

A BRIEF HISTORY

...a glowing past; illuminating our future

2002 Anniverary Year in Review

An anniversary steering committee, chaired by Bruce Rex and charged with planning and implementing celebratory events for this special occasion, commenced meeting in February, 2002.

SPECIAL EVENTS

April 28 (Heritage Sunday)



The Rev. Richard Harrington (left), a former pastor of our church was guest speaker during this Sunday service. He related much about the history of our church—with some emphasis on the people and issues of the times during his tenure. Former Rev. Gailey Carpenter was a special guest. Other former Pastors were unable to attend because of illness or prior engagements. A reception in Fellowship Hall followed the service.

September 15

Our congregation met at Hamlin Beach State Park at an enclosed pavilion reserved for our use. Bill Chambers organized this worship and picnic characterized as a "good, old-fashioned, fun day." It started with a worship service led by our Pastor Sinnathamby Thevanesan (Pastor Theva),and was followed by a cookout. Hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream and beverages were supplied by the church. Participants were asked to bring their own table service, a dish to pass—and a friend. Jill Mann was in charge of "games for all ages." Former Pastor, now parishioner, Rev. Gailey Carpenter attended.

October 27

Our agenda was full this Sunday

10-11 am: Worship with guest speaker District Superintendent Ruthellen Hoyle.

11:15 am-Noon: A reception was held in our fellowship Hall

12:15 pm: We had our dinner in the First Baptist Church of Brockport hall, as our own Fellowship Hall was too small for such an event.

12:30 pm: A dinner of ham, scalloped potatoes, fruit cup, salad, vegetable and beverage was served ($6/adults, $3/6-13 year olds, those under 6 were free). A special anniversary cake ordered from Wegman's with the 175th logo was served. Following our meal, speeches by Ruthellen Hoyle, Brockport Mayor Josephine Matella, and Bruce Rex were given. Baptist minister Kenneth McCarthy and their congregation members who hosted our din-





September 15 picnic at Hamlin Beach State Park.
(left):John Wesley, portrayed by Gary Thomas, astounded us as he stepped forward in time to share the origins of our faith.
(above) At the grill (front, l-r): Gerald Werner, Rick Codori and Gary Thomas.



October 27 dinner at the First Baptist Church of Brockport. (l-r): Pastor Theva, Mr. Hoyle, District Superintendant Ruthellen Hoyle, Bruce Rex (standing), Terry and Carol Marsham, and Mayor Josephine Matela were among those at the head table.

ner were recognized. Following this, all our fifty year members were honored; those in attendance provided some anecdotes about the past.

December 9

Bishop Violet Fisher was our special guest and speaker at this 7 pm Monday evening 175th Anniversary Christian Celebration worship service, and a communion service entitled, simply "The Love Feast." Following the call to worship, three candles were lit "...to thank God for the love he gave us over 2000 years ago–His Son, Jesus Christ," "...in remembrance of the Christmas Conference of December, 1784 and the birth of Methodism in America," and "...for those who 175 years ago and down through the years have believed in the United Methodist Church of Brockport, New York." The lightings were interspersed with prayer, the reading of scripture 2 Corinthians 4:6 and the singing of Christmas hymns. Ruthellen Hoyle, Rochester District Superintendent, read I John 4:9-11. This was followed by a Christmas Creed, and the lighting of a fourth candle "...for today, tomorrow and the future of this church as it continues to reach out into the world." Pastor Theva then read scriptures Joshua 4:1-7; Matthew 16:18 and Revelations 2:17. This was followed by the message "Remembering the Stones" delivered for this special occasion by Bishop Violet Fisher.

HELPING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Fund-raising

One of the highlights during our 175th Anniversary celebration was the commitment church members and friends made for the preservation of our historic church building. The church was built in 1877, one hundred and twenty-five years ago. It is interesting to note our ancestors celebrated the 50th anniversary of Methodism in Brockport by building a new house of worship. A home that has served us well. Our house of worship is a historic landmark in the Brockport community. For many it represents a lot more.

There are memories of important events in their lives such as baptisms, weddings, and memorial services for loved ones. It is a landmark



December 9 Anniversary Celebration in Fellowship Hall. (l-r): Pastor Theva and Bishop Violet Fisher.



Landscaping facing Erie Street – on the south side of Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary (2005 photo).

that spans generations. Pastor Theva reminds us: "A well kept facility encourages growth. Growth allows us to expand our ministry and more importantly, it allows us to grow with God."



With these thoughts in mind, it became incumbent upon us to maintain and preserve our historic church at this milestone in time. A capital fund campaign led by Bruce Rex (right) met with a very generous response. The following repairs and improvement were made:

– The refurbishing and preservation of our seventy year old stained glass windows.

– Church landscaping was greatly improved through the design efforts and hard work of Bill and Mary Hallings, Bruce and Bette Rex, and Gerald and Marjorie Werner who removed, renewed, replaced and added trees, shrubs and other plantings.

– A fence to enclose our church courtyard, complete with a specially designed gate emblazoned with the Methodist logo was designed and built by Bill Hallings.

– A specially designed and carved, colorful identification sign was installed on the front of our church.

– The sanctuary was painted and the floor was refinished; new carpeting was installed in the second floor hallway and Sunday school rooms, and many other projects were completed by church volunteers.

It is our hope the spirit shown during this year of celebration will make a difference in the lives of those who follow.

Publicity

– An anniversary logo developed by Norm Frisch was used on stationery and a variety of publications and publicity.

– A poster display presenting our church accomplishments was displayed at District Conference by Lay Conference member Virginia Cross.

