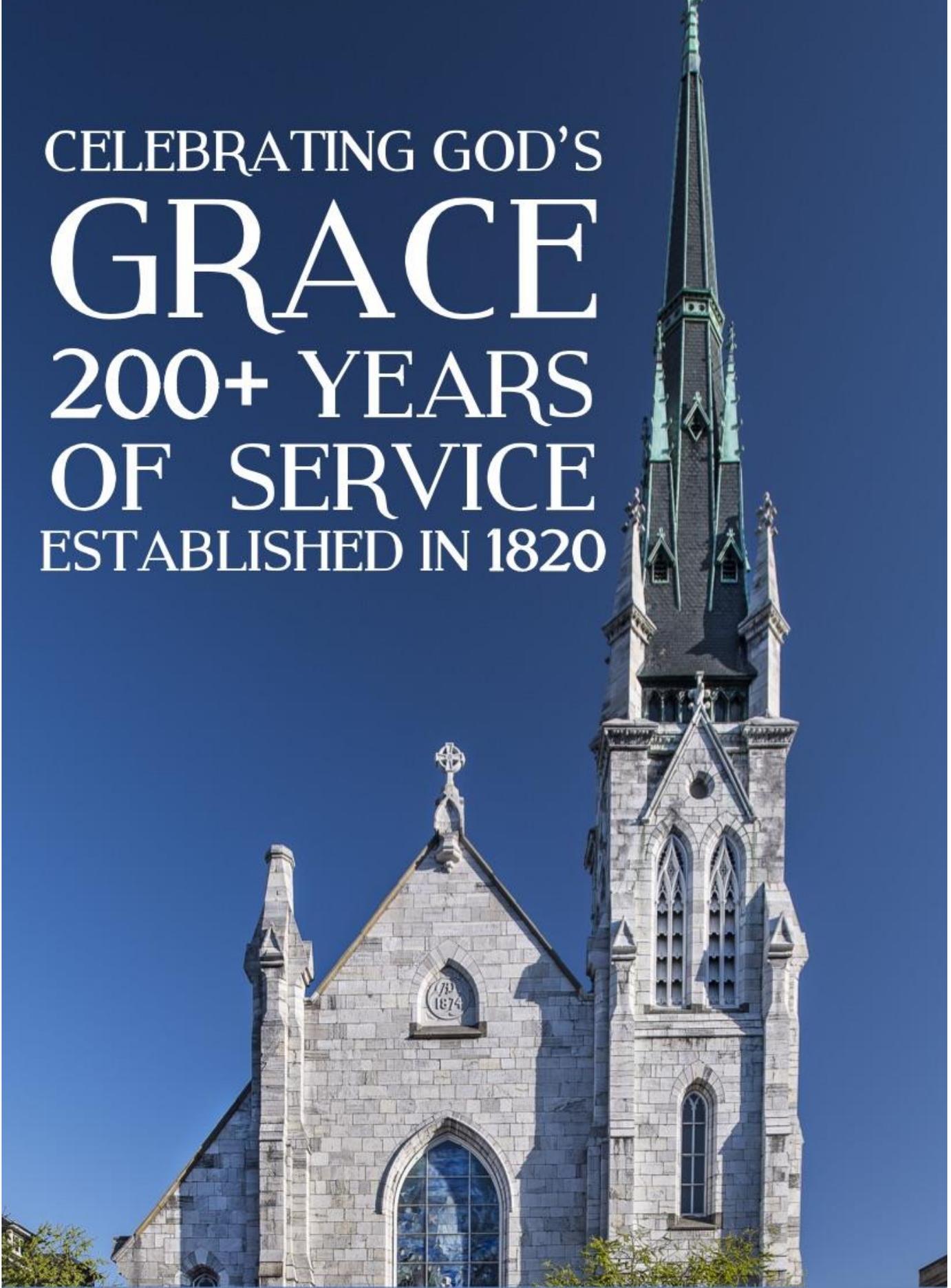


CELEBRATING GOD'S
GRACE
200+ YEARS
OF SERVICE
ESTABLISHED IN 1820



HISTORY OF GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

The following history was written by
the members and clergy of
Grace United Methodist
Grace Methodist Episcopal
Locust Street Methodist Episcopal
and
Second Street Methodist Episcopal
Churches

and herein recorded by
the unknown writers/recorders of the histories
of 1970, 1940, and 1930,
and the historians of the
Church Centennial Celebration in 1920;
Leroy and Marianne Erickson,
Jean Pugh 1990 and 1995;
Beverly Fowler 2003;
and
D. Wayne Bender 2022

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All pictures used with permission of the
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May 2022

Appreciation is extended to the following persons
for their assistance, comments, review, proof
reading, and support:
Rick Albright, Barbara Janecko, Jim Clippinger,
Justine Kompare, Bill Shakely,
Dr. Milton Loyer, Sharon Herr, Joanna Hunt
and Lisa Bender.

Note: This is the first Grace Church history that is recorded with
modern technology and will be widely available on the internet.
It will be edited as new information is found, corrections are
needed, and new events included. This history compilation
includes more pictures and is intended as a more complete and
accurate history of Grace United Methodist Church. While
previous histories included the facts of major events, this history
tells more of the story and includes more detailed information
about the buildings, members, and ministries.

*Background: Architect drawing of church
by Frank Davis, 1870*

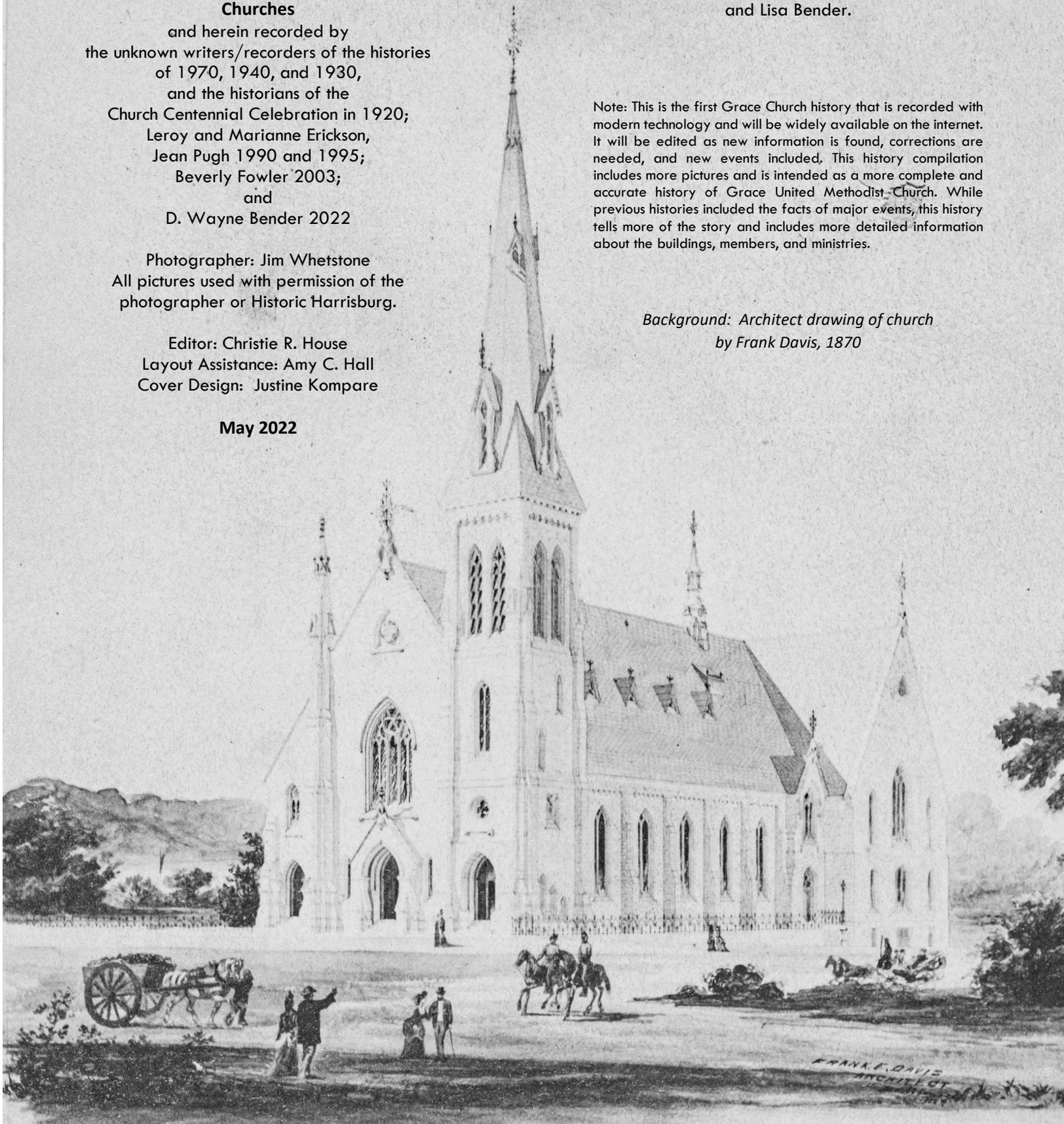


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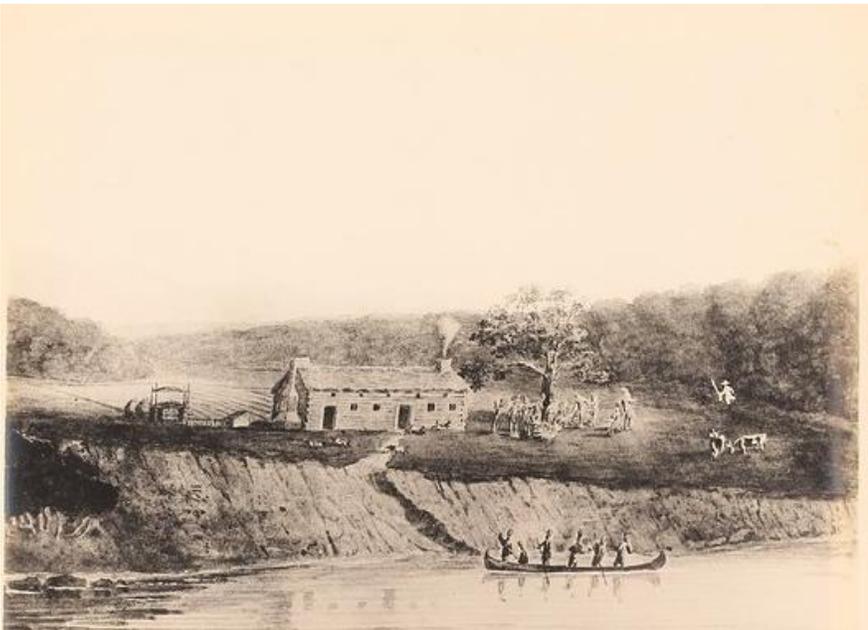
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EARLY HISTORY OF HARRISBURG INTRODUCTION OF METHODISTS First Methodist Society 1810-1820

The seeds of Methodism were sown in American soil just before the American Revolution, when few colonists belonged to any church, but these seeds lay dormant during the war itself. The patriotism of American Methodists was suspect because of their affiliation with the Church of England. Then on December 23, 1784, the Christmas Conference to establish Methodism as an American denomination was held at Lovely Lane Church in Baltimore, Maryland. With America free, Methodism declared its independence from the Church of England and the seeds germinated rapidly. With heavy reliance on circuit rider preachers with minimal formal education, the Methodist movement spread rapidly in the growing nation.

In 1719, John Harris Sr., an English trader, settled in the Shipoke area of Harrisburg, and 14 years later secured grants of 800 acres to build a town. He also acquired a license to operate a ferry and the small town became known as Harris's Ferry. In 1784, John Harris Jr. proposed the laying out of a town of 200

quarter acre lots on higher ground upriver from his house. In the spring of 1785, William Maclay, Harris' son-in-law and later the first U.S. senator from Pennsylvania to the United States Congress (1795-1797), laid out the town along the east shore of the Susquehanna River, which he named Harrisburg. The following year the city was temporarily renamed Louisburg, in honor of King Louis XVI who had helped the Americans during the Revolution, but John Harris refused to sell the land for the county seat under those terms. The authorities relented, and Harris Ferry was officially named Harrisburg, becoming the Dauphin County Seat.



The home of John Harris, the first settler of Harrisburg

In 1795, it was recorded that Harrisburg had about "300 houses neatly built of brick or logs and mortar." The streets were wide, though not paved. There were 32 taverns and 18 merchants. In the 1780s, it was not unusual for bears and wolves to appear on the outskirts of the town, or even invade the settlement. On one occasion in 1792, a buffalo joined a herd of cows pastured in Maclay's Swamp (on which Grace Church now stands.) It caused the cows to stampede into town before it was finally killed in Harris' stable. At this time, the river islands were nesting places for bald eagles, which fed in the spring on the shad ascending the river to spawn.



Records of the beginning of the Methodist Church in the area are meager, but it appears that itinerant preachers held services in the area as early as 1781. The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, an ardent follower of Francis Asbury, preached in Lewisberry that year, and, in 1783, soon to be elected the first bishop, Asbury himself conducted services as near as Chamber's Ferry (later called Simpson's Ferry) site of the present-day Susquehanna Club located on the Defense Distribution Center Susquehanna military base (formerly known as the New Cumberland Army Depot).

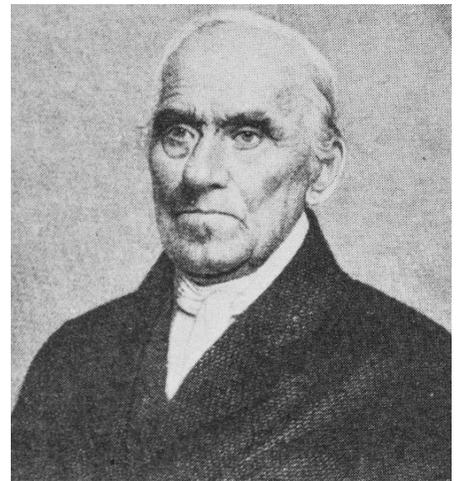


Jacob Gruber

Grace Church owes thanks to Jacob Gruber, the circuit rider who caused the seeds of Methodism to germinate in John Harris' Ferry settlement. Gruber was a close friend of Bishop Asbury's, who in 1802 extended his efforts on the Lykens Circuit over Peter's Mountain and down to Harrisburg, the jumping-off place for the West. He found here a few blocks of irregular houses stretching along the Susquehanna. We can but imagine the circumstances whereby he came to preach. Perhaps he sought only to cross the river. But preach he did, and he inspired and planted the first Methodist congregation of which we today are the inheritors. Our faith is an extension of that early preacher's faith, and our church is the fruition of his dreams. [See Appendix I for a listing of Pastors and Associate Pastors of Grace Church]

Henry Boehm, (son of Bishop Martin Boehm of the United Brethren denomination) first ventured into Harrisburg on two occasions in 1793 and 1803 with his Methodist circuit preacher friend Jacob Gruber. He wrote of the difficulties in his journal, "Harrisburg was another of our preaching places. I was in the neighborhood of where Harrisburg now is in 1793. It was then called 'Harris's Ferry.' In 1803 it was a small place and Lancaster was then the capital of Pennsylvania. We had very hard work to get a foothold. We preached mostly in German and had only a small class in 1803."

Again, in his journal, Henry Boehm wrote after preaching in Harrisburg on Friday, April 6, 1804, "The people in this town are next thing to inaccessible," due to crossing the river from the Cumberland Valley. From this time on, Harrisburg was unofficially included on the Dauphin circuit but not recorded as an appointment until 1810.



Henry Boehm

We can speculate that from the 1780s into the early 1800s, families met in one another's homes for worship and study. The first Methodist Society in Harrisburg (of which Grace is the direct successor) was organized in 1810 with a class of five members.

Harrisburg was growing. In 1791, Harrisburg was incorporated and named the Pennsylvania state capital in October of 1812, moving from Lancaster. The first capitol building cornerstone was laid in 1819. With the westward march of white settlement, there was a steady flow of goods and people along the Turnpike to Chambersburg, and thence due west. In 1816, work was begun on a bridge from Harrisburg to the West Shore of the Susquehanna River to facilitate the traffic. The ferry days were numbered.

In October of 1818, the members of this first society were John Funk, William Mitchell, Jane Mitchell, John Bond, Rebecca Bond, Harriet Henry, Amelia Henry, William Musgrave, B. Barret, John Hosler, Alex Buffington, John Rigg, Jane Wood, E. Wood, Louisa Power, Jacob M. Awl, Aurora Callender, Mary McMichael, George Linketter and John Burkett.

Around that same time, laymen Richard McAllister and eight other trustees from the society purchased a lot and two-story brick “meetinghouse” on Pine Street on land now occupied by Pine Street Presbyterian Church. They met and worshiped there until early 1819 when it was dispossessed by reason of a flaw in the title to the building and a mortgage that was still owed. The building was sold by the sheriff.

For nearly two years the church had no settled home. Meetings were held part time in a small one-story log house on the site of the present Dauphin County Library. Later they met in the school house of Mr. McGinnis (presumably the teacher) on Raspberry Alley, east of Chestnut Street. Their leader may have been John Funk, the miller at the poor house mill. He walked into town every sabbath to conduct the service.



Engraving of a circuit rider by Frank Beard.
Image courtesy of the General Commission on Archives and History.

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH BUILDING Second Street Methodist Episcopal Church 1820-1839

By 1820, the Methodist Society was strong enough in faith and number to organize and build its first small meetinghouse at Second and South streets. It cost \$1,500 and the building was of brick, two stories high, with an end gallery, dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on Sunday, December 3, 1820. The trustees were John Bond, James Gallagher, and John Funk. Early preachers on the circuit were Jacob Gruber and H.C. King, but at some point, the Rev. Gruber was assigned to serve the Harrisburg Society and he no longer had to travel.

Rev. Jacob Gruber was a character and copied after no man. He was always himself, and everywhere, and never lost his individuality as one of the most humorous, witty and yet withal grace and earnest preachers of his day. His ministerial career of over half a century, indeed his whole life, was filled with incident.

In 1818 he preached a sermon in Maryland against slavery and was tried by Frederick County Court for inciting the slaves to commit act of mutiny and rebellion. He was acquitted of the charge. The Honorable Roger B. Taney, afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States (1836-64) was his Counsel. Copied from the 1995 history for the 175th Anniversary of Church

Shortly after the church was built, some town residents had the frontier spirit characterized by taking the law into their own hands. On one occasion, someone packed the church pulpit with gunpowder and blew it to bits. What was first regarded as a disaster turned into a blessing. Word of the irreverent act outraged the whole town, and some surmised the event was a retaliation effort to intimidate the preacher for his anti-slavery sermon in Maryland. The governor of the state and the town council each offered a reward of \$100, but the perpetrators of the deed were never discovered. The community outrage over the incident led to so many contributions that the trustees were able not only to restore the pulpit but to pay off "...an onerous church debt" on the building as well.



*The First Methodist meetinghouse at Second and South streets built in 1820 (left).
The same building as it appears today (right). Note the three front windows are original.
This building is the oldest religious building in Harrisburg.*

While the abolitionist preacher may have been an early progressive theologian and part of the proud history of Grace Church; unfortunately, the impact of his message fell ultimately on deaf ears for his lawyer, Roger Taney. Early in Taney's career he emancipated his own slaves, and reportedly stated that slavery was "a blot on our national character." It is also reported that Taney's experience of defending Gruber was so intense that he felt his life was endangered. However, over time he hardened into a pro-slavery advocate, and declared the abolitionist movement "northern aggression." On March 6, 1857, then Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, ruled in Dred Scott v. John Sandford, that African Americans were not and could not be citizens, a high court decision that is truly a blot on our national character.

In the early class meetings and worship services, singing was done a cappella with the pitch given by a string or woodwind instrument, and the singing was unaccompanied by piano or organ except in large cities or wealthy homes. At Second Street Church, the first instrument was a wooden flute.

In early bulletins from the Second Street Church this reference was found: *The flute was the first instrument*



used in the [Second Street] Methodist Church. It was played by one of our older members, Mr. Joseph M. Black. There was considerable opposition to the use of any instrument and the player sat on steps, concealed by the front of the gallery. It is suspected that because there was opposition, the flautist accompanied the singing as well, and the concealment kept the focus off the performer and on praising God.

This very flute is now on display near the baptismal area of Grace UMC sanctuary. It was restored prior to 1995 by Dr. William Higgins.



Rev. Francis Hodgson

The Methodist Church was growing from 1820-34. We have no record of the members, nor official records of the church including clergy until 1834 when the congregation (yet known as a society) had 175 members with Reverend Francis Hodgson as their first pastor. It is assumed that Rev. Jacob Gruber and possibly Rev. H.G. King served the society from 1820-1833. In that history, there were references to “shouting Methodists” and to baptisms held in the Susquehanna River.

According to Methodist conference historical records, the Rev. Francis Day Hodgson was born February 13, 1805, in England. He was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference on trial, a common way of referring to lay pastors. He married Agnes Cobourn Long on April 15, 1830. He and his wife moved to Harrisburg in 1833 to serve as a circuit rider on the Dauphin-Harrisburg Circuit. After one year of traveling the circuit, he was appointed the first pastor of the church as a station and no longer rode the circuit. He died April 17, 1877. [See Appendix II for information on all the parsonages of the church.]

Rev. Hodgson was the “finest linguist and ablest theologian” of the Philadelphia Conference, and a scholar and preacher of rare gifts, who studied theology while working at the shoemaker’s bench.

On June 16, 1836, the society was incorporated by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as “The Methodist Episcopal Church of Harrisburg, Maclaysburg and vicinity,” and the minister was Rev. R. Gerry. [Note: Maclaysburg is an old neighborhood of Harrisburg just north of State Street and south of Forster Street, once known as Maclay’s Swamp.] The following church members were named as trustees to hold the real estate: Jacob M. Awl, John Davis, John H. Bigler, Joseph Black, Henry Antes, James Denning, William Jennings, and Alexander Buffington. The property included the church on Second Street and the “burying ground” on North Street. The cemetery was later taken by the town authorities in land included in the old reservoir ground. When Rev. Jacob Gruber was moved to the Carlisle Circuit in 1937, he wrote in his journal of the Harrisburg Circuit, “I found it [Harrisburg] a small patch instead of a fertile field.”

Rev. Robert Gerry served the Second Street Church in 1835-36. He had a “sweet and gentle disposition, charming manner, and fitly spoken words. His work yielded an abundant harvest for the church.”

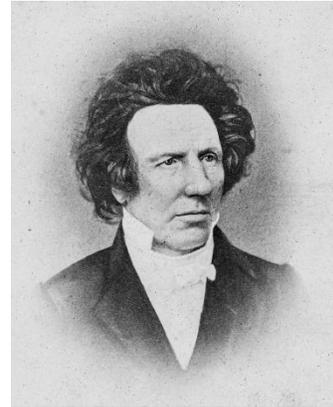
From 1837-39, the Rev. Thomas I. Thompson was pastor. Anticipating the future needs of the church, a lot on Locust Street and near Third Street was purchased in 1837 for \$1600 from Dr. Luther Reily. The Rev. William Barnes was the next pastor to arrive, in 1939. “Billy” Barnes as he was known, was an eccentric but eloquent Irish preacher. He could have been referred to as the “fighting parson.” It is documented that he would stop preaching, come down from the pulpit, settle a disturber of the worship, and resume his preaching. During his time at Second Street Church, the society grew to be too large for the building.



Rev. R. Gerry



Rev. Thomas J. Thompson



Rev. William Barnes



Map of Harrisburg is 1881 – lighter area shows the capital and area of first three churches



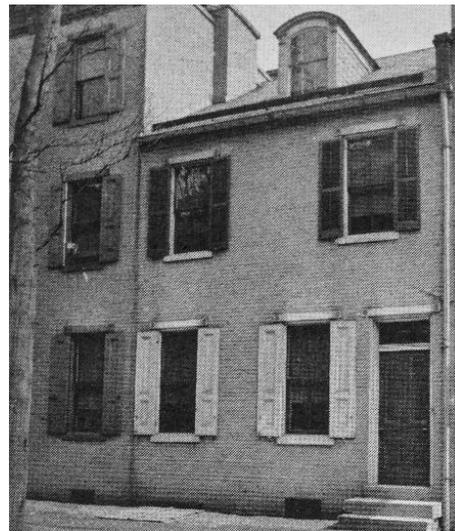
Pulpit chairs from the Second Street Church, on display in Grace UMC's history room.

SECOND CHURCH BUILDING Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church 1839-1871

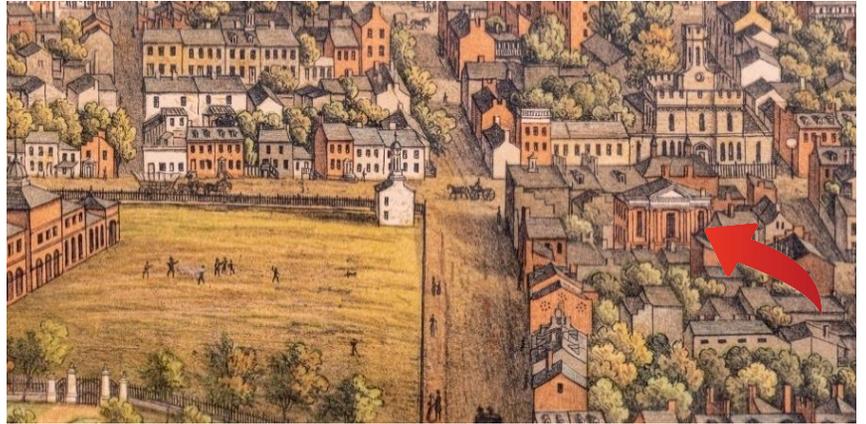
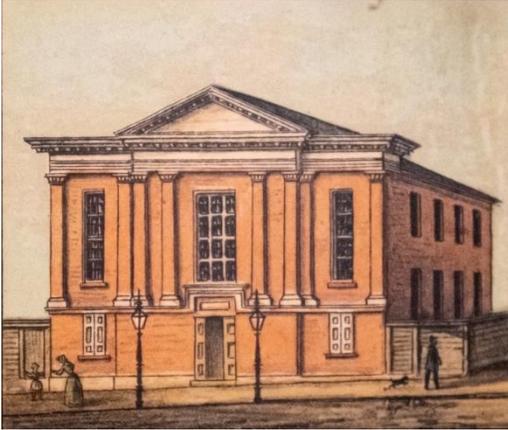
Worship continued at Second and South streets until 1839 when the congregation bought an existing church on Locust Street used by the Unitarians. This building was enlarged in 1839 and named, "The Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church" at a cost of \$8,512.16. The church was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on August 25, 1839. Former pastor, Rev. Gerry, now of St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, preached the morning service, and Rev. Thomas I. Thompson preached in the afternoon. The new building was 60"x73" and had seven rooms on the lower level with the sanctuary on top. Rev. Barnes remained the pastor till 1841.



The original Locust Street Methodist Church 1839



First parsonage of Locust Street Church



Left: Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church after the 1852 remodeling – 1855
Right: Corner of Third & Walnut streets, note location of Locust St Church – 1855

The original Second Street Church, 321 N. Second Street, which served the congregation for 19 years, was sold to the United Brethren Church, who later sold it to the Temperance Society. It later became the synagogue of the Ohev Sholom congregation. In the 1970s, it was the Welfare Building and then a photography store for Cole & Company. In more recent years, the building housed a restaurant and bar under various names. In 2022, it is called NyRees, a southern-style comfort food restaurant. It is interesting to note that while the building served as a church, the pulpit was blown up after the pastor preached for the human rights of all people including slaves. Later, as part of the Temperance Society, it housed those who worked for prohibition.

The first choir was formed in 1941. The choir became well known in the community and gave concerts in neighboring towns under the leadership of Mr. Tarbuton. Other choir leaders were Mr. Albert Bigler, the father of Mrs. W.C. Armor, possibly an ancestor of Miss Helen Armor, an early church secretary at Grace. The last choir director of Locust Street and first at Grace Methodist was Mr. Israel Ellenberger, who led the choir for 30 years.

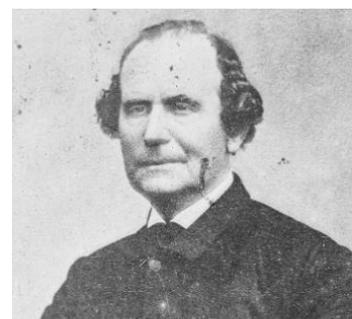
From this time until 1852, a period of 13 years, the church grew and prospered under the pastoral charge of Joseph Lybrand (1841-43), “a successful revivalist and a man of magnetism;” the Rev. Anthony Atwood (1843-45), who was forceful and argumentative; and the Rev. Joseph Castle (1845-47) who was “wonderful at prayer, well taught, and clear and pungent in his discourses.” The Rev. William Cooper (1847-49) was followed by the return of now the Rev. Dr. Francis Hodgson (1849-50) and then the “sweet and charming” Rev. William Urie (1851-53).



Rev. Joseph Lybrand



Rev. Anthony Atwood



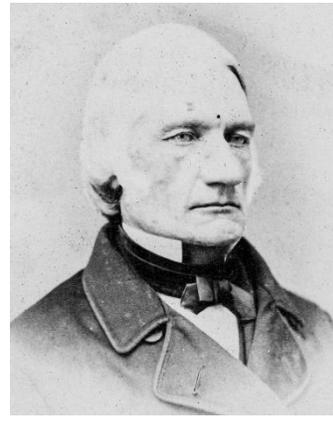
Rev. Joseph Castle



Rev. William Cooper



Rev. Francis Hodgson



Rev. William Urie



↑ *One of the few pictures of the interior of Locust Street Church, possibly Christmas 1869, with Charles J. Thompson.*

→ *Kingdomtide Sunday in Locust Street Church.*



On November 17, 1851, the famous Jenny Lind sang from the pulpit of Locust Street Church. It is reported that Mr. George B. Ayers, who was instrumental in getting her to come to Harrisburg, succeeded in obtaining the church for her recital. Before permission could be obtained, he agreed to cover the entire pulpit over with planks, as the Board of Stewards thought it would be "wicked and ungodly for any one, except Jenny Lind, to step on the sacred platform; her troupe not all being Christians." He also agreed that no tickets should be sold at the door of the Church, and that, if possible, the rule of seating the men and women on separate sides of the church should be carefully adhered to. Other serious objections were finally overcome by Mr. Ayers agreeing to give stewards and their families free admission tickets.

People came from Chambersburg, Carlisle, and nearby points. The ladies were in full evening dress, and the church stewards afterward said, "all was done in decency and good order." The concert was a great success; \$3,000 was a great financial reward from the tickets sold. It was said the final song Jenny Lind sang was "Sweet Home" and proved the outstanding climax of the evening. The audience was greatly moved, and the remembrance of that song was the theme for unending praise.



Rev. Alfred Cookman

This church underwent remodeling in 1852 during the ministry of Rev. William Urie. Former ministers, Rev. William Barnes and Rev. W.M. D. Ryan, preached the rededication sermon.

The Rev. Alfred Cookman (1853-55) was "silver tongued and an eloquent man of God." History records "None made for himself so large a place in the esteem and affection of the community as he." Rev. Cookman was also highly regarded by other non-Methodist church leaders. "His genial manner, pleasant smile, and cordial handshake were a passport everywhere, and made him a favorite among all classes of people." Of note, Pastor Cookman's father died shortly after hearing of the death President William Henry Harrison, who died 32 days after his inauguration. Pastor Cookman, on April 4, 1841, said to his son, "I am sweeping through the gates washing in the blood of the Lamb."



