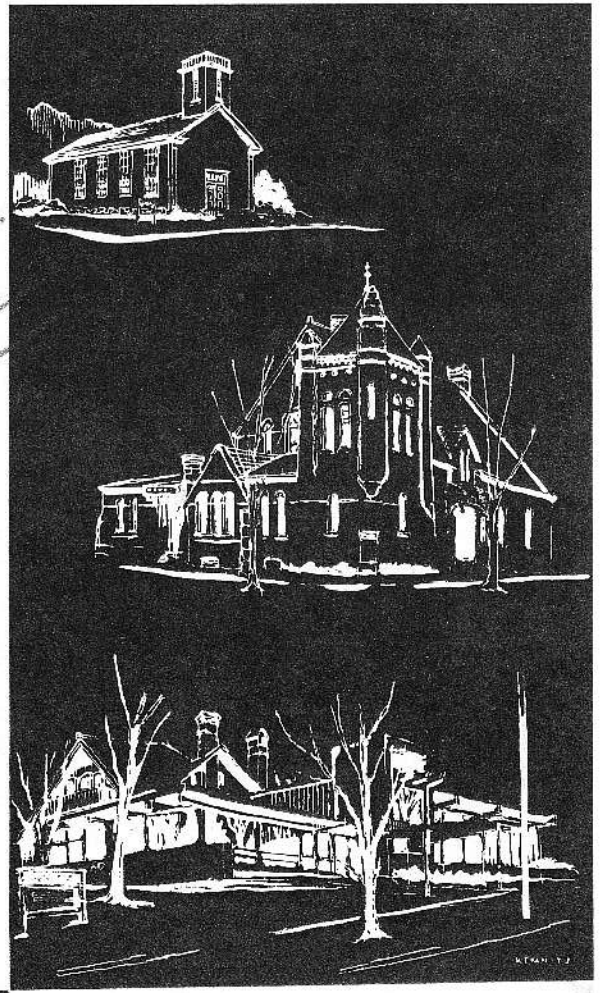
SAVE

1865
1965



Centennial Program

First Unitarian Church

Buckle Family

ANN ARBOR MICHIGAN

This program is dedicated to Dr. John F. Shepard for his half-century of inspiring leadership and participation in the ideals and activities of the Ann Arbor Church.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN	Mrs. Richard Chesbrough
CHURCH HISTORY	Mrs. James Greene Mr. Harold Marley
FRIDAY POTLUCK DINNER	Mrs. Hal Estry Mrs. James Harrington
FRIDAY PROGRAM	Mr. O. L. Chavarria-Aguilar
SATURDAY DINNER ARRANGEMENTS	Mrs. Werner Landecker
PROGRAM COVER	Mr. Milton Kemnitz

Centennial Program

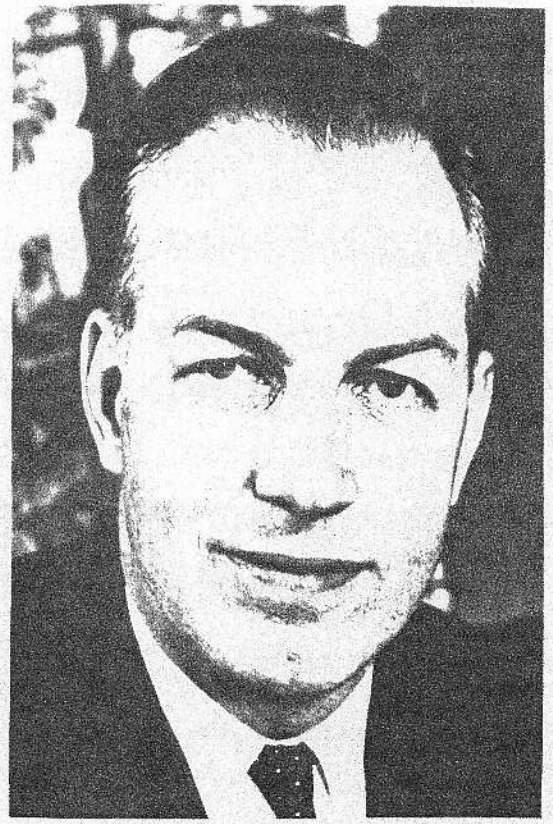
SUNDAY, MAY 9 - Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, President of the Unitarian Universalist Assocaition, will be the guest speaker at both church services.

FRIDAY, MAY 14 - A Potluck Dinner in the Social Hall, 6:30 p.m., featuring the cuisine of our members and an exhibition of pictures and documents of the last century.