– The Brockport Post featured our anniversary on the front page of their Thursday, April 25, 2002 edition, complete with full color photographs! Other local newspapers covered many of our events on a continuing basis through the year.

– Events were also continuously posted on our church web site by member Mary Hallings.

OTHER EVENTS AND PROJECTS

"The Odd Couple"

This Brockport United Methodist (BUM) Players performance furthered the recognition of our anniversary through publicity in newspapers, posters and fliers distributed throughout the community. Produced by Gary Thomas and directed by John ("Mack") McCarthy, the cast included members of the congregation AND thespians from the community. Performances were held in Fellowship Hall on April 25-28, 2002. Over 200 people attended, of which about 30 percent were from outside our church.



Main Street view of fence, gate and landscaping at courtyard entrance north of church (2005 photo).

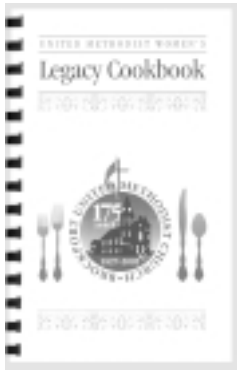


(left): New identification sign between the front outside doors of the Sanctuary.



Poster advertising "The Odd Couple."

"United Methodist Women's Legacy Cookbook"



Most of the recipes found in this 104 page, 8.5 x 11" spiral bound collection are favorites of church members. They were passed down from older relatives, friends and other fondly remembered members of the congregation. The book was produced as a "...special tribute to those Methodist cooks who have preceded us." 200 copies were preordered, then distributed in October following printing. Marge Werner directed this project; typing was done by Pat Jewell and Sandy Mosher; final layout by Norm Frisch. All proceeds went to UMW to support their mission.

History Display

Four poster displays regarding our church heritage and mission were on display in our church foyer toward the end of the year. Produced by member Audrey Miller, each was complete with text, historic photos and documents, and a variety of other memorabilia that filled a long table. Themes included:

– "Beginning of the Church in England." (Sept.)
– "The Church Comes to America." (Oct.)
– "Historical Events Related to BUMC." (Nov.)
– "A collection of family, anniversary and Christmas photos and materials." (Dec.)



One of the Methodist history displays prepared by Audrey Miller.

Choir Music CD

A compact disk preserving our musical heritage was produced by Music Director Sally Martin with technical assistance from Neal Mosher. Narrated by Gary Thomas, it contains 33 songs performed by our Senior and Junior Choirs and the Praise Team.



175th Anniversary Scrapbook

Paige Pye produced a scrapbook containing various anniversary memorabilia including old post cards and booklets, memories of some of our 50+ year members, current news clippings and candid photos of 175th events from various sources.

Memorial Brick Purchase

We were one of many who purchased an engraved brick to be placed in the walkway at the 9/11 Memorial Park at Capen Hose Company on the corner of Main Street and Park Avenue. The brick memorializes our 175th anniversary.



Memorial brick at 9/11 Memorial Park.

2002 Anniversary Year

Ministry

Bishop, New York-West Area
Violet L. Fisher

Rochester District Superintendent
Ruthellen Hoyle

Minister
Sinnathamby Thevanesan

Church Staff

Choir Director & Organist ..... Sally Martin
Church Secretary ..... Linda Tabbitas
Custodian ..... Tom Bauersmith

Church Officers

Parish Council Chair ..... Terry Marsham
Lay Leader ..... Gary Thomas
Lay Leader to Annual Conference ..... Ginny Cross
Trustee Chair ..... Neal Mosher
Parish Relations Chair ..... Larry Hodge
Outreach Chair ..... Gail Hodge
Christian Education Chair ..... Carol Marsham
Worship Coordinator ..... Sandy Mosher
U.M.W. President ..... Marjorie Werner
Men's Group ..... Gary Thomas
Youth Advisor ..... Andrew Chapman
Youth Group Representative ..... Tina Mosher
Recording Secretary ..... Linda Tabbitas
Finance Chair ..... Robert Miller
Church Treasurer ..... Gerald Werner
Financial Secretary ..... Linda Tabbitas
Trustee Treasurer ..... Steven Breslawski
Stewardship Chair ..... Charles Dalrymple
Memorial Secretary ..... Barbara Dalrymple

50 Year+ Members

Herbert Bailey
Belva Browne
Marguerite Browne
Bernard Cliff
Beatrice Goheen
Beatrice Hamlin
Stanley Hare
Dorothy Heise
Sadie Hube
Pauline Klump
Alyce Lampen
Mary Jane Lessord
Gladys MacDiarmid
Marion Maw
Earl McCauley
Lucille McCauley
Wilbur McCormick
Mildred McCormick
Elma Mercer
Shirley Mercer
Margaret Nellis
Douglas O'Brien
Frances Rogers
Loretta Schmidt
Barbara Smith
Jean Swan
Helen Sweeting
Richard Sweeting
Doris Toal
Gwen Truelson
Gerald Werner
Marjorie Werner

175th Anniversary Committee

Chairperson

Bruce Rex

Steering Committee

William Chambers
Charles Cowling
Betty Draper
Frederick Fowler
Norman Frisch
Sarah Leathersich
Ronald Maw
Audrey Miller
Marjorie Werner

Fund Drive Committee

Betty Ruth Agte
Rev. Gailey Carpenter
William Chambers
Charles Dalrymple
Terry Marsham
Robert Miller
Neal Mosher
Tina Mosher
Doris Rahn
Linda Tabbitas
Gerald Werner

