

IN CELEBRATION OF OUR 200TH YEAR!  
1822-2022



# SPECIAL THANKS

---

We would like to recognize those who have helped make this project possible through their research, photographs, design and more.

Unfortunately, as with records preserved over 200 years, there are gaps in time, lost names and unrecorded events. If you have information or memories relative to the life of the church, please feel free to share them by contacting the church office.

God has blessed First Presbyterian Church with 200 years of growth and we hope for many more!

Copyright © First Presbyterian Church 2022, 2023  
All Rights Reserved

Photography provided by: FPC Archives and FPC members

Designed by: Mindy Wildman

Histories written and compiled from the FPC Archives by: Sue Reisenweaver and Janine Miller

Disclaimer: Maps and diagrams may not be historically accurate.

Information on Edward Edwards and other topics have been provided with permission to reprint from Margaret Sue Mattinson, the author of *Edward Edwards: The Man Who Built South Charleston, Ohio* ©.

Produced by: First Presbyterian Church | [office@fpcconnect.org](mailto:office@fpcconnect.org)







## 1822-1824

During an 1821 meeting of the Presbytery in West Union, Rev. William Dickey was directed to spend eight days in missionary work on the headwaters of the Paint, Little Miami, and Deer Creeks. His evangelistic efforts produced a Presbyterian Society consisting of twelve persons.

At this time (1822), the community of South Charleston consisted of just thirteen houses. The church members met in homes.

The first record of the church as an organized body is found in the 1824 records of the Presbytery of Miami in Session minutes. There was a request for missionary supplies.

Rev. Andrew Poage was appointed to spend eight days in missionary labor in South Charleston, Buck Creek, Urbana, and adjacent settlements.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF THOSE  
WHO ORGANIZED  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF SOUTH CHARLESTON, O.



JAMES PRINGLE  
SARAH PRINGLE  
DAVID WILSON  
POLLY WILSON  
JANE VANCE

SARAH VANCE  
JAMES RANKIN  
MARGARET RANKIN  
ISAAC WILSON & WIFE  
JOSEPH LAIRD & WIFE

— 1822 - 1922 —



THE PRESBYTERY OF DAYTON, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, S. CHARLESTON, O., SEPT., 15 1915

THE PRESBYTERY OF DAYTON, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, S. CHARLESTON, O., SEPT. 15, 1915



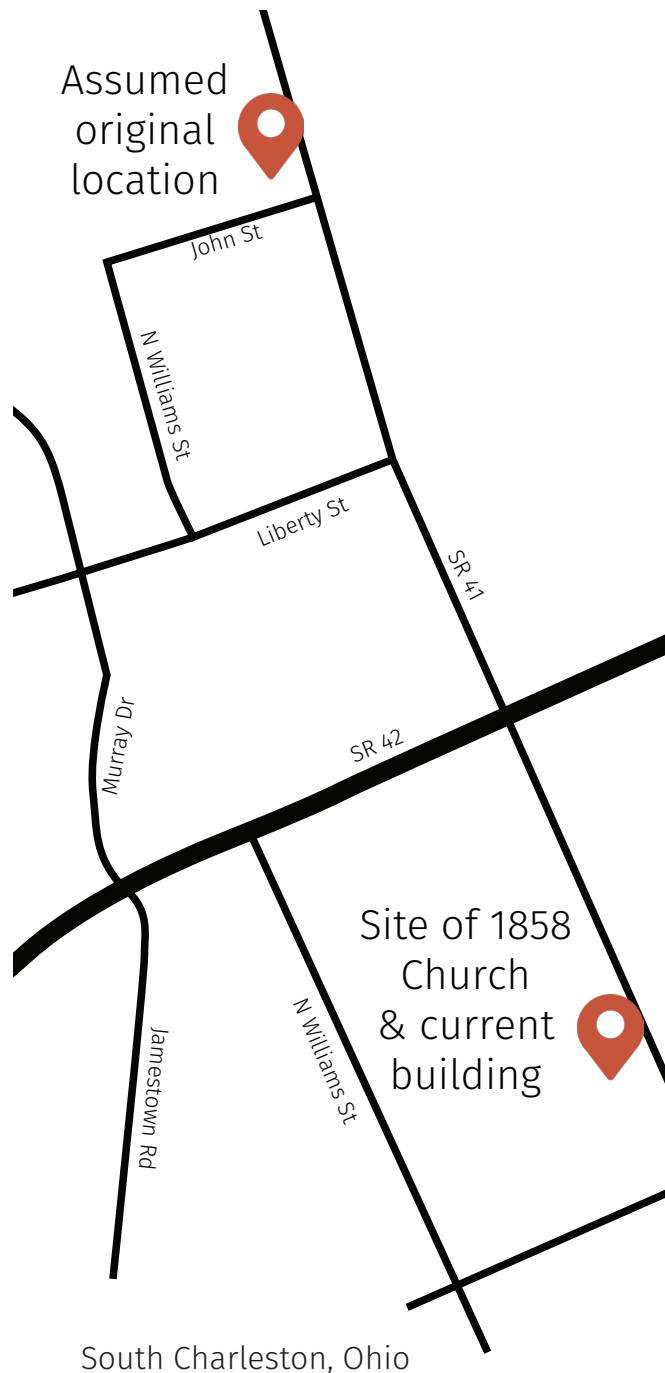
1832

Although the membership was reduced to seven people, it was decided to build a house of worship. The first church was erected on the northwest corner of Chillicothe and John Streets on an acre of ground donated by Clement Shockley who ran a hotel and tannery on the opposite side of the street (see map). Shockley was instrumental in the layout of South Charleston.

This frame structure served for 24 years. It had broad wooden steps and an aisle in the center. The men occupied the seats on one side and the women on the other. The pews were constructed with doors as was typical of the time period.

The salary of the minister was raised by the congregants bidding on the pews. The ones closest to the heat source were the most expensive. The building was heated with stoves, and men provided the wood for the fuel.

As there was no regular pastor, other churches provided supply pastors. Among those contributing were: Rev. John McLean and Dr. J.H. Campbell (Superintendent of schools who frequently occupied the pulpit)



## 1850-1859

Dr. John Haight was the first resident pastor. At this time, membership in the church was around 15 individuals. Dr. Haight proposed to build a brick church and stated that he would be self-supporting while the church building was being constructed. Having been a dentist before becoming a pastor, he now opened an office in his home. During his leisure time, he helped carry brick, mortar, or whatever was needed at the construction site.



In 1858, the brick church was constructed a few blocks down the street from the original site (see map on page 4). This had originally been the site of Mr. & Mrs. Louis Warner's log home and barn where they had operated a bakery and brewed light beers. The current church building and manse are still at this location.

The first brick church (see inset above) was dedicated November 21, 1858 and cost \$5,000. At the time, a revival of religion added 45 to its membership. After building the brick church, the original framed building was rented to the Catholics for a short time.

## PASTORS CALLED TO SERVE FPC

1833-1834 | THE Rev. Franklin Putnam  
 1835-1841 | THE Rev. John F. Galloway  
 1843 | THE Rev. McComb & THE Rev. Perman  
 1844-1849 | THE Rev. J. Pelam  
 1851 | THE Rev. Edwards & THE Rev. J.E. Waver  
 1853-1854 | THE Rev. John McLain  
 1857-1860 | Dr. John Haight  
 1860-1861 | THE Rev. George H. Fullerton  
 1862-1863 | THE Rev. S. Jewett  
 1862-1867 | THE Rev. N.S. Smith  
 1867-1870 | THE Rev. Schofield  
 1872-1873 | Dr. T. C. Thomas  
 1873-1877 | THE Rev. L. Kelsey  
 1878-1890 | THE Rev. Kemper

## 1861-1867

Rev. George H. Fullerton enlisted at the outbreak of the Civil War and served as Chaplain in the Army.

Rev. Nathan Smith served as Chaplain during the war but came back at its close.

Rev. S. Jewett filled the pulpit from July 1862 to August 1863 while Rev. Smith was serving in the Union Army.

## 1860-1869

In the 1860's, Rev. Nathan Smith was instrumental in reaching beyond the South Charleston village borders. He extended the church's ministry to include the area of the Peirce School House (corner of Rt. 41 & Pancake Chapel [Midway] Rd) and the small church in the Carthage neighborhood (the area encompassing the crossroads of Old Springfield Rd. & Dolly Varden Rd [see map on next page]). The Carthage ministry was described as "a strong mission and auxiliary to the church." (FPC Archives) Not only were worship services held in the Carthage building, but a prominent Sabbath School was held every Sunday afternoon at 2:00 pm.

The old frame church was made into a manse, and Rev. Smith and his family lived there for a time before moving into the current manse, which is believed to have been built around 1867, probably by Edward F. Edwards\*. He was an elder of the church and a contractor who is estimated to have built approximately 95% of the buildings existing in South Charleston at the time of his death in 1897. Prior to that, no permanent residence was provided for the church's pastors.

