



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Increasing the Love of God and Neighbor

Founded 1799
Dayton, Ohio

ORANGE FRAZER PRESS
Wilmington, Ohio

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*From humble **beginnings** in cabin crude
A mission, **nurturing** a faith community,
Began **building** on solid rock,
Expanding the Word and Spirit free,
Preaching the saving message,
Singing the glorious psalms,
Giving to all both near and far,
Engendering lives with soothing balm,
Serving humankind in time of need
And **educating** both young and old.
As boundless **caring** makes each day,
With **stewarding** gifts throughout the fold,
Democracy's tenet's **governing** creed
Is **performing** joyful call,
Creating in God's image
And **promising** His love eternal.
Living the Scripture, committing each day for
**Increasing the love of God
and neighbor.***

Ronald Price



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*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...
And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*

Genesis 1:1, 31



THE AUTHORS

The author is a corporate ministry team ordained with reporting the rich history of the venerable Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton's first church founded in 1799 and dedicated to teaching and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The members of this august body were invited to share their talents and spirit to commemorate the bicentennial celebration of this church and re-dedicate its tradition into its third century. Like the church itself, the author reflects the multifarious qualities, background, and personalities which comprise its community. The biography of the author encompasses twenty-four souls whose tenure to the church totals 835 years, serving as twelve elders, nine deacons, trustees, seven choir members, ten Sunday School teachers, three Stephen Ministers, WPW, scores of committee roles for missions, Christian education, music, May Festival, social justice and peace making, arts, personnel, finance, mission arts and crafts, community life, stewardship, library, Circles, PresbyGroups, and ushers.

They hail from Lebanon, Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, and, of course, Dayton Ohio, plus Bethlehem & Pittsburgh, PA; Huntington, W.VA.; Tulsa, OK; Irvington, NY; Cambridge, MA; Bronxville, NY; Perth Amboy; Farmersburg, IN;

Dowagiac, MI. There are nine Presbyterians, plus six former Methodists, three Lutherans, two Episcopalians, two Congregationalists, one Dutch Reformed, and two Roman Catholics. Degrees were earned from Wittenberg, Otterbein, Bucknell, Indiana State, Miami, Dayton, Harvard, Vassar, University of Pennsylvania, Ohio University, Denison, Ohio State, London School of Economics, Bradley, Detroit, Depauw, Wright State, Iowa State, Beloit, Indiana University, Duke, Lehigh, Duquesne, Lawrence, Central Michigan, Princeton, and Emory. Their careers included fifteen school teachers, two attorneys, a nurse, a social worker, a chemical engineer, artist, personnel manager, government contract negotiator, several entrepreneurs, a pipe organ builder, a CEO, museum curator, composer, writers, and a minister. Certainly, the sum of its parts make an even greater whole.

To these authors, Westminster means "the opportunity to use my talents to help others and serve God," "a community of faith includes so many members with a rich variety of backgrounds and experiences," "warm, inviting, caring, and intimate," "what loving God and others really means," "where I am always welcome and can find comfort through peace."

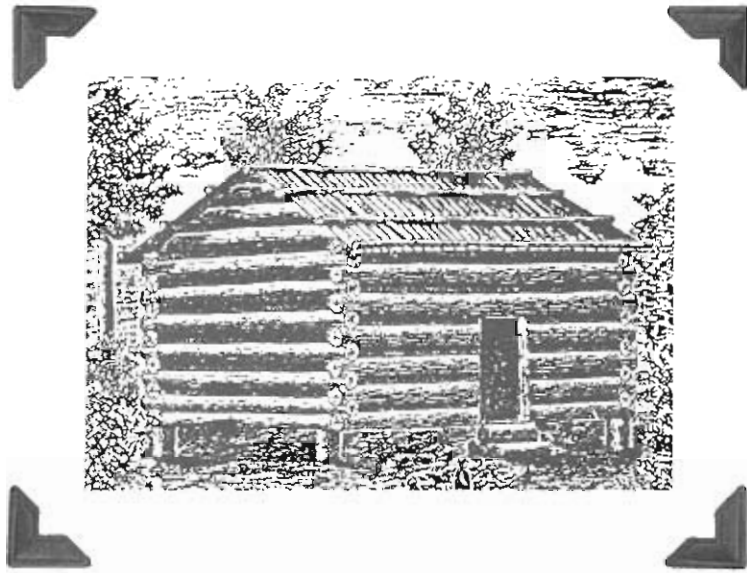
Chapter 1

Beginnings



FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN CABIN CRUDE

By Ronald Price



Artist's rendering of Westminster's first home



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PREFACE

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith....*Hebrews 12:1-2*

Our history surrounds us with such a great cloud of witnesses who set the pace to cheer us on to continue the race that is our faith which is Westminster Presbyterian Church. This history composed by the people of the church chronicles a remarkable edifice that with God's help has greatly affected thousands of members, and by extension, even more people of our city and beyond for over 200 years.

For anyone who has experienced Westminster, even for a moment, it creates a wonderful memory. For the person who grew up in the church and then raised his own family here an indelible mark is etched in the heart.

The final paragraph of *A Cabin Grows* reads as follows: "Thus it is springtime that calls. That lies in the future. Tomorrow calls. It bids us let the light of the future fall upon our faces. It asks us to rise and build a greater church. Not forgetting the cabin from which it springs, the church moves toward the wider usefulness of a building which has no walls, no limits, no barriers, a place where there is no distinction of social, race, or family to put limits to its growth. In short, its future is bound up with the ideals of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."

This 2003 book's title and chapter headings are present participles which indicate, in time, action that is continuing—that is progressing—that is growing—realizing God's kingdom on earth, fulfilling His will. Standing on the rich foundation of our past, we envision what Westminster could be in the next millennium. —*Ron Price*

I recall my very earliest memories of Westminster with great emotional tranquillity. They include my hand against the cool, smooth, undulating walls of the church hallways; the images in the small reflective window in the wooden door beside the pulpit; white-haired men in dark suits; women in hats and gloves, fanning white programs in the summer; the kindness in Dr. Westhafer's voice and smile; the pleasant din of many adult voices and footsteps in the narthex before and after a service; family nights on Sunday evenings. I can hear a choir member's voice (my mother said it was a contralto and that I would one day think it was beautiful) and so many faces.

When I was a small child, Westminster, like the only grandparent I ever knew, was a kind of aegis to me. My life, sometimes disturbed by some turbulence or discord, always found shelter in these walls, images, and voices. These early Westminster memories are indeed, to me, "hallowed quiet of the past." —*Thomas B. Talbot*

Westminster Choirs 2001



▲ Westminster Choir



▲ Knox Choir



▲ Calvin Choir



▲ Junior High Bells



▲ Genesis, Cherubs & Kinder Choir



◀ Adult Bells

▼ Mu En Church, Shanghai's largest Protestant church



▲ Senior High Bells

▼ Elders Ruth Price, Dave Clute, Julie Drumheller serve Communion Heritage Sunday



Price, Greenwald, Lindower families ▶
host Shi Qigui, Mu En pastor





▲ Laurie Price,
Hilles Hughes
fellowship trip to
Grand Canyon

▶ Laura Minnich,
Scott Price,
Michele Green



◀ Italian dinner
fundraiser by youth

▼ Youth group in the
1980's on retreat



◀ Laura Bayless, Sarah Bouslog,
Greta Conner and friend

▼ Rob Chambers,
Heritage Sunday



◀ Courthouse
Square

▼ Crossroads—
Last Supper



▲ Joyce Carr, Crossroads



▲ Chi Whitmer tutors Robert Brown from Van Cleve

Dick & Cameron Stevens ➤





Proofing the galley—
Vail McGuire, Glenn Leupold, Jim Eschbach



Proofing the galley—
Matt Melko, Mim Clute, Mickey Gogle

DEDICATION

*I*n the Presbyterian tradition, a committee was invited to write a book with the charge to reflect the bountiful history of this congregation. While we are bound as a family, we are many voices, many thoughts, many impressions, many memories, many writing styles. And as the Holy Spirit brings sundry believers as one in the church universal, here over twenty assignments are given and countless others have shared their talents, memories, souvenirs, photos, inspirations, including those listed below:

As the prophet Elijah encountered God in the small voice, may this history be a “still, small voice,” awakening us to the glories of God. We dedicate this book to the thousands who preceded us and even thousands more who follow us and thereby inherit the legacy which has been handed down to us. May the abiding love of Jesus Christ continue to fill our halls and souls to enrich our community and the greater world.

—Ron Price, *Editor*

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John Neely
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Scott Price
Donna Reece

Donna Shaw
David Spencer
Tom Talbot
Jerry Taylor
Mary Yingling

Chapter 2

Nurturing

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A MISSION, NURTURING A FAITH COMMUNITY

By Jim Eschbach



First Presbyterian 1817

*"Things in life will not always run smoothly...
The great fact to remember is that the trend of civilization itself is forever upward..."*

Franklin D. Roosevelt



Following the Treaty of Greenville (1795), which provided some stability between the Native-Americans and the would-be settlers, a group of forty six persons made a ten-day trip from Cincinnati and landed in what is now downtown Dayton. To the chagrin of many, they discovered that they did not have clear title to the lands that had been promised, so a number left the settlement. Those remaining promptly recognized the need for worship. In 1798, William Robinson, a member of the Transylvania Presbytery, came to the Dayton settlement to organize a church. A year later, while the country mourned the death of its first president, George Washington, the First Presbyterian Church under the care of the Washington Presbytery (Synod of Kentucky) was organized. That small congregation utilized the space on the first floor of Newcom's Tavern for worship. That building (the first erected in the Dayton settlement) also served as store, post office, courthouse, and jail. One has to assume that anyone incarcerated on a Sunday morning would be "forced" to have the fear of God drilled into them—what a rehabilitation program for those outside-the-law!

In 1800, the First Presbyterian meeting house was built at the corner of Third and Main Streets. It was 18' x 20', seven logs high, and raised 2' off the ground. The logs were *not* chinked to allow light and ventilation. Years later, Charles Spinning would relate how he, as a young boy, would crawl under the log building while services were going on and surprise worshippers by popping up through a hole in the floor.

Several years later, the first Session was instituted at the First Presbyterian Church and a burial ground established adjacent to the meeting house. (Toward the end of the 20th Century, during the construction of a new office building on that site, skeletal remains were discovered.)

During the early days of the church, a salaried minister was a lavish expense, so members of the congregation took part in worship. It was not infrequent to have the local physician serve in the pulpit as a respected community member. The meeting house served as a focal point for early Presbyterians, but being typical members, "religious" issues such as uncomfortable seats and winter drafts through the logs prompted the desire for another place of worship. Subscriptions to the amount of \$412 were raised and subsequently those monies were lent to the Montgomery County Commission for the construction of a new courthouse with the understanding that the First Presbyterian congregation would have the use of the courthouse room until such loan was repaid. In the meantime, the congregation returned to Newcom's Tavern for worship.

By 1806, the Courthouse was completed and the church (following the prior agreement) held services there. Within a few years, the Presbytery of Miami was founded and the local congregation began to raise concerns about a new church home. During the War of 1812, life on the frontier remained relatively isolated; the local church was legally organized as a corporation, and a committee was formed to raise subscriptions to pay a preacher. A lot

for the proposed church building was purchased (not without some disagreement); the county repaid the money lent it for the construction of the Courthouse, and a substantial change in the make-up of the Board of Trustees allowed plans to move forward. By the time Napoleon was recovering from his setback at Waterloo, the new meeting house at the corner of Second and Ludlow Streets was underway. Even before construction began, the church decided it wanted a second story on the building. Subscriptions were taken for the "purchase of pews" for a total of \$1088. The new building opened for worship in 1817 at a construction cost of \$2980. A bell destined for the new meeting house arrived and was delivered to the church in a wheelbarrow by Daniel Cooper. Mr. Cooper was one of the first members in the settlement and a leader in establishing proper land deeds and in surveying and laying out streets and properties in the emerging community. Unfortunately, his delivery of the church bell was his last contribution to the fledgling city as he ruptured a blood vessel in the process, resulting in his death.

The year 1826 was a sweet-sour year for citizens of the U.S. Daytonians joined in mourning the passing of Thomas Jefferson, past President of the U.S. and one of its most prominent founding fathers. They also joined the rest of the country in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Locally, the commemoration included a program at the Courthouse, followed by a procession to First Presbyterian for worship, then a dinner at Newcom's Tavern, and later a picnic in the "suburbs" on Brown Street.

Close on the heels of the celebration, the Miami-Erie Canal was dedicated. This canal basically followed the path of the present Patterson Boulevard through downtown and out toward the area later established as the NCR Old River Park. This canal served to improve trade with the east coast and to revitalize the Dayton economy. In the world of fashion (although perhaps not so much in

Timeline

- 1505 John Knox born.
- 1509 John Calvin born
- 1517 Luther posts "95 Theses" in Wittenberg.
- 1532 Calvin leads Reformation in France.
- 1538 Calvin expelled from Geneva
- 1541 Calvin returns to Geneva; Knox leads Calvinist Reformation in Scotland.
- 1555 John Knox returns to Scotland from exile in Geneva
- 1558 Knox writes "The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women."
- 1661 Scottish church ministers draw up Confessions of Faith—mainly the work of John Knox.
- 1664 John Calvin dies.
- 1672 John Knox dies
- Early 1600's Presbyterian churches formed in the colonies
- 1617 Calvin's collected works published in Geneva
- 1647 Calvinists acknowledged by Lutherans as "co-religionists."
- 1706 1st Presbytery formed in Philadelphia
- 1730 John & Charles Wesley found Methodist sect at Oxford, England.
- 1739 Moravian Church founded in America
- 1776 The American Revolution; Synod of NY & Philadelphia endorses The Continental Congress; Hanover Presbytery is first to accept The Declaration of Independence.
- 1789 The French Revolution; camp meetings (revivals) take the place of formal church on the "frontier."
- 1790 1st Roman Catholic bishop consecrated in America
- 1791 John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, dies
- 1799 George Washington dies Church Missionary Society founded in London, the Rosetta Stone discovered
- 1800 Washington, D.C. becomes the new capital city; Church of the United Brethren in Christ is founded in the U.S.
- 1801 Robert Fulton produces 1st submarine

Dayton where life was harder), women's skirts grew shorter, hats became extremely large and highly ornamented with flowers and ribbons, and (wonder of wonders!) the first female lawyer practiced before the Supreme Court of the U.S. And this last event a mere seventy-two years after John Knox published his fiery denunciation of the subservient role of women in western society!

By the 1830's, unrest over the issue of slavery was beginning to foment, and Dayton was not exempt from those discussions. The record shows that a Matthew Patton submitted a letter to the church asking that his membership be transferred to the Episcopal Church because of his personal disagreement with schools of thought followed by First Presbyterian. In 1838, First Presbyterian tore down its meeting house and proceeded to erect a new building in the same location. Concurrently, about seventy-five members who allied themselves with the "New School" broke away to form the Third Street Presbyterian Church. The only issue apparent in the split was their anti-slavery position, while the First Presbyterians allied with a more conservative approach. To further complicate matters, the Third Street congregation declared a claim of interest in the First Church property. This claim was settled by a payment of \$1500, raised by subscription among First Church members.

While slavery issues hardened on both sides with occasional bursts of violence (not related to the church) both congregations completed ambitious building programs. The Third Street Presbyterian finished its edifice at Third and Ludlow Streets at a cost of \$17,480, and the First Presbyterian Church at Second and Ludlow was occupied for worship. At about the same time, the first church for non-whites was organized in the Dayton community.

In the mid-1800's, Brigham Young was leading the Mormons to the Great Salt Lake, greed and avarice were leading opportunists toward gold in California, and local Presbyterians concentrated on leading the sheep into the fold. A new congregation



known as Central Church was formed and a year later dissolved and its members attached to First Presbyterian. Shortly thereafter, a group of members from First Presbyterian withdrew and organized another congregation known as Park Church. Meanwhile, in an effort to reach out, the Third Street Church voted to support the founding of a new congregation on Jefferson Street. Enthusiasm for the project failed to materialize, and the monies raised for the venture were set aside in trust for a future project in the Dayton Presbytery.

In the later 1800's, Presbyterianism in Dayton became interlocked with the national scene in unanticipated ways. In 1854, Rev. Gurley (Minister at First Presbyterian) left the Dayton community and moved to the Washington, D.C. area. That move preceded by four years the visit of Abraham Lincoln to Dayton where he spoke at the Courthouse steps, declaring that human slavery was unconstitutional. When the Civil War broke out, Dayton sent 3,664 of its finest young men to fight for the Union side. On a -30 degree day, the community held a bazaar to raise monies to assist the soldiers' families. The year that the Civil War was ended, Lincoln was assassinated and his funeral sermon in The White House was delivered by the Reverend Gurley, former minister at First Presbyterian. What a strange turn of events!

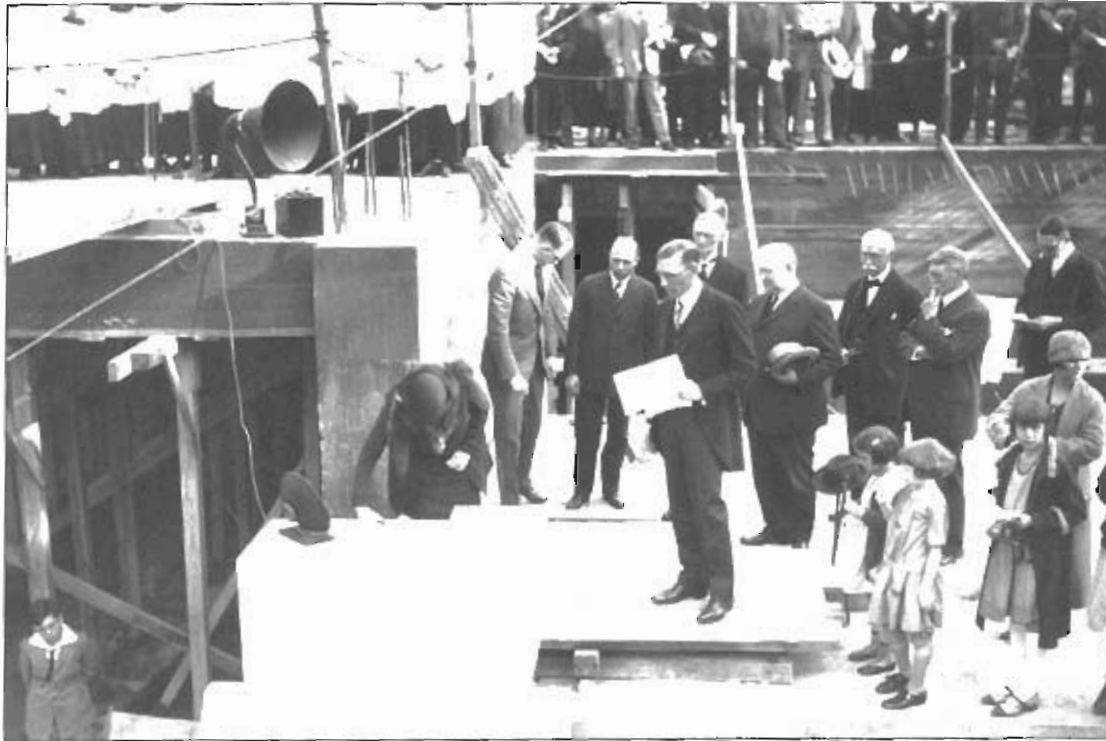
During the late 1860's, the Turuer Opera House (Victoria Theater) opened on Main Street, 540 acres of land on the west side were purchased

for development of a National Soldier's Home, and, in the big city to the south, the first professional baseball club was founded—the Cincinnati Red Stockings. All this excitement failed to compensate for the restlessness of the First Presbyterian congregation, for soon plans were underway to remove the building erected in 1842 and to replace it. During construction, members worshiped with the Baptists downtown or with Park Street Church (their earlier off-shoot). At Thanksgiving time, joint services were held with Third Street Presbyterian and the worship was dedicated toward the union of the “old” and “new” branches of the church. To help fund the current building project at First Presbyterian, the “occupants” of Presbyterian Cemetery were transferred to Woodland Cemetery and the downtown site was sold for \$32,000.

In 1876, the First Presbyterian church building was badly damaged by fire, and the congregation once again found itself worshipping with the members at the Third Street Church. The group charged with the replacement or rebuilding of the burned-out edifice found itself strapped financially, having erected the church only about seven years previous. So the joy of the first telephone installed in Dayton was dampened by Valentine Winters' need to ask for additional subscription time. At about the same time, Cologne Cathedral was completed in Germany. It had been started in 1248—what was the Presbyterians' hurry?

While First Presbyterian Church was having its problems, the same restrictions were not apparent at the Third Street Church. There, the old church at Third & Ludlow was razed and a new building constructed. The old furniture and fixtures were donated to Memorial Presbyterian at Third & Perry (currently on Smithville Rd.). In the same year that the Statue of Liberty was dedicated, the Third Street Church raised \$800 to start a mission church “across the river.” This was the predecessor of the Forest Ave. Presbyterian Church.

- 1803 Ohio becomes a state; the Louisiana Purchase is effected.
- 1806 Official end of The Holy Roman Empire; work begins on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.
- 1807 U.S. Evangelical Association (Jacob Albright) holds 1st convention; England prohibits slave trade
- 1807 U.S. prohibits importation of slaves from Africa; Inquisition abolished in Spain & Italy.
- 1808 Cumberland Presbytery of Kentucky (revivalists) excluded from the Presbyterian Church (traditionalists); techniques for canning food developed
- 1809 Abraham Lincoln born.
- 1812 U.S. declares war on Britain
- 1814 Treaty of Ghent ends British/American War, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is written.
- 1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo
- 1817 Construction of the Erie Canal begins.
- 1818 Franz Xavier Huber sets the words of Joseph Mohr to music (Stille Nacht).
- 1823 Monroe Doctrine takes effect.
- 1824 Erie Canal completed
- 1828 Construction of the B&O begins—1st railroad built in the U.S.
- 1830 1st woman lawyer practices before The U.S. Supreme Court
- 1831 London Bridge opens; 1st horse-drawn buses appear in NYC.
- 1837 Queen Victoria ascends the throne of Great Britain
- 1837 American Presbyterians split into the “old” and the “new” schools [Old] Scottish and Scottish/Irish backgrounds—favor concept of original sin, ecclesiastical court and law, many members in the South favor slavery. [New] roots in the Puritan tradition, many members in New England favor the anti-slavery position.
- 1839 1st baseball game played (devised by Abner Doubleday)
- 1840 Third Street Presbyterian completes its building at Third & Ludlow (cost \$17,480)
- 1841 “New York Tribune” appears, 1st university degrees granted to women in the U.S.
- 1845 U.S. Naval Academy opens at Annapolis
- 1846 Brigham Young leads the Mormons to the Great Salt Lake; Smithsonian Institution is founded



Assuming the helm in 1923, Dr. Evans leads officers and dignitaries at the laying of Westminster's cornerstone.



For all the whirlwind excitement of helping found a new community and developing into a city, First Presbyterian shared its 100th birthday with the Paris Exposition and the dedication of the Eiffel Tower, along with the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia. It was significant that the pastor of the Third Street Church noted the event and referred to First Presbyterian as “our mother church.” Was there some portent in that terminology?

With automobiles, flying machines, and the San Francisco earthquake stealing the headlines, almost unnoticed was a recommendation in 1909 for the consolidation of First Presbyterian Church and the Third Street Presbyterian Church. This was not to happen for another decade, during which time Dayton endured a massive flood with major damage to its downtown churches, and the world was plunged into a world war.

Another effort at establishing a mission church came as First Presbyterian started Bethel Chapel in North Dayton. One of its goals was to meet the needs of young people in the changing society; and so its plans included a gymnasium in the lower level. Activities for the boys were held in the gym; girls’ cooking and sewing classes were held in the upper level; and a library was provided for both boys and girls. The evolution of this mission church was not clearly documented.

Despite the Great Flood in 1913 and the outbreak of WW I the next year, Third Street Presbyterian celebrated its 75th anniversary by noting that membership had grown from the original sixty-nine members to a current roster of 700. During that time, the value of the site originally purchased for \$2700 had grown to \$300,000. Fuel shortages resulting from the war necessitated union services in the evenings. These were held at the Third Street Church. Soon, committees and boards within the churches began to seriously discuss the possibility of a merger.

The year 1919 proved a monumental one in the life of the downtown Presbyterian churches in

- 1847 1st California gold rush.
- 1854 Republican Party formed in the U.S.; Pope Pius IX declares dogma of The Immaculate Conception to be an Article of Faith
- 1861 Confederate States of America formed, outbreak of the U S Civil War.
- 1861 Churches in the south form The Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States (PCCSA), declaring that the General Assembly is making political, rather than spiritual, decisions
- 1863 Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address ”
- 1864 In the South, “old” & “new” branches merge to form the Presbyterian Church in the U S
- 1865 Confederate States formally surrender, Lincoln is assassinated; the Atlantic Cable is completed, The Ku Klux Klan is founded.
- 1867 U.S. acquires Alaska from Russia.
- 1868 1st professional U.S. baseball club is founded—the Cincinnati Red Stockings
- 1876 Telephone is invented.
- 1877 Phonograph is invented.
- 1880 NYC streets first lit by electricity
- 1883 1st skyscraper built (10 stories) in Chicago; Brooklyn Bridge opened to traffic.
- 1886 Statue of Liberty dedicated; American Federation of Labor founded
- 1893 Henry Ford builds his 1st car, Chicago World Exposition
- 1896 1st modern Olympics held in Athens, Klondike gold rush begins
- 1900 Eiffel Tower completed, Commonwealth of Australia created.
- 1903 Wright brothers successfully fly a powered plane
- 1906 Paul Laurence Dunbar dies; San Francisco earthquake
- 1909 Peary reaches the North Pole
- 1911 Kettering develops the electric self-starter for autos.
- 1911 Church of Scotland revises its Prayer Book
- 1912 S S. Titanic sinks, World War I breaks out.
- 1915 1st transcontinental phone call.
- 1916 Start of Prohibition Movement, 1st Rose Bowl game played.
- 1918 United Lutheran Church established in the U.S.

Dayton for at that time a merger was effected. To this unification, First Presbyterian brought 516 names and Third Street Presbyterian brought 630 names. The name **Westminster Presbyterian Church** was chosen for the merged congregations because the name had been so closely associated with the history of the Presbyterian Church for 2-1/2 centuries. In 1624, The Parliament of England called together a number of ministers and laymen to consider a restatement of The Doctrines of the Church. These men met at Westminster Abbey in London and entered into devout study. They continued for several years and put forth what is commonly known as The Westminster Confession of Faith, the shorter catechism, the longer catechism, the directory of worship, and the form of church government. While the Presbyterian Church was in existence prior to that time, this was a defining moment which set forth definitively the beliefs and creeds of the church.

The first leader of the merged congregations was Rev. E.W. Clippinger, the minister of the former Third Street Church. In 1923, he was succeeded by Rev. Hugh Ivan Evans who took the united church through its first 32 years. The Third Street Presbyterian building was razed, and the bell purchased in 1843 was stored at First Presbyterian. Soon thereafter, the building at Second and Ludlow was sold to the Central Reformed Church, and the Westminster congregation moved its services to the newly dedicated Memorial Hall. Church services were broadcast nationally. During 1924, John Hibbenling, President of Princeton University came to Dayton to lay the cornerstone for the new edifice. He then shared the recollection of living at Cooper Seminary (site of the new building) with his widowed mother, who at that time was a member of the faculty. What a homecoming that must have been!

By 1926, the same year that Clarence Darrow defended John Scopes for teaching the Theory of Evolution and the Charleston became a fashionable dance (certainly not for strict Presbyterians!) the new Westminster Church opened its doors for wor-

ship. It was not long, however, during the collapse of the NY Stock Exchange, that the fledgling church found money scarce to pay off the remaining debt. Over the next few years, Dr. Evans asked the congregation for \$1 per family to pay off the debt and to restore pay cuts to the staff. These donations were to be matched dollar-for-dollar by two separate anonymous donors—thus, each donation amounted to *three* dollars. The anonymous donors were later identified as Mrs. Harry Carnell and Thomas A. Elder. By 1936, the debt-reduction program was successful, and the cancelled mortgage was burned. The parishioners had all their unpaid pledges cancelled and returned to worship with “clear” consciences.

The fact that the church was out from under a huge financial burden only led to an increased social awareness and participation in the life of the community. World War II imposed its face on the community, and the bell from the Third Street Presbyterian Church (1843) was donated to the war effort, which needed metal products. At the close of the war, Fairmont Presbyterian Church in Kettering was getting a start and the land on Far Hills Ave. was given to the new congregation as a gift from Westminster. But not all was smooth sailing—in 1948, Westminster Church and its Skinner organ sustained \$34,000 in damage from a fire which was set by a young man who “wanted to see the fire engines run.” Just as those repairs were being completed, a heavy blizzard hit Dayton, and church services were cancelled for the first time since the Great Flood of 1913. On the upside, the church was honored to have Dr. Evans elected as Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCUSA.

During the 1950's, the carousel called the Earth began to spin faster and faster. Color TV was introduced into the U.S.; Norman Vincent Peale treated us to *The Power of Positive Thinking*; after fifteen years of work, the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible* was introduced; the first U.S. hydrogen bomb was exploded (what irony in these last two events);

- 1919 Prohibition Amendment ratified; fundamentalist vs. liberal conflicts erupt in U.S. churches
- 1920 League of Nations established, 1st American broadcasting station opened.
- 1926 John Scopes put on trial for illegally teaching The Theory of Evolution
- 1927 1st talking movie produced, Charles Lindbergh flies nonstop from NYC to Paris, the Holland Tunnel opens in NY
- 1928 Penicillin is discovered; Mickey Mouse is created
- 1929 Presbyterian churches in Scotland unite to form The Church of Scotland; NYSE collapses
- 1931 Empire State Building completed, "The Star-Spangled Banner" officially becomes the national anthem.
- 1933 Orthodox Presbyterian Church formed (fundamentalist)
- 1937 1st full-length animated film—"Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs, Golden Gate Bridge opens
- 1939 1st helicopter constructed; nylon stockings first appear.
- 1941 Pearl Harbor attacked, U.S. enters the war in Europe and Asia.
- 1945 VE Day ends war in Europe, 1st atomic bombs dropped; Japan surrenders, FDR dies in office
- 1946 UN General Assembly holds its 1st session. Dead Sea Scrolls discovered; 1st U.S. supersonic plane flight
- 1948 World Council of Churches organized, Orville Wright dies.
- 1950 National Council of Churches organized in U.S., UN building in NYC completed; antihistamines become popular; Korean War breaks out.
- 1961 Color TV introduced in the U.S.
- 1952 Revised Standard Version of the Bible (prepared by 32 scholars over 15 years) published for Protestants; 1st U.S. hydrogen bomb exploded
- 1953 Queen Elizabeth II ascends throne of England, Sir Edmund Hillary conquers Mt. Everest.
- 1956 M.L. King, Jr. emerges as a desegregation leader
- 1957 Dr. Seuss' "The Cat in the Hat", USSR launches Sputniks I & II.
- 1961 The New English Bible appears on the 350th anniversary of the Authorized Version; 1st U.S. space flight
- 1963 Freedom March in Washington, D.C.; President Kennedy assassinated
- 1965 Outbreaks of violence in Selma, AL; Westminster Abbey is 900 years old
- 1966 EUB & Methodist Churches vote to merge as The United Methodist Church.
- 1967 1st heart transplant performed.
- 1968 M.L. King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy assassinated.
- 1969 Gallup Poll shows 70% of those polled feel that influence of religion is declining in the U.S.
- 1969 Neil Armstrong walks on the moon
- 1971 The "Jesus Movement" becomes an element of religion in the U.S.
- 1974 Four U.S. bishops defy church law & ordain 11 women as priests, Gallup Poll shows 40% of U.S. adults attend worship weekly.
- 1974 Females allowed to play on Little League teams; Nixon resigns the Presidency (Watergate); Xenia tornado strikes.
- 1975 Anglican Church in Canada approves ordaining women to the priesthood.
- 1976 Riots in S. Africa against apartheid, Episcopal Church formally approves ordination of women; 1st supersonic trans-Atlantic flights; U.S. Air Force Academy admits women; U.S. Lutherans split over interpretation of the Bible and synod administration
- 1978 A Gutenberg Bible sells at auction for two million dollars—highest ever for a printed book.
- 1978 John Paul II elected Pope (1st non-Italian in 456 years).
- 1981 The S. African Presbyterian Church instructs its clergy that they can marry people of different races, in defiance of apartheid laws.
- 1982 The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. merges with The Presbyterian Church, USA—having split from them in the Civil War
- 1982 1st female priest preaches at Canterbury Cathedral, "Hymns for Today's Church" introduces new hymns & modernizes wordings of older ones.
- 1982 EPCOT opens; 1st lethal injection administered, 3 of the 5 Lutheran denominations vote to merge (LCA, ALC, & ELC).
- 1988 1,000 years of Christianity celebrated in Russia.
- 1990 The "New Revised Standard Version" of the Bible is published in the U.S.
- 1990 Operation Desert Storm takes place
- 1991 Policy of Apartheid repealed in S. Africa; USSR replaced by a Commonwealth of Independent States.
- 1994 The Tunnel under the English Channel is opened.
- 1995 The Oklahoma City Federal Building is ravaged by bombs, the Bosnian War erupts.

Queen Elizabeth II ascended the throne of England; an oral polio vaccine was introduced; and we all thrilled to *The Cat in the Hat*. Meanwhile, back at First and Wilkinson, Westminster offered financial assistance to the Church of the Master to get started and also raised \$10,000 for the Southminster Presbyterian building fund.

As demographics in the expanding Dayton community began to change, so did the pattern of worshippers at Westminster. Membership (although basically the same people) shifted from those who lived nearby to those who lived in the suburbs. A 35-year-old church design was altered to accommodate new needs; specifically, the Westminster Chapel on the west side and the gymnasium on the east side were made into multiple levels to accommodate new church offices and Sunday School needs. Dr. Frederick Speakman was called as Senior Pastor and, once again, Westminster was honored by having a staff member achieve national recognition—this time as National Presbyterian Preacher of the Year.

Maintaining its social conscience in the 60's while the nation was "troubled" with civil rights demonstrations and the assassinations of two Kennedy brothers and M.L. King, Jr., Westminster strove to meet the needs of its congregation by establishing a Religion & Race Committee to respond to community issues. Concurrently, Rev. Don Wick helped found MALACHI, a community group to assist lay people in determining a Christian response to secular problems. In response to teen-agers running the streets, the recreation center named "Down There" was opened at Westminster to provide a better environment. This institution was short-lived, but then threw its support behind a similar venture at neighboring Christ Episcopal Church called "The Alley Door."

When Presbyterian congregations were given approval to ordain women as Elders, Westminster fell right into step with its first female Elder and

within five years became the first Presbyterian Church in the Dayton area to add a female minister to the staff. Meanwhile, the financial roller coaster, which appeared to be Westminster's lot in life, once again surfaced. In the low 70's, budget deficits plagued the Stewardship Committee. Yet, two years later when the Xenia tornado devastated the area, Westminster raised \$8,600 for the One Great Hour of Sharing/Xenia Rehabilitation Fund of the Miami Presbytery, and within two years of that time the budget deficits from 1972 were resolved. Also within this time frame, Westminster celebrated its 175th anniversary; part of the celebration was the dedication of the original church bell (from Second and Ludlow) to be on permanent display on Courthouse Square, where it resides as of this writing.

The history of this church is filled with examples of reaching out to those in the church and community who might have special needs. When national fuel supplies fell to a critical level in 1977, Westminster Church (heated at that time by the Dayton central steam system) opened its doors to Presbytery meetings and to the College Hill Presbyterian Head Start Program. While urban redevelopment was underway in downtown Dayton, the church seized the opportunity to purchase the property across the street to provide parking for its members. To meet specific needs of the congregation, church bus service was established and for those who had trouble hearing during worship (no matter how fine the sermon) an infra-red sound system was initiated. As the second century of this church's organization came to a close, major renovations in the church structure and its ancillary systems were enacted to enable it to continue its outreach by making the plant available for many events such as school partnerships and community programs.

The history overflows with tradition and change to meet new needs. It has supported its Statement of Mission in the past and, with God's help, will continue to do so.

Chapter 5

Building



BEGAN BUILDING ON SOLID ROCK

By David Leach with Penny Haddick



First Presbyterian 1841

Westminster's Architectural Heritage

"We must express the Church that is One through all ages; but we must also express the endless changes of human life, the variation of environment. This is Church architecture; the manifestation through new modes of the ecclesiastical past, unchangeableness through variety; the eternal through the never fixed."


Ralph Cram



When one looks at the magnificent structure that is currently the home of Westminster Presbyterian Church, it is difficult to picture how this edifice grew over the past 200 years from its humble beginnings as a log cabin. How can one imagine a congregation meeting in the years when the city of Dayton itself was founded, and then picture the evolution of this first "downtown" church into the gothic structure that the current congregation enjoys today? How many structures did our forebears inhabit during this journey, and where in Dayton were they located?

This chapter will begin by looking at these beginnings—the first 127 years preceding the completion of the current church—in an attempt to appreciate more fully our past and to understand some of the guiding principles supporting this structure. It will then proceed to examine, both in picture and word, the present church since its completion in 1926. The general tradition in this country at the time that gave rise to Westminster's gothic style, the specific interests of the congregation and its leaders at the time of building, and the lasting features we enjoy today are the central concerns of this chapter.

HISTORY OF DAYTON BUILDINGS 1799–1926

 The congregation that became Westminster Presbyterian Church has been housed in the heart of Dayton throughout its history. The original log cabin church which was used from 1799 to 1805 was located at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets. With only a few exceptions, all ensuing structures occupied by the evolving congregation over the two centuries since existed within a short two blocks north and three blocks west of this location. The only minor exceptions were the years of 1805–6, when members met in Colonel Newcom's Tavern at the southwest corner of Main and Monument (then called Water Street), and the two years prior to the

completion of Westminster, from 1924–26, when the congregation met in Memorial Hall at First Street, between Jefferson and St. Clair. These were both temporary meeting places, and, of course, still in the "downtown" area (see map on page 32 for a visual account of the above.)

It took 18 years for the congregation to grow to the point where it needed a two-story meetinghouse that it could call its own. In a sense, the locations prior to this meetinghouse, completed in 1817 at the northwest corner of Ludlow and Second Streets, were all "temporary." It's easy to romanticize about the original log cabin as being purely American

Third Street Presbyterian



mid-west, and a dramatic contrast to our current facility, but it was surely a combination of the open spaces between the logs and the size of this one-room structure that drove the congregation to Colonel Newcom's Tavern and then the Old Courthouse, which was just north of the current Courthouse at Third and Main Streets.

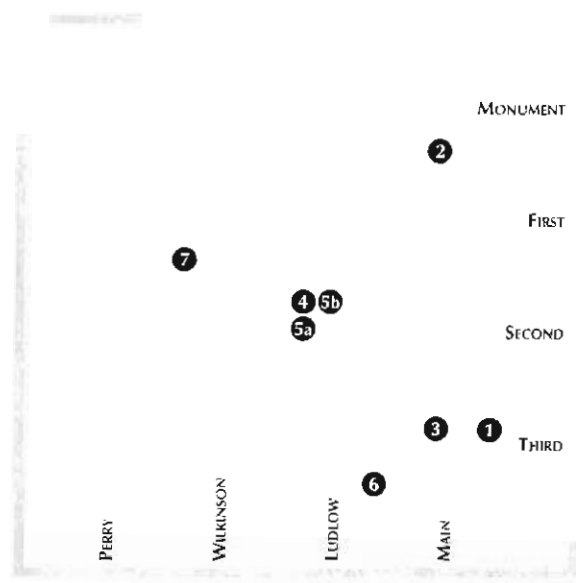
This first meeting house, a Colonial structure with two entrance doors facing east on to Ludlow, met the congregation's needs until 1838, the year that the church divided into two separate churches over differences that could not be resolved (see chapter 2 for information on this separation.) It was this year that a new structure was built at this same location, with an entrance facing Second Street, while the split-off segment of the congregation built

a new church at the southeast corner of Third and Ludlow Streets. This was called the Third Street Presbyterian Church, and was a handsome stone structure with a towering spire entrance set at the corner, between two massive gables facing each street (see photo on page 31.) It was the first church structure to incorporate a Gothic style.

The original congregation remained in the new church, a Greek Revival fronting on Ludlow with columns at the entrance and a large bell tower above, from 1839, the year it was completed, until 1869. After this thirty-year period, the congregation had grown to the point where it needed a larger structure. It, too, turned to a Gothic style, with a stone spire nestled into the transept and entrances facing towards Ludlow again, as did the original meeting house in this location. This church, known as the First Presbyterian church, was similar in many ways to the Third Street Presbyterian church with its masonry detailing at the corners and steep, gabled roof lines. It was set back from Ludlow sidewalk at a greater distance, and had a more rectangular "footprint" as compared with the compact, squarer one of the Third Street structure.

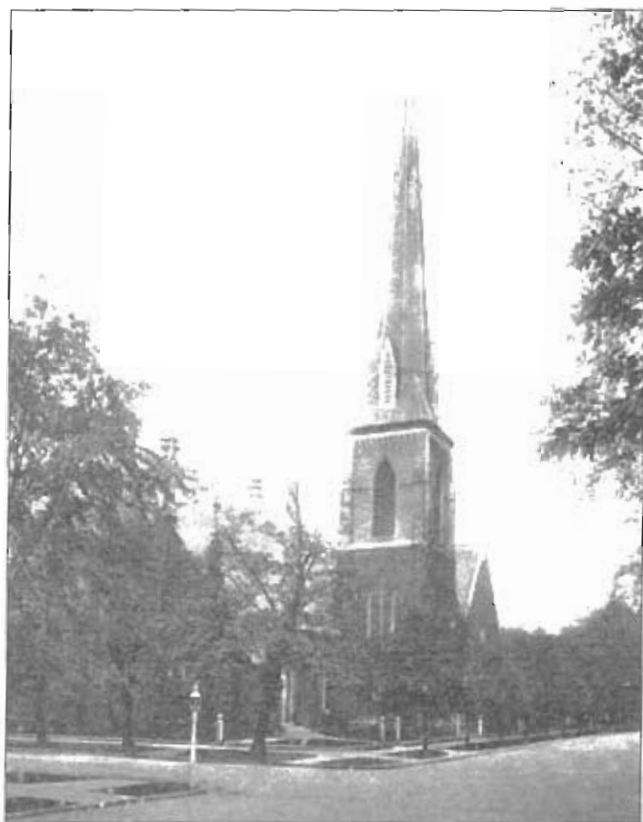
There are two clear photographs of this structure, one taken early with Ludlow and Second Streets lined with trees, and one from the 1940s with Dayton looking more like the city we see today (see photos on pages 33.) All three of the church structures which occupied this corner from 1817 to 1924 existed one block away from our current church, on the ground that is now the old Rike's/Lazarus' parking garage, and which will become the new parking garage for the Schuster Performing Arts Center in the next couple of years. It is interesting to note that a good number of current members of Westminster use this parking facility each Sunday as it is so close to the church.