175th Anniversary Capital Fund Donors

Betty Ruth Agte
Rev. Walter Barger
Helen Beatty
Patti (Hill) Bondi & family
Marguerite H. Browne
Rev. Gailey & Carol Carpenter
Russell H. & Jean Caves
William & Madeline Chambers
Christians in Christ (Callaghan family)
Barbara Cornell
Claude & Marilyn Cornish
Charles & Claudia Cowling
Charles & Barbara Dalrymple
David & Libby Dalrymple
Marilyn Day
Erwin & Marilyn Duryea
Ray & Jeanne Fradella
Bill & Mary Hallings
Jack & Ethelyn Hamlin
Stanley & Marilyn Hare
Thomas & Karla Hare
Keith & Doreen Harvey
Dorothy Heise & family
Clara Hurley
David & Patricia Jewell
Elda Kirkland,
Klump Family
David & Hollie Koop
Friends of Alyce Lampen
Betty Jane Laney
Donna Laundry
Barbara (Rex) Little
George & Carol Mann
Jill Mann & Hayley Lown
Gordon & Doris Marsham
Terry & Carol Marsham
Sally Martin
Wilbur & Mildred McCormick
Rev. David & Elizabeth Meade
Allen & Shirley Mercer
Robert & Audrey Miller
Melvin & Mary Mosher
Barbara & Karen Owen
Richard & Paige Pye
Carol Rahn
Milford & Doris Rahn
Bruce & Bette Rex
Jacqueline Rex
Sandra Rex
Steven & Paula Richardson
Arthur & Doris Schmidt
Dayton & Barbara Smith
Elmer & June Smith
Howard Smith
Wayne & Donna Smith
Douglas & Janet Steves
Jean Swan
Richard & Helen Sweeting
John & Linda Tabbitas
Gary & Debbie Thomas
Doris Toal
Marjorie VanCise
Mark & Donna Warner
Valerie Way
Gerald & Marjorie Werner
Waldron & Vera Wigtil
Sadie R. Wilson
John & Jean Wortman
Glada Wuilliez

Brockport United Methodist Church Historical Sketch – 1827-2002

In the early 1800s forest covered much of Western New York. As settlers, mostly from New England, moved into lands acquired from the Seneca after the Revolution the sound of axes felling trees sounded a steady background beat. Before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825 the main through route from east to west was Ridge Road, where the ridge of ancient glacial Lake Ontario forms a natural roadway. In those days Clarkson Corners was the major settlement, and the location of Brockport was still uncleared woods. When the canal went through, however, Clarkson lost its preeminence to the new settlement of Brockport, as shipping and traveling by canal were far cheaper than on the primitive roads of the day like Ridge Road.



In that era the Methodist movement flourished. Modern Methodism, with its concerns about declining numbers and an aging membership, might well study that earlier movement to see how its principles could be applied to the present day. It was a vigorous, confident and immensely vital religious phenomenon. Part of the genius of Methodism then lay in its flexible and responsive structure, energized with an unusual combination of religious enthusiasm and strict discipline of thought and action.

An early writer on the history of Methodism, George Peck, in 1860 described the advent of Methodism in the late 1700s as "an earthquake which shook the mountains." Of the circuit riding elders Peck says that they "found their way to the people, however deeply buried in the forests, without waiting to be invited."

The preachers were the circuit riders, the so-called "saddlebags men." Mostly young fellows who had grown up on the frontier, in what was sometimes jokingly referred to as the "brush college," they related well to the people of the newly settled regions. The circuit riders, like all Methodists then, were nurtured in "class meetings," or small groups, and after being called to ministry spent a year with an experienced preacher riding the circuit and learning the life.

A "circuit" was the route these itinerant clergy followed as they went from one church to another—the "churches" in the early days often being a room in someone's cabin, a barn, or simply a field. It took several weeks to travel a circuit like the Sweden circuit of which we were a part. Certainly not many denominations have ever had as a requirement for ministry that one have a horse and be able to ride!

George Peck says of these circuit riders, "To travel these roads in hunger, cold, nakedness and weariness, and often to lodge in open cabins, among dirt and insects, and receive almost $50 in the course of the year… They had their enjoyments, but they were not such as the earth affords… They were the joys of the heavenly communion, the joys of hope, faith charity; of being poor yet making many rich."

Peck gives a colorful description of early frontier dwellers in the Otsego area, probably not much different from those in our own area, "The country had been largely settled by New Englanders… They had been educated in the Calvinistic creed, and forced to attend church, but when once separated from their early associations they, as a general thing, broke loose from all moral restraints, and were a Sabbath breaking, irreligious race, some of them almost as wild and savage as the wolves and bears which often invaded their enclosures."

These young circuit riders enthusiastically preached and lived out the Gospel. They endured great hardships in their work, and some became incapacitated or even died from the constant traveling, exposure to the elements and incessant demands on their energies. Their preaching and the

meetings they conducted were similar in some ways to those of modern Pentecostals, openness to the movement of the Spirit leading to speaking in tongues and other charismatic expressions. Our forerunners in the faith were at times referred to derisively as the "shouting Methodists!" Yet they had a discipline, a tolerance and a capacity for critical thought and discussion that Pentecostals often lack. This "union of heart and mind" is one of the glories of our Methodist heritage.

The legacy of these circuit riders lives on today. Their tireless traveling is why it seems that even the smallest hamlet has its Methodist church. That the ministers were generally present only once a month at any given church is why today we typically celebrate communion only once a month, even though John Wesley advocated much more frequent celebration of communion. The principle of "itinerancy," another legacy of the early days, still applies to the clergy, although not as strongly as it once did. This is the idea that a rotation of clergy through the churches is best for all concerned. For generations Methodist clergy were routinely moved after a pastorate of two or three years.