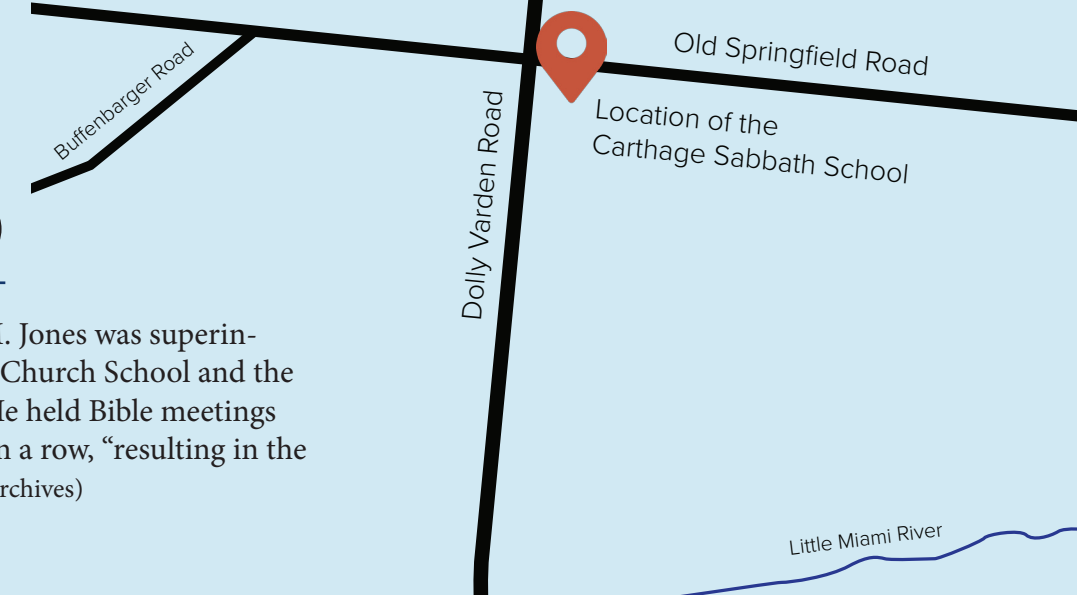
\*For more information about Edwards read *Edward Edwards: The Man Who Built South Charleston, Ohio*© by Margaret Sue Mattinson.



Rev. and Mrs Gibson enjoying the front porch of the Manse.

## 1870-1879

From 1870-1881, Mr. Jed M. Jones was superintendent of the Presbyterian Church School and the Carthage Sabbath School. He held Bible meetings at Carthage for 100 nights in a row, "resulting in the conversion of many." (FPC Archives)



## 1890-1899

The small Carthage church was purchased by the Presbyterian Church in 1895, where the new minister, Rev. Gibson, conducted revival services. A strong Sabbath School program lasted there until 1927.

When the gas lines were being laid across Clark County, 300 men camped for weeks in the Mattinson Woods (location unknown). Rev. Gibson held religious services every Friday night. He went where the men were, and the services were held in a temporary dining hall that had been erected.



Dr. James King Gibson & family  
1890-1915





## 1900-1909

The first brick church was razed, and the present edifice was built. The first shovel of dirt was turned over by Ralph Pringle, a great-grandson of James Pringle, one of the charter members of the South Charleston church plant. The cornerstone was laid Monday, October 13, 1902, at a worship service which concluded with depositing documents in the cornerstone by Rev. Gibson.

The church was dedicated November 3, 1907. It had been operational for some time, but the congregation decided not to formally dedicate the facility until it had been paid for in full - \$8,000.

The women in the church (organized as the Ladies Aid Society) were instrumental in raising over \$2,000 towards the completion and decoration of the church.

## 1910-1919

Session voted to sign a contract with Dayton Power & Light for electric lights for the church. (1916)

A pipe organ was purchased and dedicated September 23, 1917. The pump organ was later updated with an electric keyboard in 1955.



Organist Miss Bonnie Long  
(1966-1975)

## 1920-1929

The church sold the village lot directly behind the church building on the east side of Williams Street for \$500 in 1926.

During the first half of the 20th century, the church would annually participate in "Every Member Canvass." This process took place in order to raise money for the budget for the next fiscal year. Members were given an opportunity to make pledges during a specified Sunday morning worship service in February or March. If, however, you were unable to attend church that morning, one of the members of the Canvass Committee would call at your home. There was no "forgetting" to make a pledge!



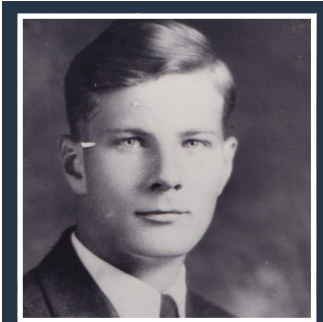
Dr. M.E. Koonce & wife  
1916-1933



# 1930-1939

When the pastor and his family would leave for vacation during the month of August, church was canceled. Members were encouraged to either attend the Methodist Church or another church in town.

During the Great Depression, the pastor's salary which had been recorded as \$1,000 in 1913, dropped to \$596 as everyone struggled to make ends meet. Session minutes record supplementing his income as often as possible with special gifts.



THE Rev. Donald Lomas  
1933-1937



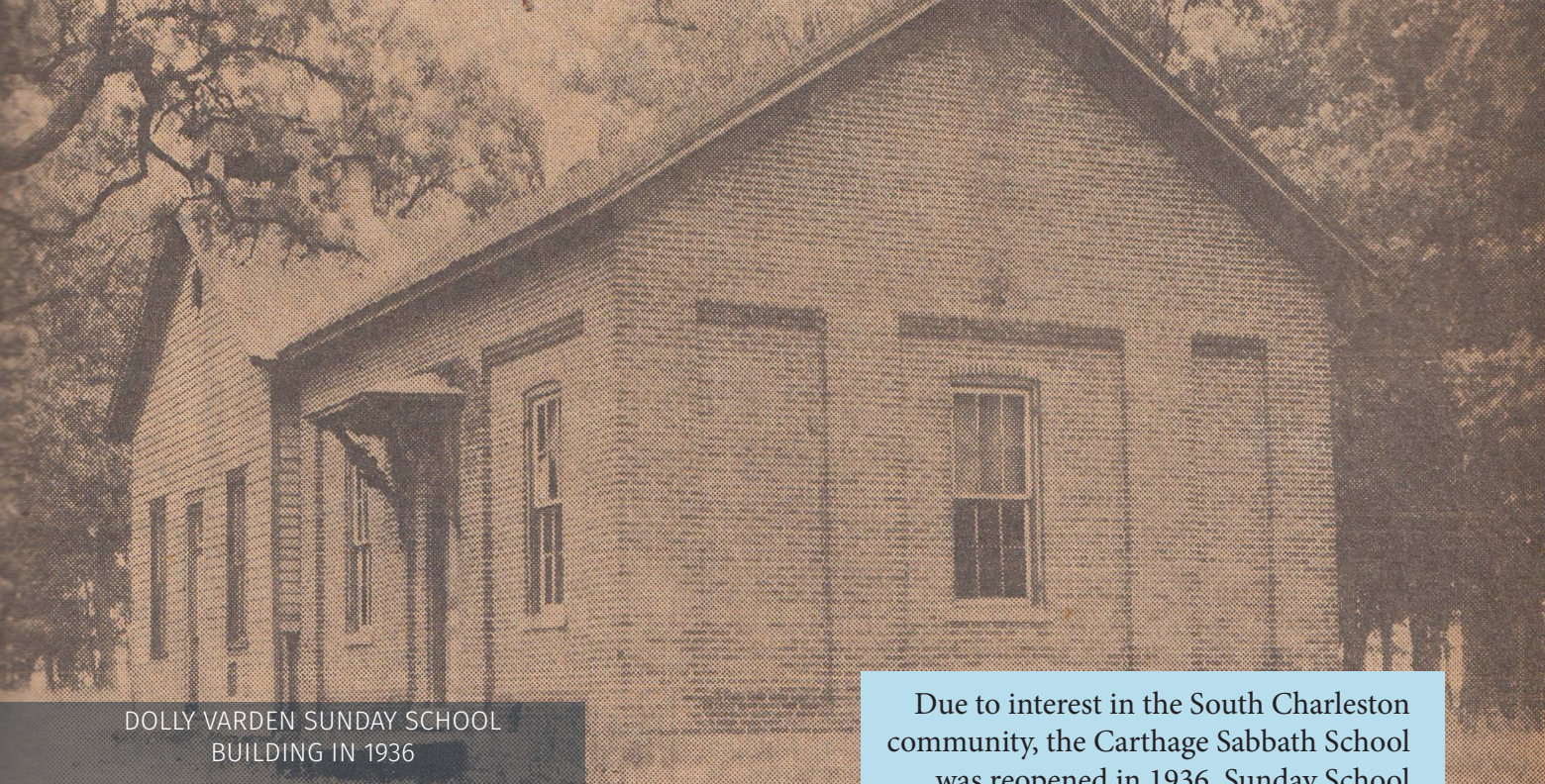
THE Rev. Earl F. Shottke  
1938-1940

In Sept. 1935, a second bathroom was installed in the basement because of an upcoming Presbytery meeting in October. It seems preparation for Presbytery visits were just as major 85 years ago as they are today!

In the 1930's, the first South Charleston Vacation Church School was held for two weeks during July mornings for grades 1-8. Some classes were held at the Presbyterian Church and some at the Methodist Church with an examination on the last day. There was a charge of 10 cents per pupil at registration. Vacation Bible School has been held annually ever since. Pictured below is the 1951 Bible School on the church steps.

## PASTOR'S SALARY AND MEMBERSHIP

YEAR	SALARY	MEMBERS
1913	\$1,000	135
1933	\$596	126
1940	\$1,400	149
1946	\$2,000	156



DOLLY VARDEN SUNDAY SCHOOL  
BUILDING IN 1936

Due to interest in the South Charleston community, the Carthage Sabbath School was reopened in 1936. Sunday School classes with up to 90 children met each Sunday afternoon for the next decade before shutting down once again.



1938 Presbyterian Choir

The church inherited a farm in 1938. During the next few years, Session minutes record quite a bit of work and expense for farm repair and upkeep. The farm was sold in 1946.