Rev. John D. Curtis

The next pastor was the Rev. John D. Curtis (1855-57). His annual salary was initially \$500, but table expenses, and the usual child allowances made by the Methodist Discipline, required the salary to be increased to \$850. Up until this time it was customary for men and women to sit on opposite sides of the sanctuary for worship, but during Rev. Curtis's ministry, there is reference to the congregation sitting in blocks, which may mean that the men's and women's classes sat together.

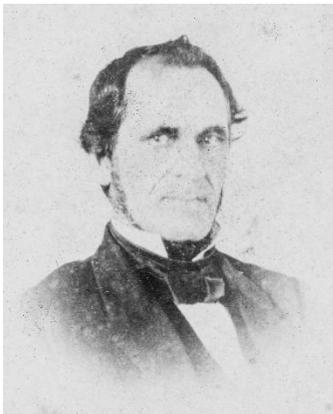


Rev. David W. Bartine

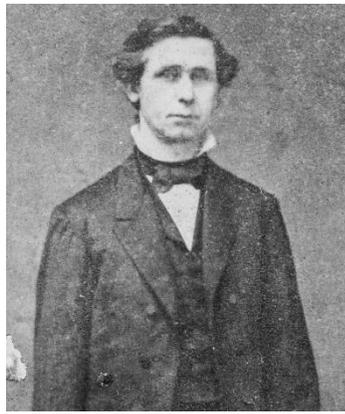
The Rev. David W. Bartine was the pastor from 1857-59. The Annals of Harrisburg by George H. Morgan (©1906) tells us the parsonage was on Walnut Street near Second. Rev. Bartine preached every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. He lectured every Thursday evening and had communion the first Sunday of every month. Baptism was the last Sunday of the month immediately before preaching. Class meetings were in the basement of the church every Sunday at 3:00 p.m. and on Monday, Tuesday and Friday evenings. Sunday School was at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon in the basement. Infant School and Bible Class were at the same time. This glimpse of the schedule of this pastor was no doubt typical of many years before and after.

During the pastorates of Revs. Cookman, Curtis, and Bartine, the congregation steadily increased in numbers.

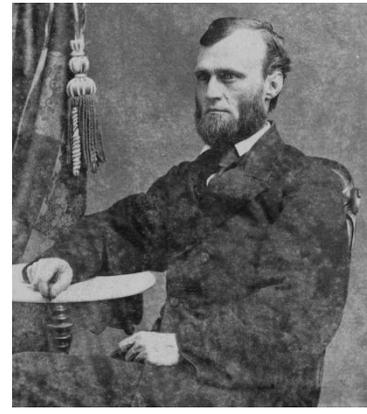
The Locust Street Church, as it was known, continued to grow through the pastorates of William Bishop (1859-61) and Franklin Moore (1861-63). Prior to this time, the Methodist preachers were limited to two-year pastorates and then were moved automatically. The next pastor was the first to be allowed to serve three years with a new rule change. During the Civil War, the Rev. John Walker Jackson was the pastor who saw the need for a larger church. He held a congregational meeting to discuss a new and larger building but the "faith of the officary" failed, and the old church was again overhauled, improved, and decorated as a compromise.



Rev. William Bishop



Rev. Franklin Moore



Rev. John Walker Jackson

At the Second Quarterly Conference with the presiding elder of the district, on August 20, 1862, it was recorded in the minutes that 29 men connected to the church had enlisted in the service of the country during the previous quarter. Of those persons, one was a colonel of the Dauphin and Lebanon regiments of Pennsylvania Volunteers. Two were also captains and one was a lieutenant.

Following is the text of a White House letter from President Abraham Lincoln dated May 18, 1864, addressed to Philadelphia Conference, Presiding Elder, Mrs. William Calder, a member of Locust Street Church and Secretary of the Philadelphia Conference:

Gentlemen:

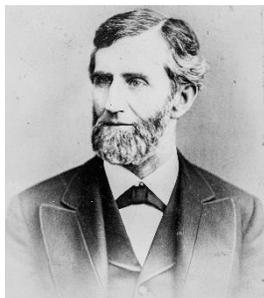
In response to your address allow me to attest the accuracy of its historical statements: endorse the sentiment it expresses: and thank you in the nation's name for the sure promise it gives.

Nobly sustained as the government has been by all the churches, I would utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet, without this it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is by its greater numbers, the most important of all. It is no fault

*in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospital, and more prayers to Heaven than any.
God bless the Methodist Church – bless all the churches—and blessed be God, who, in this our great trial, giveth us the churches.*

Signed: A. Lincoln

During the war years the need for a larger building for the church and Sunday School was apparent but became even greater after the war during the pastorates of the Rev. John F. Chaplin (1866-67) and the Rev. Charles I. Thompson (1868-71). Tenacious and zealously determined Rev. Thompson had the vision for a new church. He consulted an architect, presented estimates, and finally solicited “subscriptions” to fund the project. His zeal and faith finally overcame the doubters in the church! His first plan was to buy the adjoining lots on Locust Street and use the old church as a chapel, building the new church next to the old one. This plan was abandoned but his subscriptions continued till he had secured \$20,000.



Rev. John F. Chaplin



Rev. Charles I. Thompson

THIRD CHURCH BUILDING Grace Methodist Episcopal Church 1871-1897

A young man by the name of J. Horace McFarland, touched by the eloquence of Pastor Thompson, gave a \$50 bond out of his earning as the first money given for the new church.

On the eve before the new pastor, the Rev. William J. Stevenson, arrived from Wilmington, Delaware, in 1871, the trustees purchased the present site of Grace Church on State Street from Mrs. Margaret Forster and others for the sum of \$19,600.

The name of the original church was changed for the third time when the present building was dedicated in 1878, although it officially became the name during a corporate meeting on November 25, 1872. It became Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. The later name, Grace Methodist Church, was adopted when all branches of Methodism were united in 1939. With the union of the Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist denominations in 1968, “United” was inserted into the name. According to the 1940 church history written for the 120th anniversary of the church, the first baby baptized in Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, was appropriately named Grace, and was still a member of the congregation in 1940.



Rev. William J. Stevenson

An interesting conundrum is how the name “Grace” was chosen. No documents yet found reveal the answer. In the Guild Room today, there is displayed a collection of Love Feast cups featuring the word “Grace” in gold leaf, as well as matching platters. The written information with the collection claims the Love Feast was often celebrated with two-handled cups and platters of English Ironstone with the “Sheaf of Wheat” pattern, circa 1865, at the Locust Street Church. Is it possible that Grace was chosen as the name in part because they used these Love Feast cups at their previous building? Choosing “Grace” was a theological statement that broke away from the tradition of naming Methodist churches based on their locations (street or community) or order of existence (First, Second, Third.) With the china collection is an order of worship used by the laity when clergy were not present to observe Holy Communion. Traditionally, worshipers were seated in a circle. Bread was broken into small pieces and passed on the platters, and then the two handled cups were passed filled with water and people would drink from the common cup, remembering that whoever drank from the living water of Jesus would never thirst.



Rev. Stevenson was the last pastor of Locust Street and was the guiding light during the beginning of the construction of Grace Church. Frank Davis of Baltimore was chosen as the architect. He designed it in a Gothic Revival style, using limestone from Mish’s Quarry on South Cameron Street in Harrisburg. The contractor was Augustus Sayford. Frank Davis spent so much time in Harrisburg during the construction that he was often referred to as a resident.



The Ladies Sewing Society contributed the down payment for the lot. In laying the foundation stone in 1871, the first stone sank from sight in the swampy ground. This cast temporary doubt on the church’s firm foundation. Church members sold \$2.50 round trip train excursion tickets to the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia to raise money.



The old Locust Street Church was sold to the Odd Fellows Hall Association for \$17,000. After the sale in 1872, the congregation worshipped for nearly a year in the First Baptist Church on the corner of Second and Pine Streets.



First Baptist Church, Second and Pine Streets

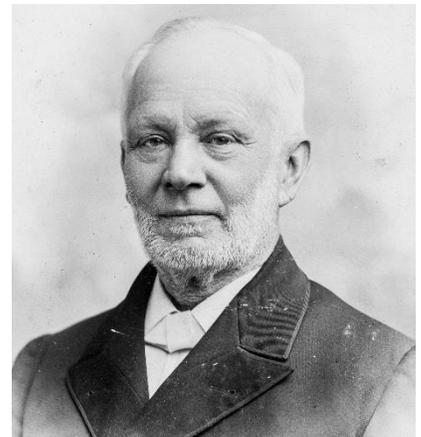
The congregation of 503 members moved into Grace Church for the first time on March 15, 1873, when they held worship in the Assembly Room/Chapel on the third floor of the back section of the building, which was called an annex at that time. That portion of the building was dedicated on December 28, 1873, when Bishop Matthew Simpson preached to a congregation estimated between 1200-1500, which included the Baptist friends. At the time, the church was considered a construction miracle because of the additional cost of getting to bedrock for a solid foundation.

Until 1872, Harrisburg and Dauphin County were part of the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the Central Pennsylvania Conference across the river and north of the county. The 1872 Methodist Episcopal General Conference aligned the city of Harrisburg churches with the Central Pennsylvania Conference. [See Appendix III for the dialogue of the heated debate at the General Conference of 1872.] The end result was that Grace Methodist Episcopal Church and the five other city Methodist churches were reassigned to the Central Pennsylvania Conference to the dismay of the Philadelphia Conference, which wanted to continue to control the churches in the state capital. However, the jurisdiction of the surrounding county remained in the Philadelphia Conference, which was an issue until 1972, when all of Dauphin County became part of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. The conference headquarters was moved from Carlisle to Harrisburg.

The presiding elder of the Harrisburg District wrote in his conference report in 1874:

Grace is the new name of the old Locust Street Church and is much the strongest of any of our charges in Harrisburg. The Church building, beautifully situated on State Street, will be, when completed, one of the largest, most substantial commodious and elegant sacred edifices in the State, an honor to Methodism and a monument to the enterprise and liberality of its builders.

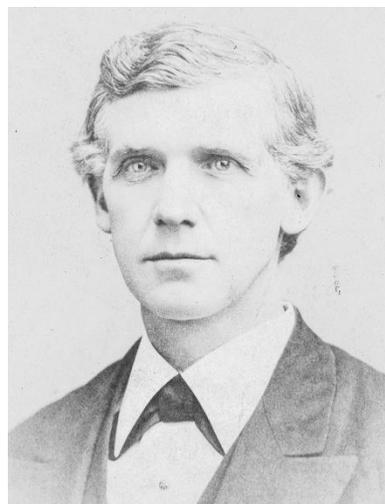
That year, Rev. Stevenson was moved to the Madison Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, and the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Holmes was assigned to Grace. During the American Centennial in 1876, the church had 475 members, celebrated the country, and raised funds for their building under construction. The church was commended as well for their participation in mission. It was also in 1876 that the church hosted the 8th Session of the Central Pennsylvania Conference, just four years after the General Conference moved the churches to Central Pennsylvania Conference.



Rev. Dr. Charles A. Holmes

During the pastorate of Dr. Holmes (1874-77), the church gained 211 members to reach 550 and raised \$40,000 for their new building.

Following additional fund-raising efforts, the sanctuary was completed in 1878, during the pastorate of the Rev. Richard Hinkle (1877-79). The Conference Journal of 1878 reports: *The magnificent audience room of Grace Church Harrisburg has been completed. The dedicatory services were held March 10th [1878]. Bishop Simpson, Dr. Newman and Dr. Stevenson were preachers on the occasions that will be long remembered. It was also reported that the church raised \$20,000 on the day of their first service. The report continued: It is said by competent judges that this is the most complete church edifice on the continent. The zeal and liberality of the pastor, Rev. R. Hinkle, and of the members and friends of this charge are well known and worthy of the highest eulogy as well as universal imitation.*



Rev. Richard Hinkle



New Sanctuary decorated for Thanksgiving, November 30, 1878



Rev. Charles W. Buoy

The new church building was valued at \$130,000 and had 594 members. The Rev. Charles W. Buoy served as pastor from 1879-82. His previous appointment was Christ Church in Philadelphia.

As the Mother of Methodism in Harrisburg, Grace Church celebrated with their daughter church, Ridge Ave. Methodist Episcopal Church on their dedication of their new building on May 16, 1881. That same year there was a Christmas miracle. The new Fifth Street Church had a debt of \$3,500 that was like a millstone to the struggling church. A Presbyterian family agreed to cut the church debt in half for them on the day before Christmas. On the same day, the Grace M.E. Church received a donation of \$10,000 toward their debt which then was \$30,000. It was noted that the debt was funded by bonds sold to the members at 4.5%, instead of the normal 6% which was the going rate for other mortgages in Harrisburg.

Rev. William J. Stevenson was appointed for a second time to Grace Church, having previously served from 1871-74. He served from 1882-85.

Grace Methodist Episcopal

advised CHURCH Mar 7/78

WILL BE DEDICATED TO THE SERVICE of Almighty God

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1878.

The Dedicatory services will commence at 10 o'clock A. M., and continue during the week, as follows:

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, AT 10:30 A. M.,
Sermon by Rt. Rev. Bishop Matthew Simpson, D. D.

AT 2 O'CLOCK P. M.
Addresses by Rev. C. I. Thompson, Phoenixville, Rev. C. A. Holmes, D. D., Williamsport, Pa., and others.

AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. W. J. Stevenson, D. D., Wilmington, Del.

MONDAY, MARCH 11, AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. C. A. Holmes, Williamsport, Pa.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. Thos. H. Robinson, D. D., Pastor of Market Square Presbyterian Church.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. Joel Swartz, D. D., Pastor of First English Lutheran Church.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. B. B. Hamlin, D. D., Presiding Elder Harrisburg District.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, AT 7:30 P. M.,
Sermon by Rev. John R. Paxton, Pastor of Pine St. Presbyterian Church.

There will be a Social Reunion in the Chapel on the evening *preceding* the dedication, Saturday, March 9th, at 7:30 o'clock.

THE PUBLIC ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

RICH'D HINKLE,
Pastor.

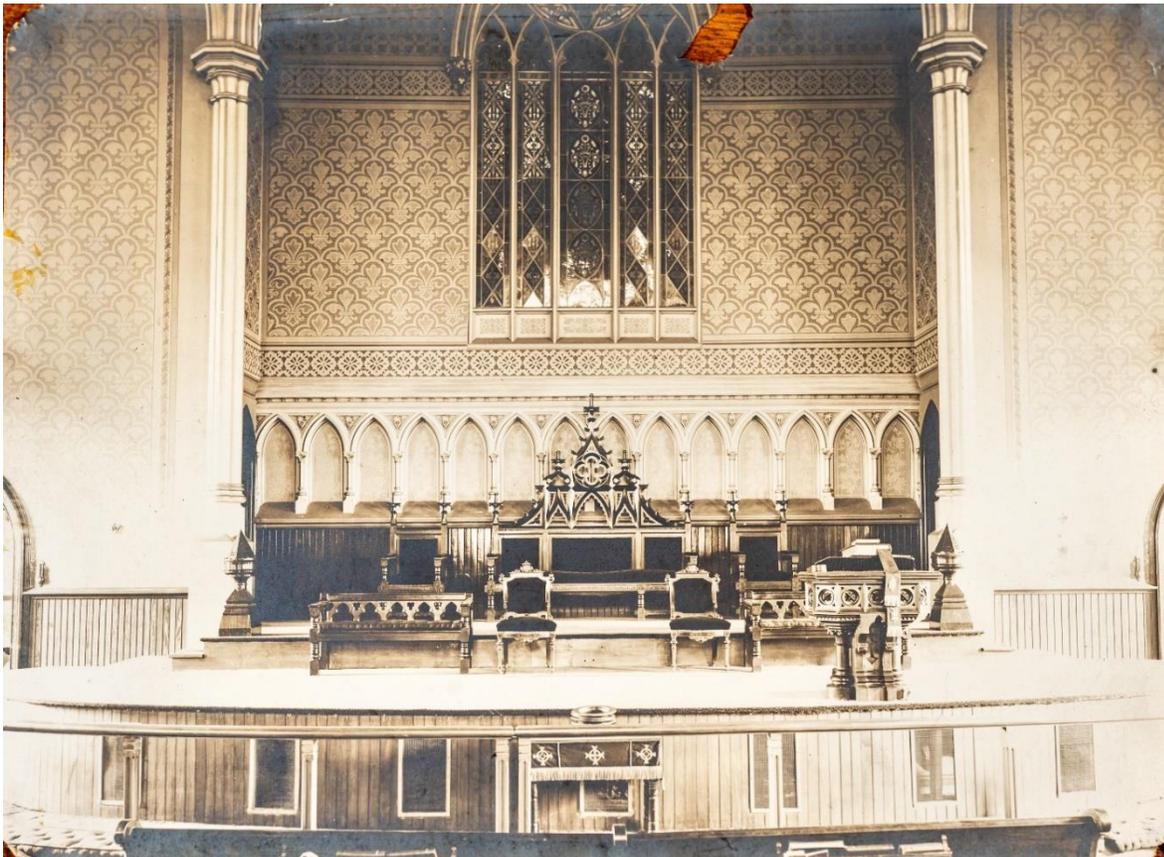
JOHN J. CLYDE,
JOHN W. GLOVER, } Committee.
F. ASBURY AWL, }

Advertisement for the Opening Dedicatory Services of the new Grace Sanctuary



In May 1884, the Calder Family gave the Calder Memorial Organ to honor their father, William Calder, a long-time church member and pillar of the community. The organ was installed in the rear of the balcony and bore the inscription, "We will joy over thee with singing." The cost was \$5,000. [See Appendix IV for more information about William Calder.]

When Rev. Stevenson left in 1885 the church had 642 members. There was a "tea sociable" held for the retiring Dr. Stevenson. According to records, sociables had become fixed institutions at Grace and were deservedly popular. They were free of anything like the denominational stiffness of social formalism. Pleasant smiles and kindly words of welcome were seen on everyone. At his retirement sociable, also present were Governor Pattison and Dr. Pitcairn, possibly John Pitcairn Jr., the financier of the General Church of the New Jerusalem in Bryn Athyn, Pa. "About 9 o'clock the news was received of the appointment of the Rev. Jesse Bowman Young to fill the pulpit of Grace Church, and the hum of conversation increased. It was a delightful affair throughout."



Sanctuary 1885-1889 - Note the raised stage and high altar rail. The pulpit and chairs are on display in Grace UMC's history room.

In 1886, under the ministry of the Rev. Jesse Bowman Young, a problem developed with the William Calder estate. In 1870, the then Locust Street Church helped to form the congregation, which met at the old Mount Pleasant Schoolhouse on the corner of Mulberry and Crescent streets. This church was designated the Alison [sp] or Allison Hill appointment until 1873 when it built its first building at Thirteenth and Vernon streets on land owned by William Calder. The name was changed to Mt. Pleasant Methodist Episcopal and often referred to as the Grace Mission.



Rev. Jesse Bowman Young

The problem was the land for the first church building was still owned by William Calder of Grace Church. While settling the estate, the land valued at \$6,500 was now owned by Mrs. Kate Turner of the Calder family. She offered to sell the property to the congregation for \$5,000. The pastors and laymen of the Harrisburg churches agreed to buy the land with Grace Church providing \$1,500, Ridge Avenue providing \$1,000, the Grace Mission providing \$1,000, and St. Paul's Church and Fifth Street each providing \$500. The balance of \$500 was paid by the Conference Board of Church Extension. The church was officially chartered on May 5, 1886, as the Thirteenth Street Methodist Episcopal Church. [In 1909, the new building on the same site became B.F. Stevens Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church].

In 1887, Grace Church sent two missionaries to India and held evangelistic services in January.



Rev. Ezra H. Yocum

Grace Church's finishing touches were completed in 1888: the magnificent spire cost \$8,000 and interior decorations cost \$1,700. The sanctuary, closed during construction, was reopened just in time for Christmas 1887, and the steeple was dedicated in early 1888. Bishop Fitzgerald and former pastors Dr. Holmes (1874-77) and Dr. Buoy (1879-82) were present. An oddity about the steeple is there is not now nor ever was a bell or carillon in the steeple, which was primarily for financial reasons. Rather, it poignantly points to the one whom we worship, and is a reminder of God's undeserving grace for us.

When the next pastor, the Rev. Ezra H. Yocum (1888-1891), arrived in July of 1888, the church had 751 members and was valued at \$150,000, with a debt of \$33,000. Rev. Yocum launched an unsuccessful campaign to pay \$3,500 per year on the debt for 10 years.

The pastor appointed in 1891 was the Rev. Thomas J. Leak, who continued to work on the church debt, paying \$3,000 on it in 1891 and 1892. Membership dropped to 695 from 753 when the church helped to birth Curtin Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, on the Civil War Camp Curtin grounds outside the then city limits.

In 1891, there is a reference written by Mr. Melick, who may have been the organist/choir director that the "Sabbath" school teachers would gather prior to Sunday school and practice singing and then afterward sit in the gallery and sing one of the hymns.



Rev. Thomas J. Leak

When Pastor Leak left Grace at the end of September in 1893, there were 740 members at Grace and a debt of \$27,300. His report to the presiding elder in 1893 claimed 1,300 pastoral visits, 55 conversions, and debt and interest of \$2,200 paid.

The next pastor, the Rev. Benjamin F. Dimmick, arrived on October 1, 1893, and in two months the new pastor, "saved 140 souls," paid \$1,800 on debt and interest, and by the end of the year, the debt was down to \$25,500.

Sadly, on December 30, 1894, the new Curtin Heights Church was destroyed by fire. It was reported in the Conference Journal of 1885 that the building could have been saved, but the Harrisburg city fire fighters refused to render assistance because the fire was a few hundred feet beyond the city limits.

Fund raising efforts continued to pay for the new Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. Its total cost was \$150,000, and it was the largest and most expensive church in the conference by far. The old Locust Street building was sold for \$17,000 to the Odd Fellows Hall Association. Pastors William J. Stevenson (1871-74 and 1882-85), Charles A. Holmes (1874-77), Richard Hinkle (1877-79), Charles Buoy (1879-82) and Jesse Bowman Young (1885-88) led the congregation through the fund raising and building of the third church.

They, the church leaders and congregation, carried out the plans for raising money, continued the work of the church, and cheered the workers for their toil.

It was reported that the generosity of the membership of Grace Church was wonderful. The generous contributions of prominent citizens of Harrisburg, many of whom were members, also materially aided the building of the church. History also pays high tribute to the fund-raising efforts of the Ladies Sewing Society and the Young Ladies Aid, and honorable mention to the "young men" who ably seconded and carried out many of the ideas of the ladies. The men of the Board of Trustees and Building Committee were recognized for accepting the responsibility of erecting the church building. These men bore the burden, devised the plans, suffered disappointments, experienced sleepless nights and anxious days to bring the church into reality. Ultimately, the Lord of Hosts was credited as their leader. "May love for Christ and the souls that have been saved through the preaching of His word in our beloved Church be our inspiration to work for the coming of God's Kingdom. To Him be endless praise."



*Grace Church on State Street c 1907
After completion of the Civil War Monument in 1875
and St. Patrick's in 1907, the obelisk was relocated
in 1960 near the Zembo Shrine Temple.*

The Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Dimmick was the pastor of the new Grace Church from 1893-1899. Before coming to Grace, he provided instrumental leadership at the May 1889 Convocation in Cleveland, Ohio, that united various Methodist youth groups to form the Epworth League. Epworth was the childhood home of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. Dr. Dimmick transferred to the Central Pennsylvania Conference from the Ohio Conference in 1893 to be the pastor at Grace. He was pastor the night the state Capitol burned.



Rev. Dr. Benjamin D. Dimmick

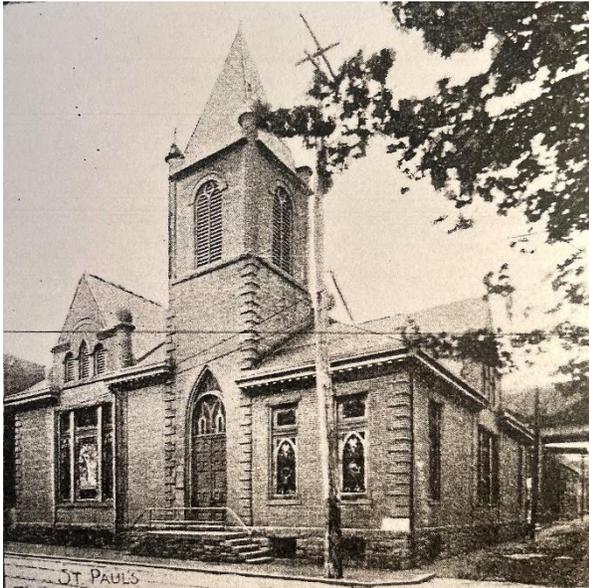
He led the congregation through the chaotic years ahead when two temporary buildings were used for Sunday school and church and then moved back to their newly remodeled sanctuary. He was the first pastor to preach with electric lighting in 1898. Upon leaving Grace Church, he was appointed for two years to Danville Methodist before transferring back to the Ohio Conference. He died there in 1908.



*The choir loft and Calder organ used from 1884-1920 in the rear balcony;
This picture was taken after the organ was enlarged in 1903.
Also note the original electric lights in the three chandeliers hanging in the center of the sanctuary,
and the new lighting in the ceiling done 1899 and 1903.*

GRACE CHURCH: Mother Church of Methodism in Harrisburg

From 1857 under the pastoral leadership of David W. Bartine, through 1873, the church earned her title “Mother Church of Harrisburg Methodism.” A missionary effort on the part of the church helped to organize the following Methodist Episcopal Churches in Harrisburg:



Vine Street in 1857 – later called **St. Paul’s** (in Shipoke) was started with a number of young men from Locust Street Church that met in a brick factory. By January 1858, the Sunday school had 100 members and in May they moved to a former barroom, then to a shop. In December 1858, they purchased a lot on Vine Street and built their first small building. The existing brick church was built in 1898. Flooding and population shift out of the flood district led to the church’s demise. It closed in 2006 and the property was transferred to Harris Street United Methodist Church and then sold. Harris Street closed in 2016.

Ridge Avenue in 1859 – started at Sixth (formerly known as Ridge Ave) and Herr Streets when a local preacher from Locust Street Church organized a mission in the “Hardscrabble” neighborhood on N. Front Street, just south of Broad St. By 1861/62 they built a church on Sixth Street on ground owned by Locust Street Church for a burial ground. A brick building was built in 1880. This church was very strong in its early history. In 1953 this church was sold to Bethel A.M.E. congregation, and the funds were used to start Calvary Methodist on Locust Lane in suburban Harrisburg.



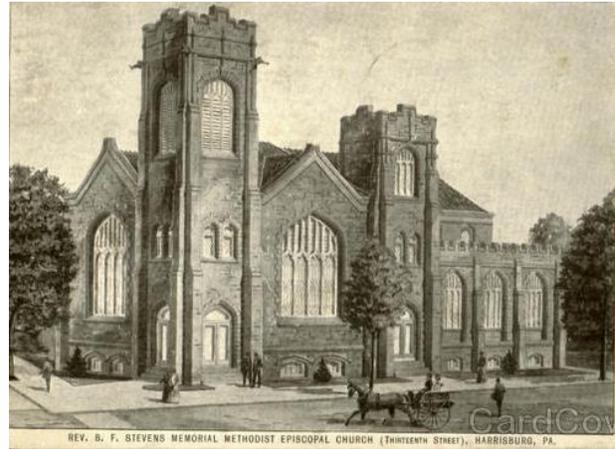
Steelton First in 1867 - a granddaughter church of Grace, birthed from Vine Street, merged with Steelton Centenary in 1993.

Lochiel in 1868 – was a neighborhood between Harrisburg and Steelton, near the Lochiel Iron Works. Mr. William Calder, member at Locust Street, helped to organize the mission which lasted only four years. After the iron works burned in 1872, this property was sold to the Presbyterian Church.

Mt. Pleasant in 1871 – 70 members of Grace, then Locust St Church, left to form the church located first at Mulberry and Crescent Street in Allison Hill, then to a new location and became **Thirteenth Street** in 1886. It was renamed **B.F. Stevens Memorial** in 1909. In 1953 it had 2290 members and was the largest church in the Central Pennsylvania Conference. This church declined over the years despite their faithful members’ attempts to maintain their building. In 2004, the church entered into ministry with the city Hispanic congregation, Iglesia Emmanuel Metodista, and together they were **Stevens Emmanuel Church**. The congregation closed July 1, 2013. The property was sold to an independent ministry and currently appears to be abandoned.



Thirteenth Street M.E. Church 1886-1909



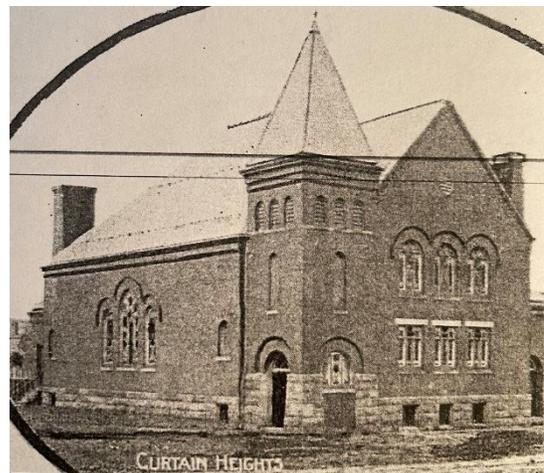
B.F. Stevens Memorial M.E. Church 1909-2013

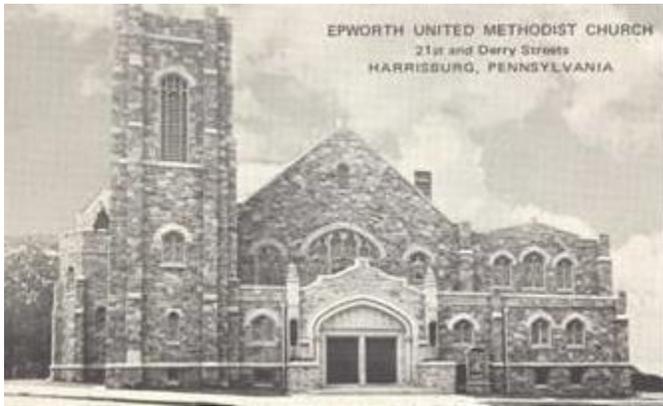


Fifth Street in 1871 – another granddaughter church was born from a large city revival held at Ridge Avenue Church in the winter of 1869/70. These new converts held outdoor services in the summer of 1870 and they were chartered as Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church in 1871. Following a fire at Bethel A.M.E. (the former Ridge Ave. Church) the Fifth Street building was sold to them. The United Methodist congregation continued to share space with them and held services there until June 24, 2006, when the congregation disbanded. The Mount Calvary Church of God in Christ uses the building in 2022.

After 1873, Grace Methodist Episcopal Church also helped to birth some of the remaining Methodist churches in Harrisburg:

Camp Heights in 1890 – This church at 2221 N. Sixth Street (formerly Ridge Ave) was in the small village known as Schudemadjevillie laid out in 1884 and annexed into the city in 1895. All the original trustees of the new church were previously members at Grace. The 1890 frame church was destroyed by fire in 1894. A new brick church was built on the 80-acre site of what was Camp Curtin during the Civil War. The congregation changed its name to **Camp Curtin Memorial** Methodist Episcopal Church in 1914. In 1916, the present sanctuary was added to the brick chapel, and the famous mural of Jesus ministering to a dying Civil War soldier was added. In 1989, the Mitchell Memorial church merged with Camp Curtin UMC and they became **Camp Curtin Memorial-Mitchell**, and closed in 2019. This building is on the National Register of Historic Places.