The Rev. John Copeland, preacher on the Sweden Circuit, presided over the establishment of our church in 1827. Methodist churches then were typically organized as "societies" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (our denominational name back then.) The Brockport "Society" was organized December 10, 1827. The "Class Leader" in the new church was Caleb Kingsbury. As mentioned already, in those days every adult Methodist was a member of a "class meeting." These meetings combined elements of the Bible study, prayer meeting and fellowship groups of today. More was expected of a member than to simply come to church on Sunday! The first "local preacher" was Barney Mead; he was a layperson who preached and led worship on the several Sundays a month when the circuit riding ordained elder was not present. The role of local preacher still exists today, in a somewhat more independent form, as that of "local pastor"— this writer served as one for several years.

After meeting in private homes, a hotel and an "academy" or private school, the church erected a building on Market Street, the first church building in the village, which was dedicated January 1829. This building was of brick and cost $3,000, a considerable sum for that day and an admirable sign of the membership's commitment. (Much like the commitment recently demonstrated during our successful building capital fund campaign!) This Market Street location then was our church home for many years, until the current building was erected in 1875.

One minister of that early church became a leader in the first major fracture of the Methodist movement. Rev. Benjamin Roberts, who was pastor from 1853-1855, lead those who felt that the church was becoming too formal in worship and putting aside the charismatic expressions of earlier days. They also denounced the denomination's trend towards compromise on slavery, which was done in hopes of remaining engaged with the people of slaveholding areas. Thus Methodism like the country itself was badly split over how to best respond to this deeply troubling issue. Roberts went on to found what today is the Free Methodist church, and Roberts Wesleyan College is named after him. Controversy and disagreement are not new things in church life!

That original brick building on Market Street became increasingly crowded as the years went by and in the 1870s plans began to be laid for a new building. The Market Street building was sold, the last service being held in May 1875. For the next two years the congregation met in the local Free Will Baptist Church, presumably renting space there. This building still stands at 32 King Street, where it is now a student rental property.

The site of our present church had been for some years the residence of Hiel Brockway, co-founder of the village of Brockport. In 1867 the house was converted into a hotel, which burned after chemicals in a photography studio in the hotel caught fire. A man named Peck purchased the lot, cleared away the rubble, and built a three-story hotel on the northern half of the old house foundation. The southern half remained vacant, and it was this lot our church wished to build upon.

When our church indicated interest in this property several merchants criticized the plan,

feeling it should be a business "block" or property. Determined to be downtown though, perhaps feeling that this kept them closest to the people, the church leadership persevered and the land was purchased. A drive for subscriptions was opened with a goal of $10,000. On March 1, 1876, the goal was achieved. Hiring an architectural firm from Rochester and a contractor from Honeoye Falls the project started. The church was to be built for $11,000, by June 1, 1877. $1,500 was added for furnishings. The cornerstone was laid August 8, 1876, and construction was begun.

Meanwhile, the old church on Market Street, with its belfry removed, had been converted to a millinery shop and stove store. In January 1877, while our present structure was being built, a kerosene lamp exploded and the old church building burned down.

In July of that year two painters were working on a scaffold on the North tower when a window bracket broke and they fell off the scaffold to their deaths. A newspaper article related the details of the accident, paid ample respect to the victims, then concluded with the following:

"It is a noticeable fact that men used to working at lofty heights become after a time reckless and take many uncalled-for risks. This terrible accident should prove a warning to all such persons."

Construction resumed, presumably with more attention to safety, and the building was completed. The church was dedicated on December 12, 1877, during the pastorate of Dr. John Dennis. Membership was about 165 at the time.

One researcher of Brockport history wrote that the Methodists subsequently had opportunity to regret their choice of this site, since Mr. Peck built a beer garden in the narrow strip of land between his hotel and the church. The researcher further states, "From behind the board fence enclosure the sound of the band could be heard up and down Main Street... One can imagine the amplificatory competition between church hymns and drinking songs during weeknight services." Of course, one might well argue that next to a beer garden is the best place for a church; where better to meet the sinners?!

The church flourished in its new location, and many additions to the church properties were made in following years. A parsonage at the southeast corner of Monroe and Utica Streets was purchased in November 1871 for $3,000, during the pastorate of Rev. John Copeland. This served as the parsonage for over a century when it was sold in 1986 and the current parsonage at 54 Sweden Hill was bought during Rev. Carpenter's pastorate here.

In the winter of 1912-1913, with Dr. O.J. Blackford as our minister, the church underwent major structural changes and improvements. A rear portion was added to the church. It included a basement with a furnace to provide steam heat. On the first floor there was a new parlor, a modern kitchen, restrooms and a ladies cloak room. A pastor's study was added on the second floor, as well as a choir loft. The sanctuary was redecorated and new hardwood floors were laid down. The aisles were carpeted and curved pews were added, the ones still in use today. Additionally, a new Moeller pneumatic action organ was installed, which was greatly admired. The work that year cost almost $12,000.

On the morning of the rededication service, March 16, 1913, a debt of about $6,000 still remained. Rev. Dr. John Krantz, of New York City, described as "the world's greatest church debt raiser" preached. After his sermon pledges were secured for all but $800 of the indebtedness. In the evening he preached again, and the remainder was raised. It seems his reputation as a fundraiser was well deserved!

The local Brockport Republic account stated that the addition "leaves the society with the best equipped church building in this section of the country." Another comment was that "The church throughout is a gem in beauty and convenient in every respect for church work."

