birthday. This service will conclude with the congregation lighting candles. At 11 p.m., a candlelight service will begin in quietness and lead to the celebration of Jesus' birth at midnight. The beauty of 700*

*candles will light the way for the coming of Christmas day as we invite the world to 'Come and Worship the Newborn King!' (This is a beautiful service of carols, scripture, and special music.)*

*"College Student Recognition Sunday will be December 30. One worship service will occur at 10 a.m. featuring college students. There will be a luncheon at 11 a.m. for college students and high school seniors in Fellowship Hall. This will be a time to greet old friends and exchange thoughts about college life.*

*"On Monday evening, December 31, New Year's Eve, the church will be open at 8:00 p.m. for an opportunity to take communion. You may arrive and leave when and as you wish."*

Between 1991 and 1993, the Lay Leaders of the church wrote a brief column: "Lay-Leaders Comments," for the monthly Circuit Rider. These Comments, taken together, give the reader a wonderfully personal glimpse into the life of the church during those years. There are too many to be included here. However, many of them are included in the Appendix and are also kept in the archives of the church.

Stewart P. Holmes, organist, joined the staff of the church and quickly became an essential part of the music ministry of the church.

In May 1991, The Fellowship Players produced "In Sight," a collection of the works of many talented, young playwrights. This was the twelfth production of The Fellowship Players of the Chatham United Methodist Youth Fellowship. Through the characters, the playwrights share their thoughts and ideas, their dreams and hopes, sometimes through unusual and often outrageously bizarre humor of today's youth. This is similar to the 1986 production by the youth of "Glimpses." The work takes the form of monologues and short dramatic pieces, each one of which is composed by someone who is adolescent and is designed to be acted by someone who is also adolescent.

In 1991, Sharon Gventer became another CUMC member to complete training as a Lay Speaker.

The Trustees took major steps during the early 1990s to implement the extensive E.P.A. guidelines for asbestos abatement and to convert our furnace from and oil to gas-fired unit. In the process of the change, the oil tank and oil-tainted soil in front of the church was removed and the smaller oil tank in the rear of the building was drained, filled with concrete and capped.

All of these actions were completed in accordance with state regulations.  
(Annual Report)

In memory of the late Reverend Dr. William F. B. Rodda, Senior Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church 1949-1965, Fellowship Hall was re-named "Rodda Hall," on April 7, 1991. Dr. Rodda died in 1979. The congregation thought it was appropriate to name the Hall for Bill Rodda, since it was under his leadership that the new church had been constructed and it was the location where, for seven years, Dr. Rodda led worship services while the new Sanctuary was being planned, financed and constructed.

Kathleen A. Stolz provided us with an excellent description of her new responsibilities in the 1991 Annual Report. For many years, Kathy was a strong, active leader in the church.

*"It is hard to believe that I have reached the end of my first year of 'full-time' ministry. As a diaconal minister, my job description is one which is defined by you, the congregation, as my employer. This differs from an ordained minister, whose position is defined by the United Methodist Book of Discipline.*

*"I have a Masters of Theology Degree, but I also have specialized training in Christian Education for all ages. Following two years as a full-time educator, I will be certified by the United Methodist Church as a Minister of Christian Education.*

Kathy worked with our children in B.I.B.L.E. and church school. In addition, she was coordinator for our Junior Youth Fellowship and of our church's involvement with the Interfaith Hospitality Network for families temporarily without homes. Under her leadership, Kathy initiated and led the Bible study program: "Disciple." The Church and Society work area and our church's Family Life Council also received a lot of her attention.

Beyond our church, Kathy was a member of the Conference Board of Church and Society, the Board of Diaconal Ministry, the Ministry Area on Christian Education and the Leadership Development Committee.

Kathy rapidly became an important clergy member of our church.

Mary Buckley became a student assistant minister at the church and remained for two years. She was active in our youth ministry, the outreach endeavors of the Church and Society Work Area and in leading worship.  
(Annual Report)

During 1992, the Membership Committee of the church assembled an extensive collection of informal photographs of members of the Chatham United Methodist Church congregation, showing them engaged in all aspects of the church life. Current, and a few older pictures, were used to create this wonderful album. A copy of the album, titled: "Faith in Action" is in the archives.

A look at the table of contents in the 1992 Annual Report gives the reader a broad view of the activity in the church that year and, by extension, during the decades either side of 1992:

*Pastoral responsibilities; Genesis, Chancel and Children's Choirs; Education including that for children, youth (JYF and MYF), adults, small groups (including the men's group and Christian studies group), family life, older adults (including the Monday luncheons, the drop-in center and Sunday coffee at the close of the 11:00 a.m. service), the church library and the Nursery School;*

*Worship; Missions including the Community Interfaith Council of the Chathams, SCEEP and world and local benevolences;*

*Membership and Outreach;*

*Church and Society including Aids awareness, food relief for Russians, the Interfaith Hospitality Network (through which we host for 7 days, four times a year, families who are currently without homes), and recycling projects;*

*Prayer Fellowship; Small Group meetings for the unemployed; the activities of the United Methodist Women;*

*Friday Niters; and*

*Numerous administrative and coordinating activities, such as Finance, Trustees, Nominations, and Staff-Parish Relations. (Annual Report)*

The recent recession and the changing area demographics had a significant impact on the Church's finances in the early 1990s. As the 1992 Annual Report said:

*For two years in a row the church has not received the full amount from those who have made pledges. Consequently, it has been necessary to dip into the endowment funds for operating expenses. This begins a period of liquidation of assets of the church. In view of this development, the Finance Committee has assisted the Administrative Board in developing a plan for 1992, 1993, and 1994 to restore the church to self-funding of its ongoing operations from annual collections of pledges; thereby allowing endowment funds to be used solely for capital repairs and replacements and other significant one-time events.*

Under Galen's leadership, the leaders of the church met in 1992 to discuss the progress that had been made toward the goal of being "Vibrant and Alive in '95." The following are comments summarize the progress. This summary provides a good perspective on the state of the church in 1992.

"Vibrant and Alive in '95,' was a goal set for the church by its leaders in 1989. You may recall that our church undertook a thorough self-examination in 1989. We developed twenty-two recommendations that were designed to strengthen our ability to provide Christian service to others. The impact of these recommendations was intended to be felt throughout the next five years. We are nearing the mid-point in the five-year plan of action and it's time to evaluate our progress.

"The small groups are going very well and many new groups continue to emerge. The Men's Group tried to meet at several different times and has found that Saturday morning works best. We have contacted all of our out-of-state members in the last two years. Many have joined congregations where they live; this is an on-going program. We had a very intensive Stewardship campaign last fall and plans are under way now to build upon that enhanced effort. Finally, the change-over to Galen has gone smoothly, and strong clergy leadership continues to bless this church.

"The Council believes that the church is better served by retaining the two worship services and by having an education hour between the two services. Dale [Forsman] and Kathy [Stolz] give considerable, high quality time and effort in the area of youth ministry; our youth are well served by their leadership and an additional full-time youth minister is not required at this time. Finally, the idea of an after-school program for middle school youth was evaluated and it was determined that there is not sufficient demand for the program at this time.

"Some early steps toward neighborhood groups were taken when Galen and Judy Goodwin met with groups of families in their first year. With the establishment of 'Fellowship Friends,' we have begun to improve our follow-up with new members. Our awareness of this church as a 'family' is growing. For example, the recent Family Life Retreat was sponsored for all ages. We plan to begin the church year this fall with a 'homecoming,' including breakfast for all and one combined worship service. New opportunities have been provided in music and liturgy with Chic and Robin Hansen's creativity, Stewart Holmes' talent and versatility on the organ, and the Bell Choir. The material accompanying the Stewardship campaign helped us gain a new perspective on the financial profile of the church and the new office computers and software will enable us to better understand the church's membership and financial potential.

"Some of the recommendations have yet to receive the attention they deserve. In 1989, we felt we must improve the way in which we greet visitors and make it easier for them to feel at home in our church. We believed that we should seek a commitment from the youth to be involved in the church in some way, as part of their membership pledge. By providing seminars which would be of interest to young working adults, we thought we might draw their interest to other aspects of the church as well.

"We also felt that we should offer weekend or evening service opportunities to interest young adults and working couples, since social concerns and community-involvement are strengths of this church. Notwithstanding this specific concern about possible new members, we believed that our goal should center on having an active membership rather than only on attracting new members. We felt it was important to identify the interests of the current members and to seek to involve them in an activity that matches their interests.

"Finally, we thought it was important to let others know more about the many things in which our members are involved. For example, we believed that 60-second vignettes during the worship service might help. Written communication, such as in the Bulletin or monthly letter, did not seem to have a big impact."

Chic and Robin Hansen, directors of music, left the church in 1992. Stewart P. Holmes became music coordinator and organist at this time. (Annual Report)

In the Spring of 1993, the "Third Generation Fund" was established by the congregation as an endowment fund from which money may be expended and applied only toward the costs of major repairs and capital improvements involving the church building, grounds and parking lot. The congregation recognized that it was the beneficiary of the donations and labor of earlier members and wanted to take steps that would assist the coming generation. "The older the buildings get, the bigger the projects become that must be undertaken to preserve what we have." Donations over a three-year period, 1993-1996, established the Third Generation Fund. Income from the Fund is to be used from the very inception of the fund. The congregation hoped that the Fund would be a continuing and growing source of funds on which the Trustees may rely to defray building expenditures. (Annual Report)

Former members of the Chatham United Methodist Church returned to the church on Main Street on October 1-3, 1993 for a weekend of fellowship and celebration to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sanctuary dedication.

*The celebration began on Friday evening when the "Friday Niters" club offered a program of popular show tunes sung by Elaine Watson, Nan Canfield, Reverend Galen Goodwin and Reverend Dale Forsman. Stewart Holmes accompanied them at the piano.*

*The celebration continued on Saturday with an old-fashioned picnic from 2-6 p.m. at Nash Field on Southern Boulevard. There were games for all ages, a church banner project, a hymn sing, a fried chicken dinner, and a baking contest.*

*On Sunday, former minister Reverend Dr. Robert D. Simpson returned to deliver the sermon at a special 10 a.m. service. Following the service, there was a reception in Rodda Hall.*

Judy Goodwin, Reverend Goodwin's wife, helped create the colorful banners that we still use to celebrate Christmas, Easter and other occasions. Judy also was instrumental in starting a tradition that we continue today, that of lay people telling the scripture stories in their own words. (Stannard)

In 1993, Marion Schmitter, our long-time Administrative Secretary and Church Secretary Eileen Morrison both left. All ministers and committee members had a marvelous working relationship with both Marion and Eileen and they were missed. (Annual Report)

Donald Underhill joined the church staff as Sexton. Originally from North Carolina, Don brought much energy and good will to the task of maintaining our building. His spirit is contagious and he is well-liked. He keeps the church in fine condition and, where outside contractors are used, he provides over-sight to assure the jobs are completed well. Don readily helps many in the congregation move personal belongings, furniture and fixtures and, when they are to be discarded, he takes them to people in need of such things. A fine man, Donald is active in his own church and in the support of youth in trouble. He quietly carries out a ministry within the community that is exceedingly important. (Annual Report)

Stewart P. Holmes left the staff for another position and Mark A. Miller became the church's organist and Director of Music. Mark provided youthful dynamism and his fine talent gave the church much to love. (Annual Report)

Mark served as the Director of Music of the Chatham United Methodist Church from 1993 to 1999. He concurrently was Director of Music at the Drew Theological Seminary in Madison and an organist for the Nightwatch Program for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Prior to coming to our church, Mark was an interim director of the seminary choir of Union Theological Seminary, New York City. Mark is a graduate of Yale University and earned a Master's degree in Organ Performance from the Juilliard School of Music. He has been commissioned to compose several anthems for churches and other organizations. Mark continues to be active in United Methodist organizations and publishes six or seven new pieces per year. Several of his compositions or arrangements are in the soft cover hymnal in the pews. In his spare time, Mark enjoys watching the Yankees, racquetball, camping and a good movie.

Edel Thomas also joined the staff to assist Mark as a leader of the choirs. Edel served as the Choir Director of the Chatham United Methodist Church

from September, 1994 to 2001. She concurrently taught choral music and music appreciation to grades 5-8 at Kent Place School in Summit. A native of Ireland, Edel graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Music from the University of Dublin and with a Master's in Education from Trinity College, Dublin. She studied choral direction with Peter Erdei at the Kodaly Institute in Hungary before coming to America. In her spare time, Edel enjoys gourmet cooking and movies. (Annual Report)

Reverend Clarissa South Holland and her family became a part of the church family in 1993. Though not a staff member, Clarissa occasionally led worship, visited members and led a retreat on "Creation Spirituality." Prior to coming to Chatham, she was the pastor of the Broadway and Montana (New Jersey) United Methodist churches. In June 1993, she requested and received a one-quarter time appointment to Hagedorn Geri-Psychiatric Center in Glen Gardner as a chaplain. Her primary responsibilities at the Center involve assessing and attending to the spiritual needs of approximately 66 patients, leading funeral services and administering communion to Protestant patients. (Annual Report)

The Risingville Intercommunity Service Effort (RISE) had grown such that in 1993 it involved over 200 workers from 13 churches and operated from four centers in Steuben County, New York. Two hundred homes had been improved since the project began. *(As noted earlier, many more homes were repaired and improved during the succeeding years.)*

In addition to leading the RISE program and his various Associate Pastor's responsibilities at the church, Reverend Forsman was very active within the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference, such as heading the Board of Church and Society, the Commission on Camps, Conferences and Retreats, the Aldersgate Committee, and the Commission of Research and Survey. In Chatham he participated on the Chatham Human Relations Committee, Project Community Pride, the Chatham Borough Juvenile Conference Committee and served as Chaplain to the Chatham Borough Volunteer Fire Department. A busy man!

In 1993, average attendance at both services was 400 people. In 1979, it was 570 and in 1989, it was 470. (Annual Report)

The Trustees replaced the church's flat roofs in 1993. This work represented one of the largest projects undertaken by the church since the church was erected in the 1950-60s. Many other (less substantial) projects continued or were completed in 1993.

# Church Staff - 1994

Greeting to each of you as you open this directory of our church family. We hope you will find in these faces a warm welcome, a Christian friendship, and a loving community with which to share your journey. We offer this volume in the hope that we will get to know one another better, and so strengthen our fellowship that our witness to the love of Christ in our midst may grow.