East End in 1890 - On April 20, 1890, 88 persons, including members from Grace, met in the East End School House and formed the East End Sunday School and built a church in 1892 at 21st and Derry streets – then called **Epworth**. A new church was built on this site in 1921 and used until the church closed in 2005.

New Benton in 1903 – This was the original name of Bressler, a village between Steelton and Oberlin. Started as an outreach of Epworth Church, this congregation also got caught up in

politics and feuding between the Philadelphia and Central Pennsylvania Conferences. A building was built in 1903 but it last appeared in the 1924 records of the Central PA Conference with 28 members. The congregation was forced to become unaffiliated by the conference, and the building now houses the Bressler Bible Church.

Trinity in 1921 – This church is another granddaughter of Grace birthed by Stevens Memorial. The congregation formalized in 1922 with 140 members. They worshiped at the Fire House until their church at 915 N. Seventeenth Street was built. In 1970, this congregation merged with Sixth Street (former United Brethren Church, and old Paxton (former Methodist in Susquehanna Township) to form **Paxton UMC**.

The following two churches are also in Harrisburg but were not birthed through history with Grace:

Riverside in 1907 – Birthed from St. Marks Church on May 1, 1907, when trustees were appointed to buy three lots at Third and Lewis streets. A frame building was built by January 1908. A new building was built on the site in 1956. The church closed in 2019 when it approved joining The Journey UMC. Some members however did move their membership to Grace Church.

Asbury in 1882 – This congregation in Harrisburg was started by the Washington Conference of the Methodist Church as the first Methodist African-American church in the city. The first building was in the 100 block of Herr Street. In 1925, the congregations moved to Briggs and Cowden Street and in 1938 moved to Marion Street under the leadership of their pastor, Rev. Elisha Mitchell. After 1840, it was renamed the **Mitchell Memorial** Church in honor of its beloved pastor. In 1956, the congregation became the very first Methodist Church in the entire denomination to transfer from a racially segregated “black” conference into its geographically appropriate “white” conference. A year later the church moved into the former Pilgrim Holiness Church at 1919 N. Fourth Street (just a block from Fifth Street Methodist). In 1989, the church merged with Camp Curtin due to declining membership and high maintenance costs. Camp Curtin then closed in 1919 as part of Impact Harrisburg.

This Methodist Church Summary in Harrisburg was largely taken from the writing of Dr. Milton Loyer, Archivist, Susquehanna Conference The Chronicler 2021

In 1871, the sinking stone of the new Grace Church was not seen as a bad omen of the Methodist movement in Harrisburg; however, in 2022 Grace is the only former Methodist Church still active in the city of Harrisburg, and along with The Journey are the only two congregations within the city limits.

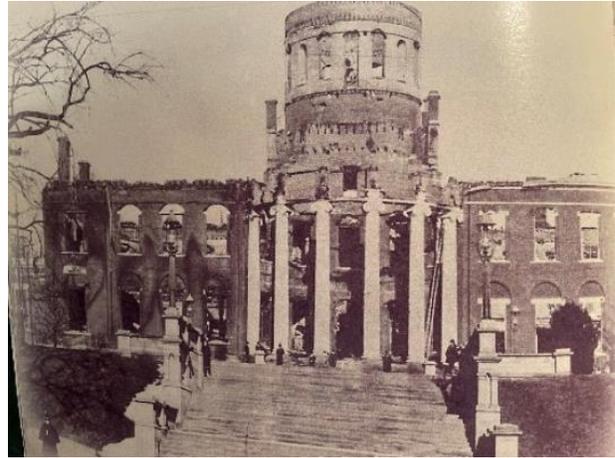
[See Appendix V for a graph showing the Methodist Church chronology in Harrisburg.]

GRACE CHURCH BECOMES THE STATE CAPITOL BUILDING 1897-1899

On Tuesday, February 2, 1897, the clock in the dome of the State Capitol struck 12 o'clock as usual, but when it struck again, it tolled its own death knell; for at 1 o'clock the fire that destroyed the historic building on that day had already encircled the dome like a hydra-headed serpent; and the old clock and all that was dear about Pennsylvania's Capitol was doomed to be no more.

Taken from "The State Capitol of Pennsylvania" published 1907

Pennsylvania Capitol Building Before and After the fire – February 2, 1897:



On February 3, Governor Daniel Hastings, the Auditor General, the State Treasurer, committees from both branches of the Legislature, the Mayor of Harrisburg, and committees from the City Council and the City Board of Trade had a meeting with the Board of Trustees of Grace Church and said, We have searched the city for a building adapted to the uses of the General Assembly, and can find none except your church. At this crisis, we request you as patriotic citizens to give your church for the time being for the occupancy of the Legislative Department of the Commonwealth. We may not offer you a money consideration for the distress and inconvenience it will occasion, but we do ask this as a sacrifice from you to the public weal.

*Page 66 of the 1897 Central Pennsylvania Conference Journal
Rev. William H. Evans, Presiding Elder, Harrisburg District*

After careful consideration the trustees in an afternoon meeting saw it was their duty to accede to the request but needed the approval of the church Official Board. By that evening the Official Board was called together immediately for consultation. In the absence of the Pastor Dr. Dimmick, who must have been out of town, the Presiding Elder, the Rev. William W. Evans of the Harrisburg District, was asked to preside. All members of the Official Board were present except two or three. They thoughtfully reviewed the situation and agreed that: *For a money consideration we may not favor this request, but as Christian citizens, remembering that our General Assembly is a ministry of order, of law, and of God, and recalling the fact that the Constitution of this Commonwealth necessitates a General Assembly to meet in the city of Harrisburg, there is but one thing for us to do.* They then unanimously approved the request. This action was later approved by the Pastor and the Presiding Elder of the District. It was reported that there was scarcely a dissenting word from the members or the other sister churches. Pine Street Presbyterian Church offered the use of their church to Grace for meetings, and for two weeks Grace Church met at Pine Street, including for worship, until arrangements for other facilities were made.

Governor Hastings wanted the legislature to continue without interruption. He guaranteed to have Grace Church in shape for occupation by Monday night which was six days after the fire. Many legislators were opposed to "such precipitate haste" in fitting the church for its new use. The pessimists desired the job to be

done right and they disclaimed manual labor being performed on the sabbath in a building dedicated to the worship of God.

An army of 150 workmen took possession, working night and day, except on Sunday (midnight to midnight) to rearrange the second floor Sunday school room into the Senate Chamber and the auditorium into the House of the Representatives Chamber. The contractor who built the Pennsylvania World's Fair building was directed to arrange the rooms. Governor Hastings took personal charge of the conversion.

Pews were removed, the carpet was taken up, and big gas chandeliers removed to be replaced by electric lighting. Steam heat was introduced, and the dirt floor, unfinished basement was renovated into 20 meeting rooms. Offices and committee rooms were partitioned off. In the main auditorium, the organ in the rear balcony was boxed up.



Pennsylvania Senate ready to meet in Assembly Room, third floor, Grace Church



Pennsylvania House of Representatives ready to meet in sanctuary

All religious furnishings and pews were removed, and legislative desks were installed. The sanctuary provided space for the House of Representatives. The Assembly Room on the third floor was occupied by the Senate. The church and pastor's office (the current nursery) became the Office of the Chief Clerk. "The whole Legislature will go to church," the Harrisburg Patriot announced with glee. Local wits wondered if perhaps the Almighty could reform the legislators since the electorate obviously could not. Spittoons appeared in the aisles and cigar smoke wafted through hallowed halls. The Legislature continued to meet in Grace for five months, or as someone said, about as long as forbearing Christians could turn the other cheek to such a crowd. That summer's legislative work was not very productive. It was said that Governor Daniel Hastings spent much of his time vetoing bills.

[See Appendix VI for the article in the Monday evening issue of The Harrisburg Telegraph regarding the church conversion to the capital and ready to open the next morning.]



Clerk of the Senate at Grace



Clerk of the House of Representatives

After the first two weeks at Pine Street Presbyterian, the congregation worshiped at the Grand Opera House at Third and Walnut streets during this time. The Opera House, which was destroyed by fire February 1, 1907, was in the block now occupied by the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and Court House. The Sunday school met in Central High School located where the State Archives tower now stands.



Opera House where Grace met for worship in 1887-1889



Assembly Room of Central High School set up for Grace Sunday school 1887-89



Central High School, where the State Archives Tower and William Penn Museum is now

“There are few people in Harrisburg who will know how close we were to having the Capitol taken from the city. Had it not been for Grace Church’s unselfish action, the Capitol would have gone to Philadelphia.” This was from a newspaper at the time.

The legislature continued to use Grace Church for four sessions and one special session of the General Assembly until they could move into the partially completed Cobb Capitol in 1898. This “ugly” building was later redesigned and enlarged to become the capitol completed in 1906. After the heathen cigar-smoking, tobacco-chewing legislators moved out, they had to do a complete cleaning and restoration in preparation for the church reopening. Portions of the restored building could be used by the later months of 1898.



Cobb Capitol 1899



One of two remaining House of Representative desks used in the Grace sanctuary. This desk is owned by Grace Church. It was used by the Speaker of the House in 2022 for the Ceremonial Session of the House of Representatives on September 30, 2020. The other desk is in the William Penn State Museum on Third Street, Harrisburg.

[See Appendix VII for the story from a respected Methodist clergyman in Harrisburg about the political corruption and the real cause of the capitol fire.]

GRACE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1898 - 1917
First Renovation and Ministry

The congregation received \$20,000 from the state to compensate for the use of their building. These funds were used for necessary restoration of the interior of the entire edifice. The remodeled church reopened with a week of special services, November 12-19, 1898. The services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. J. Wesley Hill, and sermons, addresses and lectures were given by bishops Hurst, Ninde, and Fowler; the Rev. Dr. Daniel Dorchester, the Rev. Dr. J.L. Hurlbut, the Rev. Dr. Paul C. Curnick, the Rev. Dr. J.W. Hamilton, the Honorable Robert E. Pattison, General J.F. Rusling, Governor W.A. Stone, father of the pastor, the Rev. Dr. J.W. Hill Sr., the Rev. Dr. J. Walker Jackson and pastors of the Harrisburg churches.



Rev. Dr. J. Wesley Hill



Grace sanctuary from 1889-1903

Note the low location of the painting, Adoration of the Shepherds on a new wall covering the previously seen stained glass window.

During the reopening services the church unveiled a commissioned piece of art that adorned the front of their new sanctuary, "The Adoration of the Shepherds." The new altar area required covering over the previously visible stained-glass window. This painting was done by New York artist, E. Irving Couse. It measured 12 by 18 feet and was surrounded by a large mounted frame. The picture was painted on canvas in Mr. Couse's studio and was retouched after it had been fixed to the wall of the church.

Mr. Couse's scene is set in the dawn of the first Christmas morning as a symbol for the dawn of a new century, and through the infant Christ, of a new era for the world. It is said to be the only portrayal of the adoration where the infant is in the manger and not in the arms of the mother Mary. Famous for his paintings of American Indians, Mr. Couse won many major awards in the United States, and his work is displayed in the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He was only 33 when he painted "The Adoration of the Shepherds."



As part of the church renovation, electrical lighting was installed in suitable “electroliers.” A church member and chair of the Grace Church building committee, John Irwin Beggs, was manager of the first Harrisburg Electric Light Co., the first commercially successful electric light plant in the United States. He wanted to electrify the church to save on the cost and cleanup from candles. In his position, he was friends with and worked with Thomas Edison in power distribution. Grace Church was the first building in Harrisburg to be fully wired and use light bulbs throughout the building. The new state capitol was the second building to be electrified. While John Beggs’ Wikipedia biography claims Grace was the first church in the world to receive electricity, it is clear that honor goes to First Presbyterian Church in Roselle, New Jersey, where Edison himself did the installation in April of 1883. However, that installation appears to have been just one 30-bulb electrolier in the sanctuary. The Grace installation was for the entire edifice. Harrisburg may have been only the second city in the United States to have a profitable electric company. [See Appendix IV for more information about John I. Beggs.]

During the renovation, the former stained-glass windows were replaced with opalescent glass, harmonious in tone with the general color scheme of the new sanctuary with cool green, predominating with bands of plain gold, and contrasted with the walnut woodwork. Four of the ten windows included “The Annunciation to the Virgin” and “the Angel of Peace” on the left, and the on right was the “Angel of Praise” and the resurrection scene “He Is Risen.” Records do not show who designed or made these windows which have since been removed and are no longer in the building.

Presiding Elder of the Harrisburg District, the Rev. E.H. Yocum, reported the improvements appropriately crowned and glorified the existing gothic church. He wrote: *This state churchly structure is now as charming and beautiful within as it is imposing externally. Artistic taste and skill have wrought wonders in every part of this great building. Worship of the all-glorious Father must surely be prompted and promoted by surroundings which so strongly minister to every sense of the true, the beautiful, and the good. What these loyal Methodists have done... must not by me be recited in detail. You are invited to visit and tarry and enjoy it all.*

As many people were anxious to see the renovations to the building, the church was asked to host the Pennsylvania State Convention of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held October 22-25, 1900. In the first years after the renovation, membership grew from 953 to 1099 members.



The Grace Church congregation heard the final sermon ever preached by world renowned orator Thomas De Witt Talmage, when he was a guest preacher on January 13, 1901. Talmage, preacher at the Brooklyn Tabernacle and later at First Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., was a personal friend of the pastor, Rev. Dr. J. Wesley Hill. It was said that Talmage preached to audiences of 8,000 people each week. His sermons were published in over 3,000 journals that together reached 25 million readers. He died April 12, 1902, after a severe case of the flu and a six-week rest vacation in Mexico. On September 22, 1902, his third wife, Eleanor Collier Talmage, donated the serpentine marble pulpit in her husband’s memory. The pulpit and other matching chancel furniture were made by Tiffany Studios in New York City. Each piece has inlaid Tiffany glass mosaics of reds, greens, and yellows, and mother-of-pearl. The original pulpit had an electric reading lamp with a shade of Tiffany Favre glass. On the lower left side of the pulpit is a bronze tablet that reads:



May 3, 1903 was a big day at Grace Church! During the 10:30 a.m. morning worship service, a new stained-glass window was installed at the rear of the sanctuary, facing State Street. It appeared that the space for the window had been included in the design of the building with the window itself just plain glass from 1887-1903. A former church member who moved to Milwaukee, John Beggs and his daughter Mary Grace, donated a Tiffany window entitled "The Ascension," to the memory of his wife and her mother, Sue Elizabeth Beggs. The window was executed by Tiffany Studios of New York from a design by Mr. Frederick Wilson. Grace Church and Tiffany Studios records show that the window cost \$3000, although some newspaper reports and previous histories of the church stated the window cost \$5,000. This south facing window, gloriously depicting Jesus' ascension, is an inspiring site during every morning worship service. Bishop Charles H. Fowler, former president of Northwestern University and bishop of San Francisco, was the preacher.



The 11'7" x 21' window is centrally inscribed: "In Memory of Sue Elizabeth Beggs, Wife of John Irwin Beggs" and lists the birth and death year of Mrs. Beggs as 1847 and 1902. On the lower right side is the text "The memory of the just is blessed. Proverbs 10:7," and the lower left inscription is "He giveth His beloved sleep. Psalms 137:2."

The Ascension, the crowning act in the life of Christ, is the theme of this window. In the words of the artist and those who dedicated it in 1903, "The artist has given an individuality to each one of the figures that appeals to the spectator, making [the observer] feel that although the theme is old, yet in this window it is a new and most interesting story. The figure of the Lord is extremely beautiful; the pose is suggestive of the power and glory of the Incarnate God. To attempt to describe the color composition would be impossible; the eye alone can appreciate its wonderful magnificence, which in beauty rivals, if it does not surpass, the far-famed windows of the Middle Ages."

That afternoon at 2:30 p.m. the baptismal font, also created by the Tiffany Studios, was dedicated in memory of David Herr Ross, donated by his father Henry Clay Ross and mother Elizabeth Irene Herr Ross, longtime church members. Their 16-year-old son had died in 1898. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Neeley of New York City and secretary of the Sunday School Union, was the preacher. Presiding Elder, the Rev. George W. Stevens, gave the prayer. The baptismal font was reported to have cost \$1000 at the time.



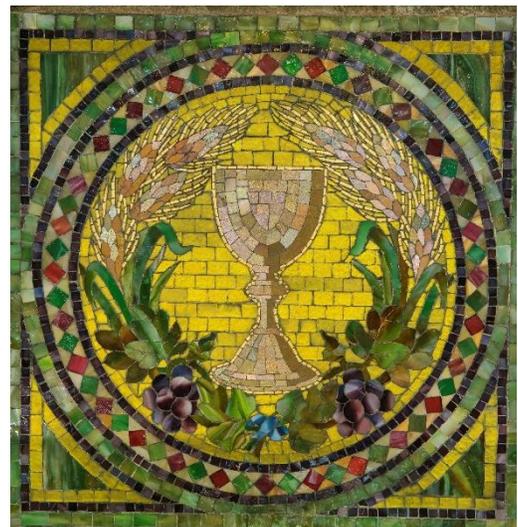
At 7:30 p.m. that night, the now enlarged 1884 Calder organ was dedicated and bore the following inscription: "This Organ enlarged In Memory of Regina C. Calder, widow of William Calder, 1902." Dr. James M. Buckley of New York City, editor of the "Christian Advocate," was the preacher. The local newspaper referred to him as "one of the most scholarly and versatile preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whom some say was equaled only by Henry Ward Beecher. The dedicatory prayer was given by Bishop Fowler.

The newly expanded organ in the rear balcony now had three manuals; contained 34 speaking stops, nine mechanical stops and four composition pedals. It had a total of 2,120 pipes. The rebuilding of the organ was done by Johnson & Sons of Westfield, Massachusetts, and the enlargement was done by Mr. Samuel Poorman of Harrisburg.

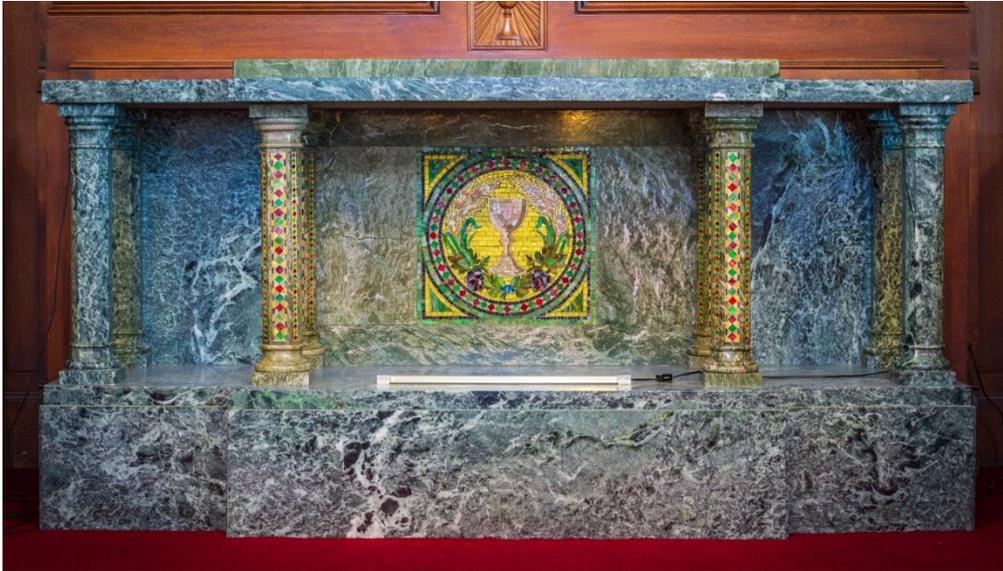
Following that Sunday was a week of special services. On Monday night, Dr. Buckley gave a lecture, and on Tuesday, the pastor (J. Wesley Hill) and the church officers provided a reception. Pentecostal services were held on Wednesday night, led by the Rev. Dr. John W. Hill of Ohio, father of the pastor. On Thursday, there was an organ recital by Mr. Henry Eyre Browne of New York City. The opening piece was the incomparable Toccata and Fugue in D Minor by Bach. Other soloists included soprano Mrs. Nellie W. Shircliff of Washington, D.C., tenor Mr. Owen Roberts of Philadelphia, and from Harrisburg were violinist Mr. George W. Updegrove and soprano Mrs. S.D. Sanson. Browne was the organist at Dr. Talmage's Brooklyn Tabernacle when it burned in October 1899 and he lost all his music in the fire. He was also the founder of the American Guild of Organists.

On the following Sunday, May 10, 1903, the Tiffany-made Talmadge Memorial Pulpit was dedicated. The dedicatory first sermon from the pulpit was given by Rev. William V. Kelly of New York, editor of the "Methodist Review." That evening tributes were paid by Rev. Dr. William V. Kelly, of Dickinson College, former Governor William A. Stone, and Rev. J. Wesley Hill.

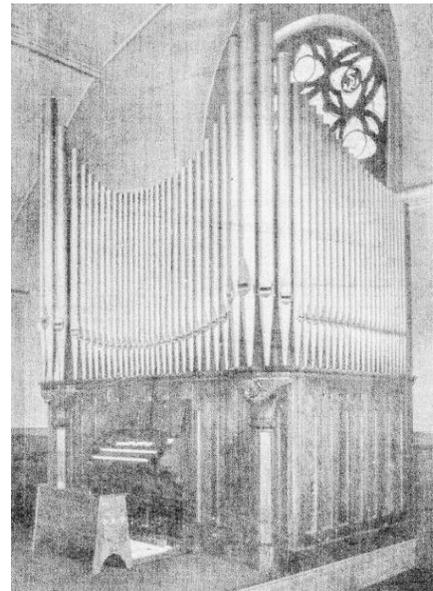
The matching Tiffany communion table presented by John Beggs in honor of the current pastor, Dr. J. Wesley Hill, was dedicated on January 10, 1904. This green serpentine polished table with four pedestal legs was much smaller than it is today. In 1940 the smaller table was incorporated into the high altar for the new larger chancel. At that time, the table was rededicated and named the Beggs Memorial Altar after John Beggs died in 1925 in Milwaukee. He and his wife are buried in the Harrisburg cemetery.



Upon close inspection and with good lighting, the slight difference in the shade of the serpentine is visible and the original parts are distinguishable. The communion-themed glass mosaic is illuminated on the high altar, celebrating its purpose as The Lord's Table.



The McKinley Memorial Organ was installed and dedicated in the third-floor Assembly Room on April 24, 1904. It was given in memory of President McKinley who had been assassinated on September 6, 1901. The primary benefactor for the organ was Mr. Andrew Carnegie, a steel industrialist and philanthropist from Pittsburgh, who gave \$2,500. The organ was built by the Estey Company of New York and had 32 stops and 780 pipes. Note the location of the organ on the third floor below the round rose window on the western wall. The organ was removed and presumably sold, when the area was redesigned for more modern Sunday School needs.



In early 1904 there appears to have been a scandal between Dr. Hill, Rev. Silas C. Swallow (pastor and publisher of the "Pennsylvania Methodist" journal,) and Mr. B.F. Stence, a member of the church. It appears that Rev. Swallow believed that Dr. Hill may have exaggerated Grace Church's statistics by claiming he had 345 more members than there were. In Mr. Stence's version of events, Dr. Hill offered to pay Mr. Stence \$500 to publicly assault by whipping Rev. Swallow.

An additional \$500 was promised from another church member. These two men also agreed to pay Mr. Stence's legal fees if charged and to "rig" the jury if necessary. Mr. Stence was reluctant to cooperate and struggled with the knowledge that his pastor was unethical. While the attack never happened, rumors of the proposed plan spread around Harrisburg, with most believing their beloved Dr. Hill, who denied the story. However, the entire affair was documented in a pamphlet recently found in the church archives that shared Mr. Stence's side of the story. It provides testimony from Mr. Stence and Rev. Swallow to protect them if they were accused of libel. Interestingly, you will note on the Membership Chart on page 94 there is rapid membership growth during Dr. Hill's ministry, and significant decline following his departure as pastor in March of 1905. This seems to correspond with the charges brought by Rev. Swallow.

In May 1904, the former pastor then serving at James Street Methodist in Brooklyn, Dr. J. Wesley Hill and wife Nora, attended the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles. He was a delegate. During the conference, Mrs. Nora Hill died. Grace Church sent four members to her funeral in Arlington, Ohio.



A fourth matching piece of Tiffany chancel furniture is the lectern featuring a bronze eagle that holds the Bible. The lectern was dedicated as the Simpson Memorial Lectern on March 12, 1905. Bishop Matthew Tingley Simpson (6/21/1811-6/18/1884) was bishop of the Philadelphia area including the city of Harrisburg, while Grace Church was built. Bishop Charles H. Fowler returned again to do the dedication and sermon. The lectern was also rededicated later to the memory of Rev. Dr. J. Wesley Hill, who was pastor from 1899-1905 when all four Tiffany chancel furnishings and the Tiffany window were dedicated. This may have been done because the communion table that was given originally in his honor was rededicated to the memory of John Beggs in 1940.

The eagle is an ancient symbol for the Apostle John who opens his Gospel with "In the beginning was the Word." The Word was Jesus who brings light to all who hear. Eagle lecterns were common in Anglican churches and cathedrals. Revelation 4:7, with the symbol of the eagle for John, and Isaiah 40:31 may also give credence to the symbol: *Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not grow faint.*



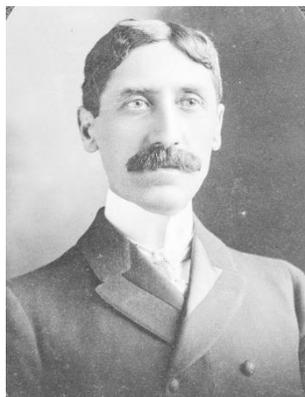
All four pieces of chancel furniture appear in this picture showing the 1899 renovations, but taken after March 12 of 1905.

The four chancel pieces were made by Tiffany Studio using serpentine stone. Previous histories said it was marble from Italy. Serpentine was also quarried from southeastern Pennsylvania where there are large deposits of quality serpentine. While serpentine is considered a gemstone when polished, it is made up of

magnesium, iron, nickel, aluminum, zinc, and manganese. It is softer than granite but harder than most marble. Polished serpentine is properly referred to as marble. It is translucent when cut thinly. It was popular for building in the early 1900s, including many serpentine buildings at West Chester University. It lost popularity as a building material because it was found that serpentine contains asbestos. Tiffany records for the chancel furniture do not indicate the source, although Tiffany was known to source serpentine from Italy.

The Conference Journal of 1903 said the total cost for all the improvements at Grace Church was \$23,000, and were completed without adding to the church indebtedness, "save in three cases aggregating \$750." By the end of 1903, the church was debt free.

After the exciting events of Dr. Hill's (1898-1905) pastorate, the Rev. Dr. Isaac Wood was appointed and served five years. He was followed by Rev. John D. Fox from 1910-17. Membership was 1300 in 1905 and grew to a high of 1,350 members in 1906.



Rev. Dr. Isaac Wood



Rev. John D. Fox



In the 1900s, rally days became popular to promote the Sunday school programs of the church. This unique invitation to Rally Day at Grace on October 11, 1908, focused on "Hook On and Hang On!" The Harrisburg Telegraph reported fall rally days had become quite a feature throughout the city. Each Sunday school tried to promote interest in Rally Day with clever invitations. Two years before the church sent a "telegram" invitation to each Sunday school scholar, and the year before the invitation was "Be like the bee - on hand!" The hook anchored to the Grace Church steeple was especially clever, and also ran as an advertisement in the paper.

In Spring 1908, Grace Church hosted the semi-annual meeting of the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the counterpart of today's United Methodist Council of Bishops. The evening worship services were open to the congregation. Pennsylvania Governor Edwin S. Stuart addressed the bishops. The meeting was attended by 17 bishops from across the United States as well as China, Switzerland, and Argentina. Several missionary bishops also

attended from India, Madeira Islands, Singapore, Japan, and Liberia.

November 22-24, 1909, Grace Church hosted the interdenominational National Layman's Missionary Movement. With one delegate from each church, over 1,219 delegates attended. These delegates from across the nation were committed to work zealously along with their pastors to grow the foreign mission field.

In 1913, the presiding elder congratulated all the churches of Harrisburg for having multiplied nearly four times their membership from 1002 to over 4000. Stevens Memorial Church had grown to 983 members, surpassing the 925 at Grace. The other six Methodist churches had 2100 members compared to the 1908 at Stevens Memorial and Grace.

In 1915, funds were raised by the women of the church to build the parsonage at 216 State Street, now called Wesley House, named after John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement in England. It was designed as a memorial to the women of the church in the Ladies Sewing Society and The Ladies Aid. It was considered one of the finest parsonages in Methodism. The first pastor to live in this furnished parsonage was John Fox and his wife.



The new parsonage, later known as Wesley House, is seen in this 1915 photo. The plaque below shows its dedication to the women of the church.

[See Appendix I for more information about this parsonage and all parsonages]



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

In 1910, Grace Church played an integral role in the creation of the Neighborhood Center of The United Methodist Church. On June 9, a meeting was held at Grace United Methodist Episcopal Church. Those in attendance were pastors of the Methodist churches of Harrisburg and vicinity, one lay member from each church, a representative of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of Harrisburg, a number of clerical members, and a committee of three persons from each woman's auxiliary and each Methodist circle in Harrisburg. The purpose of this meeting was to organize a Board of Management for Deaconess Work in the city of Harrisburg and vicinity.

Once a Board was established and a facility acquired, Grace Church was instrumental in supplying furnishings for the newly-formed Neighborhood Center. The property was located at 402 South Second Street in Harrisburg (no longer in existence). The Church purchased a stove for \$10 and one ton of coal for \$4.80. Grace Church's yearly apportionment was \$350 toward the center's annual budget of \$1,000.

(History taken from Dr. Robert H. Terry's book, Neighborhood Center: An Urban Love Story.)

Neighborhood Center began as a Methodist mission to help Eastern European immigrants coming to work in steel yards, coal mines, and the railroads. Early programs included English classes, cooking classes, well baby clinics, child care, and Christian education. Over the years, the Center's programs have been adapted to meet the changing needs of the community. Above all, Christian love and mission have always been at the heart of every program and service. Since its inception, Grace Church and its members have been very active in the center's ministry.