There was a whole week of celebration. It is interesting to note that while the membership in 1913 was reportedly 393, on the Tuesday following the dedication 400 gathered for the annual banquet. The 1897 pastor, John E. Williams, who was then District Superintendent, was toastmaster for the event, and three other former pastors gave addresses that evening.

In 1914 the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution approached the church about using the church bell tower to house a clock that would belong to the village and serve as a memorial to the Revolutionary War veterans buried locally. The plan was approved and the clock was dedicated on June 25, 1914, with great ceremony, an estimated 1,500 people attending. A street level plaque naming the area Revolutionary War veterans was also mounted on the building then.

In the 1920s there was another period of renovation and addition to the building when, under Pastor Idelbert Miller, over $5,000 was spent on repairs and improvements. It was during this time that our lovely stained glass windows were installed. The large windows facing Main Street were presented by Mr. E. M. Sparlin in memory of Francis T. Sparlin and his wife Sarah. The windows on the North and South sides of the sanctuary were given by Mrs. Ella Williams, the Official Board, the Sunday School classes of Bramley, Shafer, Smith and Lampen, and the Epworth League (the youth group of that era). During Rev. Miller's tenure here this Epworth League for youth flourished, becoming of the most active in the conference.

It is interesting to reflect on the people and church life of these years of the 19th and early 20th century as well as on our church buildings. The class meetings mentioned above that were very important in the earlier part of the 19th century died out as time went on and were largely replaced by the classes of the Sunday School movement. Young people then did not go through confirmation as they do now, but were put on "probation," and spent a period of half a year as "probationers." For at least six months they attended classes, had examinations, and were generally tested to determine their "fitness" for being a candidate for church membership. They were given a little book to study from, which included "Thoughts on Probation, Counsel to Converts, Historic Information, Church Policy, General Rules and advice on Marriage and Temperance." The church has an 1897 copy of this book, *The Probationer's Companion*, which belonged to Lilly Maw, aunt of Fowler Maw who wrote the 1952 history of the church.

For many years, certainly up through the 1920s, there were several services each week—on Sunday morning, evening and Wednesday evening. In the very early days as mentioned above there would have been a certain "charismatic" aspect to the services, people spontaneously "praying in the Spirit" and so forth. As time went on the worship style became more settled, and new devices introduced, such as organ music.

There were fellowship groups for people to take part in, for example the Epworth League for young people mentioned above. The women had not only the Ladies Aid Society, but also several societies to support missionary work—a much more significant focus of the larger church in years gone by. There was no formal men's group, but likely there were informal groupings of men in Sunday School classes and in church bodies like the Trustees.

The Great Depression of the 1930s came not long after the church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1927 with special meetings, activities and a banquet. Those were hard years for churches as well as society in general, and there were fears that the church might have to close, but as the 1977 history notes, "To some six or seven faithful members of the Official Board we owe a great deal. In 1943, discouraged by lack of interest and a mortgage of approximately $6,000, they finally decided to do something about it. It may well be that what they started then is the basis for our enthusiasm today. On one Sunday morning, after a great deal of arousing interest in the congregation, it was decided that Bishop Flint be invited to come to our aid. After the Bishop's message of the morning and during the service, nearly enough money was pledged to pay the mortgage. Some weeks later the mortgage was paid and the church freed from debt. The Rev. John Held was pastor at that time."

After those challenging years the church began to flourish once more under Pastor Mucci. The 1977 history notes "During the Fall of 1950 the church experienced one of its great moments. After a week of visitation by couples of the Church, and the prayers of those who remained at the church to pray for the success of the endeavor, a class of seventy-seven, the largest in the long history of the church,

was received into membership on December 10, 1950 by the pastor, Rev. Frank J. Mucci.''

In 1950 a Methodist Men's Club was organized, as was a Couple's Club, and a Wesley Student Fellowship. The Men's Club, in cooperation with the other organizations of the church, sponsored a Church Auction in the Spring of 1952 for the purpose of creating a Building Repair Fund. The Men's Club has been resurrected in today's Men's Group.

The Wesley Student Fellowship was a ministry to the students at what was then Brockport State Teacher's College. In later years there was a house for the fellowship on Utica Street and a minister assigned to them. Rev. Roy Agte, who so many knew and loved, was the last minister to the group that was disbanded due to a conference decision in the late 1960s.

On May 10, 1947 the church received a bequest from the estate of Miss Carrie Cronk, in the amount of $6,426.22. The Women's Society of Christian Service and the Board of Trustees made plans for some church improvements. Ultimately the kitchen was remodeled and a fund started to install a new organ console, which was dedicated three years later. That organ would serve the church for many years until it wore out and was replaced by the current electronic organ in the early 1990s.

In March of 1959 a public address system, a memorial to Mrs. R. Kimball, was installed. Doubtless this was of great benefit to those who had trouble hearing, and this tradition is continued today in the sound system with cordless microphones used in our services and maintained by Neal and Sandy Mosher.

The first mention of a newsletter is found during the pastorate of Rev. Bruce Rahtjen. It was a bi-monthly newsletter, ''The Methodist Messenger'' and is still with us today. Many of us look forward to receiving the Messenger and reading Pastor Theva's thoughtful inspirational messages, Gary Thomas' ''Lay Leader Lamentations'' and the many notices therein of the life, work and joy of our church community.

In 1969 the church opened the Advent Season with the first ''Hanging of the Greens'' program. There was a family night supper, Christmas program, and everyone worked together to make decorations to adorn our church for this special time of the year.

A ''Hymn Sing'' service was held in 1971. It became an annual tradition and favorite with the congregation for some years. The first church picnic, complete with hotdogs, good fellowship and baseball games was held in 1972.