Your staff in ministry,



Galen Goodwin  
Pastor



Dale Forsman  
Associate Minister



Kathy Stolz  
Assistant Minister



Clarissa South Holland  
Assistant Minister



Mark Miller  
Organist and Music Director



Kenneth Austenberg  
Pastoral Counselor

A committee was appointed by the Administrative Board of the Church on January 24, 1994 to study the financial condition of CUMC and determine how best to reestablish a sound yearly operating position. Pledge receipts for 1991-1993 had not increased year-to-year and an operating deficit of \$197,000 had accumulated. Dick Plambeck, Susan Dimmick, Jim Rutherford and Jim McSurely served as the Committee. They recommended that spending in 1994 be reduced, that some money be drawn from the endowment funds and that a special appeal for additional donations be made to the congregation. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that the endowment funds (including the Endowment Fund, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund and the Third Generation Fund) be used for their intended purposes and that additional money from them be used annually at a rate based on current inflation and the total return on the endowment funds for the several preceding few years. (Annual Report)

On Sunday, January 23, 1995, the Chatham United Methodist Church honored both Senior Pastor Galen Goodwin and Associate Pastor Dale Forsman. Each clergyman had concluded 25 years of service in the ordained ministry; both men were ordained Deacon in 1970. Bishop Neil Irons preached at the morning services. Director of Music, Mark A. Miller, gave an organ recital at 10:00 a.m. Over 200 people attended a luncheon and program in Rodda Hall.

On Easter Sunday, April 16, 1995, a center-piece of the worship service was the premier of "A Portrait of Easter," a Cantata for Choir and Orchestra by Mark A. Miller, Director of Music at the Chatham United Methodist Church. The soloists were Carol Richardi (Soprano), Barbara Fedeler (Mezzo-Soprano), Reverend Galen Goodwin (Tenor) and Rudy Torres (Baritone). The orchestra consisted of instrumentalists from the church and the community.

"A Portrait of Easter" features not only the resurrection stories but also passages of affirmation from Paul's letters in the New Testament. Mark Miller wrote,

*"In 'A Portrait of Easter' we hear of Thomas' disbelief in the resurrection, and of Mary's wonder and amazement at meeting Jesus in the garden. We are told through music of the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus and their encounter with the Risen Christ. Paul's declaration in his letter to the Romans, 'I am convinced that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ,' serves as the central theme of the cantata."*

## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

In 1992, Gordon Henderson (craftsman) and William Baker (artist) were half way through a project at the Chatham United Methodist Church that brought stained glass windows to the sanctuary. An article in the August 6, 1992 "Star-Ledger," pages CE-1 and CE-2 described him and his work. A copy of the article is in the archives. The follow are excerpts from the article.

*"At Chatham Methodist, Henderson has completed 10 of 15 planned stained-glass panels, dominated by three Christ windows at the front of the church, including the Nativity scene and the Resurrection. The windows along the sides of the sanctuary are of Bible scenes or figures of saints, such as the Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Old Testament figures such as Abraham and Sarah and David the Psalmist also appear in the windows.*

*"Henderson said that there are many factors in choosing the right colors: the architecture of the church, the inside lighting and the light outside. 'The work is so color rich . . . the colors really bring together the images,' said the Reverend Dale Forsman, the associate pastor of Chatham United Methodist. 'The tone is set by the colors and the predominant color is blue. Gordon told us he used an English glass that was 80 to 100 years old and he was saving it for just the right project.'*

*"Henderson works exclusively with artist F. William Baker of Oak Ridge, who draws the designs for Henderson's windows and does the etching for the more intricate details – such as facial expressions – on the glass. 'I've worked with Bill Baker for the past 30-35 years,' Henderson said. I never work with anybody else because there's no reason to. Bill Baker is the best. Henderson says he and Baker, a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, found the elusive balance between 'artist and mechanic.'*

*"As the 'mechanic,' Henderson chooses the colors, cuts the glass, glazes it in a century-old gas kiln, makes the necessary etchings and scrapings to give perspective to the figures and sets them in lead.*

*"I sit down in disbelief when I think [of what] I created,' he continued. 'To be able to work in a medium where people come, look up, and meet their God is a feeling I can't describe with words.'*

*"The beauty of Henderson's work [may be seen not only in our church, but also in] the Drew University Chapel in Madison, the First Congregational Church of Union, the Riverside Hospital Chapel in Boonton Township, St. George's Church in Maplewood, St. Michael's in Haddonfield [and in] countless other places of worship and public buildings where he has left his mark over the last five decades.*

*"Gordon Henderson's father was a stained-glass craftsman. So were his grandfather and great-uncle. 'Maybe we go all the way back to the Middle Ages,' the 73-year old craftsman said.*

*"Henderson's workshop sits alongside the Rockaway River just below the Powerville dam in Boontown Township. The sign above the door on [his] shop says 'Est. 1872' – the year his grandfather, William and great-uncle, Robert, came to the United States from Scotland and started their stained-glass business. 'I assume they learned [the craft] from their father,' Henderson said. 'By the time they came here, they were already accomplished artists.' [The brothers took] advantage of the building boom of the Gilded Age [in the 1890s] by working on churches, public buildings and the mansions of the industrial barons.*

*"[Henderson's grandfather and great-uncle] did the leaded architectural windows of Manhattan's Grace Church, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the doors of St. Patrick's Cathedral. They did the leaded windows in New York's City Hall building as well as the Hall of Records on Chambers Street. 'They worked for the best,' Henderson said; this included architect 'Stanford White and Ralph Adams Cramm, who designed the biggest cathedrals in the world. They worked with Cramm on the Chapel at Princeton.'"*

The stained-glass windows in our church have a deep heritage of craftsmanship. Gordon Henderson is exceedingly proud of his work in our sanctuary.

The stained-glass windows in the sanctuary have the following inscriptions:

*In the Narthex:*

*Christ window – In memory of Ruth McDowell Gilbert 1892-1989.*

*Nativity window – In memory of Julia Bates Hurst 1889-1960.*

*Resurrection window – In memory of Charles Warner Hurst 1876-1947.*

*In the Sanctuary:*

*Moses the Patriarch window -- In memory of Frank H. Stewart*

*Ruth and Naomi window -- In memory of Gula M. Ciborski*

*St. Luke window -- In honor of the ministry of Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson*

*St. Matthew window -- In memory of William Ten Eyck*

*St. John the Baptist window -- In memory of H. John Rowland and Ann S. Rowland*

*St. Peter window -- In memory of M. Vernon Green and Helen E. Green*

*Sarah and Abraham window – Donated by Mr. and Mrs. William A. Howes*

*David the Psalmist window -- In memory of Reverend Dale H. Forsman,  
our beloved Associate Pastor (See below.)*

*St. John window -- In memory of Jesse W. Benton, Jr.*

*St. Mark window – Dedicated to*

*Helen and Harry Harchar and Betty and Newton Bryant*

*Mary and Martha window – Dedicated to all the Women of the Church*

*St. Paul window -- In memory of Elizabeth Hurst Welsh*

There are other memorial stained-glass pieces hanging in the church carrying the names of various people. The pieces were removed from the Center Street Church windows when that church was sold and the Main Street Church was constructed. We have learned some information about some of these people:

“Edith E. Noe”

*When the Center Street was constructed and dedicated in 1899, the congregation felt that they could not give too much credit to Brother Louis M. Noe, leader in the Madison Methodist Church, who had become greatly interested in the building of the new church in Chatham, and his son, Louis A. Noe, member of the Chatham Methodist Church Board of Trustees. They aided the work significantly by their words, their influence and their liberal gifts of money. Edith Emily Noe was a daughter of Louis Mulford Noe and Emily Ellouise Brant, the sister of Louis A. Noe and of Ruth Pierson Churchill's mother. Edith died on March 19, 1891, at the age of nine of scarlet fever. (Hampton, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Churchill)*

“William C. Wallace”

*William C. Wallace was a prominent, broad-minded and generous member of the local Presbyterian church, who, within three days after architect Bower had pronounced the old church unsafe, told Brother M.K. Hopping, President of the Board of Trustees, that he would give \$1,000 towards erection of a new Methodist Church. He passed to his heavenly reward before the new church was completed, but his daughters, Mrs. R.H. Allen and Miss Sarah Wallace, faithfully carried out their father's intentions. [He was the author of "Old Chatham."] (Hampton)*

“Kate G. Brennan Johnstone”

*She was born on March 27, 1869 and died on January 17, 1897, a young woman of 27.*

“Leonard Hess”

“Caroline Hess”

“Annie Hess”

*[The Editor knows nothing about these persons at this time.]*

“Reverend Solomon Parsons”

*Reverend Parsons died in 1897, two years before the Center Street church was completed. A former pastor of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church, he served*

*for one year in 1858, when he was 26 years old. The Chatham appointment was his first appointment and he kept us in his heart throughout the subsequent years. When time and circumstance allowed, he stopped in Chatham for a visit. [Reverend Parsons is discussed in greater detail in an earlier section.]*

## REVEREND DALE HENRY FORSMAN DIES

During the summer of 1995, our Associate Minister, Dale Forsman, discovered he was suffering from brain cancer. The congregation was stunned; along with Dale and his whole family, we entered into a very painful period of prayer, anticipation and mourning. Many persons joined hands during this period to share Dale's numerous responsibilities. Our ministers, Galen Goodwin and Kathy Stolz, added many of his responsibilities to their own. Clarissa South Holland, an Elder in the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference, volunteered her time and energy to help Galen and Kathy carry pastoral duties. Numerous church lay members stepped into leadership roles in Dale's absence.

At 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, Mark Miller and Edel Thomas, pianists, gave a program in the sanctuary called a "Duel of the Pianos." The program consisted of: Sonata in D Major K.448 [W.A. Mozart], Scaramouche [Darius Milhaud] and Suite #2 Opus 17 [Sergei Rachmaninoff]. Dale listened to this and all of our regular worship services through an open microphone to a speaker in his home. Each Sunday, the congregation called out a greeting to him in unison.

During these difficult months, Dale reflected on the often expressed question: "Why you?" His response came out of his deep faith and understanding of the human condition: "Why not me?" As Rev. Galen Goodwin said at the December 5, 1995 Charge Conference, "God is teaching us through Dale."

Our beloved Associate Pastor Dale Henry Forsman died on January 9, 1996.

A service of celebration and resurrection for the life of Dale Henry Forsman was held on January 14, 1996. The service included special music, some of which was composed by Mark A. Miller, and remarks from "witnesses" to Dale's work in all aspects of his life. "I by my works will show you my faith," [James 2:16] served as the touchstone of the service.

There was an outpouring of grief and celebration from members of the church, citizens of the community, members of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference, Drew University and many others. The sanctuary was tightly filled, including the side sections; and Rodda Hall and the Activities Room were filled, both of which had been wired to receive television transmission from the sanctuary. Many people attended by standing outside of the sanctuary, in the snow, and heard the service by audio. Altogether, approximately 1,000 people attended; just a fraction of those who Dale touched with his ministry. *[A video copy of the service is in the Archives.]*

Reverend Dale H. Forsman was buried in the Fairmount Cemetery in Chatham.

A year or two later, the "David, the Psalmist" stained-glass window in the sanctuary was dedicated to the memory of "Our Beloved Associate Pastor, Reverend Dale H. Forsman." The following comments were printed in the dedication brochure. They capture, as well as brief comments can do, the energy and vitality of this Christian man.

*"The 'David' window was given by one of our church families five years ago.*

*"Their original purpose was to dedicate the window 'To Those Who Love The Psalms,' and this is how the window was known up to this time. The family now wishes to permanently present the window in the loving memory of the 20-year ministry of Reverend Dale Forsman at the Chatham United Methodist Church.*

*"The family recently said, 'We know so many are thankful for Dale's ministry and for his openness to all of us. We remember Dale, sleeves up, putting his faith into action at a vigorous pace; we recall his hugs, his warm smile, his capacity and eagerness to handle 5 things at once, and his love for children, the youth, and all adults, including the most aged and the most troubled. His 'cup' seemed to 'runneth over.' While we now dedicate a window in Dale's memory, we believe the best reminder of his presence is the example he provided by living in service to others.'*

*"The family continued, 'Where do you begin to talk about his ministry? In the space of one hour, he might have talked with a senior high youth about career choices, responded to a telephone call from the Morris County Jail, discussed a member's living will, and prepared lighting in Rodda Hall for an upcoming drama production by the youth. As the creative force behind RISE and the Easter Eve Jazz Vigil, an ever-present resource for the youth and administrators at local schools, a caring friend to senior citizens, an active participant in church meetings, a person who shared his wonderful singing voice and a leader of worship services, he would always have an impact on you. You could find him at work in the world: supporting firemen at a fire, counseling people through the Morris County Board of*

*Social Services, helping the Chatham High School Marching Band at its competitions, leading worship at nursing homes, enjoying the fellowship at the Senior Citizens Luncheons, and so many other places that it was by luck that you caught him in his office.' - - - 'Surely, God preceded and followed him, and placed His hand of blessing on his head.' [Psalm 139:5, The Living Bible version.]"*

## THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH CONTINUES

In June 1996, the Reverend Kathleen Stone Riddleberger joined the staff as Associate Minister with responsibilities for the youth programs and to back-up Reverend Galen Goodwin in visiting members of the congregation and leading worship. "Kath" quickly became part of the church family. Her energy and sense of excitement drew many youth into her circle of love in Christ. The congregation gradually began to recover from the loss of Dale Forsman. Kath remained for six years.

The Annual Chatham United Methodist Church Antique Show and Sale reached its 40<sup>th</sup> year in 1996. In recent years, annual profits approached and even exceeded \$10,000. Following the tenure of Rosalie Gollinott, those who served in either as Chairman or Manager of the Show (or both positions) are Jean Booth, Pat Davis, Hilda Druback and Nan Canfield. Edith Van Wert continued to make her delicious and hearty soups and Lee Cunningham served as Treasurer for the last 25 years. Others with many years' of service include: Dot and Larry Gernert, Dorothy Bennett, Roxy Frey, Doris Hoppe, Aileen White, Mae Norris, Grace Derosia, Madeleine Groh, Bennie Ungerman, Connie Ehmman and Marge Savoie. The dedication of the women of the church over the years (and the men who helped them) enabled the UMW to help pay off the mortgages on two parsonages, support many mission projects, and also provide monies for large items in the church building and parsonages, such as drapes and kitchen furnishings. (Boyer)

Drew Theological Seminary student Thomas A. Flint joined the staff.  
(Annual Report)

Reverend Clarissa South Holland accepted part-time responsibilities as an Assistant Minister in our church. (Annual Report)

The "Blessing of Creation" worship service on the front lawn of the church began around this time. This service affirms all of God's creation and many

Reverend  
Kathleen Stone Riddleberger  
"Kath"

Associate Pastor

(1996-2001)



Kath and her two sons, Mike and Jon Riddleberger  
with Rev. Malen Goodwin and Judy Goodwin

loved pets were brought to church and received a blessing from one of the ministers.

Reverend Kathleen A. Stolz was ordained a permanent Deacon in the Spring of 1997. She was assumed the position of Associate Pastor in our church. (Annual Report)

During several years of the 1990s, Reverend Kathy Stolz's activities included Christian education, the church and society area, the areas of missions and outreach, pastoral duties and leadership of RISE. (Annual Report)

The outstanding talents of Mark Miller and Edel Thomas led the choirs to heights, which continually astonished and delighted us. Their music brought a new dimension to the worship services. (Annual Report)

In addition to being the Director of Music at the Chatham United Methodist Church, Mark Miller continued to be an active conductor, pianist and organist. A noted composer of choral and instrumental music, many of Mark's compositions and arrangements have been performed at concerts and special events throughout the country. Most recently Mark was commissioned to write a new choral piece based on the Maya Angelou poem "Still I Rise."