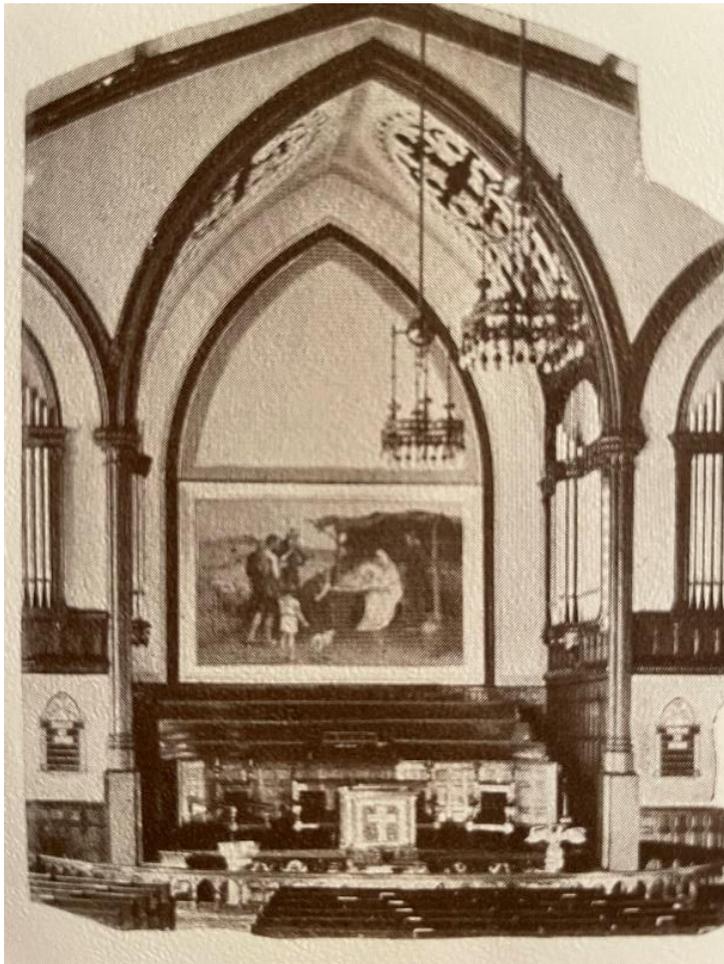
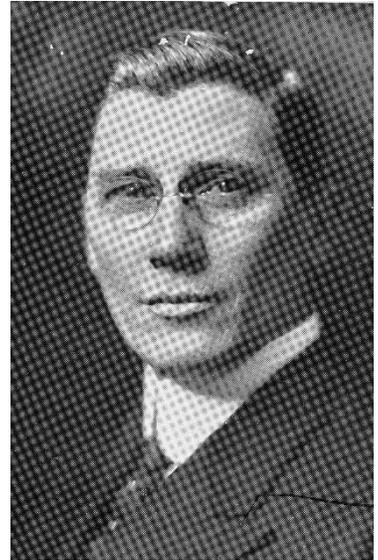
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER on Third Street, 2022

GRACE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH 1917-1968

Rev. Dr. Robert Bagnell
1917-1933

During America's involvement in World War I, the Rev. Dr. Robert Bagnell came to Grace Church and served for 16 years. With this appointment, the short clergy appointments of every 2-3 years ended. During World War I, it was difficult for the Methodist Church to appoint pastors because the clergy were often drafted or volunteered, leaving church pulpits open at short notice.

Dr. Bagnell was a scholar. He was ordained in 1888, received his Doctor of Divinity from Cornell College in Iowa, in 1905. Four years later, he received his Master of Arts degree at Columbia and added a Ph.D. also from Columbia in 1915. In 1912, he wrote the book *Economic and Moral Aspects of the Liquor Business*.



The sanctuary 1920

Dr. Bagnell was selected to come to Harrisburg in 1917 from Park Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. He had also served churches in Iowa, and New York City. Upon his arrival in Harrisburg in October he was quoted about his new role as minister at Grace, "I should not hope to do the popular thing as long as I do the right thing." Also, in October of 1917, members of Grace Church pledged \$41,500 to the Second Liberty Loan for war bonds sold to help the United States government fund the war effort.

Dr. Bagnell was selected to be part of a delegation of 24 persons sent to France in 1918 to speak to the troops and to investigate the U.S. government's role in the war. Bagnell was a representative of the Committee on Public Information. He also was special secretary to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in France and England. During this tour he sent letters to Grace that were published in *The Patriot*, Harrisburg. His service in this delegation seemed to bring a sense of pride to the members of Grace.

In 1919, church trustee William Paul Starkey donated a new organ that became known as the Starkey Organ. The organ was built by the Austin Organ Company in Hartford Connecticut. The Austin Company was founded in 1899, and by 1910 was nationally recognized as a leading organ builder because of the reliability of the “Universal Air Chest System.” Between 1915 and 1931, Austin Organ built over 1,200 organs, including the one for Grace. But after the depression hit, orders slowed, and the company was sold to Austin’s nephews in 1937.

The 4-manual organ at Grace was the Opus #862, with 64 ranks of pipes. At the time, only 22 of the #862 organs made were four-manual organs, and the Starkey organ was one of the top 10 largest organs they had made.

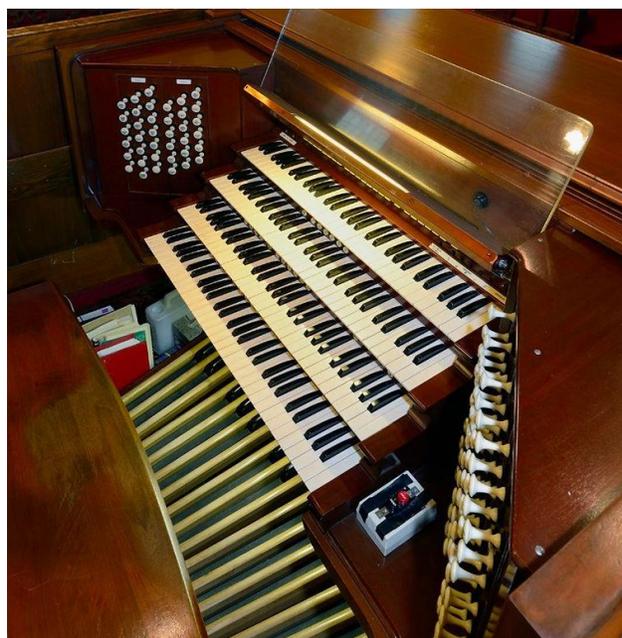


*Choir of Grace Church on January 10, 1920
with new Starkey Organ centrally located in the chancel behind the pulpit.*

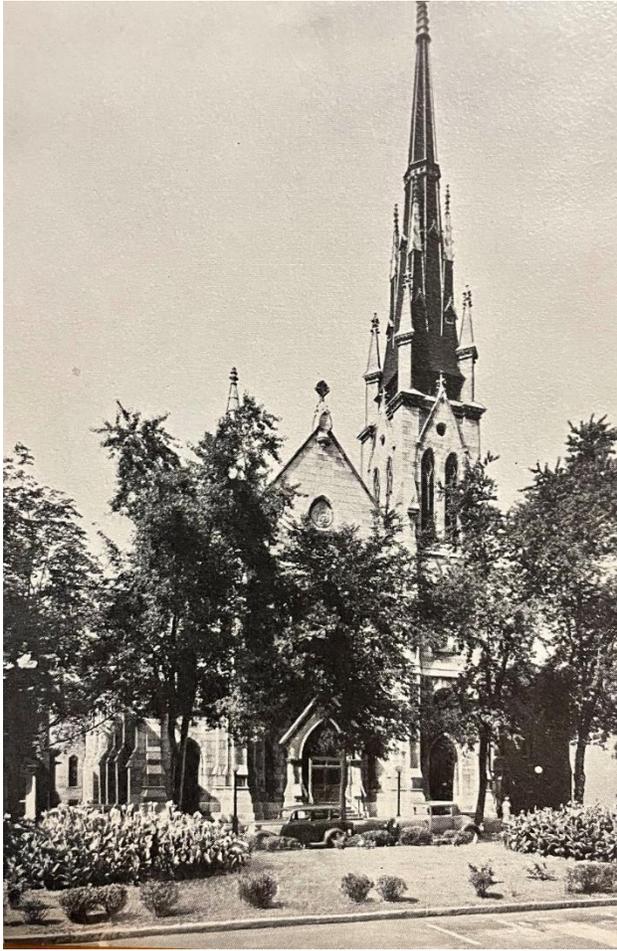


The Starkey Organ was given “In Honor of Those Members of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church who with unswerving fidelity and noble patriotism answered the call of their country in the World War.’ Two members died during the war: Robert A. Boll, September 27, 1918, and J. Harold Fox, September 28, 1918. A large plaque bearing their names and those who served in the Army and Navy from the congregation hung near the organ in the chancel until the remodeling in 1940 required it be moved to the hallway on the first-floor entrance to the pulpit side of the sanctuary. [See Appendix VIII for a full listing of the persons honored on the plaque]

On March 23, 1920, the new Starkey organ, which cost \$30,000, was dedicated, honoring the men and women who served in World War I. At the same service, other renovations that cost \$35,000 were dedicated. This included the dining room, kitchen, Assembly Room, and new rooms for the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of America. They also purchased a “motion picture outfit” for use in the Sunday school. The Conference Journal in 1920 reported that the total renovation and organ costs totaled \$90,000.



It was during this renovation of 1920 that the sanctuary side windows were changed to feature Christmas wreaths in each window. This was in keeping with the Christmas theme of the mural, and from that time on the church was often referred to as “The Christmas Church.”



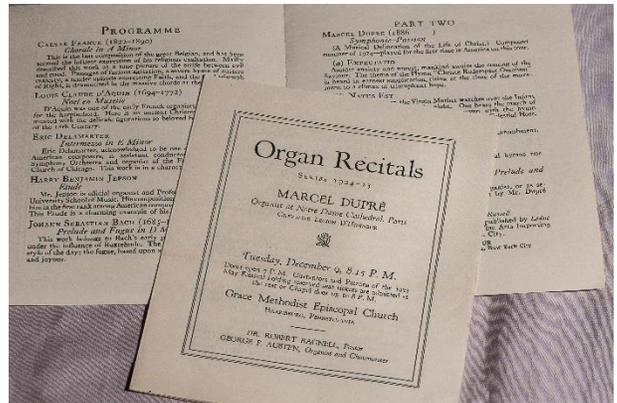
Grace Church 1920

The 1920 installation of the organ required a change in the chancel area. The sanctuary had had a central pulpit and a wall behind that filled in the central arch. The Calder organ and choir were in the rear balcony. The renovations moved the chancel wall back 15 feet, just in front of original wall of the chancel with the still-installed glass window visible from 1878-1898. The new chancel required moving the mural back on the rear wall with the heavy wood frame. The frame was painted a soft gold leaf. The mural was raised slightly, yet significantly lower than its current location. This deeper chancel allowed a choir loft with four rows of pews to span the chancel. The organ console was installed in the center behind the pulpit and a walnut choir loft rail was added. This also allowed the organ pipe chamber to be installed on the sides with a white scrolled aperture in the nave ceiling through which the organ chamber could flood the sanctuary. All the existing pipes in the front are decorative, from the Calder organ that was removed from the balcony.

The installation of the organ was completed in time for the church to celebrate its centennial. A week of services was held December 26, 1920-January 2, 1921. Professor Bernard R. Mauser was the recently installed organist choirmaster. He was also a professor of music and music history at Dickinson College. A choir of 45 voices filled the choir loft every Sunday. Regular organ recitals became part of a series of concerts shortly thereafter.

During the organ recital series of 1924-25, Mr. Marcel Dupré, world renowned organist of Notre-Dame de Paris, performed on December 9, 1924, at 8:15pm. Doors were open from 7-8 p.m. for guarantors and patrons, with the public allowed in at 8 p.m., if there was seating room. The first half of the “programme” included *Chorale in A Minor* by Caesar Franck, *Noel in E Minor* by Louis Claude d’Aquin, *Intermezzo in E Minor* by Eric Delamarter, *Etude* by Harry Benjamin Jepson, and *Prelude and Fugue in D Minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach.

The second part began with an original composition by Mr. Dupré, *Symphonie – Passion* in five-movements. The composition on the Life of Christ was composed in the summer of 1924 and played for the public for the first time during Mr. Dupré’s American tour. The last piece of the concert was *Improvisation in the form of a Prelude and Fugue* based on a theme selected by a Harrisburg organist and not seen by Mr. Dupré until it was handed to him in view of the audience. The work of a true master organist! If only there were recordings of this concert!



While much is said today about the Starkey organ that still is used in 2022 at Grace Church, the real excitement in 1920 for the children and youth was the new movie theater that was installed in the third-floor Assembly Room. The March 19, 1920, edition of *The Harrisburg Telegraph* reported:

An innovation in [the Sunday school Assembly Room] is the most modern and complete moving picture and stereophonic outfits in the city, housed in a fire proof booth with every safety device known attached. In this room once each week and sometimes oftener, will be given moving picture shows. Every attendant at Grace Sunday school will receive each week a ticket to the church movie. Only the best picture shows will be shown, specializing in educational features and travelogues, but not forgetting the best there is in the line of drama and some good wholesome comics such as children love. Those not in the Sunday school who desire to attend will be charged regular rates. The children will have their show each Saturday morning.

Dr. Bagnell, is the first minister in Harrisburg to take the movie into the folds of the church, and he has no doubt whatever that it can be made a very great influence for good. The boys and girls of his congregation are highly enthusiastic over the proposal, as well as many of the younger people. "They will go the movies," said he, "so we have concluded to given them the best that can be procured and to endeavor to lead their tastes in the right direction, as well as use the moving picture machine for the manifold educational uses to which it can be put."



The new Assembly Room with the McKinley Organ removed and the new fire proof room for the movie projector booth.

It was in 1925 and 1926 that the church began its first Boy Scouts of America troop, which was chartered as Troop #19. If not the first troop, it was one of the first in Harrisburg. This troop in the civil rights era celebrated that it was a fully integrated troop. Later the church also sponsored the Girl Scouts of America, Troop #2. During the remodeling of the church basement in 1940, both troops were given their own special rooms with plenty of storage. The Boy Scout room was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Albright and family, and the Girl Scout room was given in memory of Samuel Wilt Kinter by Mrs. Mary E. Kinter. At this time, the Girl Scouts had expanded to two troops (#2 and #123) plus Juniors and Brownies.

The stock market crash of 1929 caused difficulties for people everywhere, including the members of Grace Church. At the time of the crash, Grace Church was valued at \$275,000 with a parsonage valued at \$25,000. They had \$20,000 debt which they were fortunately able to pay off by 1935.

Rev. Bagnell was born August 10, 1885, and died April 24, 1946. He was married to Mary Elizabeth Wallace. He was listed in the 1816 list of *Who's Who in American Methodism*.

Rev. Dr. Wilbur Vincent Mallalieu
1933-1943

The Rev. Dr. Wilbur V. Mallalieu of Charleston, West Virginia, was selected by a national search committee of the church leaders, and oddly, as it turned out, he and Dr. Bagnell exchanged churches. A lifetime member, Jean Pugh (2/25/1910-10/1/2009) was a presenter at his installation service on behalf of the Epworth League, a youth and young adult ministry of the Methodist Church from 1889-1939.



In 1934, Dr. Mallalieu celebrated the church's centennial again with a week of services, having already celebrated in 1920. Three former pastors returned to be part of the celebration: Dr. Isaac Wood, Dr. Bagnell, and Rev. J. Wesley Hill. However, this begs the questions: What is the official date of birth of the congregation and therefore the real age of the church? Officially the church had its birth when the first Methodist Society was formed in Harrisburg in 1810. However, it was a part of a circuit and not a station church until 1820. Its first church building was dedicated December 3, 1820, then this is a secondary or alternative date for its birth as a church. Certainly 1834, when Francis Hodgson was appointed its first full time appointment, is not the birth nor was 1934 the appropriate year to celebrate the centennial of the church. Most previous church historians simply report that the anniversaries of the church correspond to the 1820 date.

As part of the historical celebration in 1934, on Friday, May 4, there was a pageant of four episodes. Dr. J. Horace McFarland was the announcer for the historical pageant.

- Episode No. 1 was called *The Love Feast*: with women performing: Mrs. E.H. Gottschall, Mrs. H.B. Wolbert, Mrs. A.D. Bacon, Mrs. Howard H. Fraim, Mrs. J Dyer, and Mrs. A.O. Roorbach.
- Episode #2 was "*The Gallagher Trial*" and included the men: Ellsworth S. Reese, Frank C. Sites, B. Frank Barker, Ross Swope, Williams S. Snyder, J. Spencer Ross, and Harry W. Miller. Unfortunately, historical context of the Gallagher Trial is unknown at this time.
- Episode No. 3 was the reenactment of the famous Jenny Lind concert held at Locust Street Church in 1851. This time renowned soprano from the Metropolitan Opera Company, Frieda Hempel, impersonated Jenny Lind.
- Episode No. 4 was "*The Ladies Sewing Circle – 1871*" with Mrs. H.J. Talley, Miss Ethel M Sayers, Mr. Robert Ellenberger, and Mrs. M.S. Green.

Episode 1: The Love Feast

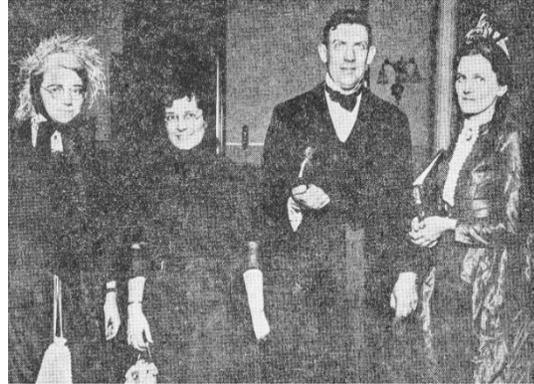


Episode 2: The Gallagher Trial





Episode 3: Frieda Hempel as Jenny Lind



Episode 4: The Ladies Sewing Circle

Credit is given to Dr. Mallalieu in the 1940 church history as a “preacher of rare ability, a quiet but persistent worker for the church, and a man well-liked and respected.” He is credited with using Psalm 29:18 “without vision, the people perish” as he imparted vision and enthusiasm to members of his congregation, so they would be ready and willing to do greater things for Grace Church.

In April 1939, the Uniting General Conference was held and the new denomination, The Methodist Church, was created by uniting the Methodist Protestants, the Methodist Episcopal, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South. From this time until 1968 the church was named “Grace Methodist Church.”

In 1940, the sanctuary was renovated again, at the cost of \$110,000, this time under the direction of M. Edwin Greene, a church member and distinguished architect. Steel girders were installed to reinforce the first floor. A new fire escape was built at the northwest corner of the church. Lighting was also modernized. He redesigned the marble communion table and enlarged and designed the chancel, removing the wall and chamber that hid the previous window. The new split chancel with high altar and elevated choir loft featured the ornate black walnut woodwork which has mellowed to its present beauty. At this time, the gold leaf frame was removed from the chancel painting of the “Adoration of the Shepherds” and the painting was moved to a higher location on the new back wall of the chancel by mural artist George Gray.

On the committee for this renovation was an 81-year-old member of the church, Dr. J. Horace M McFarland, who claimed in his 20s that he gave the first contribution at the Locust Street Church to start the building fund of Grace. His \$50 gift is confirmed with other church records. That history also stated that the first baby baptized in Grace Church, was appropriately named Grace, and was still a member of the congregation in 1940. While researching to determine if this child could have been church member Grace Ensminger, verification was found that her mother, Nancy Ensminger, was the first bride to be married in Grace Church, in 1874, in what was then the Assembly Room sanctuary.

Also in 1940, the organ was rebuilt, and the organ console was moved to the right side of the new split chancel. There was extensive rebuilding and expansion of the organ from 1950-1960 by the M.P. Moller Organ Company in Hagerstown, Maryland. The organ now has 80 ranks of pipes and 6 divisions, making it one of the largest and most regarded instruments in the area. The front decorative pipes are from the original 1920 Starkey organ, while the pipes visible in the rear are from the older Calder organ.

The sanctuary was rededicated from May 5-12, 1940, with a weeklong series of services. The rededication of the sanctuary service was May 5, when Bishop Charles W. Flint, of Syracuse, NY, preached at the 11 a.m. morning service, and at the 7:30 p.m. evening service, Bishop Ivan Lee Holt of Dallas, TX, conducted the "Dedication of the Chapel and the Educational Building." On Tuesday it was "Grace Church Night" with the building open from 7:15 to 10:15 p.m. for tours. A short service was held in the Assembly Room at 8:30 p.m. with a string quartet and refreshments following. Thursday was "Methodist Night" with the eight other Methodist churches invited from Harrisburg and ten other Methodist churches from Dauphin and Cumberland counties. The "Consecration of the Altar" was held the following Sunday morning on Pentecost. (The sermon was given by the Rev. Dr. Harold Paul Sloan, then editor of the *New York Christian Advocate*.)



The small altar table given by John Beggs in 1904 in honor of the pastor, was now enlarged by the Tiffany Studio with matching serpentine and rededicated this time in memory of John Beggs. Present at this dedication was Mrs. Richard McCulloch, daughter of John Beggs, who had died in 1925. She later donated the funds for Beggs Chapel in her father's name. The week of services concluded that evening with the "Community Celebration" with speaker Harry N. Holmes, Secretary of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches of New York City.

The altar cross and candle sticks were purchased in Italy during a visit by the architect and designer, M. Edwin Green, and given to the church. The green marble in the cross was almost a perfect match for the green serpentine of the new high altar.

The program book for the rededication services concludes with this statement: *Grace Methodist Church is proud to be part of the Christian community of the city of Harrisburg, and as a centrally located church it is used constantly for assemblies of representatives of many Protestant Christian faiths. In this way Grace Church believes it is carrying on the simple doctrine of John Wesley, founder of Methodism, when he said, "The world is my parish."*



*Left: The church offices in the Guild Room prior to 1940 novation
Right: The Guild Room in memory of Madge Sams, by her husband Dillard Sams*

Part of the 1940 renovations included moving the offices from what is now the Guild Room to the rooms near the Rose Garden entrance. The front office was the secretary's, and the second office was the associate pastor's. The room in the back was the nursery, and the rooms were all accessible using the narrow hallway between the rooms and Beggs Chapel. The Guild Room was created in the space vacated as a parlor for meetings and receptions.

It was Dr. Mallalieu's prayer that "if the congregation dedicates and consecrates themselves to God's purposes, letting God work in and through them then the future for Grace church will hold boundless

opportunities. Let us make this rededication of [God's] house a time for the rededication of a house for [God] in our hearts!"

It was also through the work of a young associate pastor and director of Christian Education, the Rev. Al Haas, that the renovation of the church school took place. Rev. Haas (1936-42) was ordained an elder in 1938.

During the 1940 renovation, leaders decided to rename the chapel behind the chancel in recognition of John I. Beggs who had led the church building committee, arranged for the church to be the first building in the city to have electricity, and donated the Tiffany Ascension stained glass window. Beggs Chapel over the years has been used for mid-week services, Women's Sunday school classes, church receptions, small weddings and meetings.



Beggs Chapel before and after the 1940 renovation.



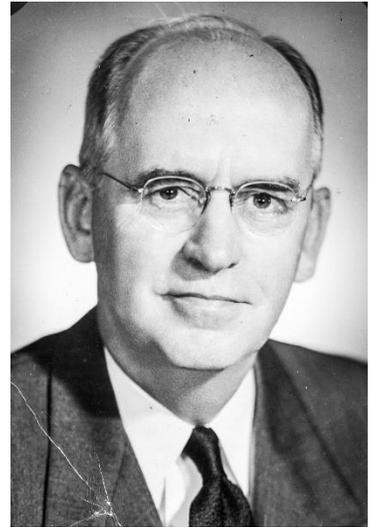
During this renovation, the third-floor Assembly Room was modified with one large gathering area in the center with four classrooms on each end of the room for children from primary grades to senior high youth. The toddler and kindergarten rooms were on the mezzanine level where the history and archives rooms are currently. [See Appendix VIII for 1940 renovation floor plans.]

The 1940 renovation cost \$110,000 and by the end of the project, the church held a \$68,000 debt, a significant investment following the economic difficulties of the 1930s. During the depression era pastorate of Dr. Mallalieu, the church membership declined from 1,201 in 1933 to 1,079 in 1936 but grew again to 1,167 members by the end of his ministry at Grace. Dr. Mallalieu retired on July 1 at the age of 67 in 1943 and died just four months later on November 11, 1943.

On March 22, 1943, during World War II, co-pilot First Lieutenant Glenn Ulrich Brooks, Jr. of Florida was shot down in the North Atlantic returning to his base in England from a bombing mission in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. One month later, April 22, 1943, his daughter, Jeannie Brooks, was born. Her young widowed mother came home from Florida with Jeannie to live with Jeannie's grandmother, Elizabeth Watkins. Elizabeth, as a single mother had raised seven children but now in retirement lived in the Belvedere Apartments which did not permit children. An exception was made. Jeannie was baptized in the church in 1943 and is a life-long member and long served as the treasurer of the church. A time-honored tradition of remembrance for Jeannie Brooks Rhinehart is on Memorial Day Sunday, she always places patriotic flowers on the altar in memory of the father she always loved but never knew.

Rev. Dr. W. Emory Hartman
1943-1950

The Rev. Dr. Hartman became the minister at Grace Church in 1943 at the age of 43, after having served only three years as the district superintendent of the Altoona District of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. He had also previously served churches in Berwick, State College, and Carlisle. During the early history of the Methodist Episcopal churches, the bishop appointed the pastor on the last day of the Annual Conference, and pastors then learned if they were moving, and if so, where. However, as one of the prestigious churches of the conference, Grace Church was allowed to seek out their own pastors and then have the bishop appoint them. Since Dr. Hartman came from within the conference, it is not clear if Dr. Hartman was appointed or was hired as a result of a national search. His three-year service as a district superintendent rather than the normal six years may indicate that Grace Church was able to entice either the bishop and/or Dr. Hartman to come to Grace Church early. His wife was Naomi.



In 1947, the church leadership took an activist role and testified before the city court in opposition to the playing of movies in theatres on Sunday. It was clear this would impact attendance at Sunday evening services. The church had given up its out-of-date movie theatre in 1940.

Dr. Hartman worked with newly arriving immigrants from Europe following WWII and testified before the U.S. Congress on behalf of Governor James H. Duff about the conditions of the resettlement of those displaced in Pennsylvania. He concluded from reports received regarding Protestants, Jews, and Catholics, "I conclude that the new arrivals are adjusting well to their new life in America and that for the most part are creating little or no difficulties."

In 1945, Robert S. Clippinger became the organist and choirmaster at Grace. His excellent service strengthened the church's music ministry. A graduate of Lebanon Valley College with a master's degree from University of Pennsylvania, he taught organ and was director of music at Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary, while also working at Grace. Highlights of his career at Grace were his Christmas concerts and Christmas Eve services, as well as the Good Friday and "Seven Last Word" services, which often aired on the radio and/or television. He also worked with Don Clapper and the Harrisburg Choral Society for many seasons.

In October 1948, Grace Church hosted the first survivor of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb to visit the United States. Dr. Taukuo Matsumoto, principal of a girl's school in Hiroshima, Japan, spoke about the loss of 300 students and the impact of the bomb on his school, city, and nation.

During the pastorate of Dr. Hartman, church membership grew from 1,167 to 1,437 in 1950. Dr. Hartman transferred to the Ohio Conference in 1950 and served Bexley Methodist, near Columbus, from 1950 until his death on June 4, 1958.

Rev. Dr. Sheridan Watson Bell
1950-1974

The longest serving pastor of the church was the Rev. Dr. Sheridan Watson Bell Jr., who served Grace Church from 1950-1974, the heyday of Methodism during the baby boom years following World War II. Sherry, as he was affectionately known, helped to continue the legacy of Grace Church during those years when churches and Sunday schools flourished nationwide. He was also instrumental to the church during the merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968.



Sheridan Watson Bell, Jr. (12/21/1908- 10/30/1982) was originally from the Ohio Methodist Conference. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, he met his future wife Elizabeth Rich on a blind date during her final year at Yale School of Nursing. They continued corresponding and spent the equivalent of one week together before they were married on September 1, 1937. She was originally from Woolrich, PA, where her family was well known for founding and owning the Woolrich Woolen Mills. He and his wife, who was affectionately known as "lbbby," had four children: Julia, Sheridan, Cynthia and Robert.

In the memories of older church members at the time of the Church Bicentennial in 2020, it was during the Bell years that the church was the strongest. Nearly every Sunday the church was full, including the balcony.

Attendance was 600-800 in the 1950s and early 60s, when church membership ranged from 1,437 in 1951 to a high of 1,491 in 1965, its highest membership ever. (The seating capacity of the church is approximately 1,200). At the time it was one of the top 10 largest congregations in the Central Pennsylvania Conference.



Grace Congregation 1953

With an uncanny ability to remember names and faces and a passion for people, Dr. Bell became a highly respected and beloved pastor. He was extremely active in ecumenical and inter-faith work in Harrisburg, and helped the church develop a strong relationship with neighboring church, St. Patrick's Cathedral, especially following the Second Vatican Council held 1962-65.

In the autumn of 1953, the church instituted a "Church Improvement Program" with major improvements to Wesley House and the Church School portions of the building. New granite steps were built for the front entrance with new storm protection for the main front doors. The brick herringbone sidewalk on State Street was replaced with concrete. The narthex was remodeled and updated to better match the sanctuary renovation of 1940. The third-floor Assembly Room with children from first to twelfth grades was not effective, and the space was redesigned with a junior chapel with four classrooms and a separate area for the youth chapel, which also had four classrooms. The chapels were used for age-appropriate openings and closings of Sunday school. A hallway with a kitchenette was added. The uniquely designed hallway closets were perfect for easy access to the church's large collection of choral music.



Robert Lee George Memorial Chapel

The junior chapel with the large gothic arch window in the rear was used by the elementary age children for training in worship during Sunday school and junior church. This is also where vacation Bible school was held.



Junior Chapel

Wesley House also had the offices modernized on the first level for the church secretary and office manager. The second-floor offices for the pastor, associate pastor and the education assistant with responsibilities for Sunday school were also modernized. The third floor was renovated into an apartment for the church sexton. The basement was converted into three rooms for the choir, including a rehearsal room, and rooms for men and women to robe for worship. The tunnel that connects to the church allowed easy access for the choir to



In 1956, the youth chapel with the rose window was renamed the Robert Lee George Memorial Chapel in memory of Mr. George who had died in 1955 during a B29 military training exercise off the coast of Japan. The Chapel was also to honor of all those youth from Grace Church who served their country in times of war and peace.

the narthex for processions. The activities room under the sanctuary continued to be used for small groups and meetings. The fellowship hall had a new acoustic tile ceiling and folding divider installed to create two classrooms. [See Appendix IX for 1955/56 renovation floor Plans.]

“Build Ye the Sanctuary” was the theme of an Improvement Program in the mid-sixties. As part of the program the church expended \$91,604.55 in 1965 and needed to raise an additional \$23,000 in 1966. In a written appeal to the church membership, Dr. Bell reminded his flock how King David, the Psalmist, was appropriately focused on building the sanctuary. Dr. Bell writes: *The Sanctuary is built in many ways. It is built by the ministers and the congregation when they, by their prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service meet the challenge of the particular age in service to God, to each other, and to all humankind.* He challenged the congregation to be stewards of the building they were given and to build it anew for future needs. This was the first major repair, restore, and improvement project since 1953, when \$80,000 was raised for similar purposes. Of note in this time when the church membership was 1,491, the highest in its entire history, the church total church budget was \$106,594. They were concerned about the “consistently increasing conference assessments” totaling a mere \$11,335, foreshadowing in 2022 when 110 members are asked to give \$30,660 to shares of ministry plus insurance of \$44,484.



Easter 1963

In 1965, Rev. Wallace Cummings became the associate pastor, and continued in that role until his death in 1972. In the summers, he enjoyed being a camp director at Camp Loyalsock, near his summer home in Sullivan County. His wife Elizabeth also served as the camp nurse.



A Navy chaplain during World War II, Dr. Bell helped to organize a series of services every February 3 to remember the “Four Chaplains” who lost their lives on February 3, 1943, in the North Atlantic. Considered one of the worst maritime losses for the United States, the chaplains gave their life jackets to four of the 230 men who survived the sinking of the US Army Transport ship *The Dorchester* out of the 902 men on board. The four chaplains were Methodist Rev. George L. Fox of Lewistown, PA; Reform Rabbi Alexander Good; Catholic priest, Father John R. Washington; and Reformed Church in America minister Rev. Clark V. Poling. For several years the

services were held in rotation at Grace Methodist Church, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the Ohev Sholom Temple.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1968-2022



In 1968, the denomination again experienced a merger, this time with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, and the name of Grace Methodist Church changed to Grace United Methodist Church.