SATURDAY, MAY 15 - A dinner at the Town Club for our honored guests, the Board of Trustees, and interested members.

Social Hour: 5:30 Dinner: 6:15

SUNDAY, MAY 16 - Two of the former ministers of this church, Mr. Harold P. Marley and Mr. Edward H. Redman, will be the guest speakers at both church services.

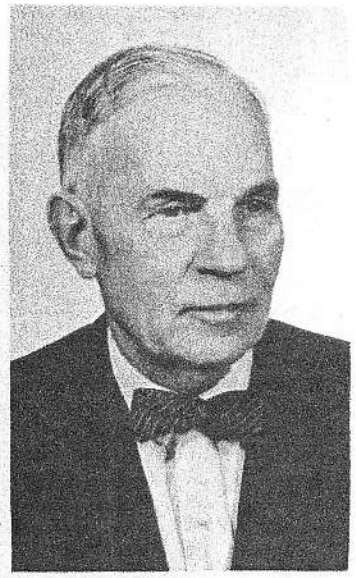


DR. DANA McLEAN GREELEY

President, Unitarian Universalist Association

Dr. Greeley is the first president of the UUA, having been elected in May, 1961, at the time of the formal merger of the Universalist Church of America with the American Unitarian Association. Prior to this merger, he served as president of the AUA. He was elected to this post after a twenty-three year ministry at the famed Arlington Street Church in Boston.

"....in depression times a "New Deal" ministry in a wide, wide parish, with attention to religious arts and the scientific method." Mr. Marley also notes that his father's uncle, William Carlock, was a charter member of this church in 1865. Mr. Marley is now minister in residence of the Evansville Unitarian Fellowship, Evansville, Indiana.



HAROLD P. MARLEY

(Ann Arbor Ministry, 1929-1942)

"....program development for the Sunday School, the fashioning of the new church, heavy involvment in denominational affairs, and making good use of the resources so generously provided by the bequests of the Jacksons were the main concerns of the latter years of the Redman ministry." Mr. Redman is now the minister of the Unitarian Church of Arlington, Virginia.

EDWARD H. REDMAN

(Ann Arbor Ministry, 1943-1960)

MILESTONES

May, 1865 - Articles of Association signed; the founding of the Unitarian Church in Ann Arbor.

1865-1877 - Charles H. Brigham, Minister.

January, 1867 - The First Unitarian Society purchased and occupied the church building at Fourth and Ann Streets from the First Methodist Society.

1877-1878 - Joseph H. Allen, Minister.

1878-1898 - Jabez T. Sunderland, Minister.

1882 - The First Unitarian Church at the corner of State and Huron Streets was completed.

1898-1905 - Joseph H. Crooker, Minister.

1906-1910 - Henry W. Foote, Minister.

January, 1912 - Articles of re-incorporation as "The First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor, Mich." were signed and sealed by the Michigan Secretary of State.

1910-1912 - Percy M. Dawson, Minister

1912-1918 - Robert S. Loring, Minister.

1919-1928 - Sidney S. Robins, Minister.

1929-1942 - Harold P. Marley, Minister.

November, 1929 - A service of rededication was held to celebrate the remodeling of the church and the decision of the members to continue to uphold a liberal religion in this city.

1942-1960 - Edward H. Redman, Minister.

1946 - The property at State and Huron Streets was sold to the Grace Bible Church and the Dr. Dean Myers property at 1917 Washtenaw was acquired.

1956 - The new additions of auditorium, social hall and church house were completed at 1917 Washtenaw.

1961 - - Erwin A. Gaede, Minister.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR

1865 - 1965

THE HISTORY OF THE ANN ARBOR UNITARIAN CHURCH reflects in microcosm the international involvements, social upheavals, and philosophical dialogues which have concerned our country for the last one hundred years. As we celebrate our Centennial anniversary, it is fascinating and informative to view the development of liberal thought in our church, and the various strong personalities who left their mark on this community.

The development of Unitarianism may be roughly divided into three stages: the first stage comprises the period 1835 - 1911; the second, 1911 - 1930; and the third, 1930 to the present. During the first period of time, a modern interpretation of the Bible was introduced into the community. Between the years of 1911 to 1930, our Unitarian church became a social and political institution, rather than a purely religious one. And since 1930, the emphasis has been on the church as a community force; and Humanism has become a philosophical entity rather than an off-shoot of religious thought.