In September, 1998, Mark also became assistant conductor of the Harmonium Choral Society for the 1998-1999 choral season. He is a doctoral candidate in Liturgical Studies at Drew University.

The Covenant Choir presented "Songs of Christmas" featuring the William Patterson University Brass Quintet; Sunday, December 14, 1997.

The Suburban Cultural Educational Enrichment Program (SCEEP) continued to be actively supported by a core of reliable and dedicated church members. Fifteen children, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Peshine Avenue School in Newark, profited by individual tutoring, field trips and special celebrations. For two hours on Monday afternoons throughout the school year, CUMC volunteer tutors taught English and Math to the students and participated in their enrichment projects. Ladies of the church prepared some 468 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for snack times. The church provided money for supplies, field trips and summer camperships. Students come to our center in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and remain in the program through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (Annual Report)

Reverend Kathleen A. Stolz

Associate Pastor

(1997)



While the church endeavored to find new programs and ministries for a changing world and congregation, the continuing ministry remained strong at Chatham. The pastoral staff tried to be with church members who were in the hospital, sick at home, or facing tests and challenges.

Under the direction of Reverend Clarissa South-Holland, a Stephen Ministry was established in the church. More than a dozen lay people underwent extensive 60 hours of training during a 9 month period to develop and nurture their caring skills. It is a strictly confidential, lay-caring ministry of support through one-to-one relationships. Following a commissioning service in June, they began their caring ministry, working with people who are experiencing many different kinds of crises in their lives. A Stephen Minister will care, listen, and share God's love to help someone through the experience. The program is named after Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early church commissioned by the apostles to care for the needs of the Christian community. (English)

The church continued to function with an operating budget that was funded by current giving and supplemented by money from the endowments. (Annual Report)

In a Special Charge Conference held in March 1998, the congregation unanimously recommended Thomas A. Flint and Frances Preston as candidates for the ministry.

Barbara Davis joined the office staff in March. She quickly became important to the smooth functioning of the church office. Equally as important, Barbara's caring manner provided the church with a warm and welcoming presence in the office.

In 1998-1999, Associate Pastor Kathy Stolz and Music Director and organist Mark Miller left for new ministry. (*Kathy was appointed Interim Associate Council Director and continued as Project Manager of the New Jersey Area Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty.*) Sharon Yarger moved, having spent two years of student ministry with us. Student minister Brady Whitton joined us. (*In 2007, Reverend Brady Whitton is Pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Amite, Louisiana.*)

In June 1998, the Chatham United Methodist Church members reviewed and approved a proposal from the Trustees for the installation of an elevator.

# Through Our Team in Ministry

1998



Kathleen M.S. Riddleberger  
Associate Pastor



Kathleen A. Stolz  
Associate Pastor



Clarissa South Holland  
Assistant Pastor



Kenneth A. Austenberg  
Pastoral Counselor

Music



Youth Choir

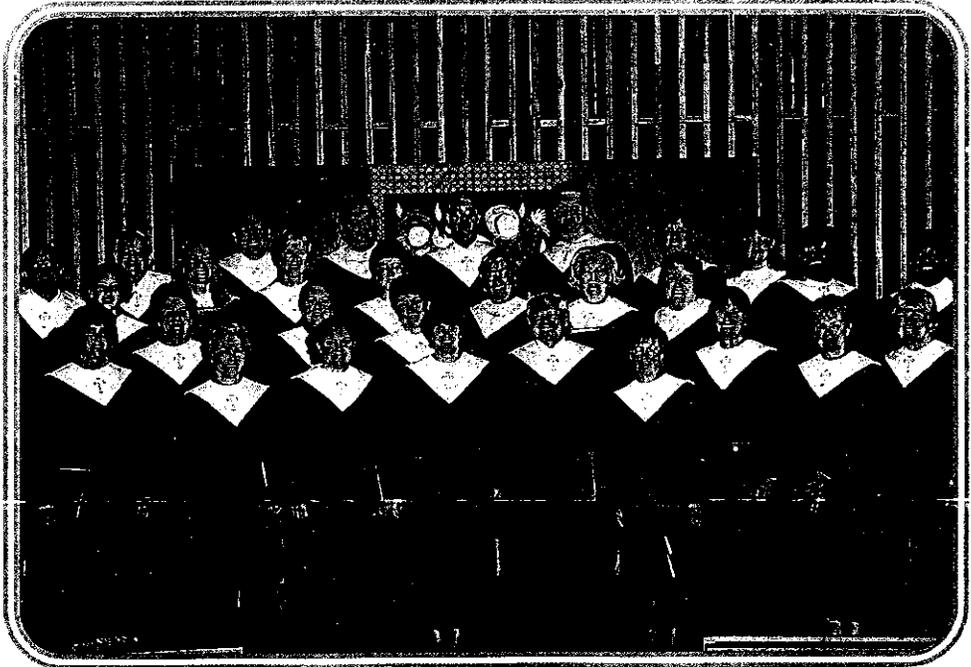


Mark Miller  
Music Director and Organist



Wesley Choir

1998



Covenant Choir

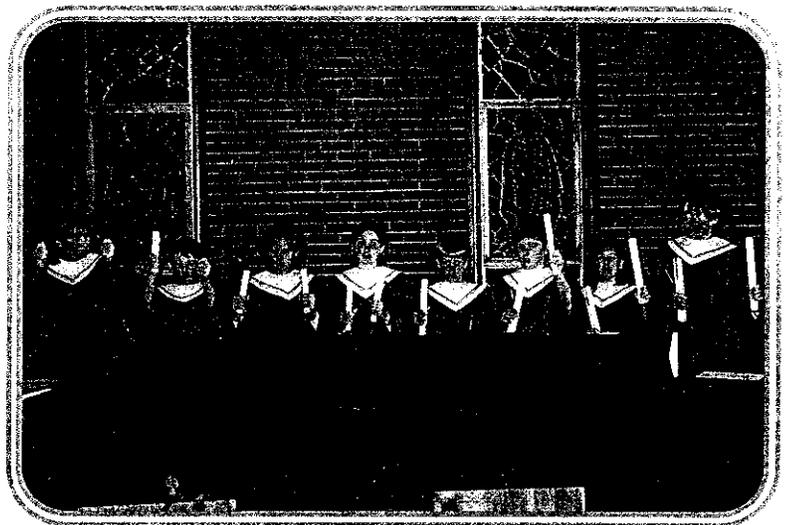
Through Our  
Voices



Edel Thomas  
Assistant Choir Director and Organist



Joyful Noise



Hand Chimes

1998



Hand Bell Ringers

The elevator was planned, funded, constructed, finished and dedicated during 1997-1999. Mr. and Mrs. William Frey (Bill and Roxy) were significant financial contributors to the project. Ron Whalin, Larry Dalziel and others spent considerable time managing the planning and construction phases. (Annual Report)

Reverend Goodwin was active in supporting other improvements in our facilities. For example, the curtain wall in our sanctuary was replaced with a beautiful glass structure that is recognized widely as a graphic image of our church. (Stannard)

In the spring of 2000, the church received a major bequest from the estate of Marion Ten Eyck. The bequest amounted to \$613,429 and represented a large portion of her Estate. Bill Ten Eyck died in 1989 and Marion died in 1998 at the age of 90. The church was a very important in their lives. They were very close to Bill Rodda and Bob Simpson. The Ten Eyck's legacy is what they have done for the church. *(During the following six years, the Trustees used the bequest as the principal source of funds to refurbish Rodda Hall, the Asbury Room, the Wesley Room, the kitchen, the bride's room, the church office and the library and provided initial funds for planning a renovation of the Sanctuary.)*

On February 9, 2003, Rodda Hall was rededicated with this inscription:

*"Dedicated in Honor of Dr. William F.B. Rodda, Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church from 1946 to 1965, with Appreciation for the Generous Bequest of Marion and Bill Ten Eyck Making Extensive Renovations Possible."*

On May 1, 2000, a committee developed guidelines "for the use of all the specific Funds maintained by the Church as the endowment funds." The committee's report, "Guardianship of Church Financial Resources - - Endowment Fund Policy Document," established "the basic philosophy by which the church assures the availability of these funds for the purpose for which they were intended while meeting the more immediate needs of the annual budget."

Reverend Galen Goodwin had been involved with the administration of the Annual Conference for many years. This continued during the time he served as our Pastor. He was elected several times by the members of the Annual Conference as one of their representatives to Jurisdictional Conference and to the General Conference. In the period of 1997-2000 he served as co-chairmen of the Committee appointed by the Bishop to evaluate and then

implement the merger of the Northern and Southern New Jersey Annual Conferences. (Annual Report)

In 2000, Reverend Goodwin was appointed District Superintendent in the United Methodist Church. Also, in 2000, the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference unanimously voted to place his name before the General Conference as a candidate for Bishop. To the momentary dismay of the Annual Conference, the General Conference selected another clergyperson from among those names put before it to become Bishop. Our Conference, therefore, continued to benefit from his service in the creation of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference and as District Superintendent, following which he was appointed Pastor of the United Methodist Church in Clinton. (Annual Report)

## THE WORLD TOUCHES CHATHAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

India, South Korea, Ireland, The Netherlands, the Middle East and the United Nations all crossed paths with us soon after the turn of the new century.

On July 1, 2000, the Reverend Paul Mathew Maliel became Senior Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church.

*Paul served the Metuchen Centenary United Methodist Church during the previous 12 years.*

*Paul was born and raised in Kerala, a state on the Malabar Coast of southwestern India. He left his native country at the age of twenty-three in order to attend seminary at Drew University. Upon completion of his studies, Paul and his wife, Omana ("O-ma-na"), served two congregations in South Dakota (Mt. Vernon/Plankinton and Claremont/Hecla). In 1983, he was appointed to the United Methodist Church in Congers, New York and, five years later, received an appointment to Metuchen.*

*The Maliel's have two sons, Matthew and Jacob. At the time of their arrival in Chatham, Omana was a Nurse Manager in the Department of Behavioral Health at Trinitas Hospital in Elizabeth.*

Yanghee Song became the organist and pianist for the church early in 2001.

## Chatham United Methodist Church



As friends and members of Chatham United Methodist Church, we recognize that our mission is 'to hear, learn and share Christ's love.' I believe that a church is its people, it is a place to belong and a place to become. We become the 'church' by knowing each other, strengthening our relationships, and being witnesses of Christ's love as a church here on Main Street. We have been called by name to continue a rich legacy of Christ-centered love and friendship that has been entrusted to us since 1786.

This pictorial directory can enable us to know each other better. Our thanks to those who make this gift possible, and to all of you who had your pictures taken. As we see the pictures, we are helped to remember names, remember relationships and remember to thank God for who we are as a congregation. We hope you will find in these faces a warm welcome, a Christian friendship, and a loving community with which to share your journey.

Grace and peace,

**The Reverend Paul M. Maliel**

**Pastor**

(2000-2007)

*Yanghee was born in Daegu, South Korea and is a graduate of Kemyung University in South Korea, having earned a Bachelor of Music degree. In 1997, she received a Master of Music degree from the Julliard School. She has performed with Taegu City Choir and in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, the Rutgers Presbyterian Church, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church and St. Paul Church at Columbia University, both in New York City, and the Morristown Presbyterian Church. She is a much sought after piano teacher in the New York metropolitan area. She recently became a US citizen.*

In June, Associate Minister Reverend Kathleen Stone Riddleberger (Kath) left the congregation to join the United Methodist Church Global Representation at the United Nations. Many in the church, especially the youth, were very sorry to see her go, but there was a sense of confidence that she would apply her same high level of energy and excitement to the work at the United Nations - - *(we hope the U.N. is ready for her!)*

Reverend Tanya Linn Bennett, a “child” of this church, assumed for a year the position of Assistant Minister. *[Today, (2007) Tanya is Associate Chaplain of Drew University and Director of the Chapel and Religious Life Council. She is also active in the Drew Theological Seminary as an instructor and is pursuing her Ph.D. in sociology and religion at Caspersen Graduate School at Drew University.]*

Edel Thomas, our music director, resigned from her position in June 2001. A full-time teaching job at Kent Place School in Summit combined with part-time work at our church left Edel with very little free time.

Middle Eastern terrorists destroyed the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, as we all know. Many people from Chatham Borough and Chatham Township escaped from the devastation, but eleven of our residents did not. Among those who died was Kenneth Swenson, a young family man with a wife and two children. Ken was a “son” of the church family. Most people in the congregation had family members, or were close to those, who were directly involved in the danger or the rescue efforts. Our ministers opened the church for vigil and prayer throughout the week.

Andrew J. Robinette (Andy) joined the staff as director of the choirs.

Miss Leola Anderson died at her home in Jamestown, New York, in 1999. Leola had previously expressed the desire that her personal Steinway piano be given to the Chatham United Methodist Church upon her death. Dale Canfield made sure that her wishes were followed. While Leola expected that

the church would sell the piano and use the money for the music program, Dale arranged for a substantial restoration of the piano and for its transport to the church sanctuary.

Dale Canfield said,

*"After Leola died in 1999, we learned from Inez, her sister, that Leola said in her will, 'I direct that my Steinway Model M grand piano to be sold, and I bequeath the proceeds to the Chatham United Methodist Church to be used toward the purchase of a grand piano for the church sanctuary or the completion of the 4 (four) foot flute stop on the great manual of the Schantz pipe organ.' Leola wanted a good piano for the sanctuary because the existing one could not hold tune and the rank of pipes that she had specified in the Schantz organ was left out due to lack of funds in 1962.*

*"A little research showed that her piano, a 5'-7" model M, S.N. 273988, built in 1931 suffered from stuck keys and a small crack in the sound board; but otherwise looked attractive considering the age. And most important, a Steinway of that vintage could be restored to new condition for half the price of a corresponding restored piano in Steinway Hall.*

*"After having two piano technicians examine the piano, we asked Inez if she could arrange to give the piano to the church so it could be restored and used in the sanctuary. Inez discussed the question with the lawyer, a member of the Anderson family, and agreed to the request!*

*"With the help of Ron Bishop, the Schantz representative now living near Jamestown who sold the organ to CUMC, we were able to find a reliable piano mover. After months of waiting, the Anderson piano arrived at CUMC at noon on July 21, 2000.*

*"Following a search for qualified piano technicians, three were asked to examine the piano and offer recommendations with quotations. Finally, we selected Robert L. Beck, a man with an outstanding reputation and much experience including General Manager of Manufacturing at Steinway & Sons N.Y., who proposed to restore the piano to original condition.*

*"The Trustees of the church agreed to the request for \$21,166 and we proceeded with a contract. The 70-year-old piano left CUMC late in September and returned at noon February 14, 2001, to reside in the sanctuary permanently beside the choir loft.*

*"Your eyes and ears will tell you that the 'new Anderson' Steinway is a work of art for artists. Edel Thomas, choir director, has said, 'It is not only a fine piece of furniture to look at, but has the wonderful sound quality that I hoped and prayed for while it was being restored! I am thrilled with the final result, and know that you will too when you hear it. This is a magnificent addition to our thriving music program.'"*

On March 25, 2001, Leola Anderson's piano was dedicated to service in the church and Dr. Louise Thomas gave a concert to celebrate the arrival of Leola's piano.