During the Hurricane Agnes Flood of 1972, the church suffered minimal damage and no flooding, and was able to remain open. The congregation welcomed the congregation of Temple Ohev Sholom to use space at Grace for their sabbath services while their synagogue was cleaned and refurbished.

During Dr. Bell's ministry, the music program at Grace soared under the leadership of organist/choirmaster Robert S. Clippinger. The annual 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve candlelight services in the elegantly decorated sanctuary were televised for many years. It was just before Christmas in 1972 that the beloved organist and choir director suffered a massive stroke during choir rehearsal and died on December 30, 1972.

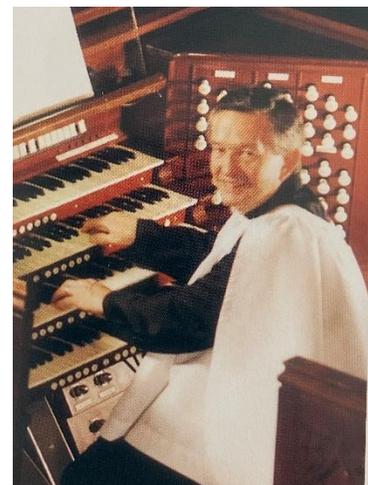
← *The Rev. Dr. Sheridan W. Bell, Jr. welcoming members of the board from Temple Ohev Sholom to Grace Methodist Church after the synagogue was flooded in Hurricane Agnes in 1972.*

In 1973, a brilliant festival trumpet was added to the antiphonal organ in memory of Robert S. Clippinger. This Starkey Commemorative Organ was reconditioned through the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Snyder.

Dr. Ronald Sider was the organist-choirmaster of Grace Church from 1973 to 2006. His wife Beth served as children's choir director until her retirement in 2002.

During this period, Grace Church was home to many musical organizations and events. These have included the Harrisburg Choral Society, the Harrisburg Singers, and the Central Pennsylvania Oratorio Singers. Several concerts of organ and choral music have been presented by the Grace Church choir and organists for the American Guild of Organists.

Grace Church was one of the churches involved in the downtown Advent Walk. For several years, choirs of Grace Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral joined to form a larger choir that sang at services in each other's churches. Many high school and college choirs have been eager to perform their concerts in this favorable acoustic environment.



Many traditions of earlier years such as the extended organ prelude and an outstanding solo quartet continued. The chancel choir continued to sing from a divided choir loft with the women above and the men below. The annual “Seven Last Words” service on Good Friday continued as a tradition for more than 80 years.



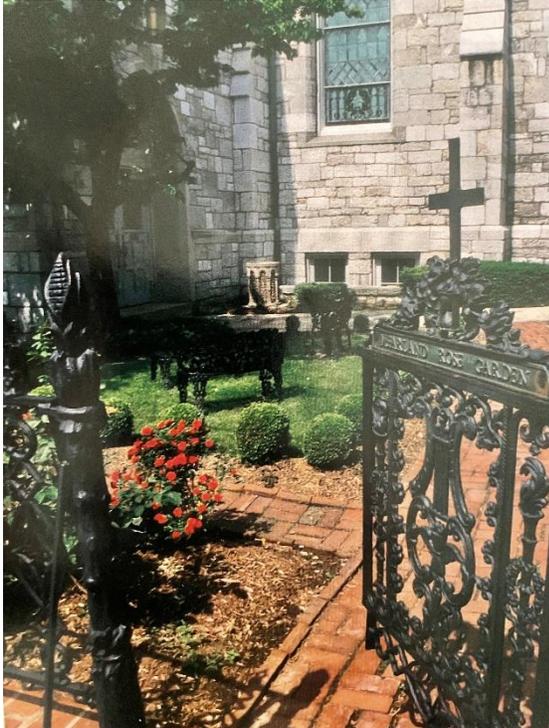
Christmas Eve Candlelight 1970s



Some innovations introduced during the Siders' ministry include the purchase of hand bells and development of youth, adult, and intergenerational hand bell choirs. The children's choir program emphasized Christian education through music and gave them more importance by having the children sing from the chancel instead of being hidden from view in the rear balcony.

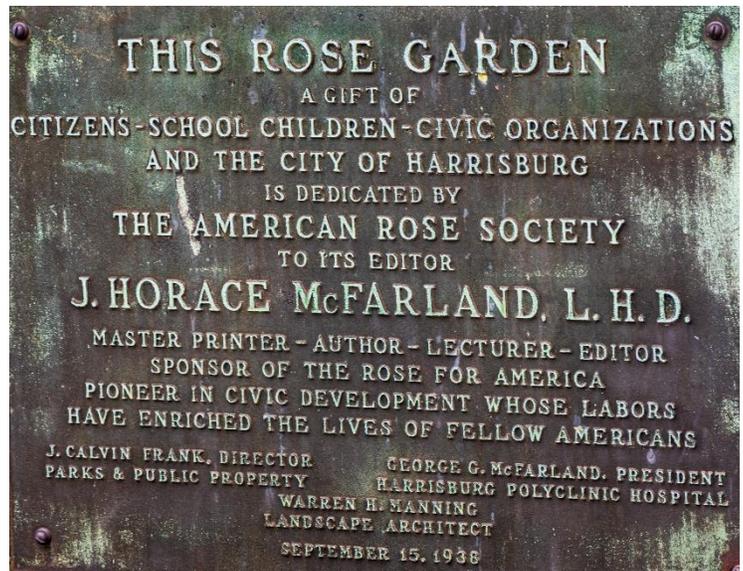
Youth and children's choirs presented musicals in the sanctuary. A Steinway Grand piano was added for this purpose, gifted by past members, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Davis. Additional innovations included the fall and spring oratorio series, the Christmas Eve Cantata, and the Lenten Cantata, with volunteer soloists singing in the summer and at other times.

The charismatic leadership of Dr. Bell attracted many prominent new members during his tenure, but in the 1970s, both membership and attendance began to decline as a result of white flight from the city. Churches in the suburbs of Harrisburg and the West Shore grew often at the expense of the inner-city churches.



McFarland's memory be placed in the new rose garden at Grace Church. The iron work fencing around the garden and the Wesley House balconies was given in memory of Susana Stover Root by her husband, Robert. [See Appendix IV for more information about J. Horace McFarland]

Inspired by Dr. Bell, the Rose Garden was planted behind Wesley House at the west entrance to the church and dedicated on June 9, 1974. A colorful member, J. Horace McFarland, founder of McFarland Press, a nationally recognized advocate of city beautification and progress and growth, was one of the nation's outstanding rose experts. He was instrumental in the establishment of a Rose Garden near Polyclinic Hospital. When the garden fell victim to an expansion at Polyclinic, clippings from those roses were used to start a rose garden at Grace. Dr. Bell requested the original dedication plaque in Mr.



Dr. Bell had a stroke in early June 1982 and died October 30, 1982. He was buried in a private service at the Woolrich cemetery on All Saints' Day. A celebration of life service was held at Grace Church on November 3, 1982, with over 1,000 persons present. The service was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Calvin Cole. The Most Reverend William H. Keeler, auxiliary bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg, gave the eulogy. Robert Bell, Dr. Bell's son, later wrote his father "was a loving man of conviction, warmth, generosity, passion, impulse, flamboyance, gusto, humor, spontaneity, balance, dedication, support, vocal gifts, drama, wise counsel, compassion, and faith: a pastor of people, rather than a great preacher, though occasionally a speaker of profound ideas and natural eloquence."

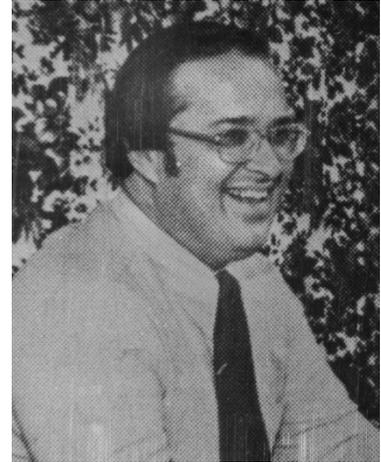
This sentiment was also echoed by columnist Paul Beers of The Patriot when he wrote on November 18, 1982:

Dr. Bell, for all his training at Yale, seldom had the repose to construct a well-organized, high-contexted sermon. His forte was his spirit and his God-given love of humanity, and he inspired souls - from the pulpit, at a United Way gathering, at a hospital bedside, in a living room or simply on a street corner....

As an inveterate preacher-watcher, this columnist acquired a deep respect for Sherry Bell. He had the audacity to sign top associate ministers and let them out-preach him every third Sunday - Taylor Miller, Mason Olds, Harry Taylor and Wally Cummings. As Leo Rosten once put it, first-rate persons hire first-rate persons, and second-rate persons hire the fourth-raters. Sherry Bell, even in his open profession, had no vanity to protect."

Rev. Brian Fetterman
1974-1981

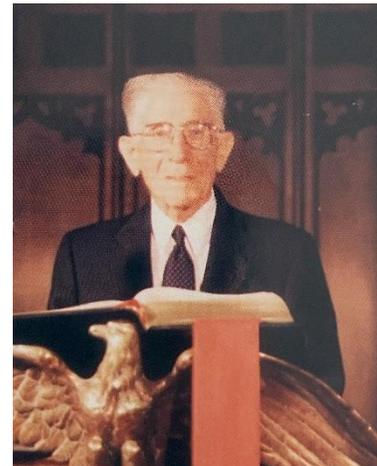
Following Dr. Bell's unprecedented long-term appointment for Methodist clergy at the time, Grace Church was appointed other gifted ministers. The Rev. Brian Fetterman (wife Lois) served seven years, 1974-81 and left his ministry at Grace to become the Harrisburg District Superintendent 1981-87. He was the first pastor at Grace in many years to be appointed by the United Methodist bishop rather than being selected by a search committee from the church. He was also the first pastor in many years not to have a Doctor of Ministry or Ph. D.; however, he completed his Doctor of Ministry in 1985 from Drew University. He often said he was "a coal cracker from the coal region" and felt a little out of place among the elite professionals at Grace. Dr. Fetterman served from 1988-1991 as the denomination's Deputy General Secretary of the National Division of the General Board of Global Ministries in New York City. He retired in 1996 and died January 2, 2021, from complications of COVID-19.



As Registrar for the Board of Ordained Ministry, Rev. Fetterman arranged for a young pastor just out of seminary to be his associate. Rev. Thomas Salsgiver began his work with Grace in 1975 and developed a strong youth and young adult program. Together, the pastors began to help the church focus on inner-city issues. They started an "Issues of the City" series that included speakers on emerging concerns. Mental health was a hot topic because of the relocation of patients from the State Mental Health Hospital into the city. Other hot subjects included same-gendered activities on State Street, city government and politics, and abortion. A busload of church youth took a field trip to Haddonfield, NJ (near Philadelphia), to learn about inner-city ministry. In 1978, another young pastor, the Rev. L. Fitzgerald Reist II, became the associate. The young adult ministry included strong social justice action and activities as well as social and educational work. The young adults were involved in seminars to the General Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C. Seminar topics included the Nestle boycott for marketing infant formula to poor mothers in Africa, Apartheid in South Africa, world hunger, and racism.

In 1975, the Rev. Dr. Carl M. Schneider, and his wife Elsie, came to Grace following his retirement from Linglestown United Methodist Church. He also previously served Harris Street Methodist Church in Harrisburg. He was named Emeritus Pastor and served in retirement until 1989 without salary. He died May 12, 2001.

Rev. Dr. Carl M. Schneider
Emeritus Pastor: 1975-1989



At the end of the Vietnam War, Grace Church sponsored Vietnamese refugees Chi Paul Chen and his wife Wa Helen Chen, and children Howard and Hans. Having worked for the U.S. Army, Chi and his family were able to evacuate in April 1975. Paul and Helen, as they became known, joined the church in appreciation for the support of the congregation during their transition to the United States. Paul spoke five languages and went on to work as a case manager for the International Service Center in Harrisburg, helping to resettle other newly arriving refugees. He later worked for Highmark Insurance. He died in 2019 but his wife is still a member in 2022.

In 1976, M. Edwin Greene chaired the “Bicentennial Pledge for the Preservation of Grace” and raised \$28,000 to have the front and selected areas of the sides and back of the church exterior sandblasted and repointed. Wesley House’s brick was also cleaned and repointed, and all metal and wood trim on both the church and house were painted. His grandson, M. Edwin Greene III, entered Yale Divinity School as a ministerial son of Grace Church, and was ordained a Deacon in 1983 and an Elder in 1985 in the Central Pennsylvania Conference. Rev. Green has served churches in both the Susquehanna and Florida conferences. Over the years, Grace Church has provided partial financial support to missionaries in Alaska, Peru, Jerusalem, Tanzania, and Argentina. When on furlough, the missionaries presented special programs to the congregation about their work and the needs of the people they served.

In 1978, the church also sponsored a second Vietnamese refugee family that had escaped Vietnam as “boat people.” The congregation assisted with housing costs, furniture and necessities and helped to teach them English as a second language.

In 1979, the first storm enclosure to protect the primary entrance to Grace was installed at the cost of \$4880 but was later rebuilt in 1988.

In 1974, the church had 1,280 members, but by 1981, the membership had dropped to 884 members. Average worship attendance also dropped from 300 in 1974 to 198 in 1981.

Rev. Dr. Calvin H. Cole, Sr.
1981-1992

In 1982, the Rev. Dr. Calvin H. Cole Sr. (wife Janet) was appointed and served for 11 years. Just prior to becoming the pastor at Grace, Dr. Cole was the Harrisburg District Superintendent. He had a passion for the city and its ministry. During the first seven years of his pastorate, membership remained fairly stable, but in the final four years of Dr. Cole’s ministry, there was a loss of nearly 100 members. Average worship attendance, however, actually grew from 198 in 1982 to 270 in 1992. Dr. Cole worked tirelessly to grow Grace Church during his ministry without the assistance of an associate pastor. He retired in 1999 and died January 8, 2018. His wife died December 26, 2020 from COVID-19 complications.



The mission outreach of Grace Church was vigorous thanks to the Mission Outreach Ministries chair, Leroy Erickson. Jean Pugh and others assisted. The annual denominational mission studies were the focus of intergenerational summer Sunday school classes in Beggs Chapel. These studies included a geographical study of a foreign country, a social justice issue, and a spiritual growth Bible study. The Matthew 25 account provided funds for needy individuals who sought help from the church.

Through an endowed mission fund, more than \$10,000 was distributed yearly to local and national mission programs and projects. Many members provided service to the homeless, aid soup kitchens, Habitat for Humanity, tutoring, support food banks, volunteer in mission work camps, and served on boards of conference agencies. A special general denomination-wide project, Africa University in Zimbabwe, received more than \$12,000 from Grace Church by 1992. Three members of Grace were privileged to attend the dedication of the University in 1994: Carolyn Adams and Leroy and Marianne Erickson.

Time took its toll on the church building and by 1987, the electrical system had become hazardous and the deteriorated steam heating system was destroying the foundation walls. The congregation and their trustees responded in faith and action to reclaim, renovate, and preserve the building. The building was completely rewired. Total cost for the combined project was \$604,209. All but \$70,000 was raised with pledges from

the membership and community capital committee chaired by Robert Fowler and Charles (Chick) Morris, chairs of the church Stewarding and Finance Committee.

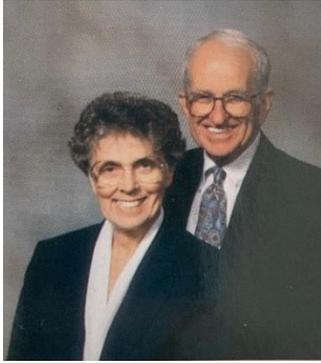
Starting in 1987, the four United Methodist conferences of Pennsylvania funded a new ministry called "A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania." Rev. L. Fitzgerald "Gere" Reist II returned on a part-time basis to serve as the first United Methodist Witness and lobbyist to Pennsylvania legislators, focused on social justice issues. The office of the United Methodist Witness program was in Wesley House and continued there till 2015. The name was changed to United Methodist Advocacy in 2011. Former associate pastor, James Zeisloft, and current church member, Steve Drachler, are also former directors. The Susquehanna Conference lay leader, Joyce Davis of Harrisburg, currently serves as the advocate.

Through the years Grace United Methodist Women (UMW) provided a strong arm of support to the church outreach. They financed their good works with four yearly fund-raising events: a spaghetti dinner, a salad luncheon and fashion show, a pork and sauerkraut dinner, and the sale of fresh Christmas wreaths.

Some of the local missions UMW supported were: Church Women United, Ecumenical food pantry, Neighborhood Center, Bethany Village Care Assurance, Women of Bethesda Mission, HELP, the State Hospital, and the United Methodist Home for Children. Grace UMW provided a Valentine Tea and summer Peach Festival for the residents of Bethany Village. Food Bank Sunday was initiated in 1997 as part of their social action outreach.

In the late 1980's Grace Church approved their first female candidate for the pastoral ministry. Ms. Cordella J. Brown, an ordained clergy woman in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church joined Grace Church while she was in United Methodist seminary and in process of transferring her credentials. She was ordained Deacon in 1989 in the Central Pennsylvania Conference. She immediately transferred to the Wyoming Conference in northeast Pennsylvania/southern New York, ordained an Elder in 1992; and served churches in the Wilkes-Barre and later in Massachusetts. She retired in 2010 and died November 23, 2017. In lieu of a funeral, she requested her family and friends to honor her life and ministry by "being more kind and loving extravagantly in these troubled times."

In 1989, an interracial couple attended Grace Church after not having been welcomed in previous churches they tried. They arrived late, sat in the back corner of the balcony and left during the last hymn, so as not to engage with anyone. The third time they did this, four men stopped them on their way out the door. Chick Morris, Charlie Edgar and two others made sure the couple felt welcomed and introduced them to the pastor. These four men soon visited Livingstone and Michele Dore in their home. The couple never snuck into the church again! As they became more active, Livingstone felt the call of God to enter the ministry. Livingstone spoke to Rev. Carl Schneider, and he and Rev. Cole immediately took Livingstone under their wings. The church leadership supported his call to ministry. In 1993, he was appointed as a student pastor at Jacobs United Methodist Church near Halifax, where Neil and Sally Snyder welcomed them like family. Livingstone's appointment at Jacob's Church was difficult, and a year later he was appointed to First and Otterbein United Methodist Churches just blocks from Grace. He graduated from Lebanon Valley College and Drew University's Theological School and was ordained an Elder in 2003. While he was nurtured into the ministry through Grace Church, when his wife accepted a job in Virginia, Livingstone transferred to the Virginia Conference. He currently serves Great Fall United Methodist Church in the suburbs of Washington DC. Livingstone recounts that the folks at Grace Church modeled what it means to be Christian disciples of Jesus as they loved, nurtured and encouraged this young man from the Caribbean and his wife. Neil and Sally Snyder later joined Grace Church because of Livingstone's experience with Grace Church.



In 1990 and 1995, Leroy and Marianne Erickson chaired both the 170th and the 175th anniversary committees. The Ericksons created a variety of meaningful celebrations throughout the years. The 170th celebration on Palm Sunday, April 8, 1990, culminated with a Service of Reconsecration and Dedication of the Church with Central Pennsylvania Conference Bishop D. Frederick Wertz presiding. A luncheon for over 400 guests followed.

In an article in *The Patriot* on August 3, 1990, Dr. Cole was questioned about the cost and effective use of resources to restore the cathedral-like Grace Church at the same time there was national attention over the soon to be completed National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., which cost \$65 million. Is the cost justified? Dr. Cole responded that Grace Church maintained its support of international, national, and local missions during the restoration. He likened the building of the Temple of Jerusalem as an opportunity for people to restore their faith. "In Christianity's early days, congregations gathered in homes and gradually developed a tradition of public meeting places in which to gather, before scattering to the four winds to do good. Gathering and scattering are good words to use when describing the role of church building. God gathers his people into the church and then scatters them to do good."

The Eternal Lamp in the front right of the sanctuary was a gift to the church by the officers and personnel of the 28th Infantry Division Support Command of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. This was given in recognition of Dr. Cole's retirement from military service, when he served as Chaplain (Colonel) Calvin H. Cole.

Dr. Cole described the congregation at Grace during his ministry as "a people of unique history at the cultural center of Harrisburg who have survived a suburban exodus and rejoice in the rebirth of the central city. We are a congregation from varied roots and diverse geography who have answered the call of Christ to be a redemptive family in the pluralistic urban setting."

Rev. James Grubb
1992-2001

Fresh off the superintendency of the State College District, the Rev. James Grubb was appointed to Grace in 1992 and served nine years. At the time, his wife Donna served on the conference staff part time as associate director of Christian Education. Donna also was hired by the church to be the director of Christian Education, a position she held until July of 1999. She worked tirelessly to strengthen the Sunday school program for all ages from children to adults.

The denomination-wide Disciple Bible Study was first offered at Grace by Rev. Grubb in 1993 and continued for many years. The 34-week courses had extensive Bible reading through the books of the Bible, focusing on the biblical story and its applications today. Rev. Grubb described Grace Church's long journey as "a pilgrimage of faith that holds joy, surprise, forgiveness, risk, and rebirth." He also studied the demographics of the church community and strategies for church growth. "One simple law undergirds the building blocks of every Christian church: Churches, like people, are healthiest when they reach out to others rather than worry about themselves. Churches grow because they intentionally reach out; churches die because they dwell on their own internal problems."





Rev. Grubb began outdoor 9:30 a.m. summer services in the McFarland Rose Garden starting July 1993. The services started as part of a new focus for the church called GROW – Grace Reaches Out to the World. It was hoped the service would encourage neighbors of the church to attend and help the church relate to the community around the church. Initially the 10:45 a.m. service continued indoors during the summer, but in later summers, the church held only the outdoor service at 9:30 a.m. These services, with light refreshments afterward, continued until 2016. Occasional slate falling from the roof was a safety concern, so the outdoor services were discontinued.

In 1998, Grace Church purchased the property north of the church building. The plot consisted of 28 living units and 29 parking spaces. This purchase was prompted by the need for parking for church attendees. The ultimate goal was to tear down the structures and build a multi-level parking garage that would be owned and used by the church, yet provide much needed parking space to the community as well. When the city denied the permits for the construction of the parking garage, a partnership with Messiah College of Grantham, Pennsylvania, was developed to assist them in their urban studies program. The initial need was for inner-city housing for students. Grace responded by providing five town houses and 15 apartments on property owned behind the church. The church building was also used for classrooms and faculty offices. The program only used these properties a few years. The church sold the properties in 2009.

In 1999, Jennifer Williams, a recent graduate of Duke Divinity School, became the first full-time associate pastor since 1980. She was also the first woman pastor to serve Grace Church. Her ministry focused on assisting with worship, Christian Education for children and youth, and spiritual growth. She was a gifted Disciple Bible Study teacher. During her ministry, she helped the congregation do their first direct visit to the neighborhood, inviting children and youth to the Sunday school and youth program. She served until 2001.

Concern for accessibility of the aging congregation was an issue for the trustees. Grace Church had a side ramp on the east side for wheelchair accessibility but needed electric accessible doors. A stair inclinator was installed inside the Rose Garden door for persons needing assistance to the sanctuary or the basement level classrooms and restrooms. However, the building was still not fully accessible, and the trustees continued to work on options for an elevator.

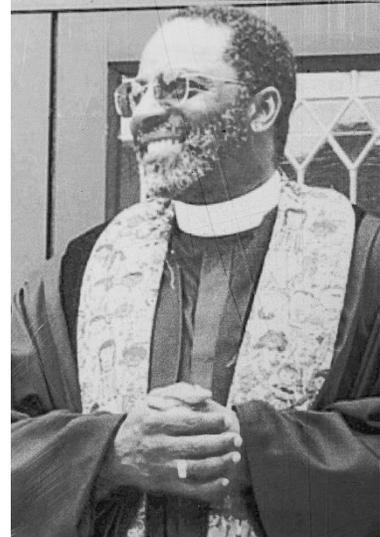
According to Rev. Grubb, a highlight of his ministry was when Grace hosted the 2000 and 2001 annual Interdenominational Ministers' Conference (IMC) of Greater Harrisburg for midday teaching services. Over time, this event evolved into the MLK Leadership Development Institute "to prepare and empower individuals committed to exercising creative leadership to improve conditions in the greater Harrisburg community." This was a great opportunity to intersect with the clergy and laity of the African American churches in Harrisburg.

The parsonage at 302 Swan Street was sold in 1996, and the Grubb's commuted to Harrisburg from their home in Liverpool.

The church membership stood at 758 when Pastor Grubb came to Grace but declined to 602 by 2001. Much of the loss of membership was from death and purging of membership rolls of those who had become totally inactive. Average worship attendance dropped from 261 to 186.

Rev. Dr. Anthony Alexander
2001 - 2007

In 2001, the Rev. Dr. Anthony Alexander (wife Lenore Haas Alexander) became the pastor after serving the Williamsport District as superintendent. He was the first African American pastor to serve the congregation, and with his appointment, Grace hoped to address the changing demographics of the neighborhood and help find ways to meet the needs of the African American community.



Shortly after Dr. Alexander arrived, the world changed with the attacks of September 11, 2001. Grace Church served as a shelter for the Capital Complex that was evacuated when reports indicated that a fourth airplane was flying over Pennsylvania. Dr. Alexander organized a prayer service for the community and congregation and provided hope and vision during a dark time in our nation's history. Unfortunately, the terrorist events of 9/11 caused the Capital Police to close all free public parking at the Capital Complex, causing further parking stresses to many downtown churches, including Grace.

Dr. Alexander continued the high standards of worship and service that Grace Church was known for. While his preaching style was more informal and often out of the pulpit, his sermons focused on the contemporary issues of the day. In 2001 and 2002, Grace Church held two outdoor jazz concerts on State Street in front of the church. These concerts were arranged by members Larry and Betty King. The concerts drew community interest and attention and emphasized the program variety offered by Grace Church.



Jazz Concerts on State Street 2001 and 2002

A computer center was established in the church's Activities Hall for use by any interested members. With the internet now available, Grace Church designed and implemented its first web site.



After serving for 36 years as the organist and choirmaster, Ron and Beth Sider retired in 2006. The choir room off the Activities Hall was dedicated in honor of Dr. Sider and the bell room was dedicated to his wife, Beth. This ended an era of sixty-one years with just two organists/choirmasters.

After a successful search, Mark Cole was selected to serve as Grace Church's next organist and choirmaster. Mark came with over 20 years of professional church experience, a degree in Organ Performance and Sacred Music from Lebanon Valley College, where he studied with Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman, and numerous scholarships and awards. His was a connection

between Grace Church and LVC that would be renewed some years later. Ron Sider was a hard act to follow, but Mark proved more than capable of continuing the church's tradition of musical excellence.

Dr. Alexander also initiated "Twenty Minutes with God," a service at midday from 12:10-12:30 p.m. for state workers and church staff who gathered for meditation during their lunch. In January 2002, a 6:30 a.m. Wednesday prayer service was also begun.

A 2003 addition to Grace Church was "The HolyWord Theater" in Activities Hall. It remains available for use by church school classes, committees, meetings, and other creative uses. The theatre was the creation of Erin and Roderick Clippinger. It had a video projector to show film and class material. Various church members gave time and funding to support it. The theater seating remains but the technology is now outdated.

A new sound system, anonymously donated, was installed in the sanctuary in January 2003. As an additional gift, member and wood craftsman Ed Lank built the walnut cabinetry to hold the system.

In 2003, Grace Church hired Susan Knipe as Director of Family Life to minister to younger families, children and youth. Ms. Knipe's primary responsibility was Christian education. She conducted the confirmation class for the youth. She also assisted the children and youth as they prepared and participated in the Youth Sunday worship service. Because funds were limited to hire additional staff, the congregation was asked to make an additional pledge (for two years) to cover Susan's salary. The congregation graciously responded. Susan lived in the third-floor apartment of Wesley House.

Extremely cold weather in January 2003 prompted downtown churches, including Grace, to offer their buildings for night shelters. Pastors and church members took turns hosting.

Also in 2003, Grace Church held an inaugural religious service for incoming Governor Edward Rendell. The sanctuary was opened on weekdays 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for prayer and meditation.

This is Grace, a pictorial and written history of Grace Church, was prepared by Beverly Fowler, now the late Beverly Fowler-Connor, in June 2003. She was assisted by a committee of members. At this time, the historical display with pictorial panels in the back of the sanctuary was added. The congregation is indebted to Mrs. Fowler-Connor as much of this history includes her words.

The church also had 15 to 20 people active in a lay ministry team called GRO – Grace Reaches Out, celebrating a congregation that cared deeply about one another.

Prior to 2006, the church adopted its first vision statement: "Our mission at Grace United Methodist Church is to be bold in Christ, abounding in love, grounded in faith, and zealous in our ministry. We journey to nurture God's gifts within every child of God, proclaiming the Good News as we grow in Grace."

The church leadership also went through a process of discernment as they faced difficult realities of a transitioning inner-city church. They identified the changing styles of clergy and expense of fulltime elders with experience, other financial issues, and a congregation rooted to its past rather than a vision for the future. They identified the need to claim their ministry for the future, continue to invest in the music ministry, and to do a better job communicating with the congregation. They also needed to celebrate their strengths: The building! The music! The preaching! And the good they do for the work of Jesus Christ!

Rev. Dr. Joanne Montgomery Link
Interim Pastor: 2007-2008

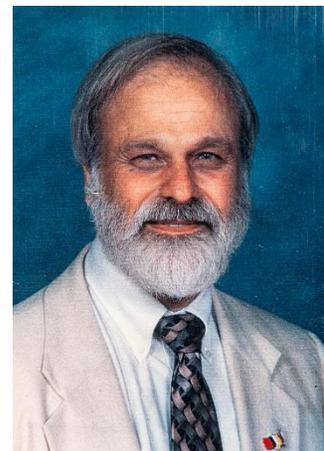


Dr. Alexander's ministry ended abruptly for personal reasons in the fall of 2007, and the Rev. Dr. Joanne Montgomery Link was appointed as an interim pastor November 1, 2007.

Dr. Link served as the first female district superintendent in the Central Pennsylvania Conference when she served the Chambersburg District from 1988 to 1995. She retired from the ministry in 2002. She agreed to serve as the interim pastor at Grace until July 1, 2008; thus, becoming the first female senior pastor to serve Grace Church. Her skills in spiritual direction and healing were helpful to the church during this time. She also tried to focus the church on its future ministry rather than on its history, preparing the church leadership for the difficulties of the future.

It was during Dr. Link's ministry that the trustees began to explore options to install an elevator in the church to bring the church into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A fire suppression system was installed in areas of the church. Dr. Link also began to challenge the church leadership about its reliance on spending investment principal for operational expenses, a practice that had begun in 2006 and continued almost yearly. Some years as much as \$150,000 was withdrawn to cover operational expenses.

Rev. Leroy Fitzgerald Reist, II
2008-2012



In the history of Grace church there had been two pastors who served more than one time. (Francis Hodgson in 1834 and in 1849-51; and William J. Stevenson in 1871-74 and 1882-85.) Rev. L. Fitzgerald (Gere) Reist II, was the first associate pastor (1978-80) to return to the church as the senior pastor. Following his appointment as the district superintendent of the Williamsport District (2001-2007), Rev. Reist took a leave from appointments to serve full time as the secretary of the General Conference in preparation for his first General Conference held in May 2008. In July of that year, he was appointed to Grace Church.