1938 Presbyterian Choir  
(Front Row) Nina Roberts, Pearle Cheney, Lib Mattinson, Anna Louise Conklin,  
(2nd Row) Mrs. James Bowersox, Phoebe Cheney, Ann Venema, Mrs. Will Sprague, Jessie Battin Shaeffer  
(3rd Row) Albert Venema, Rev. Shottke, Roger Boone



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
WITHERSPOON BUILDING  
PHILADELPHIA 7, PENNSYLVANIA

MODERATOR:  
WILLIAM B. LAMPE, D.D.  
ONE AVENUE, ST. LOUIS 12, MISSOURI

Office of the General Assembly  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Church Member:

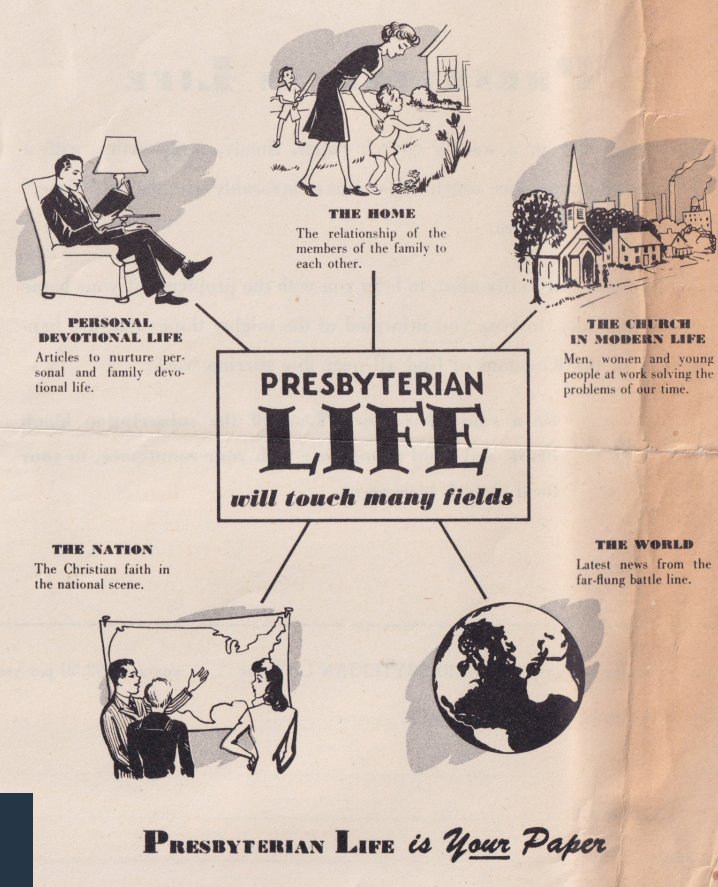
One of the most vital needs of our church today is a church paper which can keep our people informed and inspired. In all my travels over the church as Moderator of the General Assembly, pastors and church members remind me of this need.

The last General Assembly authorized me, as Moderator, to appoint a committee to plan a church paper. The Committee, the majority of whom are laymen actively engaged in magazine and publicity work, has laid excellent plans. In many churches the subscriptions to the new paper will be secured in the Every Member Canvass.

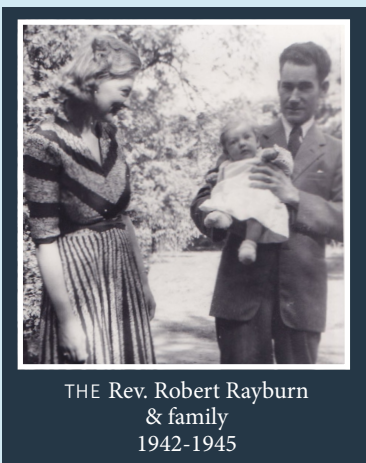
As Moderator of the General Assembly, I am writing you, as a church member, to urge your family to subscribe to PRESBYTERIAN LIFE. I am sure that as a loyal Presbyterian you will want your family to read it. Will you please read pages three and four of this brochure and fill in the subscription blank on page four at once.

An enlightened church membership demands a worthy church paper.

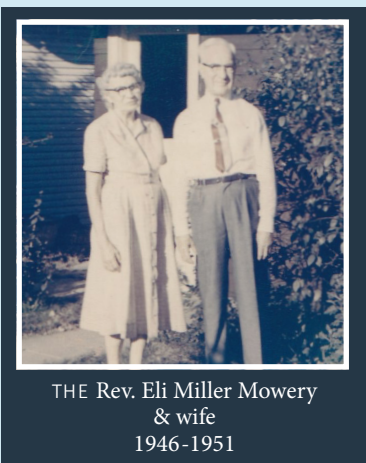
Sincerely yours,  
*William B. Lampe*  
Moderator of the General Assembly



PRESBYTERIAN LIFE WAS A WEEKLY CHURCH PAPER PUT OUT BY THE DENOMINATION.



THE Rev. Robert Rayburn  
& family  
1942-1945



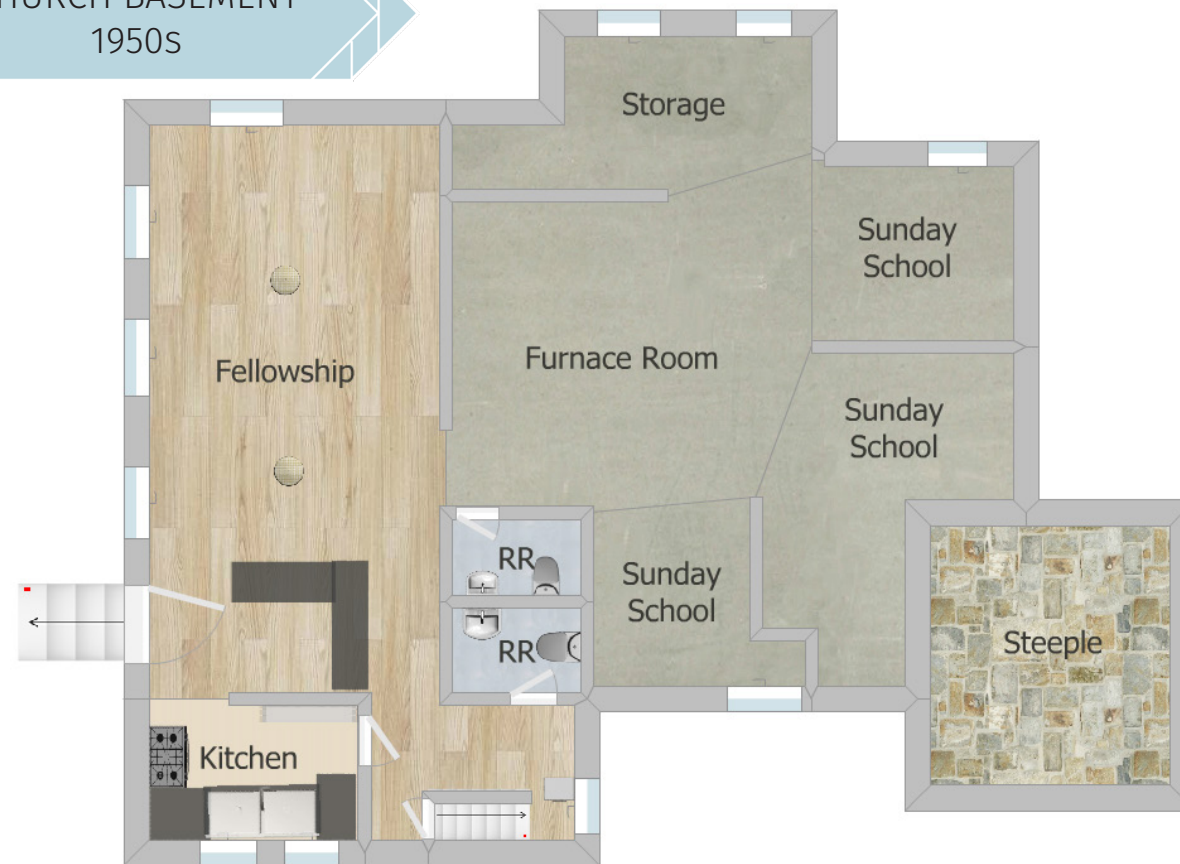
THE Rev. Eli Miller Mowery  
& wife  
1946-1951

## 1940-1949

In 1958, attempts were made to repair the stained glass and install storm windows.  
Cost: \$2,200

The basement contained a large room which was used for fellowship meals, meetings, and other activities. Church members as well as community groups would gather there.

## CHURCH BASEMENT 1950s



“THE CHURCH ALWAYS HAD A HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY IN THE OLD BASEMENT AREA. THOSE IN COSTUME PARADED AROUND IN A LARGE CIRCLE AND THE JUDGES WOULD CHOOSE AND AWARD PRIZES. THERE WAS A HAUNTED HOUSE IN THE OLD FURNACE ROOM AREA. WE BOBBED FOR APPLES AND ATE CIDER AND DONUTS.”

JANE (CHENEY) HILDEBRAND



# 1950-1959

Before kindergarten was in the local public schools, it was held in the Presbyterian Church's basement. (1950s-1960s)

Throughout the 20th century, the Presbyterian and Methodist churches served and often worshiped together. Holiday services often combined the congregations and were termed "Union Services." These included the Union Sunrise Service as well as the Union Thanksgiving Service which was typically held on Thanksgiving morning at 8 am. The Union Thanksgiving service in 1963 on Nov. 25 was also a Community Memorial Service for the late President Kennedy. Beginning in the '70's, union services also intermittently included the Catholic Church, and later, the Church of God. The November service was also changed to a Thanksgiving Eve service. These services continue and are now called Community Worship Services rather than "Union Services", but unity is still the vital part of the service.

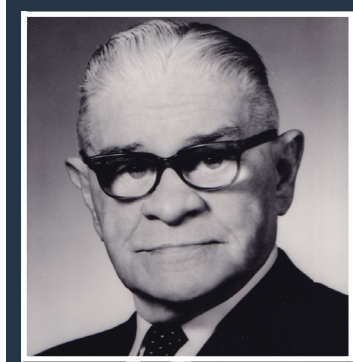
*"THE CHURCH USED TO HAVE A PICNIC EVERY SUMMER AT SNYDER PARK, AND WE'D ALL GO THERE ON SATURDAY OR SUNDAY AFTERNOON. I ALWAYS LOVED THOSE PICNICS."*

MARY JANE (MCINTIRE) DENNIS



Presbyterian Church Bowling League  
1958-1964

In 1957, Lyle Amos who lived in the Dolly Varden neighborhood approached the Presbyterian Church Elders inquiring if he and his wife could lease the Carthage School building for one year. The Sunday School they were holding in their home had grown too large and they needed a bigger space. The Presbyterian Church trustees agreed and leased the building to them for \$1. Mr. & Mrs. Amos kept up the building and grounds so beautifully and actually improved the property, so that when they reapplied for another year, they were also granted permission to conduct worship services there on Sundays & Wednesdays. When they reapplied in 1960, they were given a 25-year lease for, again, only \$1.