IN 1835, A GROUP OF UNIDENTIFIED LIBERALS who felt that they were able to support "sustained preaching" wrote to Nathaniel Stacy, an itinerant preacher of the Universalist church, and invited him to Ann Arbor. Then past 50, he wrote in his memoirs, "I felt justified in changing my position, so that I might enjoy at least a temporary release from the extreme fatigue I had so long endured." Mr. Stacy's idea of rest and relaxation was to go after the other ministers of the town, fiercely challenging them to "Christian discussion," particularly on the issue of Universal salvation. This militant liberal gloried in controversy, and eagerly sought to convert others to his faith. After persuading Deacon Williams, a staunch Calvinist, to become a Universalist, he exulted: "Never since the time of Saul of Tarsus has there been such a conversion!"

Those ministers who followed Nathaniel Stacy were apparently not gifted with his powers of oratory, and the records of the Universalist group dwindled and disappeared. It was the time, however, of the dawn of liberal religion as we know it today. It evolved slowly, assailing every weak point in traditional dogma, even though such opposition meant nearly complete ostracism. Those early liberal ministers hammered upon the barriers of superstition and narrowness with unquenchable courage and compelling persistence. These unrecorded years were filled with the drama that led to the Civil War and with the war itself. They were years of bitter hatred and high tension, of struggle and suffering. In this framework the Unitarian Church was born in Ann Arbor.

ON MAY 14, 1865, ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION were signed by 30 men and 10 women who were "desirous of securing to ourselves and our families the advantage of religious instruction and fellowship." A series of sermons under the direction of the American Unitarian Association were delivered by various ministers that summer, and in September, Charles Henry Brigham was sent to assume the Ann Arbor Pastorate.

It is important to note that while the writings of Emerson and Channing had reached a small enlightened group of Americans, the great masses of the country had not been reached by the principle of reason in religion. The Bible was, at that time, the fount of all wisdom, the final authority in the minds of most people, so that no minister could effectively preach except through the literature of the Bible. The liberal minister had to have full and comprehensive knowledge of this great book in order to use it as a point of departure. An he further had to be an exciting and forceful orator to convince his audience of these revolutionary ideas. Such a man was Charles Brigham.

Vigorous and alert of mind and body, an exceptional and industrious student, a powerful, logical and convincing minister, Mr. Brigham drew students and townspeople alike to the crowded quarters at the Washtenaw County Court House. It was not unusual to have 200 people in attendance at the afternoon and evening services, and this number was increased when in 1867, the Unitarians purchased the former Methodist Church at Fourth and Ann Streets. The Articles of Association were then adopted, Mr. Brigham was elected president of the new Society, and six trustees were chosen. Bible classes were started, with an average attendance of from 50 to 60 at each meeting, and increasing numbers of students came to listen to the stimulating ideas advanced by the Unitarian minister.

A well-kept notebook of Mr. Brigham indicates that the subject matter for a typical Bible course included 8 essays on the Book of Proverbs, 9 on the Law of Moses, and 8 lectures of Palestine. In March, 1871, he observed that students from more than 180 different towns and cities in 20 states had been in attendance that term, and his tracts were widely distributed. Other church functions included Christman Eve services, weekly social gatherings at members' homes, and get-togethers in the church basement. Mr. Brigham began the tradition of public service by serving on a State Sanitary Commission, and shocked the community by advocating cremation of the dead.

When he retired in 1877, the pulpit was filled by the Reverend Joseph Henry Allen. His work in Ann Arbor, while adequate, lacked the creative brillance of Mr. Brigham and the contructive and sustaining fire of his successor, Dr. Sunderland.

THE TWENTY-YEAR MINISTRY OF JABEZ T. SUNDERLAND may be

called a double ministry, both for length of time and because Mrs. Sunderland, who received a doctor's degree from the University, took such an active part in the work. The Sunderland ministry not only built the church still standing at State and Huron Streets, but it modernized the Bible's message for five generations of college students. Dr. Sunderland was an understanding and tolerant crusader for social, economic and religious reform; and he published more than twenty volumes on a variety of subjects. As early as 1893, he preached a series of sermons on the Great Labor Problem and its Proposed Solutions, Relations of Capital and Labor, Trade Unions, and Arbitration as a Solution to the Labor Problem.

Ever an orator, Dr. Sunderland had a gift for capitalizing on the happenings of the day. He spoke in favor of the World's Fair remaining open on Sundays; and upon the death of a non-Unitarian faculty member, preached a sermon on "Is Dean ____ in Hell?" The Sunderlands jointly established the Unity Club Lecture Course in the days before the University set up a lecture series, and faculty members spoke on biography, art and travel as well as religious subjects. One program in 1889 promised an illustrated lecture on "A Recent Investigation as to the Surface of Mars." Mrs. Sunderland, herself a brillant student and speaker, conducted for many years a Bible class which enjoyed an average attendance of over one hundred students. Many young people were in this manner brought in close touch with the doctrines of Unitarianism at this formative period in their lives, and the distribution of a huge number of tracts and pamphlets added further to the influence of this remarkable couple in the Middle West and elsewhere.