History of Westminster's Churches 1799–Present



- 1 Log cabin 1799–1805
- 2 Colonel Newcom's Tavern 1805–6
- 3 Old Courthouse 1806–17
- 4 Two-story meeting house 1817–38
- 5a New church oriented toward Second Street 1839–69*
- 5b First Presbyterian Church 1869–1924
- 6 Third Street Presbyterian Church 1838–1919*
- 7 Westminster Presbyterian Church 1926–present
(1924–24 congregation met in Memorial Hall)

*Church divided at this point



First Presbyterian, early 20th century



First Presbyterian, 1940's

BEGINNINGS OF THE CURRENT CHURCH

*I*n 1919, the two congregations reunited, forming the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Dayton. By the early 1920's, it was clear that the combined and growing congregation needed a new facility, and planning was started for a new structure. The entire church body was involved in the planning, as is common to the Presbyterian tradition. Issues of scale, facilities for education and youth ministry, music, and the continuation of a downtown location are prominent in the records of the church during this time. The minister at this time of transition was Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans, who served as the head of the Westminster staff from 1923 to 1955. Dr. Evans managed to facilitate the planning within a congregation that was temporarily without a home. Shortly after the merger of the Third Street and First

Presbyterian churches, the structure at Second and Ludlow was sold to the Central Reformed Church. The Third Street facility was sold only months after Dr. Evans arrived in Dayton. That is why the congregation held its services at Memorial Hall from 1924 to 1926.

The name Westminster was chosen as it recalls the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was developed at the Westminster Abbey of London in 1624. While the Presbyterian Church existed prior to that date, it was this occasion that set the doctrine that became the spiritual backbone of our denomination throughout the world. This tie-in with the history of Presbyterianism reflects the sentiment of the congregation at this point, and the degree to which they wanted the architecture to echo this

sentiment is reflected in the building itself.

The architectural firm of Cram and Ferguson from Boston was hired as the consulting architect and the offices of Schenck and Williams became the local firm hired to carry out the design and building of Westminster. Ralph Cram was a leading proponent for the revival of Gothic church architecture in America at this time. His highly regarded book, *Church Building* was first published in 1901 and was in its third edition by 1924. In it he characterizes the changes in architecture for many denominations at the beginning of the twentieth century as the renaissance of Church Architecture in America. On page 314 of the 1924 edition he states:

"At present the tendency is altogether away from Puritanism and intellectualism, back towards more spiritual, devotional, and liturgical standards, and correspondingly comes a hunger for the same qualities in architecture, hence we find a pronounced drift towards Gothic and a demand for churches that in their assemblage of all the arts, including liturgics, would have been considered rather extreme by the Episcopal Church of the early 19th century—or even of the end of the century in Virginia. Not only is the architecture that of the Catholic era in England, but stained glass rich with saints and symbolism, statues, splendid wood-work and fine metal-work, great organs and vested choirs, Communion tables centrally placed, vested with rich frontals and bearing cross and candles...all these things have come in the last twenty-five years, and the end is not yet."

It is telling that an architect of Cram's national stature was selected to provide this congregation with a structure that reflects not only the church's local stature, but also these general changes throughout the nation. In his 1934 book, *The Church Architecture of Protestantism*, Andrew Landale Drummond linked these architectural changes with "the re-orientation which the religious spirit underwent, especially after the Great War." He further states on page 103 that:

"Worship' had hitherto been thrust into the background by the theological, evangelistic, ethical, and administrative emphasis of American Protestantism. It was now eagerly acclaimed as the basis of faith."

The idea of Cram's "new and vital Gothic" as a means of integrating worship into the building structure itself—both inside and out—was a new emphasis, not just here in Dayton, but in many parts of the country. Notably, Drummond quotes from Cram that in the Middle West the Presbyterians "seem to be building more churches—and getting better architects than any other bodies of Christians." The churches the author selects to augment this statement in a footnote on page 121 are "Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio (Schenck & Williams)" and "First Presbyterian Church, Chicago (Tallmadge & Watson)."

It is somewhat problematic, or at least ironic, that the "new" and "vital" in American church architecture at this time was drawn from the Middle Ages. Cram was devoted to the final phase of Gothic, the "Perpendicular" phase, during the early stages of his career. At times he was criticized for being such an outspoken apologist for the Gothic style, and for his stance against modernism. In general though, he was regarded as a progressive conservative, whose ideas grew to incorporate both a sense of continuity and tradition along with the vitality of modernism. It is widely considered that the firm of Cram, Goodhue, & Ferguson created some of the landmarks of Gothic Church architecture in America, which include St. Thomas' in New York, the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, the Euclid Avenue Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, and the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, all completed prior to his becoming the consulting architect for Westminster. It is this mature, complex outlook—which is reflected in the opening quote to this chapter—that characterizes the distinction of the building that now houses the congregation that began its journey in a log cabin in 1799.



WESTMINSTER'S MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ART FEATURES

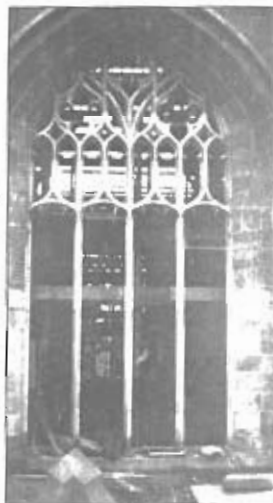
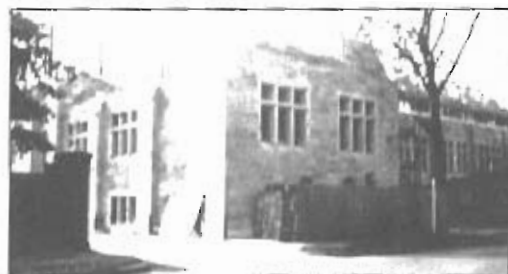
When one enters the sanctuary of Westminster today, the legacy of the plans and desires of the congregation from the time of Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans is readily apparent. The lasting power that is crafted into the overall structure to orient the congregation towards worship is as prominent now as it was in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and perhaps as tangible as it was for human-kind during the Gothic era. Today's visitors, whether members of the congregation or not, are struck with the over-all beauty of the interior space of the sanctuary. Its openness is not compromised by the height of the Perpendicular style, perhaps as a result of the blending of breadth (American Modernism) and the Gothic style in 1924. A sense of entering a "different" space, one that invites reflection, piety, thankfulness, reverence and the host of emotional states and feelings that comprise the fullness of "worship" is the dominant sensation. This is suggested of course by the exterior before entering. The handsome north facing façade—with each side symmetrically buttressed by one-story classrooms and offices, along with the stone detailing throughout, and the central entrance off of First Street, dividing the block between Wilkinson and Perry Streets—promotes an expectation of what is to come. Even with the addition of the buildings that now surround the church, including two other churches all facing First Street within a three-block area, Westminster stands out as a significantly different structure. Perhaps one feels the sense of the past being captured as much as a sense of the purely spiritual and of beauty. Whatever the aesthetic preferences of the visitor or member may be, the general reaction one feels upon entering the building is a sense of awe.

One of the most unusual features of this otherwise traditional Gothic structure is the elevated choir loft. A more traditional handling would be rows placed on either side of the chancel, receding straight back at the floor level. The steep rise of the

existing loft behind the altar and communion table with the choir facing out towards the sanctuary is unusual and striking. This difference prompted a noted historian of church architecture, Jim White, whose doctoral thesis was on Cram, to remark on a recent visit to Westminster, "I see that music is important in this church!" Perhaps this was a prophetic view taken by the congregation and designers of the church, as indeed, music is an important element in worship at Westminster (see Chapter 6 on this subject.)

Visually, however, the ascending platform of the choir loft has another function that was more likely the motivating factor in the design. The visitor/member's eye, upon entering the sanctuary, is drawn directly up to the magnificent *Te Deum* stained glass window above at the south end of the church—the "top of the cross." This window, designed and built by the Tiffany Studios in New York in 1918, is the centerpiece of the church interior.

This remarkable work of art, which today is used as a singular visual metaphor for Westminster, was a guiding element in the design of the church. In the records of the church, one can find this phrase: "the new Westminster sanctuary was built around the *Te Deum* window." It was given in memory of John W. Stoddard (1837–1917) by his wife, Susan K. Stoddard, both members of the First Presbyterian Church, and was originally installed in that church, one block east of Westminster. In other words, before the plans were developed for the current church, this masterpiece existed, housed in Westminster's immediate predecessor. The rich and complex imagery and symbolism found in the medalion window is echoed throughout the church in its various architectural features. The varied meanings that are woven into the window itself would take a separate book to describe. For a more complete outline of all the component parts of this window, one may consult a pamphlet located in the Westminster



archives at Wright State University titled the *Mary Poage Rees Memorial Brochure* written by her sister, Dr. Lydia L. Poage. In this brochure, Dr. Poage states the following:

"This window is priceless and is considered by Edwin Stanton George, one of the great artists of stained glass, as 'the finest medallion window in America,' and is without doubt Mr. Tiffany's masterpiece." "

The central theme of the window is *Te Deum Laudamus*, a hymn of praise to the Holy Trinity, assumed to have been written by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan in 300 AD. The words to this hymn are incorporated into the window itself, though in a different order than in the original text, within the horizontal bands which separate the medallions. Thus, at the very top of the window is a trefoil, the shape which symbolizes the Trinity, and the imagery within is the symbol of regal sovereignty and triumph. God, holding an orb with a cross in His left hand, and the right hand raised in the sign of blessing, is seated on a rainbow, the sign of the covenant (Genesis 9:12, 15.) The words "We praise Thee O God," the opening lines of the *Te Deum Laudamus* hymn, lie directly below this upper-most image. Beneath this top image are four medallions, which represent the four Gospel writers. Matthew, represented by a winged man or angel is at the top, followed by Mark, represented by a winged lion, then Luke, represented by a winged ox, and finally John, symbolized by an eagle. These symbols derive from Ezekial and the Book of Revelation. The fourth chapter of Revelation, specifically the passage "all creatures and others present...sang praises day and night," is another Biblical reference drawn into the Tiffany window's themes.

On either side of the central vertical window are thin, separate windows, called "lancets," depicting the twelve Apostles. Each of the twelve is represented by symbols derived from the Bible or based on legend or tradition. These representations, similar to those in the central medallions, combine visual symbols

with the Apostle's name beneath. At the top of each lancet is an arch containing a trefoil, echoing the shape and symbolic content of the central window. Below follows a rectangular frame depicting each Apostle, six on each side. Hence, the top rectangle of the left lancet symbolizes Peter with an upside down Latin cross and crossed keys, and the name of the Apostle in the horizontal band directly below.

The leading within all of the central medallions delineate quatrefoils, a four-leaf design similar to the trefoil, which symbolically represents the four Evangelists as well as the four corners of the earth. In the first and third medallions (Matthew and Luke), the quatrefoils are suspended on a diagonal bias within the circle of the medallion. The alternating second and fourth quatrefoils for Mark and John are on a vertical bias. These shapes, along with the classically Gothic repetitions of the pointed arch, are echoed in the tracery and other windows throughout the church. Indeed, the new church was "built around the *Te Deum* window," and the resulting sense of wholeness and consistency amplifies the lasting effect Westminster's designers had hoped to achieve.

All of the remaining windows that are visible from the sanctuary continue to reference the long history of the church as well as the story of the Christian faith. All were commissioned at the time of the building of Westminster Presbyterian Church through the office of Schenck and Williams, and were created by the Rossbach Art Glass Company in Columbus, Ohio. Proceeding from the altar to the East and West Transept windows, the symbols continue to symbolically represent the Apostles in the central, interior portion. At the top of each is a rosette containing the Ascending Dove, symbolic of the Resurrection. The West window's emblems are of St. Simon and St. Andrew, the Apostle's of Peace, while the East window depicts the "fiery Apostles," St. Paul and St. Peter. Below these rosettes are panels with images that convey Christian virtues such as the cross, anchor and heart, or faith, hope and charity.

The twelve windows flanking the sanctuary contain a sequence of emblems that unfold the history of the church. Each window contains three emblems centered in the interior. Beginning at the front on the West façade (to the right of the Altar), the first window shows the articles of the first church—the tabernacle of the Jews. The remaining windows on this façade proceed from emblems of Moses through emblems of Christ. For example, Window #2 contains the emblems of Moses represented by the Burning Bush, the Stone Tablets, and the Fiery Brass Serpent, and the central image of Window #6 depicts the Lamb and Flag, emblem of the Resurrection. The six windows on the opposing Eastern façade continue the story from early and later Christian emblems to emblems that symbolize the character and sayings of Christ. The final North-facing window above the entrance to the church, echoes the symbols of the *Te Deum* window at the opposing façade. In this case, the Trinity is illustrated at the top by the all-seeing Eye of God, and the four Evangelists are spread horizontally rather than vertically.

A continued repetition of these shapes and emblems occurs in the stone tracery and woodwork in the sanctuary and throughout the church building. Perhaps the most subtle manifestations are located in the painted ceiling high above the sanctuary. In contrast to the luminous windows, the designs and imagery in the steep, traditionally Gothic collar-braced roof are muted and dark by design. In the original contract with the architectural firm, it was specifically stated that polychrome paint would be applied over darkly stained cypress panels, and after which

"the color work should be glazed to dull tones with an umber glaze and the entire beam work should be glazed...to give the effect of age and softness..."

This somber contrast tends to augment the height of the ceiling, separating it from the lighter and brighter architectural elements supporting it. Yet, the imagery continues from below, depicting nine of the disciples and two of the Evangelists (Mark and Luke) as well as Paul. Each ceiling panel is decorated with repeated designs that symbolize Christian beliefs that accompany the figures: grapes and vines, a crown of thorns with four nails, *fleur-de-lis*, and so forth. Of the visual elements that are an integral part of Westminster's architecture, the ceiling is probably the last to be perceived by one visiting the church. Its subtlety is a part of its beauty, however, and its darkness tends to suggest the ever-present mystery that is contained within the story these images portray.

While the centerpiece of the sanctuary's imagery remains the Tiffany window, the complementary aspect of the various images that surround the sanctuary promotes a profound sense of completeness. Contained in this special space is the central story of Christian faith, through ancient symbols and motifs, repeated in verse, image, and concrete architecture, all of which reflect on the actual practice of worship.

Beyond these visual attributes that are a fixed part of the architecture of Westminster Presbyterian Church since it was completed in 1926 are a host of objects of art and decoration that complete the total image of the church as it has served its congregation

and community since that time. These include the paintings, tapestries and sculpture, the seasonal paraments and stoles, as well as the center and side aisle pew candles and seasonal decorations that adorn the sanctuary during Christmas and Easter. While these are not a permanent part of the architecture, a few deserve a brief mention in this

Copy of Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair* by George Phillips.



chapter as they have grown into the fabric of worship to the extent that they are wedded to the sanctuary's presence through traditional use. In this sense, even the Casavant organ should also be mentioned as the towering pipes and their ensuing music are such a significant presence in this musically oriented church. This will be discussed in the chapter on music, however.

One prominent example of an art object would be the copy of Raphael's 1516 painting, *Madonna of the Chair*, the original of which hangs in the Pitti Palace in Florence. This skillful oil copy of the Renaissance master's work by George L. Phillips, elegantly encased in an elaborate gilded frame, is hung as a centerpiece behind the altar once the abundant Christmas decorations are installed in the sanctuary during the Advent season. The image shows a seated Mary on the left holding the infant Jesus in the center, with the infant John the Baptist in the background on the right. The canvas is a tondo, or circular shape, set into a square frame. The figures all project out from a dark background, and the prominent bright foreground colors, particularly the reds and blues, relate to the dominant colors of the stained glass. The circular shape, of course, parallels the medallions of the *Te Deum* window directly behind and above the painting. While the remaining decorations for this season—bows of pine and pine trees, garland, poinsettias, candles, bows—are symbolic and beautiful, it is this painting that commands your attention and couples with the Christmas story as it is told from the pulpit each season.

Another more permanent example is located outside the sanctuary, in the remodeled chapel at the ground floor level in the south west corner of the church. The chapel originally rose two stories to a ceiling above the first floor and had a balcony in the rear similar to the layout of the sanctuary. Subsequently, the ceiling height was lowered and the balcony removed, making way for what is now the West Parlor on the first floor above the chapel. The tall, two-story windows original to the chapel on the South façade are now visible from both spaces.

The result of this architectural modification, one of the few major changes within the original structure, was to create a more intimate chapel and to allow for a totally new, large meeting room with equal floor space. A kitchenette was added just east of the West Parlor as well. Both spaces are used often throughout the year for adult education classes, special services and meetings. Along with the chapel modification, a wood sculpture was commissioned for the altar area in 1959. This handsome light wood altarpiece was executed by local artist Robert Koepnick, and blends into the modern character of the renovated chapel in both style and color.

It is interesting to see how the original design of this church has needed little modification over the years since its initial design. Most of the modifications which have taken place have to do with standard up-dating, redecorating and replacement of worn carpeting. The heating and ventilation underwent a thorough renovation within the past ten years of this writing, for example, as did the sound amplification system in the sanctuary. However, when you look at the original floor plan, very little structural modification has been necessary, and with little exception, rooms continue to have the same general use as they did from the beginning. It reveals how thoroughly the planning must have been by this congregation in the early 1920's, and echoes the sentiment of architect Ralph Cram that opened this chapter. The enduring quality of this downtown structure, the envisioning of both an outward edifice and a functional interior that would embrace change and yet remain rooted in the traditions of the church are a lasting tribute to Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans and the congregation that planned and built Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Chapter 4

Expanding

1867

EXPANDING THE WORD AND SPIRIT FREE

By Irvin Harlamert



First Presbyterian 1867

*We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren,
as is fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly,
and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.*

2 Thessalonians 1:3



When the circuit riders or stage coach passengers arrived in Dayton at the end of the 18th century, they probably gave little consideration to the need for a parking lot, let alone acreage devoid of a single stalk of corn or row of beans. Yet, over the generations transportation changed and soon facilities were needed to accommodate suburban members who had left city dwellings and chose to drive downtown to worship and maintain their Christian fellowship with residents of the region. Expanding was required to preserve the church's mission to be an anchor in the center city.

Background

The half city block across First Street from the entrance to Westminster has a curious history starting with the 1920's. One of the great Dayton philanthropists at that time and a strong supporting Westminster member was Julia Shaw Carnell (1863–1944). She was a wealthy dowager and the lead supporter and financial source for the construction of the Dayton Art Institute building. She lived in a large gothic stone mansion at the corner of First and Wilkinson Streets facing Westminster. For some unknown reason her large mansion and property were sold and demolished to make way for the Greyhound Bus Station in 1935. It certainly would have been of great benefit to the church had it been given to Westminster. Instead the church would have to wait until the 1970's to acquire the property and then pay its fair market value, \$574,378.

Geography

In the early 20's Westminster was surrounded by mansions of Westminster members such as Valetine Winters, The William Huffman family, Dr. Robert Henry, and Julia Shaw Carnell. But during the 1940's to the 1960's all this gave way to urban center city development. In place of these mansions there

now stands the Montgomery County Juvenile Court on Perry Street, another high rise telephone building at the corner of First and Perry, a 12-story hotel on First Street, a 4-story office building known as the Stratford House and, of course, the Greyhound Bus Station on First Street immediately across from Westminster.

Prior to this development, parking for Westminster was not so critical due to public transportation use, the general residential nature of the neighborhood and people walking to and from church. But as the area became more impacted with the change from residential to commercial use, parking for Westminster became a problem.

Mission

The official written statement of Mission in 1974 and 1984 clearly states:

"Westminster must be a downtown church seriously engaged in the life, problems, and opportunities of the Dayton Metropolitan area."

The church had a paid volunteer coordinator who helped facilitate members of the congregation becoming involved in non-religious charitable



Dead horses after the 1913 flood

functions in the community. The church building was used extensively for such non-religious charitable organizations as:

- Numerous high school baccalaureate services
- Dayton Rotary Boys Choir
- Smoking Clinic Organization
- Counsel for the Blind
- Miami Valley Literacy Center
- Dayton Business & Professional Women's Association
- Dayton Guild of Organists
- The Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
- The Dayton Philharmonic Chorus
- The County Mental Health Organization
- Citizens for Better Schools
- Girl Scouts of America
- Boy Scouts of America
- Dayton Organ Recital Group Series
- Gray Panthers (Retired People)
- Emergency Resource Bank (Food Organization)
- Dayton Opera Guild
- Sweet Adelines (Women Non-Religious Singing Group)
- Senior Citizens Center Group

The Church provided office space with telephone and utilities to some of these organizations without charge. The kitchen and dining room in the social hall were made available for meetings and meals on a cost recovery basis. Parking for Sunday services was not so much a problem in that Rike's parking facility among others was made available for church parking. But parking during week days and evenings in connection with the use of the Westminster building became more and more difficult simply because there was no place for patrons to park. Newly located businesses in the immediate area brought in many more employees who took all available parking. Therefore, the use of the Westminster building declined mainly because of the lack of parking. Moreover, there was the flight to the suburbs of the

general population with new churches in the residential neighborhoods. This caused a membership decline at Westminster from a high of +3000 in 1950 to 1300 in 2000. Notwithstanding these changes, Westminster stood steadfast to its downtown commitment and actually contributed seed money for new suburban Presbyterian churches.

An Idea

Judge Irvin H. Harlamert, a Westminster Elder, saw a news article one day announcing the results of an 81 page study on Center City Parking published by the City of Dayton. Elements of this study were the City's goals to:

- (a) move the Greyhound Bus Station from its old location across First Street from Westminster to a new planned transportation center in the vicinity of Fifth Street and Patterson Boulevard,
- (b) to acquire the First Street Greyhound Bus site, and
- (c) to designate the old site for a public parking facility based upon the parking needs for that general neighborhood.

With the blessing of Senior Pastor Frederick Bruce Speakman, Harlamert began to informally investigate the possibility of Westminster using this First Street City Block for its own parking needs in cooperation with the City's desire for public parking. Negotiations were opened with Assistant City Manager Earl Sterzer. It became apparent that the City viewed the Greyhound Bus Building in a declining state of repair, a visual eyesore and a gathering place for crime, drugs, and prostitution. Westminster would be happy with the departure of the bus fumes and the noise, which actually did compete with the Sunday morning sermons in the summer with all the church doors open in the days prior to air conditioning.

The Lease

A Committee was formed to help Harlamert pursue his idea including:

Robert Beerbower, Vice President of the
Price Brothers Company
James Nazareus, Proprietor of J. G.
Nazareus, Inc.
Robert Grannis, President of Shook
Constructions Co.
Russell Gilmore owner of Peerless
Transportation
Peter Pointer, Dir. Production Manufacture
Aeronautical Systems Division, WPAFB
James Slager, Architect
Rev. William C. Schramm, Senior Pastor
Rev. Thomas C. Davies, Associate Pastor
Galen Friesenborg, Business Administrator
of the Church
Judge Irvin H. Harlamert, Chairman

Harlamert approached the City first informally and then formally regarding the negotiation of a lease by Westminster from the City for a period of 5 years at a rent of \$1585 per month on condition that:

- (a) Westminster demolish the Greyhound building
- (b) Westminster would fill in the basement area and grade the lot
- (c) Westminster would blacktop the parking lot
- (d) Westminster would provide parking blocks and striping
- (e) Westminster would reserve a green space 10' feet wide along Wilkinson Street and plant trees and ground cover

The Lease was signed with the City on the 1st day of June, 1977. After all conditions were met, the parking lot opened in 1977.



The Parking Operation

The Parking Committee set out to find an operator, and after interviewing several parking operators, settled on Ray Kuhn who also operated a lot on West Second Street. Since then Kuhn has operated the parking lot from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Westminster patrons, both religious and non-religious users, have access to the parking lot during all evenings after 6 p.m. and all day on Saturday and Sunday. In addition, Westminster patrons can use the lot during Kuhn's hours with Westminster paying Kuhn for the patrons' parking fees. In addition, Westminster has parking spaces at all times for the vehicles of church staff members and the two Westminster buses without additional cost to the church. This arrangement has worked well from 1970 to the present.

The Purchase

In 1979 William T. Huffman, approaching age 90, whose family belonged to and substantially supported Westminster for many generations, approached Sr. Pastor William Schram about his plans for a bequest to Westminster. He indicated that he would make a substantial gift to Westminster during his lifetime rather than making it available at his death. He and Schram agreed that the money would best be used to acquire the parking facility from the City of Dayton. It was appraised, advertised for public sale according to law, and purchased by Westminster for \$574,378 in November, 1979. From a purely financial standpoint the church might have done better by investing the money at the high rates of interests during the 1980's or into large appreciation in the stock market increases of the 1990's. But the Church decided it was more important to carry out its mission to provide adequate parking for its religious and non-religious patron use perpetually.

Real Estate Tax

Montgomery County and the State of Ohio attempted to impose and collect real estate taxes on this one-half city block now owned by Westminster. The rate currently would be approximately \$12,000.00 per year. The issue was appealed from the Montgomery County Auditor to the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals in Columbus. Attorneys Harlamert and Kathryn Lamme with the testimony of witnesses Dr. William Schram and business manager Jeff Butterworth convinced the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals that Westminster was both a religious and non-religious charitable organization and on that basis no real estate taxes were found to be due.

And expansion of the Word and Spirit fulfills our responsibility to do God's will on earth.

Chapter 5

Preaching



PREACHING THE SAVING MESSAGE

By Jane Rininger with Ronald Price



Dispensing the Word

Preaching—Proclaiming the Word of God

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them....
Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:
and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

(Matthew 28:19–20)



Presbyterian pastors, ministers, and preachers are entrusted with proclaiming God's word, and we as a congregation respond to their thoughts and ideas. They are vital in helping us understand God, Christ, and His disciples, our reformers, our historic Presbyterian heritage, our world, and the Bible—the word of God—which is the foundation of our faith and church.

We need to know how our church began. Our Presbyterian Church is an historic church whose continuity is maintained through the Presbytery—elders from our congregations—who ordain ministers and give them the authority to conduct worship, to preach the Gospel, and administer Sacraments. Backing the authority of the Presbytery is 2000 years of Christian history.

The story of the Christian church begins with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior—our first minister—who proclaimed God's word. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea about 4 B.C. He preached that men should turn to God and gathered about him twelve disciples. He offended the chief priests and rulers who sought his death. He was betrayed and crucified. He arose from the dead and commanded his Disciples to go into the world and preach his Gospel, and that he would be with them.

The Church of Christ spread throughout the Roman Empire. For 400 years Christianity triumphed because the Christians had faith, had a personal Lord and living Savior, and had moral character. The Bishop of Rome claimed sole authority and

power in the Christian Church but was never accepted by all Christians. Immorality, corruption, greed, and violence occurred. Thus the need for reformation came.

In the 16th century the German reformer, Martin Luther taught that the authority of the Bible, God's Holy Word, and not the Pope was the guide for the Christian faith and that every man in his vocation and calling is God's minister. He emphasized the conscience of the individual and that we are saved not by our deeds, but by faith in Jesus as our Savior. At the same time, a French reformer, John Calvin, was called to Geneva to take charge of the Reformation of Church and state. Because of his study of the New Testament, he established a representative system of government: the church was ruled by representatives of the people called Presbuteroi—or Elders. Calvin emphasized education, music, and order of worship and stressed the virtues of honesty, reverence, chastity, thrift, and industry. John Knox of Scotland came to Geneva, accepted the principles of the reformation, and brought the influence of John Calvin and Presbyterianism to establish the Church of Scotland. English followers of John Knox helped reform the Church of England through the Westminster Assembly which drew up the Westminster Confession of Faith. Due to the strongly established monarchy, the representative form of governance did not succeed in England.

In the 17th century persecution of the English Puritans and Scotch Presbyterians stimulated

immigration to America's Atlantic coast. In 1680 Maryland Presbyterian asked a presbytery in Ireland to send a minister, Francis Mackemie, who organized Presbyterian churches in America for 24 years and preached for religious freedom. In 1706 seven ministers united in Philadelphia to form the first Presbytery. The Westminster Confession of Faith became the doctrinal standard of the Presbyterian Church in America.

One of the first requirements of the Presbyterians in America was an educated ministry. In 1718 a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister, William Tennent, arrived in America, and opened a "Log College" to train men who needed an education for the ministry. When he died, a group of young ministers obtained a charter, funds, and land to

establish in 1755 the college of New Jersey, later Princeton University. In 1768 John Witherspoon became the President of Princeton. He was a Scotsman, scholar, Calvinist, and orator with a strong personality who vigorously trained young men of the nation's service. He was a leader in American politics, a representative to the Continental Congress, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. When American independence was established, Presbyterians stood for separation of church and state.

Christ, His Disciples, our reformers, and ministers—all have proclaimed God's word. Our heritage of these men has helped form our Presbyterian church and given us a strong, vital faith and foundation.

EARLY PREACHERS

*I*n the Westminster Church histories and publication, we learned of our church's beginnings in a log cabin, in the First Church, and Third Street Church. Their remarkable, diverse ministers endured challenges and hardships in developing congregations and building the church physical structure. In 1799 the First Church, under the care of the Washington Presbytery, Synod of Kentucky, was organized by William Robinson, and in 1800 a small log cabin was built by ten Presbyterians. After moving to the Newcom Tavern courthouse and before moving to the new brick court house, the congregation called its first minister, Dr. James Welch (1804–1817) who was a pastor and a local physician. He was a "man of merit and showed clear and logical reasoning in an impressive manner." Dr. Welch ministered to the congregation and sought a new building for the growing congregation.

Challenges and controversy occurred, but faith, perseverance, and good words prevailed. The First Church became the first regularly-organized church in Dayton and third organized in the state. From 1818 to 1849, the congregation grew, built, and worshiped in several church buildings and had eight ministers.

Dr. Phineas D. Gurley (1849–1854) was called and ministered with zeal and success. The congregation developed deep affection and devotion to him, and the church prospered. In 1854 he received a

pleading letter from First Church, now New York Avenue Church in Washington, D.C. In an inspired, difficult letter of resignation, Dr. Gurley knew he must go to be of service and that the "good shepherd would always be with First Church [Dayton]." He spoke in a sermon—"Trust in



Rev. Thomas E. Thomas

Him, Cleave to Him..., and He will comfort your hearts and supply your need." He became the chaplain of the United State Senate, the pastor of Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, and moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly.

A unanimous call was given to Rev. Thomas E. Thomas (1858–1871), a widely-known teacher, Bible scholar, past president of Hanover College, and anti-slavery minister. He wrote, "Let us learn the rights of man from Him who gave to man both his rights and his existence." He was held in admiration, reverence, and love by his congregation and after 13 years was called to be President of Lane Seminary in Cincinnati. In her manuscript "Civil War and Reunion" Virginia F. Rainey characterized Dr. Thomas's arrival as a "prestigious coup" for the congregation. She further cited Clarke McDermont's *A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio, from 1845 to 1880* which described Thomas as "a citizen [who] had always taken a deep interest in public affairs, and while he was regarded far and wide as the fearless and uncompromising champion of human liberty." Charlotte Conover in *Some Dayton Saints and Prophets* wrote "...what held me, in spite of myself, was his marvelous facility of language, the sweep of his sentences, his oratorical vigor and passionate conviction....I should have known Dr. Thomas's preaching to be a product of three things: first—his invincible faith; second—his Biblical knowledge; and third—his indomitable will." Thomas vehemently opposed slavery and preached so in the pulpit. Conover wrote, "Some people said Dr. Thomas should keep away from politics, and preach only the gospel. When he preached against slavery, Dr. Thomas thought he was preaching the gospel."

After several ministers, Rev. Maurice E. Wilson (1890–1919) began his pastorate in which the membership grew. In his sermon, *25 Years in a Dayton Pulpit*, he viewed his ministry as a joint work of the pastor and his people under the guidance and blessing

of God. He wrote "...the inner aspiration and struggle by which souls have been born, and the delightful friendship and fellowship we have mutually enjoyed; much less could we catalogue the manifold blessings and goodness of our God. These things can no more be tabulated than we can count the stars or compute the numbers of the sun's golden beams. The story of the human heart can never be written, and these inner experiences and treasures of our history are too subtle to be caught and registered." The congregation was proud of his leadership and fidelity, and accepted his resignation after 29 years of service.

In 1909 the merger of First and Third Street Church was considered and realized in March 19, 1919. The congregation thought they could do greater work and would erect a new church to accomplish more for God. The name Westminster was chosen because the name had been so closely associated with the 250 years history of the Presbyterian Church. Rev. E.W. Clippinger (1917–1922), pastor of Third Street Church, was released so he could head the new church. Under his ministry and guidance membership grew to almost 1500 members and the Westminster Choir emerged. In his sermon he said, "If we would come before God this day in a new dedication of ourselves to Him; if we would pledge anew to Him our service, this would be a new day indeed for our church and for ourselves."

Westminster began and continues....



Rev. E.W. Clippinger

Ministers of First Presbyterian Church Founded 1799

James Welch	1804 to 1817
Backus Wilbur.....	1817 to 1818
Ahab Jenks.....	1820 to 1821
William Graham.....	1823 to 1826
John L. Belville.....	1826 to 1827
Franklin Putnam	1828 to 1836
James C. Barnes	1836 to 1845
Wm. C. Anderson.....	1846 to 1849
Phineas D. Gurley.....	1849 to 1854
James H. Brooks	1854 to 1858
Thomas E. Thomas	1858 to 1871
John McVey.....	1872 to 1874
Leigh Richmond Smith.....	1876 to 1880
Prentiss de Veuve.....	1881 to 1889
Maurice E. Wilson	1890 to 1919

Ministers of Third Street Presbyterian Church Founded 1838

Randolph Stone.....	1839 to 1840
J.W. Hall	1841 to 1852
G.P. Tyndal.....	1853 to 1857
S.G. Spees.....	1859 to 1865
Rollin A. Sawyer	1865 to 1872
J.H. Montgomery	1872 to 1889
A.A. Willetts	1890 to 1894
Edgar W. Work	1895 to 1902
Merle H. Anderson	1903 to 1908
C.A. Campbell	1909 to 1917
Edward W. Clippinger.....	1917 to 1919

Ministers of Westminster Presbyterian Church Merging of First and Third Street Churches

Edward Warren Clippinger.....	1919 to 1922
Hugh Ivan Evans	1923 to 1955
W. James Westhafer	1949 to 1962
Joseph Lehigh Jensen, Jr.	1954 to 1962
Frederick Bruce Speakman.....	1963 to 1972
William C. Shram.....	1974 to 1987
Robert L. Lowry	1988 to 1990
George H. McConnel	1993 to present

Associate Ministers of Westminster Presbyterian Church

Charles T. Campbell.....	1928 to 1930
Reuben Pieters	1934 to 1936
Byron D. Hughes.....	1936 to 1943
Arthur M. Romig	1942 to 1944
Carroll Kitts.....	1943 to 1944
S. Turner Ritenour.....	1944 to 1949
Eli M. Mowry.....	1946 to 1951
Charles Leslie Plymate.....	1947 to 1951
Russell Lowell Jaberg	1951 to 1954
William W. Harvey	1956 to 1959
Donald W. Wick.....	1961 to 1969
Gary G. Pinder.....	1964 to 1968
Thomas C. Davies.....	1967 to 1979
George F. Hupp, Jr.....	1969 to 1974
Mary M. Wills.....	1975 to 1976
Richard E. Otty.....	1978 to 1983
Richard A. Hasler	1980 to 1982
John W. Neely, Jr.	1982 to present
Barbara A. Anderson	1983 to 1990
Mark K. Smutny	1983 to 1990
Miriam Lawrence Leupold.....	1994 to present
Glenn D. Leupold	1994 to present
Kay Davis-Dudding.....	1998 to present
Nancy S. Hodgkins.....	1998 to present

II. MINISTERS OF WESTMINSTER (1919-1990)

*W*estminster Presbyterian Church has been blessed with remarkable, outstanding pastors who have inspired, guided, educated, and helped their congregations. When Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans (1923-1955) was called, his wisdom was to unite in spirit and fact the First and Third Street Churches into Westminster Church, to build a new church building, to keep the church together while there was no church building, and to create a strong, honored, respected church in the community and the nation. These tasks were accomplished. A Gothic building was erected in 1926, and the church membership grew to be the largest Presbyterian Church in Ohio. Dr. Evans was elected moderator of the General Assembly, President of the Board of Missions, and later, Director of the Foundation of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—a remarkable career of serving 29 years at Westminster and 40 years totally in Ohio. In his sermon—"What the Years Have Taught Me," Dr. Evans stated four major ideas—there is a Guiding Hand, The Christian life must be affirma-

tive, people are greater than they know, and take a long view of life. Before Dr. Evans' resignation, the collegiate pastors, Rev. James Westhafer and Rev. Joseph Jensen had been called for the growing pastoral responsibilities. They continued as co-pastors. Both men were capable, dynamic leaders, sharing responsibilities and making the co-pastorate successful for seven years. In a sermon "Belonging," written on a return visit, Dr. Westhafer wrote "As one who went away, let me tell you, you never leave Westminster. If we leave, we leave a part of our heart here. We belong together and to the child of Bethlehem, and now we are joined in this season of memory and reunion with a great cloud of witnesses. We belong, and may God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing in our struggle to be faithful to Him here and now. Amen. God bless...."



Rev. James Westhafer
Rev. Joseph Jensen



Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans

In 1962 the co-ministers and the Session decided that it was time for a single pastorate. The nominating committee looked for an authoritative decision-maker and an eloquent preacher which they found in Dr. Frederick Bruce Speakman (1963-1972) who gave sermons in a first-person style and was named National Church Preacher of the Year. Also an accomplished author, Dr. Speakman wrote *Love Is Something You Do*, *Salty Tang*, and *God and Jack Wilson*. Dr. E.G. Homrighausen, Princeton Theological Seminary, wrote: "preaching is a person's witness to the power of the Gospel in the preacher's life, and it is witness with a view to persuading others to give that Gospel attention and acceptance...it is grace and the truth of God come to mankind and to persons in and through Jesus Christ."

It would be unthinkable not to include a sermon by Fred Speakman published in one of his fine collections *The Salty Tang: Messages for Today*. Dr. Speakman was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Oklahoma and earned degrees from Harvard and Princeton Theological Seminary. In the Introduction, his teacher E.G. Homrighausen praised his "messages that penetrate to the very

heart of man's need and give answers to many questions that trouble his mind and disturb his soul.... Not that Dr. Speakman is a mere phrase-maker, nor a spellbinder toying with words. His subject matter ranges at large through Gospel and story, each message culminating in a moral or truth so clearly enunciated as to compel the doubter to believe and the wayward to acknowledge his failure."

A God for Pedestrian Hours

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;
they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

ISAIAH 40:30, 31

We would never have written it that way. Not in that order. Here a man is distilled into one glorious refrain what the power and truth of the living God can do; in the lives of men. Through this immortal chapter he has sung of God's strength and how available it is for those who will take God seriously. And his conclusion here is one of the pinnacle pledges of all Scripture. Life wears anyone down, he insists. Even if you are now boasting in the unhampered strength of untired youth, this is certain, that in time you shall be wearied, shall fail. But they who come to constant grips with this God of life, they will know renewal. They will be enabled again to soar as eagles, to run unwearied, to walk and not faint. But we would not have written it that way. Not in that order. In our customary view Isaiah's song there falls away to anti-climax. To be able to plod along at a walk without fainting that is hardly an exciting, challenging ultimate result of faith! Talk to us only of the flights and sprints of life for which religion can empower us. We are a little disappointed when at its climax this heroic anthem slows itself down to a walk. And if that is our reaction as we look at faith and life we are simply being very human and ever so wrong.

Very human, because *you and I always are inclined to save religion for life's crises*. We tend to keep faith like an old-fashioned parlor that is to be opened and dusted only for life's great hours, the



Dr. Frederick B. Speakman

so-called red-letter days. Have you noticed how many nominal Christians, name-on-the-book, pledge-on-the-ledger Christians, have the *stated-occasion complex* so far as the church is concerned. They are determined the church shall marry them, baptize their children, and minister to their sorrow. But aside from those stated occasions they would look at you in mild surprise and ask, "What else is a church for?" But you and I can't point, because we follow the same pattern on a different level. We are apt to preserve the practices and benedictions of belief for the big hours. When we are in trouble, when we are ill, when we have met with unusually good fortune or singularly bad fortune, when we are remarkably blessed or frankly frightened, when the heart within us is racing for better or for worse, and life demands that we mount up with wings as eagles or run and not be weary, then we want God in on it. For though we may not say it, we have a way of concluding that *religion concerns only the unusual in life*.

*H*ave you noticed in how many plays and novels, when the plot reaches a crisis, the storm is raging beyond control, the moment is tense beyond relief, some character in the story announces that things are desperate and that they had better pray. That is the pattern. There is that moment in "King Lear," when Lear, in his last illness, begins to talk about God and the nurse comforts him by saying that surely there is no need to talk about such desperate things as religion just yet. That is the pattern. How often have I heard quoted with approval the words of Lincoln, "I have been brought to my knees often before God simply because things were so bad there was no other place to go." That is the pattern. I believe it is Willard Sperry who conjectured that if a directors' meeting were to open with prayer, word would be on the street before the amen that the corporation was surely on the rocks. Before using it let your heart shake well the belief, that God is for crises and emergencies only; that prayer is a neon-marked emergency exit, that the practice of the Presence of God is meant only to undergird moments of stress. That is ever so common and ever so human, and ever so wrong!

It is wrong because we don't live in crises only. We don't exist for emergencies only. Count the hours of your life and see. So small a portion of your time is spent in soaring flights, in breathless sprints. Mostly we walk. Most of our days we follow the schedule called routine, the daily round, the common way. Most of our days we get up at the same hour in the same reluctant way, to eat the same breakfast in the same sullen silence, before we take the same route to the same building to greet the same people and cope with the same duties we faced yesterday. Or there is the routine of the home. Or there is the schedule of school. Most of our living steps are taken along the well-trod paths of these old familiars. And the very arithmetic of it should point out a large truth too, too often ignored. The conquest of life is won or lost, not so much in its thrilling flights, not so much at a headlong dash, but at a walk. And we need a God to nerve us for occasional sprints of effort. Of course we do. Else we shall breast no tape and have for our racing only the gasping weariness and aching sides some moderns still call the pursuit of happiness. We need a God who will match our flights of emotion. Of course, else their issue is only a crash landing. *But most of all we need a God for the Pedestrian Hours*, a Companion in routine, a strength for trusting, truths for the common way. Life is won or lost at a walk. Isaiah was so right to save this best for

last. They that wait upon this God I am describing will find Him equal to all emergencies. With this ultimate grace of faith they will be able to walk and not faint.

Have we found it? We must find it if there is to be any poetry in living and not just a pointless reading of dull prose. Let us not try to romanticize the nagging monotony of some routine. A friend I have talked to on the subject insists with heat that no amount of Christianity can make the chore of dishwashing other than it is. And a snatch of a jingle runs through my memory:

It's not the jumping hurdles that hurts the horses' feet,
But the hammer, hammer, hammer, on the hard highways.

That is the very danger to notice. The constant sniping of Pedestrian Hours can wear away life's values unless Christianity has some earnest things to say to these common hours too. In one of Benét's radio dramas a maidservant cries, "Life is not lost by dying. Life is lost minute by minute, day by dragging day, in all our thousand uncaring ways." And so it is so often.

We preachers have a careless habit of painting wages of sin in lurid, dramatic colors. And we highlight those moments when temptation explodes around a man and in one burst of anger or lust or avarice he destroys himself. But, as a matter of brutal fact, the most traveled roads to hell are undramatic, gentle slopes. Through years, and without our noticing, little personal resentments grow into hardened habits of hatred. Daily unimportant pamperings of our senses grow unnoticed into large and restless appetites for wrong. The slender twine of self-seeking we wrap around ourselves each day, here a little, there a little, never much, but just enough so that some day we awake, like Gulliver, bound, shackled, helpless in the selfishness which is the truest death, finally holds us powerless. No, with our habit of summing up life in news flashes and the drama of world crises, we must remember that the *greater tragedies are written in Pedestrian Hours*. Vachel Lindsay had reason to claim the world's worst crime is that "its babes grow dull, its poor oxlike, limp, and leaden eyed."