Harrisburg was the host city for the 2008 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference for The United Methodist Church. One of the primary purposes of this event held every four years following the General Conference is to elect and appoint bishops for the Northeast Jurisdiction. On July 18, 2008, Grace Church hosted the Consecration and Installation Service of newly elected Bishop Peggy Johnson. Having served a deaf congregation in Baltimore, she is shown here blessing communion in sign language at Grace Church.

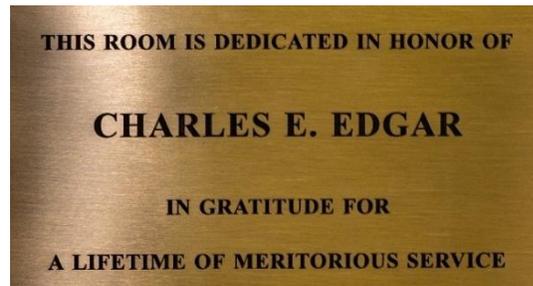
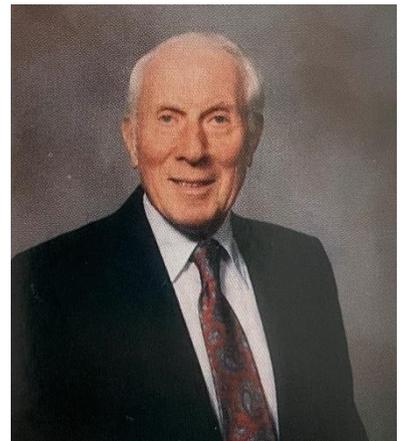


Membership at Grace had dropped to 305 members in 2008, and to 247 members in 2010, when Rev. Reist's appointment was changed to ¾ time to allow him more time for his increasing work as the General Conference Secretary, and Rev. Marcy Nicholas was appointed to serve full-time as the associate pastor. During this time, the pastors began a second prayer and praise service in Beggs Chapel, which had relatively strong support from the congregation. Weekly attendance increased during this time.

With the housing allowance, Rev. Reist chose to stay with family living in the Rockville area and commuted from his home near Wellsboro, in northern Pennsylvania. Gere's wife, Betty, is a gifted visual artist and designer of beautiful banners and altar displays that enhanced the worship experience.

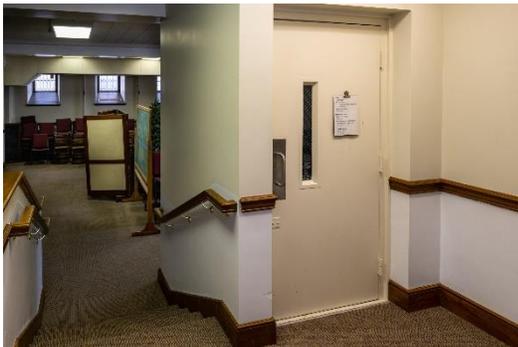
On June 14, 2009, during a Rose Garden worship service, it was announced that the fellowship hall would be renamed Edgar Hall in honor of the life and ministry of Charles Edgar. Charlie was in attendance that day with his family. Charlie served as a trustee and treasurer and was a member of the choir for 65 years. A posthumous dedication of Edgar Hall

was held that fall as Charlie passed away August 29, 2009, at the age of 94.



In 2009, the Board of Trustees again addressed the accessibility issues.

Given the age of the building and odd configuration of floors, a large elevator for all levels of the church was cost prohibitive. Instead, a two-person lift that would allow members from the sanctuary to access Activities Hall and Edgar Hall was installed, taking some space from the Guild Room. The stair lift (inclinator) was removed from the Rose Garden entrance, and persons were encouraged to use the ramp and entrance on the north side of the building. The new elevator began operation that summer and cost \$84,500. It was in 2009/2010 that the church stopped buying steam from the city and converted the furnace to gas. Wesley House and the sanctuary ceiling were also insulated for the first time. These projects cost an additional \$130,000, mostly paid by endowment funds not



given in perpetuity.

The Guild Room had been created during the 1940 renovation of the church. The church offices, which had been in this space, were moved to Wesley House when the new parsonage was purchased on Second Street. The Guild Room was used as a parlor for receptions, meetings, dressing rooms for bridal parties, and for the Women's Bible class. It was reduced in size when the new elevator was installed in 2009. The Guild Room is decorated with art and historical artifacts, some of which are now in the history and archives room on the Mezzanine Level.



The Sunday morning breakfast for neighborhood friends began in 2009. The need to provide food for nearby residents was great as soup kitchens were closed on the weekends. For two years, the breakfast was completely run with volunteers from Grace Church and had attendance of 50-75 each Sunday. Later, four other area congregations joined the effort with each responsible for providing food and volunteers for the 7 a.m. breakfast one Sunday a month. Those churches were Mt. Calvary near Manada Hill, Camp Hill United Methodist, St. Paul United Methodist in Elizabethtown, and Chambers Hill United Methodist in Harrisburg. These suburban churches appreciated being part of ministry in the

inner city. Grace Church provided the breakfast and volunteers on the occasional fifth Sunday of the month. Initially, sexton Brian Ulsh, and later, facilities manager Chuck Houtz, provided consistent critical key leadership. The breakfast continued 52 Sundays a year until April 2019, typically serving 30-60 of our neighbors who were food insecure and often unhoused.

Ministry bears fruit in many different ways. The Neighborhood Friends Breakfast led directly to the call to ministry for Mack Granderson. Mack and his wife, Bobbie Jo, started attending Grace Church during the ministry of their dear friend Anthony Alexander. Upon learning of his appointment that spring, Mack told Anthony he would attend Grace Church to be supportive of his ministry. Mack intended to participate with Grace for a year or two, but after one year of serving on the trustees and singing in the choir, Mac "fell madly in love with the congregation" and joined the church. After the breakfast was started in 2009, Lenore Alexander asked Mack if he would lead the devotions for the breakfast once a month. He quickly agreed. He found he loved speaking about his faith to the Neighborhood Friends. He began to feel a call to become a preacher. Rev. Reist encouraged Mack and asked him to preach a 4-week month series of sermons. Gere also asked Mack to greet people at the door each Sunday, but he went out on the sidewalk and street and joyfully and sincerely welcomed all who passed by, including exiting Roman Catholics from the Cathedral next door to Grace.

One Sunday in the spring of 2013, Mack welcomed Bishop Jeremiah Park from the Susquehanna Conference, and Mack excitedly told the bishop his desire to become a pastor saying, "I am like a race horse being held back by the gate." The bishop's response, "if it be God's will," left Mack wishing for more affirmation. Soon thereafter, Mack had a confusing dream where God spoke to him saying, "Why are you shackled and handcuffed where you are when there is peace on Derry Street?" A few days later, Mack received a phone call from the Harrisburg district superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Dennis Keller, asking him to serve as pastor to Derry Street United Methodist Church. "Yes!" was the immediate response, but it saddened him to learn the church expected to close by November because the congregation doubted they could pay the heating bills. Undeterred, the next day Mack filed for bankruptcy for his restaurant/bar and



entered the ministry with the blessing of the congregation at Grace. He began his ministry at Derry Street in July 2013 and received his License to Preach in 2014. Within five years, the congregation at Derry Street quadrupled, and they were paying their Shares of Ministry in full, all other bills were paid, and they had over \$70,000 in the bank. God had truly called a humble servant from the fold of Grace. Mack continues to serve God in 2022 as the pastor of Crossroads Christian Ministries in Oberlin, PA.

Often the Neighborhood Friends remained for the early worship service in Beggs Chapel and were warmly received by many church members; however not all. Some found it hard to welcome persons who often had extraordinary needs.

A campaign to raise \$675,000 for renovations started in February of 2011. The campaign entitled, "Lift High the Cross" would provide funds to remove and replace the Celtic Cross on the pinnacle of the roof facing State Street. About half of those funds were also needed to repair the sanctuary ceiling and paint and carpet the sanctuary. This effort did not succeed, but enough funds were provided to correct the safety issue. The cross was removed and now stands at the Rose Garden entrance to the church, and a new cross made of lighter synthetic materials was newly installed. The sanctuary ceiling repair and painting still needs to be done when funds allow.

Membership continued to drop to 224 in 2012.

Rev. Marcy Nicholas
2012-2014

The Rev. Marcy Nicholas served full time as associate pastor with Rev. Reist for two years (2010-12). Rev. Reist then resigned his appointment on January 1, 2013, because of his added responsibilities as General Conference Secretary resourcing delegates to General Conference from Africa and other regions of the world. Rev. Nicholas was appointed as the lead pastor, and the conference sent her to Houston for special training for urban ministry for transforming struggling inner-city churches.



Rev. Nicholas had been ordained an elder in 2008 and previously served a church in York. During her ministry at Grace, Marcy became a certified Spiritual Director with Oasis Ministries in Camp Hill. She was highly respected by the congregation for her spiritual growth discipline and for leading excellent Bible studies. Armed with a vision for what Grace Church could become, she was ready to move Grace into a deeper



level of spirituality and spiritual growth. Her ministry with Grace provided a much-needed spiritual grounding for a church that was in turmoil trying to stay alive in the inner city. Rev. Nicholas commuted to Grace from her home and ten-acre property in Hellam, PA, where she still lives with her husband Fred Haag, professor of visual arts at Penn State York, their dog, two cats, and a few chickens.

Bishop Jeremiah Park, wife Lisa with Rev. Nicholas

In 2013, Jerrold Tidwell became the organist/choir director. While Jerrold's time with Grace Church only lasted a little over a year, his tenure was noteworthy for its strong emphasis on choral music. He made effective use of Grace's extensive music library and worked very closely with the choir, challenging them to perform selections that had not been sung for many years.

After leaving Grace, Rev. Nicholas was appointed to Community United Methodist Church in New Cumberland, and later decided to leave the ministry in 2016. As of July 2022, she will be the Assistant Professor of Teaching in English at Penn State York.

Pastor Yvette Davis
2014-2016

Rev. Nicholas's ministry and plans for growing Grace Church were cut short, when to her surprise and that of the congregation, Pastor Yvette Davis was appointed. At this point, the financial resources of the smaller congregation could only support a ¾ time appointment. Pastor Davis was the first African American woman to serve Grace Church. She had served on the conference staff of the Eastern Pennsylvania UMC Conference and became a licensed local pastor in 2012. At this time, she transferred to the Susquehanna Conference and served Asbury United Methodist Church in York. She was seen by many in the conference to be a rising star with a passion for inner-city ministry. It was hoped by the conference that she might bring new vision for ministry at Grace.



It was after Christmas 2014 that it was decided to leave the tall candle holders on the pews all the time. These candle holders had been made by Rod Clippinger, a church member, and previously were used just for Christmas Eve and weddings. However; the candleholders were being damaged taking them in and out of storage. They were also modified to use oil-filled tapers rather than wax candles.

Jordan Markham became the organist/choir director in 2014. Jordan was also a student of Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman from Lebanon Valley College and has enormous talent as an organist and vocalist. Throughout his years with Grace Church, he was very devoted to the church's history and musical traditions. He revived the Dubois Seven Last Words in what was most likely the first time it was performed at Grace Church with an orchestra. Jordan also organized a number of recitals and musical events, along with his friend, Tyler Canonico from Market Square Presbyterian Church. Jordan is currently the Director of Music at St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral, Harrisburg.



Pastor Davis was a gifted and passionate worship leader of a more contemporary style of worship not using traditional liturgy. This caused conflict for the leadership team of the church and the "faithful remnant" of the congregation. While she was able to reach some new members, she was unable to convince the congregation to accept her vision for the new Grace Church. Did she move too fast? Was it poor communication? Was it members rooted in the past? Was it racism?



Trying to appease those caught up in the past, she promoted branding the church as “The Historic Grace United Methodist Church.” Unfortunately, membership dropped from 201 to 108 by the time her appointment ended in April of 2016.

Pastor John Quintilian
2016-2019

In May 2016, the conference appointed another licensed local pastor, Pastor John Quintilian (wife Christine) to serve the church half time. Pastor John also had a passion for inner-city ministry and hoped to help the congregation develop a ministry to a multicultural, diverse community. He and his family had been missionaries in Japan, and he was a skilled English as a Second Language teacher. His offer to host Spanish lessons so the church could minister to Hispanics was not fruitful. He also had contacts with the Bhutanese community that were settling in the Harrisburg area. However, the Hispanic and Bhutanese communities did not live near Grace Church.



It was also in 2016 that Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman became the organist/choir director of Grace. Dr. Moorman-Stahlman’s contributions to Grace Church have been unparalleled. Dr. Moorman-Stahlman solidified our relationship with Lebanon Valley College by employing her students as choir soloists and section leaders as well as soloists on musical instruments, hand bells, and organ. The students’ contributions to worship greatly enriched the congregation, and we provided a church home away from home for them.

Dr. Moorman-Stahlman had long had a mission relationship with music students in Brazil, both from her concert tours and mission trips to that country. In January of 2017, Dr. Moorman-Stahlman hosted the first month-long cultural enrichment program for young musicians from Brazil at Lebanon Valley College. These students live with host families and participate in special classes with the Music Department at Lebanon Valley College. The 15-20 Brazilian students visited Grace Church one Sunday each time the program has been held from 2017-2019.



These visits were inspiring to the choir and congregation; the Brazilian students won the hearts of our members with their energy, joy, and deep faith, as well as their considerable musical talents. We sang in Portuguese and English, celebrating music across the hemispheres. Each year these young people love Grace Church and the congregation loves them. Many lasting friendships have been made, including the marriage of Pastor John's son to a young woman who participated in 2018. The program was cancelled in 2021 and 2022 because of the coronavirus pandemic. In 2018, church members Neill and Sally Snyder donated a set of chime tones and a set of hand bells in 2019 for use by the students in Brazil.



Eleanor Clark
5/28/1917 – 11/8/2019

On May 28, 2017, long-time church member Eleanor Clark celebrated her 100th birthday and hosted her own birthday party open-house at Bethany Village. Eleanor was one of the “saints” of the church for many reasons. She often hosted young adults and church members to very formal dinners in her home prior to moving to Bethany Village. Everyone also marveled at Eleanor who always made a special effort to worship on Communion Sundays. She sat near the back of the church but always walked forward on her own to take communion, kneeling at the rail. She often said that was the only way to



take communion. At her Celebration of Life service at Bethany Village on November 17, 2019, she requested that copies of this drawing be given to those who attended. It is a compilation of the loves of her life including Grace

Church as a sand castle because she deeply loved her church and the beach. The logos of the United Methodist Church and Bethany Village, her dog Grendel, her nursing cap, her favorite flowers, and her Avon pin are featured. “God loves you, and so do I!” was her weekly message to all she greeted.



IMPACT! HARRISBURG The Near Closure of Grace

“Harrisburg United Methodism received an unexpected disruption like none other on December 8, 2018,” writes the Conference Archivist, Mr. Milton Loyer, in the 2021 issue of *The Chronicle*. Follows is his historical record of the events:

That was the date of the meeting at the Camp Curtin YMCA at which a plan was announced to close ten United Methodist church buildings in Harrisburg, Penbrook and Susquehanna township in order to merge those congregations into a single, more efficient and more effective ministry. That project, known as “Impact! Harrisburg” had an informal and inauspicious beginning earlier in the year as concerned persons began brainstorming about the decline of The United Methodist Church in the Greater Harrisburg Area. On September 9, 2018, the project was formally named and presented at a worship/celebration/challenge service at the Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell UMC. At that time, the end result was seen to be a new working together of the Greater Harrisburg UMC congregations to reach the unchurched people in a metropolitan area undergoing demographic changes. The project was met by the congregations represented, however, with only modest enthusiasm and a general feeling that this would be another high-profile, image-saving effort that really wouldn’t change anything at the local level. When the representatives of the involved congregations and other interested persons met at the YMCA on December 8, 2018, they expected to hear a progress report along with the usual lip-service about reaching out to Harrisburg’s diverse and unchurched population. It would be a gross understatement to say that those present were both shocked and angry to hear the ultimate plan and timetable placed before them. The printed material distributed at the meeting included the rationale for such drastic and unexpected action and a detailed plan of implementation which included the following, apparently non-negotiable, items.

- *ministry and worship in the present buildings to cease on April 14, 2019*
- *keys to all properties turned over by April 20, 2019*
- *unified worship beginning April 21, 2019, [Easter] at Twenty-Ninth St. UMC*

According to the UMC Book of Discipline, the standard procedure for closing a church is a vote of the congregation and not an edict from the conference. Needless to say, there was much resistance at the local level and some negotiation was inevitable. In the end, some deadlines were relaxed – in particular, congregations were permitted to meet on their own at least through Easter – and two congregations were permitted to continue indefinitely: Rockville, as an extension ministry of Linglestown; and Grace, as the historic downtown flagship church of Methodism.

The churches involved were:

- Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell UMC at 2221 N. Sixth St.
- Derry Street UMC at 1508 Derry St.
- First Harrisburg UMC at 260 Boas St.
- Grace Penbrook UMC at 25 S. 28th St.
- Riverside UMC at 3200 N Third St.
- Rockville UMC at 4386 N. Sixth St.
- St. Mark’s UMC at 3985 N. Second St.
- Trinity Penbrook UMC at Canby and North 25th St.
- Twenty-Ninth St. UMC at 29th St and Derry St.
- Grace UMC at 216 State St.

The “Impact! Harrisburg” plan was received by nearly everyone involved with shock and resentment toward Susquehanna Conference officials.

Church conferences were held simultaneously at all 10 churches on January 13, 2019. Only church members were permitted to vote on a resolution presented that day announcing “The Journey” as the new United Methodist expression of ministry in Harrisburg. Non-church members were also invited to the conferences but were not permitted to speak. A different district superintendent from across the conference chaired each church conference.

The Grace Church Conference was attended by nearly 60 members. While the administrative council previously agreed to support the closing, they individually could vote at the conference. Unable to go along with the poorly presented plans, Grace Church members voted to remain open with 58 votes, and one to close.

Of the other churches, only 29th Street and Riverside churches voted to consolidate. Trinity Church in Penbrook had merged already with Grace Church in Penbrook because of costly maintenance issues. The other churches (Derry St, First, Grace Penbrook, Rockville, St. Mark’s, Camp Curtin, and Grace) were required to meet with the district superintendent as there was no guarantee they would remain open.

The leaders of the Sunday Breakfast for the Neighborhood Friends decided to close the program the first of April to allow time to prepare the church kitchen and facility for the expected closing in June.

Not knowing what the future held, Dr. Moorman-Stahlman proposed to the worship committee that the Sundays of Lent focus on the sacraments and rites of the church. The following schedule was approved and Dr. Moorman-Stahlman designed the worship services during Lent as follows:

- March 10 Baptism: Remember your Baptism and service of reaffirmation of baptismal vows
- March 17 Marriage: I Still Do Couples and service of reaffirmation of marriage vows. Couples married in the church provided wedding photos for the bulletin and spoke briefly of their weddings.
- March 24 Funerals and Memorials: A service of remembrance for the “Great Cloud of Witnesses” who had died as part of the ministry at Grace.
- March 31 Healing: The service included prayers for healing and anointing
- April 7 Ministry: Mary’s Gift, a service focused on the ministry of Mary and Martha and the ministry of all Christians.
- April 14 Palm Sunday: Jesus Wept over Jerusalem and today over Harrisburg
- April 21 Easter: Celebrate The Resurrection

In addition, Dr. Moorman-Stahlman proposed that we invite former members of the choir to return and supplement with other singers to perform Theodor Dubois’ “Seven Last Words of Christ” with orchestra. The tradition of commemorating Good Friday with this oratorio began around 1928 and continued annually for over 90 years. The services then were three-hours long and included organ interludes, Scripture and meditations by area clergy. The last annual performance had been in 2006 under the direction of Dr. Ron Sider. It was again performed, this time with orchestra, in 2015 under the direction of Jordan Markham. This 2019 performance featured a 24-voice choir that sang from the elevated loft accompanied by a 13-piece orchestra directed by Dr. Moorman-Stahlman. The service was well attended. Many congregants were moved to tears grieving the anticipated closing of the church.



A meeting was held between key church leaders and the district superintendent during Holy Week and the congregation was told that the conference would recommend to the Annual Conference in May that Grace be closed June 30, 2019, despite the Church Conference vote, unless the church developed a “Pathway to Vitality” and vision for the church that satisfied the conference. With little time to plan, a vision/strategic plan meeting was scheduled for the Sunday after Easter, April 28. Suggested resource leaders from the conference were not available, and with no other alternatives, retired pastor, the Rev. Wayne Bender and church member Rick Albright agreed to facilitate the afternoon visioning session. With a large crowd on Easter, the announcement was made that while the church was celebrating the resurrection of Christ that day, the following Sunday would be Easter for Grace Church, as we needed everyone who cared about the future of the church to participate in the visioning session on April 28.

April 28 was a Sunday of miracles at Grace! Over 50 people attended the meeting. During the provided lunch, members were asked to discuss the strengths of Grace Church, and what the church does well and should keep doing. Following the lunch, there was a presentation about the demographics of the neighborhood around Grace Church. The congregation was reminded of their core values adopted by the church: *Bold in Christ, Abounding in Love, Grounded in Faith*. Finance Chairperson Barbara Janecko provided a realistic financial summary. A round robin brainstorming session in small groups had members excitedly discussing options for vitality in worship, communication/social media, outreach and mission, spiritual growth, and stewardship/hospitality.

By the end of the day, the participants said they wanted the church to focus on traditional worship with progressive theology, and that they should respond to the demographics of the church community by becoming a Reconciling Congregation with and for the LGBTQ+ community.

[Note: This was a radical decision because the Special Session of General Conference held in February 2019 sadly had reaffirmed the denomination’s stand that homosexuality is “incompatible with Christian teaching.” Until at least the next General Conference, The United Methodist Church would continue to prohibit ordaining self-avowed and practicing homosexual clergy and would forbid clergy from conducting same gender marriages. However, there was an “understanding” the bishops and churches would not litigate any charges for violations until the next General Conference.]

A two-page “Vision for Vitality in Ministry 2019 and Beyond” for Grace Church was written and at the request of the conference, a “Timeline for Action” was prepared. These documents were approved by the congregation at a meeting on May 18, 2019.

The Grace Church congregation was delighted to learn that the conference leadership approved the vision plan and timeline, and Grace Church was removed from the “closure” list. At the 2019 Annual Susquehanna Conference in June, the following churches were closed: Derry Street, First (effective September 30, 2019), Grace Penbrook, Camp Curtin, and St. Mark’s. Riverside Church and 29th Street Church closed June 30 and reopened as “The Journey” with Rev. Kristopher Sledge and Pastor Deb Port as pastors. Rockville developed a plan to become a satellite church affiliated with Linglestown Life United Methodist Church in Linglestown.

Rev., Dr. Michael Minnix
2019-2022

Bishop Park then appointed the Rev. Dr. Michael Minnix as half-time pastor for Grace, effective July 1, 2019. Pastor Mike, as he preferred to be called, and his wife Wendy could not have been more excited about the vision of ministry and leadership that Grace was offering to the city of Harrisburg.



A new logo for the church was designed by office manager, Justine Kompare:



During July, the members completed surveys about becoming a Reconciling Congregation. There was strong support with only two negative responses. The administrative council approved joining the Reconciling Ministry Network with over 900 United Methodist churches nationwide. On Saturday, July 27, Grace Church had a booth at the Pride Festival of Central Pennsylvania in Soldiers Field at the Capitol Complex. The banner made for the booth was hung afterward from the church rear balcony:



The Rev. Dr. Frank Trotter, a gay clergy member of the Baltimore-Washington United Methodist Conference, was the guest pastor for worship the following day when the congregation formally affirmed their support for becoming the second church in the Susquehanna Conference to declare itself a Reconciling Congregation. The Statement of Reconciliation was affirmed:

We celebrate human diversity and affirm God's gifts of love and grace for ALL persons. Each of us is created in the image of God and is a child of God. We invite you, no matter your age, race, ethnicity, family structure, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical ability, or economic situation, to be in ministry with us. We support the full participation of all persons in every phase of church life. We believe that at Grace Church you will experience our God who already knows you by name, loves you, and yearns to have an even closer relationship with you. As a Reconciling Congregation, our hearts, minds and doors are open, and we are blessed by your presence.

The Reconciling Ministry Team also began to work with the Harrisburg LGBT Center to identify how the church could reach the needs of its community. The highest priority was to find a place and resource persons to form a support group for families and friends of transgender children, youth and young adults. Wendy Minnix, a licensed psychotherapist, offered to begin the support group along with the Rev. Jason Swartzman, pastor of Grace UMC in Lemoyne, and his wife Michelle, who are parents of a transgender son. The first and second monthly meetings in January and February of 2020 had over 40 attendees.

Plans were also developed to transform Beggs Chapel into a Coffee House, meeting the need for a social opportunity and meeting space for the LGBTQ+ community that was not focused on alcohol. A safe place to meet was needed.



*The Open and Affirming Congregation
of the second church in the Susquehanna Conference to become a Reconciling Congregation*

The church also approved using the basement of Wesley House as a shelter for unhoused women, with volunteers and staff coordinated by Christian Churches United. The shelter opened in December 2019 and continued through mid-April of 2020. The shelter continued the next two winters, but because of COVID-19 and the need to provide more room for social distancing, the shelter moved to the Activities Hall under the sanctuary and two large classrooms used for sleeping. They could house 24 women and were often near capacity.



It was the summer of 2019 that Dave Buchanan became ill on a family cruise vacation. His health worsened quickly, and it was necessary for him to resign his position of administrative council chair after service for more than 10 years. He had also been active with the Boy Scouts in his early years at Grace. His wife Mary was very active with the United Methodist Women and was committed to ministry with many of the older women of the church. A highlight in recent years was the opportunity for Dave to make arrangements for a personal visit from Santa Claus. In appreciation for his leadership, he was presented a laser engraved framed cherry image of the church in 2019. Dave fought a good fight and passed away February 6, 2022.

Christmas at Grace was glorious that year compared to somber memories of Christmas the year before. A Christmas Service for those who experienced loss (including our friends from the closed churches) was held entitled "The Rocky Road to Christmas." The Christmas decorations were expanded, and the Christmas concert by the choir was presented to a much fuller church than in recent years. It was exciting to have a pastor and a congregation that was united in their vision for ministry and the future of the church.

Attendance began to grow. A normal Sunday in 2019 had 20-30 congregants, but by March 2020, there were Sundays with 80-100 in worship. Then the pandemic hit with the spread of the deadly coronavirus called COVID-19. By order of Governor Tom Wolf and the state Physician General, Dr. Rachel Levine, a statewide lock down was declared on Monday, March 16, 2020. Attendance was unusually low on March 15, which turned out to be the last service held in the church until October 4, 2020, when the church was able to reopen briefly if congregants wore face masks and social distanced, following COVID-19 protocols. However, the reopening was short-lived, and the church once again closed November 22, and remained closed till Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021. Social distancing and mask wearing requirements continued until March 2022. The congregation continued to wear masks during hymn singing. Since April the church attendance has grown slowly from 15-20 to some Sundays reaching 50-60 people.



The year 2020 was Grace Church's bicentennial. The committee had preliminary plans for a yearlong celebration, but almost all events were cancelled because of the pandemic. One very special celebratory event was held September 30, 2020, at a time when the coronavirus infections were down, in part because



of vaccines had been widely distributed. That was a day the Pennsylvania Legislature returned to Grace Church and held a Ceremonial Session of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in the sanctuary, 123 years after the church served as the Pennsylvania Capitol (1897-99). The legislators processed behind the mace of the Speaker of the House from the capitol into the sanctuary while celebratory patriotic selections were played by Dr. Moorman-Stahlman. The session was presided over by Speaker of the House, Honorable Bryan Cutler, who gavelled the session to order from one of the original desks used by the representatives in 1887. Together, he and Harrisburg Representative the Honorable Patty Kim, presented a citation to the church approved by Resolution House Bill 1017, recognizing the pivotal role the church played in 1897 in securing Harrisburg as the state capital. Remarks were offered by Majority Leader, the Honorable Kerry Benninghoff, and the Minority Leader, the Honorable Frank Dermody. Rev. Michael Minnix offered the opening prayer, and Rev. D. Wayne Bender presented the history of the church and reviewed its current ministry. Appreciation was extended to Mr. Clancy Myers, Parliamentarian for the House, and his staff for arranging this historic meeting. A commemorative pictorial booklet containing the complete recording of the day is available in the archives of the church.

*(ABOVE) Speaker of the House
With facemask, due to the COVID-19 pandemic*



House of Representatives meeting once again in Grace Church, September 30, 2020

Within a few weeks of the start of the lock down in 2020, churches scrambled to be able to offer Zoom meetings, Facebook Live worship, or live stream services over the internet on their web pages. With limited technology available to Grace, Dr. Moorman-Stahlman proved invaluable to Grace Church's survival during the Covid-19 pandemic, creating and assembling video worship services for YouTube by combining Scripture readings, musical selections, and sermons for weekly distribution. When the church returned to live worship, the church installed Wi-Fi in the sanctuary, so the services could be live-streamed on the church Facebook page. Many members and visitors enjoyed this new way of worshipping. The church owes a great debt to Dr. Moorman-Stahlman for providing these opportunities for our congregation.

Amazingly the financial offerings to the church remained strong. During the pandemic the church did not lay off any staff because the church received a federal Paycheck Protection Program grant in the amount of \$19,400 to help offset employment costs during the pandemic. As a result of the new pastoral leadership and the government grant, no funds were taken from the endowed funds of the church for the first year since 2006.



An extraordinary blessing to the church was when Dr. Moorman-Stahlman's beloved piano teacher, Ruth Slenczynska, moved from New York City to the Stahlman home in Annville during the pandemic. Ruth is the last living student of the world-renowned pianist Sergei Rachmaninov. She has often provided her gift of music to our virtual as well as in-person worship experience. Ruth played for us her beloved Chopin and made friends with members of the congregation of all ages. She continues to inspire the congregation with her exploits, still performing recitals, traveling the world, and recording CDs at age 96.

supportive church members.

During the pandemic, Grace Church rented the third-floor children's Sunday school rooms and chapel to the "Garden Spot Collective" for a modest rent. The artists are part of the LGBTQ+ community and are thrilled to have a studio in which to work together and display their art of various media, including textile and photography. They held their Grand Opening on March 19, 2022, with over 100 guests attending, including many

In 2022, Hannah Reasoner, the daughter of new church members Don Reasoner and Christie R. House, was home on leave during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March she returned to Bogota, Colombia, as a missionary with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. She spoke to the church on March 13 about her ministry in Colombia, and Rev. Minnix led a service of sending forth with the laying on of hands. The church has entered a Covenant Relationship with Ms. Reasoner to help fund her ministry as a missionary.