*Dr. Louise Thomas, sister of Edel Thomas, was born in Dublin and is the recipient of all major Irish national music awards. After completing her undergraduate music studies at Trinity College Dublin, Louise received a full scholarship to pursue a graduate piano performance degree at the Hochschule für Musik Hannover in Germany. In recent years Louise has played in England, Russia, Austria and Germany, and has performed regularly in her home country. In 1993, she won 2nd prize at the Ibla-Ragusa International Piano Competition in Sicily, where she was awarded the Bela Bartók Prize.*

*In 1998, Dr. Thomas won the concerto competition at University of Southern California. An active chamber musician, Louise has made a CD recording with the Irish contemporary music group Nua Nós at the Banff Center for the Arts, Canada as well as radio recordings for BBC radio in Northern Ireland and for Moscow Radio. Dr. Thomas has performed at Carnegie Hall and recorded for the Ovation cable arts channel in Los Angeles. In 2002 she toured Taiwan and appeared in concerts throughout the United States.*

*Louise Thomas is Director of Collaborative Arts at Chapman University School of Music in California. She received her doctorate in piano performance from USC, where she studied with John Perry.*

On April 19, 2002, Yanghee Song and Ji-Yeun Cholee presented a varied program of Organ, Piano and Vocal Music in Concert in the Sanctuary.

*Ji-Yeun Cholee, raised in Korea, earned a Master's Degree from Julliard School in 1996. She has taken part in numerous competitions and has come to the attention of Renato Scotto, Placido Domingo, and Barry Tucker, President of the Richard Tucker Foundation. She has won many important international prizes and has performed in the Master Classes of Dame Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne and Licia Albanese.*

During 2002, Reverend Paul and Omana Maliel introduced the WALK TO EMMAUS in our church. It is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through development of Christian disciples and leaders. The Walk to Emmaus experience begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity, comprised of fifteen talks by lay and clergy on the themes of God's grace, disciplines of Christian discipleship, and what it means to be the church. The course is wrapped in prayer and meditation, special times of worship and daily celebration of Holy Communion. (English)

The "Emmaus community," made up of those who have attended an Emmaus weekend, support the 72-hour experience with a prayer vigil, by preparing and serving meals, and other acts of love and self-giving. (English)

# Our Staff

2003



**Reverend**  
Frances Preston  
Associate Pastor



**Reverend**  
Tanya Linn Bennett  
Assistant Pastor



Leeta Koilpillai  
Director of Music Ministry



Seated: George Hasbrouck, Barbara Davis

Standing: Yang-Hee-Song, Donald Underhill, Barbara Whalen

During and after the three days, Emmaus leaders encourage participants to meet regularly in small groups in order to strengthen and renew Christian people as disciples of Jesus Christ and as active members of the body of Christ in mission to the world. The "WALK" is an international ecumenical group. (English)

An original Christmas pageant was presented in Rodda Hall on December 15, 2002. The Music Director, Andrew Robinette, and Accompanist, Bill Watson, led a "Celebration of the Silent Night". The participants included the Adult Handbell Choir, Youth Music Ensemble, Church Mice, Joyful Noise Choir, Youth Handbell Choir, Psalm Players and the Covenant Choir.

Our church continued its many missions programs that included hosting the homeless and donating to local food pantries. A group of lay visitors were trained in 2002 and are visiting people in the church. New Sunday brunches have been festive and popular. We made greater use of contemporary music in worship, provided children K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade opportunities to participate in the summer vacation Bible Camp program and formed a new UMW circle.

In October 2002, ground was broken for the Forsman Sports Complex at Aldersgate Center in Swartswood, New Jersey. The complex was named for Reverend Dale Henry Forsman who died in 1996. He was Associate Minister at the Chatham United Methodist Church for 20 years, taught at Drew Theological Seminary, was a major advocate of the Aldersgate Camp and Conference Center, was deeply involved in drama, was one of the founders of RISE and was totally committed to the youth of the church and their quest for understanding the Christian message. It is a wonderful tribute to a man who believed so much in the value of youth fellowship and all of its possibilities. Our church and several of its members were significant contributors to the financing of this recreational complex. The Forsman Sports Complex was dedicated in 2004.

On May 18, 2003, "A New Creation," a cantata for Chorus, Soloist, and Orchestra, by Rene Clausen was performed. Andrew J. Robinette conducted the piece. Andy said, "Awe and wonder, unworthiness and doubt, mercy and forgiveness, love, joy, and peace, are all wrapped together in this piece."

In July 2003, Reverend Frances Preston, a member of this church for thirty years, was appointed Associate Minister and Reverend Tanya Bennett assumed part-time responsibilities, still with the Chatham United Methodist Church. "Francie" had most recently spent several years in The Netherlands

with her husband, Sam, and served in an International Inter-denominational Church in The Hague.

*"Francie" is a preaching-teaching pastor with a strong interest in social justice. Her responsibilities will include the adult and children's education ministries, Stephen Ministry, and Membership education, as well as worship leading and some preaching. She will also serve as Registrar for the Gateway North District Committee on Ministry and will mentor candidates for ministry.*

*Reverend Preston previously served three years as Associate Pastor in The Netherlands at the American Protestant Church of The Hague, an international interdenominational English speaking church with a congregation from over 50 countries. There she was responsible for adult and children's education, small group ministry, and worship leadership and occasional preaching. She also established a program to visit women held in prison.*

*While a student at Drew Theological School, Francie was pastor of the Lower Berkshire Valley United Methodist Church in Morris County. She was also a Director of Christian Education at the Community Congregational Church in Short Hills, New Jersey, and did an internship as a Chaplain at Overlook Hospital in Summit.*

*Francie has a Masters of Divinity from Drew Theological School and a Bachelors degree from the University of Pennsylvania with a major in International Relations.*

*While raising her children, she was an active volunteer in the Chatham United Methodist Church, including teaching Sunday School for 15 years (ranging from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades), Chairing the Missions Committee and, later, the Council of Ministries. She has also been active in the Chatham community serving two terms on the Board of Education.*

*A long time resident of Chatham, Francie has been married for over 36 years to her husband Sam, who works in banking. Francie and Sam have four sons, Dave, Brad, Frank and Tate.*

In June 2004, Reverend Frances Preston was ordained an Elder in Full Connection and Daniel W. Gepford started his journey toward the ministry by attending the Drew Theological School. [Dan graduated in 2007 with a Master of Divinity.]

In August, Andy Robinette, director of the choirs, left the church to undertake advanced studies in choir directing. He was loved by many and, though young, exhibits a competence well beyond his years. We miss him.

Also, in 2004, Reverend Paul Maliel, Omana and their two sons, moved into the residence at 48 Elmwood Avenue. The former owner, Frances

Keeler, had upon her death, given the residence to the church with the understanding that it be used as the Senior Pastor's residence. The church received the property in 2002. [*The Deed was recorded by the Morris County Clerk in Book 5679 on Page 180.*] The Church immediately commenced a renovation of the house and property. The cost of the renovation was financed by using a portion of the proceeds from the sale in 2003 of the parsonage located at 11 Mercer Avenue. Associate Pastor Reverend Frances Preston and her husband, Sam, moved into the parsonage at 20 Oak Drive. A plan was developed to renovate the 20 Oak Drive parsonage, a project also financed by proceeds from the sale of the 11 Mercer Avenue parsonage.

In 2004, Hillary Crute Johnson became our Director of Music. She is a highly talented Mezzo Soprano who is being certified in music ministry and is attending New Brunswick Theological Seminary in the M.Div. program.

*Hillary is a life long church musician, beginning as alto soloist in several different churches from 1979 to 1986. During the next few years, Hillary was a soloist with The Chicago Symphony (1986), the Ravinia Festival, Chicago (1987), the Little Orchestra Society of New York, Alice Tully Hall (1987), the Opera Orchestra of New York, Avery Fisher Hall (1987) and the Manhattan Philharmonic Orchestra, Carnegie Hall (1989). From 1984 through 1990, Hillary Crute Johnson was a Principal Artist with the Metropolitan Opera. She sang in eleven or more major roles, including Aida (High Priestess), Samson and Dalila (Dalila), La Traviata (Annina), Aida (Amneris), Porgy & Bess (Strawberry Woman, Annie and Lily), and other roles in major operas. Hillary has been voice teacher and conductor of the Boys and Girls Choirs of Harlem. She presently solos occasionally with orchestras and societies around the world.*

*She was Choir Director at the Teaneck UMC (1993-1995) and founded multicultural and contemporary gospel choir. She was Director of Music at the Centenary UMC in Metuchen (1995-2003), with full charge of multiple graded choirs and handbells, greatly expanding the music program of the church.*

At the November 16, 2005 Charge Conference, Alice Walsh was reaffirmed as a Candidate for Ministry and Dan Gepford was affirmed as a new Candidate for Ministry. Both Alice and Dan have been members of the church for many years.

The young people who are of high school age and who participate in RISE have, for many years, fulfilled their commitment to raise some of the funding for RISE themselves by organizing events that are often rooted in music and drama.

As Amy Ball reflected on the talent of CUMC's young people, she said:

*The Chatham United Methodist Church always seems to have talented youth. We always seem to have singers, instrumentalists, dancers and actors who not only participate in worship, but also add great fun to the fund raisers, such as Cabaret. In the 1970's the youth even put on plays like God-Spell and Jesus Christ Superstar. Those were great fun. (Ball)*

When the massive Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005, one of the casualties was the First United Methodist Church in Slidell, Louisiana. People throughout the nation responded with help in many ways. On January 14, 2006, our church hosted a Family Mardi Gras Fundraiser to help finance rebuilding of the church. In March, a volunteer work team from our church traveled to Slidell, Louisiana in order to help the congregation of this sister United Methodist Church. The group consisted of Suzanne Bonamo, Liz Boyer, Marsha Gepford, Susan Gepford, John Hadamuscin, Jay Hazen, Allan Klotz, Omana Maliel, Tanya Marrett, Peggy Philp, Katie Stefko and Marnie and Norm Zacher.

The 50<sup>th</sup> annual Antiques Show was held in February 2006. Ruth Swenson attended to help mark the occasion.

Over the last 50 years, many women (and men) volunteered to make the Shows a success. In addition to those people mentioned previously, leadership roles have been assumed by Priscilla Haberstroh, Pam Bess, Marge Ahrens, Dot Dunn, Nancy Hanlon, Arlene Odell, Alice Dochtermann, Peggy Littlejohn, Marilyn Schindler, Katie Gunning, John Hadamuscin, John Rovick and Sheri Omelczuk. The Antiques Show has weathered blizzards, gasoline shortages, shifting school vacations and sewer emergencies. It has continued to prosper through the tenacity of its organizers and the hard work of an all-volunteer, all-church staff. (Boyer)

Bob Willis became a member of the church office in February. The clergy staff and the various committee heads quickly learned they could rely on his steady and dependable competence.

In 2006, Hillary Crute Johnson resigned her leadership role as Director of Music in order to dedicate herself to her theological studies.

For the remaining of 2006, our talented Organist/pianist, Yanghee Song, took on the additional duties of Choir Director. Her talent, ear for music and wonderful sense of humor made it possible for the church to continue to have

excellent music during the worship services, while a search was undertaken to find a new Director of Music.

In June 2006, Reverend Tanya Linn Bennett received full commissioning as an Ordained Elder.

Also, in June, Reverend Alice Walsh graduated with a master's degree from Drew Theological Seminary and was commissioned as Deacon. Daniel Gepford was appointed local pastor to the Andover United Methodist Church.

On September 19, 2006, the Church Council passed the following Resolutions to honor Bob and Megan Simpson:

I

We, the Special Charge Conference of the Chatham United Methodist Church, do Resolve that the name:

**THE SIMPSON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING**

be given to the east wing of the church in honor of

The Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson and  
Dr. Megan Demarest Simpson,

in recognition of Bob's pastorate of 25 years (1965-1990) at the Chatham United Methodist Church and of their wide interest and service in Christian Education.

II

We, the Special Charge Conference of the Chatham United Methodist Church, do Resolve that:

a new endowment fund known as "The Simpson Christian Education Fund" be established. Current and former members and friends of the church are invited to donate to this Fund.

The income from this Fund will be available to persons from and associated with the Chatham United Methodist Church "family," who enroll in and attend a Theological Seminary\*, for the purchase of up to \$1,000 per year per person of books and other study materials (*\$2,000 if sufficient endowment Funds are raised*); if not so used in a given year, 25% of the remaining income shall be applied to the principal of the Fund and 75% of the remaining income shall be applied to current or future improvement of the Christian education resources of the Chatham United Methodist Church.

### III

- Knowing that Robert Drew Simpson was Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church from June 1965 to June 1990;
- Knowing that Robert Drew Simpson retired from Pastoral Ministry in June 1990; and
- Knowing that Robert Drew Simpson's connection with the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference continues to be through the Chatham United Methodist Church;

We, the Special Charge Conference of the Chatham United Methodist Church, do Affirm that:

The Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson shall henceforth be designated:  
Pastor Emeritus  
Chatham United Methodist Church

*[\* There are many people who have attended a seminary and have been involved, at the same time, in our church - - either as a current member, student assistant or as a son or daughter of members (1965-2007). Lawrence McIntosh, Leola Anderson, Kathleen Stolz, Marjorie Ericksen, Theodore Hatten, Barbara Knox, Claire Strandberg, Frances Preston, Tanya Linn Bennett, Tom Flint, Brady Whitten, Mary Buckley, Modese Molefe, Nancy Snyder, Sharon Yaeger, Natalie Finch, Philip Wolfe, Brad Franklin, Daniel Gepford, Alice Walsh, Brandon Etan, Becky Dembo, David Eichelberger and Dick Fisher are among the people who have such a connection with our church.]*

On October 29, 2006, a church-wide celebration of recognition was held for Bob and Megan Simpson in Rodda Hall. Current and former members of the church joined in the gathering between the two worship services, greeted Bob and Megan and renewed many old friendships.

The 2006 Annual Report of the Chatham United Methodist Church provides information on an array of programs, activities and expressions of Christian witness at this time. Our total membership of 687 as the end of October, 2006 was very actively involved in many ways. For example:

- The "Mission" of our church is to **Celebrate the Good News** by: **Empowering** all to follow Christ; **Equipping** all to do what is just; **Encouraging** all to show loving kindness; and **Energizing** all to walk humbly with God.
- Reverend Paul Maliel wrote, "We are preparing the congregation to become more active in their discipleship." "With four Disciple Studies, several adult education opportunities, and with 23 persons having attended the Walk to Emmaus, we are moving in the right direction." "A

truly welcoming congregation shares its faith and vision, not only by words but [also] by deeds of hospitality. I celebrate the many ministries such as Interfaith Hospitality Network, SCEEP, Stephen Ministry, RISE, Youth Hang Time, the annual Antique Show, UMW Rummage Sales, and our weekly Sunday brunches." "During the year," "we experimented with contemporary music, praise band and Fresh Bread service."