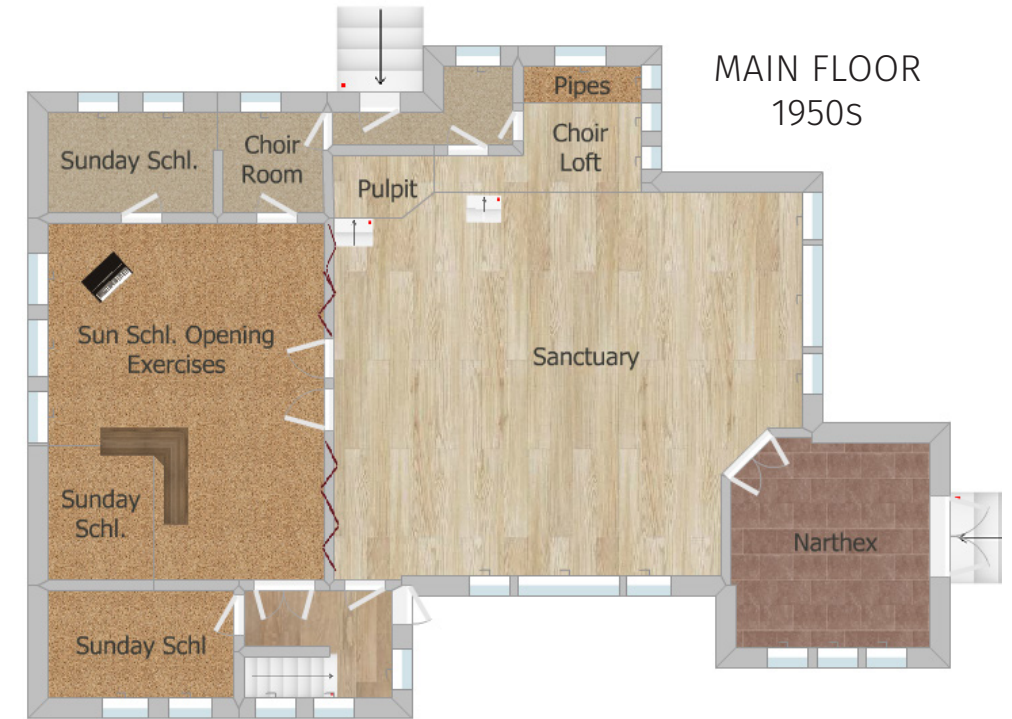
THE Rev. Robert Thena  
1951-1956



THE Rev. Philip D. Hirtzel  
1957-1961

*"WE HELD SUNDAY SCHOOL OPENING EXERCISES EACH SUNDAY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM BEFORE WE WENT TO OUR CLASSES. THIS WAS LED BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT. WE HAD A SHORT MESSAGE, TOOK UP AN OFFERING AND SANG HYMNS ACCOMPANIED ON THE PIANO BY DIFFERENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SUCH AS NANCY LANIER, MARY JANE (MCINTIRE) DENNIS, BECKY (MATTINSON) SCHAUS, ANNE (CHENEY) RUHRMUND, OR ME."*

JANE (CHENEY) HILDEBRAND



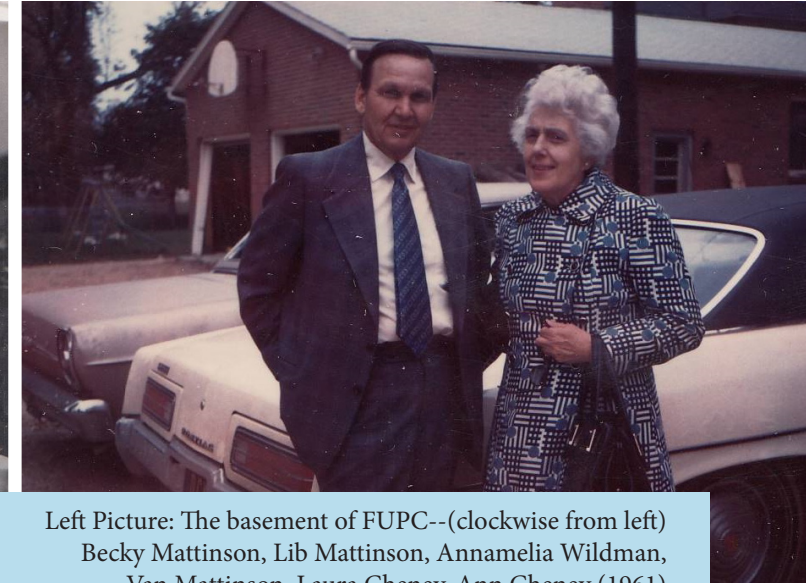
Children's Sunday School  
(Estimated to be 1980s)





Left Picture: Virginia Goetting, Jane Parker, Fred Parker, Margaret Dean, Dan Dean, Fred Goetting in 1961.

Right Picture: Phil Colland and Rev. Phil Hirtzel of the PYAD's in 1961 presenting the song, "I Can't Say No."



Left Picture: The basement of FUPC--(clockwise from left) Becky Mattinson, Lib Mattinson, Annamelia Wildman, Van Mattinson, Laura Cheney, Ann Cheney (1961)

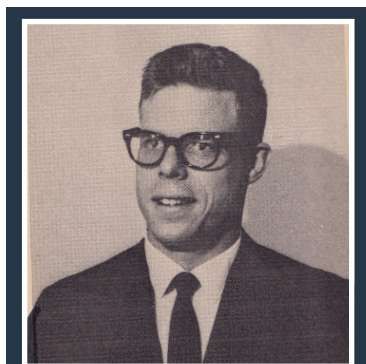
Right Picture: The "new addition" is on the manse in the background. (Marge & Dave Kirkwood in 1972)

## 1960-1969

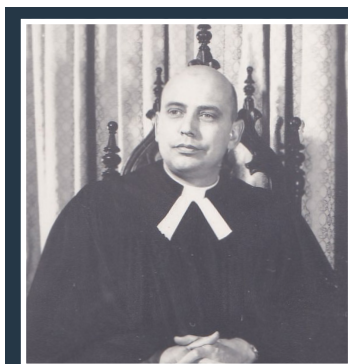
The PYAD's (Presbyterian Young ADults) met frequently for social and service activities in the 1950's & 60's and apparently thoroughly enjoyed themselves! They also spent quite a bit of time fundraising for church renovations and other projects. Many of the renovations during this time were partly attributed to this group.

New pendant lighting was installed in the church Sanctuary for \$1,000. (1963)

Pigeons in the church belfry became a big problem. Session supplied shotgun shells and contacted a local hunter to eliminate them. The mayor was notified when the shooting would take place, probably to be able to calm any concerned citizens! Unfortunately, this didn't solve the problem, and pigeons continued to be a nuisance until 1994 when a strip of sharp spikes called "Cat Claw" was installed along the landing sites on the bell tower to discourage the birds from settling there.



THE Rev. Donald Kratz  
1962-1964



THE Rev. Locke  
1966-1988

In 1966, the manse was renovated for the new pastor. A large new addition was added to the rear of the manse which included a bathroom, a great room and a two-car garage, and the main stairway was rerouted in order to create an additional second-story bathroom. A gravel driveway was installed next to the north side of the house connecting the garage to Chilli-cothe Street.

Combined choirs from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Springfield and FUPC presented Handel's Messiah to both churches during the Christmas season. (1967)



*BILL LOCKE FORMED THE PRESBYTERIAN CHOIR. WE WOULD PRACTICE ONCE A MONTH AND SING IN ALL THE CHURCHES ON SUNDAY EVENINGS. WE PERFORMED THE WHOLE MESSIAH ONE CHRISTMAS EVE AT OUR CHURCH. I WILL NEVER FORGET, AT THE END I LOOKED OUT IN THE CHURCH. TEARS WERE FALLING.*

RON FARRELL





An annual Sunday morning service and meal at Kirkmont Center, a regular occurrence in the 1960's & 70's.



## 1970-1979

In 1975, a new rear church entrance with a carport was constructed and in 1977 the church basement was remodeled to include five classrooms, men's & women's restrooms and a nursery restroom, and a resource room next to the lower portion of the steeple.



Community Children's Choir for Community Sunrise Service in front of FUPC organ with the Rose Window in the background.



## THE FEAST OF LIGHTS

A UNIQUE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 1968-1987

The Feast of Lights was presented each Christmas Eve. This was a special Christmas service tracing Old Testament prophecy of the coming of Christ in word and song. It culminated with a nativity scene in the Sanctuary, complete with Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, shepherds, a drummer boy, the three kings, and usually several extras including sheep. In 1979, it also included a live donkey! After the nativity scene, there was a Christmas message and a candle lighting ceremony and procession. Many people still remember the beauty of that service.



Children preparing for Christmas Eve in the early '70s.



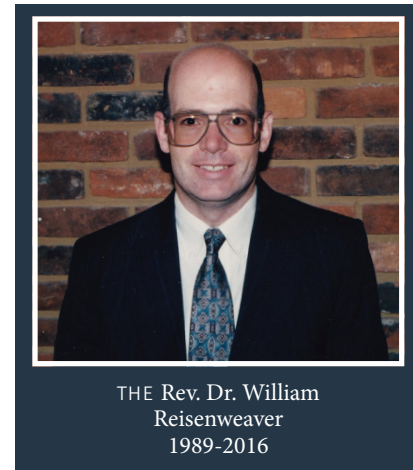
# 1980-1989

FUPC sold the Dolly Varden property to Pitchin Freewill Baptist Church for \$8,000. (1981)

The Community Children's Center, a preschool operating from 1981-1987, rented the basement space from FUPC.