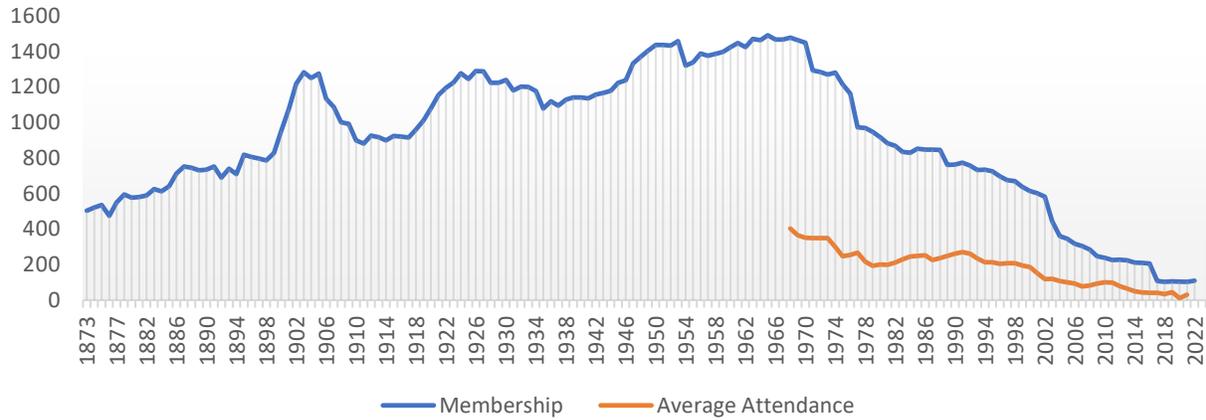
In 2016, the church needed to use \$80,000 of endowed funds to meet operating expenses. During the years of the renewed vital ministry of the church we used only \$15,000 in 2019 and \$20,000 in 2022. Membership reached a low of 103 in 2018 but has increased to 110 with over 19 new members during the past three years.

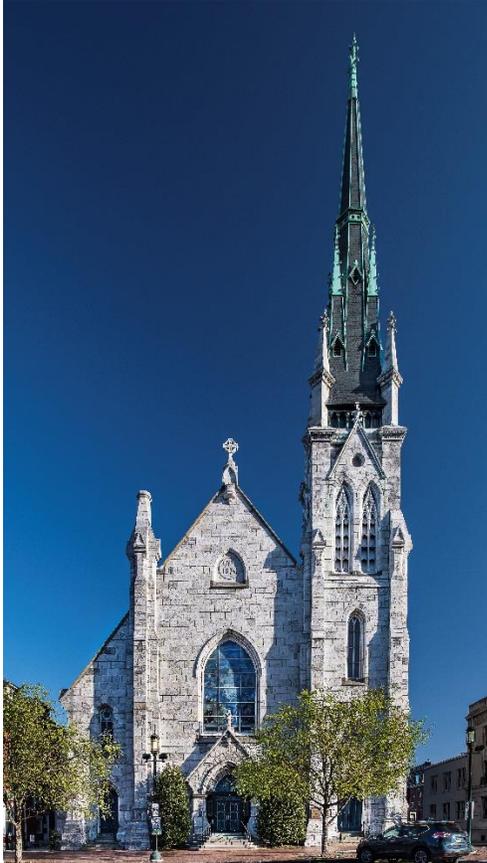
When Rev. Minnix accepted the call to be the pastor at Grace in 2019, he agreed to serve for one year to help the congregation take the next step of ministry into our third century. However, because of the pandemic, he agreed to serve an additional two years, which he claims were some of his most enjoyable years of ministry, despite the setbacks of the pandemic. The congregation anxiously awaits the appointment of our next pastor who will continue the resurrection of the church and enable the members to continue vital ministry with our neighbors, community, city, state and world.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

and **AVERAGE ATTENDANCE**: 1873-2022





INTO THE NEXT 98 YEARS

In 2003, Beverly Fowler completed the last written history of Grace Church by writing: *The church is a memorial to the devotion and foresight of early members. It is more than stone and steps, plaster and pews. It embodies the spirit and faith of Methodist laymen, preachers, bishops, organists, choirs, and choirmasters who have gone before us. Some were inspired by God to build a church of Methodism in the little settlement of Harris' Ferry. It fell to lots of others to support it through its growth and service to the growing State Capital, extending inspiration and influence to a vital town in varied times. We acknowledge their faith and works, and willingly add our own strength to the everlasting arms ever reaching through time and eternity.*

The writing of this history has not been an easy story to tell. It is sad to know of its glorious past and then to read and experience the decline of the church since the 1960s. A faithful remnant of disciples of Christ remain from the glory days, and they are to be commended for keeping the church alive through difficult days. Their dedication, leadership, continued financial support, and prayers kept the church alive.

Also, credit must be given to other unnamed church staff that have served this congregation over the two centuries. While this history was organized around the clergy that served the church, especially since 1900, their support staff must also be mentioned. The numerous secretaries, office managers, sextons, youth leaders, Christian Education Directors, musicians and other staff have added greatly to this church's history. Maybe none more than Mildred M. Kerstetter Parry Macomber who served 28 years as secretary and parish worker starting in 1958. Her devotion and Christian ministry exemplified her love for Grace Church, its pastors and all its members. The church can never thank her or all the staff both past and present, for their labor of love and unselfish service.



Millie Kerstetter Parry Macomber

There are hundreds of reasons to explain the decline of the church: Changing social dynamics of the inner city, the lack of parking, visionary pastors who struggled with the old guard, visionary members who struggled with unwilling pastors, failed clergy ethics, changing styles of worship (traditional, blended, contemporary), high cost of building operation and maintenance, high shares of ministry, not being more accepting of the neighborhood friends, America's changing religious landscape away from church and faith, classism, racism, sexism, burnout, and death to name a few.

Writing this history has been an exercise similar to the Psalmist who lamented the past but always offered a reason for hope. The past 60 years have seen a relative rapid decline in membership, attendance, and financial resources. But it was also a time for risk-taking and ministry, as the congregation reached out to the community directly around the church, including the poor, the homeless, the hungry, and the rejected. Taking Matthew 25 to heart, God will surely bless the church who has loved, housed, fed, and accepted those whom others rejected.

Today there is hope! While the congregation may be in transition, the faithful continue to be Bold in Christ, Abounding in Love, and Grounded in Faith. Susquehanna Conference bishops Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Sandra Steiner Ball will preside over the Bicentennial+2 celebration on May 22, 2022. That day the congregation will celebrate Grace (the church and its history) but, more importantly, will celebrate God's grace, which is the undeserved gift of God's love, salvation, and acceptance given to all. At Grace United Methodist Church, we are disciples of God's grace and strive to truly live in a community where God loves all, and ALL means ALL.

How appropriate that the theme for the Bicentennial Plus 2 is ***Celebrating God's Grace***. While in the past, such celebrations often focused on the beautiful edifice and/or its renovations modernizing the church for the future needs of ministry, the church, over time, may have become myopic on their building and past. However, the steeple literally points us to the source of grace. Today, the congregation is really a new church start with disciples of Jesus striving to first be the church rather than simply a building.

While the church is steeped in a rich historical past, and that history along with its imposing and expensive building has at times been a financial liability for the congregation, that history may also be part of its future. The church was included in the designation of the "Harrisburg Commercial Historic District" in 2009, and as such is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and eligible for state and national grants for preservation of the building. This is a source of funds that has not been used before, and the Historic Harrisburg Association is committed to assisting Grace with seeking this funding.

Throughout the years, Grace Church experienced the mergers and divisions of their denomination in 1830, 1939, 1968, even as they are currently experiencing denominational division as the Global Methodist Church breaks away from The United Methodist Church. The Global Methodist Church organized in May of 2022 and its impact locally is still unknown. Pressure to divide the denomination has been building since 1972 over the issue of homosexuality and the ordination of gay clergy. A special called session of General Conference in 2019 failed to bring resolution to the issue of inclusion and following the postponement of the 2020 General Conference until 2024, some conservatives in The United Methodist Church decided to leave. The next few years will be difficult for the denomination as local churches and members make decisions about their affiliation. It is anticipated that with the direction that Grace Church has already chosen, it is expected that Grace will be part of the more progressive and inclusive United Methodist Church.

With hope, with faith, with courage, we the members of Grace Church and as disciples of Jesus Christ, recommit ourselves to the work of Jesus through the ministry of Grace United Methodist Church, and prepare ourselves to write the next 98 years of the history for Grace Church.



Grace Church is at the crossroads with state government, social justice issues, the denomination, and the future.

What alley, street, highway, expressway, or launch pad will we take into the future?

How will God's grace continue to be manifested through the ministry of Grace Church?

Stay tuned for the next 100 years!

Appendix I: Pastors of Grace United Methodist Church

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Class Meeting/Methodist Society | | 1874-1877 | Charles A. Holmes |
| 1810-1820 | Jacob Gruber | 1877-1879 | Richard Hinkle |
| Harrisburg Station - Church | | 1879-1882 | Charles W. Buoy |
| 1820-1834 | Jacob Gruber | 1882-1885 | William J. Stevenson |
| 1825-1827 | Henry G. King | 1885-1888 | Jesse Bowman Young |
| 1833-1835 | Francis Hodgson | 1888-1891 | Ezra H. Yocum |
| 1835-1837 | Robert Gerry | 1891-1893 | Thomas J. Leak |
| 1837-1839 | Thomas J. Thompson | 1893-1898 | Benjamin F. Dimmick |
| 1839-1841 | William Barnes | 1898-1905 | J. Wesley Hill |
| 1841-1843 | Joseph Lybrand | 1905-1910 | Isaac Wood |
| 1843-1845 | Anthony Atwood | 1910-1917 | John D. Fox |
| 1845-1847 | Joseph Castle | 1917-1933 | Robert Bagnell |
| 1847-1849 | William Cooper | 1933-1943 | Wilbur V. Mallalieu |
| 1849-1851 | Francis Hodgson | 1943-1950 | W. Emory Hartman |
| 1851-1853 | William Urie | 1950-1974 | Sheridan Watson Bell |
| 1853-1855 | Alfred Cookman | 1974-1981 | Brian Fetterman |
| 1855-1857 | John D. Curtis | 1981-1992 | Calvin H. Cole, Sr. |
| 1857-1859 | David W. Bartine | 1992-2001 | James W. Grubb |
| 1859-1861 | William Bishop | 2001-2007 | Anthony Alexander |
| 1861-1863 | Franklin Moore | 2007-2008 | Joanne Montgomery Link |
| 1863-1866 | John Walker Jackson | 2008-2012 | L. Fitzgerald Reist, II |
| 1866-1868 | John F. Chaplin | 2012-2014 | Marcy Nicholas |
| 1868-1871 | Charles I. Thompson | 2014-2016 | Yvette Davis |
| 1871-1874 | William J. Stevenson | 2016-2019 | John Quintilian |
| | | 2019-2022 | Michael V. Minnix |

Associate Pastors

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| 1903-1905 | Frederick F. Shannon | 1965-1972 | Wallace J. Cummings |
| 1936-1942 | Alfred B. Haas | 1973-1974 | Kenneth E. Hassinger |
| 1941-1942 | Walter Felton (Minister of Music) | 1973-1974 | F. Lamont Henninger* |
| 1942-1944 | Robert A. Lystad | 1975-1978 | Thomas L. Salsgiver |
| 1944-1946 | Paul L. Austin | 1978-1980 | L. Fitzgerald Reist II |
| 1946-1950 | Clyde E. Way | 1999-2001 | Jennifer Williams |
| 1949-1954 | Berryman H. McCoy* | 2002-2006 | James Zeisloft* |
| 1951-1954 | Donald F. Kingsley, Jr | 2010-2012 | Marcy Nicholas |
| 1953-1957 | William E. Fenstermaker | | |
| 1957-1959 | Taylor E. Miller* | | |
| 1959-1962 | Harry Milton Taylor | | |
| 1962-1965 | W. Mason Olds | | |

Service records for George E. Reed and Gerald Watkins, both previously listed as associates have not been found in church or conference records.

* = served in retired status

Emeritus Pastor:

1975-1998 Carl M. Schneider

Appendix II: Parsonages

1857-1996



1857-1866:

Parsonage of Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church, located on the southern side of Walnut Street, below Second Street. It was used by Revs. Bartine, Bishop, Moore, and Jackson. This parsonage and previous parsonages not photographed were rented.

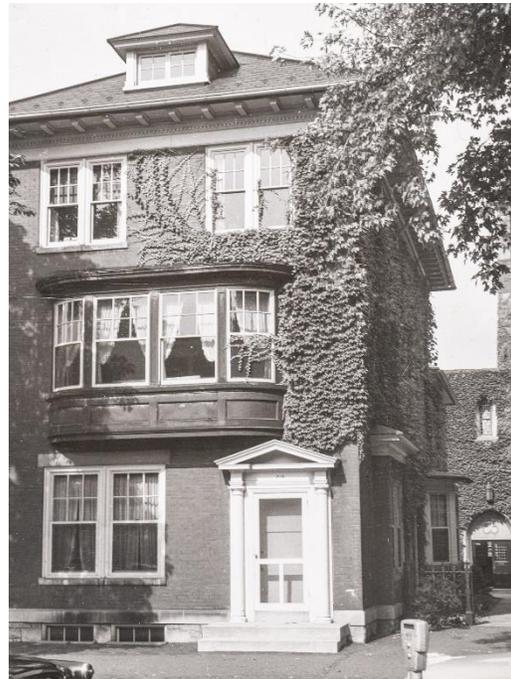


1866-1872: The first parsonage owned by the Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church was located on the east side of Third Street, above Chestnut Street. It was purchased April 1, 1865, from William Calder and wife and was used by Revs. Jackson, Chaplain, Thompson, and Stevenson. The picture above on the right was taken of the actual house years later when it had been converted into a store. The picture on the right is a “recreation” of the façade as it appeared when it was a parsonage.



1872-1915:

This is the second parsonage of Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 212 Pine Street. It was purchased on March 30, 1872, and was used by Revs. Stevenson, Holmes, Hinkle, Buoy, Stevenson, Young, Yocum, Leak, Dimmick, Hill, Wood, and Fox. It was sold March 6, 1914, to Zion Lutheran Church to be used also as a parsonage after Wesley House was built at 216 State Street.



1915-1947: The third parsonage was in what is now known as Wesley House. Then it was the Memorial Parsonage at 216 State Street. The vacant lot was purchased on February 2, 1914, from the Presbyterian Church of Harrisburg on Pine Street. The new parsonage was built here later in 1914 and occupied by January 1915 by Rev. John Fox. It was dedicated on April 9, 1915, at 4:00 p.m. with a bronze tablet honoring the women of the church. It cost \$25,000. Revs. Fox, Bagnell, Mallalieu, and Hartman lived there. It was last a parsonage in October 1947.



1947-1980's:

The fourth parsonage was purchased at 3024 Duke Street, Harrisburg, in 1947. This home was near Paxtang. It was used as the senior pastor's home from 1947-56 for Rev. Hartman and the early years of Rev. Bell. It was then used as the second parsonage for the associate pastors, including Revs. Fenstermaker, Miller, Taylor, Olds, Cummings, Hassinger, Salsgiver, and Reist. It was sold after 1980 and proceeds used to provide housing allowances.



1956-1973: On September 29, 1956, an additional parsonage was purchased at 2518 North Second

Street and became the home of the senior pastor, Sheridan Bell. After being damaged in the 1972 flood, the property was sold to Dr. Bell in 1973.



1974-2006:

In 1974, the last parsonage owned by Grace United Methodist Church was bought. Located at 302 Swan Street, Paxtang, it was lived in by Revs. Fetterman, Cole, and Grubb. It was sold in 1996 for \$124,900. Since then, a housing allowance has been provided for the pastor and family.

Appendix III: The Fight for Harrisburg

The following story is reprinted with permission from *The Chronicle*, Volume 32, Spring 2021 of the Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church. This documents the controversy at General Conference between the Philadelphia Conference that had jurisdiction over the state capital, Harrisburg, and the Central Pennsylvania Conference that had jurisdiction over all of Dauphin County but not Harrisburg.

The Fight for Harrisburg passages adapted from Frederick Maser's 1971 *Methodism in Central Pennsylvania 1771-1969*, pages 3-5

"Mr. Chairman!" The place was Chicago. The year 1868. The occasion – the meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church with representatives from every Annual Conference in the country.

Henry Slicer, a delegate from the East Baltimore Conference, was trying to secure the floor. "Bishop Simpson!" he shouted more insistently. This time he attracted the bishop's attention. "I move, sir, that we reconsider the question of the boundaries of the Central Pennsylvania Conference."

"No! No!" cried some of the delegates. Several began to speak at once. "Second the motion to reconsider!" shouted one. "I move the motion be laid on the table," cried another. "Second the motion." "No! No! Let's hear what he has to say."

When Slicer eventually regained the floor he said, "Bishop, I move to amend the item whereby we laid down the boundaries of the Central Pennsylvania Conference so as to add the words 'including Harrisburg.'" The motion would take Harrisburg out of the Philadelphia Conference and place it in the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

The delegates of the Philadelphia Conference, from whom the city of Harrisburg would be taken like a prize, sat as if stunned. The next moment they began leaping to their feet in opposition. They received unexpected help from Sanford Hunt of the Genesee Conference who opposed the motion. Then three delegates from Philadelphia spoke in rapid succession. They were gifted men and able speakers, and their speeches riddled the motion like bullets.

In the meantime, there was no one to speak for Central Pennsylvania. The Conference had just been formed by the action of this session of the General Conference, and it had no elected representatives to combat the men from Philadelphia. When the vote was taken, the motion was lost, and Harrisburg remained a part of the Philadelphia Conference.

When the delegates left Chicago after the General Conference, they knew that the fight for Harrisburg would probably be renewed when the General Conference met four years later.

They were right! This time, however, Central Pennsylvania was represented at the General Conference, meeting in Brooklyn in 1872, by some of its strongest preachers and spokesmen. Jacob S. McMurray led the attack to capture Harrisburg. He was tall, powerfully built, with quick black eyes, a stubborn mouth, and a shock of jet-black hair. He was a ready speaker and possessed a humorous kind of sarcasm with which he often shattered his opponents in debate. He came fully prepared to speak on a motion to "include Harrisburg" in the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

Others supported McMurray; Stephen D. Brown of New York and [first pastor at Grace in 1820] Francis Hodgson, formerly of the Philadelphia, now of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. But Philadelphia was not to be bowled over. Their delegates had anticipated McMurray's move, and they were organized to oppose it.

Charles Albright, their first speaker, was a nationally known popular figure. A Union officer in the War Between the States, he had risen to the position of General. More recently he had achieved recognition in the press for quelling riots in the coal regions of his state.

W.H. Elliot, a presiding elder, followed the General. An aggressive man, he was an able debater and a brilliant speaker, and he used every argument he could muster to answer the men from Central Pennsylvania.

Finally, like a football coach sending in his star quarterback at a critical stage of the game, Philadelphia put forth a man who at one time had been among the most outstanding men of the denomination. A noted orator, a former President of Dickinson College, a missionary secretary whose eloquent appeals

had increased missionary giving in the denomination from \$100,000 to \$700,000, his name was John Price Durbin. But Durbin was old and worn—and it was generally known that he had decided to announce to the General Conference his retirement from his missionary position.

When Durbin finished speaking, Elliot of Philadelphia rose again to try a parliamentary maneuver. He moved to table the matter. But his motion to table was defeated 117 to 68, and the original McMurray motion was adopted by a similar overwhelming majority. Harrisburg had been captured for Central Pennsylvania.

*Used with permission from the editor, Milton W. Loyer
The Chronicle: Journal of the Historical Society of the
Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church
Volume XXXII, Spring 2021*

Appendix IV: Prominent Lay Members of Grace Church



William Calder Jr.: July 13-1821 – July 17, 1880

With only a limited education, he was inducted into the railroad business of his father at 16 years of age. In 1851, he assumed the entire management of his father's affairs, and in 1857, undertook the completion of the Lebanon Valley Railroad and employed 600 men. In 1858, he became a member of the well-known banking firm of Cameron, Calder & Co., which later became the First National Bank of Harrisburg, of which he was president. He was elected a director of the Northern Central Railway. During the Civil War, he rendered the government service by purchasing and supplying 42,000 horses and 67,000 mules at a good price (\$125 and \$117.50).

Mr. Calder was one of the founders of the Harrisburg Car Works, the Lochiel Rolling Mills, the Harrisburg Cotton Mills, Foundry and Machine Works, the Fire-Brick Works, and the Pennsylvania Steel Works. In 1873 and again in 1876, he was appointed by Governor Hartranft as a trustee of the Pennsylvania State Lunatic Hospital. He was also appointed to a commission to devise a plan for the government of cities, and in 1880, was elected a director of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. For many years he ably officiated in the management of city affairs through its councils. His social qualities gathered about him a host of warm personal friends. He was among the founders of the Harrisburg Hospital and the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. He was formerly a Whig, later a Republican, and a presidential elector in 1876.



J. Horace McFarland: September 29, 1858 - October 2, 1948

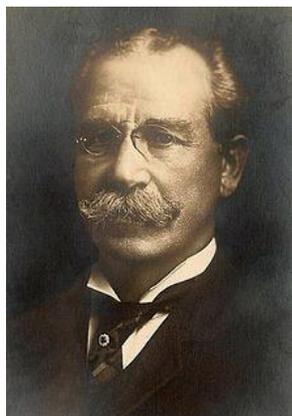
At the age of six, J. Horace McFarland moved to Harrisburg from Juniata County, PA with his family. His father George had a printing business and later a nursery. At nineteen, J. Horace became the owner of printing business then named Mount Pleasant Press. With his interest in horticulture, the business began selling seed catalogues but soon became a premier horticultural publishing company.

By 1900, J. Horace McFarland joined the City Beautiful movement in Harrisburg that was headed by Mira Lloyd Dock. Together they got support for community gardens including rose gardens that Mr. McFarland personally developed near the Polyclinic Hospital.

Realizing the negative health impacts of living in a growing city with sewage issues, unpaved streets, and dense urban life, the need for gardens and parks was obvious to Mr. McFarland. Locally, the new planned community called Bellevue Park included large yards and gardens. His work and publishing on City Beautiful issues received national attention, and by 1904, he became the first president of the American Civic Association, a position he held for 20 years. His vital interest and work for preserving America's natural beauty and developing environmental policy led to the preservation of Niagara Fall and development of the National Park Service.

While extremely active at Grace Church, Mr. McFarland also served as chairman of the State Art Commission for Pennsylvania and was vice-president of the National Municipal League. In 1935 he was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to serve on the National Park Trust Boards.

He died in 1948 at his Breeze Hill home and gardens. He and his wife Lydia are buried in Harrisburg Cemetery.



John I Beggs: September 17, 1847 – October 17, 1925

Born in Philadelphia, at age seven, after his father died, John Beggs found work in a brickyard and as a cattleman and butcher. At age 21 he moved to Harrisburg to work as an accountant for Mitchell and Haggerty Coal Company. Mr. Beggs also sold real estate and fire insurance. He joined the Masonic fraternities and married Sue Elizabeth Charles.

He was involved in the organization of the Harrisburg Electric Light Company, whose plant he helped to build and manage. It was the first commercially successful electric light plant in the United States. One source reports that Mr. Beggs' interest in lighting was because he was chairman of the Grace Church building committee and he wanted the building to have electricity. His success in Harrisburg led him to be hired by J.P. Morgan to be the plant manager of the Edison Illuminating Company in New York City. He worked closely with Thomas Edison, and became one of the small group of Edison Pioneers. He was named Western Manager of the Edison Company in Chicago, which later became General Electric. He also worked in Cincinnati, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In Milwaukee he built the Public Service Building, and became president/general manager of the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company. In 1911, he purchased an island near Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and developed Beggs Isle as a summer residence for himself and his daughter's family. At the time of his death in 1925, he was an active director of 53 companies. He died in Milwaukee at the age of 78, and is buried Harrisburg Cemetery with a large stone visible from Herr Street. Edison and Beggs remained friends throughout their lives. On Beggs' 75th birthday, Edison gave John Beggs a grandfather clock with a card addressed "To my hustler friend, (signed) Thomas A. Edison."



Beverly Fowler-Conner: January 19, 1930 – January 28, 2020

Beverly was the church historian and author of *This is Grace*. She was born, raised, and attended college in North Carolina, where she met her first husband, Robert H. Fowler, in 1948 at Guilford College. They were married for 52 years.

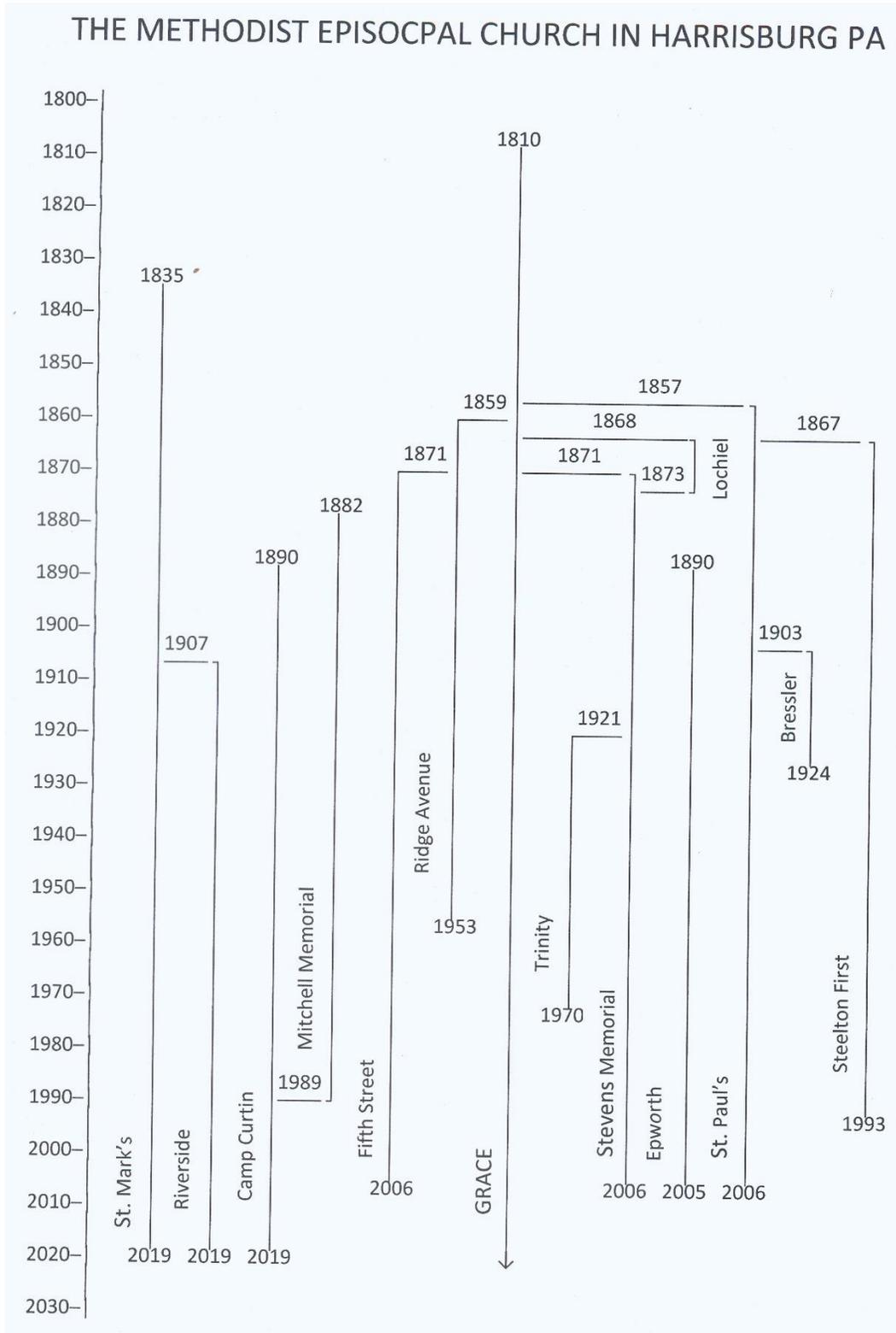
In her lifetime, she was a school teacher, a newspaper columnist, and book review programmer for the New Cumberland Public Library. She served 12 years on the board of Bethany Village. Mrs. Fowler-Conner was the widow of Robert Howard Fowler and of D. Bruce Conner, an educator who served as superintendent of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. She was a lifelong United Methodist; a columnist for *The News-Sun*, *Perry County Times*, and *Duncannon Record* and a contributor to *Guideposts* magazine.

Through personal giving and through the Robert H. and Beverly U. Fowler Foundation, which she founded with her first husband, she supported the arts and good causes in central Pennsylvania and beyond. WITF, the Harrisburg Symphony, New Cumberland Public Library, the Care Assurance Program at Bethany Village, and the Harrisburg Arts Association were among those who benefited from her generosity. She and her first husband co-founded Historical Times Inc. which published a variety of special interest magazines including *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *American History Illustrated*, *Early American Life*, *British History Illustrated*, *Fly-Fisherman*, and *Bowhunter*.

One of her four children is Dr. Alyce Mundy McKenzie, a United Methodist pastor and professor of Preaching and Worship at Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology.

NOTE: If current or past church members have suggestions for additional persons to be included in this section, and have the information about the person, please contact Wayne Bender through Grace Church.

Appendix V: The Methodist Church Chronology in Harrisburg



Appendix VI:
The Harrisburg Telegraph - Monday Evening, February 8, 1897

His Promise Fulfilled
New Halls Ready for the Legislature This Evening
Great Transformation Made
Grace Church Interior Remodeled Since Last Wednesday
No Reason for Adjournment

No stage manager ever put on a more complete transformation scene than Governor Hastings and his corps of rapid change artists have made at Grace Methodist Church for Pennsylvania Legislature. Wednesday afternoon last about 3 o'clock, the trustees of the church proffered the building to the Governor and the Board of Public Buildings and Grounds. Then it was a model church. Today it has a complete system of electric lighting; steam heating throughout the entire building, and in every one of the twenty-odd new rooms which have been made, a complete cold and hot air system of ventilation; larger and more rooms for storage and posting and folding of the two houses; committee rooms, office for the officials and clerks of the legislative bodies and two very pleasant, well lighted and heated chambers for the House of Representatives and Senate.

The Senate has its post office, its cloak room, its washroom and shaving parlors; quarters for the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff of assistants; a rail about its floor to keep the spectators off the carpets; a gallery – in fact anything and everything that the most exacting persons could want in such an emergency. New desks and old chairs are on hand for the Senate.

Over in the main auditorium room, where the House will sit two hundred and more chairs are being unpacked. At 4 o'clock this morning Governor Hastings, who had been superintending the improvements since midnight, ordered the floor to be cleared ready for placing desks and chairs. It is now clear. The Governor remarked this morning: "The House desks have not arrived, but we have had temporary ones made and will carry out our contract to be ready tonight at 9 o'clock.

The Governor is noticeably pleased with the work done. He makes no secret of the fact and says that the whole job has been a very fascinating thing. Unless one had seen the place before it was taken hold of by the remodelers, the extent of the transformation could not be estimated. The most remarkable changes are in the cellars. Where two long, dank, dark dirt-floored, sub-cellars were on Wednesday last, there are now some twenty rooms with halls, ceilings, steam heat, electric lights, ventilation – all complete. The furniture, shelves, filing cases, etc., from the Sergeant-at-Arms' rooms in the old Senate and House cellars has been removed from the old capitol intact and Sergeant-at-Arms Larry Eyre, of the Senate is ready for business.

Speaker Boyer's room has been restored just as convenient to the House as of yore, with most of the former furniture. All the other officials have comfortable quarters, while the provisions for the two bodies on the floors are excellent.

A number of members of both branches arrived early to-day to see how the improvements had progressed. Every one of them was amazed at the expeditious manner in which it had been accomplished and the officials are overwhelmed with congratulations.