- Associate Pastor Frances Preston commented,
  - "There is so much energy and excitement in the classrooms downstairs between services - - God bless all the classroom leaders and the children! Shelly Rack and the Children's Council have overseen a growing children's ministry." "We're feeling very blessed to have Natalie Finch assisting with children's ministry as part of her supervised ministry program at Drew."
  - "Corkie Ziegler continues to keep photos of our children and families in learning and fellowship settings prominently displayed on bulletin boards and in local newspapers."
  - "In addition to two all-church picnics and an outing to the minor league baseball Bears game, Family Life sponsored an all-church retreat with a worship theme" under Jacque Bruno and Annie Walker's continued leadership.
  - "Adult education opportunities continue to grow under Barbara Fedeler's leadership, with the addition of Sunday morning and Monday afternoon Bible studies to Friday mornings and now four Disciple Bible Study groups. Added to the short-term studies at Advent and Lent were short-courses in January and in May, and occasional studies with circles and other groups."
  - "Working with Amy Ball and the Membership Committee, we've added learning opportunities equipping new/er members and others with the foundations of our faith."
  - "Stephen Ministry, under the leadership of Perry Philp and Chris Fillimon" is equipping seven fellow worshippers "to care for those among us experiencing short-term life crises."
  - The "Shawl Knitting Ministry continues to grow" as more people knit "prayers into shawls, encouraging those . . . who can benefit from being wrapped in the prayers of the congregation."
  - The Altar Guild has used "their artistic gifts to bring visual meaning and spirit to our worship space."

- Dan Gepford, a Chatham United Methodist Church member, was appointed as a local pastor to the Andover United Methodist Church, as part of his studies at Drew Theological School.
- The Youth Advisory Council pointed out that “Confirmation at CUMC is a 44 week program, starting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and ending in official Confirmation into the Church in January of 9<sup>th</sup> grade at a Confirmation service designed as led by the confirmands. The curriculum is based on the United Methodist Church’s Cokesbury teaching materials, ‘Claim the Name.’”
- The Chatham United Methodist Church Nursery School is a free-standing program that utilizes space in the church. In 2006, the 36<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, the school had a full enrollment of 96, three class sections of three and four year olds.
- As had been done other years, the Church addressed issues of justice, tolerance and peace locally and in the world by raising funds for the Heifer Project; our hurricane-beleaguered sister church in Slidell, Louisiana; “Our Place” in Morristown, a safe place for homeless and marginally poor residents of Morris County to go to get off the streets during the day to rest, read the newspaper, use the bathroom, and receive mail and telephone calls; and other worthy programs. Three blood drives, food collections, recycling in the church, the promotion of “fair trade” products, and hosting the week-long Interfaith Hospitality Network homeless shelter 4 times during the year represented other ways the church again expressed its concern for the world.
- RISE completed its 27<sup>th</sup> summer in Steuben County, New York with participation by over 200 youth and their advisors from fourteen different churches living at five different centers. During the four youth work weeks, 33 homes and families were served. RISE painted homes, repaired or replaced roofs, built steps and handicap ramps, repaired porches and siding, and completed numerous other small projects. During the adult RISE week, which was held at a sixth center, 13 workers from 5 churches did a variety of projects on three different homes, including building and repairing two handicap ramps, building two sets of outside stairs and realigning and repairing a porch adjacent to a trailer.

- The Suburban Cultural Educational Enrichment Program (SCEEP) is a one-on-one tutoring program for children in the Newark School district, grades 2 through 5, meeting on Mondays 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. throughout the school year. We are one of 18 tutoring centers. Fifteen students from Peshine Avenue School in Newark are tutored by 15 adult and HS student volunteers in math and English. Field trips, crafts, snacks and entertainment are all part of our tutoring program.
- Singers of all ages are welcome in any of the six CUMC choirs. And non-singers can join the handbell groups.
- Our CUMC Praise Band can be heard at many 9 a.m. family worship services, occasional concerts, and regularly at the monthly Fresh Bread worship services.

Following several years of careful evaluation by the Board of Trustees, it was decided in October 2006 to postpone extensive renovation of the sanctuary. A special committee formed to investigate fund raising, the pastors and the Trustees decided that, as a comprehensive project, the renovation proposals should be deferred. However, considering the importance of several significant and sorely needed repairs and replacements in the lighting and sound systems, the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems and the carpeting, it was concluded that the church should immediately commence work in these areas. It was thought that, at this time, the major focus of the congregation and the staff should be on increasing attendance and membership, with the proposed overall renovations being reconsidered only when "demand" and potential new "funding sources" increased.

The Trustees said:

*"Although the [proposed] re-design of the sanctuary is attractive and appealing both visually and functionally, we have to defer fund raising and construction." "A lot of people gave valuable input and time on this; we do expect to use much of the plan sometime in the future."*

Mrs. Edith Behre Van Wert ("Edie") celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in January, 2007. The Chatham United Methodist Church, and several other organizations in the community, marked her "century" during the month. Edie has been a life-long Methodist and a member of the Chatham United Methodist Church for over 75 years. Within a month of these celebrations, Edie moved to Florida to be near her daughter. The church, and the

community, will truly miss her alert sense of humor, her participation in many church gatherings and her presence for so long as a volunteer in the church kitchen.

Early in 2007, Casey Proch was invited to assume the position of Music Director.

*Casey has a wonderful background in choral direction, handbells and individual voice training. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, Cum Laude, from the University of Texas in 2002 and a Masters of Music/Conducting from the University of North Texas in 2005. He has worked in various capacities for two United Methodist Churches and the Lyric Opera of San Antonio and has given numerous private voice lessons. He has also completed additional theological and church leadership studies at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University and at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection near Kansas City, Missouri; one of America's fastest-growing churches - and one of the largest churches in the Methodist denomination.*

## THE BISHOP CALLS AGAIN

On February 28, 2007, Reverend Paul M. Maliel wrote the following letter to the members and friends of the church:

*It is with mixed feelings that I write to you of my appointment by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar to serve as District Superintendent of the Cape Atlantic District, effective July 1, 2007.*

*Seven years ago I was called to come to Chatham United Methodist Church. I have enjoyed a blessed ministry here and thank God for the spiritual growth within the church. Thank you for your love, support and affirmation for Omana, our sons and myself.*

*This June, I will be completing 30 years of ministry in congregations ranging from a two-point charge in Mount Vernon/Plankinton, South Dakota to Chatham United Methodist Church. I believe I could not have made it this far, but for the grace of God, who has guided me through the years. As a clergy person called to be obedient to my ordination vows of itinerancy in ministry, I have said 'yes' to this new venture in my faith journey.*

*I am sure you as a church will continue to grow in your mission and vision. Omana and I pray for each of you during this time of transition and beyond. I ask that you be in an attitude of prayer for your Staff Parish Relations Committee and for Reverend Bob Costello, your District Superintendent, as they work together in the*

*appointment of a new Senior Pastor for our congregation. Please continue to uphold Omana and me in your prayers as well.*

*God's blessings,  
Paul Maliel*

Immediately upon their arrival in 2000, Paul and Omana Maliel became intimately connected with our congregation. Omana joined the choir and took part in many facets of the church life. Her warm personality was apparent immediately and the congregation took her to their hearts. Paul became a presence in seemingly every place and time of need. His energy and commitment were evident upon arrival within our midst. In a real sense, Paul and Omana were a team of ministry to our church.

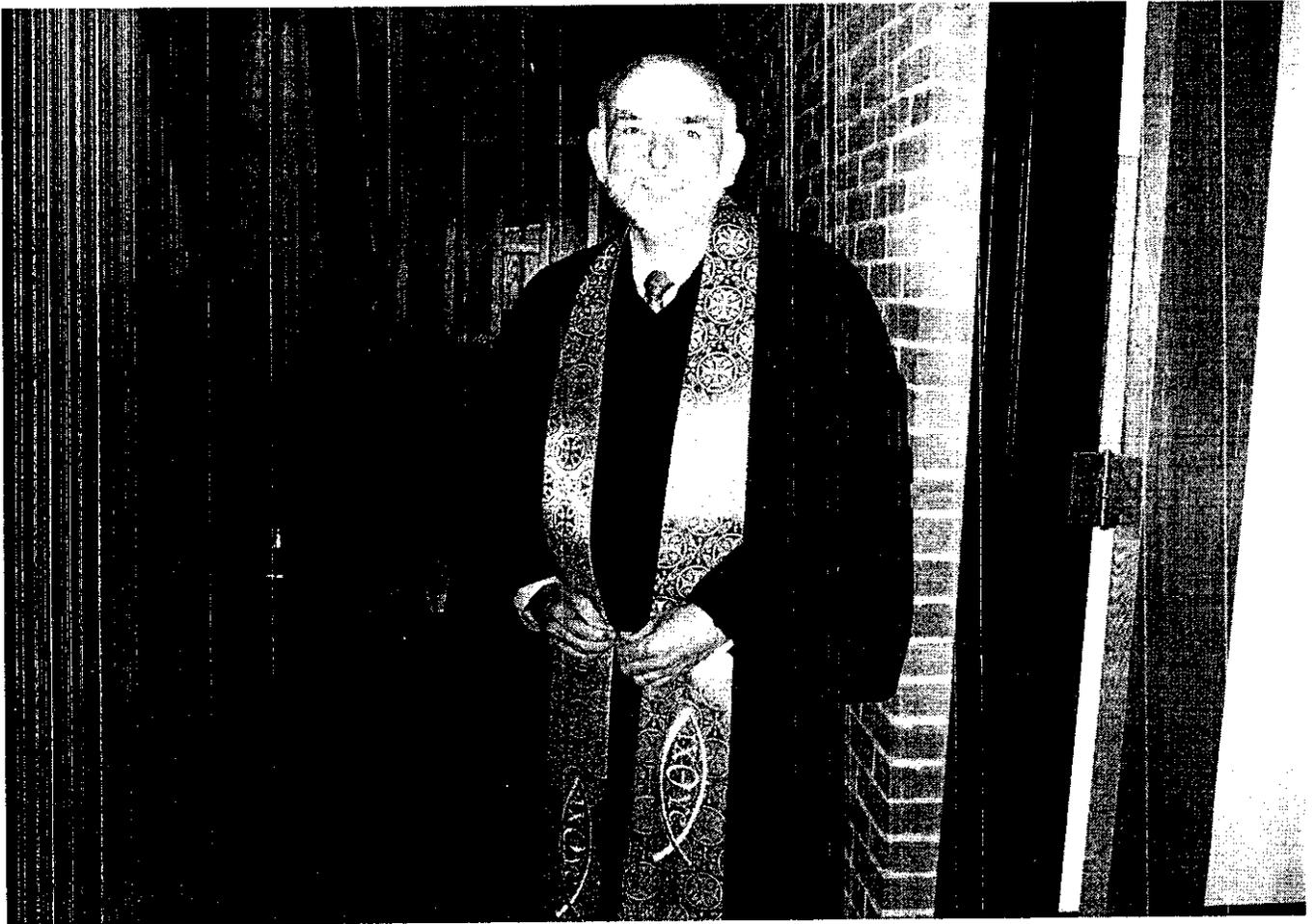
Reverend Maliel has the respect and admiration of many people not only within the church, but also throughout the Annual Conference. For example, he was among the clergy nominees to represent the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference at the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, and was one of those elected to represent the Conference at the Jurisdictional (*Regional*) Conference. He was described by his nominators as a "model of servant ministry."

Thus, for the second time in a row, our senior Pastor departed from our church to an appointment as a District Superintendent. Prior to that, our Senior Pastor retired. So, one has to go back to 1965 to find a Senior Pastor (*Reverend Dr. William F.B. Rodda*) who received an appointment to another church after serving the Chatham United Methodist Church.

The word that Reverend Paul M. Maliel would be leaving the congregation for a new appointment was followed very shortly by the announcement that our Associate Pastor, Reverend Frances Preston, had been called to serve as Pastor in the St. Andrew's United Methodist Church in Spring Lake, New Jersey.

The Reverend E. Richard Knox, Ph.D. was appointed to assume Senior Pastoral duties in the church, effective July 1, 2007.

*Reverend Dr. Knox is a preaching-teaching pastor who has served as a United Methodist minister for over thirty years. Rich graduated from Gettysburg College with a BA in sociology. He earned a Master of Divinity at the Divinity School of Duke University and a Masters in Philosophy and Doctorate in Christian Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.*



The Reverend Dr. E. Richard Knox

Pastor

(2007 - )

*As a student at Duke, Rich served as youth minister at New Sharon United Methodist Church in Hillsborough, North Carolina; as a pastor intern at Trinity UMC in Charlotte, NC; as chaplain intern at Pfeiffer College in Misenheimer, NC; and as a lobbyist for the North Carolina Council of Churches, concentrating on issues of sales taxes on food and on legislative ethics.*

*After graduating from Duke, he returned to New Jersey to serve as the Associate Minister at Morrow Memorial United Methodist Church in Maplewood. Rich has served as the minister of Roseland United Methodist Church and, concurrently, for three years, he was interim pastor of the Roseland Presbyterian Church. Prior to coming to Chatham, Rich has been pastor of Vincent United Methodist Church in Nutley.*

*Rich also has a joint faculty appointment at New York and Union Theological Seminaries; he teaches United Methodist polity, doctrine and history. Previously, he taught professional ethics for eleven years at Manhattan College; including ethics in the fields of computers, engineering, business and the general workplace. He also taught Christian ethics at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, NY and served as an adjunct professor at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, where he raised and explored ethical issues with medical residents in their ambulatory care rotation. While working on his Ph.D., Rich had the opportunity to work as a research associate at the Columbia University School of Business, exploring leadership formation and performance in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and served as a teaching assistant at Union Seminary and as research assistant to the president of Union Theological Seminary.*

*Rich has been married for ten years to Nan Hawkins, who recently retired as the director of alumni giving and communications at the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, a non-profit Christian agency whose administrative offices are in New York City.*

**The Reverend Jill Hubbard-Smith was appointed Associate Pastor at Chatham United Methodist Church, also effective July 1, 2007.**

*A life-long Methodist, Jill Hubbard-Smith has been involved in the ministry of several churches. Jill served with the youth and mission ministries at Bridgewater United Methodist Church before deciding to pursue her call to ministry. She has been a fully ordained elder in the greater New Jersey Annual Conference for eleven years.*

*While attending Centenary College in Hackettstown, Jill served as the Young Adult Coordinator for the Northern NJ Annual Conference. Her theological studies were completed at the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri, during which time she served as Minister of Youth and Young Adults for Blue Ridge United Methodist Church in Kansas City.*



The Reverend Jill Hubbard-Smith

Associate Pastor

(2007 - )

*Jill has also been Assistant Site Director at Aldersgate Center, Minister of Visitation and Youth for Trinity United Methodist Church, Chaplain at Centenary College and Program Minister at Newton United Methodist Church.*

*Since her ordination, Reverend Hubbard-Smith has served as Pastor of Lebanon UMC; Oldwick UMC and, prior to her appointment to Chatham, Jill served as pastor of the Belmar United Methodist Church. She is also the Chairperson of the Commission on Camps, Conferences and Retreats, which is the board that oversees the camping ministry of Aldersgate Center and Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery.*

*Jill is married to Garry Smith and together they have three children. Adam is 18 and a senior in high school, Hannah is 7 and in first grade and Lydia is 10 ½ months old.*

## THE CHURCH TODAY

A “history” is more than facts and figures; it is the people - - it is us. What is our church like today? Twenty years from now, what can we say about the spirit of our church in 2007 and during the most recent ten-to-fifteen years?