A fire was set in the church by intruders in 1985. A neighbor, Miss Karmen McKee, saw the flames through her window and contacted the fire department, most likely saving the building. Miss McKee was presented with a \$50 savings bond as a thank you at a later service. The Session voted to continue the current practice of keeping the church unlocked for members to use throughout the week. This continued until more vandalism occurred in 2008, and, from that point on, members used a coded lock system to enter during the week when the church was not open.

In 1986, FPC received a bequest from former member, Esther Slusser, to install a Living Garden (right). This living garden filled in the area where the former organ pipes had been. The garden included live plants and trees surrounding a fountain, giving a backdrop to the pulpit. Eventually a beautiful wooden cross was installed behind the garden. The endowment monies expired in 1990 but the Living Garden continued on, using private donations until being replaced, first with silk plants, and then finally, simply as a staging center for the cross.



"NOW KNOWN AS FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
NOT FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH."

(FPC SESSION MINUTES 1984)



In the early to mid-1980's, the congregation raised money for a new Flentrop tracker organ to be shipped from Holland. This organ needed a level area on which to sit and so the Sanctuary floor was leveled in 1985. Votes were taken on where exactly to locate the new organ. The options were to either put it directly in front of the chancel area where the old pipes had been or in the northwest corner. The northwest corner was chosen, and that's where the Flentrop was assembled at the end of March 1986 by a visiting Dutch artisan. The old wooden organ pipes were given to members and friends of the church.



# 1990-1999

FPC's Prayer Chain was created. (1990)

In 1991, the Manna Food Pantry was born, and Session voted to house it in the former Resource Center in the church basement. It is still in existence and is managed by FPC deacons and used by both FPC and the South Charleston Methodist Church. Community organizations, schools, other churches, and individuals contribute food and finances to keep it operational, and it serves families throughout the Southeastern School District.

The Charleston Brass was formed to make a joyful noise. (1991) These church members perform during church services and community events. The original members

still active are Alan Stiles, John Eichelberger, Tom Allen, and Jim Hildebrand.



The relationship with YoungLife had its beginnings in the Presbyterian manse where a group of adults met to pray for the young people of the village and planting a club locally. In the fall of 1991, YoungLife began meeting every Thursday morning for Club at the home of Larry & Barb Hill who weekly cleared their living room of furniture and cooked breakfast for 30-35 students. It eventually moved to various homes throughout the community, the Presbyterian Church, and finally to Gilbert's Youth Center.

The GOLD (Gift of Love and Discovery) Club, a program for senior citizens, began. (1993)

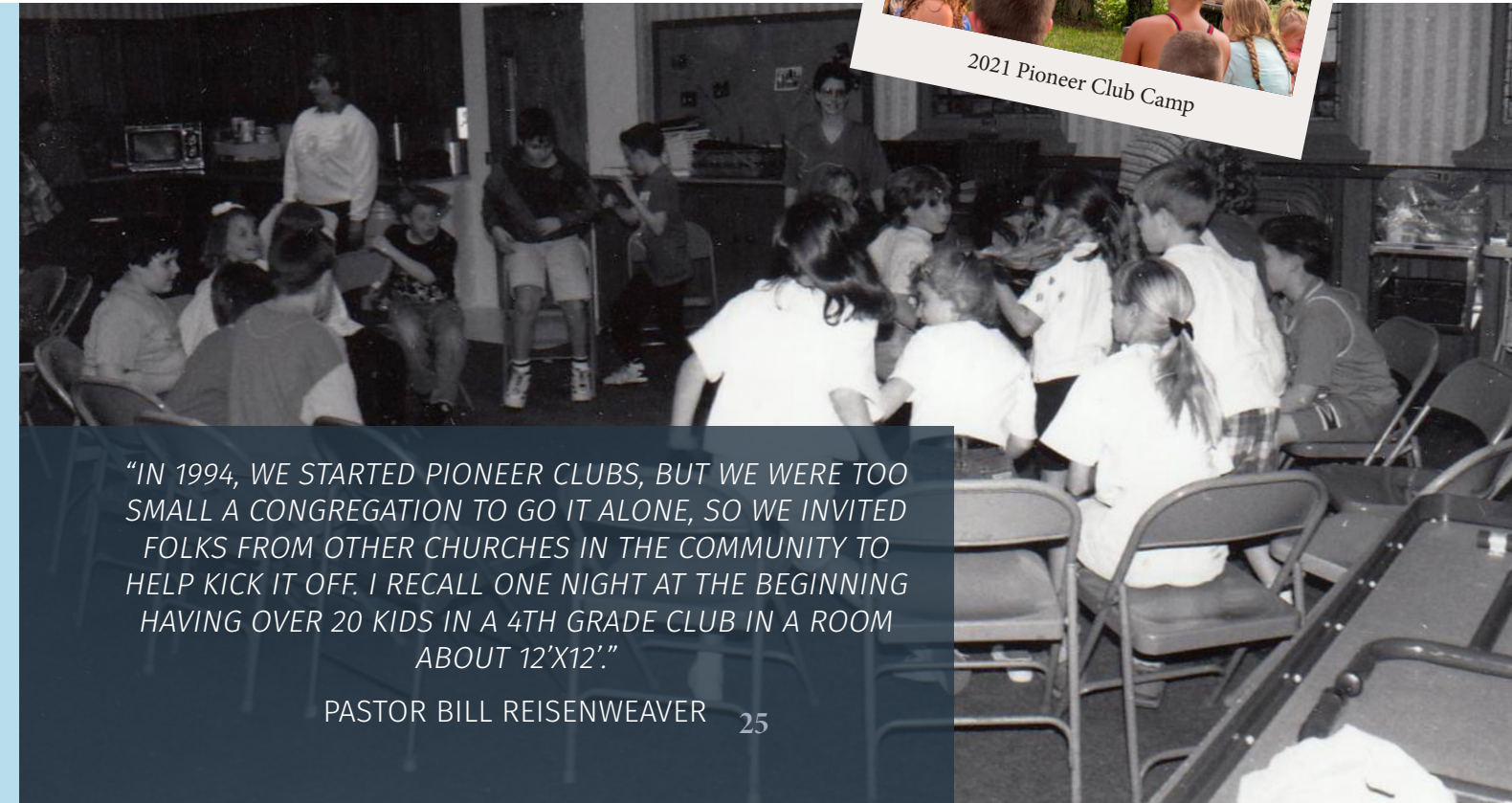
In 1994, Pioneer Clubs was formed for grades K-7 as an outreach to the community. Originally directed by Linda Smith, Pioneer Clubs expanded and grew to include an annual Summer Camp and continues to thrive today!

The pastor moved into his own home in the village, and the manse was converted to a Christian Education building, badly needed due to the increased number of children attending Sunday School and Pioneer Clubs. (1998)



IN THE SUMMER OF 1991, WE HAD THE FIRST YOUNG LIFE EVENT AT OUR HOUSE. WE DECIDED TO BUILD THE LARGEST ICE CREAM SUNDAE IN SOUTH CHARLESTON'S HISTORY ON OUR FRONT PORCH. WE HAD AN APPROXIMATELY 30-FOOT-LONG PIECE OF SPOUTING TO HOLD THE ICE CREAM AND TOPPINGS. WITH ABOUT 20-30 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING, GOOD PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE ON THE SUNDAE. THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, THINGS GOT CRAZY. I WAS WITNESS TO THE LARGEST FOOD FIGHT I HAD EVER SEEN. IT WAS WILD AND THE TALK OF THE STUDENTS FOR WEEKS AFTERWARDS. IT WAS A PERFECT EVENT TO ESTABLISH INTEREST IN YOUNG LIFE. I REMEMBER THAT BARBARA AND I THOUGHT OUR PORCH SMELLED LIKE A DAIRY QUEEN FOR SIX MONTHS!

LARRY HILL



"IN 1994, WE STARTED PIONEER CLUBS, BUT WE WERE TOO SMALL A CONGREGATION TO GO IT ALONE, SO WE INVITED FOLKS FROM OTHER CHURCHES IN THE COMMUNITY TO HELP KICK IT OFF. I RECALL ONE NIGHT AT THE BEGINNING HAVING OVER 20 KIDS IN A 4TH GRADE CLUB IN A ROOM ABOUT 12'X12'."

PASTOR BILL REISENWEAVER



# OUR CAMPUS GROWS!

PROPERTY EXPANSION FROM 1995-2022

1995 | Purchased property directly behind the manse (18 Williams St.) for \$35,000. The house was used as a rental, and sometimes, a free residence for those needing assistance. A family left homeless by Hurricane Katrina used it for a time.

1996 | Purchased an empty lot (20 Williams St.) for parking (\$18,000).

2000 | Purchased a tiny house adjacent to our parking lot (28 N. Williams St.) for \$42,500. The house was first rented out and then eventually used as a ministry.

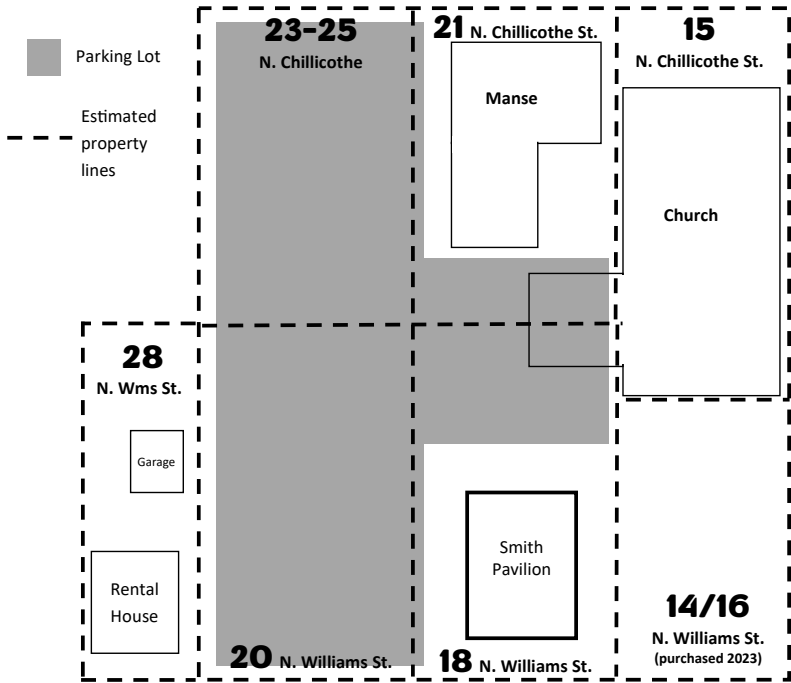
2002 | Purchased a duplex house on the north side of the manse for \$100,000 (23-25 Chillicothe St.).