The 1977 history noted ''We gratefully appreciate the bequests made to our church in 1973 by Geraldine and Emerson Phillips, Clark S. Miles and Lela May Clark. These monies were put into growth funds for future building plans.'' Such bequests are to be noted over and over again in the history of our church, and great has been the good that these generous gifts have made possible.

A major decision was made in 1975 to stay downtown, renovate and build an addition, rather than build on a lot purchased on Fourth Section Road in 1966. In 1980 Phase I of the renovation was completed: new roof, exterior sandblasted and sealed. In 1981 the village renovated the clock. 1982 saw the groundbreaking for a new 5,000 square foot addition. In 1983 that addition was completed and an open house held in May. In 1991 the chancel area was remodeled. A digital computer organ was installed but the old pipes from the earlier organ were retained. This organ is still here today, being played by our capable music director Sally Martin.

In the mid 1990s the church began offering the Disciples Bible Study Program. This is an intensive, yearlong program that has several levels of programming. It not only teaches about the Bible but also focuses strongly on discerning and building one's spiritual gifts and calling. There have been several Disciple I and II groups offered in recent years. Sandy and Neal Mosher have been teachers in this program.

The young people of any church are so important because they are the hope for the future. There has been a gratifying increase in the number of youth and programs for them in the last decade. There has been an active youth group program for some time, and this fall of 2002 there are 10 youth in the group, lead by Andy Chapman. Pastor Theva and Doreen Hodge are leading a class of 8

confirmands who will spend the year with him and their congregational sponsors as they explore their commitment to the faith. Carol Marsham as Christian Education Director leads a wonderful program for our younger members, assisted by an energetic team of committed Sunday School teachers. The program in recent years has included such activities as taking part in an ecumenical vacation bible school in the summer and service led by the youth.

Worship has changed much over the last few years. For a time there were two services, a "traditional" and a "contemporary" service. Currently there is one service that seeks to blend the two styles, including both traditional hymns and praise songs, for example. Under Sally Martin the choir has been very active, with over twenty members, and there is a junior choir as well. Another innovation is the cordless microphones that are brought to members in the pews so that they may more easily express their sorrows and joys during prayer time, or make announcements. For years the worship service has been audiotaped and the tapes subsequently distributed to shut-ins and others. Pastor Theva's sermons are quite popular for their inspiring messages, frankness of approach, and humorous moments.

As Methodists we are convinced of the necessary balance of personal holiness and social justice. Some of our outreach to the community includes members working at the Clothing Shelf at the Episcopal Church, participating in the annual Crop Walk which raises money to feed the hungry, the support of missionaries and much more.

The Brockport United Methodist church has seen many things come and go over its' 175 years of existence. The trolley cars that used to trundle by its doors are long gone, and the era of the old time circuit riders is even farther in the past. Instead of a pipe organ we now have an electronic organ. In recent years one of our members, Mary Hallings, did a splendid job of creating an internet web site for the church, www.brockportumc.org

Probably not many of us, if any, are biological descendants of those early members of 175 years ago. Every one of us though is a spiritual descendent of those members, and can take great pride in the legacy of Methodism which they left to us, and which we in turn hope to leave to our children and their children, that their hearts too may be touched with God's love. Perhaps the best ending for this little booklet is the one written 25 years ago for the 150th anniversary, which seems to apply equally well for today:

"Much planning was needed to make our years of serving God a beautiful and rewarding experience, but was undertaken with joy in our hearts, and the humble hope that we may hear someday, "Well done" by our Lord and Savior. May His name and love go on forever, a beacon to all who follow in His service."

The above article was adapted by Charlie Cowling from a number of sources: Historical sketches of the church done for the 125th, 150th, and 175th anniversaries. W. Fowler Maw wrote the 125th, W. Fowler Maw and Helen Parish the 150th, and Donna Laundry, Sarah Tabbitas, and Karen Owen the 170th booklets respectively). Also helpful were Gary Thomas' statements regarding the United Methodist Men and the B.U.M. Players, Audrey Miller's statement on the United Methodist Women, and the files of the Brockport Republic and other local history sources. The George Peck book is *Early Methodism within the bounds of the old Genesee Conference from 1788-1828*).

Brockport United Methodist Women

Our Purpose



The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Our History

The Woman's Foreign Mission Society was formed in Boston in 1869. We know that the Brockport church had a local society in January, 1917 (the minutes for this meeting refer to it as a regular meeting)) however; we have no earlier written records. These women met monthly with speakers, programs, and devotional time. They raised money for missionaries in India, Liberia and

helped to support two orphans in France and often made payments to purchase a bundle of supplies for medical mission work. Their gifts of one-cent per day to their mite-boxes, their participation with the other women in the Rochester area and their money raising projects were supported by many devoted women.

In July 1924, a new society began in Brockport, Woman's Home Missionary Society. The two groups met on alternating months and several women belonged to both societies. The Rochester Settlement Work, Friendship Home in Buffalo, Deaconess Home, and Hull House, NYC were just a few of the projects they supported.

In 1939 these two groups joined together as the Missionary Society and continued to promote both the Home and the Foreign Department through their mite-boxes, thank offering and special projects. At this time the Methodist church became unified and in August 1940 the women's organizations were merged into the Women's Society of Christian Service (W.S.C.S.). The women started meeting once a month in small groups called Circles as well as holding joint meetings. In the early years of the W.S.C.S. the Brockport Church had three Circles; Alpha, Wesley and Asbury.