As mentioned before, the Sunderlands initiated the idea of a new church building and were finally successful in raising the $19,000 required. When the new church at State and Huron Streets was dedicated, the Ann Arbor Register of September 13, 1882, noted: "The structure is thoroughly churchly in look, picturesque in outline, and certain to be one of the most admired architecturally, of our public buildings."

JABEZ SUNDERLAND LIVED FOR MANY YEARS AFTER LEAVING ANN ARBOR, and continued to work for social betterment both in this country and others. His successor was his friend and protege, Joseph Henry Crooker, who occupied the pulpit from 1898 to 1905. A former school teacher, Mr. Crooker became a minister in the Baptist doctrines. Many years later he wrote: "I had heard of the Rev. Charles H. Brigham, an eminent Unitarian divine, who for ten years had been preaching to large congregations of professors and students at Ann Arbor. I visited him in 1877 ... and he urged me to consider my problem and then to come back ... I never saw him again, as he was soon stricken with paralysis, but three months later I attended a Unitarian Conference in Chicago and there met Dr. J. T. Sunderland, in whose pulpit I preached

my first Unitarian sermon. . .I followed him to Ann Arbor in 1898, and for fifty years he has been my most intimate and helpful ministerial friend."

JOSEPH CROOKER CAME TO THE CHURCH IN ITS PRIME, himself at the mature age of 48, and with a wife, Florence Kollock, who was herself a trained minister in the Universalist Church. His parishioners described him as meticulous and imposing in appearance, tall and straight and bearded. His scholarly pen produced many tracts which were published by the American Unitarian Association, as well as a number of books. Perhaps the most widely-read of his pamphlets was "The Unitarian Church" (1900), a treatise to help college students solve their perplexing religious problems, which was subsequently translated into several languages. Mr. Crooker not only saw the wisdom of keeping the Bible out of the schools but also took up his pen on the subject of the Spanish-American War. In his work, "The Menace to America", published by the American Anti-Imperialist League, he pointed out that a powerful nation had not "the right to conquer, subjugate, control and govern feeble and backward races and peoples without reference to their wishes or opinions."

HENRY WILDER FOOTE (1906-1910) enriched the life of the church along traditional Unitarian lines, and his New England conservatism pleased many members of his congregation. He founded the Young People's Religious Union, aimed at "the stimulation of religious and ethical ideals and the promotion of social intercourse among young people of any or no church." Various program topics for the season of 1906-1907 included, for instance, "Liberalism vs. Dogmatism," "The Dignity of Labor," "Divorce," and "The Idea of God." Dr. Foote also established an excellent church library of 2500 volumes, built up the choir, and took an active part in interdenominational affairs before he left to become the Secretary of the AUA's Education Department.

Despite Dr. Foote's excellence as an administrator, there was a drop in student interest, and this dissatisfaction was expressed in the selection of Dr. Percy M. Dawson as minister in 1910. A graduate of the John Hopkins Medical School and a full professor of physiology at that institution, he resigned and took a special course of study at Harvard Divinity School. Ann Arbor was his first pulpit, and it proved to be his last. Students with no special interest in the church as such, but with an awakening social and political consciousness, turned to the new minister as a logical choice. He befriended the Socialist movement on the campus, but he found himself "misfitted" for what he described as one of the most conservative churches of the Western Conference.

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN 1912, the congregation voted to terminate the ministry of Percy Dawson after a bitter controversy. The Detroit News reported the facts of the meeting and stated that "it is a live question in Ann Arbor if, with the passing of Percy Dawson, the artistic stone church and its attractive parsonage become but a silent monument, or loquacious, mayhap, of a new destiny."

Unfortunately, the issue was not entirely clear cut. Members of the church might have accepted the strong social implication of the ministry of this man who was deeply sincere, but they were not willing to go without the traditional pulpit formality possessed by those trained for the ministry. They felt that a church should be more than just a lecture hall, and Mr. Dawson's unconventional behavior was even more jarring than his radical views.