2003 | Undertook the demolition of the duplex house on 23-25 Chillicothe St. to put in space for more parking.

2006 | The small house on 18 Williams St. was torn down to extend the parking lot.

2006 | Ground broken for the Education Wing and Fellowship Hall on the west side of the church building.

2022 | Constructed the Smith Pavilion (\$76,000) in order to provide a protected outdoor area for children’s and youth activities, fellowship gatherings, and worship space.



## FATHER’S DAY BREAKFAST

A BELOVED TRADITION FOR GENERATIONS

Outdoor church gatherings were common at the home of Fred & Mary Jo Bryan on South Charleston Pike. These gatherings eventually morphed into the annual Outdoor Father’s Day Breakfast & Worship Service that continues today.

Upper Left Photograph: Father’s Day Worship Service at the Hildebrand residence. (2008)

Upper Right Photograph: Jim Hildebrand, Rick Wyble, Jean Clark, Fred & Daphne Berge, John Gall. (1982)

Lower Right Photograph: Deanna Mattinson practicing before the Father’s Day Worship Service. (2021)







*"IT WAS 2002, AND WE HAD JUST FINISHED THE EARLY WORSHIP SERVICE. I RECALL STANDING RIGHT NEXT TO AN IRON PIPE BEHIND THE SANCTUARY DOOR WHEN A CRACK OF LIGHTNING STRUCK THE BELL TOWER OF THE CHURCH AND SENT SPARKS FLYING OUT OF THAT PIPE NEXT TO ME. BRICKS FROM THE BELL TOWER SHOT OUT, SOME OF THEM LANDING IN THE BACKYARDS OF HOUSES ACROSS THE STREET AND ONE INTO THE SUNROOM OF A CAR IN THE PARKING LOT BEHIND THE CHURCH BUILDING."*

PASTOR BILL REISENWEAVER

## 2000-2009

As our church family multiplied, two services were instituted: 8:30a and 11:00a with Sunday School between services. (2000)

In 2001, Mike Parker was hired as the first full-time Director of Youth Ministry.

The Deacons initiated a Care Care Clinic for single women. (2001)

Repairs were made on the church steeple and roof after lightning struck the church on Sunday morning in 2002.

Air conditioning was installed in 2002. This allowed the worship service to move from the 10:00 am summer service (in place to avoid the heat) to the regular 11:00 hour in place during the rest of the year.

The first of three high school youth mission trips to West Virginia was undertaken. (2002)

A local store front was rented on the corner of Chillicothe Street and Mound Street, creating Gilbert's Youth Center. The Youth Center has become a safe place for junior and senior high school students to hang out, participate in Bible study and learn the Word of God.

A local family was in need of safe, suitable housing. (2007) God provided the funding and FPC provided the manpower to rebuild a portion of their house. A majority of the work was accomplished over a long weekend (pictured below).



*"GOD USED OUR CHURCH TO HELP A FAMILY WHOSE HOUSE HAD CAUGHT ON FIRE. THEY WERE TRYING TO LIVE IN THE BURNED-OUT STRUCTURE BECAUSE THEY HAD NO MEANS OF RESTORING IT. GOD BROUGHT THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR CHURCH AND PROVIDED A GRANT FROM THE MIAMI VALLEY PRESBYTERY FOR EVANGELISTIC WORK. AS A CHURCH, WE LEARNED THAT WHEN GOD GIVES A PROJECT THAT IS FAR BEYOND OUR ABILITY, HE WILL SHOW UP AND PROVIDE."*

TONY FAUST



## 2005-2006

Fundraising events began in 2005 for the construction of a new building addition. These included church garage sales held in a large tent in the church parking lot and on the front porch of the manse, a Kroger card fundraiser, Amazon-Smiles, a Secret Santa Shop held in the manse during Christmastime, and most notably, a cinnamon roll booth which was operated for a number of years by church members at the Clark County Fair in the summer and again during “Christmas in South Charleston”, an annual community festivity.

Ground was broken for the 2-story addition which would include a kitchen, a large community room, three HVAC rooms with storage, three bathrooms, and seven classrooms. (2006) The cost was \$1.2 million.

The building was dedicated on January 14, 2007.

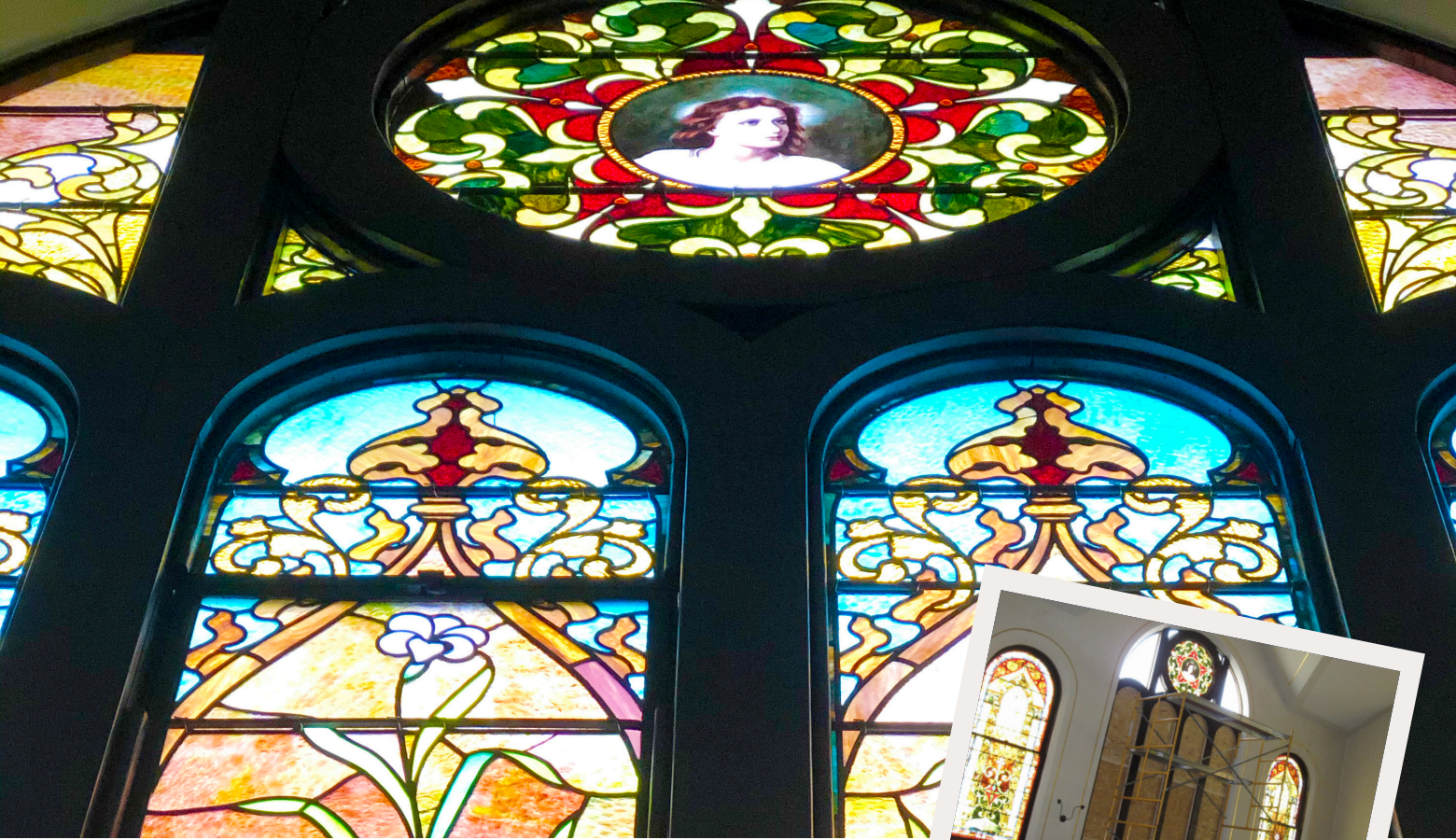
Pictured below: (Left to Right) Gary Deerwester, Jeff Miller, Sarah Wildman, Dick Smith, Bob Entler, Judy Kolwicz (Presbytery Representative), Pastor Bill Reisenweaver, Steve Hepp (Wenco Representative)

*“A WONDERFUL MEMORY  
WAS ANNIE  
COLLIFLOWER SINGING  
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE IN  
CHURCH AS WE KICKED OFF  
OUR BUILDING CAMPAIGN  
FOR THE 2006 NEW  
ADDITION! WE BELIEVED  
HER AND WE SUCCEEDED!”*

LINDA SMITH







The congregation voted on October 30, 2011, to sever affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA) in favor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination.

In 2012, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley approved a covenant of gracious separation with the church on February 11, releasing all property claims in exchange for \$10,000, the estimated amount of the 2011-12 per-capita contribution.

God called a family from First Presbyterian Church to serve His kingdom through full-time global mission. (2014) They continue to minister to an unreached people group with FPC's support and prayers.