In 1972, following the union of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church into The United Methodist Church, the women were reorganized as the United Methodist Women (U.M.W.).

We have been very proud to have several women from our local unit serve in the past thirty years as officers on the Rochester District, WNY Conference and the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Presently there are three Subgroups; Bethany, Dorcas and Zipporah, a new group formed in 2002. The Wesley women felt the need to disband in 2001 after many years of service to our organization.

In 1972 a group of U.M.W. began the Chrismon project, symbols from Christian history which refer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They researched these Christ Monograms and crafted the symbols in white and gold. They were presented to the church during a Sunday Worship Service, December, 1974 and have been used every year to decorate our sanctuary Christmas tree.

Banners were designed and used to decorate the front foyer for several years. We sponsored several Mother-Daughter Banquets, Teas and special programs for the church.

We continue to support mission projects for both World and National Missions through our Women's Division with our yearly pledge and participation in special projects like the yearly Call to Prayer & Self-Denial Offering, Thank Offering, and the Rochester District Projects, which covers needs in our local area. We also participate yearly in the recommended Mission and Bible studies and Reading Program set forth by the Women's Division.

We are women organized for mission—now and for the future.

Mens' Group

The last 10 years have seen many new opportunities for fellowship among men as this group developed. Monthly breakfast meetings offer food, fellowship, and devotional time, as well as an opportunity to plan activities. The group sponsors an annual Mothers Day breakfast and an annual Sweetheart Banquet for Valentines Day. They are involved in Monroe County's Adopt-a-Highway program: Each spring and autumn they pick up litter on Redman Road. They also sponsor Family Night outings to various sporting events such as: Rochester Red Wings baseball, Batavia Muckdogs baseball, Rochester Amerks hockey, Rochester Knighthawks indoor lacrosse, and Buffalo Destroyers indoor arena football.

B.U.M. Players

This group was established in 1997, under the leadership of Gary Thomas. They have done church service dramas such as: "The Sobbing Stone," "This Is God. I Need You," "The Other Carpenter," "The Trial of Jess Goodenough," "The Floundering Spaceship" and "Soldiers and Souls."

They have also done full-length community outreach dessert-theater comedies like "Scrambled Eggs" (1997), "Aaron Slick from Punkin' Crick" (1998), "The Meddlesome Maid" (1999), "Look Who's Laughing" (2000), "More Than Meets the Eye" (2001), and "The Odd Couple" (2002).

Twenty-five Years of Ministery



(l-r): BUMC Pastors Rev. Dr. David Meade, Rev. Richard W. Harrington, Rev. Walter B. Barger and Rev. Gailey Carpenter at 170th Anniversary celebration in Fellowship Hall Sunday, December 7, 1997. Photo: D. Laundry

1969-1979

Rev. Harvey O. Taylor, his wife Elsie and daughter Cindy were very much liked. During this time decisions were made affecting our destiny as a downtown church. The Taylors were here during our 150th anniversary and another two years before being assigned to a church in Lancaster.

1979-1993

Rev. Gailey Carpenter was our pastor for 14 of the last 25 years, so we got to know him and his wife Carol quite well. Daughters Sherri, Kristi, and Lori were on their own by then, but we watched Scott and Judi grow into early adulthood.

While Gail came to us from another academic community, Alfred University, his personality was as "down to earth" and practical as his West Virginian family farm roots—but balanced with a sense of joy that frequently manifested itself as a hoot, a holler, handshake or hug.

An early major project was overseeing a major addition to our church—Fellowship Hall. The dedication was held May 1983.

Gail was committed to ecumenical issues. In the early 80s he met with kindred spirit Rev. Ed Deichler, then of the First Baptist Church. Over time, leaders of most of the other Protestant churches and the Catholic church joined their Monday morning breakfast meetings where this spirit was cultivated. Many of the community services we are aware of today, such as the Food Shelf and Ecumenical Clothes Closet were either formed or expanded during this time.

Each year these churches took turns hosting an ecumenical Christmas Eve service that was frequently filled to capacity. An Easter Sunrise and Thanksgiving Eve service was also shared.

Vacation Bible School, already in existence, became ecumenical in the early 80s when the First Baptist Church alternated with BUMC as host site. In the mid 80s camping at Camp Asbury, Silver Lake, was added and done jointly with the Alders Gate church. Several years later the Adam's Basin Church join in. Some of the camp counselors were SUNY Brockport students.

Continued on p.20

District Superintendents

GENESEE DISTRICT

Asa Abell 1827-1829
Loring Grant 1829-1832
Asa Abell 1832-1836
Micah Seager 1836-1838
John B. Alverson 1838-1842
John Copeland 1842-1843
Israel Chamberlayne 1843-1844

NIAGARA DISTRICT

Samuel Luckey 1844-1845
Thomas Carlton 1845-1848
Samuel C. Church 1848-1850
Glezen Fillmore 1850-1854
Isaac C. Kingsley 1854-1856
Philo Woodworth 1856-1860
Henry R. Smith 1860-1864
Sanford Hunt 1864-1866
William Scism 1866-1870
E. Everett Chambers 1870-1871
Allen P. Ripley 1871-1872
Sanford Hunt 1872-1875
Andrew F. Morey 1875-1879
James E. Bills 1879-1883
Albert D. Wilbor 1883-1887
Charles W. Cushing 1887-1888
George H. Dryer 1888-1894
Charles E. Millspaugh 1894-1900
Melville R. Webster 1900-1902
L.F. Congdon 1902-1903
S.A. Morse 1903-1908