Not that they starve, but that they starve so dreamlessly.

Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap.

Not that they serve, but that they have no gods to serve.

Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

But have we found it, and used it—the wayfarer's wealth, the pilgrim's peace, the marcher's renewal? Have we learned that Christ was certain He could infuse into the common days power for the day's work, wisdom for performing the same old task, increasing light on the familiar paths? Remember, only to that degree in which we find the grace of faith will the world believe it can be found. Carlyle was right: the world's first question to the Christian Church in any age is the blunt query, "Can you teach us or not?" We keep calling conferences of churchmen and polishing organizational techniques and exploring what the Church has to say to today's crises.

And, of course, that we must do. If ever Christianity has had an hour in which to witness the real power of this faith blazing its way through darkness, this hope outreaching despair, this love outmaneuvering hatred, it is now. It is a time for religion to soar and sprint. And yet if

Christianity is going to do much for tomorrow it will give to the drama a gentler, quieter triumph that will never rate the headlines—*the bringing of God into the world's Pedestrian Hours*. For the life mankind has lost at a walk must be rewon at a walk.

Look, tomorrow is Monday. The chances are that on your calendar it is just another day. But can't you seize some moment before the open window of tomorrow morning to pledge to yourself as much as in you lies, that God shall approve of this day! The task ahead of you will have a certain tame sameness to it. Can't you at least begin by determining that whatever there is to do you will do well—do well in the service of the Master Builder who has decreed work shall be done well, even dirty work in a dirty world? And as the round of it begins, can't you carve from it some fleeting moments for conscious praise, for friends if you see them, for health if you have it, for all the unmerited beauty of life if you happen to glance its way? And can't you now and then, if ever so quickly, test the old familiars you will meet, test them by the stars? When the snags and jolts turn up, as they will tomorrow, can't you practice seeing them against the backdrop of all the wonder and truth and therapy of the love that is ours, even in a cold and cruel world? And the people you deal with in so casual a way, friendly by habit, or aloof by habit, can you take a Christ's-eye view of them? Here are people as great and as petty as you are. And all of them God's and so few of them knowing it. And all of them with salt on their tongues, thirsting deeply for eternal love, eternal meaning, and eternal cleanness. And only by the bridge of sympathy can you ever really know them. And then, when the day has gone, can't you have a time of real accounting—the two of you, you and this God who leans over your shoulder? Skim off whatever has floated to the top of your heart, the day's worries and tensions and, defeats, and ask Him to be true to His word and rid you of them, and release you to be carried on His tides of renewing sleep, ultimately certain that because He is God and concerned for you tomorrow will be better. In a celebrated passage Arthur Gossip tells how he noticed in the Hebrides that you never get away from the sea. Inland it thrusts arms at you, at every turn you see its grayness or glitter; the tang and the roaring of its breakers come to nostril and ear. The ocean has soaked into the people's very soul, so that even in their music one can hear the sobbing and the cluck and the gurgling ripple of great waters. Christians, the common day can so be permeated with the scents and sounds and mysteries of a God who walks beside us. To let Him walk with us during *our Pedestrian Hours*, there is the victory. Destination, eternity—at a walk.

Anyone who ever witnessed Fred Speakman in the pulpit could never forget his crooked saunter down that long center aisle, the harbinger of the inspired word and dramatic eloquence.

When Dr. Speakman returned to his former church in Pittsburgh, the pastoral search committee wanted a senior pastor who would be talented in all areas of ministry. In Dr. William Schram they found a strong administrator, a caring pastor for the congregation and community, and an outstanding teacher in the Presbytery. The following is a pastoral charge written by Dr. Schram for a friend who was becoming a pastor in Long Island, New York. Schram's special insight and wisdom is shown in his advice—and in his understanding of being a minister:

"Your first test as a minister is to be a Pastor. As a shepherd you will:

A Tend Your People.

They will share with you their problems and difficulties. You will grieve with them and rejoice with them. You will be a friend. You may not understand them all, but as a friend, you will love them all.

B You will feed your people.

Through the Sacraments you will lead your people into the unutterable mystery of the presence of Christ, where they become one with Him, and He will be part of your pastoral work, not an end in itself. You will cherish the privilege of leading their thoughts and guiding them on a closer walk with God.

C You will guide your people.

...they will see in you an attitude toward life in terms of God and the power to live as a child in terms of personal humility, forgiveness, and concern for the whole of mankind, is the only creative basis for life.

D Obviously you cannot do all this alone.

In the grace and power of God, Enter into this ministry, and find here in the service Of Christ the joy and the wonder of doing His will.

May God bless you in His work, and through you, His people. Amen.



Dr. William Schram



Dr. Robert Lowry

For his years of service, the Session with blessing and love of the Westminster congregation, designated Dr. Schram, Pastor Emeritus. In his last sermon at Westminster, Dr. Schram wrote: "This church will grow and its blessings will increase, for through it flows an eternal spirit binding us always to each other and to God and compelling us, as we are faithful, to venture the way of the cross until we receive the crown." After a year of church mission evaluation, the pastor nominating committee presented Dr. Robert Lowry, who served the church for two years. His resignation prompted another

self-study and mission statement culminating in the calling of George "Sandy" McConnel, selected to lead us into the new millennium with a new world filled with many challenges to confront a downtown church seeking to continue its important mission for the community. His vision and promises comprise a vital part in the last chapter of this book speculating Westminster's status for a tercentennial celebration in 2099.

This church has been richly blessed with outstanding preachers. When the senior pastor is not in the pulpit, associates step in to deliver inspired messages of the Gospel. Such is the case of Kay Davis-Dudding whose focus is pastoral care, but is equally effective in preaching the word.

Belief and Unbelief

John 20:19–29 April 7, 2002

by Kay Davis-Dudding

*S*andy has been gone for a week now, and though we on staff miss his smiling face, his long staff meetings — “not,” his inner office e-mails which begin, “Friends” and then proceed to inform us of the next project in store for us — we certainly do miss his presence among us.

While he is away, the plan is for each of us to preach a little more often. John’s arm has been twisted to preach one Sunday, and there will be some guest pastors — people formerly associated with Westminster in one way or another. You will have to speculate who those folks might be.

Today, I welcome to this pulpit, a very distinguished guest preacher, one of the original witnesses to the resurrection. I welcome him, by way of a letter to us. I am thinking that in telling his story, we might sense a new appreciation of the resurrection event.

Our guest preacher’s name is Thomas, Doubting Thomas. Tradition tells us that before becoming one of the original 12 disciples, he was, like Jesus, a carpenter. However, what most folks know about him, is of his questioning mind, and I sort of think people like that in him. Perhaps we, have some of the same questions that Thomas had. But, let’s let him tell his own story. My friends — from the hand of the apostle Thomas.

Brothers and sisters at Westminster, I greet you as a fellow disciple of our Lord and as I could not be with you in person this morning, I am glad to address you through this letter. I do need to have you get something straight about me right off the bat. You need to know that before “it” happened I was not totally a “Doubting Thomas.” And after “it” happened, I wasn’t totally a “Believing Thomas.”

I am basically a plain man, but am big on getting the facts. In fact, facts are about the only thing that impress me. I hadn’t been what you would call a religious person; in fact I hardly even frequented the local synagogue. That’s why it’s still hard to believe I did what I did. Me, Thomas leaving the good business I had going, and following an itinerant preacher. If you would have asked me back then, I would have told you that religion was wishful thinking, something someone cooked up to make the *real* world seem more palatable. The Pharisees were, to my way of thinking, a bunch of phonies with their pious talk about a good and righteous God. They may have been sincere, but to be honest, they made me sick. That wasn’t what I saw.

Though my neighbors would have probably told you I was pretty much a loner, and a pretty tough customer, what they didn’t know, was why I was that way. To be honest, it was the only way I could be, the only way I could protect myself. Believe it or not, I cared about the world, I cared about it a lot more than most people, but all I ever saw was disease, hunger and poverty. And there was the lousy way people treated each other — everywhere — in business, at home, why even in the synagogue. Kindness and honor, love and decency? They were rarely to be found. Mostly what I saw wasn’t good; it wasn’t good at all. And on top of all of this was death. That is what I saw.

I hope you are beginning to understand why I never had much to do with religion. It wasn’t

just that I found it difficult to believe something I couldn't see, the big thing was that I couldn't accept the God they talked about either—somewhere up in the heavens, sitting on a throne, lording it over everyone. And here WE were, you know? I couldn't understand when there was such trouble, why God didn't DO anything! Didn't God care about what we were going through? Frankly, I didn't care to have anything much to do with a God like that.

And then, Jesus came along, and to everyone's surprise, most of all to yours truly; I joined up with him. After what I've told you about me, you will probably find it hard to understand this. But the big reason I liked him was because he was so very real, a real, honest-to-goodness person, you know what I mean? Many people thought he was some kind of Polly Anna. But that couldn't have been further from the truth. Jesus of Nazareth knew about misery, he knew about all the evil in the world, and yet, he still had hope. Said he had good news for the world. And when he looked at you, you knew he knew the worst there was to know about you, but at the same time, you felt as if he saw something else in your life, something that was wonderful and good. And as strange as it seems, he was particularly drawn to people who were having some sort of problem, some sort of stress in their life.

I couldn't figure him out. He spoke about a God who was as close to me as I am to myself, but I just didn't get it, no I just didn't get it. Maybe that's what drew me to him, why I followed him, so I could get to the bottom of it. And then it happened. I wasn't a curious observer any more. I wanted very much to be like him, to understand how he could see this rotten world as I did, and still believe in its future. I felt as if I were catching a glimpse.

But then, one awful thing after another started to happen to him. Instead of being interested in listening to him; people wanted to use him and when they got what they wanted—a healing, a good show, they left. And when they didn't get what they wanted, they got really ugly. Opposition started building, and soon everybody who was anybody, was against him! I kept thinking, "Thomas, you'd better get out while you can. You know what the world does to people like him." But I didn't listen to myself; I stayed, reasoning that if the world was going to reject him, then, to be honest, I didn't want to be around either.

Peter and the others were, at first, optimists. They wouldn't face the facts. All they could see following the demonstration at the gate of Jerusalem—you call it Palm Sunday—was sending their hopes sky high. They had started to divide the spoils, to see who got which office in God's kingdom. But Jesus and I knew differently. He was coming on to some big trouble before this thing was over.

Was I ever right! Things got worse than I would have ever imagined. So, like the rest, I ran away at the last minute and let him walk right into the worst the world could dish up. I'd learned my lesson. I'd had it with his love and kindness and decency. It was back to the carpenter shop for me.

The rest of the disciples chose Monday morning quarterbacking, going over and over the week, attempting to figure out how things could have gone so wrong, and trying to rationalize why they'd left as they did. But that wasn't me, I just kept to myself. I wanted to be alone with my grief and my anger, so, I wasn't around when he first appeared. Actually, I was just coming

back to get my things and leave for good. That's when I found the ten of them, jabbering away about it. I thought they lost their minds. Why, even if Jesus should be raised from the dead, a ridiculous idea in the first place, why he'd want to come back to people like us, people who'd turned our backs on him, and back to a world which had rejected him so horribly and hung him on a cross—it was more than I could see, more than I could understand. I mean, why?

I told them I'd have to see it to believe it. I'd have to see the print of the nails, place my finger in the mark of the nails, and my hand in his side. I wasn't about to let those guys do it again, to push another religious dream off on the world. That would be the last thing people needed.

But then, he appeared, appeared to me. You know how some accounts speak of how different and dazzling and out of this world he was? Maybe that was true at some particular place and time, but the thing that hit me the hardest was that this was the very same Jesus I'd known. Just a look at him made this clear. It was the same Jesus, but it was as if I'd never really seen him before. And it was at that moment, that I understood the source of his mysterious hope for this messed up world. At that very moment, I saw what he had been seeing all along. At that moment, I saw God! Not a God up there, far away and safe, but a God who is down here, with us, a God who cares so very much, that God identifies with the people—in all their messing up, and in all their suffering. A God who hurts, because we hurt, who cries when we cry. For the first time in my life, I saw a God whom Thomas could worship, and serve, with all his heart—a God with wounds.

It's a funny thing. Every time I see someone suffer now, every time something so very awful happens in the world, I have the strongest sensation that we aren't alone in our anguish. I get the strongest feeling that this God whom Jesus showed me is there, suffering too. And in spite of myself, I, doubting, pessimistic Thomas, I begin to trust, to trust that things will turn out all right, and that nothing, in all creation can separate any of us from God's love.

Oh, I still have my doubts sometimes, but it's a funny thing. The suffering and inhumanity that used to drive me deeper into pessimism, no longer does. I get the feeling that this God whom Jesus showed me, is there suffering too. I can believe in a God with wounds. What about you?

Peace to all of you who are in Christ,
Thomas



Bicentennial Sunday October 24, 1999
Bob Veon, Joe Jensen, Sandy McConnel,
Doris Hill, Roy Osborn, Judith Barr,
Bob Lowry, Rick Otty, Bill Schram

Sandy McConnel, the senior pastor and head of staff, whose primary responsibility is preaching, brings a unique style of his own usually punctuated

with a challenging question at the conclusion which stimulates both the mind and soul.

The Next 200 Years—What Does the Lord Require?

by The Reverend Dr. George H. McConnel

January 9, 2000

Micah 6:1–8

*W*e are two churches. We are the guests of those who have gone before, but we are also the hosts of those who will come after us. In the last four months, as we celebrated our 200th birthday, we held up the past, honored our history, gave recognition to the contributions of those who came after us. This month we begin our next 200 years and it is fitting that we should emphasize the future. We will do that in a number of ways between now and May Festival. One of them will be a series of four sermons on today's scripture passage.

As we make this transition from past to future—from being guests of those who came before to being hosts of those who will come after us—it is appropriate to stop and ask an important question. What does the Lord require of us? What does God require of us now—in the present as we begin the rest of our life together? What is our part in this history of God's people who gather to worship in the middle of the City of Dayton?

To answer that question, I would turn our Bibles to that section of the Old Testament called the Prophets. A prophet is not a fortuneteller. Prophet means spokesman. The one whom in their unfathomable audacity the prophets claimed to speak for was Yahweh—the God of Sarah and Abraham, Isaac and Rebecca and Jacob and Leah, which of course is also the triune God of the Christian faith.

As one of our elders said accurately at our Session meeting this week, "When you look at the prophets, there isn't a wimp among them." Take Jeremiah, one day he showed a clay pot to a crowd of Judeans and told them it represented Judah. Then he smashed it to smithereens and told them that this was an expurgated version of what God had in mind to do to them (Jeremiah 19). He was right.

In a dream the Prophet Ezekiel ate a copy of the Bible, thumb index and all, to show how sweet as honey was the word of God (Ezekiel 3:1–3).

At the time of the Prophet Amos, the Israelites looked forward eagerly to the day when the Lord would finally come and deliver them from all their afflictions. Amos told them they had better start looking forward to something else because when the day came, the lord was going to settle a lot of people's hash all right, but the hash that would be settled first was Israel's. Quoting God, Amos went on to say, "Your musicals *J. C. Superstar*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Godspell* bore me just as stiff as your Billy Graham, and your encounter groups, and your Sunday services at the White House cause me no less abdominal discomfort than your dashboard virgins

and Bingo games. Justice is what I want, not California positive thinking, I want justice and I want righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (See Amos 5:21–24).

Well, Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern and the rumor is that Isaiah was sawed in half. It was not recorded how Amos got his.

Frederick Buechner says, "The prophets were drunk on God, and in the presence of their terrible tipsiness no one was ever comfortable." With a total lack of tact they roared out against phoniness and corruption wherever they found them. They were the terror of kings and priests. The prophet Nathan tells King David to his face that he is a crook and an adulterer (2 Samuel 12:1–15). The prophet Jeremiah goes straight to the Temple itself and says, "This the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the lord, the Temple of the Lord" (Jeremiah 7:4). It was like a prophet to say it three times just to make sure.

Most of the prophets went a little mad before they were through, if they weren't a little mad to begin with. Ezekiel kept seeing wheels with eyes. around the rims. John the Baptist ate bugs.

Like Robert Frost's, a prophet's quarrel with the world is deep down a lover's quarrel. If they didn't love the world, they probably wouldn't bother to tell it that We're going to hell. They just let it go. Their quarrel is God's quarrel, too.

Today and in the weeks ahead, the prophet we are most interested in is Micah—a contemporary of Isaiah, who regarded his mission as pointing out the sins of his people—especially the fatal sin of moral corruption. You've known people who are good at pointing out faults: "It was an excellent paper but you misspelled 'antiquity' on page 3—A-." "Well, the party was fun, but did you notice there weren't any clean towels in the bathroom." "Yes, I enjoyed the Bible study highly illuminating' good application, but there wasn't anyone my age there. I'm not sure I'll go back." Micah was kind of like that—someone who had an eye for the dark side—who saw the glass half-empty—rather than half-full. The kind of person who doesn't often get asked back to dinner the second time.

In fact, Micah was a lonely man. His standards too high, his stature too great, and his concern too intense for other men to share. Living on the highest peak, he had no company except God. But, there on the peak with God, he had some great insights. His main contribution was the short passage we read earlier—perhaps the most famous of all the prophetic writing:

"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:6–8).

It is obvious that Yahweh was not interested in sacrifices and burnt offerings. But, why are the sacrifices worthless or—to bring that question up to date—why is this church's endowment a temptation as well as a blessing? Why does even this very room with all its beauty and its memories, the *Te Deum* window itself, serve as curse as well as benefit? Because these things can give a false

sense of security. The love of them can become a substitute for a whole giving of oneself before God.

God has shown you what is good. God has shown you himself. It might have only been a glimpse or a shadow: the touch of a hand. But God has been there faithfully. God has revealed himself to us in the 200 year history of this congregation. Yahweh alone is good, ultimate, eternal. Heaven knows the prophet is right, we have not been satisfied elsewhere. We have sown and not reaped. We have put away and not saved. We have eaten and not been satisfied. We have tread grapes but not drunken wine. We have tread olives but not anointed ourselves with oil.

We will see in the weeks ahead that Micah's words are both an indictment and a directive. They are an indictment in that they point out our half hearted commitment to God. They are a directive in showing us where we can most easily find God and be pleasing to God. They are a directive by answering the question, "What does the Lord require of us?"

First, we are "to do justice" or as the NEB says we are "to act justly." Comfortable communities like Kettering and Vandalia and comfortable churches anywhere are good places to hide from the world's pain and inequities. Micah is saying that we can't truly worship God until there are proper social circumstances for all people.

"Justice is truth in action," said Disraeli. What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, and to love kindness.

The key word in this second directive is the Hebrew word "hesed" it is translated as "mercy" or "loving kindness" or "steadfast love" or "loyal love" or "constancy" or "loyalty." It describes the lifestyle of those who return to God—that is repent. We are to love that kind of lifestyle.

What does the Lord require of us? "To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God."

Our response to God's deity is humility.

"I used to think that God's gifts," wrote F. B. Meyer, "were on shelves one above the other and that the taller we grew in Christian character, the more easily we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other and that it is not a question of growing taller, but of stooping lower."

The prophet Jeremiah talks of humility this way: "Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord."

As we begin our 201st year as a church, what does the Lord require of us but to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

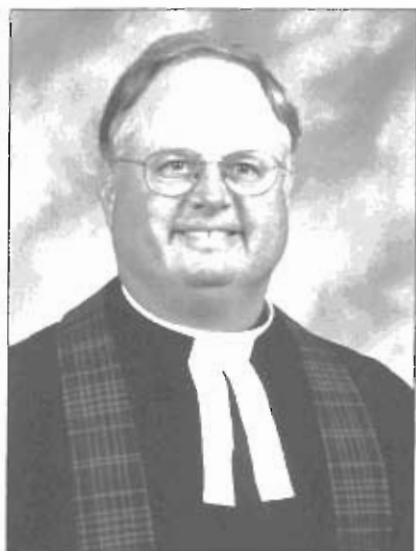
One of the prophets favorite images is clay. Just as the quality of clay will limit what the potter can do in her creation—so in the next 200 years will the quality of Westminster people limit what God will do. God waits on us.

Let us pray:

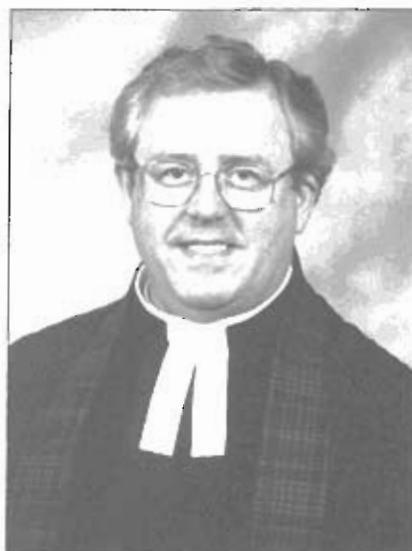
You have shown us what is good, O Lord. You have shown us yourself. You have given us your son. We have seen your justice, kindness, and faithfulness to us now—as we begin a new chapter in our journey —may we reflect it to others. Amen

Church memories take on many colors—some inspirational, some sentimental, some beautiful, some influential, some bizarre. Not the least of these stem from the clergy: a Civil War preacher who fought slavery, but advocated the subjugation of women; a pastor who threw dry ice in the canal at Old River during a church picnic and set the waters steaming; he also would walk up behind elderly inatrons at church dinners, grab their fork, and sample their food. Another who would regularly

sneak off to nap on a sofa in the West Parlor. An associate in sandals and monk's robe who first served a "contemporary" communion with real wine in a common chalice and a loaf of hard bread in the Social Hall—the pillars shook! Or the chalice lid that flew open, spilling grape juice all over the altar. Scores more known and unknown and maybe unmentionable. And what of it?! Nothing—just human qualities which made their preaching more effective and something to which we might relate.



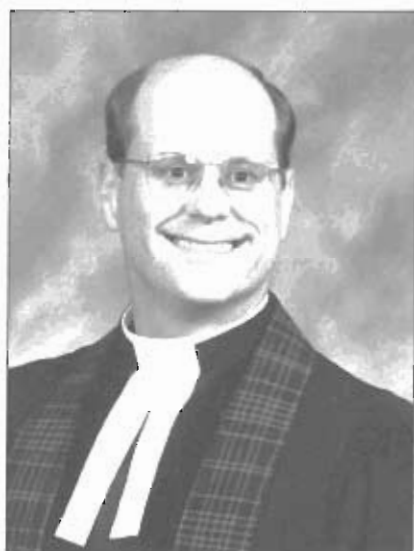
Dr. George H. McConnel



John W. Neely



Kay A. Davis-Dudding



Glenn D. Leupold



Miriam Lawrence Leupold



Nancy S. Hodgkins

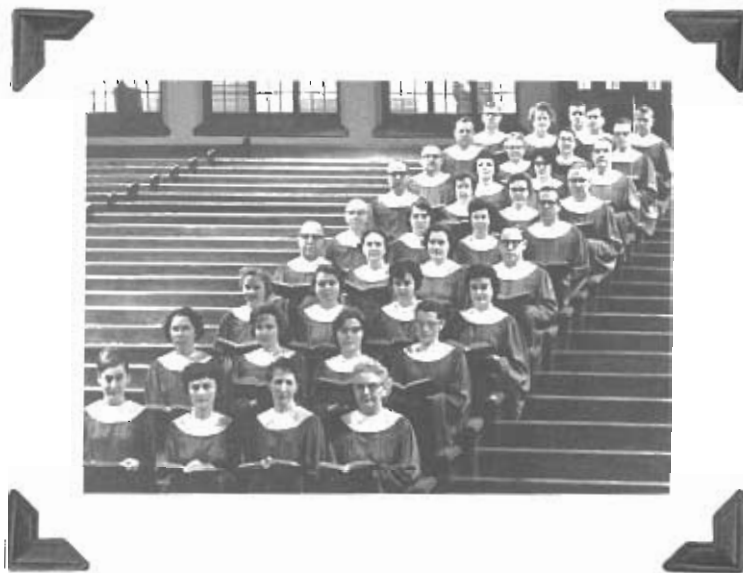
Chapter 6

Singing

and

SINGING THE GLORIOUS PSALMS

By Les & Esther Howard



Westminster Choir processed in quartets in the 1950's

*Praise the Lord with the lyre, make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!
Sing to him a new song, play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.*

Psalms 33:2-3



The history of music at Westminster Presbyterian Church is divided into two categories for the purpose of this discussion. This portion is concerned primarily with vocal or choir music.

Henry L. Brown's history mentions the existing differences of opinion about church music as late as the church's centennial year. He states: "In that early time, as well as in this centennial year, there were continued and annoying differences of opinion as to who and how many should constitute the choir, and from what position in the church the singing should be conducted. As some of the young and a few of the old were not content to have the precentor [a song leader who would read (line out) the words of a hymn a line or two at a time] lead the singing from under the pulpit, the decision on the place was submitted to the trustees in 1821. The trustees resolved:

'that the front seats in the middle block of pews in the gallery should be appointed for musicians, and that persons acquainted with the rules of singing have leave to occupy said seats.'"

For a time this change was satisfactory, but then the question of using a bass viol arose. The assistance of such an instrument was resisted, but soon it was permitted probationally. Beyond this, little can be found in church records on the use of instrumental accompaniment to singing in the church until the 1920's.

Prior to the early 1920's the Dayton Westminster Church had no organized choir. The first such choir was built by John Finley Williamson and made its debut in the Sunday morning church service on 24 February 1929. The anthems performed that day were "God is our Refuge" and "Rock of Ages." Prior

to that time the choir was composed primarily of Dayton singers who were interested in touring the United States, and possibly Europe, with Mr. Williamson. Mrs. M. E. Talbott, a philanthropist in Dayton, provided the necessary fund for the entire touring program which included several states in the U.S.A. and three trips to Europe.

In 1926 Mr. Williamson started a choir school at Westminster Church. The choir school soon outgrew the limited space the church

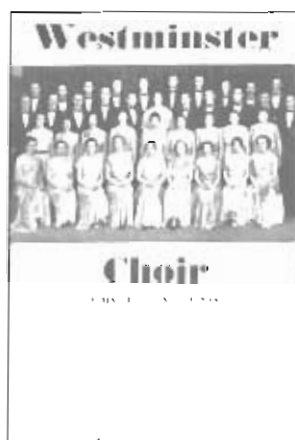


1921 Choir retreat

could provide, and the choir school was moved to the Ithaca, New York Conservatory in 1930. Accompanied by Mr. Williamson, the school later moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where it remains today at Rider College. Over the past sixty years the choir has gained world-wide acclaim and is much in demand for concerts throughout the world. During all of these years the choir at Princeton, New Jersey, has carried the name of Westminster Choir while the choir in Dayton, Ohio, is officially called the Dayton Westminster Choir.

Mr. Williamson was succeeded at Westminster Church by James Philip Johnston, who served until 1934 as Director of Music.

In September, 1934 Carlton McHenry (or "Mac" as he was called by most who knew him) took over the choir. Mr. McHenry had served as Assistant to John Finley Williamson for two years. He was a native of Danville, Pennsylvania, and a



Westminster Choir 1925

graduate of Lafayette College. He later took special training at Cornell, and early in his career he became a teacher. During his tenure as choir director, he was also a vocal teacher of considerable reputation in Dayton and surrounding communities. Many of his choir members became his students. Under his direction the choir attained a high degree of performance.

In 1941 the choir was invited to appear with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at the Cincinnati May Festival, but the Festival was cancelled because of the beginning of World War II. The choir appeared in concert in 1948 with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Paul Katz, founder and builder of that orchestra, in a performance of *The Ordering Of Moses*. That performance added to the reputation of the choir as a musical organization of outstanding calibre.

Upon Mr. McHenry's retirement, because of health problems, in October of 1954, Dr. Hugh Ivan



Les Howard, Elmer Kneisly, Don Vandenberg

Evans, Senior Pastor, named Don Vandenberg and Leslie Howard interim co-directors of the choir. At that time there were two identical Sunday morning services, one at 9 A.M. and one at 11 A.M. Mr. Howard directed the choir at the first service, and Mr. Vandenberg directed at the second service. Mr. Elmer Kneisly, organist during Mr. McHenry's years as director, remained in that position during this two year interim period.

In September, 1956, Mr. Robert M. Stofer became organist-choir director, the first such combination in the history of Westminster Church. Mr. Stofer had been organist-choir director at the Church of the Covenant in Cleveland for about ten years.

Mr. Stofer was a graduate of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, and Union Theological Seminary where he obtained his Master of Sacred Music Degree. He was studying at Columbia University when he was offered the position at Church of the Covenant. While serving in that position, he was also the chorus master for George Szell, director of the Cleveland Symphony. The chorus was a hundred voice all-male organization. Mr. Stofer did not complete his doctoral studies at Columbia before accepting the position at Church of the Covenant.

With the arrival of Mr. Stofer the music of Westminster took on an emotional flavor that reflected the great spiritual character of Mr. Stofer himself. Upon his arrival he began the establishment and development of the following children's choirs:

Cherub Choir—Grades K, 1, 2, 3

Calvin Choristers—Grades 4, 5, 6

Knox Singers—Grades 7 through 12

Bell Choir—Grades 7 through 12

These choirs performed on an average of about every seven weeks in a worship service and made a great contribution to the music program of Westminster Church, not only in the Sunday morning services, but in special Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter services, as well as other special services. Some of the children participated in *Amahl and the*



1961 choir rehearsal

Night Visitors, a presentation of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra at Memorial Hall. Mr. Stofer was loved by all the children in the several choirs and by their parents for arousing their children's interest in participating in the church services.

In 1958, two years after his arrival at Westminster, Mr. Stofer established the May Festival of Religious Arts. In the first festival the choir performed Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, with Donald Gramm, nationally known bass-baritone, as Elijah and John McCollum, tenor, who was recognized as one of the greatest oratorio tenors of his time. His remarkable voice was familiar to audiences worldwide. He sang the parts of Obadiah and Ahab. Lillian Chookasian, contralto, sang the parts of an angel and Jezebel. She had appeared with some of America's greatest conductors and had recently returned from doing the Beethoven Ninth Symphony with Louisville Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Stofer's last May Festival, *A Celebration through Music and Dance*, in 1976, featured Barbara Conrad, Mezzo-Soprano from The New York City Opera Company. The Dutch Club, now known as the Scottish Rite Choir, under the direction of Don Vandenberg, and the Wright State University Men's

Glee Club, directed by Paul Magill, joined the Westminster Church Choir in this May Festival.

After having brought the Westminster Church Choir to a stage of greatness recognized throughout the Mid-west and beyond, Mr. Stofer retired in June of 1976 following his last May Festival. He wrote to "My Westminster Choir Family" shortly after:

*'The time has come,' the Walrus said, 'to speak of...'
so very many things, rememberings and rejoicings,
fun and frolics, stress and strain, but most of all the
great joys and satisfaction we have had working together,
whether it has been twenty years, or just a few months.
Ours was a dedicated purpose: to make music to praise
and adore our risen Lord and Savior. What higher purpose
can one have? It is no small wonder that we were such a*

*happy family working together for such a high calling.
Our purpose set the tone for friendship beyond earthly
bounds. Concern and caring and sharing for each other
held high priority in our daily lives and this spirit made
your singing, more than singing.*

Undoubtedly, no ministry has had greater impact on the congregation and community than the music and example of individuals like Bob Stofer memorialized in the beautiful and eloquent tribute delivered by Bill Schram on March 19, 1978.

It is fitting and right to acknowledge both the artistry and spiritual strength of both Bob Stofer and Bill Schram in the beauty of the subject and the eloquence of the literary expression in Bill's eulogy for Bob inscribed below.

IN MEMORIAM ROBERT M. STOFER

September 1, 1913 – March 13, 1978

*F*rom the very beginning, God had great plans for Bob Stofer. And Bob Stofer had great plans for the things he would do for God. Neither was disappointed.

Before his family could afford a piano, Bob chalked keys on the window sill and played the music that was in his soul. At no small sacrifice, his mother purchased an old upright piano and by the time he was 12, Bob was taking lessons. By age 14, he was organist and choirmaster at the First Baptist Church in Columbus.

His musical gifts were larger than Columbus could adequately nurture, so in his high school years he traveled by interurban to Indianapolis for lessons from the city's leading organist. Again his talent out-distanced his teacher, who sent him to study with the organist of DePauw University.

So outstanding was his progress during his high school years that Wabash College offered him a full scholarship if he would come and serve as the college organist—a post he held with such distinction that, following his graduation, he returned each year to play at the Baccalaureate Service and the Commencement Exercises. Not until 1968 did his failing health prevent him from making that spring pilgrimage back to his alma mater. In appreciation, and in recognition of his larger contributions to the world of music, Wabash presented him its Alumni Award for Merit.

His college career was a harbinger of things to come, not only as a distinguished musician but also as a courageous one, for even then his education had to be extended over 5 years because of the beginning of the painful arthritis which would afflict him throughout his career.

From Wabash he went to New York City where he studied at the Union Theological Seminary School of Sacred Music, while serving at the same time as organist of the First Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Conn. It was wartime but Bob's physical condition made it impossible for him to serve his country as a soldier. He served it in better ways, for his ministry of music pointed people not to the conquerors of history but to the Lord of history.

When the organist of the Presbyterian Church in Montclair, New Jersey, went off to war, Bob, still a student, was called to replace him. It was a mark of the man that his integrity would not permit him to accept the flattering offer to become the absent organist's permanent replacement. Instead, upon graduation, he accepted a call to the prestigious Church of the Covenant in Cleveland, a post avidly sought by men of twice his years and experience. There, he not only directed the music program of the church but also conducted the Cleveland Symphony Chorus and taught at Western Reserve University.

While he was there, he married Wanda who, even then an impeccable judge of quality, had singled him out of a conference of musicians, meeting in Colorado. What a generous and gracious Providence brought them together! Could she have found such a husband otherwise? Could he have found such a companion who would care for him with exquisite tenderness and love him always?

In Cleveland, Rob was born and his excited father rushed to the church to say a prayer of gratitude, surely, and to play Brahms's Lullabye from the carillon, to the astonishment of the passers-by below. Then came Sara, and again the Brahms's serenade. I suspect if there was one regret Bob had about Westminster, it was the fact that here there was no carillon to herald Larry's arrival.

It was Bob's right sense of priorities that brought him to Dayton—that and the cheesecake Virginia Munroe served him when he came to interview. Apartment living in Cleveland was not what Bob and Wanda wanted for their children. And after 12 years God told him it was time for a new challenge. How blessed this church has been that God led him here. And make no mistake about that: throughout his life, Bob was sensitive as few of us are, to the leading of God's spirit.

The community, too, knows its debt to this man of God: the May Festivals he inaugurated, the leadership he gave to the American Guild of Organists, the competence he brought to the faculties of United Theological Seminary and Wright State University.

But all this only traces a lifetime, only hints at the character of the man who served this church for 20 years as organist and choirmaster. There is so much more to be said. He was a musician of rare ability. We know that. But few know of the untold hours he spent honing his native brilliance. How many times, as he worked into the night to perfect his registration his family must have thought, "Why doesn't he just play the notes?" Why not? Because even if no one else could tell the difference, Bob could. He was committed to give the best that was in him.

Following a plane crash early in his career, his greatest fear was that his hearing would be impaired. It wasn't! Not only had he an extraordinary ear for music, he also had—as his children will testify—an ear that could pick up the slightest noise of a door opening late at night—the front door or the refrigerator door.

He was an artist-genius who could unfailingly manipulate the banks of stops on the

Casavant organ. Yet, to the delight of his children, he was never able to master the controls of the heater in his car.

Even in these latter years, when arthritis crippled his hands so that he could not reach an octave, and virtual blindness forced him to call music out of his heart and memory, we could always tell when it was Bob at the organ behind the reardos. There was a special quality, a brilliant flare to his playing that was unmistakable.

In part that was because he was an acknowledged master of improvisation—the only organist, in fact, who each Sunday after the Michigan-Ohio State game could—and would—work his way into the Doxology by way of “Carmen, Ohio.”

His son Rob learned of his father’s skill at improvisation at a Wabash College recital when he was turning pages for his father. (One of the beautiful things about the Stofer family is the way they do so many things together.) Rob’s mind was not fully on the music until he heard his father say, “Turn! Turn!” Hastily Rob reached for the music—and scattered it all over the foot pedals and floor. Bob continued playing without a pause and probably only he and Rob knew that he wasn’t playing the number printed on the program.

He had such a winsome sense of humor—a mark of his authentic piety, for he never took himself too seriously, though he had more reason than most for doing so. He had a sense of the appropriate, an appreciation of the awesomeness of worship. Yet he never lost what Fred Speakman described as “that pixey quality.” I remember one chapel service in which I spoke of our earthly home and our eternal home. Following the benediction, Bob’s organ response, played with all the ecclesiastical dignity he could coax out of the chapel organ, was “Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”



Robert Stofer—gallery organ

Small wonder children loved him, especially his own. One elder of the church said this week, "For me, Bob's music was a beautiful bonus. What I most appreciate was what he did for and meant to my children."

He was a natural teacher. He had a gift, one former organ pupil wrote, "for telling you just what to do to correct a problem." But he taught more than technique. He reached into the soul and stirred his student to a sense of the transcendent. "He planted beautiful musical roots inside our hearts," was the way one put it. "From him I learned loyalty and responsibility," said a choir member, for with his gentle humor and warm friendship, he commanded a firm discipline.

And Bob was a disciplined man himself. How else could he have struggled so valiantly and successfully against the pain that ravaged his frail body for so many years? How else? Discipline. And a family who tried to ease every step, provide every comfort. And a wife who so fully shared his life, his love, his music, and his pain?

And there was his unquenchable faith. Bob knew his Redeemer and drew his strength from Him. It was transparent, and of all the gifts he gave us, this was the greatest. In his presence we learned the meaning of the word, "saint."

Not long ago, despite the pain in his crippled hand, Bob wrote one of those encouraging letters so many have received from him, to a young woman beginning her own musical career. How much of her spirit had been infected by his "inspiration, courage and faith" (her words) is evident by the poem she enclosed, in the letter she sent back to him. It was written by the former pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City, Maltbie Babcock.

"Be Strong!"

*We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle—face it; 'tis God's gift.*

Be Strong!

*Say not 'the days are evil. Who's to blame?'
And fold the hands and acquiesce—oh shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.*

Be Strong!

*It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not—fight on! Tomorrow comes the song."*

For Bob the song has come. Surely the heavenly choirs are singing, "Hallelujah," for Bob has come home.

Reverend Dr. William C. Schram, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio.

*P*auline Olinger Williams performed invaluable service as Assistant Organist for many years from Mr. McHenry's tenure through Mr. Stofer's twenty years as Organist-Choirmaster. Pauline retired after many years of increasingly serious health problems.

Following the Stofer era, the position of Organist and Choirmaster was occupied by Mr. Paul Reynolds beginning in 1977. Unfortunately, his performance failed to meet expectations. His service at Westminster ended in 1980.

Interim choir directors from 1980 to January, 1982 were Carol Gillette and Janet Springer. During this period Gregory Land and Dorothy MacDongal served as organists. A search was begun to find a new organist-choir director. As a result of the search committee's intensive efforts, the church was most fortunate indeed to obtain the application of the Reverend John W. Neely in 1981. Mr. Neely was Organist-Choirmaster at Calvary Presbyterian Church in Canton, Ohio, where he had served from 1976 to 1981.

John had obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Organ Performance from Duquesne University in 1967, a Master's Degree in Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary in 1969 and a Master of Divinity Degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1972.

From 1969 to 1976 John was Organist-Choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church in Washington, Pennsylvania. While there he taught music history and directed the college choir at Washington and Jefferson College. While John was at Calvary Presbyterian Church, he taught organ at Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio.

In January, 1982, John was appointed to the position of Associate Pastor for Music at Westminster Presbyterian Church. His work here has been nothing short of sensational. He has built upon and added to the work of his predecessors. His appearances in the pulpit also display his great preaching talent.

The tradition of holding May Festivals biennially was continued under John Neely's outstanding



John Neely

leadership and direction. He not only demonstrates excellence in choir direction and organ performance but as an orchestral director as well.

In addition to the performance of the Westminster Church Choir at May Festivals, John has sometimes added some of

Westminster's Children's Choirs, members of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church Choir, some members from other choirs in the Dayton community, and the Central State University Chorus which is directed by William Henry Caldwell, Chair of the Music Department of Central State, as well as director of vocal and choral activities. Of late, soloists have been selected from the Westminster Church Choir.

Kinder Choir (Kindergarten) and Genesis Singers (4 & 5 year olds pre school) have been added to the number of children's choirs. The names of the Calvin Choristers and Knox Singers were changed to Calvin Choir and Knox Choir. Enrollment in all the children's choirs and the Westminster Church Choir has increased dramatically during John Neely's years as Associate Pastor for Music. John is loved and respected by the children and their parents, by adult choir members, and by members of the church and the community.

In 2000 John Neely took the church's first sabbatical. In the summer John took seven weeks and studied with Dr. Marilyn Keiser at Indiana University. In January, 2001, John completed his sabbatical with three weeks of traveling to New York and Chicago where he visited three peer churches to garner ideas and took a week long course with Sir Neville Marriner at Carnegie Hall.

A truly wonderful asset to the music staff of Westminster Presbyterian Church was the addition of Mr. Jerry Taylor as Music Associate to John Neely. Jerry is also the full-time organist and choir-

master at the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jerry received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Walla Walla College. He served as organist-choir director at Arkansas-Ozark Academy for four years and at Shenandoah Valley Academy in Virginia for eight years. A fellowship in church music, involving organ and choral conducting, resulted in his acquisition of a Master's Degree in Sacred Music with Distinction from Indiana University in 1981. Jerry's first association with the Westminster Church Choir was as a member of the choir in 1986. He became a substitute organist and choir director in 1987. In 1989 Jerry was made a Music Associate and since that appointment has made a number of appearances as organist and choir

director in the absence of Mr. Neely.

Jerry's responsibilities include conducting bell choir, assisting with service playing, funerals and weddings, obtaining orchestra members for special choral programs, and for sectional rehearsals. His duties also include providing music folders for all choir members and assuring that anthems and other music are provided for each choir member.

Throughout the history of Westminster Presbyterian Church there has been a commitment that the first goal of the music ministry be the glorification of God and demonstration of God's unconditional love. "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation."

THE CASAVANT ORGAN OPUS 2670

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Dayton, Ohio

1993 marked the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the Casavant organ. Custom designed and built to meet the acoustical and musical requirements for our church building, it blends the grand sounds of the classic organ with the orchestral color of the romantic type.