The front narthex had been in desperate need of attention. The southwest corner of the floor was sagging alarmingly, and the only thing left of some of the wainscoting was the paint. Sarah Wildman Courtright completely renovated the front narthex as a memorial to her son, Eben Paxton Wildman. (2015)

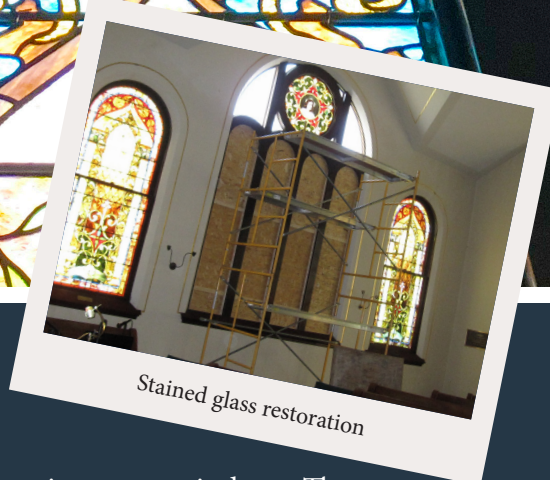


## 2010-2015

All the stained glass windows in the building were entirely restored. The project included completely removing a window from its frame, transporting it to a workshop in Dayton, repairing or replacing the mechanisms or broken glass, cleaning each piece of glass, re-leading and re-glazing the window, and then returning it to the church to be replaced in the frame. The project also included repairing the woodwork and

installing protective storm windows. The entire cost for the 12-year long project came to \$150,000.

With the addition of all the classrooms in the new building, the small classrooms in the basement were no longer needed. Several basement walls were torn down to create one large classroom (Room B-01) in 2011.



Stained glass restoration



Completed front Narthex renovation in 2015.



# 2016-2021

Rev. Dr. Reisenweaver resigned after a 27-year career. (2016)

The Midwest Presbytery of the EPC provided Rev. Bill Rasch to serve as pulpit fill and Moderator of Session. He also assisted in organizing a Vision Team in preparation for a Call Committee until Rev. Paul Copeland, our transitional pastor, was hired. (2017)

In 2018, THE Rev. Aaron W. White, Ph.D. was hired as First Presbyterian's nineteenth full-time pastor.



THE Rev. Aaron W. White, Ph.D.  
2018-Present

Office space was created in the basement to centralize the growing staff (2018-2021). The beautiful wooden accordion doors which had once graced the Sanctuary were repurposed to create walls between the Admin. Assistant's office and the conference room.

The Small Group ministry at FPC began and continues to grow by providing micro-communities that foster deeper understanding of God's love.

Jodi Smith was hired as Director of Pioneer Clubs in the fall of 2019. Under her leadership, we have witnessed Pioneer Clubs explode with attendance ranging from 50-90 (in 2022) K-6th grade students.



JR. HIGH BIBLE STUDY (2022)



S. CHARLESTON HERITAGE FESTIVAL  
WORSHIP SERVICE IN 2021

In the wake of COVID-19, FPC felt the need to hire a designated staff member to oversee communications, design, and other creative elements of ministry. Mindy Wildman was hired as our first Communications Director in 2020.

After the absence of a Youth Director for five years, Chris Cain was hired to serve the role in 2021.

In the span of four years, we have welcomed 59 partners into membership at FPC and have witnessed 23 baptisms.

In 2021, FPC adjusted the second service from 11:00a to 10:30a to welcome and accommodate the growing number of young families attending.



JODI SMITH LEADING PIONEER CLUBS (2022)



RICK BURTON AND JIM LIGHTLE GREETING (2020)





Left: Larry Hill greeting Linda Smith at the Pavilion Dedication.

Middle: Combined Worship Service and Pavilion Dedication.

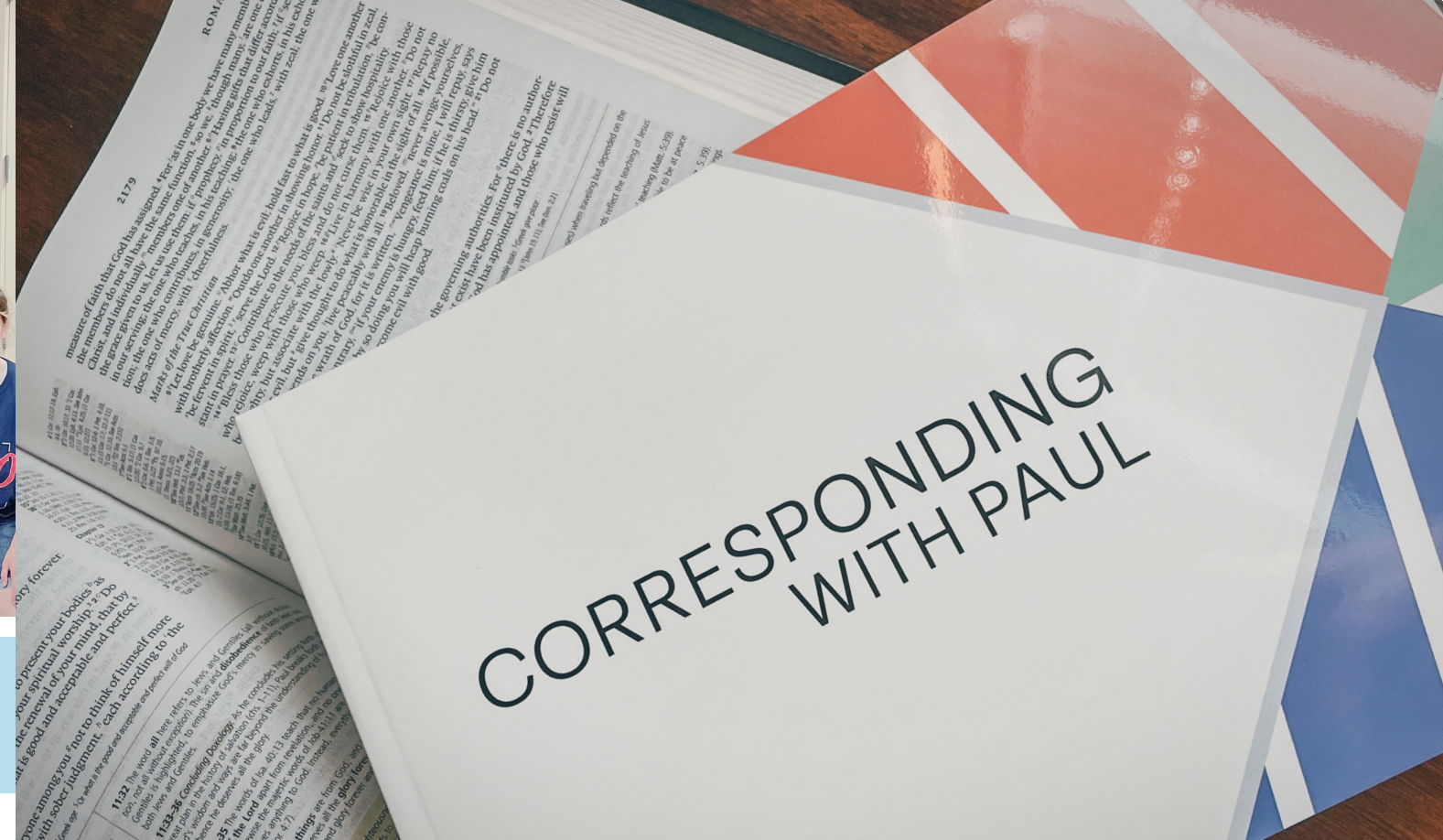
Right: Kids proudly celebrating 200 years!

## 2022

In 2022 we spent time reflecting our church's history and everything that God has brought us through in order to reach the milestone of 200 years.

The Bicentennial Celebration included:

- A presentation by Sue Mattinson, local historian, about the life of Edward Edwards, a popular S. Charleston architect of the nineteenth century. (See page 6 for more information)
- A "Tour of Churches" in which the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church each presented brief oral histories to a group of approximately 50 participants.
- An Ice Cream Social for the village which included ice cream, baked goods, and musical entertainment.
- Building and dedicating the Smith Pavilion on Sept. 25, in honor of the ministry work and impact of Dick and Linda Smith (see page 24 for more information).
- A dedication worship service which took place on Nov. 6. This service combined our current liturgy and that of the Sesquicentennial service which took place in 1972.



## CORRESPONDING WITH PAUL

In the fall of 2019, the Elders decided to embark on a year-long series through the Bible. In light of the constant task of catechizing God's people in God's story of Scripture, the Elders were convicted to have the congregation work through the Bible together. This was accomplished through reading a daily Bible study book and hearing a sermon based on the week's reading. This method served two purposes: the

congregation studied the Word consistently together and prepared them to hear the sermon's message throughout the week. With successful study sermon series in 2020 and 2021, FPC decided to write and produce their own devotional book.

With the help of FPC leadership and member volunteers we were able to write, produce, and release *Corresponding with Paul* in the fall of 2022.





# BEYOND 200 YEARS

In 2023, the Elders of FPC are ministering to the church through shepherding, the Deacons are graciously caring for the needs of our church and community, and Next Gen. Ministry (K-12th grades) continues to grow. We are thankful for all that God has provided us in our 200-year history and we look forward to the future ministry and growth He has planned for us.

Photograph: Dave Morrow's and Sarah Burton's 5th and 6th grade Pioneer Clubs class playing dodge ball.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

Pioneer Clubs saw an explosion of involvement with 100+ students in the fall of 2023.

Trey Martin was on-boarded as FPC's first Ministerial Resident, who, while gaining church ministry experience, also helps oversee the Small Group ministry.

The duplex house on the south side of the church was purchased (see diagram on page 24) for \$80,000 with the intention of being razed and providing a section of green space next to the pavilion.





BRYAN BREAKFAST 1971



PASTOR BILL REISENWEAVER PRESENTING A CHILDREN'S MESSAGE IN THE EARLY 2000S



PIONEER CLUBS' FLOAT IN THE 1999 HOMECOMING PARADE



HARRY LAVIER, DAN DEAN, JUNIOR HEFF (1959)  
"OUR ONLY TROPHIES ARE OUR PLACE CARDS."