Appendix VII:
Political Corruption and the Real Cause of the Capitol Fire?
comments by the editor – Dr. Milton W. Loyer. Susquehanna Conference Archivist
passages from Silas Comfort Swallow's autobiographical III Score & X

Rev. Silas Comfort Swallow (1839-1930) is considered by many to be the most prominent Methodist clergyperson ever to serve in central Pennsylvania. His Harrisburg service includes Ridge Avenue (1887-1892) and superintendent/editor at the Harrisburg Book Room (1892-1902). He was the 1904 Prohibition

Party candidate for President of the United States. He was convinced that the 1897 fire which destroyed the capitol building was deliberately set by dishonest politicians covering their tracks – and he publicly made such accusations, for which he was later sued. The following pages from his autobiography give the gist of that story. A biographical sketch of Swallow appears in the 1974 Encyclopedia of World Methodism.

page 197 – We come now to February 1897, and to a record of events and experiences wholly new to the author, as they have to deal with courts, legislators, judges, witnesses, verdicts, appeals and decisions. I had through my nearly sixty years, never sued nor been sued—had never appeared as a plaintiff, defendant, or witness.

My most convenient walk from my home on North Sixth Street to the Methodist Book Rooms, of which I had then been superintendent for five years, was through the State Capitol grounds, where I experienced extensive changes going on in both building and grounds. Daniel Hartman Hastings, named for a veteran Methodist preacher, had been elected Governor in 1894. He had appointed one to an important office in his cabinet, to be known here as Johnnie DeLancy, which was the signal for all sorts of changes—many of them utterly uncalled for in the estimation of thoughtful observers, and excusable only on the ground that the State was plethoric in cash, and the taxpayers needed further to be bled.

Four years before, \$125,000 had been spent on the House of Representatives, and now \$70,000 additional was put upon it. A rose house worth \$5000 cost nearly four times that amount. A flag pole for the Soldiers' Orphan School at Scotland, worth \$50, had cost nearly eight times that amount, and a private room at that school, well stocked with liquors at the public expense, was maintained where government officials drank to drunkenness and gambled for keeps. Granolithic pavements around the capital ground were costing two or three times their value. Expensive furniture slightly soiled was privately disposed of to favorite purchasers, I will not say how, and they divided the spoils with those who favored them. Other new furniture was receipted for the capitol, and then hauled to private houses. It cost \$200 to hang a picture and \$18 each for a large number of spittoons. Six men, political hangers-on, guarded one gallery door at \$6 a day each – or \$36 a day for guarding an unimportant hole in the wall. High salaries were being paid to subordinate officials, their duties being farmed out for one-third of what they themselves received, while they remained at their homes engaged in their own personal business. The pay rolls were padded at times with scores of party workers who were doing nothing for the State.

Taxpayers who had knowledge of the stealing congratulated themselves on the fact that about everything had been done, and every pretext exhausted, for grabbing the people's money. But alas, they did not know the depth of the villainy of the men into whose hands the government had fallen, for, on February 2nd, near the noon hour, the cry of fire was raised and soon the center building of the three was a mass of flames.

The odor of burning wood had been smelled and remarked upon for two days. The knowing ones suavely said, "Oh, it comes from the furnace." The fire was finally discovered over the Senate chamber, where the tell-tale books were stored, but the Senators sat undisturbed and then, amid jokes and laughter mingled with curses, adjourned on motion. One Senator more brave than the others had gone to the second floor, seized an axe, and chopped a whole in the surbase—which let in the air and thus expedited business. The alarm was sent in to the city fire department as to take it past the capital and five squares away—up to the Pennsylvania Railroad round-house. A fire had been kindled 125 feet away from the fire that burned the building in the basement of the extreme east wing—and as I proved by three witnesses, there was absolutely no connection between the two fires.

A few days after the fire we took four mechanics as witnesses, and about the time we gathered all the facts needed, Mr. DeLancy came and ordered us out on the pretense that our lives were in danger. We offered to give bonds to indemnify the state against any claims for damages if Hastings and DeLancy would let us pursue our investigation. But though the application was frequently made, it was as often refused. A man claimed by them to be a fire expert was brought from Philadelphia, but instead of keeping him here to testify before the Senate Committee on the fire, before which I took my witnesses that very evening, the expert took an afternoon train to Philadelphia and DeLancy rushed into the afternoon papers to tell what would have been his testimony if he had remained—viz., that the fire came down a chimney. But we showed that the chimney was not in use and had been bricked shut just under the roof. Employees discharged in the ten years that have intervened have told their intimate friends that still other fires than the fatal one were

kindled in other parts of the building. We could prove beyond a doubt that the fire was the work of an incendiary, but could not prove who the incendiary was.

The Grace Methodist Episcopal Church was rented for \$20,000 (it was used for five months) in which to house the most abandoned gang of lawmakers that ever disgraced a state. And this gang transferred their demijohns, euchre decks, and tobacco fumes to the house of God, the fixing up of which for their entrance had been done in four days and four nights at a cost to the state of nearly \$60,000. It will perhaps never be known how much of this was stolen and by whom. Certain it is that citizens of Harrisburg, and some of them Methodists at that, attempted and were caught in the grab. How many succeeded we know not. The chairman of the Legislative Committee on appropriations showed me a bill for \$2500, presented to pay for seats in the gallery of Grace Church. It was being lobbied not by the church trustees, but by citizens of Harrisburg who certified to its correctness. But the seats were [already] in the gallery and are there yet. Two days after I was shown the bill, I exposed the fraud to the daily papers and it was withdrawn under the pretense of amending it—but it was never heard of after.

As indicated by the newspaper account on the next page, Swallow was actually incarcerated for a while for refusing to divulge his sources and refusing to cooperate with the official "investigation." While he was originally convicted of criminal libel against J.V. DeLancy and Representative W.F. Steward, that conviction was later overturned by a state appeals court which ruled that citizens have the right to criticize state officials. Nominated by the Prohibition Party and endorsed by the Honest Government Party and John Wanamaker supporters who bolted the Republican ticket, Swallow ran for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1898 and garnered 133,000 (13.7%) votes. The truth behind the capitol fire remains a mystery to this day.

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The Chronicle: Journal of the Historical Society of the
Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church
Volume XXXII, Spring 2021

Post-Fire Fireworks

clipped from the Harrisburg Daily Independent, April 6, 1897, page 1

Rev. Dr. Silas C. Swallow appeared before the bar of the senate this morning to purge himself of contempt in not answering questions asked him by the committee that investigated the cause of the state capitol fire. Mr. Swallow was brought before the bar of the senate by Sergeant-at-Arms Eyre.

Senator McCarrell, the president pro tem., who occupied the chair, addressing Dr. Swallow, said: "The senate has been informed that you declined to give the names of the persons on whose information you wrote the article in the 'Pennsylvania Methodist.' I now ask you whether you are willing to furnish the names of these persons?"

James A. Stranahan, Dr. Swallow's counsel, was present, but in his behalf and for the prisoner, Senator Gobin, of Lebanon, said: "When Dr. Swallow was subpoenaed to appear before the committee, several cases were pending against him in court, and he believed that to divulge the names of his informants would be to prejudice his case. He therefore refused to answer the questions. One of these cases has not yet been tried, but Dr. Swallow is willing to go before the committee and testify and have his informants testify. He does not desire to be held in contempt, and he purges himself of all contempt by agreeing to testify."

The chair asked Dr. Swallow if he was willing to assent to the statement made by Mr. Gobin. The answer was in the affirmative.

At this point Senator Walton, of Greene, presented a resolution which stated that in purging himself of contempt Dr. Swallow state whether he is willing to appear before the committee and answer the questions propounded and that if he refused to so testify that he be recommitted to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and that he be kept in the Dauphin county prison until he answers the questions.

Mr. Grady moved to strike out so much of the resolution as had been embodied in the statement made by Mr. Gobin in behalf of Dr. Swallow. To this Mr. Walton vigorously objected. He said that his resolution should have been read before any statement had been made. "This prisoner," he continued, "has been adjudged guilty of contempt of the rights and privileges of this body. We must protect ourselves and thereby our constituents. I do not wish to persecute or punish the prisoner. Far from it, but we should make the legislative record perfect. This resolution, if adopted, should be placed first in these proceedings.

Mr. Grady stated that in presenting the resolution he merely wished to have it conform with the proceedings. However, Mr. Gobin said he could see no sense in passing the resolution. "What we have sought to do," he declared, "has been accomplished. Inasmuch as Dr. Swallow has agreed to testify, I move to further amend the resolution of Mr. Walton by moving that Dr. Swallow be discharged from the custody of the sergeant-at-arms."

"I will not vote for this amendment," asserted Mr. Grady. "Dr. Swallow is in contempt, pure and simple. He has not purged himself, but he says he will go before the committee and do so. We must not back down. If we do our power in this direction will have been ended."

Then for nearly three-quarters of an hour the lawyers in the senate tried to determine whether Dr. Swallow was still in contempt, and whether he had really been in the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. No agreement was reached on this point, and, after a deal of talking, a vote was taken on Mr. Gobin's motion to discharge Dr. Swallow from the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. The motion was defeated by a vote of 20 to 27, the members voting as follows:

Yeas—Messrs. Cochran, Crawford, Crouse, Eby, Flinn, Gobin, Haines, Hardenbergh, Hertzler, Hummel, Hyde, Kauffman, Losch, Magee, Miller, McCarrell, Rowland, Scott, Stiles and White.—Total, 20.

Nays—Messrs. Andrews, Becker, Brown, of Philadelphia; Brown, of Westmoreland; Chisholm, Critchfield, Durham, Gibson, Grady, Heller, Kennedy, McQuown, Meredith, Merrick, Milleisen, Mitchell, of Jefferson; Moyer, Osbourn, Saylor, Shortt, Snyder, Sproul, Stine-man, Thomas, Vare, Vaughan and Walton.—Total, 27.

Mr. Grady withdrew his amendment, but Mr. White moved to amend the Walton resolution by striking out the words "that he be confined in the Dauphin county jail." This amendment was defeated by a vote of 23 to 23, and the original resolution was adopted by a viva voce vote.

Mr. Walton thereupon moved to place the resolution first in the day's proceedings. This was agreed to. This ended the proceedings, and the couple of hundred lookers-on left the chamber in a hurry.



Appendix VIII:

1940 The Starkey Organ Plaque

1917 – 1919
 THIS ORGAN AND TABLET
 ERECTED IN THE HONOR OF THOSE MEMBERS OF THE
 GRACE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 WHO WITH UNSWERVING FIDELITY AND NOBLE PATRIOTISM
 ANSWERED THE CALL OF THEIR COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WAR

★ Robert A. Boll, September 27, 1918

★ J. Harold Fox, September 28, 1918

ARMY

Russell B. Armor
 William Berthal, Jr.
 A.L. Bishop
 Clarence B. Bishop
 Theodore W. Black
 William Calder
 Eugene W. Carter
 Merrill H. Caton
 Raymond S. Caton
 Albert R. Compton
 Walter H. Compton
 John B. Demming
 William S. Denehey
 Harrie A. Douglass
 Kenneth M. Downes
 A. Leroy Egol
 Ralph S. Eldridge
 Alfred S. Ellenberger
 J. Wesley Ellenberger

Robert B. Ellenberger
 John Endress
 Harvey H. Frank
 Samuel Freedman
 Richard F. Hamer
 William H. Hamer
 John C. Harlacker
 John C. Herman
 William S. Hoover
 George R. Kinter
 Archibald G. Knisely
 Frederick S. Laucks
 James H. Lee
 Joseph Leswing
 Donald F. Lybarger
 John Miller
 Richard Moyer
 John H. Myers
 Jay E. Neals

Victor W. Neiman
 John D. Paul
 F. Thurston Ransburg
 Livingston V. Rausch
 John L. Rausch
 James McK Reiley, Jr.
 J. Spencer Ross
 Robert W. Seitz
 George Shoemaker
 F. Boas Sites
 H. Elmore Smith
 Frederick D. Stieffer
 Donald F. Taylor
 John G. Todd
 J. Wilbur Towson
 Herbert H. Wallower
 Raymond B. Winter
 E.R. Wiseman

NAVY

James Claypool
 H. Vigor Cranston

Kenneth Eldredge
 John J. Hargest
 William Landis

Charles K. Saltsman
 Joseph C. Todd

Y.M.C.A.

Robert Bagnell
 Albert M. Hamer

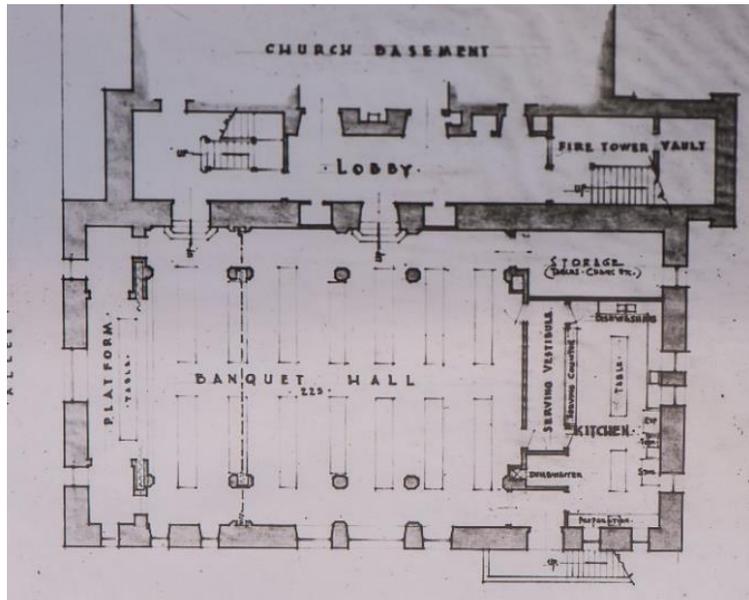
Frank R. Hean
 George B, Landis

Eleanor Leonard
 Julia M. Stamm

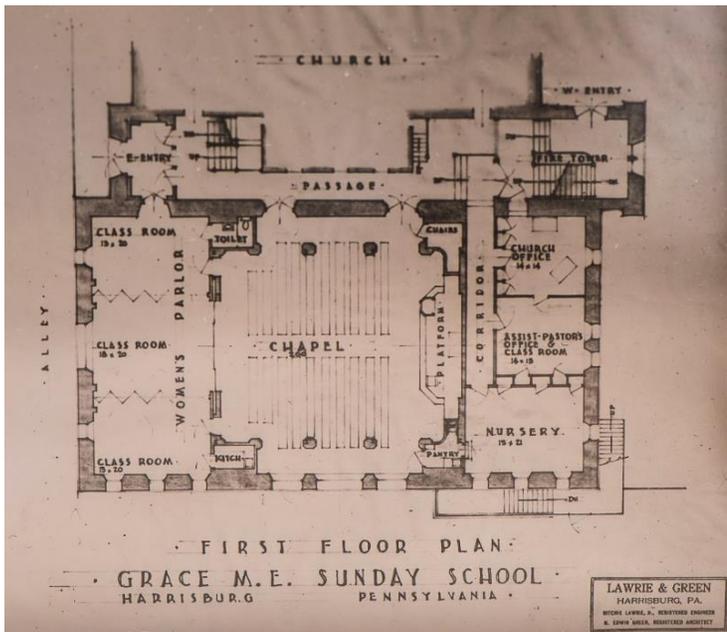
“THE RIGHT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN PEACE”
 Woodrow Wilson

The plaque was originally placed in the chancel near the organ, but its size required that it be moved during the chancel renovation in 1940. The plaque is now in the first-floor hallway near the entrance to Beggs Chapel.

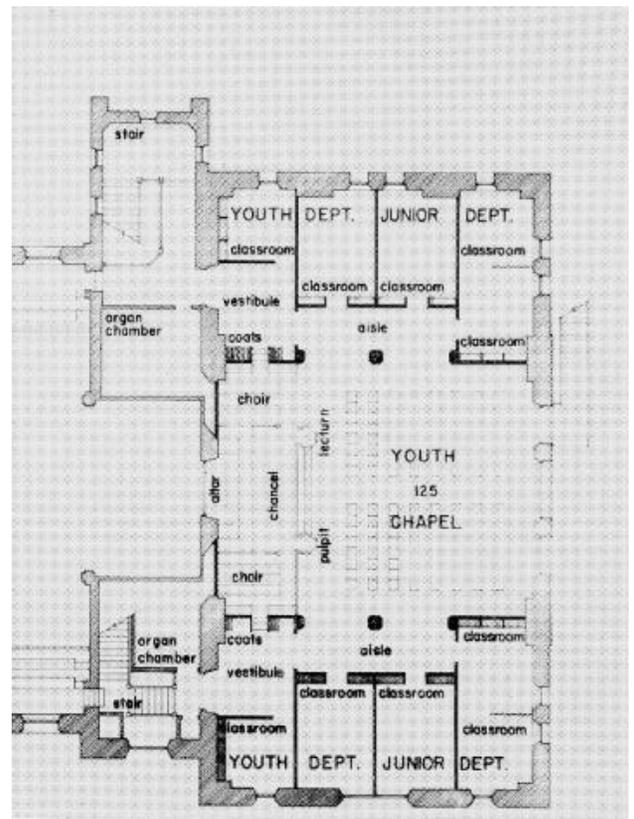
Appendix IX: 1940 Renovation Floor Plans



Fellowship Hall – Lower Level



First Floor - Sanctuary



Third Floor
Former Assembly Room

Appendix XI: Grace Church's United Methodist Ministry Beyond the Local Church

Lisa Bender, who joined Grace Church in 2016, was elected to General Conference in 2012 and as chair of the Susquehanna Conference delegation to the 2016 and Special 2019 General Conferences. She also serves as the chair of the Conference Episcopacy Committee and is a member of the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. Her work on the Episcopacy Committee continues until the next General Conference, which has been postponed until 2024. She is also the chairperson of United Methodists for Kairos Response, an unofficial United Methodist advocacy group working on behalf of the Palestinian people who are living under occupation in Israel.

Wallace J. Cummings was the founder of Teen Challenge and Bethany House Center in Harrisburg prior to becoming the associate pastor at Grace

Charles E. Edgar also served as the first conference lay leader of the new Central Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church from 1968-76. He also held the unofficial title of Song Leader of the Annual Conference for many years.

Al Haas, who was a young associate at Grace from 1936-1942, later became a consultant to the hymnal committee in 1964. "The Book of Hymns" was the last hymnal of the Methodist Church and was used until the first hymnal of The United Methodist Church was published in 1989.

Lenore Haas Alexander, was the Executive Director of the Neighborhood Center from October 1978 to August 1988. As a Quaker, Ms. Haas Alexander found that the values and social concerns of the United Methodists were very similar to those of Quakers. Working at the Neighborhood Center, she exemplified the commandment to love God and love neighbor. Her obituary read: "Lenore Haas Alexander brought inspiration and joy to those who loved her. She lived a life devoted to faith, family and service to her community." Lenore was also the wife of Reverend Anthony Alexander, who pastored Grace Church in the early 2000s. The playground at the center on Third Street was named in her honor, and now memory.

Christie R. House, a recent new member, served as the editor of New World Outlook mission magazine and for the Board of Global Ministries in New York City since 1987, continues writing for Global Ministries as a consultant.

Barbara Butterfield Janecko served on the Board of Directors of the Neighborhood Center from 1985-2010. One of her responsibilities was coordinating volunteers from Grace and around the conference to volunteer at Hershey Park, an effort that raised tens of thousands of dollars for the center.

Robert A. Lystad, at age 23 was the assistant pastor at Grace in 1942-43. He transferred to the Ohio Conference in 1944. In 1961, he became a professor of African Studies at Johns Hopkins, and Associate Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies from 1980 until his retirement in 1991.

Donald Reasoner, is the newly elected chair of the administrative board for Grace UMC. He worked for the General Board of Global Ministries, 1990-2020 as an executive regional director for Latin America, a missionary in Nicaragua, Director of Interpretations, and in his retirement is a consultant for the United Methodist Council of Bishops and the Judicial Council. He continues to coordinate translation work for General Conferences and international agency meetings.

L. Fitzgerald Reist II was the Secretary of General Conference from 2004-2016 and served as assistant secretary from 1988-2004.

Thomas Salsgiver, associate pastor in 1975-78, later served as the conference council director from 2000-08 and 2016-18. He was the Lewisburg District Superintendent from 2008-16 and Assistant to the Bishop from 2016-2022. He was the Susquehanna Conference representative to the 2019 UMC Commission on A Way Forward.

Jennifer Williams, associate pastor from 1999-2001, became the Parliamentarian of the Susquehanna Conference in 2012, and continues to assist the bishop to preside over Annual Conference. Since 2008, Jennifer also serves as the Assistant Treasurer to the Northeastern Jurisdiction.



Appendix XII: The Most Beautiful and Historic Churches in Pennsylvania

In 2015, PennLive published and updated a list of the ten most beautiful and historic churches to visit in Pennsylvania. They are:

- Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, 1723 Race Street, Philadelphia
- Saint Anthony's Chapel, 1704, Harpster St., Pittsburgh
- Zion Lutheran Church, 15 S. 4th St., Harrisburg
- Gloria Dei Church, 916 S. Swanson St., Philadelphia
- First Presbyterian, 320 6th Ave., Pittsburgh
- Cathedral of St. Patrick, 212 State St., Harrisburg
- Christ Church, 20 N. American Str., Philadelphia
- Heinz Memorial Chapel, 4200 5th Ave., Pittsburgh
- Old Saint Joseph's National Shrine, 321 Willings Alley, Philadelphia
- Grace United Methodist Church, 216 State St., Harrisburg



In addition to being one of the most beautiful churches in Pennsylvania, Grace United Methodist Church is almost single-handedly responsible for Harrisburg still being the capital of Pennsylvania.

In the late 1800s, many politicians wanted the capital of the state moved back to Philadelphia. When the State Capitol building burned in 1897, the cries to move to Philadelphia grew even louder. However, when the church offered their building, the government opted to stay in Harrisburg, garnering Grace the nickname “The Savior of the Capitol.” During the two years that the government met in the church, the House of Representatives set up in the sanctuary, and the congregation had to meet in various buildings around the city.

In addition to its amazing history, the sanctuary of Grace United Methodist Church is quite beautiful. Two highlights include the large Tiffany stained-glass window above the rear of the sanctuary, and the large painting above the altar. This painting was done by E. Irving Couse, a world-renowned painter of Native American figures. His work hangs in some of the world's more famous art museums, and this is his only known religious painting.

APPENDIX XIII: Time Line for Grace United Methodist Church

| | | |
|---------|-------------|---|
| 1719 | | John Harris Sr. settles in area |
| 1784 | | John Harris Jr. proposed building town of Harris Ferry |
| 1785 | | William McClay laid out town of Harrisburg/Harris Ferry |
| 1781 | | First Methodist preaching in Harrisburg area |
| 1783 | | Francis Asbury preaches in Simpson Ferry |
| 1784 | December 23 | Methodist Episcopal Church formed, Baltimore MD |
| 1791 | | Harrisburg incorporated |
| 1802 | | Henry Boehm preaches in Harrisburg |
| 1810 | | First Methodist Society in Harrisburg begins |
| 1812 | | Harrisburg becomes the State Capital |
| 1819 | | First Meeting House on Pine Street used |
| 1820 | December 3 | Second and South Street Church built and dedicated |
| 1820-34 | | Class Meetings / Circuit Rider Jacob Gruber, |
| 1830 | | Methodist Protestant Church divides from Methodist Episcopal Church |
| 1834 | | First pastor – Rec. Francis Hodgson |
| 1836 | June 16 | Society incorporates at Methodist Episcopal Church of Harrisburg |
| 1837 | | Lot at Locust Street bought |
| 1839 | August 25 | First Locust Street Episcopal Church dedicated |
| 1841 | | First choir formed at Locust Street Church |
| 1851 | November 17 | Jenny Lind Concert at Locust Street |
| 1852 | | Locust Street remodeled |

| | | |
|---------|-------------|--|
| 1857 | | Grace Church gives birth to first new church: Vine Street/St. Paul's |
| 1859 | | Grace Church gives birth to Ridge Ave Church |
| 1861-64 | | American Civil War |
| 1862 | August 20 | 29 men from Locust Street enlist in Civil War |
| 1871 | | Land on State Street bought for Grace Church |
| 1871 | August 9 | Foundation Stone laid |
| 1871 | | Grace Church gives birth to Mr. Pleasant Church/13 th St/Stevens Memorial |
| 1872 | November 25 | Grace Methodist Episcopal Church incorporated |
| 1872 | | Locust Street Church sold, worship with Baptists on Pine and 2 nd Streets |
| 1873 | | Educational building of Grace is completed and used |
| 1873/74 | | Grace Methodist Episcopal Church is officially named |
| 1878 | | Church is completed but not spire |
| 1886 | | Grace Church helps resolve problem with deed and saves 13 th St. Church |
| 1888 | | Church Steeple Finished |
| 1890 | | Church births Camp Heights Church, later Camp Curtin |
| 1897 | February 2 | State Capitol Burns |
| 1897 | February 3 | Grace Church agrees to give building to the state as temporary capitol |
| 1897-98 | | Worship at the Opera House at Third and Walnut Streets |
| 1897-98 | | Sunday School at Central High School |
| 1898 | | Church Remodeled, wired for electricity, Adoration of Shepherds |
| 1898 | November 12 | Remodeled Sanctuary reopened, church |
| 1900 | October 22 | Hosts state Sunday School Convention |
| 1901 | January 13 | Rev. Dr. Thomas D. Talmage preached his last sermon at Grace |
| 1903 | May 3 | Morning - Tiffany Window dedicated |
| 1903 | May 3 | Afternoon - Baptism Font dedicated |
| 1903 | May 3 | Enlarged Calder Organ dedicated |
| 1903 | May 7 | Calder Organ Recital Mr. Henry Eyre Browne, Organist |
| 1903 | May 10 | Tallmadge Pulpit Dedicated |
| 1904 | January 10 | Small Communion Table dedicated |
| 1905 | March 12 | Lectern dedicated |
| 1910 | June 9 | Grace helps to start Neighborhood Center |
| 1915 | | Wesley House built and dedicated |
| 1918 | June | Bagnell sent to France and England for YWCA |
| 1919 | | Sanctuary Chancel remodeled; Painting moved back |
| 1920 | January 10 | New Starkey first used |
| 1920 | March 23 | Starkey Organ dedicated |
| 1924 | March 23 | Movie Theatre and Remodeled Assembly Room dedicated |
| 1924 | December 9 | Organ Recital of Mr. Marcel Dupre, Organist from Notre Dame |
| 1925 | | Boy Scout Troop #19 organized |
| 1934 | May 5 | Reenactment of Jenny Lind at Grace |
| 1939 | April | Methodist Episcopal & Methodist Protestants merge to be Methodist Church |
| 1940 | May 5 | Morning: Rededication of the remodeled sanctuary - |
| 1940 | May 5 | Evening: Rededication of the Chapel and Educational Building |
| 1940 | May 12 | Rededication on Communion Table now enlarged for high altar |
| 1940 | May | Dedication of Guild Room, Assembly Room now in Youth and Children Division |
| 1950 | July 1 | New young pastor appointed: Rev. Dr. Sherry Bell |
| 1956 | | Robert Lee George Chapel dedicated |
| 1965 | | Hits highest membership - 1,491 members |
| 1968 | March 29 | The United Methodist Church merges from Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches |
| 1972 | June-July | Grace shares space with Temple Ohev Sholom due to Hurricane Agnes Flood |
| 1973 | | Antiphonal Organ with Trumpets added to balcony |
| 1979 | | Front Door Storm enclosure built |
| 1987 | | Church rewired, new furnace and air conditioning installed |
| 1990 | April 8 | Reconsecration and Dedication of Grace Church - 170 th Anniversary |
| 1883 | July | McFarland Rose Garden Summer Outdoor Services begin |
| 2003 | January | Homeless Shelter Opens one month rotated with 4 churches |
| 2003 | January | Grace host inauguration worship for Governor Edward Rendell |
| 2008 | July 18 | Bishop Peggy Johnson Consecrated during Northeast Jurisdiction Conference |

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| 2009 | June | New Lift installed |
| 2009 | August 29 | Fellowship Hall named Edgar Hall – honoring Charlie Edgar |
| 2009 | | Sunday Breakfast for Neighborhood Friends begins |
| 2016 | January | First Brazilian Student Exchange with Lebanon Valley College |
| 2018 | December 8 | “Impact! Harrisburg” announced by Conference to close 10 city churches |
| 2019 | January 13 | Grace Church Conference votes NOT to close |
| 2019 | Spring | Revitalization Plan developed to launch new Grace Church |
| 2019 | July 1 | Rev. Dr. Michael Minnix appointed |
| 2019 | July 27 | Grace Church participates in Central PA Pride Festival |
| 2019 | July 30 | Becomes LGBTQ+ Reconciling Congregation |
| 2019 | December 1 | Women’s Shelter Opens in basement of Wesley House – |
| 2020 | March 16 | Covid19 Pandemic Lock Down closes church till October 2020 |
| 2020 | September 30 | Ceremonial Session of House of Representatives to celebrate Bicentennial |
| 2020 | November 22 | Church closes again till April 2021 |
| 2021 | December | Women’s Shelter Open Dec. to Mid-April in church basement |
| 2021 | April 4 | Church reopens on Easter with masking, social distancing, etc. |
| 2022 | May 22 | Grace Celebrates 200+ Years |



The Rose Window in the Robert Lee George Memorial Chapel – third floor

Appendix XIV: 2022 Administrative Council and Leadership Team

Administrative Council

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Church Council Chairperson | Don Reasoner |
| Church Council Secretary | Joy Makin |
| Lay Leader | Jim Flesher |
| Treasurer | Open |
| Staff Parish Relations Chairperson | Rick Albright |
| Lay Member to Annual Conference | Sue Kompare |
| Alternate Lay Member to Annual Conference | Bonnie Rhoads |
| Board of Trustees Temporary President | Elaine Rissinger |
| Worship Committee Chairperson | Sue Kompare |
| Finance Committee Co-Chairperson | Barbara Janecko |
| Finance Committee Co-Chairperson | Jim Flesher |
| Reconciling Ministries Team Leader | Stephanie Evans |
| Safe Sanctuary Administrator | Joy Makin |
| Membership Secretary | Lisa Bender |
| Youth Coordinator | Corey Korinda |
| Youth Coordinator | Jeff Frankenberger |
| Education Chairperson | Steve Drachler |
| Certified Lay Minister | Sheila Noss |

Board of Trustees

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Elaine Rissinger | Robert and Amy Hall | Dave Howell |
| Jim Whetstone | Wayne Bender | Don Brown |
| Bonnie Rhoads | | |

Nominating Committee

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Bonnie Rhoads | Eileen Young | Mike Minnix |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|

Reconciling Ministries Team

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Stephanie Evans | Wendy Minnix | Charlie Fetterman |
| Steve Drachler | Sheila Noss | Lisa Bender |
| Sue Kompare | Hillary Holmes | Michael Minnix |
| Doug Gracey | Justine Kompare | |

Bicentennial Committee

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Mary Buchanon | Heidi Shackley | Bill Shackley |
| Robert and Amy Hall | Wayne Bender | Barbara Whetstone |
| Jim Whetstone | Mike Minnix | Sue Kompare |

Sunday Finance Assistants

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Mary Buchanon | Sue Kompare | Joy Makin |
| Barbara Janecko | Jeff Phillips | Grace Flesher |
| Bonnie Rhoads | | |

Staff

Rev. Dr. Michael Minnix, Pastor
Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman, Organist/Choir Director
Justine Kompare, Office Manager
Tom Moran, Sexton
Hannah Reasoner, Missionary - Bogota, Columbia