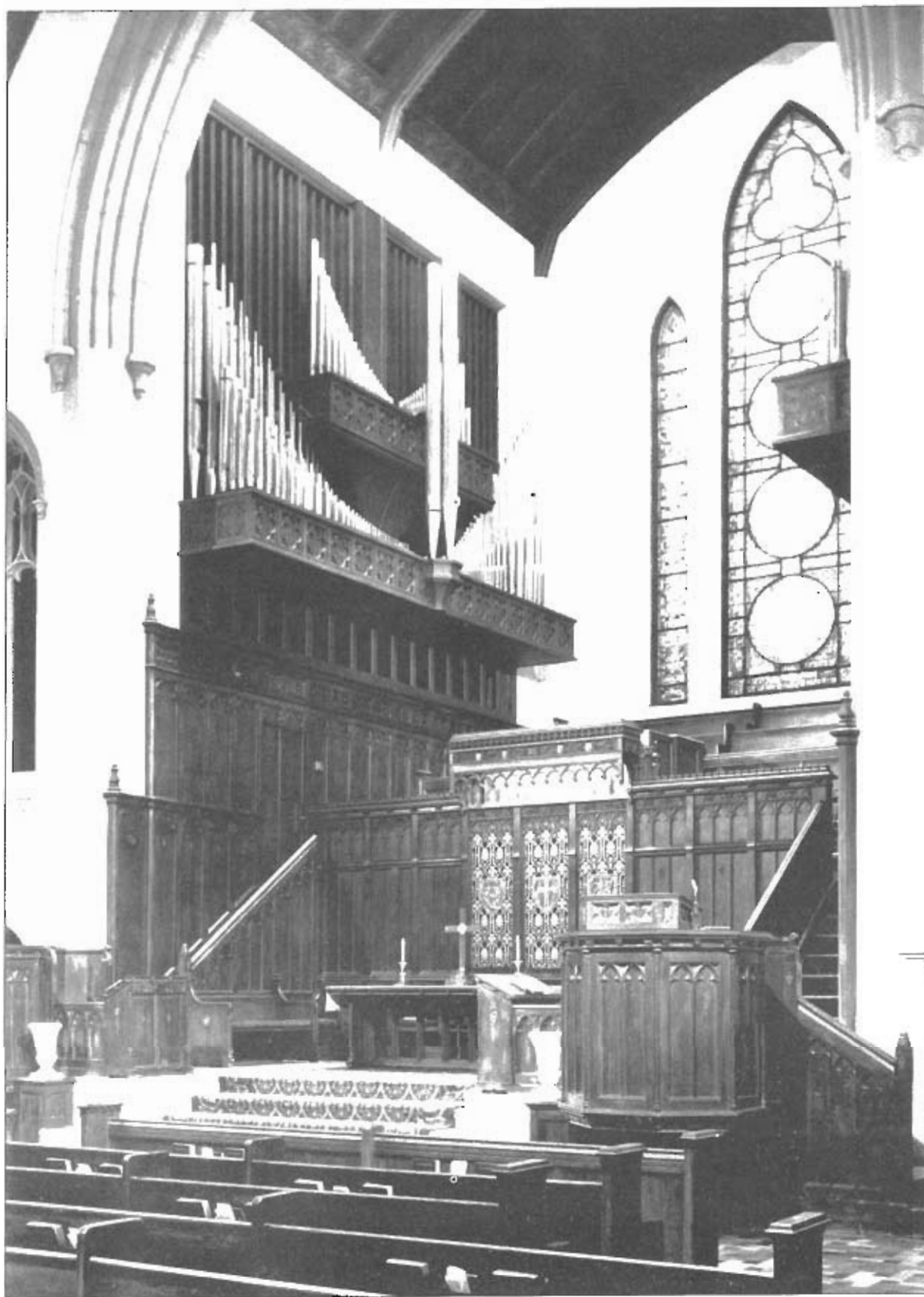
The organ is really two organs—a Main Organ at the front of the Sanctuary and a Gallery Organ located in the balcony. Each has its own console. Together, these organs have over 7,000 pipes arranged in 122 ranks. Chimes, Harp and three ranks of pipes were retained from the 1926 E.M. Skinner Organ. Every pipe, including those visible from the pews, is a speaking pipe.

The Vox Humana was provided by the Paul E. Wells Living Memorial Music Fund of Westminster Church. The Tuba Magna (Solo), Grande Chamade (Solo), Trompette Royale (Great), five-rank Symphonic Strings (Choir), Zimbelstern (Choir),

Nachthorn, and Offenflöte (Pedal) were provided by Larry Stofer. The Sesquialtera (Swell) was given in memory of Angie Stofer. The above additions were installed by Mr. Stofer. As part of Westminster's Forward to the Future program, a solid state combination system was installed during the summer of 1991 by the Casavant Organ Company of Quebec, Canada.



Organ console



Chancel organ

Special Musical Notes

The musical heritage of the church has long dedicated exceptional instruments. The organ in the Third Street Presbyterian was by J.W. Steere of Boston, considered an instrument of extraordinary quality. The Skinner organ was an exceptional instrument. The Casavaut, insured for one million dollars, is probably the finest of its kind west of the Alleghenies today. From the tintinnabular splendor of Handbells to the resounding brass and timpani at Easter, the rafters are filled with music created to the glory of God.

Just as in the Scriptures, some stories handed down may be apocryphal. For example, a disgruntled choir member in the early 50's, who didn't pass the audition, lit up the choir robes in the dressing room below the organ chamber and caused considerable damage to the organ and the ceiling panels in the smoke-filled sanctuary. That Skinner organ was eventually sold to the First Congregational Church in Rockford, Illinois, and destroyed by fire there in 1990. It seemed destined to be done in by organized crime! The panels were cleaned in the 70's, but had themselves been treated to look "old" when the sanctuary was originally constructed. The major problem with the ceiling is probably its lack of insulation which allows heat loss comparable to the cost of Sistine Chapel artistry.

Chamber Organ

In the sanctuary is a small, portable organ donated by Bill and Susie Scutt and built in memory of Susie's parents Muriel and Louis Schmidt, a TVA dam builder. The case and keyboard were salvaged from a bar in Owensville, Indiana, by Larry Stofer. Found on the family farm, the organ was reconstructed by Larry who acquired the two ranks of pipes from the Spring Grove Mausoleum in Cincinnati where they had survived the 1937 flood. The mechanical action organ has a blower built from surplus parts found at Mendelson's and represent Larry Stofer's uncanny ability to make the possible

out of the impossible. (In another era this action would have been created by organ pumpers using hand bellows; many were members of an organ pumper's guild which comprised a drinking society.)

Harpsichord

The church's rich musical program has been enhanced by the harpsichord given in memory of Robert Stofer in 1978. This instrument was built for Westminster by Andy Dupree, a pipe organ builder from Brumbaugh Organ Co. in Germantown, Ohio. It is a replica in the Flemish style with two sets of strings and 8-foot pitch (meaning middle C matches middle C on the piano). It is constructed of oak kept in a tent with ammonia fumes which give it the dark color. The keys are ebony and bone made from the shin bone of a cow; only two keys can be made from one cow's tibia. The case is trimmed in 24 carat gold and adorned with birds painted on the lid.

Westminster is synonymous with outstanding music and remains committed to providing the highest in artistic and spiritual enrichment. From Psalm 108:

*"My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!
I will sing, I will sing praises! Awake my soul! Awake,
O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!
I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, among the peoples,
I will sing praises to thee among the nations.
For thy steadfast love is great above the heavens,
thy faithfulness reaches the clouds."*

Chapter 7

Giving



GIVING TO ALL BOTH NEAR AND FAR

By Matt Melko



Third Street Presbyterian—New

*They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; every man shall give as he is able,
according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you.*

Deuteronomy 16:17



THE DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTION

Perception of Mission
*T*he perception of church mission, of course, precedes the organizational structures having that function. Looking back, we can see in the 19th century concerns that we would classify under the heading of mission today.

Two aspects of mission might be designated spreading the word and social concern. Spreading the word involved promulgating the religious message of the Bible and Church both locally and in the wider world. Social concern involved being a good neighbor in local affairs, but also being aware of and sometimes helping with social problems in and beyond the nation.

The surviving church records suggest that social concerns have been given much more attention than spreading the word, perhaps suggesting that members of Westminster have felt that their actions would in themselves convey the word.

Local Mission

Jerry Fox Vincent's *A Cabin Grows*, a history of the church published in 1949, at the time of its sesqui-centennial celebration, indicates that one of the earlier exponents of spreading the word in the Dayton area was William C. Anderson, who became pastor of First Church in 1846. His practice was to go to the National Hotel on Saturdays to meet the incoming stage coaches, learn which visitors were staying over, and invite them to First Church. According to Vincent, they were promised a cold dinner, should the sermon prove tiresome.

Social concern was manifest as early as 1857,

when the Rev. Dr. James Brooks, of the First Presbyterian Church, called upon the elders to enlarge the church, then located at Second and Wilkinson, because he needed more room to "receive the destitute in the streets and alleys of the town." So local mission, it appears, was already taken for granted before the Civil War.

In the early 20th century, First Church acquired Bethel Chapel at Webster and Herbert Streets as a local mission, dedicated both to social concern and Christian education. A 1911 report from Elders A. M. and H. G. Kittredge said many young men in North Dayton "need something to attract them and occupy their leisure-time hours, which would otherwise be given to questionable amusements." The previous summer, boys' gardens had been established around the Chapel, "with excellent results."

The boys had been taken from environments "that were anything but the best," and had the opportunity "to show that there was something worth cultivating." The chapel was a promising facility, the Kittredges said, with a large basement that could be used for a gymnasium for boys and for a cooking and sewing school for girls. They also envisioned a children's library "that will give their young minds a chance to develop." The church and chapel were both badly damaged in the flood of 1913, perhaps why we hear no more about the development of the chapel. There is no information in *Cabin* about the church's involvement in rescue efforts during the flood.

One kind of local mission work carried out by the church as a whole was the support of new

Presbyterian Churches in Greater Dayton. Memorial and Forest Avenue Churches were offsprings of Third Street Church, and Central Church was a merger of Park and Fourth Street Churches, which came from First and Third Street churches. Westminster Church purchased the land for Fairmont Church, and its session called Roland C. Anderson, Fairmont's first pastor. Westminster also gave substantial financial support in 1950 when Memorial Church moved from Perry and Third Streets to Smithville Road.

Given its location, the church could function as a center for events that brought the community together. In the 1960's Assistant Pastor Don Wick set up an academy and coffee house called Malachi. In that troubled and exciting decade, the academy offered seminars on Christian responses to secular problems, film discussion series, and trained school educators and youth workers.

The coffee house side of Malachi was continued in the later 60's as "Down There" which was located in the Lower Youth Center. Decorated with small tables and dim lights, it was designed to get young people off the streets on Friday nights. Chaperoned by college-aged students from Westminster and the University of Dayton, Down There dispensed coffee and donuts and featured live folk music. For a time it was very successful in attracting young people, but when the college students returned to school, there were not enough young people left to handle area youth with serious problems. The Center lasted two years, from 1966 to 1968, and for another year joined with another coffee house called "Alley Door" at Christ Episcopal Church.

In 1963 Session established a Religion and Race Committee for the church, while two of Westminster's ministers, Fred Speakman and Don Wick, headed a committee of the same name for the Miami Presbytery.

After riots in the middle sixties, Westminster joined an interdenominational effort in establishing the Edgemont Center on the West Side. The center offered after-school care for more than 100 children,

providing a variety of arts and crafts, choir, trips and tutoring. Lloyd Sayler and Mary Goss of Westminster were particularly involved. The program continued until 1969.

Another interdenominational effort, "Summer in the City," using the facilities of Westminster, attempted in 1968 to deal with racial tensions through "educational confrontation." But, Virginia Rainey records the meetings proved to be too "confrontational" for many in the church, and it was not repeated.

Reviewing these experiences in 1969, Fred Speakman and the session issued a statement saying that in the past the Christian Community had dealt with its black brothers in an unchristian manner, but for the future the church intended to attend to issues of justice and poverty, and not be distracted by "the rhetoric of violence."

In less controversial ways the church involved the community in the sixties: Bob Stofer giving organ concerts to over 300 children from the area; the Needlework Guild providing garments for children at Shawhan Acres; the Thursday Sewers creating thousands of items of clothing for local and world missions; and the Women of Westminster holding a series of lunches to discuss community responsibilities with civic leaders.

By the 1980's the Church had established the Community Life Committee to focus on local mission. The Committee received an annual budget that was devoted to supporting a number of local agencies, including House of the People to shelter the homeless, The George Foster Home of Building Bridges, Artemis House for counseling battered women, Hospice, the jail chaplaincy, and many other local agencies.

In January 1986, a Martin Luther King Remembrance Celebration was presided over by Sarah Harris and the Rev. William Schram. Dr. Joseph Lowery, president of the Christian Leadership Conference, arrived from the airport with a police escort in time to give the sermon. Attending the celebration, Isabel Vandenberg felt an

"intangible but unmistakable new energy in the large group of humanity,...more dark faces than light,... a mounting anticipation and expectation in the atmosphere." She quoted Dr. Lowery as saying that "nobody who loved Martin Luther King could ever remotely consider going back." He received a tremendous "rafter-raising ovation."

In 1990 the Committee for Social Justice and Peacemaking tackled many sensitive issues in twentieth century American society. Under the leadership of Elder Ruth Price, Keith Daugherty and Ron Price, the committee sought dramatic measures to remedy Dayton's being labeled one of the country's most segregated cities. Realizing that Rep. Barbara Jordan of Texas was a member of the Board of Directors of Dayton's Mead Corporation, they arranged to bring Miss Jordan to address civil rights issues at a public gathering that filled the Westminster sanctuary. Barbara Jordan was one of America's most eloquent orators and a Congresswoman who played a major role in the televised Watergate Hearings. She inspired Dayton, and her work became the motivation and namesake for what became known as the "Barbara Jordan Task Force for Racial Unity." Co-chaired by member Ronald Price and Judge Walter Rice of the Second District Court of Appeals, the task force established a model for representatives from all segments of the greater Dayton community, Black and White, to exercise dialogue and ideas to break down racial barriers.

*F*rom the merger of the First and Third Street Churches, and even before, much of the mission work was carried out by the church women, first as the Westminster Service Club, then as the Women of Westminster. Some of their contribution is described in chapter eight on Presbyterian Women.

The Community Life Committee developed a system by which it accepted applications from Greater Dayton social agencies, and awarded grants ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars to support projects aimed at improving the

situations of the ill, the stressed, and the impoverished.

In 1989, however, the Community Life Committee was addressed by Fred Bartenstein, director of the Dayton Foundation, who advocated reducing the number of agencies supported, providing impact by giving large amounts to a few, and perhaps exposure by giving small amounts for seed money or special services to others. The Committee welcomed the idea enthusiastically until it came time to cut some of the agencies in order to have impact on others. The problem, committee members recall, was that each member of a rather large committee had served as a liaison for each of the agencies funded, with the result that each observer became an advocate. "By all means let's have Impact, but you 'ain't' going to cut my agency!"

Nevertheless, the Committee decided to focus on homelessness, and in the following year appropriated about 40 percent of its \$50,000 budget to two agencies: the Religious Coalition for Low Income Housing, chaired by Westminster's



Habitat for Humanity—Mark Smutny

Mark Smutny, and Habitat for Humanity.

Under the leadership of Scott Porter, particular attention was given to Habitat for Humanity, the Committee budget being more than supplemented by a large number of volunteers who participated each Saturday in the building of houses that would be owned and maintained by poor families.

And in 1990 and 1991 the Church participated with other downtown churches in housing the homeless in a "Hospitality Network," each church in rotation taking a group for a week. Up to sixteen men, women, and children (families) were housed in individual Sunday School rooms on cots moved from church to church, arriving on Sunday evening

and vacating Sunday morning.

Meals were brought in and served by church members who also counseled, entertained, tutored children and sought to help get the guests rehabilitated and into permanent housing. The cycle repeated every ten weeks, and over 200 members participated each week Westminster hosted the families. It was a wonderful outreach to a segment of the community most needing love and caring as well over 400 members worked in the program at some point.

Also in the 1990's the Committee, combined in 1995 with the Global Mission and Peacemaking Committees, devoted an increasing part of its budget to the "House Keys" Program at the YWCA, a program designed to help families acquire the skills necessary to maintain their homes once they had gotten into them.

In 2001, when Westminster was honored for lifetime achievement by the Dayton YWCA, Development Director Gwen Durban said that solely as the result of commitment of funds from the Westminster Community Life Committee in the early 90's, the YWCA was able to continue its transitional housing program to insure the success of women re-entering community life from homeless and domestic violence shelters. "If Westminster had not sustained the project when no one else would fund it," she said, "the program would have died."

A committee member from that period describes some of the difficulties involved in making decisions. Should the committee make an appropriation to any of three AIDS related requests? If so, would this involve supporting immoral behavior? But how would it look if an all white, middle class group of suburbanites ignored three proposed attempts to deal with AIDS? Staff member Mark Smutny pointed out that Jesus administered to people who had made wrong decisions.

Again, the committee member added, if we really wanted to deal with homelessness, should we give our impact money to an organization like The Other Place, that took literally

homeless people off the streets, put them in housing, and got them jobs, rather than to Habitat, which put fewer but more competent

poor people into homes they could own, and also gave a number of church members a chance to participate by helping in the building of the houses?

At the turn of the millennium, after the Community Life and Mission Committees had been combined, a five-year plan was launched that aimed to "make a difference in education" in Downtown Dayton by the year 2003. This began with a partnership with the Van Cleve elementary school which featured tutoring by church members of students, first at the school, then at the Church. This was supplemented by church affairs to which Van Cleve parents were invited, student of the month pizza lunches at the church, and drives to provide, pencils, books, and equipment for the Van Cleve Students.

Diane Welborn, Montgomery County ombudsman and member of the Church Mission Committee, wrote that the Van Cleve-Westminster Partnership might "suggest a road map for future discussions of faith-based initiatives," such as those proposed by President George W. Bush. The most important indicator of the ultimate success of the program, she said, "was the seriousness of the commitment made by the church and the school to a long term relationship." She described how parents, children, and tutors had to learn to trust one another, and how Westminster provided its own bus to bring children

to the church for snacks and reading when budget cuts forced the elimination of city special activity buses. Since the parents came to pick the children



Literacy Council



Habitat for Humanity—Barbara Anderson

up, tutors and parents were having a chance to interact that had not existed before. "Why," she asked, "force a choice between private academies and public schools? Why not a partnership?"

Beginning in the fall of 2000, the Van Cleve Partnership was followed by a new initiative, School Church Partners, designed to share the Van Cleve model with other local churches, providing them with information and resources that would encourage them to establish their own church-school partnerships to support local education. At least 25 additional partnerships were launched by the fall of 2002 with the prospects of this program becoming a model for similar ones throughout the country.

National and World Mission

It appears that one factor involved in the split in the 1830's between the Old and New schools, according to the Rev. Charles Campbell of the Third Street Church, was that the Third Street New School was strongly antislavery; the First Street Old School was not. But twenty years later Dr. Brooks at First Church was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas E. Thomas, described by Colouel Edwin A. Parrott, the chronicler of the Church's first century, as an "outspokeu anti-slavery man" (Cabin, 44, 18). So the

church was involved in questions of national concern, and by 1858, one of the great social differences between the two churches had already narrowed.

Information about the Church's involvement in World War I is scarce, but a church bulletin of March 12, 1916, contained an appeal for contributions to aid Christian Armenians persecuted by the Turks during the War. This was later to become known as the Armenian genocide, and a tepid world response was to lead Hitler to say to his advisors: "Who remembers the Armenians?"

As in local mission, so in national and world mission, the women of the church have been extremely active since before the merger of the churches. Some of these activities are also described in the chapter on the Women of Westminster.

Both the Women's Missionary Society and the church sponsored missions in India, Brazil, and Alaska. The missionary to India was James Funk, a medical doctor. The Westminster Church provided medical equipment for the India mission, a complete building and the replenishing of a herd of cattle for a farm in Brazil, and a steamboat piloted by the Rev. Paul Prouty so that he could preach along the Alaskan coast.

The word from Westminster Presbyterian Church was heard from coast to coast for 11 years in the 20's and 30's, in the days of Hugh Ivan Evans, as morning and evening services were broadcast by radio. These began when services were held in Memorial Hall, before the completion of the present church.

The 1960's was a period in which high school workshops were undertaken. Twice the senior highs journeyed to Morrisania Presbyterian Church in New York City, and once the students from both churches went to Deerfield, Massachusetts, to build a barn for Woolman Hill Quaker Camp. In New York the students cleaned, painted, and cemented sidewalks, experiencing a mingling with Afro-American and Hispanic students (Rainey 29-30).



Dacons transporting Korean care packages

In the 1970's the Ernest Campbells went to Saigon to minister to those caught in the Vietnam War and were among the last to leave when the American Army withdrew in 1973. Subsequently, the Campbells wrote to the church from New Delhi, India in January 1974:

*Dear Westminster Friends,
Hallelujah, the parts arrived! Will get them on the motor and send you a picture. A thousand thanks for such a complete and generous response. We are now ready for floods — which we hope don't come. Had a wonderful Christmas. All the family were together. Jim and Lynn from Nepal! And Jeff from Wesleyan. Visits and programs at hospitals, Old Folks homes, orphanages and the leper village gave a dimension of depth to the usually warm, happy family spirit. A new dimension of understanding seems to be developing between India and America helped by the P.L. 480 settlement, U.S. withdrawal of arms supply to Pakistan and the efforts to truly resolve the Far East crisis. The daily headlines on Watergate, etc. have had an effect not only of saying "you are not much different than the rest of us," but also pointed up the citizens' concern to bring about open, honest changes. In a sense, America's travail is helping every concerned citizen all over the world. It's one world! Thousands of young people are pouring into India looking for spiritual commitment, some finding community at last in small group participation in a discipline — any discipline — others ebbing back in dissolution.
Love and blessings,
Ernie and Alfie*

"The more things change, the more they remain the same." The Campbells wrote of India and Pakistan over 25 years ago still a center of controversy in 2002, while finding a solution in small groups which has become the focus of activities in the new millennium at Westminster.

By the 1980's the Westminster Mission Committee was supporting four missionaries in the

field: Dr. Harry Chuck of the Donaldina Cameron House in San Francisco; Ernest D. Matthews in Merida, Mexico; Julia Hudson of the John Hyson Educational Center in Chimayao, New Mexico; and the Rev. Joe Powlas of Cow Creek, Booneville, Kentucky.

A Cow Creek trip led in 1980 to the creation of what was to become the Mission Arts and Crafts Center which continues until the present day to be an outlet for rural craftsmen. Unique hand-crafted items are available periodically after church with all the proceeds being returned to help support the individuals who made them.

In the 70's and 80's, under the leadership of Gaylan and Leona Freisenborg, there was an increase in mission trips. Jean Brown and Miriam Crawford went as volunteer missionaries to Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, and Mick Jefferis, Amy Miracle, Meg McCormick, Tim Slager, Andy Reynolds and Gwen Reece were among those who volunteered to go to Cameron House (Rainey 58–60).



Caroline Shuey—John Hyson School



Dean Vaughn, Lee Lane—John Hyson School

The Senior Highs went to one of America's most economically depressed areas—San Luis, Colorado, in 1983, where they worked on a mission project with Hispanics, and attended services at the tiny ten-member San Luis Church. This life-changing experience involved hard work digging ditches, building an outhouse, working in a day-care center, painting, mowing weeds, and joyfully witnessing to God's love and following the inspiring example of a young Baptist minister Doug Sullivan. The Junior Highs led by Barbara Marshall, Katie Johnson, Bill and Topper Schram and John and Vail McGuire made painting expeditions in 1981 and 1982 to the Kemmerer Village Children's Home in Illinois, to Jenny and Bill Schram Jr's church in Sashabaw.

In the 1980's youth and adult groups made trips to Merida, Yucatan, to help build a clinic and Bible school. A second trip to Alaska brought the adults going back to Sheldon Jackson, while the youth group went to Ketichikan. In 1981 an adult trip traveled to Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Fred Wright, George Yingling "and crew" built a solar greenhouse that would extend the growing season to supply food as well as heat for John Hyson Academy, while Larry Hadlock taught classes in jewelry making at Ghost Ranch. Then the group went by school bus to Wasatch Academy in Utah where they installed a sprinkler system, repaired rugs, cleaned and painted. They also experienced a "Rocky Mountain High" on a picnic into the Wasatch Mountains. The next year another group stayed at Cameron House to carry out remodeling and refinishing projects. These trips included visits to Santa Fe, Salt Lake City, and Yosemite.

In 1986, under Mark Smutny, mission trips were made to Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska and to Huntington, West Virginia. Extraordinary fellowship was flavored by a lady in West Virginia who baked sourdough bread and rolls daily. A "starter" of that sourdough was brought back to Dayton and "fed" for years by members who kept it alive and remembered breaking bread with our friends in Huntington. Of course, such trips

were never problem-free. Mark felt that, as adults, members of the group could handle their own airline tickets. One traveler left his return ticket on the plane flying on to Juneau; another discarded his in the waste basket. It is not recorded whether they are still in Alaska.

In 1991 and 1992, under the leadership of John Sorenson, health fairs were conducted to Ashtabula, Ohio, and to Bay City, Michigan. Among those tested, instructed, and treated were a large group of migrant laborers. Under Glenn Leupold there were trips from 1997 to present to Grand Forks, ND, for flood relief cleanup, to Grayson Kentucky to build a house, two cleanup trips to John Hyson School, and a trip to the Ohio Buckhorn Children's Foundation to clear trails and waterproof woodwork.

In the 1990's the Mission and Peacemaking Committees held almost annual affairs, dinners or potlucks with speakers telling about missionary work in Africa, Central America, and the Far East, and several speakers, including Westminster's Jim Clay, on attempts to bring peace in the former Yugoslavia.

In this decade the Peacemaking Committee also sponsored a number of adult education classes on peace, including Matt Melko on the long Western peace following the World Wars; LaVina Wilson and Tom Talbot on violence among young people; Jim Hughes on Martin Luther King and Malcolm X; Bob Reece on healing racism around the world; and Margaret Karns, Glenn Leupold, and Jim Clay on their respective experiences in China, Colombia and Bosnia.

In 1995 Miami Presbytery launched a partnership with the Presbytery of the north coast of Colombia. Within that partnership, churches have been paired with sister churches, that of Westminster being Primera (First) in downtown Barranquilla. Primera was founded in the nineteenth century by a missionary from the United States whose grandson was a member of Westminster.

Some members of Primera have visited Westminster, and its pastor preached from our pulpit.

The Rev. Glenn Leupold made a trip in 1998 to our sister church, the First Presbyterian Church of Barranquilla, Colombia, and in 2001 The Reverend Nancy Hodgkins and three members of the Youth Group—Kelly and Kori Phillips and Alison Greenwald—joined a Miami Presbytery youth delegation on a visit to Colombia to build relationships with members of the church at Barranquilla. The group stayed in the homes of church members and in the Presbytery campground at Fraydolindo. With Colombian friends, they toured the area and participated in mission work projects. Westminster helped

Primera acquire some computers to enhance the English language lab in their church-run school. Westminster also gave Primera a new electronic keyboard which is used every Sunday. Each church includes prayers for the other in its worship service.

Mission remains a strong component in the theology and activities of the Church. Following Jesus, Paul and James, members of Westminster have consistently tried to demonstrate their faith through their works, perceiving humanity as not only church family, but as neighbor, near and far.



Sitka Alaska Mission Trip—Cindy Wise, Mark Smutny, Jane Collins, Tom Wilson

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Chapter 8

Engendering



ENGENDERING LIVES WITH SOOTHING BALM

By Mickey Gogle and Mim Clute



Interior—Third Street Presbyterian Church

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PRAISING, STUDYING, SERVING

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves: to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church world-wide, to work for justice and peace, to build an inclusive caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promises of God's kingdom.

Through the years the wording has changed but the Purpose of Presbyterian Women remains the same. The story begins with women in local congregations who responded with good deeds to the needs of society. The grass root efforts by women to testify to their religious belief was expressed by doing for those less fortunate, though activities were circumscribed by the prevailing definitions of proper work for women. The need to be responsible participants in the religious community was strong and caused the establishment of cent, sewing, praying and charitable societies. By the end of the Civil War the majority of Presbyterian churches had some form of women's organization.

This increasingly powerful role of women was much to the chagrin of Rev. Thomas who had not changed his attitude toward women. He had been accused in the 1850s of wanting to place women in that slavery from which he wished to liberate Negroes. In 1879, he still believed that the only place for women was in the home. He did not want them praying in public, even among other women, or even creating charitable organizations. Private charity, private tutoring of their own family, encouraging by example and not by speech was his motto. God never appointed a woman the founder and head of a new endeavor like he did with Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc. No prophetess ever offered a sacrifice on his altar. Not one book of the Bible was written by a woman. The New Testament directs that officers must be men. Jesus was a MAN. Thomas believed that it was a shame for women to speak in church or

to teach. He said that giving women rights would rob music of its harmony." (Rainey)

One of Thomas's last published sermons was "Woman's Work" in the 1872 *Presbyterian Pulpit*. He preached, "To impose upon woman a part in social and public life which her Maker never fashioned her to fill, were alike preposterous and profane. Such pretended advocates of woman's rights, but real enemies of woman's happiness, only imitate the old serpent in Eden, who tempted our first mother to perdition under pretense of making her a goddess." As the *Dayton Journal* commented, "He always gave to any cause with which he cooperated great strength; that which he opposed was apt to break down under his frown." His views about women

Country fair luncheon



were especially interesting since both his mother and sister were teachers throughout their whole life.

While the United Presbyterians voted in 1874 that women could read, pray, sing, and had a responsibility to do so, the rural, conservative Bellefontaine presbytery organized a women's Presbyterian Missionary Society in 1875. The Xenia United Presbyterian women carried out a public crusade against saloons in 1874, throwing themselves into hymn singing and prayer in front of the "Shades of Death" saloon. However, Dayton Presbytery under the influence of Rev. Thomas still voted as late as 1879 that women should not pray in public unless given permission to do so by their session.

To nurture our faith through prayer and bible study

Prayer is an integral part of all our meetings and gatherings. We ask God to sustain us, to lead us, and to bless our endeavors undertaken to God's glory. Through the years Bible study has been done many ways: with minister-trained lay persons, within special Bible study groups, in Circles, and as individuals. Many study aids have been used. Currently, The Presbyterian Women's official magazine *HORIZONS* publishes a yearly Bible study. An award-winning religious publication, *HORIZONS* also includes devotional material, discussion of issues affecting the whole church and the world, all manner of mission-related articles and many other topics. The Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study, originally published by the missionary societies, was taken over by the denomination for use by the whole church. It is designed to enable one to be informed about mission activities in local churches and around the world. Another resource is the *CIRCLE OF PRAYER*, published by Church Women United with whom we have an ecumenical relationship.

To support the mission of the church world-wide

From the early 1800's Women Missionary Societies worked to support mission in this country and

around the world. The women of First Presbyterian Church formed a Missionary society during the same period. Every woman came and sewed for poor whites across the river and outfits for Indian papooses.

After the merger of the Third Street and First Presbyterian Churches, two groups were formed under the Women's Society, whose first president was Susannah B. Huffman. One, the Westminster Service Club, was organized to address local problems. It engaged in all kinds of money-making activities from selling flower seeds to huge bazaars, to raise money to support projects such as the Children's Bureau, Daily Vacation Bible School, Scout Troops, camps for needy children, choir robes, etc. One fundraiser was publication of a cook book—a successor to previous publications. Recipes from these old books make for some comic reading for today's cooks.

Cookies

2 coffee cups of brown sugar	1 coffee cup of butter
5 coffee cups sifted flour	1 egg
1/2 t. of cream of tartar	1/2 cup of milk
1/2 t. soda in the milk	

Roll thin. Bake in quick oven.

*(p. 128, Presbyterian Cookbook July 1875
by Ladies of First Presbyterian Church)*

The other group was the Westminster Missionary Society formed to educate the women of the church about missions. It supported five full time missionaries. Minutes from the 1930's tell of programs with returned missionaries from all over the world as speakers. In 1944, following the organization of the national Presbyterian Women's Organization, the Women's Society became Women of Westminster (W.O.W.)

Dr. Evans was an avid supporter of the women. He hired Mae Durnell to be Women's secretary. After she left, subsequent leaders had bigger responsibilities. During the World War II years and immediately after, sewing was a large part of women's work. There were Overseas Sewing Assignments organized



WOW 1960

by the national Presbyterian Women's Organization, clothing sent to displace persons in Europe. National Mission Sewing and articles for Miami Valley Hospital done by the Thursday Sewing Group, and clothing made for Dayton's needy by the Westminster Needlework Guild.

Following the war, the Women of Westminster participated in the refugee resettlement effort. In 1956 they relocated the Johannes Feenstra family of Dutch refugees from Indonesia. Later during the Hungarian Revolution, W.O.W. sponsored Mr. and Mrs. Imre Simon.

During these years, other mission projects were being added. Support was given to eight missionary stations and to seven missionaries as well as scholarships provided for three mission schools. Locally, Klub Kanteen (founded by W.O.W.), Girl's Club, the Children's Home, Bureau for Aid to Dependent Children, and Goodwill Industries were supported. In the 1950's the organization had 14 Guilds and held ten meetings a year. The Guilds took turns helping Peg Brown, the church hostess, in preparing and serving meals. The Guilds also organized projects

and programs for the Detention Home, Dayton State Hospital, City Mission, and the Widows Home.

The 60's brought changes as Guilds became Circles. More women were entering the work force and producing the two-day Bazaar was becoming difficult. In addition the General Assembly issued a directive asking churches to begin to desist in all areas of selling activities. The Women of Westminster adopted a program called Dedicated Giving which emphasized Christian stewardship and offered the opportunity to all women in the church, whether or not they belonged to a Circle, to support W.O.W.'s mission program above and beyond their commitment to the general church budget.

While most selling activity stopped, one group continued to make peanut brittle each year for which they were rightly famous.



June Fisher, sewing circle

Westminster Peanut Brittle

2 cups sugar	1 1/2 t. soda (rounded)
1 T. butter	1/2 cup water
2 cups raw peanuts	1 T. vanilla
1 cup white karo syrup	pinch of salt

Cook sugar Karo water to 250 degrees (Medium High, not on High). Add raw peanuts (with hulls) and butter, stir, and cook to 300 degrees. Add pinch of salt, soda, and vanilla. Stir well and pour into large well-greased jelly roll pan. Stretch with fork when slightly cooled.

From 1967 to 1981 June Fisher served as a popular Church Hostess, coordinating the dining room and kitchen activities. A jar of candy always made the kitchen a place to visit for many children as well as adults who enjoyed the warm atmosphere. A Girl Scout and Brownie troop led by Libby Kline, Helen Calihan, Jane Welton, Cathy Carpenter and Ruth Freeman, was organized at the Parkside Homes housing project. The Thursday sewers continued to be active creating lap robes, baby layettes, items of clothing, etc. for local and world missions as they do today.

During these same years, Mildred Kennedy had become involved with Frank Laubach's world-wide literacy program called "Each One Teach One." In the early 1970's she received permission from the Session to have the Miami Valley Literacy Council housed at Westminster. Many Westminster members were trained to be tutors in the program which remained at Westminster approximately eight years.

In 1988, as a result of the merger of the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian Church, a new organization was formed called Presbyterian Women. Women of

Westminster (W.O.W.) became Westminster Presbyterian Women (W.P.W.) With the merger, the Birthday Offering was added as one of our church-wide offerings for mission. Begun in 1922 by the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church when the head of their women's work department saw the need for girls' schools in Asia. She challenged the women to give one penny for each year of their lives as a Birthday Gift to help in mission work.

The other women's church-wide offering for mission is the Thank Offering. It was begun in 1878 by a Presbyterian pastor's wife, Eliza Clokey. She urged each woman who belonged to a Missionary Society to give \$1.00 above her usual contribution for missions in thanksgiving for her many blessings. It is said that these funds saved the mission movement.

At Westminster, Betty Johnson started a program called "Love is Caring." The goal was to collect clothing and other items for charity. Inundated by an outpouring they were hard pressed to keep an accurate count of items donated as they started to do. Weight was the final measurement used. Since that time the name has been changed to the Mission Advocacy Project (M.A.P.) with similar goals of meeting needs of local agencies. Presently housed under the stairs to the office, it processes a ton of things per year. The circles take turns by the month to stay on top of the donations. A special brochure describes the needs.



Ann Barr, Mickey Gogle, Margrethe Feenstra,
Jody McCormick, Stan Herr



"Love is Caring" LaDonna Reagan

To Build An Inclusive Caring Community of Women That Strengthens the Presbyterian Church and Witnesses to the Promise of God's Kingdom

Our Circle, sewing, and reading groups provide intimate experiences to create a caring community. Our gathering at the Presbytery, Synod and Churchwide levels give a wider circle of friends and outstanding experiences. As an ecumenical organization we are part of Church Women United. Their programs allow interaction with women from all races and Christian faiths.

While our local gatherings no longer have crowds as prevailed in the 50's, our programs, too, are interesting and fun. In those days the women heard a book review by Alta Becker, decorated the tables lavishly (in competition with one another), wore hats and white gloves. Another memorable program was written and directed by Mary Griffiths called "A Cameo of Personalities"; it highlighted some of the first women of our church: Dorothy Halderman, first woman elder; Pauline Williams, first woman Assistant Organist; Mae Durnell, first Secretary to Women's work; Helen Colley, first woman chairperson of Trustees; Sandra Schultz, first woman Moderator of merged Board of Deacons. Also honored were Mary Kittredge, Member of First Presbyterian Church, and Betty Coleman, member of Third Street Presbyterian and with the merger, early members of Westminster.

With today's more casual social scene, we no longer make sure the silver place setting matches and is lined up 1/2 inch from the edge, but our tables are prettily decorated and match the theme of the day.

Often at a gathering we honor a special person with an Honorary Membership in Presbyterian women. Our Moderators are so honored at the expiration of their term. Some of our clergy have been so recognized as have outstanding women such as Beth

Over the decades, the Women of Westminster Church have supported a wide array of mission projects, monetary gifts, volunteer hours, sewing and collecting items needed by many organizations serving those in need locally and world wide.

To Work For Justice and Peace

Much of the mission of the women deals with peace and justice issues. For example, our Thank Offering sends 40% to support health programs in the third world. Both the Birthday and Thank Offering funds—one million dollars each—provide grants to support projects helping women and children in need, battered women homes, child care facilities, women leaving prison. The 1990 drive to Break the Chains of Debt for poor countries with large interest debts received our attention. A recent project sent health care boxes over seas, packed with \$100 worth of supplies. A new project is underway. Mosquito net tents are made and treated with insecticide to keep children from being bitten by malaria-carrying mosquitoes in tropical countries where this is a scourge.

The recent Year of the Child made us aware of issues facing children—child labor, child pornography, child soldiers, genital mutilation, maiming from land mines, malnutrition and other issues.



Holiday Bazaar 1960

Neher, Bess Wright and June Fisher among others. However, imagine our surprise when we received one for May Speaker whom none of us knew. The mystery was solved when we learned that an honorarium sent to the Presbytery office for Margaret Haney who spoke to us at our May Gathering was misconstrued; they sent the information on to Louisville for the May speaker. This was quite humorous to all but the Treasurer.

In 2001, Westminster Presbyterian Church and the W.P.W. sewing group were recipients of the first Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Y.W.C.A. In presenting the lovely crystal bowl, it was noted that W.P.W. has been donating time and talent to the community for so long no one remembers its beginning. Their handiwork benefits many programs including the shelters of the Y.W.C.A. which received hand-made night wear for women and children, layette items, and baby blankets.

The Future

As an Organization Presbyterian Women is often on the cutting edge. The churchwide gatherings address hot issues. For instance, the Missionary Societies started a Mission Year Book of prayer found to be so valuable it is published by the church. From the women's concern for the hunger issue was born the Hunger Fund. Problems of racism, classism, ageism, sexism continue to be on the agenda. Inclusive language is something the women promoted and still monitor.

Women seem naturally drawn to work together on concerns of interest to them. The warmth and fellowship of a small group setting has been a factor in women's lives since the days of the quilting bee and will hardly become outmoded.

We try to live up to ideas expressed by Dr. Ivan Evans in a sermon: "What the Years Have Taught Me." He had come to depend on the intuitions and

insights of women....“I am indebted to the spiritual insight and noble sacrifice for women for much of the success of the churches I have served. It is unconscionable to think of the role of women to be

diminished in the church. Even with more and more women in the workplace, political life, and corporate realm, in the life of the church woman’s work is never done!”



Churchwide Women’s
Gathering—Louisville 2000:
Linda Lane, Ruth Price,
Joan Swanson, Mickey Gogle,
Betty McCready



Westminster Presbyterian
Women’s Gathering:
Mime Ruth Price, Marilyn
Meadows, Lois Henderson

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Chapter 9

Serving



SERVING HUMAN KIND IN TIME OF NEED

By Delores Copas



First Presbyterian 1940's

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God;
and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

1 John 4:7

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

From the beginning of time God saw the need for companions and brought forth Eve for Adam and created great nations and empires. Humanity has needed to function in small units where individuals could feel comfort and peace. The common thread of civilization was and is now the absolute need for interconnection of individuals in personal relationships. Service to others is the sustaining element of Christian faith.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, whose roots go back over two hundred years, has ministered and served thousands by providing a gathering place where the word of God was spoken and people could intermingle in mini groups. Some memories of past activities, not necessarily of small groups, come

from members who remember when more than twelve PresbyWed groups were in existence for married couples and widows and widowers of members past

The singles group was called Presby Ones and, like the others, had similar activities and did some travel together. Relationships here sometimes matured and members married and joined Presby Wed groups or formed new groups; a very active boy scout program existed, with both a scout troop and an explorer post, which helped many young members grow and learn; the original church building provided a basketball court below the office which involved adults and youth; square dancing in the social hall was popular, as well as cards; young adults group called the "Mariners" was a mixed

group for ages 18 through 40, which had as many as 50 people involved; a Sunday school class led by the general manager of Frigidaire Corporation had enough people in attendance to fill the social hall most every Sunday; over the years Westminster had baseball teams, both male and later co-ed, that have created many fine relationships.



Small Group Leupold
Back: Anne Proulx, Cindy Knight,
Donna Spencer;
Front: Miriam Leupold, Julie
Lindower, Jennifer Vicarel

What we do with and for each other is the way we enjoy love, friendship, and spirituality all in God's presence. As this is written in the year 2002, we are benefiting from the work of our associate pastor for membership, Reverend Miriam Lawrence Leupold, who has brought forth and has been nurturing a fast

growing "small group" program for the members of our Westminster Presbyterian Church. She defines it as: "A Christian Small Group is an intergenerational face-to-face gathering of ten or fewer people on a regular time schedule with the common purpose of building relationships with each other and God." The model of sharing, study, and prayer has all been gleaned from seminars and meetings for the specific purpose of building on our rich history of togetherness and Christian love. Leaders were trained and groups formed; the development and growth has been the work of the Holy Spirit.

We envision numerous significant relational groups. Our new Small Group program is off to a good start. From this base, we want to make these groups a major part of our program. We seek to be known as a large church with Small Groups that provide a mechanism for members to draw strength and support from very close Christian relational experiences. We are committed to this because it is where we can best live out our mission of "increasing the love of God and neighbor."

From members who are now participating, they find an oasis in the week, a group of friends that grow closer each time they meet, something regular in life, a place to pray with others, a place to grow spiritually, a place to be oneself without being judged, a life changing experience and, finally, where one feels God's presence alive and well.