1986 CELEBRATING ON THE CHURCH'S FRONT STEPS

"IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, I WAS TEACHING AN ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN WHICH I HAD BEEN DOING FOR 2-3 YEARS. I'M NOT THE TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL WHO IS CONSTANTLY TELLING PEOPLE THAT I HAVE HAD AMAZING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LORD OVER THE YEARS. HOWEVER, ONE CONVERSATION THAT I REMEMBER HAVING WAS APPROXIMATELY 40 YEARS AGO. THE LORD SPECIFICALLY TOLD ME THAT I NEEDED TO TEACH THE HIGH SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS. I DID NOT REACT WELL TO HIS INSTRUCTION AS I DIDN'T FEEL QUALIFIED AND REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT. HE WASN'T DETERRED AND OVER A PERIOD OF WEEKS KEPT AFTER ME. AFTER BECOMING VERY FRUSTRATED, I REMEMBER BLURTING OUT, "WE DON'T HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL CLASS." HIS RESPONSE WAS A ONE-WORD ANSWER - "EXACTLY." I REALIZED THAT I HAD NO ADEQUATE RESPONSE TO THAT AND BEGAN PLANNING TO START A HIGH SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS WHICH I LED FOR 32 YEARS. THAT LENGTHY TENURE WAS A MAJOR SPIRITUAL HIGHLIGHT IN MY LIFE. MANY RELATIONSHIPS I BUILT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE STILL EXIST TODAY WITH SOME OF THEM BEING MIDDLE AGED NOW. LESSON LEARNED = ALWAYS LISTEN TO THE LORD AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. PROV. 3:5-6"

LARRY HILL





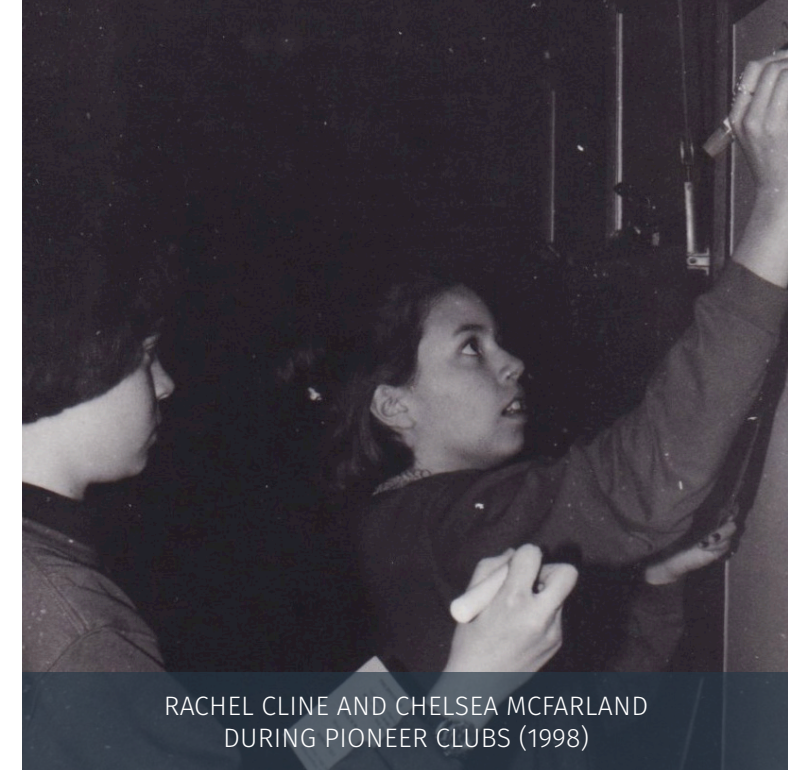
NEW PLASTERWORK IN THE SANCTUARY (2017)



KIDS HAVING FUN AT PIONEER CAMP (2020)



LIVE NATIVITY IN 1997

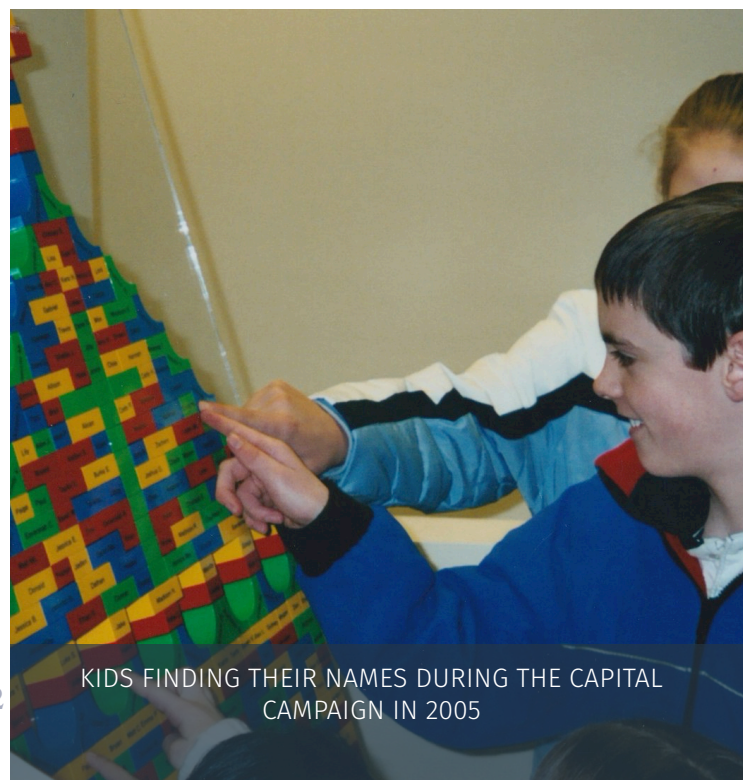


RACHEL CLINE AND CHELSEA MCFARLAND  
DURING PIONEER CLUBS (1998)



GINNY ROBERTS AND MARY FRANCIS PHILLIPS  
PRACTICING MUSIC IN 1960

42



KIDS FINDING THEIR NAMES DURING THE CAPITAL  
CAMPAIGN IN 2005



KIDS RINGING THE BELL OF THE CHURCH (1986)

43



175TH CELEBRATION IN 1997



## PERSONNEL & VOLUNTEERS

WHOSE SERVICE IMPACTED CHURCH AND COMMUNITY LIFE

EMMA PARKER DURING PIONEER CAMP  
AT CAMP CLIFTON (2016)



COMMUNITY QUILTING GROUP IN FUPC  
BASEMENT (1972)



SKIT AT YOUNGLIFE CLUB  
(2019)



LARRY HILL SPEAKING AT BRIAN  
RESIDENCE IN 1986



NURSERY SUNDAY SCHOOL (2002)



### ORGANIST & PIANISTS

Jennie Pringle Johne  
Miss Pearl Sprague  
Mrs. J.J. Moore  
Miss Celia Thomas  
Mrs. W.P. Corwin | 1917-1923  
Albert Venema | 1932- ?  
Mrs. Frank Sprague  
Mary Francis (Barber) Phillips | 1957-1966  
Bonnie Long | 1966-1975  
Pamela Fishwick\* | 1975-1978  
Vivian Kast | 1978-1980  
Silvia Fagal | 1980-1981  
Richard Wyble | 1981-1986  
Deborah (Reed) Dickerson\* | 1987-2001 (both  
services 2000-2001)  
Rob Edwards | 2002 (second service)  
Carol Wildman\* | 2002-present (second service)  
Ed Chatfield | Substitute  
Dr. Donald Busarow | 2002- 2011 (first service)  
Paul Smith | 2011- 2013 (first service)  
Deanna Mattinson | 2013-present (first service)

### CHOIR & MUSIC DIRECTORS

Miss Maggie Comrie | 1878-1915  
Miss Pearle Cheney  
Mr. Raine  
George C. Shepherd  
Mrs. Bess Wentz  
Albert W. Dyer  
Byron Griest  
Mrs. W.D. Sprague  
Shirley Farrell  
Phil Calland  
Mrs. Don Kratz  
John L. Dyer  
Rev. C.W. Locke  
Pamela Fishwick\* | ? -1978  
Jeff Davidson | 1978-1979  
Rev. C.W. Locke | 1979  
Vivian Kast | 1979-1981  
Richard Wyble | 1981-1986  
Deborah Reed Dickerson\* | 1987-2001  
Carol Wildman\* | 2001-present

### YOUTH DIRECTORS

Mike Parker | 2001-2009  
Tony Faust (Interim) | 2009-2010  
Dave Clem | 2010-2013  
Joe Grom V | 2013-2017  
Christopher Cain | 2021-2022

### PIONEER CLUBS

Dick & Linda Smith | 1994-2013  
Joe Grom V | 2013-2017  
Rachel Baldauff | 2017-2019  
Rachel (Cline) Conrad | 2019 (Camp)  
Jodi Smith | 2019-Present

### CLERICAL SUPPORT

Jean Parsons | 1972-1978  
Rev. C.W. Locke | 1979-1988  
Barbara Hill | 1989-1996  
Janine Miller | 1996-Present

### CUSTODIAL SUPPORT

Mr. Ewing | 1915-?  
Albert Venema | 1932-?  
Charles Peterson | 1952-1958  
Mr. Hammer | 1958-1959  
Richard Hodge | 1960-1961  
JH Youth w/ Jack & Jane Dyer | 1961  
Paul/Judy Salyers | 1965-2002  
Jeannine Erwin | 2002  
Louise Berrier | 2002-present  
Julie White | 2006-2021 (Gilbert's)

### COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

Mindy Wildman | 2020-Present

### PASTORAL RESIDENTS & INTERNS

Trey Martin | 2023-2025





OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE (2020)



937-462-8479  
office@fpcconnect.org  
www.fpcconnect.org



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

## COME JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

WE ARE AN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OUT OF THE REFORMED  
TRADITION, ANCHORING OUR TEACHING AND DECISION  
MAKING IN THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD. OUR MISSION IS  
TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO OUR COMMUNITIES BY  
FORGING INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CENTERED ON  
KNOWING, SHOWING, AND SHARING THE HOPE OF  
JESUS CHRIST.

SUNDAY SERVICE  
8:30A & 10:30A

SUNDAY SCHOOL  
ALL AGES | 9:45A