The “cornerstone” has been “listening.” What has it heard that has put life into our story? Listen.....

Worship is the central focus in our church. The message and music remain with me. I love the variation of worship and the impact that little surprises or changes can have on a day. For example, recently, Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith and Pastor Alice Walsh offered a Benediction that alternated between the front and back of the church with a memorable message. These are the moments I wait for and remember as faith growing experiences. My very favorite worship service of the year is the outside “Live Nativity.” It does not get any better than Mary and Joseph, baby Jesus, little shepherds and angels, real animals, caroling, and hot chocolate and perhaps some snow to lift my spirits. (Ball)

This year (2007) one of our new pastors, Jill Hubbard-Smith held a prayer service the night before school started. This was for students of all ages and their families. It was such a great way for them to feel the love of God and the congregation as they began a new year of learning. I certainly hope this becomes a tradition! (Palma)

There is a stability that people are offering children just by sitting in the same pew each week. When I was a child, Bill and Marion TenEyck, Ann and John English and Dave and Peg Wilcox helped me orient myself each Sunday as we sat in our families' familiar location 2/3 of the way back on the left. (In fact, it is my preference to sit in any church in that general location.) Today, I always know that I will find my parents Ann and Tom Harrison there. The people around us are comfortable with *sometimes* fidgeting kids. This is important to me since I believe the kids need to be present at worship in order to grow passionate about God and our church. (Ball)

Fellowship is a standout part of CUMC. We now have what is fondly called "Rally Day" which takes place on the first Sunday after Labor Day. It is the "kick-off" to the fall season and the beginning of Sunday school, choir, and all of our other fall activities. After the service there is a pot-luck lunch right out on the front lawn with bounce houses for the children and an ice-cream truck where everyone can get a favorite treat! This type of event is also held in June on Father's Day as the annual church picnic. It is so nice to have good old fashioned church picnics with all generations taking part. (Palma)

The children's Sunday school programs continue to grow. The preschoolers through second graders go to the Activities room during the sermon where they are taught the Lord's Prayer, Doxology, and many other important aspects of the church service such as communion, baptism, and the offertory. They learn the classic Bible songs and stories at that time also. The curriculum for preschool through second grade has been updated with wonderful Bible stories, great crafts, service projects, and the love of many teachers. Third graders have an overnight retreat in the church where they learn more about the importance of various parts of the worship service, baptism, communion, and the Bible. They continue to receive their Bibles during this year. The fourth and fifth graders continue to grow in their understanding of the Bible by following the lectionary and discussing what they heard during the service. This is the year that they receive their acolyte training which has been very exciting for many of them. We are so blessed to have a team of volunteers who teach our children and form a dedicated council that meets regularly to discuss curriculum and all aspects of the church that affect them. (Palma)

In sixth and seventh grade the children begin to prepare for their confirmation studies. There are more advanced discussions centering

on the liturgy and their understanding of the word in terms of their developing faith. (Palma)

Just last year I jointly taught Confirmation with Bob Blount-Lyon. My son, Matt, and Bob's step son, Cam White, were in the class. We had a curriculum that covered the history of Christianity, faith, sin, love, forgiveness, volunteerism etc. We also did several field trips to New York City, a corn maze, slept at the church, and the 11 freshmen designed the Confirmation worship service. It was a memorable experience for all of us. (Ball)

The Stephen Ministry program continues to be a valuable lay-caring ministry of support through one-to-one relationships. Presently under the guidance of Perry Philp and Chris Fillimon, Stephen Ministers from the church care, listen, and share God's love to help individuals through a time of personal crisis. (English)

The WALK TO EMMAUS program is strong at our church. As many as 20 members from our church have experienced this 4-day, 72-hour spiritual renewal. (English)

Two new United Methodist Women's Circles have been formed within the last ten years. What an exciting time for the church. The Elizabeth circle was started in the late 90's by a group of women who had young children. This circle has grown tremendously and continues to grow as a group of prayer, study, service, and fellowship. Within the last few years the Eve circle was formed. The women in this Circle have studied the Gospel that is for the lectionary that year. It has been a great way to feel connected over the year. The UMW is going strong and continues to contribute significantly to the fellowship and strength of the congregation. (Palma and Ball)

Over the last 4 years we have had an amazing growth in Adult Bible Studies, especially the Disciple Bible Series. We have also had some Lenten soup and book discussions on Wednesday evenings and studies on the history of the church and the various major world religions. (Ball and Palma)

Summer Bible Camp has become an annual tradition at the church. It offers great music, crafts, activities and friendship for children. There has been a new theme every year which presents a wonderful opportunity for children and youth to come together either as campers

or helpers to learn God's word. Children in the neighboring communities are invited and all of the parents participate which makes for quite an ecumenical education effort! The CUMC team which includes over 20 youth volunteers really steps up to lead a week of fabulous fun and fellowship! It is also a great way for the youth to begin to volunteer, as the fourth graders are shepherds to the younger children. (Ball and Palma)

Giving back or helping others has always been a major part of CUMC. For example, my 15 year old son, Matt, went on RISE this year. He was very moved by the experience and will definitely go again. He worked on roofing a home for a family with his team. My middle son, Nick, has always grown a lot by eating with the guests in the Interfaith Hospitality Network. It is a great way to help others feel welcome. As another example, the kids do a Tree Stocking gift at Christmas for families in need. (Ball)

Music Camp at Aldersgate, run by Rev. Tanya Bennett and Mark Miller, both well-known by our church, has been a fun experience for the youth. Experiencing faith in an enjoyable and relaxed setting really can contribute to our children's' growth as Christians. The new pool complex is wonderful at Aldersgate. Until recently, the church's Family Life Council organized a winter overnight retreat at Aldersgate. That event was always very spiritual. A fire in the dorm building (unoccupied at the time) has temporarily interrupted this experience. The retreats at Aldersgate will resume once the dorm is re-constructed. (Ball)

The Mothers-Morning-Out program and the very successful Nursery School continue to be in operation. We are so very fortunate to have these community outreach programs. The school continues to be a nurturing place where children truly feel the love of God. There also is a Moms and Tots playgroup which has been developed recently. (Palma)

John Hadamuscin has organized some wonderful Church events. My kids still seem to ask each year if there will be another Halloween party. We also have great memories of the Mardi Gras party that came about in response to our joint relationship with the United Methodist Church of Slidell in Louisiana after the hurricanes and flooding. The pastor from Slidell even attended the party. It is always wonderful to make teaching moments fun. (Ball)

The Interfaith Hospitality Network, regular blood drives, an alternative gift boutique at Christmas-time and the SCEEP program are thriving ministries of the church. (Palma)

The Rummage Sale is an experience that is almost indescribable! Tons of clothes and house wares are dropped off by donors and organized into a nice shopping experience. It is truly an amazing undertaking that requires about 50 people working for 4 days. Amazingly, in recent years, the Sale raises about \$10,000. The Antique show is in its 51<sup>st</sup> Year—that is commitment. When people are given the chance to actually roll up their sleeves and work side by side with others in the congregation, they really begin to take ownership of the church. It is a beautiful process to be part of and it is great to watch new people experience it. (Ball)

Church fellowship and volunteerism is strong at the Chatham United Methodist Church. Clearly, if one wants to be involved, there are plenty of opportunities. (Ball)

You can see CUMC is a church family. In fact, it doesn't get any better for me than to have a little child point at me in the grocery store and say "look mom she goes to our church." If we can carry our love for each other into the daily routine of life, the world will be a better place. (Ball)

.....

Thus, the story continues to unfold and it is left to future "Church Historians" to record the tale of the Chatham United Methodists beyond 2007. The old "cornerstone" remains standing alone in the center of the Memorial Garden like a sentinel for all to see, watching over the comings and goings of many Christian worshippers: those active in the life of the church and those private in their devotion to God; those now worshipping with other Christians; those dead, whose spirits have preceded us to heaven; and those living today who charge ourselves to empower all to follow Christ; equip all to do what is just; encourage all to show loving kindness; and energize all to walk humbly with God. The old "cornerstone" is a reminder that the "church is a people" and it is us who, by the Grace of God, are its foundation.

.....



Summit Avenue



Center Street



Main Street

Chatham United Methodist Church



## The “Cornerstone”

of

The Chatham United Methodist Church (1956 - )  
(Main Street)

The Chatham Methodist Church (1899-1956)  
(Center Street)

The Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church (1833-1898)  
(Summit Avenue and Main Street)

(Photographed in 2007)

NOTE - I thoroughly expect that you may have found important errors and noticed significant omissions. If, in spite of these, you have enjoyed this account of our *journey*, I am happy and believe that I have provided a service to my fellow United Methodists.

WBB

# APPENDIX

## “Lay Leaders’ Comments”

1991-1993



The church is an exciting place; many of us know that. If you want to feel some of this excitement, drop by on Wednesday evenings and spend time with the Junior Youth Fellowship (JYF) group! Approximately 25 youth in grades 6, 7, and 8 gather for an hour each week in this program of Christian fellowship.

Look into the eyes of these youth and you will catch a glimpse of what's going on. At different times, you will see the glow of happiness, you will see mischievous looks on grinning faces, you will see skeptical looks as new issues and positions are expressed by the leaders, and you will see many other aspects of human emotion. You sense the goodness which is pouring into these kids. You realize that they have the opportunity to learn that God is a very real presence found in the friendship with others.

To be sure, because of the restless nature of youth, conflicts occasionally develop and feelings get hurt at times; but what better place to work through these very human emotions than in the church and under the guidance of caring leaders.

The leaders are persons committed to give youth a chance to see God. Their energy level is indicative of what they give...at the end of a "meeting" they're pretty exhausted!

The leaders, however, should also feel a sense of fulfillment from having been a part of the lives of these youth. One day, to be sure, they'll look into the eyes of another adult and hear an expression of genuine gratitude for being a person warmly recalled as one who helped the other to know God and to grow and understand the world while in his or her middle school years.

We are very grateful to the leaders of the JYF for their commitment to guide and nurture these youth. The Chatham United Methodist Church is very fortunate to have many others like them who give time and energy to leading programs for young people of all ages.



As the result of the last major recession and its impact on many persons in our congregation, Henry and Sharon Gventer began a series of weekly meetings during which people shared problems related to unemployment. They called the group the "Morris Experiment," drawing upon the example of the Pittsburgh Experiment. Their interest in the program was sparked by a feature in Guideposts magazine on a similar organization which had been established in Park Ridge, N.J.

Prior to starting the program in Morris County, Henry and Sharon attended several workshops led by Dr. Paul Everett of the Pittsburgh Experiment. The workshops were offered to volunteers who were interested in establishing groups whose purpose was to help people confront work-related problems. Dr. Everett is the son-in-law of Norman Vincent Peale, the former pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City.

The "Morris Experiment" has continued through better times, since job-related problems have a way of affecting even those who are employed. The people who come to the meetings share some of their problems and concerns with other willing ears. After gaining some perspective, most people have found that their own concerns ebb and they are able to offer insights to newcomers seeking guidance. People who attend the meetings now come not only from our congregation, but also from the community at large. There is a constant turnover of those seeking help.

Henry and Sharon's faithful attention to people with job-related concerns has enabled the group to continue for many years. Unfortunately, in view of the current business slowdown, it again has particular relevance for issues relating to unemployment.



Since the summer of 1981 youth and adults from CUMC have been involved in a program called RISE (the Risingville Intercommunity Service Effort). It started as a joint effort between youth and adults in Chatham and Caryl and Noel Sylvester and the Risingville, NY United Methodist Church. Risingville is located in the southern tier of the Appalachians in New York state.

RISE is a work camp offering "hands-on" experience. Volunteers actually repair homes and help those who are either physically or financially unable to do so themselves. Their philosophy is to help without judging the people or their way of life, but by working with them to improve their quality of life.

The RISE program has grown from 25 volunteers and one center to over 100 volunteers and three centers. Although it is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, it is open to persons of all faiths and youth from all churches. RISE has been responsible for repairing nearly 200 homes and involving over a dozen churches and over 700 volunteers.

The real success, however, is best told by the people involved. The following comes from one of the first volunteers: *"As you enter a small, typical village in Steuben County, you come upon two trailers that have become very close to RISE. This is the first home we worked on. By building a room which connected the two trailers, we were able to improve the housing conditions enough so that the family that lived there could stay together. Now the son works for our project each summer, and the father has used his truck to serve others. We reached out to help through RISE, and they now reach out with us."*

As spring is arriving, youth and adults from our church are once again preparing for a summer work week of fun, fellowship, and learning. A special "thank-you" is deserved by our Associate Minister, Dale Forsman, for the development of this RISE program and its continuing success.



There is a wonderful spot in town which offers older adults delicious food and a friendly ambiance. It is the direct result of the dedication of many volunteers that these persons, largely from the two Chatham's, have the opportunity to meet weekly over a complete and nutritious meal.

Our church acts as the host for this gathering in Rodda Hall, known formerly as Fellowship Hall. Every Monday 50 to 60 older adults arrive around 11:45 a.m. for a meal consisting of a balanced main course, dessert and beverage. The meal begins promptly at noon and is over by 1 p.m. A "free will" offering of \$2 or more is requested, but not required.

The people who attend the luncheon, worship in many different churches in the area and those who prepare and serve the meals are just as diverse a group. The responsibility for planning, preparing and serving the luncheon is shared, in turn, by the regular committee in our church, many of the UMW Circles, groups from St. Patrick's, Ogden Memorial, St. Paul's, Stanley Congregational, the Township Presbyterian and Corpus Christi churches, and the Newcomer's groups. Additional volunteers help by providing transportation for some of the older adults.

A need was recognized by the women of this church, some 16 years ago, that older adults needed more opportunities for a complete and balanced meal and warm friendship. They also recognized that our kitchen and meeting facilities were just right for such a community service. Finally, our location on Main Street proved very accessible to many people. Under the leadership of the women of the church, the older adult luncheon has become an important opportunity for our Christian witness.

So, each Monday on which school is in session, you can walk the upper corridor of the church around noon and be greeted by the wonderful aroma of a "home-cooked" meal and the gentle sound of good conversation among friends who meet weekly at one of the best luncheon spots in the area.