There have always been small groups within the



Marshall University—Mission Trip

church, but this concerted program began in 1997 with five groups. There have been sixteen groups with over 150 people participating in this ministry over five years. What some of the participants have said provides a testament to their meaning. "Although I've been active in the church all my life, the Small Group experience

has been the first time I've ever done an in-depth, spiritual study in a very personal way. Our group has learned to trust each other and be supportive and encouraging to each other when troubles or challenges arise." Others have said, "Small Group is wonderful for spiritual growth during our journey of faith and the added bonus of getting to know and build close relationships with people who were previously only Sunday morning acquaintances." Another member has said, "Small Group has given me an opportunity to stop and contemplate my spiritual life with others in a supportive setting." For many it is a life-changing experience where they feel close to God.

The Fellowship Committee continues an active role in the day-to-day life of Westminster members. As the focal point for church fellowship events, committee members ensure the smooth planning and execution of activities.

One of the most vibrant elements to serving the needs of members is the organization of Presby Groups. The members are married and single, young and old, and come from all corners of the Miami Valley. Groups usually meet monthly for a meal, a special activity, or both. The Fellowship Committee initiated three new Presby Groups during the summer of 2001. This brings our total to 21 unique groups, each working to provide Westminster members yet another way to better know fellow members. Over 380 members currently participate.

Starting in the spring of 2000, Westminster began two special interest groups to assist in furthering the fellowship ministry. The first group focuses on gardening and meets on Saturdays at the farm of a Westminster member. We have all enjoyed their many vegetables via the Garden Surplus Table during the fall and summer months. The second new group is the Camping Group and is intended for all levels of interest. Those who know the tricks help the novices. Each year several weekend outings are planned with each one bringing members of the congregation a little closer together. With these successful new groups functioning, certainly others can't be far behind.

For several years the members of our church have enjoyed a very successful fellowship offering "Dinners for Eight." This has now been changed to "Dine with Nine" to further reinforce this activity is not simply for married couples; it is for everyone! During 2000-2001 three separate dinners were held. These dinners have provided evenings of good food, fellowship, and conversation.

This past year's summer activity involved a new treat: when 75 members joined in the fun and sun to watch our new hometown baseball team the Dayton Dragons. In August, 27 members enjoyed an afternoon of golfing at the W.G.C. Golf Course in Xenia. Baseball teams still represent us in area leagues.

One of Westminster's favorite events is the yearly harvest dinner held during the month of November. All of our members 80 years and older are treated to a dinner free of charge and provided with a little extra attention! Our last year dinner was served to over 325 members. An Advent/Christmas dinner served over 350 persons.

In viewing our past we are thankful for our blessings and now press on to continue our mission of "Increasing our love of God and neighbor."



Leader Small Group
Lola Signam

AS A CHURCH FAMILY, WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

*O*ur pastors and members of Westminster work together to provide support and service in all aspects of life.

Our Pastors

- Visit members in hospitals, nursing facilities, and homes
- Provide home communion
- Offer pastoral counseling in times of bereavement, crisis, and special need

Our Deacons

- Provide support at the time of a birth with a home visit and a gift book
- Provide support during hospitalization through individualized resource book, flowers, and

bulletins on Sunday; cards, visits, and meals for convalescence

- Provide support in bereavement through visitation, follow-up cards/calls, and a meat and cheese tray
- Coordinate the Care Giver/Care Receiver Program with Older Adult Ministry Team
- Supervise a task force exploring and developing a program in Health Care Ministry.
Possibilities include:
 - Follow-up care after hospitalization
 - Health screening
 - Parish nursing
 - Health-related education
 - Provide transportation to doctor appointments



Our Stephen Ministers

- Are lay ministers trained with insights and skills to provide distinctive Christian care
- Provide confidential, focused, sustained, one-on-one care by meeting regularly with those in need of support
- Receive supervision, support, and on-going education
- Compliment and strengthen other ministries in the church

In the summer of 1997 Ruth Price, Joyce Carr, and Liz Elliott with Rev. Kay Davis went to Loyola University in Baltimore to attend The Stephen Series, a program to train lay people to do caring ministry. A seven-day intensive Leader's Training Course enables lay leaders to develop skills and talents for bringing Christ's healing love to people who are grieving, depressed, and experiencing other stresses in life. At least 25 individuals ranging in age from 14 to those in their 70's have completed the fifty hours of training to experience the joy of helping others through the power of the Holy Spirit for doing ministry. Whether it's being an effective listener or ministering to grieving people, both those giving and those receiving share in building up and strengthening the whole congregation to bring God's love to us in a special, caring way.

Stephen Leaders:
Ruth Price, Kay Davis-Dudding,
Liz Elliott, Joyce Carr

Our Older Adult Ministry Team

- Provides caring ministry for, by, and with older adults
- Understands and is aware of the joys and challenges of aging
- Supports opportunities for fellowship through the Just Friends program of social activities for those 55 and older
- Sponsors educational opportunities
- Adult education classes
- Workshops
- Bulletin board
- Library books
- Enhances the worship experience by providing large print Bibles, hymnals, bulletins and amplified hearing devices
- Coordinates Care Giver/Care Receiver Program wherein a member who is physically challenged and/or has a need for companionship is matched with a member willing to provide friendship and support

Our Support Groups

All support groups are open to members and non-members

Caring for Aging Family and Friends—People caring for aging loved ones share experience and information to provide mutual support.

Coping with Illness—People experiencing chronic illness investigate positive ways to cope and care for themselves.

Writing Group—Opportunity is given to chronicle one's life, allowing people to pass along a legacy to children and grandchildren and provide meaning in one's life.

Mental Health Counseling—Members of our congregation may use Miami Valley Hospital's Pastoral Care and Counseling Center which merges traditional psychotherapy with a spiritual dimension. Services are provided at reduced cost for as long as they are needed. This service is possible because Westminster is a member church of the Covenant Society of Metropolitan Dayton. Companionship is matched with a member willing to provide friendship and support.

"In the mission of the church, there is an important outreach through support groups, which give folks with similar problematic situations a group of kindred souls with whom they can commiserate. Through the sharing of feelings, concerns, fears, solutions there is a growing in self-confidence and courage to face whatever confronts us. The support of the particular group becomes personal and relational." So professed long-time soprano soloist and active church member Donna Shaw, recognizing the essential role of individual caring and support in an increasingly impersonal, callous world.

Caring for Aging Family and Friends

The journey of this ministry was launched in the 1980's by Topper Schram, wife of Pastor Emeritus Bill Schram. Topper had driven thousands of miles on a regular basis to care for two elderly maiden aunts in Illinois. She recognized the value of support of caregivers for that expanding segment of the population. So the small group ministry began, and members Dotty Culp and Ginny Cuthbertson fostered the growth. When the Schrams retired to Florida, Donna Shaw was dubbed the "curator-elect." She had become a member to support ailing choir member Betty Windsor. Under the leadership of Donna and Robbie Nash, this group has flourished for over twenty years.

The group meets each month at the church in a casual setting to exchange stories and experiences sans "professionals," but with caring, loving Christians lending an ear and hand to ease the chal-

lenging circumstances that accompany aging. By word of mouth and referrals, scores have come, most of whom beyond the membership of Westminster. For many, the evolving spirit of the small group compels continued participation beyond "graduation." The postcard sent to the mailing list as a reminder of meetings reads:

"Here we share needs, joys, and trials as caregivers for those in need. Here we offer strength and practical help to one another."

Typical of the members' feelings are the words of Donna Reece:

Shortly after my brother was diagnosed with terminal cancer, I joined the support group because I knew that I, as the remaining child, would have the full responsibility of caring for my parents, both in their 80's. Being the caregiver of my family in Florida was very difficult and distressing. The support and caring of the group helps me beyond measure to cope with all the problems and emotions of being a caregiver. We in the support group have cried together and helped each other make difficult decisions. We have also laughed a great deal which has been wonderful therapy for all of us. I cherish the friendships that I have developed in the group and am deeply touched by the members who continue to come after the deaths of their loved ones. Sharing with others who have experienced similar circumstances and feelings helps tremendously. I am sure that I will want to be an 'alumna' of the group someday to offer my support to others who are traveling a difficult journey as caregivers.

An abiding presence is certain as people gather in serving others in times of need. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Matt. 18:20*

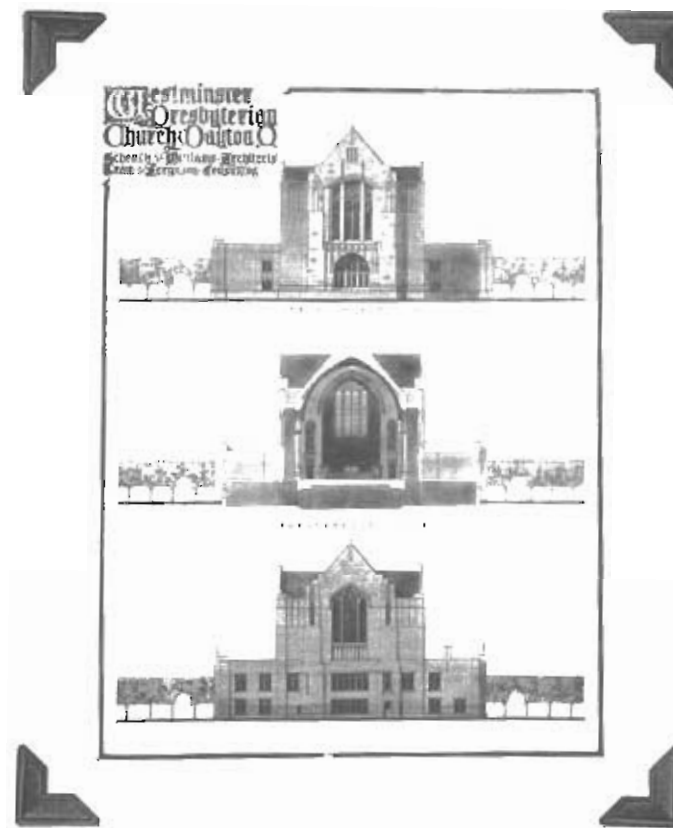
Chapter 10

Educating

✍

AND EDUCATING BOTH YOUNG AND OLD

By Ruth Price, Vail McGuire & Jim Hughes




Original Architects' Drawings

*...we instruct everyone in all the ways of wisdom, so as to present each one of you as a mature member of Christ's body.
To this end I am toiling strenuously with all the energy and power of Christ at work in me.*

Colossians 1:28–29



CHILDHOOD EDUCATION *by Ruth Price*

 Christian Education has always been an important part of mission at Westminster Presbyterian Church. From nursery age to older adults, Westminster has been committed to educational and spiritual development of all ages. In the 1997 mission statement of Christian Education, it is stated that the mission of the committee is to provide spiritual growth and nurture to its members. It is through these programs that people grow in their faith journeys. Through the years the structure and titles have changed, but the mission remains the same from 1817 to the present.

An alert human infant at one month begins to build a vocabulary and thoughts, and this continues with the interaction of others. For a child the capacity for wonder, trust, curiosity, allegiance, and faith is much easier than for an adult. So one can see how starting to learn about God at an early age begins to give a child a foundation for life and an inheritance to always look back on, even if one might wander from these early beginnings. One might go back and reclaim this early faith and continue to grow from it. As a child, we begin a process of learning (and relearning) what it means to love God, neighbor, and self.

A theme through the years with Christian Education is that goals were always being set up with surveys and evaluations being an on-going process. This seems to follow the Presbyterian way of looking at things—order and ardor.

Let's go back to the development of Christian Education focusing mostly on Sunday School from birth to sixth grade. From the time a child is baptized the congregation promises to help educate the child

and help him/her on a spiritual journey. It is the purpose of Sunday School to teach the Word of God as found in the Bible and lead the children and congregation into the kingdom of God.

First Presbyterian Church was organized in Dayton, Ohio, in 1799. As far as can be found, it was not until 1817 that a Sunday School program was established with the help of Sarah Bomberger, the first Sunday School superintendent. Sarah Bomberger was a member of First Presbyterian church and was one of the most active workers of the early church. She was also one of the leading spirits of the organization of the first Sunday School, and played an important part in establishing the Sabbath School of Dayton and the Sabbath School Association. The earliest record, from August of 1818, shows two hundred names on the Sabbath Sunday School roll. She was a person of active, faithful, Christian spirit. In those days few women were able to rise to the position in the church that Sarah Bomberger did. She must have possessed a strong drive and a way of showing God's amazing ways to children. She was only twenty-seven when she came to the rescue of the children. She was superintendent of the Sunday School for ten years.

The Sabbath School was identified with the Dayton Sabbath School Association in 1828 and became auxiliary to the American Sabbath School Union. It is interesting to note that the school was managed by all females, which was a thought ahead of its time. In fact, it was not until 1829 that a man was allowed to be a superintendent. At this time



Mrs. Poince's Class

David Osborn was elected as superintendent with Mrs. Bomberger as assistant. Mrs. Bomberger also helped to build a library for the school, carrying the entire library in her reticule for ten years. In March 1838 a meeting was held and vacancies occasioned by the formation of the New School, or Second Presbyterian Church Sabbath School, were filled; and the books of the library were divided between the two schools. In October of 1839 the basement of the new building was finished and occupied for the first time, and in May 1842 the upper room was finished. Later the Sabbath School reached out to educate Chinese children. We can see even from this early time the church was extending out into the community through education of the word of God. We can be thankful to Sarah Bomberger for the great foundation she gave the Sunday School in the church and the great opportunity she gave children to learn.

In 1886 Third Street Church started a mission Sunday School in North Dayton with Thomas Elder as superintendent. It flourished, and from this begin-

ning a church was built in Riverdale, which grew into Forest Avenue Church. In 1919 when there was a merger of Third Street and First Street Churches, a Sunday School was formed with W.H. McCain as superintendent.

In 1920 a Daily Vacation Bible School was started, and in June 1920 a Children's Day Rally was held. Both proved to be successful. In June of 1925 Vacation Bible School was held in Oakwood with Hugh Ivan Evans as principal. In June of 1928 Hugh Ivan Evans served on the Sunday School Council of Religious Education in Montgomery County. Westminster played a large part in the Dayton Community School for Church School leaders at this time. The church made financial contributions to both of these endeavors. As one can see, from early times Westminster contributed a great deal to the Dayton community and Christian Education, and these programs continued into the thirties. The attendance in Sunday School began to grow. It is interesting to note during this time and into the forties very detailed records were kept dealing with Sunday

School. It even mentioned what the weather was like and the amount of money collected each Sunday with little added notes, all done in hand writing. The Sunday School attendance grew so much that in 1955 extensive renovation took place to expand room for the Sunday School program. Most of the remodeling was completed about 1960. The Sunday School programs were expanding so much that in 1959 Edward Steton was hired as Director of Christian education. Up until this time many of the people in charge of Christian Education program were volunteers. In 1959 there was a second session of Sunday School added. It is of interest to note that in 1959–1960 there were eleven different Church School Superintendents (nursery–adult). In 1961 a council of Christian Education was formed. The Sunday School was moving forward with renewed vigor and greater spiritual depth. The result was that the average attendance now totaled 675 to 750 each Sunday. (nursery–adult) Great efforts at this time were also being made on teacher training and individual spiritual growth. After Edward Steton left in 1961, Rev. Donald D. Wick Jr. was hired as associate Pastor and Minister of Christian Education.

The session also hired a series of young adults to serve as Christian Directors—Cheri Crawford in 1963 and David Oyer and Mildred Slater in 1968. The thrust of Christian Education at Westminster has always affected each one of its members, not just young people. There was not a person in the church

who wasn't directly or indirectly connected or influenced by this ministry. It is the ministry of education and teaching that helps us as all come to grips with the meaning of our Christian faith. Without a viable program for both children and adults, the church's future is potentially one generation away from irrelevancy, apathy, and possible extinction. It is very important that we start children with a good foundation to help them deal with the world.

Mary Wills was hired in July of 1970 as an associate in Christian Education. On July 13, 1975, she was ordained as an associate Pastor. She was the first woman in Miami Presbytery to be ordained in the United Presbyterian Church. She was also the first woman Pastor at Westminster, and Westminster was the first Presbyterian Church in Dayton to have a woman on the ministerial staff. In the early seventies teachers felt that they needed more help from the staff in preparing them to teach. Accordingly Mary Wills worked on making a list of criteria for selecting teachers. There was an effort to have open houses and class visitations during this period and even the use of video taping in the classrooms.

The Mother's Day Out Program was established in 1973 with Cathe Carpenter in charge. It was started as a sitter service, meeting on Thursdays in the church nursery. As time progressed, however, the program became more elaborate and expanded. The program started as a service to the church, but later donations were requested. The program grew, and in 1982 there were as many as fifteen children

participating and then as many as twenty-seven. The children went on field trips, and the program became more extensive. In the ninety's the name was changed to Parent's Day Out to keep up with the times. Because many mothers were going back to work with children in day-care, the number



Dotty Culp's Sunday School Class

of children participating in the program became less. In 1998 the program was discontinued, as there weren't enough children participating to keep the program alive.

In thinking over the past fifty years and the church nursery program that went along with Mother's Day Out, one can not help but remember names like Grace Murray, Dorothy and Chet Maple, Cathe Carpenter, Sharon Jones, Tori Kitchen, Bess Wright, and Carol Fyke Porter. There are hundreds of other people who also helped, but space doesn't permit them all to be named. A Sunday School ministry that can't be forgotten is the kitchen ministry of June Fisher. Hundreds of children remember her kindness and her candy jar on Sunday mornings.

In 1975 a new job description was written for the position of C. E. director. During this period there seemed to be a drop in Sunday School attendance. In the elementary classes there weren't enough children for one class per grade so the grade levels were grouped together. Because of financial reasons and the drop in attendance, the position of C.E. Director was eliminated. Mary Wills left Westminster in May of 1976 to go on to another position in the Presbyterian Church.

In August of 1976 the years of volunteerism began in the Sunday School Program. Judy McCormick became the coordinator of Christian Enrichment. Open houses for the teachers were held, and a learning center type of education was started. Workshops were held for teacher learning, and new types of curriculum were explored. A big effort was made to update the Sunday School Program. The children started work with the Heifer Program. The Thursday Adventure program was started in the summer of 1977 to work together with the Mother's Day Out Program. At the end of the seventies, attendance started to increase gradually, and nursery care was also expanded.

In August of 1979 Judith Barr was hired as Christian Education coordinator to develop the Church School Program. She was installed by the Miami Presbytery in April 1984 as a certified

Christian Educator. During the period of time that Judith was at Westminster, many exciting changes began to happen with the Sunday School Program. Surveys were sent out to the congregation to see what the people wanted and needed. Teacher workshops took place. One Great Hour of Sharing was expanded. All-church retreats took place, and children participated in the May Festival. A stewardship program was started with children as well as a summer intern program. Kirkmont Camp scholarships were made available. A booklet was written concerning communion so children could better understand the meaning of it. Then a workshop was held to explain this to parents and children. The nursery was revamped and brought up-to-date. Fourth graders were presented with a Bible, and seniors were presented with a gift at the time of their graduation. During this time curriculum was also being examined to give the best possible program to the children, and as a result, the new Presbyterian curriculum was used. At this time a Sunday School class was also started for two-year-olds. Workshop approaches were used in the classroom. To help recruit more teachers for the Sunday School team, teaching was developed so that one teacher didn't have to teach the whole year. The children in primary and intermediate classes collected for UNICEF, and the high school class then gave them a Halloween party. Time was spent showing the water projects of Church World Services and awareness made of the importance of water.

Some of the outstanding programs that happened during this period with One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHOS) were children collecting for money to purchase seeds for CROP, fourth and fifth graders going to Martin House in Dayton (part of House of the People-Homeless), a pig purchased for a family in Bolivia, and a goat and lamb were also purchased to help people help themselves. The goat and lamb actually were brought down the aisle of the church to show the congregation how the children had participated in the Heifer Project. OGHOS was not only for sharing money, but to help show children the

cultures of other nations. There was sharing through prayers, games, songs, and stories of other countries.

To help broaden children's experiences, the second and third graders visited the Mary Scott Nursing Home, and the fourth and fifth graders visited Temple Israel. These were just a few of the exciting activities that were happening at Westminster while Judith Barr was in charge of the Christian Education. The Sunday School was alive and growing. Visitors were coming back so their children could be a part of the program. Judith was always trying to find ways to keep in contact with the teachers and get feed-back from them. Judith Barr left in January of 1989 to begin her studies at United Theological Seminary in Dayton so that she could become a minister.

Jeanne McIver followed in Judith Barr's footsteps. She had many ideas and ways to innovate the good program that had been started. Booklets concerning baptism, The Lord's Prayer, and the history of worship were printed, and workshops held to help families deal with these subjects with their children. A mission fair was added during the OGHOS time so children could help earn money for this program. In this way children could make items, and the congregation could purchase them. The fourth and fifth graders did group activities outside of their regular Sunday School classes, so a sense of community could be formed to carry over into Junior and Senior High. A new program was added to the Sunday School program called "Children and Worship," taught by Julie Preisser and Ruth Price. It was a hands-on way of preparing children for the order of worship with the stories of God at the center. It was a beginning way of learning about the Presbyterian Church. Workshops were held for teachers as well as thank-you breakfasts. Jeanne had a delightful way of maintaining contact with the parents of young children to help build a sense of community with them.

Jeanne McIver left in October of 1996. During this period Miriam Leupold and Denise Shoenberger acted as interim directors of Christian Education. In

December of 1997 Rev. Nancy Hodgkins became associate pastor of Christian Education. Denise remained on for some time as an assistant; and when she left, Gerald Bailey became assistant C.E. director.

In June of 1998, approved by the C.E. Committee, a ministry team was appointed to investigate the possibility of changing the Sunday School program into workshops known as a rotation method. It was felt that workshops were a way to help teach the Bible more creatively and effectively. It's an approach that taps into the natural talents of teachers and students and makes Bible learning endure. The approach is simple but powerful; it transforms standard classrooms into customized "workshops." Classes rotate to different workshops each week, and they learn the same Bible lesson in a variety of ways.

In October and November of 1998 research and development of the Sunday School workshop method was activated. Also budget planning and Session approval took place at this time. In the spring of 1999 the ministry team attended a National Workshop Rotation Conference in Chicago. Promotion of this program was explained to the congregation, and recruitment of volunteers for design, construction, and teaching took place. In the summer of 1999 construction and room workshop development was completed. Members worked hard to transform the classrooms and give them a new look. The first Sunday after Labor Day in 1999 was the kick-off Sunday for the new program, which became known as CrossRoads. At the present time CrossRoads is the core of the Sunday School Program for the children K-6th grade.

The year 2000 brought about consideration of the concept of children being included in the entire worship service. Up to this time the younger children only remained for the first part of the service. After much thought and discussion, a new Sunday School schedule was put in place in the fall of 2001. During worship service two programs were initiated: "Children and Worship" for the four and five-year-

olds, and the "Come-and-See" program for children K-3. The CrossRoads program continues at 9:00. Children fourth grade and up attend the entire church service; the younger children have the option of staying in church for the entire service or attending the classes offered. This is known as a whole-community worship concept. This is a change for the congregation, and time will tell whether this fits the needs of the Westminster congregation.

In the summer of 1998 a downtown Vacation Bible School was started with four different downtown churches. There was a children's program as well as an adult program. A dinner was also served. It met once a week for four weeks. Although the attendance wasn't high, it was a way of bonding with other downtown churches. It is hoped that this will become an important ecumenical activity.

Throughout the many years of Christian

Education at Westminster, many volunteers have worked very diligently to help make the program work. We thank God for these people in this church who reflect earnestness and dedication as we all seek to work together in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

A booklet will be available to the congregation in 2002. The characteristics described in this pamphlet suggest typical physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual growth at each age group.

Just recently a song by Alan Jackson was released. It reminded me of the importance of exposing young children to the Bible. Jackson says, "I know Jesus and I talk to God and I remember this from when I was young—faith, hope, and love are some of things He gave us and the greatest of these is love." He tells us to dust off the Bible and open our eyes. What a wonderful gift the church can give both young and old alike—Christian Education.

Julie Preiser's "Children in Worship" class



YOUTH PROGRAM

by Vail McGuire

*T*he Youth Fellowship Program at Westminster Presbyterian Church is, like any other program, “a work in progress.” Its mission and ministry has evolved throughout the years, and as it does so, it often reflects the cultural climate that surrounds it. The idea of Youth Fellowship itself is rooted in the Church’s recognition of a growing need to assume more of the responsibility for providing children and youth with opportunities for learning, fun, and mission within a Christian community. Whereas the ministry of passing the Christian faith and beliefs on to future generations had historically resided chiefly within the family as a social unit, the dynamics began to shift midway through the twentieth century. It is in response to this change that such social institutions as the YMCA were born, and it likewise gave birth to the concept of a Youth Fellowship program, an alternative community to that which the culture at

large provided. Not that Youth Fellowship is separate from the culture in which it resides. Rather, it has always been both of the world and not of the world. The emphasis during the sixties and seventies was on the social gospel, a reflection of the political and social changes taking place. Society’s gaze then turned inward, and, accordingly, the importance of one’s personal faith began to emerge during the eighties and nineties. As a result, a central question surfaced, namely how to balance these two essential faces of the Christian faith, personal belief and social action. Westminster’s Youth Fellowship program has always grappled with these same issues, and has found a theme, a common thread, to bind together the two faces of Christianity. The thread lies in providing an open and loving environment where young people can explore, question, debate, share, and even disagree. In order to accomplish this, Youth Fellowship strives to be a safe place, sowing the seeds of tolerance and understanding that make Sunday nights truly “different.” It was, and remains, a community marked by relationships, by acceptance, and by caring.

More than anything else, perhaps, Youth Fellowship is formed of relationships. Young people often form lifelong relationships, both with each other and with adult leaders while sharing confidences late into the night at a Montreat conference, or sharing a single bathroom among twenty other people while on a mission trip. Relationships emerge from sharing opinions during a discussion, or listening to someone read their statement of faith. They cross over the boundaries of age and experience as youth and adults share, learn, sing, cry, laugh, eat, and pray. And most importantly, a relationship evolves as youth experience God in their lives.

It is perhaps because of this that the Youth Fellowship program at Westminster seeks to be a



Shawn Farra amidst floor sleepers

I think the first thing I remember about going to Westminster (when I was in something like the ninth grade) was hanging out around that large round kitchen table down in the basement on Sunday afternoons/evenings, just talking and laughing with the other kids who were around—Wendy McCormick, Katie Johnston, Tim Manuel, Tom, Jill, Stella, Joan. I also have a clear memory of being given full run of the church nearly every time we asked for it: napping on the pews in the sanctuary, playing guitar and singing in the basement, making out in the choir loft.

Summer trips were the best. Bumping along in the bus, who sits next to whom, picking up stones along the beach of Lake Superior, “heavy, deep and real” talks each night.

I also remember: Preaching from the pulpit on Youth Sunday. Marveling at Bob Stofer’s control of not one but TWO different organs, and the magnificent Westminster Choir singing selections from Messiah. Masters in this Hall, Joe Albrecht in the lead. Free to be You and Me at the New Year’s Eve Nightwatch service. The terrific staff that led the youth groups: Mary Wills, “Wee Willie” Schram, Vail Hutson, Don and Julie Drumheller.

I think it’s fair to say that Westminster was the first place I ever felt truly comfortable in church, and got any idea that “church” was more than a building or whatever happened on Sunday morning. It has been my standard—and touchstone—ever since.

Leeanne Kleinmann, Editor in Memphis

I have wonderful memories of the youth group at Westminster, not the least of which is that we thought we were running the place! I remember weekend trips to Kirkmont and to State Parks when we were in Junior High and Mary Wills was our fearless leader. I remember especially the ice cream fundraisers through the hot, humid summer to raise the money for our week-long summer trips in senior high. We pushed an ice cream freezer and carts loaded with electric roasters, coolers and lunch supplies from the church to Courthouse Plaza, where we sold our wares to downtown workers. The Health Department never said a word. When I was in senior high, Vail Hutson and Bill Schram (we called him Wee Willie) were among our leaders and later Don and Julie Drumheller. Amazingly, all of those leaders went ahead and had children of their own, even though putting up with us gave them plenty of reasons to avoid parenthood! I also remember the summer that we convinced Gretchen Albrecht to go with us on the summer trip. She was busy with all manner of performing as a singer and a dancer, and she wasn’t known for camping..., but she came with us on the trip to Paradise, Michigan. I remember her mom loaded us down with snacks for the trip, and I remember Gretchen put on mascara in her sleeping bag in the morning before she got up. We had SUCH a good time—“deep and profound” conversations day and night, silly songs on the bus (the bus was an old school bus painted deep metallic purple), and lifelong friendships.

Wendy McCormick, Co-Pastor First Presbyterian Church, Evansville, IN

community of acceptance. The constant objective is to make Sunday evenings a sanctuary from the exclusion and judgment that are so often the source of pain and uncertainty in young lives. In conjunction with the church, the Youth Fellowship program has introduced a small group ministry. This not only allows teens to spend time in smaller, more intimate groups, more conducive to everyone sharing and contributing, but also encourages interaction between individuals who would not normally be thrown together. Another factor that has changed is demographics. Whereas Westminster's youth groups previously drew from a handful of school districts, twenty-seven are now represented. As a result, teens have found their social boundaries expanded as they

come together with youth from many different schools. In such an environment, acceptance is always the goal, even in the midst of differences and misunderstandings, as youth learn the true meaning of being "sisters and brothers in Christ."

The Fellowship program at Westminster is, in many ways, a reflection of the larger church community. Westminster Presbyterian Church has always been defined by caring, for its own members, for the surrounding community, and for the world. The same can be said for the youth fellowship groups. Mission trips, for example, are a summer tradition, and over the years, Westminster youth have painted, mopped, hammered, and hauled their way across the country.

Growing up in Westminster was such positive experience for me. I had so many wonderful times that I would not be able to fit all them in such short space. From seventh grade on I basically spent my entire Sunday at church. Bell choir was first, followed by choir and then evening ended with youth fellowship. Even though we all went to different schools throughout the Dayton area, none of that made a difference come Sunday. The people who led us in each of these activities were just as important as kids whom we saw every Sunday. John Neely came in and brought a whole new life into the choir programs. Rick Otte, John and Vail McGuire were just the right people to be in charge of the fellowship program. The junior and senior high fellowship activities were important because it helped us grow religiously and develop as a person. We did so many things to help in the community to help others that were not as fortunate as ourselves. There are two things that stick out in my mind. One was when we would go Christmas caroling to the nursing homes around town and see the smiles on the faces of the people in the homes. The other was the two-week journey we took out west. We worked in the small town of San Luis, Colorado. I had the pleasure of becoming an expert tire changer (we had four flat tires in less than 48 hours), and then while we had all the tires replaced, we dined high on the hog at Jerry's. I did unfortunately have a set back when we got to San Luis, in that I was running toward a creek in the back of the church we were helping and I stepped on a nail. I was on crutches for a couple of days, but I was able to make homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies for the fellowship group and the people at the church.

People at church were the kind of people you would hope you could associate yourself with your entire life. I currently live in Cleveland, and I know that there is only one Westminster Presbyterian Church, but the Parish I belong to reminds me of the church and all wonderful people I had the pleasure of knowing and helping me develop into the person I am today.

Scott Price, Supervisor/Trainer, U.S. Food Service, Cleveland, OH.



Father, son in
sleeping bags,
San Luis, Colorado

Scott Price,
roller skating
with mission kids

I can't even imagine what my life would be like or what kind of person I would have become if it were not for the experiences, friendship, love, and laughter I found from Youth Fellowship at Westminster. I matured as a giving person and made friendships that are still with me today. Many of the memories are recalled like they were yesterday, but I know in my heart that the time has been gone for years.

One of the earliest memories that I recall is walking down the aisle singing for Noah's Ark. I was a skunk in the 2 by 2's of Noah's Ark at the age of five and I thought Dr. Albrecht had the most amazing voice. I continued with Cherub and Calvin choirs into the six years of bell playing of Masters in this Hall (it was my junior year that we first saw the new bell set). Another milestone walk down the aisle was my High School Baccalaureate topped off by my momentous Wedding Day walk. The aisle itself never seemed to get any shorter, and I always said my prayers to get down to the steps without tripping. The reason I focused this thought on the aisle is that so many amazing memories and high points of my life took place for me at Westminster.

I often look back on our mission trips to Boston, St. Louis, and of course, San Luis, Colorado as the milestones in my life that made me a better human being. After being in the eighth poorest community in the United States (at the time) I vowed to not take things for granted...and whenever I let this thought get away from me, I simply go back to that time and that experience and remind myself of the good fortune in my life. My friends, my family, my good life is a mold of these early years. At a young age I was able to take responsibility for myself and actions by what I learned from all my experiences with Youth Fellowship and my friends from all surrounding school districts...we were a very diverse group and coming together every Sunday afternoon and evening made me accept everyone exactly the way they were.

So, while I remember dancing on the chancel steps to the Lords Prayer with Hilles & Laura, monthly paper drives (my poor brother always got stuck with John in the back of the semi truck), sardines...Catherine in the elevator, Super Bowl parties each year, or my senior year getting to give the sermon during Youth Sunday on God's sense of humor. I must say that no one memory alone encompasses my experience at Westminster. It is a patchwork of laughter, friends, tears, and lessons that made me appreciate God's work and the amazing gift of life I will never take for granted.

Laurie Price Starnes, Manager of Store Operations, Victoria's Secret, Columbus, OH.

Mission work is also a part of the regular fellowship year: visits to nursing homes, Halloween parties at the George Foster Home, and purchasing Christmas gifts for Van Cleve School students. Not only do the youth learn the joy of working on behalf of others, they learn that poverty and want are not abstract concepts and distant statistics: They wear a face. And as friendships grow among paint buckets and mops, kids learn to care for each other as well, gaining a new appreciation for each others' skills and gifts.

Of course, the memories of youth fellowship include some rather unsavory details typically performed by high spirited young people testing the limits of their world. As early as 1942 saw a girl's pink satin pajamas hoisted up the flagpole by the boys at a fellowship camp-out at Cricket Hollow; kids have been known to misbehave in the balcony or choir loft; bell ringers or choir members regale each other with Saturday nights' exploits on Sunday mornings. But such recollections dim in the shadow of the positive experiences lived by the extraordinary young people who have become such loving, caring Christian adults.

Yes, the Youth Fellowship program is a work in progress, and in the five years that she has been here, Rev. Nancy Hodgkins, Minister of Christian Education, has witnessed her share of changes. "I'll never forget the first time I attended a Bible Study and asked one of the kids to pray out loud," she says

with a laugh. "When someone finally did volunteer, it was very short!" Learning about praying and speaking openly about one's faith is an essential part of spiritual growth, she contends, and teaching the language of faith is part of what Youth Fellowship is all about. Devotionals have become a regular activity on Sunday nights, with youth taking turns leading each other in Scripture reading, prayer, and song. Youth have shared their Statements of Faith that they wrote as a part of their confirmation. Amid laughter and tears, they have shared their questions and their epiphanies during Back Home sessions at Montreat Youth Conferences. They have learned to put their beliefs and convictions into words, borrowed freely from both the time honored phrases of the Church, and their own everyday exchanges with friends and families. In short, they are given the tools whereby they can truly appropriate the Christian faith as their own.

Editor's Note: Undoubtedly, no one has been more involved with youth mission trips than John and Vail McGuire. Their tireless, committed, youthful, enthusiastic Christian dedication has provided models to be emulated by both the young people they "shepherd" and the adults who help with the flock. Vail, first an adolescent participant, then a leader and educator, was asked to reminisce through a stream-of-consciousness exercise that follows.

Some summer trips that I remember:

- A two week trip to Michigan back in the seventies with Mary Wills (Wendy McCormick was on that one)
- A trip to Boston to work at a small church there with a strong urban ministry. Not the best memory for me, since I spent one day watching John throw up, and the next day inside a Christian book store, painting. The next day, we were on our way home, since John's mother was ill.
- A wonderful mission work trip to Colorado, with such people as the Price family (Ron, Ruth, Scott, Laurie), Hilles Hughes, Catherine Marshall, Sarah Grueber, Jeannette Britt, Pat Lane, Laura Minnick among others.
- A trip to a Montreat Youth Conference, after the unification of the Southern and Northern churches. As a matter of fact, we might have been one of the first, if not the first Yankee youth

group to attend! This was the first of many trips: I forget the years, but I remember the people: a group that included Marshall Ferrell trying to climb out his dorm window as John stood, bemusedly, below. I remember another trip, after Dana was born and just a toddler, with Jean McIver and Tom Francis. John packed Dana in a car and came down to surprise me, and we have a great picture of our Lassie/Timmy reunion, with Elizabeth Herr standing by, grinning from ear to ear. The next time we went (1997, I think) was with Karen Clute and Jeff Firestone. This was a transition year for the kids, after Tom left, and they didn't really know any of us, but it laid the foundation for John and me to re-enter the world of youth fellowship advising. Andrew Gillespie, Rob Signom, and Beth Perry, Christina Gonzales were some of the kids on that trip. The next trip (1999) was with Nancy, and included Lauren Stevens, Andrew (again), Kevin Myers, Erin Carr, Katie Ferguson, Kori and Kelly Phillips, Josh Dungan, Jonathan Barnhart and Katy Dowell. This was an incredible trip for all involved, and many of the kids had some real life-changing experiences. Last summer (2001), we returned with Kelly and Megan McCullough, Alex Gonzales, Josh, Kevin, Ben Manual, Kevin Howorth, Katy D. (again), Ashley Conway, and others.

- In between these trips to Montreat, there have been mission trips to Chicago, where we stayed at Lakeview Pres and worked our butts off, including a trip to Cabrini Green housing. Scott Neely and Laura Perry, as well as Nancy and I were advisors on that trip. We also went to Leeds, ME, where Nancy is from and did some work for an organization there, a rural outreach program, whose name I've forgotten. John, Scott, Lisa Pugh, Karen Clute, Nancy and I went on that trip, and we accomplished an incredible amount of work. The pattern has been to alternate between Montreat and work trips, but this year we're altering things somewhat by our trip to Scotland. Also, last summer, I accompanied several of our youth to Triennium, an international gathering of Pres youth with, if my memory serves, about 5000.

Just as the Church must encourage our youth to discover a language of faith, we should also be nurturing the Presbyterian Church of the future. It is essential that Youth Fellowship offer opportunities for learning about the Church and what comprises the Presbyterian faith. Accordingly, Youth Fellowship is a place where kids learn what it means to be a Presbyterian. In keeping with this objective, Westminster's youth have become active at the Presbytery level, active in such groups as the Presbyterian Youth Council, and involved in such activities as Presbytery sponsored lock-ins and Youth Rallies. Westminster's young people have also experienced Triennium, a gathering of Presbyterian youth from all over the world. While maintaining

a respect for different faiths and traditions, Westminster youth nevertheless learn to take pride in their own denomination, laying the foundations for the church to come. All in all, Rev. Hodgkins seeks to help youth in discovering a faith that has achieved balance—balance between an ecumenical and denominational identity, between heart and mind, between personal faith and mission.

Year after year Youth Sunday is a dramatic affirmation of the value of the youth ministry at Westminster—the planning, leadership, liturgy, sermon, music, ushering—all in the extraordinarily capable hands of young people. This year, 2002, the introit was composed and sung by the seniors. The youth had based their theme for the year on a cloud

of witnesses from Hebrews 12, praising those who ran the race before us and guided our feet.

Representative of the meditations shared by the youth are the words of senior Alex Gonzalez:

There are many things that I have encountered in my life that have caused me to question God, why He does the things He does. Things like unnatural death, war, terrorism, hate, poverty; I have questioned Him on how He could allow such terrible things to happen to the world. My next question was how could He let such terrible things happen to me?

For a brief period of time during my junior year of high school, I thought that God wasn't on my side at all; and to be quite honest, it felt like nobody was on my side. This might sound familiar to some of you. I mean, I know that there are people that are always there for you; family, the church, good friends. But at that time, I didn't feel like I wanted to listen. And we all know that being a typical teenager I wasn't about to go talk to my parents about everything, even though now that I have thought about it, I probably should have. But I remembered something that I heard at youth fellowship one Sunday night and that's God will always listen. So I would talk to God, sometimes in my car, lying in bed, at school, whether it was praying, or just talking. But it felt like every time I would pray for something or someone, God wouldn't come through for me. I would pray for strength to help me get over some of the hurdles that life sets up along the way. But it felt like I just couldn't jump high enough. I would pray for confidence, courage, and will power, but things just didn't go my way. So I began to wonder if God was really there or not. Sure, I would go to worship on Sundays and recite the statement of faith, and have a brief reassurance of God's existence, but I felt completely ignored by God. But that all changed for me. I have heard stories of people who say they have encountered God and had a spiritual enlightenment with his presence, and I wished that it would happen with me, just so I would know, just to be completely certain. And it happened. Over the summer, the church youth group went to Montreat, a week-long retreat in North Carolina.

Alex Gonzalez

As the Youth Fellowship program continues to evolve, and as the church seeks to meet the needs of its youth, it also provides a means by which young people assume their unique role in the life of the church, a place where they are not only nurtured, but help to nurture the congregation. Youth Fellowship is one of the ways that the youth can find their place and purpose in the church. One of Rev. Hodgkins' goals is to increase the opportunities that the young people of the church have to share their extraordinary gifts of creativity, energy, humor, enthusiasm, and faith. This includes involving the youth in worship, service, and mission, and increasing

opportunities for interaction with congregational members of diverse ages.

Westminster's Youth Fellowship program is, indeed, a work in progress. Open to change, fostered by the love and guidance of God and of the church, and fed by the youth themselves, with all their abundance of gifts they bring, it brings life and vitality to both Westminster and the Church at large.



Roberts' class—1950's

Officers for Mr. Roberts' class 1955-1956:
 Back: William Perrett, Fred W. Boyd,
 Charles Catlett, Resler Calihan.
 Front: Helen Calihan, Janet Boyd, Fern Perrett.
 Class had 445 members.

Roberts' Class

In the tradition of Sarah Bomberger's Sabbath School and Ada Pounce's class and endowment for seminarians was Mason M. Roberts, who was legendary as a business/community leader and Sunday School teacher. In fact, his class was known as the Roberts' class with a membership in excess of 400 people, mostly couples but not a requirement. A class officer wrote, "The highlight of activities could very readily be centered about the highly inspirational talks of the class teacher, Mr. Roberts, who gives his Bible based views of the present day Christian's responsibilities and activities." Sessions opened with fifteen minutes of music followed by the lessons which were tape recorded each week. There were class officers elected who organized financial assistance to support the Westminster Work Caravan, film purchases for church use, donations to the church library, contribution towards the Ada Dodds Pounce Endowment Fund, the Christmas party, spring and fall picnics. "This necessitates the formulation of committees, delegation of work, and participation of many members of the class all of which leads to better Christian fellowship, individual initiative, and a high level of spiritual relationship penetrating the entire roster of membership."

In a *Dayton Daily News* article of June 1949 entitled "Religion in Big Business: Dayton Industrialist Says Time Is Here for More," Mason Roberts, General Manager of Frigidaire, was featured for his impact in addressing a large gathering of industrialists,



chairmen of boards, executives in Cleveland. "He was calm and unhurried, but his voice carried the power and conviction of an evangelist." Bernard J. Losh wrote, "They did not know what to make of him. They had never heard anything like this before at a business conference. But after a little while they all came to congratulate him and shake hands. They liked what they had heard." Dayton already knew of his leadership as he had quietly worked his way up to the loftiest job at Frigidaire. He said, "The first rung of the ladder was never meant to rest your foot upon but only to hold it up long enough to place the other somewhat higher."