CENTRAL DISTRICT

J.E. Williams 1908-1914
Ray Allen 1914-1920

ROCHESTER DISTRICT

F.H. Coman 1920-1925
Gilbert R. Williamson 1925-1929
Earl D. Shephard 1929-1935
Joseph M. Henderson 1935-1938
James F. Bisgrove 1938-1943
Harold W. McIlnay 1943-1947
Ernest E. Davis 1947-1952
John A. Redmond 1952-1959
Clytus F. Mowry 1959-1964
Clement B. Yinger 1964-1970
Dean Richardson, Acting Supt. 1970-1971
Donald M. Peck 1971-1971
Robert H. Rowsam 1971-1974
Gene M. Ferguson, Acting Supt. 1974-1974
Richard W. Harrington 1974-1980
Robert A. Jones 1980-1986
William J. Pegg Jr. 1986-1992
James M. Pollard 1992-1994
David P. Lubba 1994-2000
Ruthellen Hoyle 2000-

Over the years, our Church was assigned to the various Districts indicated above

Brockport Methodist Ministers

John Copeland 1827-1828
Joseph Atwell 1828-1829
Chester V. Aldgate 1829-1831
Richard Wright 1831-1832
Manly Tooker 1832-1833
William Goodwin 1833-1833
S.D.W. Chase 1833-1834
Edward Bannister 1834-1834
Philo E. Brown 1834-1836
Gideon D. Perry 1836-1838
Chauncey Baker 1838-1839
Henry Ryan Smith 1839-1840
Edward Bannister 1840-1841
Seymour A. Baker 1841-1843
Joseph T. Arnold 1843-1845
Henry Hitchcock 1845-1846
Amos Hard 1846-1847
Isaac Kingsley 1847-1848
Henry Ryan Smith 1848-1850
D. Cheeseman 1850-1852
Samuel C. Church 1852-1853
Benjamin T. Roberts 1853-1855
William C. Kendall 1855-1856
Chauncey S. Baker 1856-1857
Elias Buck 1857-1859
William S. Tuttle 1859-1860
Edward A. Rice 1860-1861
John B. Wentworth 1861-1863
Peter B. Stover 1863-1865
Edward A. Rice 1865-1866
Henry Ryan Smith 1866-1868
James N. Simkins 1868-1871
John A. Copeland 1871-1872
James H. Rogers 1872-1874
Julius C. Hitchcock 1874-1875
John Dennis 1875-1878
Micajah C. Dean 1878-1880
George H. Dyer 1880-1883
Thomas J. Bissell 1883-1886
Owen S. Chamberlayne 1886-1888
Almeron F. Colburn 1888-1892
Lorren Stiles 1892-1897
John E. Williams 1897-1899
Robert C. Brownlee 1899-1901
Carlton H. Norris 1901-1906
Henry E. Bayley 1906-1911
O.J. Blackford 1911-1915
J. Harrison Olmstead 1915-1918
William F. Wells 1918-1920
Idelbert B. Miller 1920-1927
George W. Keeling 1927-1929
Charles W. Taylor 1929-1932
Reginald E. Cory 1932-1936
Robert T. Doherty 1936-1938
David R. Klingler 1938-1940
John J.R. Held 1940-1943
Frank J. Mucci 1943-1954
Karl Harris 1954-1957
Howard Hall 1957-1960
Bruce D. Rahtjen 1960-1962
Richard W. Harrington 1962-1965
Walter B. Barger 1965-1969
Harvey O. Taylor 1969-1979
Gailey Carpenter 1979-1993
David G. Meade 1993-1999
Richard L. Selden 1999-2000
Steven R. Newton 2000-2000
Sinnathamby Thevanesan 2001-

1993-1999

Rev. Dr. David G. Meade, his wife Elizabeth, and children Kara, Andrew and Nathan were with us for six years. David had a Doctoral degree and had taught at Houghton College, but came to us from a church in Niagara Falls. He was known for his thought provoking sermons and bringing new perspectives to our church. He chose to concentrate more on in-church development than on ecumenical efforts. He was perhaps best known for his efforts at empowering members of the congregation—insisting on new and higher levels of personal involvement.

Under David's direction we expanded our worship to include two Sunday services—our traditional, ritual oriented, service was joined by a contemporary, praise oriented service aimed at attracting younger families.

An outdoor praise service was held annually in the courtyard north of church during the heavily attended Brockport Arts Festival.

A Disciples Group was developed. It was first led by Marva Lee McCracken, and continues with Sandy Mosher.

1999-2000

Rev. Richard L. Selden joined us briefly with wife Sandra and daughters before becoming Extension Ministry Administrator at Roberts Wesleyan College.

2000-2000

Rev. Steven R. Newton served us briefly. While here, he married his wife Marcie.

2001-2001

Rev. Ardell G. Gould served a number of churches in our conference. Following retirement in 1988 he often filled in as Interim Pastor. We were delighted to have him and his wife Roma with us for several months. The several years following Rev. Meade's departure had been times when we struggled for new direction and unity. Rev. Gould initiated efforts that helped turn us around—as did group meetings led by former BUMC Pastor and District Superintendent Richard W. Harrington.

2001-

Rev. Sinnathamby Thevanesan "Pastor Theva" and his wife Thevamalar "Malar," originally from Sri Lanka, came to us from Laona UMC in Fredonia. Their college age children are: Donald, Christopher and Elizabeth. Theva earned a Bachelor of Divinity from the University of Serampore (India), and a Master of Arts degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School (Rochester, NY). Theva has been very busy this past year renewing our ecumenical efforts in the Brockport community and, along with normal duties, presided over many of our 175th anniversary efforts.

175th booklet printing sponsors

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