If it's worthwhile and there is a need in our church and community, it's worth the effort. These were ideas expressed over twenty years ago when a group of dedicated church members decided to organize a Chatham Methodist Church Nursery School. It required hard work and perseverance, but in September 1969, the church nursery school opened its doors. They started with an energetic and dedicated staff and have continued to maintain a top quality staff over the years. The Nursery School of the Chatham United Methodist Church is run by a board of directors of which at least one-third of the voting members are church members. There are also three ex-officio church members.

It's hard to miss the bustle of activity at the nursery school on almost any weekday during the school year. Whether they are off to the park, pumpkin farm, pet store, or just to ride their bikes, they are learning and sharing in a loving, caring atmosphere. They have established a connection with some of the seniors in our church which has been rewarding for everyone involved. Every year offers a variety of activities to help the children grow socially and emotionally as well as intellectually. The nursery school is another outreach into the community.

On a final note, be sure to keep an eye out for new playground equipment to be provided by the nursery school.

## Behind the Scenes of Worship

If you arrive at church on Sunday morning about 8 AM, you will gain a special appreciation for something we take for granted. It is an interesting time in our church sanctuary. The natural sunlight filters through the beautiful stained glass windows casting a sparkle on the pews. Strains of music come and go as the organist warms up. The ministers arrive to prepare the pulpit. The sound system is adjusted. And, the Altar Guild members are at work arranging the altar for worship.

In this time of preparation, the Altar Guild arranges the flowers, candles, baptismal bowl, and chalice on the altar. On special Sundays, they place the newborn baby's rosebud or the AIDS candle in their appropriate locations. When we celebrate communion, they are responsible for preparing the sacraments. Sometimes, between church services, they replace the candles so that the acolyte can easily light them. At the end of worship for the day, they divide the altar flowers into special containers which are taken to shut-ins and hospitalized church members. In addition to these Sunday morning duties, the Altar Guild keeps the brass items polished brightly and the candles carefully trimmed.

Marie Coats is chairperson of this guild and is assisted by Dona Franklin, Evelyn Kolb, and Marion Ten Eyck. They handle this task in a personalized, caring way. We thank them all for their invaluable service. Next Sunday as you sit in the pews, think of their work behind the scenes in loving dedication to our church.

## UMW Rummage Sales: A Special Way to Care

There are many images associated with the Rummage Sale. For persons who sift through their belongings, there is a sense of cleaning out--to make room for new things and to get unneeded things to others who have a use for them. For the buyers, there is a sense of gaining something of value at a reasonable price. But, there are many other images associated with these sales events sponsored by the United Methodist Women in October and April:

- Rodda Hall is transformed into a supply room of tables piled high with a great variety of clothes.
- Church school rooms are magically transformed into speciality shops featuring boutique items, toys, books, jewelry, housewares and much more.
- For the workers, there is the experience of work and good fellowship.
- For our church, there is help in funding missions and other projects.
- For the buyers, there is access to goods that have served the needs of some and now can serve the needs of others.
- For the community around the CAUSE Thrift Shop in Jersey City, there is access to the unsold items which are donated to the store to be sold at a nominal cost.

The Rummage Sale is much more than a transaction to move goods from one person to another. It is a time when people and their needs are addressed in a special and caring way by the United Methodist Women and all the other volunteers who make this event mean so much to so many. Thank you for making the Rummage Sale much more than the name implies!

Next fall, when this event occurs again, will you please volunteer your "unwanted" goods and your "wanted" time to help with this worthwhile event?

## Care Corps Gives Us "Roots"

You have certainly been in a special place like this--that other place called home--the place of your childhood roots. For some of us, it is miles from Chatham. This summer in that setting, I found my mind bouncing between critical life events in Chatham and in a small Ohio town in the hills. It was at the funeral of my mother's close friend that I recaptured the special community support that resides in that midwestern village. People stepped forward to help the family in need. The food, the offer of guest rooms for visiting relatives, and the personal caring that had been so helpful and sustaining during a long illness--all these were there.

The world often seems different in places where people's lives are connected to one geographical location. Relationships are built on many years of experiences with one another. As I reflect on that, I think of life in the Chatham area where the mobility of residents provides a very different surrounding. The pace of work, the corporate moves, and the various pressures on personal life may tend to plant our roots in rather shallow soil.

But there are many opportunities to provide sustaining support to lifestyles in the Chatham area. Our church reaches out in many ways--the spiritual guidance of the ministers, the fellowship with other Christians, the Prayer Fellowship, the Alzheimer's Group, the Morris Experiment--to mention a few.

One group within our church exists specifically for the purpose of helping our members in times of need. The Care Corps volunteers help prepare and deliver food to people facing sickness or death of a loved one. They provide transportation to medical appointments. In these ways, the Care Corps helps surround us with those roots I experienced in that small Ohio town.

The Care Corps has a need, too. It needs your time to help with its task. Please consider this opportunity to serve our members in this personal way. For information, contact the church office.

## Scouting and Church--Working Together

"On My Honor, I will try to serve God and my country..." If those words are familiar, you have probably been a part of Girl Scouting, either as a Brownie, Girl Scout, parent or leader.

Our church is instrumental in the lives of girls in the Chatham area through leadership offered by several members of our congregation, and through the use of our building for their meetings and activities. We are recognized by the Morris Area Girl Scout Council as a sponsoring organization of five Girl Scout troops which meet at the church.

Currently, 14 members of our congregation from Chatham and Madison are Girl Scout leaders and approximately 30 girls from our church are active in Scouting.

The church is also a beneficiary of the girls' service work. They handle recycling for the church during the school year, and periodically re-arrange the downstairs classrooms so that the Hospitality Network can provide warm, clean shelter for homeless families. They are also active in the worship service on Girl Scout Sunday.

The community also benefits from the Girls Scouts. They have cleaned parks, visited nursing homes, participate in emergency drills, and held a Santa's Workshop in our church during December.

As of June last year, 11 girls had received a "God and Country" award from the church. Two Cadets from our church have received the second highest award in Girl Scouting--the Silver Award. They are now eligible to work toward the Gold Award.

For many years, scouting has been an important part of the ministry of people from our church. As we recognize the Boy Scouts in February and the Girl Scouts in March, let us be sure to thank those people who give their time and energy in leadership to youth through scouting.

## Hosting Special Guests

A young father, frustrated and burdened by the maze he must trace to qualify for housing, carries bundles of his family's belongings back to his car after a week's shelter in our church. He passes Reverend Goodwin and calls out to him, "Bless my daughter, Father." Reverend Goodwin answers back, "She is blessed!"...A third grade boy's homework assignment requires him to make a project out of construction paper and, with the help of a church host, he finds the materials in the church for the project...A middle-aged woman, successfully fighting alcoholism, joyfully cleans every room and sink, though she, herself, is one of the guests that week.

These and many others are the people who encounter us when we serve as host church for the Hospitality Network. The faces change, the situations vary, but the common thread is the temporary lack of housing. We can't solve the underlying problems they face; we can't raise their incomes; we can't restore their wholeness, their injured pride. But, we can provide them shelter and food and let them know there are people with open and willing hearts in our church who care.

We serve as afternoon and evening hosts, as cooks of wholesome meals, as overnight hosts, as persons who convert classrooms into temporary bedrooms, as providers of clean bedding and towels, as patient "extra-hands" who watch and play with children, and in other ways. The responsibilities are well-defined and experienced people serve alongside always.

When this newsletter comes out, we will again be serving as the host church for the Hospitality network. We'll have another opportunity in late February of next year. Come, sign up to help. The need is great, and it's likely that you'll be strengthened in your faith.

## CUMC & Camp Aldersgate

Did you know that Kathy Stolz will lead children aged 6 - 8 at Camp Aldersgate this summer in making bread, tending sheep, churning ice cream, and doing other things which will help make the Gospel stories understandable and vivid? Did you know that Dale Forsman, Chris Furlong, and two other adults will lead junior and senior high youth in producing and acting in several plays this summer?

The Aldersgate Center is a conference and camp facility belonging to all of the United Methodist Churches in Northern New Jersey. It is situated approximately six miles west of Newton, New Jersey, on 228 wooded acres which include a two acre pond, a one-half mile clear stream, open fields and 2 1/2 miles of hiking trails. A separate property, on the shore of Swartswood Lake, contains a large swimming pool, sports fields, a covered pavilion, and recreational equipment.

Over one thousand children, youth and adults will share their Christian faith in an Aldersgate program this summer. The programs vary widely and include the creative arts, athletics, vacation Bible experiences, and programs of environmental awareness, to name a few. Aldersgate has been operating at a sizable deficit recently, however, its doors remain open and its impact on the lives of the youth in our Annual Conference is considerable. The church office occasionally receives special contributions for Aldersgate. They are especially welcome now!

If you are looking for a meaningful summer program for your children, ask one of us, one of the pastors, or the church office for information about Aldersgate. The more we support it with our contributions and participation, the more we will recognize its importance in the lives of our youth.

## Church School Teachers Guide Our Youth Through Complex World

Young people today have a much broader understanding of the world than we did at their age years ago. They have been encouraged from birth to learn and have been given a substantial amount of freedom to do so. As a result, they know a lot!

At the same time, the youth of today are constantly bombarded with issues on TV, in the movies, in magazines and novels, and in other ways which often present them with moral dilemmas that adults find hard to confront. Furthermore, modern science has developed to such an extent that they are aware they will ultimately have to make decisions which we in the older generations never thought possible.

While the kids' storehouse of factual knowledge is large, it doesn't mean that they have an expanded capacity to absorb the information. In reality, they are still children and youth, trying to grow up, asking "how do I process all this information...what is the deeper meaning in it...does it relate to my beliefs as a Christian...How do I make moral sense out of this?"

Our Church School teachers are on the front-lines with the kids as they discover deeper meanings to what they have learned in the world. We can be thankful for Kathy Stolz and Dale Forsman, who provide wise leadership for our Christian education program, and for the faithfulness and energy of all the teachers who work hard to give our young people the same strong familiarity with the Bible and high moral standards as were available to us years ago.

However, the Church School teachers can't do it alone. In our own ways, we can be "mentors" to any young people we encounter. They have a complex world ahead of them. By talking with them and showing ourselves as examples, we can help them deal with all these facts and experiences and help them develop values which they can live by throughout their lives.

## Project Link Breaks Poverty Cycle

As we begin the new school year in Chatham, another beginning is taking place. In the wake of the tensions of the 1960s, a group of devoted educators in Newark and other urban areas felt they could use their talents to help youth in these areas grow in mind, body and soul. Many youngsters were in educational settings which did not challenge them. They passed through high school and entered the poverty cycle as adults whose children would have no better opportunity. A link in this cycle had to be broken.

In 1969, Project Link was founded with the skill, hope and financial support of individuals, churches and corporations. Its purpose hasn't changed; its success is well-documented.

Under-achieving youth in the seventh and eighth grades are taught the standard curriculum with the goal of upgrading their skills to or surpassing the level of their peers. Graduates of Link then re-enter the regular school system with much greater potential for success beyond high school.

The Chatham United Methodist Church and its members have been financial supporters of Link from its early days. It is one of the urban ministries that has been included in our benevolence program for many years. Furthermore, today one of this church's young adults, Todd Behling, is an educator at the Link Community School, the project's new name.

Your support of the financial program of our church helps Link relight a spark in the lives of these young people who, as a result of the impact of this program, are particularly eager to start the new school year.

## CUMC Keeps Seniors Active

Good home-cooked food, fellowship with new and old friends, interesting programs during the year, work in support of patients at Greystone, lively discussion...without more information, this could easily describe the UMYF program. But, at CUMC, it describes our program for older adults.

Seniors from throughout the area find a home-cooked meal in Rodda Hall on Mondays at noon when the public schools are in session. For a \$2.00 donation, and a reservation made through the church office, all are welcome for this social event, renewing friendships and making new ones!

A weekly Drop-In Center is open Wednesdays at 10 AM in the Asbury Room. Everyone is asked to bring a sandwich; dessert and beverage are provided. Varied and interesting programs are provided during the year, but the group also works in support of Greystone by knitting lap robes, leg warmers and bed slippers. In an effort to bridge the "generation gap," the group has visited the nursery children at Christmas and Easter with special treats and has entertained the mothers of these children at a Valentine's Day coffee.

One Thursday morning each month, retired men meet over coffee to discuss various topics.

Encourage the seniors you know to take advantage of these programs. They offer warm fellowship and an opportunity to help others.

## Behind the Scenes of Worship

There is a small group of young people who you do not see often, but who are integral to our worship, study and fellowship. We're referring to four high school students from our church who each serve as Assistant Custodian once a month: Brad Preston (high school junior), Mike Kiley (sophomore), and Richard Irwin and Matt Klotz (freshmen).

Their job on Sunday mornings is full of details. They arrive and open the church at 8 AM. Seventeen separate external doors and nine internal doors are unlocked, the heating (or cooling) in five separate locations is checked, lights in 37 different rooms and halls are turned on, the microphones in the Sanctuary and Rodda Hall are moved to convenient locations, the kitchen coffeemaker is turned on, the vault is opened for the Altar Guild, chairs are arranged as needed, orange cones are put out to restrict parking at the rear walkway, and the seven bathrooms are checked. When needed, they clear snow from the doors, sprinkle salt and sand, and clear the sidewalks of chestnut tree debris.

Much of this process is reversed after the second service. All the trash is collected and removed from the building. Their work is done around 1 PM.

These youth have also helped keep the building functional during some of our special evening services and have done a wonderful job with up to 15 - 20 lighting changes for the ministers.

Both boys and girls are eligible for these positions and have served as Assistant Custodians. They earn a modest compensation for their five hours of work. It is a very effective program managed by Boris Borecki, Building Superintendent, since 1985.

"Here is an example of how young people in our congregation are given responsibility and they come through for us time and again," said Associate Minister Dale Forsman. We are very grateful to all of the current and prior Assistant Custodians.

## SOURCES

“Adams” refers to commentary by Allison O. Adams in Emory Magazine, Autumn, 2000.

“Adams and Foss” refers to “New Hampshire Years of Revolution,” by Steve Adams and Gerald Foss, 1976.

“AfricaWithin” refers to the Biography Resource Center, 2001, Gale Group, Inc found on the “AfricaWithin.com” website.

“Annual Report” refers to the Annual Reports of the Chatham United Methodist Church for many years. [I have reviewed and selected some information from the Annual Reports of: 1942-44, 1948, 1950-2006.]

“Anniversary 125” refers to a booklet prepared at the time the Chatham Methodist Church celebrated, in 1957, the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1832. [The sources of some of the information in the pamphlet were also “Brief History of Chatham” by Charles Philhower and “Stories of Old Chatham” by Herbert T. Strong.]

“Baird” refers to a conversation the editor had with Jean Baird.

“Ball” refers to a conversation the editor had with Amy Harrison Ball, one of the numerous people who grew up within our church family.

“Bangs” refers to “A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” by Nathan Bangs.

“Bennett” refers to a recorded conversation that Connie Ehmann had with Dorothy Bennett in 1989 and one the editor had with Dot’s daughter, Barbara Bennett, in 2005.

“Bicentennial” refers to “Bicentennial of American Methodism – 1966; Programs and Activities.”