In the tradition of the greatest of teachers,

Roberts said philosophically,

"You can't master anybody or anything until you first master yourself, and anytime you start yelling and shouting—indications that you are losing your head—you give the other fellow the advantage. ...It is necessary to be efficient in your undertakings. However, remember that efficiency is not a matter of hustle and bustle; it's not noise and excitement and ceaseless activity. It is organized, planned action, carefully done and with each step marked out in advance."

Equanimity permeated his life in work, daily activities, and the church. His creed was

"...to live fully, to love deeply one's family and friends, to respect and deal fairly and honorably with each other and with all men and, by diligent work and conformity with the laws of God and man, to pursue for oneself, and help others acquire, a good measure of happiness in and satisfaction with this life."

Mason Roberts made it a point never to suggest to his employees that they should follow his religious practices. "...what they got from him about daily Christian living comes by way of example—his reputation as a man who combines big business with Sunday School work always precedes him." Life worthy of emulation was the best lesson he could teach.

ADULT EDUCATION *by Jim Hughes*

*I*n the last thirty years Westminster has continued to develop and consolidate new directions for adult educational programs. The church's historic primacy in adult Bible study has been re-interpreted. A model of seminary Bible instruction has been changed to one reflecting the church-related liberal arts college. Sunday mornings have become times to choose from three or four kinds of course offerings. What had been at first a simple celebration of diversity has come to reflect a pattern of curriculum. The pattern includes four kinds of courses: those related to the study of the Bible; others reflecting Christian themes in history; courses responsive to personal and family crisis and growth; courses discussing social and economic issues in the present world. Literature and the arts, individual creative expression, theology, courses supporting mission programs, and many others were also found to fit under the new umbrella concept of patterned diversity.

Many of those at Westminster who have participated in the adult education program are not at all surprised that Westminster begins its third century as a self-affirming "education church." The partnership

with Van Cleve Elementary School is already the model for a Westminster-led initiative for similar partnerships between other churches and other schools across the region.

Responding to a questionnaire, many friends and participants of Westminster's adult education programs over the past thirty years, spoke about their expectations. These answers tell us a great deal about where and how Westminster continues to journey outward from self-enclosure to world-understanding.

"Since man has dominance over creation, given him by God, we need to see how God is working in the fields of Art, Science, Philosophy, and Religion."

La Vina Wilson

Wilson's statement here might not go unchallenged were it to be part of one of the adult education program's lively discussion sessions. But almost always any challenge would reflect an equal spirit of love and respect for the other. This mutual respect and openness is one of the traditional strengths of a

liberalizing educational atmosphere. Though some might prefer another word for “man” and “stewardship” for “dominance,” few would argue the wide-ranging scope of God’s work in so many “fields.” Thus, in 2002, we have already had a course led by Paul Hertig on “Acts and Urban Mission” and a course led by Michele Wheatly on “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria.”

“Bible Study must always be informed by culture, context, and current scholarship.”

Jeanne McIver

Though perhaps not intended to be considered in these terms, McIver’s “context” also suggests many exceptions to the “must always be”: current small group ministries may sometimes carry-on in spirit and in practice the once continuing adult education course called “Bible and prayer fellowship” where Bible readings simply but importantly offered mutual support and inspiration. Otherwise, formal studies of the Bible have been led by area experts from Wright State University, the University of Dayton, Sinclair Community College and United Theological Seminary. Many of these experts have become magnets for their own now familiar but still exciting approaches to Bible study. Westminster pastors, singly or cooperatively, supplement these others so that indeed there is always an adult education course or two directly related to close Bible study. Pam Timmes of the University of Dayton is currently leading a study of the gospel of John in the spring of 2002; in the fall of 2001 Tyron Inbody of the United Theological Seminary presented “Some Difficult Ideas about the Apostles Creed.” Joris Heise of Sinclair Community College challenged many with his fall 2001 course on “Biblical Ideas and Words Different from Ours.” Heise’s course speaks to another questionnaire response:

“Have not words like revelation and reverence left the language?”

Rev. Lawrence Mills

Indeed, such words often seem to have left the language of many adult students in today’s “new” adult education classes. But what these words are all about can be experienced and felt many times over. There is that hush that comes after someone’s testimony about the power of prayer (as in Barbara Battin’s fall 2000 course called “Teach Us to Pray.”) There is that tone in Joris Heise’s voice as he explains the Hebrew and Greek languages. Personal admissions of addiction, of distress, of need, of victimization become somehow revelations of a common humanity. Standing-room-only class members become witnesses to the reverence in the Dayton Islamic community’s “ambassador” from his faith to ours. A similarly crowded classroom experienced the shocking revelation of homophobia visited violently against a straight-arrow fraternity member during a course studying the issue of gay and lesbian ordination. Yes, maybe there needs to be a new course on why the words themselves sometimes seem to be lacking.

“To enable adult Christians to understand, appreciate, and grow in their faith as well as to encourage them to look at their own convictions critically and with maturity.”

Father Joseph Goetz

Father Goetz issues the challenge to us all. It is perhaps the hardest challenge of all education, especially perhaps to adults and adults who are believers: how dare we look critically at what we believe? Aren’t we supposed to find convictions and hold them dearly? Such is the dilemma posed by a current associate pastor. Our task is:

“To give intellectual and cognitive support to something that is quite the opposite, our faith.”

Rev. Glenn Leupold

Isn’t it enough of a challenge to look for intellectual, academic support for personal faith without worrying about stirring up even more critically doubting components? Answers to questions like these are

more likely to be more questions. Adult Christian education seems amazingly about the task of dancing across opposites, sometimes like the sword dances of our church's Scottish forebears.

"An adult education program needs to be about the task of people explaining the Biblical story, then making it their own story."

Rev. Miriam Lawrence Leupold

Associate pastor Kay Davis-Dudding has recently taught one of many adult offerings about storytelling: "Remembering Your Story" (fall 2001). On a personal and universal level, the life-affirming diversity of Westminster's adult education program is its telling of and listening to these stories. It is an observation that Presbyterian writer Kathleen Norris has made over and over again. The relationships of what may be the ONE story to the bewildering MANY must be the all-consuming mystery that is ours only to attempt ever so lovingly to solve.

Perhaps the final quote should be from an emeritus minister to and from these years of adult education at Westminster:

"I believe that the purpose of Bible Study today must primarily be twofold: to increase our knowledge of scripture so that we may know and understand its content but also the time and context in which it was written; then to relate all of that to the times in which we live and to the issues with which we, as persons of faith, must deal."

Rev. Bill Schram

Etymologically, the word "education" has two seemingly opposing meanings at its root. One is the idea of a nurturing training; the other is the notion of leading out of or away from one's origins. Both meanings operate at once in a vibrant adult education program in a church setting. At Westminster in the year 2002, the setting continues to be centrally an urban and urbane one. Crossed swords of local and international conflicts make many multi-laned

and one-way crossroads here. All that Westminster has been for over two hundred years can provide a nurturing remembrance and a traditional training for the travels and travails of dealing with the most personal as well as the most international of conflicts. The upcoming third hundred years thus already has a treasure chest of good memories with which to move ever outward while somehow remaining true to home.

Perhaps, then, the best "conclusion" to this briefest of surveys of only a few of those many years would be a short list of memorable names and events among many, many, many more. Webb Seurat was one of the quiet and kind catalysts for change in curriculum. Sue Angerman used her method of cleaning house as a model for all kinds of therapeutic house cleanings. The Peacemaking Committee was a pioneer in insisting on adult educational responses to the latest regional and international conflicts. Rev. Mark Smutny used his Dayton and Montgomery County low income housing connections to open important connections between Westminster's adult education program and local governments. Tom Francis insisted that film was an appropriate medium for the program. Rev. Bob Veon was able to bring large numbers of members downtown early on a week-day morning for close Bible reading and study. Of course, finally, the best and most natural response to this attempt at a list is "why didn't you mention Bob Reece's courses on medical ethical issues or senior pastor Sandy McConnell's "16 Ways to Love Your Lover" or Thomas Preisser's "Reformation History" or Larry Welborn's "Good Ordinary People" and the names would and do go on. This writer's response is simply to admit failure and say, "But you are proving what an inexhaustible legacy of riches we all have!" As I remember Webb Seurat saying quietly but firmly: our program must be about our theology, our history, our Bible and all our questions about all of that in our real world here and now. Those are not his exact words, but they summarize his intention and the legacy and future of our program.

Chapter 11

Caring



AS BOUNDLESS CARING MAKES EACH DAY

By Peggy Conner



Bently Candlelight Wedding

*"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."*



WESTMINSTER YOUNG ADULTS

*W*estminster Church's center city location attracts people from all parts of the Dayton area. The Church's commitment to fellowship activities has retained them from first meeting, through marriage at the church, to bringing their children to Westminster, with the cycle repeating. Often the first contact for young singles in Dayton was Westminster Young Adults (W.Y.A.).

A new assistant minister, Byron Hughes, arrived at Westminster in 1936 and became very active in promoting activities for single young adults. The sure-fire plan for W.Y.A. at the church, repeated for many years, attracted young singles: food was served! A few people volunteered to prepare a simple supper at nominal cost, served in the Social Hall. It was most often not more than hamburgers or chili or soup-and-sandwiches, with fruit and cookies for dessert, but the company was fun. Soon, over 100 attended the Sunday late afternoon/evening activities. After they ate, they reassembled tables from near the kitchen to a more formal seating arrangement near the stage. A short worship service was followed by a speaker on a light subject, and some singing. One man always brought his accordion to lead the music. Sometimes the chairs and tables were rearranged for table games. Basketball hoops on the Social Hall walls attracted the men (this was before the Hall was carpeted) while the women were in the kitchen doing dishes. Often someone invited everyone to a house or apartment for dessert, to stretch out the evening. The part of the building which became "the lower youth center," and is now the choir rehearsal room, was then a gymnasium that was used for volleyball, badminton, and basketball on some

Sunday evenings, and on weekday evenings for other groups.

The summertime tradition of traveling together to picnic locations around the Miami Valley began in those years. Members of W.Y.A. met at 2:00 pm on the Lutheran side of Wilkinson, where they could sit on the wall to wait for each other, and pile into each others' cars to drive to Germantown, Glen Helen, Taylorsville Dam, and many other parks for hiking, baseball, volleyball, and sometimes swimming. Hamburgers and hot dogs cooked over a fire, a tub full of cold pop, and cookies and cupcakes made by members of the group, were followed by songs around the campfire until dark.

During the late 1940's the Westminster Young Adults had become a smaller group because of the World War II years. Leadership of Westminster saw the need to provide activities for the many new residents attracted to Dayton for peacetime industry, and for the military personnel who were temporary residents at Wright-Patterson AFB. The group renewed itself. In a few years, the Korean conflict was bringing to Dayton many single young men fresh out of college, new to the military, far from home, and looking for a place to meet nice young women. Jim Westhafer, a new young minister at Westminster, provided leadership for a blossoming organization that once again drew as many as 60 to a Sunday night snack supper and activities during winter months, as well as enthusiastic summer participants. N.C.R.'s Old River Park and the Officers' Club at Wright-Pat were favorite summer destinations. Jim saw the young people meet and get to know each other in the friendly Westminster fellowship,

and got to marry many of them to each other.

W.Y.A. continued with some success for a number of years into the complicated 1960's, and there have been some brief revivals of interest. Remaining in the church are many Westminster Young Adults alumni, and many old Presbywed members who may now have been absorbed into Presbygroups. The familiar faces at church may have a story to tell you about those organizations.

Reverend Hughes' singles organization was very successful, leading to the question of how to continue social life together after couples in the group married. Those married couples included Res and Helen Calihan, Larry and Pauline Hadlock, Jim and Dotty Getty, and Bob and Martha Kienzle. Dr. Evans, pastor at that time, liked Greek designations, and couples' groups named Presbyweds were formed, first an "Alpha" group, then a "Beta" group in 1941. The Betas became very strong friends. Together they provided leadership for almost every need of the church over the next fifty years. While helping with church activities, they ate together after church on Sunday at many local restaurants from the Blue Moon Tea Room, West Milton Inn, Culps, and the Seville. They met socially in each others'

homes on one Sunday night a month for dinner and a program. They even began a tradition of taking vacations together as a group during some summers, bringing their children and grandchildren who knew each other well. The Betas still keep in touch with each other.

Other Greek-letter Presbywed groups were formed with fellowship and service as their aims, and when the Greek alphabet was exhausted, other names were used. In recent years, as times have changed and more older members were widowed or single, the groups were re-named "Presby Groups" where all are welcome, and continue with monthly or bi-monthly meetings in homes. One successful group simply goes to dinner together once a month in a local restaurant, attracting anywhere from 12 to 35 participants.

Gamma Reminiscences

In 1995, The Gamma Presby Group celebrated its golden anniversary, acknowledging over a half century of meaningful Christian fellowship and support that chronicle such important particles of Westminster's history. Charter Gamma member Res Calihan remembers what it was like in 1945. He recalled:

Westminster Church was the center of it all, and here also were the people. Exiting the Church from the sanctuary, one would go down the steps on First Street. To the right was the Lutheran Church, behind us was OhioBell, on the left and west, the newly finished Ohio Bell Co. addition. Directly to the north on our present parking lot, the Greyhound Bus Station. A real concern about this time was that the church was being hemmed in with little room for growth. East of the bus station was an elevated iron-fenced garden and home of Mrs. Carnell, who financed a major portion of Westminster in the 20's (as well as the Dayton Art Institute).

Some other significant structures nearby were the Y.M.C.A. on Monument, along the Miami, the Baptist Church, with the newly formed Sinclair College in between. The Loretto women's dormitory was on First Street. The main post office was on Third Street, and the railway station was three blocks south on Sixth St. It is obvious change has occurred over time. The banks were Winters, Third National, Merchants; the department stores were Rikes, Elders, Arcade, Home Store, Metropolitan.

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Hal Herman was executive director of the YM and enticed several young men residents of the Y to Westminster. Along with Helen Calahan who worked with the young women living at the YW and Loretto and minister Byron Hughes, they formed an active youth group at Westminster. There were planned activities centering around worship services, the gymnasium, volleyball, baseball, Sunday afternoon caravans and Sunday evening dinner meetings sometimes attended by more than 100 people.

Some Sunday teachers I recall were Mr. And Mrs. Blanchard, Mr. Matthews, Mr. LaPort, Loren Minnick, Mrs. Ada Dodd Pounce (not necessarily all at the same time.) Young people taking part were Bob Dickensheets, Ken Rexford, Chet Maple, Hugh Kline and Allison, Warren DeWeese, Jim McCauley. Frigidaire was a source of many youth coming to Westminster.

What did they do and where did they go? Sunday afternoons were sojourns to many eating places in the area. Perhaps the Golden Lamb in Lebanon, the Old Mill at Miamisburg, The West Milton Inn, The Seville in the Van Cleve, Culp Cafeteria on 4th Street, Antioch Dining room on campus in Yellow Springs, the bottle farm at Farmersville with dining at Eaton, the Blue Moon Tea Room on South Ludlow, and the Virginia Cafeteria. Theaters included Lowes on Main Street next to Rikes, Keiths on 4th at Ludlow, The Colonial at 5th and Ludlow, and the Victory where it presently stands renovated for present day performances. All these things made for close group and individual relationships that grew solidly into marriages melding into the Presbyweds of Westminster.

Mae Durnell, with husband and 60-year choir member and wrote these remembrances:
member Larry, also belonged to Gamma Presbyweds

It was been a great support group both in times of joy and in times of sorrow. The friendships made there have been warm and lasting. We cherished and looked forward to a relaxed evening of good fellowship, delicious refreshments, and interesting and diverse programs which our hosts planned for us. The annual picnic at the beautiful home in Bellbrook Skit and Jeanette Dunham and just recently a sit down luncheon at Eleanor Talbot's cozy condo are just two special occasions that come to mind as highlights of our gatherings.

Westminster stands as a beacon of Hope in the heart of downtown Dayton. It has been an anchor in our lives providing inspiration, instruction, and direction. The generous spirit of Hugh and Edith Evans, both visionaries, lives on in their dreams of the future church with outstanding preachers, a music program that encompasses all ages, a Christian Education department of professional staff and laymen to coordinate Bible study with what we believe as Christians. A well-maintained building, superb equipment, a caring fellowship, and on and on. Our adult education classes could easily qualify for college credit. Our strength is a dedicated lay ministry led by giant preachers and administration. Our challenge is to meet each day with courage and wisdom led by Him who is the way, the truth, and the light!



Nu Presby Group:
Betty Wert, Betty Elliott, Jim Wood,
Judy McCormick, Matt Melko

Without question, Westminster has a history punctuated with great preachers and leaders, but its greatness is even more influenced by its membership Presby Groups, as they are now named, have been

the mortar of the second century, the foundation of the new structure. The Calihans have kept bulletins, Chimes, notes, and vivid recollections of their more than 60 years of service to Westminster. Helen recalls:

I came to Westminster Church in 1936 and joined the Church in 1937 with Rev. B.D. Hughes officiating and Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans assisting. B.D. was known as the marrying preacher. Since Alpha, Beta, and Gamma were started from Westminster young people, who were really involved with all the activities of the church, thanks to B.D. We ate together after church every Sunday, several cars full, going to all the areas in Dayton and surrounding famous eateries. The officers had a retreat in the fall to plan the programs for the year. After hiking in the afternoon, we went back to the church and cooked a meal for 100 to 125 young people. After the meeting we cleaned the kitchen/social hall to the strains of Johnny's accordion and our singing. Two nights a week we played basketball and badminton in the gym. I spent many Monday nights in the church office keeping the attendance records and helping with the annual church drives, setting up committees for the young people to set tables after work for big dinners, serving and cleaning up.

Res and I were married Valentine's Day 1942. We attended Alpha Group for several meetings, but since they met every two weeks and had a complete meal, we didn't have room for 30 people plus the speaker in our small apartment for a complete meal. We joined Beta's who met once a month for dessert and a speaker. When Beta had 30 people in a couple of years, there was a demand for another group; Res and I volunteered to help. December 8, 1945, we met at Clinton and Martha Kennard's. Our rules and regulations were an outgrowth of all our experiences at church. One outstanding one: no money making or mention. One of the first groups to serve coffee after church, Gamma maintained 15 couples until recent years when age and ill-health took its toll.

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We saw the formation of Guilds for the women, meetings at night so the families could babysit while we had programs, "Knit for Britain," rolled bandages, and supported mission projects. Mrs. Blanchard taught classes in her home teaching us about the United Nations when it was started and we learned to write our Congressmen. In 1961 they started Dedicated Giving. Guilds were changed to Circles, and people rotated so they could become better acquainted every two years. Circles worked in most of the mission projects for the church in and out of the country. We went to Dayton State Hospital, Stillwater Hospital, nursing homes, Buckhorn Ky, Cow Creek, Ky., sent things to John Hyson School in New Mexico, West Virginia Mountain Project, Christian Service Ministry In Guerrant, Ky. Boxes of books to Mark Erbaugh in Swaziland, Africa, Love is Caring project started in 1973, also Battered Women (collected articles and later sewed new clothes for them.)

The Gamma group roster reads like a *Who's Who* at Westminster with Julia & Fred Behrens, Helen & Resler Calihan, Harriet & Carroll Carr, Betty and John Coleman, Jeannette & Skit Dunham, Mae & Larry Durnell, Gladys & Daris Fuller, Juanetta & Arlin Greber, Dorothy & Herb Halderman, Esther & Leslie Howard, Louise & Allison Kline, Millie & Charles Krueger, Esther & Robert St. John, Eleanor & Tom Talbot, Betty & Kenneth Wickle. Their lives together formed a microcosm of Christian love and fellowship!



Presby Group members travel together.
Judith Barr, David Leach, Ruth Price, Laurie Leach, Bob Reece,
Sue Oertel, David Dertel, Ann Brown, Betsy Hughes, Hunt Brown.

Chapter 12

Stewarding



WITH STEWARDING GIFTS THROUGHOUT THE FOLD

By Adrian DeNardo



1950's Stewardship

*As each has received a gift, employ it for one another,
as good stewards of God's varied grace...*

1 Peter 4:10



STEWARDSHIP

Christian stewardship is the essence of being Christian. There are many definitions that help to narrow the broad landscape so often depicted in the name of stewardship. The secular dictionary definition puts stewardship as the “careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care” and the “individual’s responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regards to the rights of others.” Christian stewardship adds the dimension of faith and says: “What we have belongs to God, not to us. What we have is only under our control for a time. It is all that I do with all that I have (time, talent and treasure) after I say ‘I believe.’” The Book of Order emphasizes stewardship explicitly.

Giving has always been the mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship. Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth's and God's creatures.

The act of stewardship at Westminster Presbyterian Church has been expressed in a fullness, which over the last two centuries makes the narration of even the barest details a work too monumental to be included in this modest account. A review of every committee or commission report includes acts of

stewardship as defined here. Therefore, the aim of this short section is to distill the good works of the congregation to points where the distillate consists of a few elements of Christian economics—how the time, talent and treasure was obtained and how it was distributed. It is hoped that these products will speak for themselves to the readers.

Specifically, Stewardship for Westminster Presbyterian has been used for the creation and upkeep of our own parish family and property as well as our Christian giving to those in the worldwide community of souls. Over the years, it is of some interest to note how the raising of the “treasure” was conducted to suit the times and how the distribution



Charles Martin, Church Treasurer for 31 years

of said treasure was directed at human conditions that remained, despite name changes, much the same. Stewardship is continuous.

The story of Westminster Presbyterian Church Stewardship is divided into three chronological sections. The first covers the time from the founding of the church to the end of the 19th century. The second includes the years 1900 to 1949. The final section covers 1950 to the present. For the first 150 years, much of the material is gleaned from the sesquicentennial history authored by Mr. Jerry Fox Vincent. For the remainder of the years, information was gleaned from the church archives, presently housed in the Paul Lawrence Dunbar library of Wright State University.

The First Hundred Years

A reading of the sesquicentennial history of Westminster seems to focus on the “managing of one’s own property” or more properly, the stewardship attendant to building the congregation and their home. It is a compendium of growth and construction. It is a litany of one building campaign after another. In fact, the current structure has the honor of being the one which has been home to the Westminster congregation for the longest period.

Westminster Presbyterian was organized in 1799 and in 1800, 10 members used their time and talent to construct a log cabin as their first place of meeting and worship. No records of costs for this church exist, but in 1805, the congregation passed a resolution “to make the meeting house more comfortable.” 32 members raised \$412 dollars and realized another 22 through the sale of the log cabin site. The money was then loaned to the County commissioners who, at the time, were raising funds for a new courthouse. The purpose of the loan was to allow the members of Westminster to use the courthouse as a place of worship until a new church building could be constructed. By 1815, 43 members of the church subscribed some \$1088 for a new church. In 1817, as was common practice for the time, pews were sold and deeded to the purchasers. The sale brought

another \$2,980 dollars; and after 13 years, on October 5th, 1817, the congregation met for the first service in their first “permanent” structure. The total cost \$6,961. A prospering congregation led the body to demand a new church structure and in 1842, constructed a larger church, costing the congregation \$14,213. Of that amount, \$8,000 was raised by subscription by the members, and the remainder seems to have been loaned to the church by members of the congregation. Also, some \$12,011 was raised by the sale of 47 of 80 pews. The date was 1838 and membership was around 187 at the time but shortly thereafter, 72 had elected to leave to start the Third Street church. The reason(s) for the break seems to have been lost. But, in 1843, “...60 members were added on examination...” About that same time, the record notes that a Reverend F.T. Brown was engaged as a “missionary to prosecute the work of building a mission church.” No other details are present in the record but this early reference to mission reflects forward to the chief concerns of the congregation’s stewardship in the latter half of the twentieth century.

By 1867, the congregation approved the building of yet another new church on the site of the old building, which was razed, and the adjacent property sold. Of the \$100,000 cost, some \$69,000 was raised from the congregation through subscriptions; and in 1870, worship services were held in the new church home. In 1877, we note that under a new head pastor, “the entire male membership was assigned to various committees for carrying on the church work in all departments.” At the same time, the “young people’s meeting and the Dayton View mission” were begun. By the close of the 19th century, the congregation had incurred and paid off debt and found ways to pay for a \$4,000 organ to be installed in the church. Truly, a sense of stewardship was among the members to have accomplished so much in a period of American history that had been a period of depressions and general economic downturns.

In the early part of the twentieth century, a quiet movement began which would eventually

bring the “First Church” (today’s Westminster) and the “Third Street Church” the “daughter” church begun after the split of 1838. Officials from both churches signed what must be considered a statement of intent as early as 1909, but another 10 years passed before the reunion took place. At the time of the reunion, the “First Church” had 516 members while the “Third Street Church” had 630 names for a total, reunified membership of 1,146.

Around this time, records reveal much discussion about the churches’ Bethel mission property. The Bethel mission was erected to provide a community service for the north Dayton populace, particularly the youth. A section taken from Mr. Vincent’s history, provides an illuminating snapshot of the church’s community mission work provided by the generous stewardship of the congregation.

Bethel Chapel at the present time possesses a splendid plant, but it is not complete, and has not the essential features connected with it the work in North Dayton the success it should be. The large basement was constructed so that it can be used for a gymnasium. It can be used through the winter months as a meeting place for the boys in connection with the gymnasium. The girls can also be taken care of at stated hours. The gymnasium can be used for a girl’s cooking school; sewing schools can be established; and also possible is a boy’s and girl’s library such as will furnish educational reading for all of these, that will give their young minds a chance to develop and realize the possibilities that lie in them...

This early twentieth century effort also reflects forward the current stewardship efforts undertaken by the congregation in connection with the City of Dayton Van Cleve Elementary School. However, the discussion of the Bethel Mission was overrun by a singular disaster, the flood of 1913. Although damage to both churches was significant, the First Church left scant records immediately following the flood. It is not until June 4th, 1913, almost four months after the flood that the First Church acknowledged

“...owing to the disabled condition of the church, and the necessity of repairs, we do not hold preaching services during the pastor’s vacation, but concentrate energies upon the Sabbath Schools and weekly prayer meetings.” With the hardships of the First World War following close on the heels of the flood disaster, one can only speculate at the heroic efforts at stewardship which must have taken place to continue the work of the church set forth those many years before.

But continue it did. In 1919, the First Church and the Third Street Church formally reunited after a schism of 81 years. While the task of factual and spiritual union loomed large after the legal union, the greatest material task facing the congregation was to plan and build a new church building to replace the severely damaged structures. Interestingly, members put forth the idea of community churches instead of what was termed a “city temple.” In the end, the “city temple” idea won the day. How such a structure was built at a cost of almost \$800,000 dollars is a fascinating episode in the stewardship history of Westminster. It is interesting to note how, 75 years after completion, this “city temple” demands much of our stewardship efforts.

At the time of the reunification of the First Presbyterian and Third Street churches, the sale of both properties netted \$500,000; \$350,000 for the Third Street church and \$150,000 for First Church. (This may attest to the damage to the First Church from the flood of 1913). This was a vast sum of money in 1919. Even so, the present church property, occupied in 1926, cost \$797,896. To raise money, building fund drives were initiated and the first drive netted \$100,000. Simple arithmetic shows a large mount of debt remaining. This remaining debt loomed much larger soon with the stock market crash of 1929 which tested the courage and ingenuity of the congregation at large.

By 1935, the debt on the new building was trimmed to just over \$60,000. However, in the depths of the depression, \$60,000 might just have well been 60 million—paying it off would take a tremendous

sacrifice. And sacrifice is what the staff immediately did by accepting a 10% decrease in salary. Another 10% decrease followed soon thereafter and careful study showed that another 15% might be necessary. At this juncture, the then head pastor, Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans began what must be viewed as a continuous stewardship campaign. By first deciding that the interest expense on the debt was the crippling line in the church's accounts, Dr. Evans began a weekly stewardship drive that lasted from October 19th, 1936 to March 29th, 1936. Rather than ask for pledges, Dr. Evans asked that each family contribute one dollar on the first Sunday of every month. His plan was to retire the debt in the amount of \$1,000 monthly. Astoundingly, he announced at the same time that all unpaid pledges were cancelled, recognizing the severity of financial hardships that many suffered and more importantly perhaps, their hurt and shame brought on by receiving benefits from a church that they could not afford to support in a material way.

After his second plea for contributions, a member of the congregation asked for details about Dr. Evans' plan to reduce the debt. The member was Mrs. Harry Gardner Carnell, a long-time and staunch supporter of the church. Mrs. Carnell, under promise of anonymity, agreed to match, dollar for dollar, the funds raised in the monthly collections. By announcing that an anonymous member had promised such funds matching, congregation members began to increase their contributions. On February 1st, 1936, another member, again under the promise of anonymity, agreed to match the congregation's contributions dollar for dollar. His name was Thomas A. Elder, and he made his promise on his ninetieth birthday.

Less than two months after Mr. Elder's pledge, on March 29th, 1936, the debt was retired. By doing so, the annual expense of \$3,600 was eliminated, the staff avoided another 15% salary cut and the consciences cleared for a large part of the congregation. It was a remarkable piece of stewardship under most difficult conditions.

Since Dr. Evans' historic campaign, records of stewardship efforts, that is the methods, amounts and use of the "treasure," are largely buried in various committee reports, annual reports, and trustees records. The records actually titled stewardship are brief, most less than half a type-written page. It is interesting to note that 1915 Westminster still continued the practice of renting pews. For the church year ending April of 1910, the records note that \$5,457 was raised from such rental, almost 70% of the church's total income. However, the long lasting method used in the twentieth century for stewardship drives stands out in this brevity. From about the early 1920's to the late 1960's, the method most favored was the "every member canvas" approach. Here the records are replete with the Presbyterian fetish for organization and accounting. Year after year, the records contain lists of officers, "block captains," and neighborhood organizers along with their specific duties. As today, pamphlets, classes, and other suggestions were presented to the many participants of the campaign to ensure success of the enterprise.

Occasionally, a new wrinkle was introduced to induce pledging—or at least make the process more "interesting." In 1932, the congregation was asked to make their pledges in groups publicly to the rest of the congregation during worship service. The request was made in a letter to the congregation from Dr. Evans and contains few details on how such a public pledge might be conducted. Given that the country was in the depths of the Great Depression at the time, and the congregation was attempting to retire the debt from the construction of the new church building, one can only assume that the effort on the part of the congregation must have been heroic.

In the intervening years between the Depression and the present, the all member canvas has been used, if not as frequently, with much the same organizational and leadership style of previous eras. Naturally, the object of every campaign is to collect monetary pledges, pledges of time and pledges of

church rose along with it while benevolences also increased.

What is interesting and speaks volumes about the hearts and souls of the congregation is the fact that since the peak of 1957, church membership has declined—some years quite drastically due to changes in the Dayton economy; and others more gradually. Today, Westminster counts just under 1200 members on the role. While one might reasonably expect the overall financial situation of the church to contract after suffering a loss of 65% of its members, that did not happen at Westminster. In fact, despite variations from one year to the next, the amount in membership pledges has increased at a steady rate over the years. In 1962, a \$59.00 annual pledge per member would have met all expenses and allow for \$53,895 benevolence budget. By contrast, in 2001, the annual pledge per congregation member rose to \$932.00, accounting for most of the church income and allowing a benevolence outlay of over \$197,000. Even accounting for inflation, less than half of the maximum-recorded membership is still giving with a generous heart. To give some idea of the expense of our complex organization compared to the very early years of Westminster, note the following numbers for the year 1854; estimated income, \$1,941, benevolences, \$1,237.

Benevolences, stewardship aimed at the world community at large, had many more components than can be described here. Every church committee seemed to have a favorite target for sharing our treasure. The congregation over the years aided literally hundreds of organizations and causes. The short list that follows is a sampling of those agencies and causes that the congregation of Westminster chose as objects of their benevolence. The list is neither chronological nor by size of donation—merely a broad stroke across the canvas.

Miami Valley Hospital
 Presbyterian Home
 Pastoral Counseling Center
 Edgemont Center
 Synod Programs

Presbytery Welfare
 Metropolitan Churches United
 City Mission
 Boy Scouts of Miami Valley
 Protestant Committee
 Gideon's International
 Campus Ministry Dayton Area
 Dayton Council on World Affairs
 Pakistan Relief
 Presbytery Family Center
 Excons for a Better Society
 Seminaries
 College of Wooster
 Presbytery Camp Site/Kirkmont Center
 Freedmen
 Sustentation
 College Board
 Home Missions
 Temperance
 United Negro College Fund
 Chapman Alexander Campaign
 The Ombudsman Office
 Operation Safeguard

In the closing section of Mr. Vincent's sesquicentennial history of Westminster, he characterized the next fifty years of Westminster as the springtime of its future history. In the lens crafted in 1949, only growth on all fronts was predicted. While Westminster did indeed grow larger in membership and influence, the intervening decades have been trying on such an institution as ours. Membership has shrunk in response to forces throughout the world and the times. Programs have come and gone and significant changes have been put in place in response to the forces of history. It would appear, however, seen through the microscope of stewardship, that the singular Christian view of being "...called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth's and God's creatures...." has remained a hallmark strength of Westminster Presbyterian Church.



"That Day in May" Parade—May 2000

Chapter 13

Governing

DEMOCRACY'S TENET'S GOVERNING CREED

By Bill Newcomb



Third Street Church bell
melted down for WW II

*The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men.
And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"*

Benjamin Franklin



GOVERNANCE

*T*he presbyterian form of church government has its roots in the Protestant Reformation of the fifteenth century. From its earliest origins in Geneva, Switzerland, and Scotland, it came to America where it developed into the church we know today. Its governance is by representative governing bodies known as sessions, presbyteries, synods and General Assembly.

The session is the governing body of the local church consisting of the installed pastor or pastors and active elders. The presbytery is the governing body of a number of churches, usually within a defined geographic area; the synod is the governing body of several presbyteries, and the General Assembly is the governing body of the denomination. Above the session, governing bodies have equal representation of ministers and elders.

The First Presbyterian Church of Dayton had its beginnings under the Presbytery of Washington in the Synod of Transylvania. Early presbytery minutes provide a flavor of church life on the frontier, recording appeals from churches for "supplies" to conduct services and the search for trained clergy to supply those needs. From original sources, it is not possible to determine when the congregation was formally organized or when permanent pastoral relationships were first established.

At a meeting on October 6, 1801, the Rev. James Kemper was assigned to "one third of his time at Ducks Creek, one fourth at Sycamore, for one year; also the fifth Sabbath of November at the Forks of River, the first of December at Dayton, the first of January at Turtle Creek, the second of

February at Beulah, the first again at Dayton..."

(1) On April 3, 1805, the Rev. James Welsh was received from the Presbytery of West Lexington and appointed the same day to serve half time at Dayton. (2) On April 1, 1807, "a verbal petition was received from Dayton for the labours of Mr. Walsh for one year was presented."

The first known original record of the congregation is found in a book entitled Book of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Dayton, 1804. The first entry states:

At a meeting of the First Presbyterian Congregation of the town of Dayton held at their meeting at there (sic) meeting house this 25th day of Oct. 1804, John Miller, Robert Edgar, David Reid, John McCabe, and John Ewing were chosen trustees, and for the purpose of enabling the trustees to make the meeting house more comfortable, it was agreed that subscription should be raised for that purpose.

The next record is that of a meeting on June 6, 1805, which reads:

The trustees reported that it was inexpedient to do any more with the present meeting house, and propose for the consideration of the members, that a subscription be raised to build a brick meeting house, and if a sufficient sum cannot be raised, that we loan what we can raise to the Commissioners of the County to enable them to build a brick court house, and the congregation to have the use of the court house as a place of worship until such loan is refunded.

It is apparent from early records that the Trustees had considerable authority over the temporal affairs of the church. The charter granted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio in 1812 provided:

That a majority of the Trustees shall have power and authority in all ordinary cases, sale or lease of property excepted, to make all contracts in behalf of the congregation which may be deemed for its interest, to manage its pecuniary and presidential matters, to make such regulations and Bylaws as may be thought expedient for the government of its temporal affairs.

The *Book of Order* of 1804 makes no mention of trustees. It states that the church session is competent to the spiritual government of the congregation. Today's *Book of Order* provides that the whole church is under the jurisdiction of the session. (G-6.0404). Nonetheless, in churches which still have boards of trustees, some members mistakenly believe that trustees still have authority equal to or greater than the session in temporal affairs.

The earliest sessional records of First Church date from May 1817. Three of the elders then serving were elected in 1806 and 1807; two others had been elected at a later date. The session record begins with charges of slander against one of the elders. Complaints against members were frequent. In 1841, the presbytery upheld the trial of a member of First Church for packing meat on Sunday. Trials of church members by session are extremely rare today, but still provided by the *Book of Order*.

In the late 1820's and early 1830's, the church was embroiled in a disagreement with the presbytery over whether to formally install its pastor, the Rev. Franklin Putnam. According to congregational minutes of March 19, 1830, the presbytery had adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that each congregation destitute of a pastor be prepared at the next state meeting of presbytery to show sufficient reasons why they do not apply for the regular settlement of ministers among them for such portion as such congregation shall be able to pay for



Women Deacons 1950's



Sanctuary 1926

and that each minister be required to read this minute to their congregation.

The congregation responded as follows:

Resolved, as the sense of this meeting, that we approve of that part of the discipline of the Presbyterian Church which directs the installation of ministers generally but that we believe that there are cases where it may be prudent to omit it; And whereas we are now in a state of harmony, we are of the opinion that in our own case, it would be better to remain as we have been, that to urge the installation of our minister. Resolved that the pastoral labors of the Rev. Franklin Putnam with this congregation are acceptable; and the continuance of those labors be requested for one year; after the expiration of the time for which he is at present employed.

Rev. Putnam served First Church for eight years without formal installation. This response to the presbytery's urging contrasts with the wishes of some modern-day congregations to call their interim pastor or stated supply as their permanent pastor

contrary to the *Book of Order*.

In 1837, the Presbyterian Church nationally divided into the Old School and New School branches. A year later, 72 members left First Church to form the Third Street Presbyterian Church (New School); 115 remained as members of First Church which remained loyal to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1864, the General Assembly of the New School branch met at the Third Street Church in Dayton. In 1867, the Rev. Densmore Gurley was elected moderator of the Old School General Assembly.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Presbyterians in the southern states separated to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. After the war, it became the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The Old School and New School were reunited in 1870. The Rev. Phineas Dinsmore Gurley D.D. (pastor of First Church 1849–1854) was moderator of the first General Assembly in 1870 of the reunited church.

The First Church in late 1871 made overtures for reunion of First Church and the Third Street Church. Although the response from the Third Street congregation was positive, the effort came to naught. Despite friendly relations, the two congregations remained separated for another 48 years. In 1919, First Church and Third Street Church merged to form Westminster Presbyterian Church, ending a separation of 81 years.

Westminster Presbyterian Church of Dayton is the largest congregation in the Miami Presbytery which is the regional governing body in southwest Ohio of 66 congregations and nearly 18,000 members. The present Miami Presbytery was organized in 1959 succeeding the former Dayton Presbytery. It is one of eleven presbyteries in the Synod of the Covenant which largely includes the states of Ohio and Michigan. The original Miami Presbytery was organized in 1810, succeeding the Washington Presbytery.

In 1958, the Presbyterian Church in the United

States of America merged with the United Presbyterian Church of North America to form the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1983, the latter merged with the Presbyterian Church in the United States to form today's Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Over the years, ministers and members of Westminster have been active in the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. The most prominent was Hugh Ivan Evans (pastor of Westminster 1923–1955) who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1950.

Moderators of Miami Presbytery from Westminster include: Reverend W. James Westhafer (1953), Elder Herschel Lamme (1976), Reverend William C. Schram (1987), Reverend Barbara Anderson (1989), Elder James Getty (1994).



Board of Deacons 2002
 Mary Ellen Jarrett, Jennifer Vicarel, Jennifer DeVries, Diane Wellborn
 Chip Howard, Fred Dudding, Kay Davis-Dudding, Cliff Wild, Heather Kennedy,
 David Boezi, Sharon Jones, Marilyn Meadows, John McGuire

Endnotes:

- (1) Minutes, Presbytery of Washington, October 6, 1801.
- (2) *Ibid*, April 3, 1805, p. 110.
- (3) Edwin A. Parrott, "Historical Sketch of the Church and its Pastors," in Centenary Souvenir—Commemorative Proceedings and Addresses, First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio.



Photo by Tom Patterson

Stairway to the Narthex, 2002

Chapter 14

Performing

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IS PERFORMING JOYFUL CALL

By Ronald Price



Christmas Pageant

*Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!*

Psalms 66:1-2



DRAMA AND THE CHURCH

*"A*ll the world's a stage..." wrote the Bard long after the drama cycles told the stories of the Bible on theater wagons that traveled from place to place outside churchyards throughout Europe during the Middle Ages. But it was the same spirit that consumed the 17th century Puritans in closing the theatres that Rev. Thomas steadfastly condemned the amusements of good society. Charlotte Conover in *Some Dayton Saints and Prophets* wrote "As a Christian Minister, the sins of society made his blood boil. Intemperance, licentiousness, gambling, extravagance, self-indulgence, were a part of his theme [but] the theatre, the circus, the ballroom and the masquerade, the Negro minstrel show, the

Sunday concert, card parties, and dancing clubs, also corrupted the soul." Virginia Rainey described Thomas's published correspondence debating with a Dayton attorney over the 1866 opening of Turner's Opera House. "Such amusements are a manifestation of man's debasement in his apostasy from his Creator. Thomas could not find a single example of edification of valuable amusement on the stage in history, even morality plays put on by the Church itself were a corruption and a sin. 'I bless God, that through the early instruction and pious example of parents passed into the skies, I never saw a play, never even entered a theatre. You might have asked me, then,—what can you know of the stage? I might,

indeed, have answered,—one need not eat a joint of tainted meat to ascertain its putridity. One need not have a loathsome disease to understand its character and consequences."

Thomas E. Thomas would be tumbling in his tomb if he knew the role that drama has assumed in Westminster's heritage. Mary Griffiths, long-time active member of the church has contributed to



Jephthah 1970

Paul McGill, Peggy & Joe Albrecht,
Tom Rambo, Bob Stofer, Louis
White, Sally Schamp, Loren
Jacobsen



Noyes' Fludde 1968

our histrionic record and chronicled much of the recent history of the stage at Westminster which has presented many very fine dramatic productions, most involved with our strong music tradition. Over the years, many family night dinners were regaled with the composition and performance of choir members or other budding thespians on the rolls. Some had "big time" experience; others, "big time" desire. Why, reports tell that Betty Windsor was a member of St. Bartholomew's Choir in New York City; and Virginia Patterson performed in the movie "The Wizard of Oz." Heidi and Gretchen Albrecht with their parents Peggy and Joe, themselves leading soloists in the area, were named Ohio's musical family of the year, and the girls toured the country with Broadway shows. Steven Huter and Anne Huter, concert soloists on the piano and violin, have performed individual recitals at Carnegie Hall in recent years. Scores more possessed extraordinary talents to bring joy to any audience.