“Birdsall” refers to recollections of Bill Birdsall’s mother, Helen Burnett Birdsall.

“Blachly” refers to notes prepared by Gertrude Blachly for Bob Simpson on the occasion of the church’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1982.

“Boyer” refers to notes provided by Francele Boyer.

“Britannia” refers to “Britannia.com”

“Buesing” refers to notes assembled in a report titled “ - - - - but, I AM A CHRISTIAN” by Charles J. Buesing, a story about the planning, financing and construction of the Chatham Methodist Church at 460 Main Street.

“Camp” refers to “Northern New Jersey Camp Meetings and Mount Tabor,” by Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson and appearing in the Fall 1977 Newsletter of the Commission on Archives and History of the Northern New Jersey Conference.

“Carey” refers to Brycchan Carey’s research in the eighteenth century and his work primarily on the literature and culture of slavery and abolition; Kingston University in Surrey, United Kingdom, <http://www.brycchancarey.com/index.htm>.

“Cawley” refers to “Along the Old York Road,” by James and Margaret Cawley, Rutgers University Press, 1965.

“Centennial” refers to “Newark Conference Centennial History, 1857-1957,” edited by Vernon Boyce Hampton.

“Chatham Township” refers to information provided by the Chatham Township Historical Society.

“Chimes” refers to information found in “The Methodist Chimes,” a monthly newsletter from the church.

“Churchill” refers to “Memories Entwined With Roses,” by Ruth Pierson Churchill, 1984, life-long resident and historian of Chatham Township.

“City University” refers to the City University of New York (Hunter College) as published on the internet.

“Colored” refers to “The Colored American,” New York, September 4, 1841.

“Conklin” refers to a conversation Rev. Dr. Simpson had with Wesley Conklin in the 1980s.

"Connecticut Farms" refers to "A Brochure on The First Presbyterian Congregation of Connecticut Farms," 1935, Page 13-14, 9-10i, by Lewis E. Horton, descendant from the first pastor of the church, Rev. Simon Horton.

"Conversation" refers to a recorded and transcribed 90 minute discussion in September 1992 between Connie Ehmman, Paul and Mary Emler, Bill Swenson, Ralph Sternberg and Bill Birdsall titled, "From Center Street to Main Street," a personal account of the decision to build a new church and of the work and joy it meant for those who participated.

"Courier" refers to articles appearing in the Chatham Courier.

"Crane" refers to the Spring 1977 issue of the "Circuit Writer," the Newsletter of the Commission on Archives and History.

"Cummings" refers to PatriotSource.com, Steve Cummings.

"Cunningham" refers to "Chatham: At the Crossing of the Fishawack," by John T. Cunningham, published by the Chatham Historical Society, 1967.

"Damon" refers to "A Melancholy Case," by Allan L. Damon, American Heritage, February, 1970.

"Davis" refers to a conversation the editor had with Doug and Pat Davis.

"Dedication" refers to the Dedication Program prepared by the church at the celebration on March 19, 1972 of full repayment of the mortgage and dedication of the new Sanctuary.

"Dilonno" refers to "Backroads, New Jersey," by Mark Di Ionno, 2002.

"Dodd" refers to "A Semi-Centennial Address" by John Foster Dodd, D.D., delivered in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Chatham, N.J. September 23, 1906.

"Drake" refers to "Dictionary of American Biography," by Francis Samuel Drake, Boston 1874.

"Ehmman" refers to a recorded and transcribed conversation that Bob Simpson had with Connie Ehmman in 1989.

“Ehrhardt” refers to a copy of the John Hancock story given to Reverend Dr. William F. B. Rodda by John Ehrhardt, Editor of the Eagle-Courier Newspapers, on July 1, 1955. The story was partially based on a little book entitled, “A Pilgrim’s Footsteps,” published by Reverend Ellwood H. Stokes, pastor of the Morristown Methodist Church in March 1855.

“Emler” refers to a recorded and transcribed conversation that Reverend Bob Simpson had with Mary and Paul Emler in 1990.

“English” refers to a conversation the editor had with Ann English.

“Famous” refers to the website [www.famousamericans.net](http://www.famousamericans.net), which is based on Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, edited by James Grant Wilson, John Fiske and Stanley L. Klos.

“Franklin” refers to notes supplied by Edith Franklin on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Antiques Show.

“Fry” refers to a recorded conversation that Bob Simpson had with Christa J. Fry in 1989.

“Future” refers to information in a brochure prepared in 1958 titled “The Chatham Methodist Church Looks to the Future.”

“Gollinott” refers to a conversation the editor had with Rosalie Gollinott.

“Haberstroh” refers to a conversation the editor had with Don and Priscilla Haberstroh in 2005.

“Hampton” refers to “History of Chatham Methodism,” a sermon preached at the Chatham Methodist Episcopal church, on Sunday morning, December 9, 1900 by Reverend Dr. William Judson Hampton, minister of the church in 1899-1901; published by J. Thomas Scott, Chatham, N.J. 1901.

“History” refers to information made available by the United Methodist Church, General Office.

“Holler” refers to “My Town by a River,” by Liz Holler, 2005.

“Internet” refers to various sources on the Internet.

“Lewis” refers to “Paine’s Letter to Washington Proved His Humanitarianism,” by Joseph Lewis.

“Littell” refers to research gathered and published by John Littell, 1851.

“LOC” refers to the Library of Congress, “The Panic of 1857.”

“Lossing” refers to the “Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, Volume 1,” by Benson J. Lossing, 1850.

“Martin” refers to the Program of Dedication of the new Education Building on October 4, 1959.

“Mary” is cited by the editor (see below).

“Milestones” refers to information found in the 1972 Dedication Program.

“Military Journal” refers to “Military Journal 1782,” AmericanRevolution.org.

“Millburn” refers to “The Indians and the First White Men,” published in 1957 by the Millburn Centennial Committee.

“Minutes” refers to a notebook containing the minutes of the “Penny-A-Day Club” from May 23, 1882 to 1888; minutes from meetings of the Women Society of Christian Service; and minutes of the Men’s Club September 22, 1960 to February 14, 1967.

“News” refers to the “Mount Olive Weekly News.”

“Newsletter” refers to the October, 1957 “Chatham Historical Society Newsletter,” and, by extension, to various sources that are cited in the “Newsletter.”

“Oral History – Edie” refers to an interview with Edith Van Wert that Connie Ehmman recorded in 1989.

“Oral History – Leola” refers to an interview with Leola Anderson that Connie Ehmman recorded on June 1, 1990.

“Palma” refers to a conversation the editor had with Carolyn Watt Palma, one of the numerous people who grew up within our church family.

“Philhower” refers to the “Brief History of Chatham,” by Charles Philhower.

“Phillips” refers to “Where a Man Can Go, Major General William Phillips, British Royal Artillery, 1731 – 1781,” by Robert P. Davis, Greenwood Press, 1999.

“Phoebus” refers to “Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America,” Philips and Hunt, New York, 1887, in which George A. Phoebus, D.D. edited and published the letters, diaries and tracts of Reverend Ezekiel Cooper.

“Probationer” refers to a small book (1893) called “The Probationer’s Companion,” that belonged to Edward Taylor of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church.

“Prowell” refers to the “Religious History of Camden” taken from George Reeser Prowell’s “History of Camden County, N.J.” 1886.

“Raftis” refers to the book “Summit, New Jersey, from Poverty Hill to The Hill City,” by Edmund B. Raftis, Great Swamp Press, 1996.

“Record” refers to information that is available in the Chatham Public Library.

“Saddlebags” refers to the book “If Saddlebags Could Talk,” by Frederick E. Maser and Robert Drew Simpson, 1998.

“Sanctuary 1948” refers to the Dedicatory Program prepared for the dedication of the Organ and Sanctuary Renovations at the Center Street Church.

“Saturday Stroll” refers to the booklet, “A Saturday Stroll Down East Main Street,” published by the Chatham Historical Society on March 25, 1972.

“Schweikart and Allen” refers to “A Patriot’s History of the United States,” published by Sentinel 2004.

“Seventy-Six” refers to “The Spirit of ‘Seventy Six’”; edited by Commager and Morris, 1958, pages 9-9 to 9-12 and pages 1282-1283.

“Shrine” refers to “The Shrine Invisible” by William J. Hampton, D.D., 1912.

"Simpson" refers to the work done by Reverend Dr. Robert Drew Simpson to edit the Journals of the Reverend Thomas Morrell, "The Reverend Thomas Morrell, New Jersey Patriot and Preacher." It also refers to conversations with Rev. Dr. Simpson, who was Pastor of the Chatham United Methodist Church from 1965 to 1990.

"Sparnon" refers to "History of the Present Pastorate from the Beginning of April 1894 to the Laying of the Cornerstone November 5, 1898" by Reverend John O. Sparnon, Pastor of the Chatham Methodist Episcopal Church on November 5, 1898.

"Springfield" refers to "The Development of a Community" (Springfield, Millburn, Short Hills), 1947, pages 9-11, 24.

"St. Paul's" refers to a history of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chatham.

"Stannard" refers a conversation the editor had with Bob and Hilary Stannard.

"Stevens" refers to his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," Volume III; New York, 1867 Carlton and Porter.

"Strong" refers to "Stories of Old Chatham," by Herbert T. Strong, 1946.

"Tunney" refers to "Unusual Social Event Provides a Nostalgic look at Life," by Glenn Tunney

"Two –Hundred" refers to an informational sheet issued by the Chatham United Methodist Church in November 1989.

"Union County" refers to History of Union County New Jersey 1664-1923, A. Van Doren Honeyman, Volumes 1 and 2, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York 1923.

"Vanderpoel" refers to "History of Chatham, New Jersey," by Ambrose Ely Vanderpoel (1877-1940), published by Chatham Historical Society in 1959.

"Van Sant" refers to an autobiography, "Sunset Memories," by Reverend Nicholas Van Sant, published by Eaton & Mains, New York, 1896.

“Van Wert” refers to a recorded and transcribed conversation that Connie Ehmann had with Edith Van Wert in 1989.

“Von Ruville” refers to Von Ruville’s biography on William Pitt, London, Heinemann, 1907.

“Walden 1989” refers to a letter that Bob Simpson wrote to Ray Walden on April 10, 1989. Bob’s letter said, in part: “Dear Ray, I think it is about time we gather some of the history of our church from more recent years. Would you be willing to look over the enclosed questions?” Bob’s inquiry gave rise to Ray Walden’s reflections on the years of his membership in the church. *(As a footnote to this, the Waldens established a Scholarship at Drew University in Bob Simpson’s name, a testament to their gratitude and to Rev Dr. Simpson’s warm and generous spirit.)*

“Wallace” refers to the book “Old Chatham” by William C. Wallace, c.1850.

“Ward” refers to “Major-General Adam Stephen and the Cause of American Liberty,” by Dr. Harry M. Ward, Univ. of Virginia, 1989.

“Warren” refers to “History of the American Revolution, Volume 3, Chapter 26,” by Mercy Otis Warren, c.1800.

“White” refers to “A Village at War, Chatham, New Jersey,” by Donald Wallace White, 1979.

“50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” refers to a booklet written in 1949 by Mrs. James M. Christian, Church Historian, and commemorating fifty years of service of the Center Street church building.

Notes: (See the next page)

## Notes:

General reference is also made to the "History of Chatham Methodism," 1972, compiled by Gudrun A. Brown, Tyler W. Engelman, Christa J. Fry, and Beatrice B. Gafford. It is a fine history of the church and is found in the library of the Chatham United Methodist Church.

"Mary" refers to Mary Kashmanian. The "history" of the Chatham United Methodist Church is found in the people who worship and act together. It is difficult to refer to the many that form the backbone of the church, those in service to humanity. However, the editor chooses to describe one person as an example of the many. "..... and I will show you my faith by what I do." (James 2:18 NIV)

*Mary and "Kash" Kashmanian joined the Chatham United Methodist Church in March 1960. Mary can be thought of as giving without bounds. Mary simply describes herself as "a retired Special Education Teacher who enjoys crafts, helping those in need and outdoor activities." However, what describes her best is expressed in the negative: she can not abide injustice and she can not sit still and only talk.*

*Mary has been a leader of the Junior Youth Fellowship in the church.*

*Not long after our church joined the Interfaith Hospitality Network, Mary volunteered to help and did so for many years. The "Shelter Shorts Newsletter" of the Interfaith Council for Homeless Families wrote that if Mary is not working "hands on" then she's networking to find someone else who can help. In addition to all the organizing and planning required of a coordinator, she often helps families leaving the shelter find furniture, and is always willing to offer advice based on her many years of experience with children.*

*Her participation in RISE is mentioned above. Also, for more than ten years, Mary has been a Board member of "Our Place," a multi-service drop-in center in Morristown for the homeless, for those challenged with mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and the marginally poor. It offers a safe place to get off the streets, counseling, referrals to appropriate agencies, free use of phone for jobs, housing, medical, personal, a legal mailing address, emergency clothing, a place to sleep as needed, and storage space for small personal belongings. She is usually out helping somewhere rather than attending Board meetings.*

*Mary has also been active helping people recover from Hurricane Katrina.*

*There are undoubtedly many other ways that Mary has improved the lives of others.*

As do so many others, in so many different ways.

In addition to those I have listed in the "Sources," I give significant thanks to people who read one of my drafts, commented and made corrections, helped in other ways and offered their own reflections of life within the church.

Fran and George Boyer  
Priscilla and Don Haberstroh  
Dick and Barbara Plambeck  
Peggy and Perry Philp  
Jim and Marilyn Gilbert  
Ann English  
Amy Ball  
John Hadamuscin  
Rich Knox  
Bob and Megan Simpson  
Marge Birdsall  
Hilda Druback  
Joan Titus  
Bob Willis  
Stu Shippey

Barbara Bennett  
Helen and Doug Bryant  
Ann and Tom Harrison  
Stan and Pam Bess  
Debbie and Rich Behling  
Hilary and Bob Stannard  
Carolyn Palma  
Laura (English) Zmijeski  
Sam and Francie Preston  
Tanya and Ken Bennett  
Jean and George Baird  
Sue Burlingame  
Barbara Davis  
Ray Lauver

Postscript - -

O God who shaped creation at earth's chaotic dawn,  
Your word of power was spoken, and lo! the dark was gone!  
You framed us in your image, you brought us into birth,  
You blessed our infant footsteps and shared your splendored earth.

We grew in kindly fashion, your word became our guide;  
Examples set before us were standing by your side.  
Your bounty was the source of great strength and knowledge fair,  
And increasing awareness that you were surely there.

We burst upon the world, its glories in our hearts;  
Yet humbled we became at the wonders you impart.  
We know of your great presence, in shadows that are deep;  
Our friends in Christ do help us, though paths are very steep.

We struggle and we wonder, as we go through life's pace,  
E're burdened by life's troubles, not seeing neighbor's face.  
But it is there we find you, your spirit is our guide;  
You framed us in your image, and with you we'll abide.

ELLACOMBE  
76.76 D

WORDS:

William B. Birdsall (2,3,4)

Reverend William W. Reid, Jr. (1)