- *Noyes' Fludde* by Benjamin Britten was presented three times, spaced over the years. The last one was presented at the request of the Ohio Music Educators for their convention and received with a standing ovation.
- The quiet beauty of *Amahl and a Night Visitor* was presented two consecutive nights.
- One of the May Festival of Religious Arts included a performance of *L'Enfant Prodigue* by Debussy. Another programmed a *Dramatic Vesper* including music, rhythmic movement
- *Noyes' Fludde* and dramatic narrative. Other stage presentations included: *The Terrible Meek* by Charles Rahn Kennedy, "The Upper Room Scene" and "Street Scene" from *Family Portrait* by Coffee and Cowan, theater-in-the-round presentation of *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* by Ward, *At the Wall of Bethlehem* by Mona Swann was presented as Chancel Drama.
- For five years the Robert Stofer pageant "The Story of Christmas," depicting the story of Francis of Assisi preparing the crèche for his friends in Greccio (an accumulative pageant) highlighted nativity. In the 70's came the British "Service of Nine Lessons and Carols" a tradition which has continued into the 21st century. In the 90's came musicals performed by youth and children's choirs in *Oh Jonah, It's Hot in the Furnace*, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

When the church's own talent base was not used, numerous college and professional troupes were brought in as part of the May Festivals:

- 1958—Wittenberg Chapel Players in Christopher Fry's *Boy with a Cart*
- 1959—College of Wooster in *Christ in the Concrete City* by Phillip Turner
- 1960—College of Wooster in *The Sign of Jonah* by Guenter Ruterborn
- 1961—*Noyes' Fludde*
- 1962—*Dramatic Vesper*

- 1963—Debussy's sacred opera *The Prodigal Son*
 1966—a dramatic reading by University of
 Redlands Players in *Roger Williams*
and Mary
 1968—*The Everyman Players in Romans* by St. Paul
 1970—Repertory Theatre of Christian Theological
 Seminary in Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners*
 1978—*La Fontaine Amoureuse*, a Medieval evening
 of verse and music by Guillaume De
 Machaut presented by Music for a While
 1985—Drama by Little Miami Theatre Works of
The Pig Tales: "Starting Out Small"
 1987—*The Bell* for pre-school to 3rd grade and
Huck Finn's Story for grades 4 and up by
 Akron's Children's Theatre



Scottish Rite Quartet at June's retirement

When Bob Stofer inaugurated The May Festival of Religious Arts in 1958, the entire Miami Valley region gained a world-class festival which celebrates the highest level of creativity from the Judeo-Christian tradition. It has been the source of major musical and dramatic performances featuring not only the wealth of local artists, but also some of the best soloists from the world's leading opera and concert stages. The rich tradition initiated over forty years ago continues to grow and assume even greater dimensions under the capable leadership, spirit, and musicality of Rev. John Neely, Minister of Music.

1958

- Lecture: "Religious Painting of Georges Rouault"
 - Dr. Richard S. Davis
 Drama: "A Boy with a Cart" - Christopher Fry
 Oratorio: Elijah—Mendelssohn
 Elijah soloist: Donald Gramm

1959

- Lecture: "Religious Architecture—Challenge and
 Trend" - H. Walter Damon
 Lecture: "The Revival of Religious Drama"
 - Dr. William C. Craig
 Drama: "Christ in the Concrete City"
 - Philip W. Turner
 Oratorio: "Hora Novissima" (The Latest Hour)
 - Horatio Parker

1961

- Noye's Fludde - Britten
 Haydn's "Third Mass" and Harold Darke's "Hymn
 of the Heavenly Beauty"

1962

- Lecture: "Spirit and Matter in Modern Art"
 - Dr. Henry R. Hope
 Bach's Magnificat in D Major
 Respighi's—Laud to the Nativity

1963

- Drama: "The Prodigal Son" - Debussy
 Lecture: "Stained Glass Windows Through the
 Ages" - Robert Metcalf
 Concert: Music in the Church Through the
 Centuries (A Survey of the Development
 of Various Musical Forms in Sacred
 Music)
 Oratorio: "An Apostrophe to the Heavenly Hosts"
 - Healey Willan

1965

- Drama: "Roger Williams and Mary"
 - A Dramatic Reading by Albert Johnson
 Oratorio: Judas Maccabaeus - Handel

1966

Concert: The Spartan Bell Ringers from
Michigan State University
Oratorio: "Hora Novissima": - Horatio Parker

1968

Bach - St. John Passion

1970

Lecture: "The Miracle of Pentecost"
- Torger G. Thompson
Drama: "A Sleep of Prisoners" - Christopher Fry
Jephthah - Louie L. White

1971

Elijah - Mendelssohn

1976

Music and Dance Celebration - with Barbara
Conrad of New York City Opera

1978

A Medieval Evening of Verse and Music by
Guillaume De Machaut - by Music for a While
Concert: Music of Anton Bruckner

1980

Two ballets: Time There Was and Dulci et decorum
- pro patria mori (Commissioned for this
Festival - presented by the Dayton Ballet
Touring Company)
Concert: Five Mystical Songs
- Ralph Vaughan Williams
Dona Nobis Pacem - Vaughan Williams

1983

Address: "The Importance of Family" - Alex Haley
Concert: Zadok the Priest - Handel
Magnificat - Vaughan Williams
The Music Makers - Elgar

1985

Drama: Pig Tales: Starting out Small
- The Little Miami Valley Theater Works
Concert: Richard Leech, Tenor
Coronation Anthem No. 2 - Handel
The Seasons, Part I - Haydn

1987

Festival of Hymns
Drama: The Bell - The Akron Children's Theatre
Drama: Huck Finn's Story
- The Akron Children's Theatre
Concert: Daisy Newman, soprano
Coronation Te Deum - William Walton
Cantata 51 - J. S. Bach
Sanctus and Libera me (Requiem) - Verdi
Excerpts from "Vespers" - Rachmaninoff
Psalm 150 - Anton Bruckner

1989

Drama: Goliath's Last Stand and Other Stuff
- Friends of the Groom
Concert: Andrew Wentzel, bass-baritone
Gloria (Messa di Gloria) - Puccini
Baal Scene (Elijah) - Mendelssohn
Coronation Anthem: Zadok the Priest
- Handel
Five Mystical Songs - Vaughan Williams

1991

Drama: "The River" - Mad River Theatre Works
Lecture: "Sacred Symbols: Westminster's Tiffany
Te Deum window" - by Rev. Edward N.
McNulty
Concert: guest choir: choir of the Kettering
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Messe Solennelle - Vierne
Belshazzar's Feast - William Walton

1993

Te Deum - Hector Berlioz
(Westminster Festival Choir - Knox and Calvin
Choirs - Youth and Junior Choirs of Kettering
Seventh-day Adventist Church)

1995

Coffee House: "On Hallowed Grounds"

Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar
music of Michael Bashaw

Drama Workshop: Marilyn Klaben,
Human Race Theater

Concert: with Central State University Chorus
- William Henry Caldwell, conductor
Magnificat - John Rutter
Five Mystical Songs - Vaughan Williams

1997

Coffee House: Celebrating the Jewish experience
through poetry and music

Drama: "Daniel in the Lion's Den"
- Friends of the Groom

Concert: Belshazzar's Feast - William Walton

2000 (Bicentennial)

All-church art gallery—Intergenerational exhibit of
paintings, photographs and drawings on the theme
"Hope - What it Means to Me."

Concert: Intergenerational
Anthems by John Rutter
Gloria - Poulenc
Prayers of Kierkegaard
- Samuel Barber
Te Deum - Rutter
Westminster Choir,
Calvin Choir,
Knox Choir

Performing is usually associated with portraying a role in a dramatic or musical work before an audience. But performing also stresses the effect or completion of a significant deed or task, or accomplishment with the connotation of completing a feat which reflects a person's impressive talents. Such a "performer" in the life

of Westminster has been Pastor Shi Qigui from Shanghai, China.

The Synod of the Covenant brought five Chinese Christians to the area in September 1994 as delegates from the Chinese Christian Council. Pastor Shi Qigui served six weeks with the Westminster Church. He was senior pastor of the Shanghai Mu-En Church, the largest Protestant congregation in China with more than 5000 members. He was hosted by the Lindowers, the Prices, and the Greenwalds. During his six weeks in Dayton, he met and inspired many. He attended Westminster staff meetings and assisted with communion to shut-ins, Bible study with WPW, and pastoral care visits. He also attended Westminster Choir practices, a Church retreat at Kirkmont, Sunday School classes, and talked to Westminster youth groups and preached to the congregation during worship service. Westminster's love for this great Chinese friend was mutual.

Christianity is alive and one of the fastest growing indigenous religions in many parts of the world. Specifically in China, the Christian Church was virtually wiped out during the Mao years and totally suppressed during the Cultural Revolution. Shi



Lindowers visit Shi Qigui,
Pei-Lan in China

Qigui was a major committed player in those underground years of the Church. Now the Church in China flourishes, and its survival and growth have been due to the power of the faithful Christian community to nourish, sustain, and equip the ordinary Chinese Christians to be faithful.

John and Doris Lindower, who both hosted here and visited Shi Qigui in Shanghai, made this observation:

The remarkable faith and growth of the Chinese Church is striking to Westminster members who have visited with Pastor Shi Qigui and his dedicated associates in Shanghai and the surrounding region. Many new churches are being built, and the established congregations (even one below ground) display a conviction and vigor reminiscent of our accounts of the 'apostolic era.'

Pastor Shi Qigui has been a significant factor in the growth and development of the Chinese Christian Council. Chinese Christians really glow in Pastor Qigui's presence, and they value highly his prestige with all his Chinese and foreign contacts. We are proud that this dedicated, savvy pastor considers Westminsterites his sisters and brothers, and Dayton as his second home.

Not only was he so knowledgeable of the Scriptures, but Shi Qigui was a student of American culture and music. He loved playing the piano and singing "classics" like "You Are My Sunshine." After a visit with the Zelnick family, he returned to the Prices' with a plastic derby souvenir, wondering what to do with it. Ron and Ruth told him to wear it when playing and singing American songs. So at his farewell dinner in the Social Hall, Shi Qigui and Ron donned their derbies and harmonized "You Are My Sunshine." It was a harmony and spirit that every one shared from the sunshine of God's love brought to Dayton in the unexpected blessing of our pastor and Christian friend from Shanghai.

The year 2002 enjoyed an encore visit from Shi Qigui and his wife who were guests with the Lindowers again. He greeted his friends here by name and recalled details about each person. He had



Shi Qigui & Ron Price reprise "Sunshine"

maintained log entries and studied a church directory to perpetuate his ministry here eight years before. And as his smile brightened the room, he sat at the console and reprised "You Are My Sunshine," denoting the light of God which will never be extinguished.



Sunshine also emanates from Mary Kittredge who joined Westminster February 16, 1919, here surrounded by Lou Mason, Judy McCormick, and Joyce Carr.



Nu Presby group 2002

Chapter 15

Creating



CREATING IN GOD'S IMAGE

By Betsy Hughes



Main Entrance

*Worthy art thou, our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power;
for thou didst create all things and by thy will they existed and were created.*

Revelation 4:11



CREATING

*T*he exercise of God-given spiritual gifts is manifest in the creativity of our congregation within so many areas of church life! Creativity is evident in Westminster's emphasis on the arts, inspiring us in May Festivals, in pageants and musicals, in sermons, in choir and drama productions, in visual arts, in culinary arts, in quilting and sewing, in liturgical dance, in poetry and prose. It flourishes every Sunday in the children's educational "Creation Station."

This chapter focuses on just one demonstration of Westminster talent—creative writing. While presenting a variety of essays and poems drawn from a variety of ages and age groups, it features congregational over clergy contributions, and contemporary over historical. Various sources include adult education class publications, individual collections, Advent pamphlets, recent solicitations through the Chimes and by Christian educators, bicentennial materials. In consideration of space, some selections had to be excerpted. Contents of this chapter are just a small sampling of Westminster's creative wellspring and have admittedly been influenced by accessibility of writings.

SUMMONS

Syllables: Westminster Presbyterian Church Telephone Poem

1 Now
9 Come to love and wake the heart within.
3 It is ours
7 To take to a world in pain,
2 Our church
2 Our hope.
3 Westminster
7 Lives and breathes life into us,
2 Through Him
8 Who came and died to save our souls.
5 Come, we welcome you!

by Joyce Ferguson

SANCTUARY

1 When
9 Easter lilies, choirs, pastors in robes
3 Swell up high
7 They bring purpose and order;
2 My heart
2 Invokes
3 No other
7 Standard of life and love; this
2 Then is
8 Eternal, despite chaos without;
5 Reaching safe harbor
telephone poem by Glenn Leupold

Holy Ground

Our experience of God's presence is like the burning bush which made Moses feel that God was there. All Christians have had such moments. God seems near to them. God floods their souls with

faith and love.

The place where this takes place God calls holy ground. Where God meets us and where we are aware of Him are sacred places. The sanctuary of your church is such a place. It is hallowed ground. First it is holy ground because in an hour of great sacrifice and worship we dedicated the church to the living God. Those who were at the dedication felt that God was there and they prayed that God would always be there for their children and children's children.

Second, it is holy ground for those who throughout the years have worshipped here, have confessed faith in Christ, have received baptism, have been comforted in sorrow and have married in joy.

It is holy ground for those who served so nobly at the call of their country. They belong to our hallowed treasury. Especially we think of those who worshipped here and now sleep in peace as martyrs for freedom. We hold them and their loved ones in sacred memory. This church they loved deeply will not forget them.

To me this is holy ground. Here my ministry has reached its flower. Both my children have been confirmed and both married within the sanctuary. Here some of God's finest saints have served and honored the name of Christ. Here hundreds of children have praised God with hearts and voices. Here we have pledged our lives and our fortunes to God's cause.

Let this holy ground be your central interest in years to come. I shall return often to worship here. It is my "holy ground" as well as yours. Let us be loyal to its past and its future. Let us tell our children of its sacred character. Let us think of this church as the poet of old thought about Zion—"Walk about Zion and go around her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generations following for this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."

Next Sunday at the Communion we will pledge

ourselves to the future as this, through the years, becomes sacred ground to countless others who follow us in the service of Christ.

*by Hugh Ivan Evans in May, 1955, at the
conclusion of his 32 year pastorate in Westminster
Presbyterian Church*

Gothic

White, tall and strong the rounded pillars reach
Holding aloft a man-made firmament,
Anchored in earth, with steadfast, buried feet,
Growing toward God, to lift men's eyes above.

Softly the archways curve in beauteous height,
Spanning the pillars with a cool, white strength,
What was alone is linked in soaring might,
In Gothic beauty, pure as God's love.

Lonely and strong each soul a pillar stands,
Feet on the earth, but reaching toward our God,
Archways appear when men, in love, join hands,
Earth is a temple, and all seems divine.
by Isabel Vandenberg

The Sanctuary

We step into the sanctuary and are awed by its grandeur, impressed by its beauty, conscious of its peacefulness, and thrilled by its music. And like Moses, we are on sacred ground. There is a Presence—surely He is in this place.

The choir is heard singing the introit:
"O worship the Lord
In the beauty of holiness
Bow down before Him
His glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience
And incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore Him;
The Lord is His name."

The Westminster sanctuary is a very special place—a place where we have come to worship, to speak wedding vows, to celebrate a life as we remember "all the saints"—full of nostalgic memories.

Perhaps it is standing-room-only service on Christmas Eve where music and candlelight predominate and the walls reverberate with “Masters in This Hall” and softly close with “Silent Night.”

Maybe it is Easter, and the brass and organ are triumphantly welcoming the Easter morn.

“Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!”

Or a service of installation when the laying-on-of-hands is administered to newly elected officers.

Or a festival occasion performed by our Westminster Choir.

Or do you recall the quiet footsteps in the hushed silence of the Maundy Thursday service?

Regardless of the occasion or service, high above the choir stands the Te Deum window in all its beauty, color, and symbolism.

“We praise Thee, O God

We acknowledge thee to be the Lord.”

Within these pillared walls we find peace, joy, consolation, and we thrill to the magnificence of the organ. It is a heart-lifting experience that is to be cherished—in the sanctuary of one’s soul.

“My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.”

by Mary Griffiths

SONG

The Bible

Perhaps there is no one study that has won the love of so many people as has Music. And how this book rings with it. It begins when “the Morning stars sang together” and does not end until the Heavenly Host sounds forth the anthems of the Revelation. See Jubal fashioning his organ and harp long before the days of Noah. Catch the spirit of our modern music. Handel, Hayden, Bach, and Mendelssohn built their greatest creations on the word of God.

by Adah Dodd Pounce, excerpt from her pamphlet on the Bible

Beyond Christmas

How I enjoy hearing the congregation sing the carols of the season with full-throated splendor!

It is certainly true that music lifts our spirits. Music expresses our own deep joy and the joy of others. To rejoice at the coming of Christ Jesus is to be happy; to share his coming with others, and to have the assurances of God’s abundant love.

As we experience another season of Advent, it is my prayer that the message and spirit of our cherished carols be continued beyond the church’s doorstep on Christmas Eve. If Christ is not born into what we do beyond the Christmas season, then what is all the singing about?

by John W. Neely

Music Memories

I remember when I sang in Westminster Choir on my first Sunday morning, bedecked in crimson and ivory, in a chaotic cluster but musical invocation suddenly ordered in a procession with joyous voices lifted Te Deum.

by Ron Price

I remember when in worship we sang the procession up the sanctuary to the hymn “Give Praise to the Lord, and Sing a New Song”—a hymn so complete that no more needed be said.

by Cindy Knight

Power

Tapering fingers caress the organ’s keys,
And into a dim twilight
Unearthly sounds wing their way to heaven.

Man, you are so small seated at this thing!

And yet, God has kissed your soul,

And here from your fingertips

I hear your gladdened thanks.

Choir Practice

We sit, row on row,

Coming from each island of self

Breathless from the rush of daily life,
Unraveled by the world's vicissitudes.

There is a current near,
Between, among, around,
A rush of sound is heard,
Black shapes on paper come alive.
No longer separate, alone,
A magic melting, each a part of One,
Our differences are coloring the whole
But harmonizing in a dancing light.

We sit, row on row;
Newly alive, attuned to higher spheres,
For a composer's ears
Listened and heard Creation's Word.
by Isabel Vandenberg, poems dated 1929, 1984

SERVICES

This Service Began

This service began and hearts awoke
To joyful praise and light.
Wonder-filled, we watched and heard
Verses, music, and song take other souls
To joyful praise and light.
Strong beams soar overhead,
Verses, music, and song take other souls
Away from cares and strife
Strong beams soar overhead,
Warm light through windows comes
Away from cares and strife
We meet new friends in joy
Warm light through windows comes
We meet new friends in joy
This service began and hearts awoke
Wonder-filled we watched and heard.
pantoum by Joyce Ferguson

The Wedding

This service began and the rest of the world stopped.
Two separate lives of the past to be joined here

and on.
No experience, no preparation, for this age-old path.
With newness at every point the ancient walls
surround.
Two separate lives of the past to be joined here
and on.
Sights and sounds cannot drown out the silence of
hearts' reflection.
With newness at every point the ancient walls
surround.
Sitting, waiting, wondering, praying.
Sights and sounds cannot drown out the silence
of hearts' reflection.
Organ's and minister's pipes boom between vows,
prayers, tears and a kiss.
Sitting, waiting, wondering, praying.
Ones presented together for arrival where two
came alone for departure.
Organ's and minister's pipes boom between vows,
prayers, tears and a kiss.
Ones presented together for arrival where two
came alone for departure.
This service began and the rest of the world stopped.
No experience, no preparation, for this age-old path.
pantoum by David P. Spencer

Lessons in the Carols

This service began and the wreath was lit, the
grand procession started
Robes and voices, smiles and organ
In metered step, in place we all are
Prophets of old, cousin John cries out, the
Angel appears
Robes and voices, smiles and organ
Hark the Herald, O Little Town, O Come All
Ye Faithful
Prophets of old, cousin John cries out, the Angel
appears
The Shepherds quake, the star is shining,
there's no room at the inn
Hark the Herald, O little Town, O Come All Ye
Faithful
Lessons and carols—there are lessons in the carols

The shepherds quake, the star is shining, there's no
 room at the inn
 The old story is told anew, once more;
 the heart is warmed
 Lessons and carols—there are lessons in the carols
 The old story is told anew, once more;
 the heart is warmed
 This service began and the wreath was lit,
 the grand procession started
 In metered step, in place we all are
pantoun by Glenn Leupold

Christmas Eves

This service began and never ends.
 Daughter and son became more than that!
 They processed into a mastery of these halls:
 Ringing bells and voices all ye all ye in free!
 Daughter and son became more than that!
 There is a mastery without hierarchy.
 Ringing bells and voices all ye all ye in free!
 The mystery of an endlessly circular processional!
 There is a mastery without hierarchy.
 Invisibly yet powerfully all move across all ages.
 The mystery of an endlessly circular processional!
 Aren't all babes-to-be always almost as wholly holy?
 Invisibly yet powerfully all move across all ages.
 Aren't all babes-to-be always almost as wholly holy?
 This service began and never ends.
 They processed into a mastery of these halls:
pantoun by Jim Hughes

Maundy Thursday

Christ's candle lights, and then the other twelve
 Respond to Him in turn as they are called;
 Disciples too, His mystery we delve
 While in this holy place we are enthralled.
 They gather in that Upper Room to dare
 A final meal, a sacramental sign;
 Like them in faith, Communion we do share,
 Remembering Him we take the bread and wine.
 But gradually they fall away in fear,
 Disciples leave, Gethsemane is dim;
 The candles in the sanctuary here

Extinguish until Easter dawns for Him.
 We keep the vigil, leave in silent night,
 But on the Table shines Christ's candle bright.

sonnet by Betsy Hughes

SENSORY SENTIMENTS

Candle Spirit

- 1 White
- 9 Energizing light glows through the air
- 3 Soft, gentle
- 7 To soothe—yet lightning intense
- 2 Marriage
- 2 Into
- 3 Night-time sight
- 7 Shine for solace, hope, blessing
- 2 To warm
- 8 Every heart. Timeless spirit
- 5 Reclaiming darkness.

telephone poem by Kathy Myers

Fellowship Hall

Steaming coffee poured
 Warms the soft cup in my hand.
 Whom here might I love?

haiku by Cindy Wright

Heritage Sunday

Crisp, cool air cracked the sleepy members' eyes
 while they settled into their familiar pews. Everyone
 was anxious as the musicians, with their ancient
 instruments, could be heard warming their tools.
 Like a jolt of electricity sent simultaneously through
 each individual, the howl of the first bagpipes and
 rhythmic thump of their partnered drums began.
 Witnessing the parade of colors, intricately inter-
 woven to form the plaids of our history, raised
 ghosts of relatives of faith within me. Feeling all
 that had come before me rush through the sights,
 sounds, and motion reassured me of the known
 sacrifices made for our faith, both past and future.

by David P. Spencer

Ague Bitters

Ten cents' worth of prickly-ash berries; five cents' worth of dogwood-bark, same of sarsaparilla, and the same of wild cherry. Put the above into a bottle large enough to hold them, with one quart of the best whisky. Let stand a day or two before using. Dose—For an adult, a little more than one-half a wineglassful three times a day; use it until there is only enough left for three doses for the ninth day, or whatever day precedes the one on which the chill is likely to return.

recipe by Mrs. P. P. Lowe

p. 163 of Cook Book compiled by the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio, 1886.

Yellow Pickles

Six gallons of best vinegar; six ounces of turmeric, six of white ginger, six of long peppers, one of inace, one of cloves, two of white mustard, one of white pepper, two of celery-seed; two pounds of brown sugar; two handfuls of garlic; oranges and lemons to taste. Into this pickle put any vegetable preferred, prepared as follows: Soak in cold brine for one week; after which expose them to the sun through the day; at night return them to the brine; then soak four days in vinegar, and afterward put them into the pickle. Onions should have boiling brine thrown over them and stand four or five days; then bleach as the others. Vegetables may be prepared as they come in season. This pickle will keep for years.

recipe by Mrs. R. P. Brown, p. 136 of the Cook Book.

At the Shore

Your thoughts stop at the shore,
on the line where the sand is still wet from the
highest wave.

They stop right behind the irises of your eyes,
so you can feel them, sense them.

They rule your actions,
but your fingertips can't feel them in front of you.

Maybe they're of the ripples moving toward
your feet,
washing cooling your blood to a lukewarm.
Maybe they're of the row of houses behind you.
Who's in them?
Why are they there?

Maybe at the sky, the thunderhead.
Or at the crash of the waves and
the way they make your toes reach to them,
like a pull from the moon.

But whatever they're of, you only have that feeling.
Everything else has stopped inside of your veins,
each moment,
each love,
each shocking, breaking point has yielded to
this feeling
that refuses to step out in front of you.

So take it.

Sit in it like a field of fireflies
and learn to love the moment where your heart
beats slow
and your irises feel your life behind them.

Listen to the waves.
Feel the sands.
Watch the birds.
Feel the breeze.
Look through a friend's eyes deep into the soul.
Feel God's presence,
His power,
His love running through you.
This is God's creation.
This is God's love.
Close your eyes and listen,
Just listen.

*Written by Claire Enterline (10th grade) and
Kori Phillips (11th grade) while on the 2000 Senior
High Mission Trip to Maine, this poem was read on
July 1st by the authors, in two voices, following the*

*celebration of the Lord's Supper at the beach on
Baileys Island, Maine*

SOUVENIRS

The Schram Quilt

A treasured Westminster memory for me is the series of events surrounding the creation of a farewell gift from the congregation for Dr. Bill Schram and his wife, Topper.

First there was the brainstorming. We wanted to create something they could use. But it should also be an art form which would, visually, recall for them some of the many, many pleasant associations we had with such a devoted pastor and his wife. Finally, we decided to create a patchwork quilt for their bed. I was thrilled to be asked to design the squares.

There were so many happy events we could picture! We wanted to note the many facets of his personality. The one I remember best was his sense of humor, best shown with a quite irreverent accident in a Communion service when the wine spilled as he was pouring it into the chalice! What fun it was to remember the many ways he influenced and inspired us and our children! Even as I write this I recall his sermons and his walking through the church kitchen, commenting and joking as we labored there.

The manufacture of the quilt was an event in itself. The Ruth and Ron Price house became an extended workshop as many hands and hearts pieced and stitched the appliques onto the whole. The wonderful conglomeration of people and scraps of fabric day after day is an indelible, happy memory!

I shall never forget that endeavor, followed by the surprise and appreciation which ensued at the presentation of our gift, still, to my knowledge, lovingly exhibited in their Florida retirement home.

Westminster is our family. Truly—working, learning, worshipping with the people is one of our life's greatest treasures. And designing that quilt for our beloved pastor, together with all those nice peo-

ple, will always be one of my fondest Westminster memories!

by Bette Huter

Pas de Deux

One of the richest ministries of Westminster Church is the kitchen ministry ordained by June Fisher. Around her table hundreds communed to be fed by the love which was inspired here. When June retired, a special dinner honored her with performances by the talented corps of entertainers in this church. A lasting impression occurred when Les Howard and Ron Price created terpsichorean splendor in their tu-tu's! The contrast in height and size coupled with extraordinary grace impressed the madding crowd, whose appreciation of Jane danced in their hearts.

by Ron Price

I Remember When

...on the busiest of Easter Sundays John Neely wished me a Happy Anniversary, since he remembered that my first Sunday at W. P. C. had been a previous Easter Sunday.

by Kathy Myers

...as a member of Westminster sitting with my visiting parents, I felt proud that I was a member of a church that they themselves would be proud of as well.

by David Spencer

...I watched with delight my little daughter costumed as a polecat processing with the animals in the May Festival production of "Noyes' Fludde," and I hoped then and now that her childlike spirit would always be a saving grace.

by Betsy Hughes

...I was teaching Sunday School, I saw and heard the wonder, freshness, and honesty of the children's faces and their comments.

by Ruth Price

I Sure Wish

Many years ago, in 1954, when Dr. Hugh Ivan Evans was senior pastor of Westminster Church and I was a new assistant pastor, Dr. Evans told a story which has stayed with me through all the years since then.

The story was about a young boy who was admiring a shiny new Cadillac parked on the street. Standing nearby was a man, who upon unlocking the car door, noticed the youth. "A beautiful car, isn't it? he said to the youngster. Then he added, "My brother gave it to me."

"He did!" the boy answered. "Wow, I sure wish I..." The Cadillac owner knew that the boy would finish the sentence with the phrase "had a brother like that," so imagine his surprise when the boy replied "I wish I could be a brother like that."

Our lives are full of opportunities to "be a brother like that." Thank God for such opportunities, and for leaders whose inspired teachings stay with us forever.

by Joseph L. Jensen

Do We Really Hear?

As everyone was sitting in the Sunday morning service, all at once a young woman with a little girl stood up and said, "You are all a bunch of hypocrites!" There was a silence that came over the congregation. People then looked around to see where the voice was coming from. The woman quickly went to the back of the church and proceeded to leave. An usher quickly went over to her. I really don't know what kind of communication went on between them and I don't really know what kind of follow-up took place. It made me stop and think about what she had said and what she perceived. She was certainly hurting and needed comfort and help. Do we really hear those in need? Do we do the right thing for the right reason?

by Ruth Price



Skinner solo organ

An Ocean, A Continent, and 3000 Miles

a sermon excerpt

At 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28, thirteen members of Miami Presbytery deplaned at the airport in Barranquilla, Columbia. Our group of eight youth, ages 16 to 21, and five adults, representing eight churches in Miami Presbytery arrived to visit with our partners in the Presbytery of the North Coast.

...At each church I had the honor of assisting in the celebration of the Lord's Supper: standing behind the communion table with my colleagues in ministry; speaking the familiar words in English and hearing them spoken in Spanish; feeling the bread break in my hands and smelling the sweet fragrance of the juice as it was poured into the cup; watching the faces of the congregation as they came forward to participate in the family meal of all God's children. In these moments the eyes of my heart were indeed enlightened and the hope and faith of our brothers and sisters in Christ were revealed. For as I gazed upon the worshipping congregation I saw many faces. I saw faces of pain and faces of joy; faces of age and faces of youth, faces of fear and faces of peace, faces of doubt and faces of faith, faces of new friends and faces of old friends, faces of sorrow and faces of hope. In those moments, in those faces, I saw the face of Christ.

by Nancy Hodgkins

...The Church of Pital is one of the smallest official churches in the Presbytery of the North Coast. It is located in the small village of Pital outside of Barranquilla. While in the worship service I noticed there were no hymnals or Bibles in the pews. And only a few people had their own Bibles. There was no bulletin saying when and what would happen. When they needed a scripture read, they asked for volunteers. This is very different from the assigned parts we have. Their hymns were very

unofficial and contemporary. The words were not written, they were known by heart. They even sang Happy Birthday to one of the members of the church. These things reaffirmed the fact that faith isn't just about standing up and sitting down at the correct times. Faith is about loving God and the people around you. You don't need a hymnal, or a Bible; all you need is the love of God in your heart and your soul.

by Allison Greenwald

...While we were at Nelson Mandela Camp, we didn't do much that could immediately help these people, but I know it is a goal of the partnership to help these people. After seeing the refugees, I decided that I, too, want to help remedy some of the hurt that these people deal with every day of their lives. I don't exactly know how this will be done, but I do know that visiting was the first step to reaching this new goal.

Well, it turns out that my original suspicion was correct. I did not accomplish my goal of making a difference in someone's life simply by painting at the church camp. But, not to fear, I didn't leave Colombia unhappy or depressed, because I did make a difference in someone's life—my own.

by Kelly Phillips

...We must choose to loose the chains of injustice and set the oppressed free. By the Miami Presbytery's partnership with the Presbytery of the North Coast in Barranquilla, Colombia, we have chosen to join hands and share our food with the hungry; and when we see the naked, to clothe them. We have chosen not to turn away from our own flesh and blood, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

...Colombia is not just a place of drugs. Colombia is trying to change, but they can't change by themselves. They need our help, and the American government doesn't seem to know how to fix the problem either. Hopefully, by our partnership, we can help. In a Bible study we had in Colombia, a

man told us that "The young people in this partnership are the leaders of tomorrow." I believe in that statement. I know that together we can clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and shelter the poor wanderer. The Lord will guide us always and strengthen our frame. We will be called the Restorers of the Breach and the Repairers of the Broken Walls.

by Kori Phillips

SEASONS: ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS VISION; meditation spoken at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Sunday, December 20, 1936, by Hugh I. Evans

Last week your minister had a vision which he would like to narrate. Tired and weary, after a day of unusual pressure, he was coming into Dayton from the east in the early evening after twilight. Above the lights of the city, which cast up a glow into the sky, a star stood out in all its clear beauty. Venus, the evening star, now almost at its fullest glory, was like a beacon. Its glory shone steadily and so distinctly different from the lights made by man.

Soon the star had captured his thoughts. The weariness seemed to evaporate from his physical body. It was like the dawn of a new day after refreshing rest. The star called back the Wise Men following a star. This modern star kept straight ahead. Every turn of the road appeared to twist back into the direction of the star. As one passed Wright Field, the star stood over the city, seemingly at the end of the road. It was dropping rapidly toward the horizon. Then it was lost behind Huffman Hill. But when one had climbed the hill and paused on the summit, the star appeared again and seemed to have stopped over the very heart of Dayton. It hung over our church, or was it the City Hall?

Then as one drove on, the lights of the city

drowned out the star; human eyes could not see the star because of man-made electric lights and neon signs. But the mood was upon the minister. It was the mood of Christmas. He was not a Wise Man—just an ordinary human—yet had he been one of the Wise Men of the East, he might have believed that the star had stopped over Dayton, and that Christ was born in this city, “and he would come and worship Him.”

Perhaps Christ was born in Dayton and the star was proclaiming it. The city was quiet; families were in their homes; the evening meal was finished. Could one look behind the closed doors, what might one find?

A mother putting her little ones to bed, telling them in love of noble deeds and watching their eyes grow bright as they listened. Then drowsy heads, in an attitude of prayer, against a mother's knee. Christ was indeed born in Dayton in that tender divine scene. The star was announcing that simple fact.

A father, planning in faith and love for the future of his loved ones, sharing his dreams for his son and daughter with them, planning sacrifices to insure their happiness. Here in deep, abiding emotion Christ was born in Dayton, and the star was pointing out that fact.

A simple request for forgiveness; an impulse to do a thoughtful and generous deed; a quiet vow of love, spoken in low tones; a great longing of soul, finding its way into an earnest prayer; the tempter repelled by a youth in a moment of hot temptation; a serene spirit in complete mastery of unruly passions; or a dawning hope where despair had been—any one of these could be the birth of Christ.

Truly Christ is born in Dayton. He is born when men and women and children become Christ-like in thought and deed.

“Glory to God in the highest...”

Can it be possible there is music? Something seems to sing in the soul of the minister. Is it a choir of angels? The star began it, but the music persists now that the star is gone. And down

through the year the heart will sing

“Peace on earth good will to men.”

Christ is born today in our homes and our city, and in faith we can see His star and can come to worship Him. “The King of glory!” Let Him have a home in your hearts.

“Where meek souls will receive Him still

The dear Christ enters in.”

The Whole Story

It was a cold, snowy afternoon in mid-December. I was on my way home for Christmas, hitchhiking from New Concord to Steubenville and then to Youngstown, Ohio. My first ride was with a young couple and their six-year old son. In the back seat I started talking with the boy. I had noticed a religious calendar hanging from the right door post. I asked the boy, “What is Christmas all about?” He replied without any hesitation: “It’s the birthday of Jesus.” I said “Is that all there is to it?” His reply has remained firmly in my memory for over half a century.

“That’s the whole story.”

by Warren G. McCready

Advent

The greater part of valour lies

In facing an abyss

And asking if each person dies,

Can there be more than this?

Then shuddering within the dark

Like some small smould’ring fire

My world within—a broken heart

Where once lived warm desire.

Does courage not mean choosing life

Though all is full of doubt?

And darkness comes, instead of light

Casting illusions out?

Does it not take a braver one

Never to weep or lean

Just to keep going on and on
Not knowing what it means?

Love fanned the ashes into flame
When all my world was gray,
And I could never be the same
Since that surprising day.

One cannot see Love coming near
On winged, rushing feet
But suddenly I know He's here
And all is warm and sweet.
by Isabel Vandenberg

An African Advent

The countdown had begun. We were riding in the back of a Toyota pickup truck and knew in one night we would have electricity again. In two nights we would have an indoor toilet. In three nights we could take a hot shower. We were beginning to ease our way back toward modern conveniences with about the same speed as we had eased our way to Ebando, the village in which our son Jeff lived while serving in the Peace Corps in the country of Gabon, Central Africa.

The gleanings I brought home from Africa were a combination of appreciation and challenge. For example, appreciation that due to medical sanitation advances, we are able to live 20–25 years longer than the average Gabonese man or woman. But also a challenge, as to whether we use those extra years to serve God who graces us with life.

So, as we drove away from Ebando, stuffed in the back of that Toyota pickup with a monkey and some chickens, some might say we were headed back to civilization. Not so, we were simply counting down to the conveniences of life we so enjoy—but that is all they are, conveniences, pleasures, comforts.

During our time in a very civilized village, we had experienced the kind of spirit of caring and sharing, of integrity and honesty which opened us to the rebirth of the Messiah. Indeed the welcome

and outpouring of love we had received, and the care shown to our son was overwhelming grace. We had been given an advent of love and sharing and honesty to help us prepare a space for Jesus, the Messiah. And our anticipation had indeed been transformed into joy.

by Richard E. Otty

Light in the Darkness

One Christmas found me in Westerbroek, the small village in the Netherlands where my father was born. I was visiting in the home of Aunt Tekla, my father's sister. Near the house where she lived is a small church; it is special to me because my grandparents' grave is there. One evening Aunt Tekla took me to a Christmas program in that church. The program, even though in another language, was much like those at home—a children's program with the familiar story, hymns, scriptures and a Christmas tree. It was a beautiful tall tree, and as the program began, two elderly men came in and lit the many candles on it. What a wonderful sight it was!

Just as the light from those candles lit up the church that evening, so Christ came to bring light to the darkness in our lives. The light of his presence comforts us when we are unsure or afraid. The light of his love warms us when loneliness chills our hearts. The light of his wisdom comes to us when we don't understand and when we must make difficult decisions. The light of his way guides us when the road seems dark and uncertain. Let us welcome his light into our lives as we prepare to celebrate once again his coming.

by Hilda Lipe

A Visit to Bethlehem

Several years ago, a friend and I went to Israel, the focal point being Bethlehem, to see where Christ was born. What we expected were celestial lights, angels, shepherds, a manger filled with straw. What we saw, under the Church of the Nativity, was a dark and dingy grotto with a single

light bulb hanging from the ceiling, centered on a large silver star with the center designated as the spot where Christ was born. To the side, in a little sunken chapel, was a stone crib where the infant Jesus was laid.

We quietly agreed we should become Biblical Martha's and do a spring cleaning. But, a small family walked beside us, the children excitedly exclaiming, "We are where Jesus was born." In Isaiah it says: "...and a little child shall lead them" So true! Ashamed, we had looked at what it looked like instead of what it was and is. The child born here would transform the world and our lives, and we knew that.

Ann Weems' book *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, however, helps nudge us from where we are in this Advent season, on a personal journey to Bethlehem, to where we should be:

"This Advent let us go to Bethlehem and see things that the Lord has made known to us. In the midst of shopping sprees, let us ponder in our hearts the gift of gifts. O God, give me the humbleness of those shepherds who saw on the cold December darkness the coming of Light. The Advent of Love."

by Ruth Freeman

Preoccupied

There are many translations of the Bible today and I am not up to adding another, but I do have a phrase to propose for that familiar verse in Luke's gospel. Instead of "there was no room for them in the inn," how about this: "The inn was preoccupied."

That may not be very accurate rendering of the Greek text, but it surely is a precise description of what was wrong with the world then and what is wrong with it now. It was just too preoccupied with other matters to be concerned about an obscure birth in a dirty, drafty, ill-smelling shed.

It turned out that the only place where there would be room for Jesus was on a cross, for just as he was unable to secure a place in an overcrowded inn, so he could not find a place in the overcrowded

hearts of the people in Israel.

I suspect there hasn't been a great change in the over-crowded hearts of preoccupied people today.

"There was no room for them in the inn." Shall we not make room for him in our hearts so that no selfishness may mar the joy of his coming, so that anger and bitterness may be forgotten, so that no want may go unrelieved, so that we may know peace in our hearts and in our world?

by William C. Schram

Three Christmases or One?

There are three Christmases. There is that first Christmas of Bethlehem. It is the story in its original beauty and simplicity, so appealing, timeless in its meaning; the story of Mary and Joseph and the Christ Child in the manger bed.

There is another Christmas, the Christmas of personal memory and experience. We remember the firesides of home, parents, grandparents and little children. It is the memory of the most cherished moments of the past—of traditions dear to our family.

Then there is this Christmas, the one we anxiously await and for which we eagerly prepare. Students secretly smuggle strange packages into undiscoverable hiding places; children work for days to prepare just the right gift. All wait for Santa who will ever "make glad the heart of childhood." And we all become as little children at Christmas.

But really it is one Christmas—the day we look forward to—the day we look back upon—the day that truly holds all time together; the day that holds us together in a bond of love.

by W.J. Westhafer

Mary's Song

Hushed was the night as we rode on,

How bright yon one far star,

O God, the brightness in my soul

Rivals that light afar.

Long was the ride to Bethlehem,
 Strange was the crowded inn,
 Heavy the waiting, O noisy throng,
 Blind the weight of sin.

Quiet the stable was; so still,
 Winged our offered prayer
 For miracle of God's Son's birth
 We wait in wonder there.

Angels are singing; Son of God,
 Love in a Babe is born.
 Softly, closely in my arms,
 Wonder of Christmas morn.

Hold him so gently, human heart,
 Never let him go.
 Hold him cradled in thy soul,
 As I held him long ago.
by Isabel Vandenberg

The Sequel to Bethlehem

And halfway across the yard, we heard it and saw it. But how will I tell you, man? Here the words always sag and fail. It was silent and yet there was music. It was dark and yet there was light. The music! It was the music of life that you know is there but never quite hear. Oh, you nearly hear it in the spring sometimes. You catch it as an overtone in the voice of some children. There are certain people who remind you of its melody. There are certain times when you feel it's about to be played. But that night, bless you, it was being strummed from every tree top and hymned from every cloud bank! And the light! There's a moment just before dawn that nearly has it. The sky still black but everything around you beginning to reflect that coming wonder. That's how we felt standing hand in hand there in the dark. As if we too were luminous, if you please, reflecting some untraceable radiance! Certain that had we stood in the distance we'd surely have seen that over Bethlehem some tremendous signal fire of glory

had been lighted.

I don't know how long we stood there, letting it speak to us what can't be said. But then Leah told me of the shepherds who had come while I had slept. All abashed and uncertain, but determined in their quest. Stammering through their story of a sky punctured by voices, leaking wonders, phrasing their errand and choiring an anthem of God's intended peace. And how they all had become ill at ease but had left, heads back, their eyes flashing praise.

It was then I could wait no longer to go in. I didn't stay long. Just long enough to pretend to see that all was well. Just long enough to worship with eyes wide open, to etch that scene indelibly here behind my forehead. A peasant and her baby and her husband hovering near them. And then I went out while Leah busied herself in that way of hers which can make even a manger seem for the moment a home. I went back out under the stars.

Oh, I've doubted my senses many times since, but that night it was all so sure. And I found myself wondering why I was so willing to accept an incredible claim without even knowing what it all meant. But I knew somehow I'd always been waiting for that night, and that music and that light, and this Child and this claim, which my heart would never have dared to phrase, but which the frightened shepherd lads had stammered. For it's a remarkable thing that God has fashioned in the human heart...

excerpt from a sermon by Frederick B. Speakman

A Christmas Meditation

Christmas 1941 will long be remembered! For on the eve of the festival a new word with vast meaning swept into our ken. The new word on the lips of every American is the word invasion....

While fear and war are temporary incidents of this Christmas, our hearts are bound together in earnest prayer that eternal truth may not be obscured. We must live in a world of turmoil with the conviction that peace will come and with it another great opportunity to increase our efforts to

establish the kingdom of God. In the present crisis our prayers ascend for all separated families, all our youth in the service, all parents who find their plans for their sons interrupted, all who must turn aside to give life and possessions for a worthy cause. And in all this there must be room for the Child of Bethlehem in our hearts. Thus a hostile invasion will find its counterpart in a magnificent, divine and blessed invasion of God's love.

*excerpt from a Christmas meditation
by Hugh Ivan Evans, 1941*

SEASONS: LENT/EASTER

"Father, Forgive Them"

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 24) This sentence, the first spoken by Jesus after he was crucified, for me at least, is the essence of Christianity.

Forgiveness is one of the great basic qualities that mankind, and the individual, can receive only from a deep belief in God.

But how many of us, myself included, are strong enough to forgive? When we are wronged, imposed upon, shoved aside, the natural reaction is to strike back—with a sharp remark, a cutting comment, or at worst, with physical force.

What kind of world would we have today if all of us could find the strength to forgive?

Does forgiveness imply weakness? No, forgiveness requires tremendous strength, power, and character. Forgiveness of this depth can only come from God.

But the skeptic may ask, what about the bully? The rapist? A Hitler? Does one always turn the other cheek? Of course not! Force must be used in extreme cases to stop evil. The survival of the individual and society, sad to say, requires this. Certainly a Hitler could not go unchecked.

But forgiveness, mercy, and love are qualities or concepts that must ultimately come first.

by Graham Justus

How Can We Know

How do you forgive with a crown of thorns
piercing your brow?
How can we really know?
Good Friday comes year after year.
The scriptures are read and we experience again
that Friday that became Good.
How can we really know?
Until we, too can place the crown of thorns on
our heads.
Then we can know—
But we had no idea!

by Mary Griffiths

Jesus was nailed to the Cross.
(Pilate would show who's the boss.)
Christ suffered and died.
"Forgive them" He cried.
His death gave us life—not loss.

by Billie Ruth August

Somewhere in the desolate area of Pearl Peak in central Arizona lives an ancient of days. For thousands of years, he has recorded the coming of spring flowers and the fall of winter snows. And he remembers each season with an indelible mark etched into his living substance.

He neither forgets nor forgives the violence of the years but somehow survives even the gentle rains of a summer shower. Ask him and he will mutely show you the passage of time.

He stands as sentinel, eternally present, for men to memorialize with a bronze plaque or to cut up for a marshmallow roast.

Do not cry for his fate nor for your destiny. All of us are rooted in the eternal dust of this clay-filled earth, recording the passage of time in our sacred scars.

Fear not, for what you are is nothing, except the total expression of eternal love.

Hewett Mulford, Jr.

"Today You Will Be With Me In Paradise"**THE DAY WHEN I SAW JESUS**

I remember you lifting
 Me up from the ground
 Making me stare
 Into your eyes
 To see flashes of lightning
 And rolling water
 Pigments streaking
 Across the horizon
 Vanishing near
 The gates of heaven.

by Travis Price

Milk and Honey

I talk to my Jewish brothers
 Eat soup with matzo
 And finally see visions
 Of the ones who died
 Stepping into vaults of darkness
 Covered with ashes and soot
 Burnt from a demon's hand
 Possessed by death and fire
 You survive the flame
 Now a disciple of the scrolls
 You teach a new language
 Quoting the German Rabbi
 Who spoke against
 Killers in a night regime
 And I begin to see water
 Flowing beyond this vessel
 Taken in by mighty currents
 Splitting a new Red Sea

by Travis Price

Walking Toward Forgiveness

Last night's fullest almost forever moon is behind me,
 an affair of atmosphere and angles, if not angels.
 I walk down the long hill until Far Hills becomes
 South Main.
 There is a feeling of Spring in the just chilling air.
 Somewhere ahead of me,
 or all around me,

even maybe behind me, too,
 lies Paradise.

It is the place we are forgiven.
 It is the place we can forgive.
 There is no one else walking along this street.
 What few cars there are speed past.
 It is almost as if I were walking alone.
 How many go where we go?
 That invisible crowd surrounds us.
 Our memories mind them.
 Even in the sun's growing brightness,
 a glare across our ways,
 their lovely memorial moonshine stays,
 a glimmering shimmer of promise.
 Downtown, nearly at our church,
 I walk through refuse,
 castaway papers and cups.
 I'm tempted to be angry at such thoughtless trashing
 until I see these fragments, too, as signs of life,
 of the need for forgiveness,
 wholeness,
 holy, along the even oddly careless ways to
 Paradise.

by James Hughes

"Woman, Behold Your Son"

March 14, 1993

Woman, behold your son. Members of the congregation, behold this baptized child. You have life abundantly. Give that knowledge, that strength, to this little one. Give to those around you who are in need of strength, courage, upliftment.

Sallie, too, is gone. But through the forty years I knew her as a Circle sister and best friend, she gave to others. She gave her wisdom, her courage, her service to our little church. Her music and art brightened the lives of so many.

But she kept on cheering me on through letters, phone calls, poetry, scripture as we both struggled with this disease. She is still with us...as Jesus is.

by Roberta Daugherty

**"My God, My God,
Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"**

Betrayal and Thirst

We all have had those times when we're alone
And feel that those around us do forsake
Us; then our soul emits a piercing moan,
We wonder when from gloom we will awake.
But this depression is so heavily cursed
The season spring seems untold years away;
For understanding, love, and joy we thirst
To vivify our gray and wintry day.
We pray this selfish mood would be diminished
And that our mind's own hell become a heaven;
Oh that the terrible trial could be finished,
A ray of sun provide a warming leaven!
Our help is in the Lord and so by prayer
There we connect again, and hope we dare.

sonnet by Betsey Hughes

"I Thirst"

I thirst

We all thirst
until we find peace
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

As our thoughts return to the hill of Golgatha
There three crosses stand and three to know death.

The central figure speaks in a weak voice, "I thirst."

Some who still stand by bring vinegar, a sponge
and hyssop.
A blessing to his parched lips.

It would not be long.
Forsaken and forlorn, it would seem.

But his thirst for his heavenly father
and home would soon be satisfied.

Would that our thirst might be a priority in
our lives.

Forsaken — no!

Thirsty! — yes!

by Mary Griffiths

"It Is Finished"

Notes

Life in death now we have this —

The script finished — but still goes on —

We continue to carry it on — because of the cross.
God's promise is fulfilled.

The chapter closed but in many ways just opening.
It opens again and again.

The light came, shone, went out, but then
shone again in your spirit.
It will shine for us eternally only if we will look for it.

Just as Jesus committed himself to the Father
so now each of us can do so.

Give of what we are to be
Look back —
life filled with joy, pain,
love, faith, death, eternal life.
by Ruth Price

Haiku

Betrayed and in pain
Ends and beginnings combine
Are we seeing hope?
by Laurie Leach

It is Finished

Shout the triumph
Proclaim it afar
Journey to tell the tale
In Damascus, Antioch,

Ephesus and Cyprus.
 And other chains
 Multiply and scatter
 Of known believers.
 To Bithyunia, Dura Europos,
 Egypt and Rome.
 There were other,
 The trail from
 Unrecorded trails
 The shout of victory
 Leading out from that triumph,
 Passes through John,
 The beginning.
 To Polycarp in Asia Minor,
 To Iraneus to Lyons;
by Jane Welton

"Into Thy Hands I Commit My Spirit"

The Homecoming

"Into thy hands I commit my spirit."
 It was a calm declaration.
 He was now reconciled.
 He was going home.
 What a homecoming!
 There is an old gospel hymn
 "Safe in the arms of Jesus."
 To be a part of the brood gathered
 under the shelter of his wings.
 Safe in the arms of Jesus.
 We have come home!
by Mary Griffiths

A Resurrection

"In Me, your joy shall be full."
 I walked down palm lined ways,
 And glad hosannahs warmed my heart,
 All life a song of praise.
 "A man of sorrows and of grief."
 I climb a lonely hill,
 And share with him a bitter cup,
 O Lord, is this Thy will?

"In Me you shall find perfect peace."
 When self was crucified,
 Christ rose within my soul,
 And all life bloomed at Easter-tide.
by Isabel Vandenberg

STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Swinging Through Life

When I was a child and even now when I have the opportunity, if I go to a playground I immediately head for the swings—not the merry-go-round, or the see-saws but those wonderful old gray swing sets, solidly placed in cement, with the iron chains and the thick wooden seats. How I loved pumping my legs and sailing up into the air, until I nearly got high enough to flip over the top. I could spend hours swinging like that and always reluctantly went home.

When I was in the first grade, we lived in a house once that had a creek behind it where the neighborhood children gathered to play. The stream was probably about four or five feet wide but it seemed enormous to me. On one side of the bank there was a tree with a grapevine hanging from it. Children would line up to grab that vine and swing across that vast expanse to the other side. Some stepping stones brought them back across for another swing. I too would swing on that grapevine but it was a totally different swinging experience than going to the playground. I was never quite confident that that tree was going to hold on to that grapevine, but even more importantly, I was not confident that I would be able to hold on to the vine. I might lose my grip in the middle of my swing and fall into the dark and murky alligator, shark-infested pool below. I really did not enjoy my grapevine swinging.

As I think of the differences in these two kinds of swinging experiences, it is clear that what made the first one comforting, fun, and meaningful was that there was a secure structure around me hold-

ing that swing up, there was a solid seat under me, and although I made the swing go, it was not my own strength alone that kept me safe. Something higher up, bigger, stronger, was holding me up and supporting me through the experience. That is an image of trust. But on that insecure grapevine, I was depending on my own strength alone and if I couldn't hold on I suffered the consequences. That is an image of anxiety and apprehension.

How, then, can I move from swinging on a grapevine overcome with fears of my inadequacy to meet the challenges of the future, to the image of swinging with support and resource under me and around me which is sufficient to allow me and God together to handle the future?

My conclusion is that gratitude is the way from anxiety to trust, a way of turning life from a grapevine act into an exhilarating swing ride. More than anything else, gratitude is a form of consciousness raising. It makes us aware, as perhaps never before, of how we are being and have been blessed and then invites us to image the future in this light rather than in fear....

by Donna Reece, excerpt from an address delivered to the Pi Presbyweds at Shaker Village, Pleasant Hill, on October 11, 1998

My God

When I was little, a Sunday school teacher once asked me what God was to me. I gave the typical response: God is an old guy with a long white beard that lives up in the clouds. If I were asked the same question today, my answer would definitely be very different. I wouldn't have the same confidence in my response as I did as a child, when I knew everything, of course. What I would say now is this, God is three things: God is good, God is love, and God is everything. Now that sounds as simple as picturing God as Michelangelo did when he painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, but think for a second about what those three things really mean.

God is Good. Sounds pretty obvious, doesn't it?

But what exactly does that mean? It means a couple of things. First, what we term good and evil are defined solely by God. We don't decide what is right, God does. Secondly, it means that no action taken by God can be anything but an act of pure goodness, proving the infallibility of God. While some situations may appear different to the human mind, one must remember how incomparable the will of a mortal is to the will of God. Now someone might read this and take it to mean that the Bible should be followed verbatim, which is far from the truth. No matter how much divine influence was involved, the Bible was still written by a human being and cannot possibly even begin to explain the exact will of God. The God who died upon the cross does not support hatred, bigotry, or violence, and anyone who uses the Bible to uphold those ideals is going to have a nasty surprise waiting for him when he reaches the end of his life.

God is Love. "I pray so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God." (Ephesians 3:18–19) The very nature of God is love, pure and simple. God's love transcends any comparison by human standard. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." (John 3:16) There are hundreds more Bible passages I could quote on this subject, but I believe my point is made. God is love. A truer statement has never been said.

God is Everything. Now this one is a bit harder to explain than the other two. Now we all know that God is omniscient and omnipotent, but there is another omni word that describes God. Omnipresent. God is everywhere. I take this one step further. I believe that God is present in every single piece of matter in the universe. See, every person experiences God in a different way. Some people feel God when they are alone, others when in a group. Some

people need to be in church to feel God, others find that nature is a better place to feel His presence. God is in every rock, every flower, every tree, every house, every dog, every cat, and every person. A good friend of mine told me that after she had spent an hour praying out in the forests during the Kirkmont Youth Retreat she felt God as a communion of every single living creature living in harmony.

Now you're probably wondering exactly how this all ties in with Westminster. It is very simple. Without Westminster, I don't think I could have come to a deep, personal understanding of my faith at this age. At Westminster I was not forced or shoved into what I should believe; instead I was given a gentle push in the right direction, then let wander. Now, everyone might not believe exactly as I do, but in a place like Westminster, that doesn't really matter. Westminster is a place of love, understanding, and faith, and I know it has been an important part of my life and the life of all the youth there.

by John Dickerson, Senior High student

Exodus; Reflections on Readings

I really can't think of a time when I was oppressed, but I have felt fear many times. When I took a high adventure trip to Alaska with my Scout troop, we went on a canoe trip for the last five days. On the final day, we were caught in a very big storm. It was 35 degrees, raining, hailing, with gale force winds. I couldn't feel my hands, face, or half of my legs. We could not canoe because of the winds, and so we had to carry them through waist-deep water, along with our gear, for more than a mile. I was so scared and tired I could not even find the strength for tears. We ended up getting separated from half the group, and when we finally found the road we had to stop an RV to go get the vans about a half mile down the road. It was then the most horrible experience of my life, now a thing to joke about with my buddies that were there in the thick of it.

The lessons in these stories (*Milla Paw* and

Exodus by Leon Uris) could teach me never to give up. Never. Always keep going when all hope is lost. They could comfort me in that, once I think of it, the Hebrews' problems were a lot worse than mine, and they persevered, and reached their goal, and if they can have the courage and the determination to succeed, so can I.

This guides me by reassuring me that God is always with me, and that all I have to do is put my trust in God and I will walk through the valley of the shadow of death and I will fear no evil. I hope that I will be worthy of succeeding as the people of God did, and of such wondrous and loving assistance that when I need it, God will be there for me.

by Dayton Stone, Senior High student

Fear Not

Life as we know it changed Tuesday morning. We will give blood, make contributions to relief agencies, and stay informed. But, we can't fix what has been broken, and we can never recover what has been stolen from us. Our nation and our world will never be the same. It will recover, but it will never be the same.

I've tried to keep track of my emotions since ten o'clock on Tuesday morning. It hasn't been easy. They've been so varied and there's been so many of them it's been hard to sort them out—disbelief, shock, horror, anger, sadness, anxiety, resolve, pride, hate, denial, depression, fear. Perhaps in one way or another fear has been the overriding emotion. At least that's the one on which I want to focus in our time together this morning.

Fear can cause us to do some terrible things. Just short of 60 years ago, in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack, some terrible, fear-driven, tragic events began to unfold in this nation. Innocent Japanese-Americans were the victims of those events. Let us resolve here and now that as Christians we neither take part in, nor remain silent in the face of, any words or actions of blame or hatred, nor any other racist expression, against our friends and neighbors who are Middle Eastern by

culture or ethnicity. What a further tragedy would befall us if we allowed those who attacked us Tuesday to achieve one of their main goals: to erode away the core of who we are as Americans and as people of faith, and to reduce us to acting out our basest fears and prejudices....

God condemns racial hatred and violence in all its expressions; to this all scriptures that I know (including the Koran) attest. Let us not fall prey to the sin of racism against any group or faith. Let us reserve our expressions of righteous anger for those who are responsible for Tuesday's evils. And let us say or do nothing that would serve to give them the victory over our true national spirit.

We will emerge intact from this crisis, if we will remember who we are and whose we are. We are freedom-loving, peace-loving Americans. Moreover, we in this room put our trust in Jesus Christ. We know with certain assurance that, whatever befalls us, God is with us, and the love of God will never fail us....

Ultimately, we defeat terrorism by refusing to be terrorized. That is why we are called to live out fear's opposite, which is a living trust in God. It is your faith and trust in God that will grant you courage and wisdom for facing this hour.

excerpt from sermon by George H. McConnel

SIGNATURES

If These Walls Could Talk

excerpt from Reader's Theater presented on Heritage Sunday, January 31, 1999, based on Hebrews 12:1-3

Reader 5: All of you know who I am. I housed the first congregation to organize itself into a church in Dayton, Ohio. 1799 was when it all started. The congregation grew larger and larger, but then in the mid 19th century, the congregation split, and started two Presbyterian churches, just yards apart from one another. That silly separation ended in 1919. What a brilliant idea, too, that brought them

together. "Instead of a church, let's make a church that is also a choir college!" That's what I was at first when I was built in 1926. Some of you here may not have known that. Most of the rooms around this sanctuary were designed as rehearsal and instruction rooms. What a great vision they had! The Westminster Choir College has since outgrown me, and moved to Princeton, New Jersey. This great Tiffauy window came from one of the buildings that were abandoned in the merger of the two congregations. Another great idea.

Through the years I've heard and seen it all. I have heard sermons of encouragement during the Great Depression, sermons in support of our country in World War II, prayers asking for God to protect our soldiers in Korea and Vietnam. Prayers for peace in every country on earth. I've also heard people complain about some of the most seemingly unimportant things. I've heard people tell their friends they are leaving the church because of something that, in my opinion, is pretty inconsequential. It is amazing that some people are so willing to throw out their spiritual lives, just like that.

I caught fire once. Back in 1948, a certain young person set a fire here. He said he wanted to see the fire engines run. \$34,000 worth of damage.

I've heard funerals for people very important in town and some for people with few friends and little importance. Hundreds of baptisms and weddings, of course. I've heard sermons by nationally known preachers like Fred Speakman and Tom Long. Wilbur and Orville Wright have worshipped within my walls. John Patterson, too.

The Bible says "without vision, the people perish." That was true when those frightened Christians risked their lives to meet in the Roman catacombs. St. Columba had a vision of bringing the gospel to the Scots. Calvin, Knox, and all the reformers had a vision of a church rededicated to scripture and to Christ as head of the church. And it was true when Newcom's tavern and a dirt road were Dayton, and a band of Presbyterians birthed a congregation.

It does my heart good to see that this congregation still has a vision. “Westminster 2003.” By 2003 I will have passed my 75th birthday. Having a vision doesn’t mean you’ve arrived, though. A lot of hard work lies ahead, just as Christians through history have had to struggle to achieve their goals and visions. Everyone must help out. It takes many hands to attain a vision. Many hands...I guess I was wrong—churches do have hands. What are yours doing to help? Today’s work is tomorrow’s heritage, you know.

by the Reverend Glenn D. Leupold

Corridors

There are the corridors of the mind,
Where footsteps echo endlessly,
Each winding way goes ever on
Opening in rooms from darkened mystery.
And if one could see to the End
To step from Doorway into radiant light,
The corridors would all seem, to his sight
To lead to altars, flaming with Divine fire.

Faith somehow gives windows to our soul
And then we know through all our wandering
We always were in the mansions of our Lord,
All corridors are pathways in His love.
by Isabel Vandenberg

There is a Cloud of Witnesses

There is a cloud of witnesses that we can see.
They took the time to guide us, to guide our feet.
They ran the race before us and guided us by faith.
So worship with us and join the cloud of witnesses
so great.

Matt Dyer and Alex Gonzalez

Bicentennial Hymn

This hymn was inspired by the Homecoming Banquet Program of October 23, 1999, a Bicentennial reunion of Westminster clergy and members who joined in singing “Blessed Be the Tie that Binds.” The Bicentennial Hymn is to be sung to this tune.

Blest be this church we love.
It celebrates two hundred years!
God guided its history, watched from above,
Inspiring more hopes than fears.
Established in this river town
And threatened much later by flood,
Westminster and Dayton both grew to renown,
Their strength resides in our blood.
Once simple log cabin of ten,
Now it’s a cathedral for throngs;
The few and the many both recognize when
There’s greatness in sermons and songs.
Once First and Third churches knew strife
But discord, disharmony done,
Now our congregation can claim that its life
Is Westminster’s fellowship one!
“Increasing the love of God
And neighbor”—this be our guide!
May mission be led by a true Christian rod
So service to all be our pride.
Now our new millennium starts,
Fresh challenges, changes to bring,
Westminster’s vocations do ring in our hearts—
Of past, present, future we sing!
by Betsy Hughes

Chapter 16

Promising

AND PROMISING HIS LOVE ETERNAL

By John Haddick, Sandy McConnel & Sarah Sessions



Easter 1958

VISIONING

Will There be a Tercentennial?

*"History unfolds itself by strange and unpredictable paths.
We have little control over the future; and none at all over the past."*

Sir Winston Churchill

Westminster begins its third century from a position of strength. The congregation is fed each week with challenging sermons, meaningful prayers, and magnificent music. Worship attendance is growing. New ventures into a growing list of vital ministries include: Stephen Ministry (a caring ministry), Small Group ministry, Older Adult Ministry, and an effective outreach program to the Dayton Public School system. All of these have invigorated the life of the congregation as we celebrated our 200th birthday. A new Sunday morning schedule, which incorporates *Crossroads* (a children's church school featuring a workshop rotation model), increased adult education

opportunities, and a popular catered lunch each Sunday has been enthusiastically received. Our music program continues to boast a national reputation. Our beautiful 75-year-old building, while in some quarters looking its age, is essentially in good shape. The financial health of the church is stronger than ever with a 1.5 million dollar yearly budget and invested funds of over 5 million dollars. The current staff is collegial, gifted for their various roles, tenured, hardworking, and popular with the congregation.

And, just listen to some of the voices of our future:

**Steve McCullough, father of a young family, Elder and the current President
of the Board of Trustees—A Minute for Ministry Fall 2001...**

"A few years ago a job opportunity within my company took us from Dayton to Georgia. While there were many positive aspects to this, the one thing we hadn't considered was how much we would miss Westminster Church. We had spent 15 years here, and Westminster Church had truly become our family. This was where we started our lives together. This was where our children were born and baptized. You celebrated with us in good times and comforted us in our moments of grief. The old saying goes, "you can't go home again," but thankfully we were given that opportunity when our company offered me a position back in Dayton. I remember the first few times coming back to Westminster and just absorbing the sounds and sights. I remember experiencing those special services again—Easter Sunday, the Children's Christmas service,



continued on next page...

Youth Sunday and more. While we often take these special moments for granted, we didn't any more.

"Several months ago, an opportunity arose again with my company in Georgia, but I quickly indicated I wasn't interested. I have to be honest; this church played a big part in our decision. While I could go on for hours telling you why we love this church, I'll distill it into a few bullet points:

- The most thought provoking and inspirational sermons I've ever heard
- The best music program around, period
- A wonderful group of staff and lay leaders who have helped my children experience the love of God in unbelievable ways
- A great, great group of people with whom to share fellowship

"That is why we will increase our monetary pledge by 10% this year and will continue to support the church's programs with our time and talent. I would ask you to prayerfully consider how you will invest in all of our church family's future. Thank you."

Breanna Shell, 17, a life-long Presbyterian...

"I have been attending Westminster for as long as I can remember. My grandparents brought my mother and her siblings here—just as my mother did for me. I can only hope that, when I have a family, they will love Westminster as much as I do."



"When I was younger, I was involved in a lot of the activities for the youth and it was always great fun. I learned some, played more and made lasting friends. When I was mature enough to keep my attention on the service and to actually comprehend, I was entranced by it. I soon was a part of the Youth's planning team (Presbyterian Youth Council), while continuing with Knox Choir, Handbell Choir, and even this past year as an elder on the church's governing board. I also served on the Christian Education and Mission Committees. I love being involved. I know Westminster is a safe place where I can always go and be accepted for who I am. My friends are from all over Dayton and the Youth Group meetings are a time that I wouldn't trade for anything."

"The opportunities are amazing and I thank God that I can have such a positive church family and have the wonderful times I have had at my church!!!"

Elizabeth Herr, 29, elder and life-long member...

"Southern people of our denomination talk about being "cradle Presbyterians." I am that, and also a "cradle Westminsterite." There is no other building in which I spend so much time, so consistently. However, it's not the constancy of Westminster in my life that I cherish most.



"What makes me feel extraordinarily blessed is what Westminster has done to me, for me, through its people. As a toddler, Sharon Jones made me feel beloved in Mother's Day Out. In grade school, Elizabeth Vandevander led me to be thrilled by music. Ann and Charlie Hardwick ceded to me the wonder of the Old Testament in 5th Grade Sunday School. Sandy Schultz saw right into my Junior High misery and let me know I would survive. Liz Gray and Becky Austin as role models opened up a world of growth and leadership possibility to me. Jeanne McIver let me be angry as an older teen in a way that strengthened me. Breut Manley seems to teach me something about sincerity and faithfulness around four times a year. Sandy, Nancy, Miriam, Glenn, Kay and the Session are guides for me, as all truly struggle to discern God's will and tell God's story. And that doesn't mention the host of extra grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, sisters and brothers, who have somehow always enveloped me in committed and challenging love. I really love Westminster, but more than that I am awestruck by how Westminster has shown God's love to me."

The reason for the current health of the congregation can be attributed to strong lay and clergy leadership as well as a purpose driven management style. Beginning in August of 1995, the Session began a thorough study of who we are, what we value, and where we wanted to be by 2003. With *12 Keys to an Effective Church* by Kennon L. Callahan as our resource, we studied, debated and agreed on a vision for Westminster 2003.

Using the Callahan model:

- We agreed that we are a large multi-staffed church with a ranking among all U. S. Presbyterian churches above the 98th percentile for church membership, average worship attendance and church school attendance.
- Doing Callahan's formula and looking at our

own membership numbers we agreed that we were a stable church but with a slowly declining membership.

- We agreed that "stable with declining membership" did not make sense for Westminster Presbyterian Church, and that we want our church to be stable but with a growing membership.
- Using a formula in Callahan's book, we concluded that for us there is a realistic maximum mission potential of 58,500 people in the Miami Valley.
- We acknowledged that while not everyone thinks so, we believe that the best years of Westminster Presbyterian Church are before us.

We did a thorough analysis and rating of Callahan's "12 Keys" as they apply to Westminster,

discussing each key in small and large groups. The final conclusions are summarized below:

Relational Characteristics	Session Rating
1. Specific, Concrete Missional Objectives	Low
2. Pastoral/Lay Visitation in Community	Low
3. Corporate, Dynamic Worship	Strong
4. Significant Relational Groups	Average and Improving
5. Strong Leadership Resources	Average and Improving
6. Solid Participatory Decision Making	Average and Improving
Functional Characteristics	
7. Several Competent Programs and Activities	Average and Improving
8. Open Accessibility	Average and Improving
9. High Visibility	Average
10. Adequate Parking, Land, and Landscaping	Average
11. Adequate Space and Facilities	Average
12. Solid Financial Resources	Strong

We decided that the following three of the above characteristics (2 of which were graded quite low in the survey) were most appropriate to add as new strengths in the next five years:

1. Specific Concrete Missional Objectives,
2. Pastoral/Lay Visitation,
3. Significant Relational Groups.

We decided the following three strength characteristics were most appropriate to expand in the next five years:

1. Corporate Dynamic Worship,
2. Several competent Programs and Activities,
3. Solid Financial Resources.

From the above assessments, the 1991 Mission Statement, and a thorough discernment process, the

Session came to a unanimous decision in 1998 on Vision 2003 (in three parts). It begins with a one-phrase mission statement—“Westminster Presbyterian Church—increasing the love of God and neighbor” which we think sums up our *raison d’être*. It became a part of our bulletin, stationery, The Chimes, and most other church publications. The second part of Vision 2003 is a values statement outlining what is most important to us as a church. The third part is a vision statement of where we want to be.

Values Statement:

We trust in one triune God: We trust in God, the Creator, who made the world and is still creating. We trust in God, the Redeemer, Jesus of Nazareth—fully human, fully God. We trust in God, the Sustainer, the Holy Spirit of God present everywhere—the giver and renewer of life. Because of this trust our ministries and activities will be characterized by a reliance on prayer.

We value corporate, dynamic worship in the Reformed tradition

We value mission

We value education

We value pastoral and lay visitation

We value Small Group Ministry

We value evangelism

We value the Presbyterian form of government which is a shared ministry between deacons, elders, and clergy

We value every person

We value excellence

We value the future

Vision Statement:

Westminster will be a stable and growing church, confident that its best years are still ahead. Westminster will dramatically increase its effectiveness by building on the strengths it already possesses and adding several new strengths. We will experience marked improvement in spiritual growth, mission effectiveness, and membership growth as we

increase our love for God and neighbor. This vision for our church includes the following:

**We envision dynamic worship
where all are welcome:**

We will continue to build and improve our traditional worship service with challenging preaching and exceptional music while also increasing the warmth and winsomeness of the worship service and the congregation. Visitors and infrequent attendees, as well as long standing members, will feel welcome and at home.

**We envision a congregation
excited about mission:**

We will become known as the downtown Dayton church that has made a difference in education. Our members will experience a pride and excitement in being part of such a successful church program. This is a significant new initiative that involves time, talent, and financial commitment from our members, in order for our church to assume a leadership role in addressing the need for improved education, especially within the city of Dayton. While certain overwhelming needs for health and welfare throughout the world cannot and will not be ignored, educational initiatives will be the focus of our efforts.

**We envision
far reaching visitation:**

We will increase the effectiveness and the frequency of pastoral and lay visitation within and beyond the congregation. This is a specific response to a clear need expressed in various membership surveys. Work has already begun in this area with the increased effectiveness of the Deacons and the provision of the first full-time Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care in the church's history. We will need significant lay participation in calls on existing and potential members to meet our ambitious objectives.

**We envision numerous significant
relational groups:**

Our new Small Group program is off to a good start. From this base, we will make significant relational groups a major strength of our congregation. We will be known as a large church with Small Groups that provide a mechanism for members to draw strength and support from very close Christian relational experiences.

**We envision significant
spiritual growth:**

We will create new attractive opportunities for growing disciples of all ages. Christian education for all will focus on the Bible and expanding our belief in God. We will have specific learning objectives for our children, youth, and adults. In addition, we will be known as perhaps the only mainline church in the community where youth from all geographic areas and from all walks of life can meet for unique, diverse Christian relationships.

**We envision solid
financial resources:**

Westminster is fortunate that our forebearers provided us with a strong financial legacy. We will do the same for our children and future members through emphasis on planned giving and financial stewardship so that the new and existing programs covered by this document can be attained.

At the time of the church's Bicentennial, visible progress was achieved in all visioning areas. If we were to use the *12 Keys to an Effective Church* rating system at this writing, all 12-measurement areas would receive a higher rating, not just the above six areas on which we have concentrated. Currently the church is healthier than it has been in decades.

But, the challenges for Westminster and other "mainline Protestant Churches" are real. What does the future hold?

A recent ad in the *Presbyterian Outlook*, for one of our Presbyterian Seminaries claimed, "We are preparing students to be pastors in a church we can't yet envision." Parish ministry and church life is changing rapidly. The Protestant church in America is in the midst of a significant transition. Some experts are even calling the church at the turn of the century, the beginning of a "Second Reformation." We know the church (here at Westminster and elsewhere) will be radically different fifty or a hundred years from now. We just don't know how it will look, feel, or taste.

What began for Westminster and other Presbyterian churches as a membership trend in the mid 1960's, has now become an even greater concern. Today only one in 100 Americans is Presbyterian, versus 1 in 5 when Westminster began in 1799. At some moment in the 1980's the number of Muslims in America became larger than the number of Presbyterians. Our denomination has been losing members at a rate of about 30,000 per year. That's about 750 churches Westminster's current size that have been lost since 1965. At the present rate of decline, our denomination will be a fond memory by 2030.

Will there be a tercentennial? Is this the final chapter in the final history book written about Westminster? A hundred years from now will Presbyterians still be a viable denomination? Will our grandchildren be buried from a Presbyterian church? A hundred years from now will Westminster still be a viable congregation? These are not rhetorical questions.

Back in the 1830's a social scientist from Europe, Alexis de Tocqueville, came to America to try to understand why democracy worked so well. He summarized his study in the famous book *Democracy in America*. It was the Americans' propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to our unprecedented ability to make democracy work. "Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition," he observed, "are forever forming associations. These are not only commercial and

industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute...nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America." In the 1830's de Tocqueville looked at America and saw guilds, political parties, *churches* and all sorts of community organizations.

How might de Tocqueville see us today? Clearly, our inclination for civic association isn't what it once was. To name a few examples: membership in the League of Women Voters is off 42 percent since 1969, the Federation of Women's Clubs (off 59% since 1964), the Shriners (off 27 percent since 1979), the Jaycees (off 44 percent since 1979), the Masons (down 39 percent since 1959), the Boy Scouts (off by 26 percent since 1970), and the Red Cross (off by 61% since 1970). In sum, after expanding steadily throughout most of an existence, many major civic organizations have experienced a sudden, substantial, and nearly simultaneous decline in membership over the last decade or two.

Like all the above, any church is a voluntary organization. It is important to understand the mega-trend for all voluntary organizations when we see the dramatic loss of membership in the Presbyterian denomination and Westminster Presbyterian Church over the past four decades. It puts it all into a sad context. Next to the decline of the family, the decline of social capital—civil society—is the most damaging development in America in the past 30 years.

In the midst of this over-all cultural revolution in America there is a revolution transforming America Protestantism. While many mainline protestant, Roman Catholic and orthodox churches are losing membership, a new style of Christianity is being born in the United States. These new paradigm churches are changing the way Christianity looks and is experienced. Like upstart religious groups of

the past, they have discarded many of the attributes of establishment religion. Appropriating contemporary cultural forms, these churches are creating a new genre of worship music; they are restructuring the organizational character of institutional religion; and they are democratizing access to the sacred by taking the Protestant principle of the priesthood of all believers to the extreme.

Sociologists, such as Dr. Wade Clark Roof and others, who have studied the demise of the so-called “mainline churches” in America, tell us that we Presbyterians are in trouble numerically for two basic reasons. *One is that we have never been effective in the task of evangelism.* For a variety of reasons some theological, some sociological, and some psychological—we have tended on the whole to leave evangelism to other kinds of churches. *If we intend to grow through evangelism, then we must learn to do evangelism ourselves.*

The second reason given by sociologists for our numerical decline is more painful to hear because it points to one of our traditional strengths rather than one of our weaknesses—namely, our commitment to fulfill the vows taken at the baptism of infants, to nurture the faith of the “children of the covenant,” and to replenish the Church’s membership from within. According to the data, this confidence is increasingly without foundation. In fact, the truth of the matter is that *the chief cause of our membership decline is our inability over the past quarter of a century to transmit our faith to our own children.* Put simply, we are unable to keep our kids in the Church when they become adults. As a result, we Presbyterians are not only a dwindling denomination, but also an aging denomination.

Protestant Christianity in America has historically relied upon its social environment for the reinforcement of its theological convictions and its moral commitments. This reliance has been focused particularly upon public education. The sociologists note, however, that our social and cultural environment has changed dramatically in this second half of

the 20th century, making our reliance upon that environment for support of our Christian vision of life just wishful thinking. Two hundred years ago children not only prayed Christian prayers in school, they learned to read with McGuffey Readers—using not Dick and Jane, but the Bible.

Even in the first half of the 20th century, the young people grew up at Westminster with Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, youth fellowship and Sunday evening worship. At public school their teachers read the Bible every day and prayed. On Wednesdays, there would be choir practice and mid-week worship. During the summer there were mission trips, church camps, and popular Synod schools. In today’s busy times, many people insist that just one hour of church on Sunday mornings is all they can afford.

The bottom line is that Christianity in America today is a counter-culture religion. Those who leave the Presbyterian fold by and large are not becoming Baptists or Muslims or Mormons or any other growing denomination. We, as Christians, had them among us for a time; we failed to bring them to any life-shaping faith in Jesus Christ; and now they are gone. When people ask our pastor what church we compete with most in Dayton, he answers: “The tennis center, the golf course, the youth soccer league, the lake, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and the *Sunday New York Times*.”

In summary, the religious landscape of America and the health of our denomination create a series of challenges for Westminster and all mainline churches. Let’s review: (1) The cultural forces that helped grow our church are now clearly unsupportive. (2) The religious landscape of America has grown increasingly more pluralistic and less mainline Protestant led. And (3) the Presbyterian denomination’s health is in question. Now, let’s narrow the focus and look a little closer at the challenges of Westminster as a particular congregation at the time of its 200th birthday.

At our birth in 1799 we were literally the only “religious game in town.” During the next 100 years we were one of several large, strong, active congregations within downtown Dayton. During the Evans’ era we were very much a religious leader in the city. Our pastor held the highest office in the denomination; our building was new and admired; sermons from our pulpit were digested regularly in the *Dayton Daily News*; we founded a choir college of national reputation.

During the second half of the 20th century the City of Dayton, like other comparable U.S. cities, faced increasing challenges: busing, white flight, corporate flight, rising crime, etc. “Going downtown” became more and more a choice rather than a necessity. As a result, huge parts of the city died: department stores, dining, and churches. Today Westminster may be the only downtown Dayton church not operating in a purely survival mode. While the church is still healthy, we continue to be less than attractive to Dayton residents (less than 5% of our membership lives within the city limits). While suburbanites often see going downtown as an obstacle rather than an attraction, Westminster has long been a “suburban church downtown.”

Back in 1979, the Miami Presbytery did a visioning study of the future of the Presbytery. At that time they studied in depth the area’s demographics and predicted which Presbyterian churches in the Miami Valley — (1) will grow, (2) should grow, (3) should remain even, (4) should shrink, and (5) will shrink. We were listed in category 4 with other congregations that “should shrink.” This prognostication was dependent largely on our geographic location. We take some comfort that the Presbytery’s 1979 prediction of Westminster’s congregational shrinkage proved false. In fact, we are healthier than most of the congregations that were predicted for growth.

A helpful book for those of us today in mainline churches like ours is titled *Good News in Exile*. The

three authors of this book remind us of the Biblical image of “exile.” They say, and we agree, that the era in which we live can be described as a time of exile for mainline Christian churches like ours. “For North American Protestants it is a time of loss, of relinquishment, or disestablishment. In short, we no longer live under the illusion that we are in charge. That would be “bad news” for us if we did not remember that our God already has considerable experience in working powerfully among those who are in exile. As our “Declaration of Faith” reminds us:

In a time of exile and alien rule,
the Jews survived and multiplied.
They enriched the whole world:
they compiled the Scriptures, preserving
God’s Word to them;
they sang their songs of praise and lamentation;
they sought wisdom, examining God’s ways
in the world;
they searched the mysteries of rising and
falling kingdoms
and set their hope on the kingdom of God.
We testify that God is faithful.
Even when we are faithless, God remains
faithful.
The Lord still brings from oppressed and
uprooted peoples
riches of insight and daring visions
that can judge and bless the world.
We can have confidence in God’s coming
kingdom
even in the darkest times.

As the history of Israel demonstrates, a time of exile can be particularly rich and fertile. There is opportunity in relinquishment. When we let go of an old reality, we have the chance to welcome a new reality in ways we could not have foreseen.

The Good News is that now this new world is breaking in among us. We sense a new purpose at Westminster. We are happy to see modest growth

in our worship attendance, a significant decrease in our average age, and an honest effort to be faithful to God. Westminster as a “church in exile” can, and will with God’s help, continue to grow and flourish into its third century in spite of—and perhaps because of—the challenges discussed in the previous pages.

As a congregation beginning its third century we are in the process of recovering the best of our past: respecting the Sabbath, realizing that evangelism isn’t a dirty word, reacquainting ourselves with the Bible and theology, welcoming our younger members in worship, making an impact on the city of Dayton with our outreach, valuing pastoral care, expanding youth ministry, and continuing our tradition of excellence in music and preaching. While it is impossible to predict where we will be in 2050, we can be somewhat more confident of a picture of ourselves in a shorter time frame—for example, 2020.

In 2002, more than 200 years since the founding of our church, we have a bold vision of a congregation of 2000 members, and an average worship attendance of 800 by 2020. This growth will in part be the result of the revitalization and growth of the city. It will be a “younger” church with a strong youth program that attracts youth from all over the area. It will also include a larger percentage of members from diverse backgrounds and color. We will be inviting and friendly and proud of our tradition, yet winsome. Our worship service will be engaging, yet based on our biblical heritage and reformed theology. We will be a church with strong belief and reliance on our Presbyterian theology, but also respectful of other religions that differ from ours. Christian Education will fully involve all ages. It will be Bible centered, but also aware of contemporary issues. We will be excited about mission and will be known as the church that made a difference in the education of the disenfranchised in our community. We will be a relational congregation with most of our members involved in small groups. By 2020 our sanctuary and current building will be completely renovated while

maintaining its current architectural integrity. There may well be an adjoining building on our present parking lot. Our endowment will continue to expand and by 2020 will value \$25 million. In short we will be a vital and growing part of a growing Dayton community.

To put this vision in a more theological context we have a dream for Westminster in 2020. We invite you to dream with us using a vision for Westminster’s future adapted from a contribution in the *The Christian Century*, September 24, 1986 by Robert Webber, Professor of Theology at Wheaton College...

“Let us dream of a revitalized, energized Westminster
In which all members know simply and surely
God’s great love, and each is certain that in the
divine heart we are all known by name;

In which Jesus is the very Word, our window
into God’s heart; the sign of God’s hope and
design for all humankind;

In which the Spirit is not a party symbol, but
wind and fire in everyone; gracing the church
with a kaleidoscope of gifts and constant
renewal for all.

Let us dream of a Westminster church where
Worship is lively and fun as well as reverent
and holy;

People know how to pray and enjoy it—
frequently and regularly, privately and
corporately; in silence and in word and song;

Worship is the center of life and servanthood
the center of mission, with service flowing
from worship and everyone understanding
why worship is called a service.

Let us dream of a Westminster church which
Affirms life over death as much as life after
death, unafraid of change, able to recognize
God’s hand in the revolutions;

Affirms the beauty of diversity, abhorring the imprisonment of uniformity, as concerned about love in all relationships as it is about chastity, and affirming the personal in all expressions of sexuality;

Denies the separation between secular and sacred, world and church, since it is the world Christ came to and died for.

Let us dream of a Westminster church
Without all the answers, but asking the right questions;

Holding law and grace, freedom and authority, faith and works together in tension, by the Holy Spirit pointing to the glorious mystery who is God;

So deeply rooted in gospel and tradition that, like a living tree, it can swing in the wind and continually surprise us with new blossoms.

Let us dream of a Westminster church
So salty and so yeasty that it really would be missed if no longer around;
Where there is wild sowing of seed, and much rejoicing when they take root, but little concern for success, comparative statistics, growth or even survival;

So evangelical that its worship, its quality of caring, its eagerness to reach out to those in need cannot be contained;

So open, caring, sharing its faith that all find embrace, acceptance and affirmation.

And finally, let us dream of a people called
To recognize all the absurdities in ourselves and in one another, including the absurdity that is LOVE,

To be serious about the call and the mission, but not, very much, about ourselves;

Who, in the company of our Clown Redeemer can dance and sing and laugh and cry in worship, in ministry and even in conflict."

Finally, we must answer the question we asked in the subtitle of this chapter: *Will there be a tercentennial for Westminster?* The answer seems clear. We have 200 years of magnificent history on which we can build and learn. Going forward from that heritage with a new and exciting vision and, most importantly, with God's guiding hand, we view the future with optimism. We are confident that Westminster's best years are ahead of her and that she will grow and be even more viable at the end of her third century.

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

Albert Schweitzer



Photo by Tom Patterson

The Narthex, 2002

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