MR. DAWSON LEFT ANN ARBOR and the Unitarian ministry to become again a medical professor at the University of Wisconsin. Apparently, in time he took a more measured view of these stormy years, for he later wrote: "I can at this distance view quite objectively the course of events which led to my departure from Ann Arbor. The situation and the outcome have been repeated again and again elsewhere, but in my case the bitterness was aggravated by a lack of patience, of gentleness, of consideration on my part. I had too much of the harshness of honesty, too much of the arrogance of insight. . . "

Although Dr. Robert Loring, who followed Mr. Dawson, reversed the emphasis on the social side of religion, the memory of Dawson's tenure remained. The conservative reaction which went with the period of the war caught up the Ann Arbor church, and its attendance dwindled. Dr. Loring stressed the social life of the church, added a large guild house, and permitted card-playing and dancing while these activities were still being condemned of his colleagues. Sermons on Reason, Science and Religion were preached: The YPRU met on Sunday evenings to "encourage free discussion of social, ethical and religious questions," and the church's Fiftieth Anniversary was celebrated on April 30, 1915.

IN 1919, SIDNEY S. ROBINS assumed the pulpit and strove to restore the church to the place of importance it once occupied in the community. The "Roaring Twenties" was not a time of religious resurgence in our country or in Ann Arbor, but the church calendar of the time reveals a busy schedule and a minister who was active in local affairs. After Mr. Robins was finally accepted into the Ministerial Association, he became its president, the president of the Rotary Club, and an opponent of gambling devices at county fairs.

A program on March 27, 1921, announced the opportunity to sign the covenant of the church, declaring its purpose to be "to carry on such religious, benevolent, and charitable work as shall promote Freedom, Fellowship, and Character in Religion and Ethics." The first Layman's Sunday was observed in January, 1924, based on the premise that "ours is a free society. Neither the church organization as such, nor its ordained ministers, have any authority in matters of belief or opinion. What we in the pews think is, then, important. If a church has intelligent laymen, and we flatter ourselves that we have, it is very appropriate that upon at least one Sunday in the year, we express ourselves upon some of the questions about religious matters which seem to us important."

The sharp drift on the part of the University students away from church attendance in this decade following the war, caused a great deal of discouragement on the part of the minister and church officials. For a number of months following the departure of Dr. Robins in 1928, it was not known whether the church would continue. Only the aroused and complete interest of the AUA turned the tide in favor of continuation of the work. Several thousand dollars was appropriated for physical repairs of church and parsonage, and $1200 was set as the yearly grant toward the minister's salary.

IN MARCH, 1929, HAROLD P. MARLEY was chosen to become the new minister, and the Ann Arbor church entered the third stage of its history. In preparation for a campus-wide Religious EmphasisWeek, the Unitarian Committee secured a speaker named Curtis Reese for its representative. Nineteen members of the church signed a document stating in part: "We believe that there is only one source of authority for any philosophy of life - validated human experience. . . that religion consists in the daily quest of the good life here and now, lived in the light of truth without equivocation, and in the effort to see life in its entirety." At the same time, the Trustees voted to use the title "The Fellowship of Liberal Education (Unitarian)" for advertising purposes, and the combined result was a large attendance at the Reese lectures. This effort to reach the unchurched liberal via the humanistic philosophy drew considerable fire from the other churches, and the question was continually raised: "If you have a religion without God, why have the church?" It was to answer this question that Mr. Marley addressed his ministry.

Locally, Mr. Marley strove to convince the student population that a free fellowship has a contribution to make. To build up the image of the church as a champion of civil liberty and scientific tradition, he contributed regularly to the student paper, spoke to various groups, and circularized a mailing list. A church notice stated that "Humanism is a scientific effort in religion to relate the emotional elements of living, without recourse to God, to the service of humanity," and it was done on the assumption that the time had come to relate students to this newer

religious philosophy. The program of the church was re-evaluated with a view to enlarging its activities in the community, particularly in the area of freedom of assembly, so that all liberal groups might have a place in which to meet.

MR. MARLEY ALSO MADE HIS CONVICTIONS KNOWN on a variety of social issues of the day, particularly war, freedom of speech and problems of labor and race. During the turbulent thirties he took a strong stand for civil liberties, feeling that the greatest danger was fascism. At one time when he went to Lansing to speak for freedom of speech for all groups (including Communists), he was thrown into the Cedar River by a group of militant students. During two successive summers, he and his family worked for the Council of Churches in the coal fields of West Virginia and Kentucky, and his experiences there provided the material for many sermons.

In his search for a philosophical synthesis of reason and emotion, Mr. Marley polled the members of the church, and one answer in particular is as pertinent today as it was in 1936. This anonymous social scientist wrote: "I have often felt that I should like, were I younger, to start something that I think must eventually happen - a substitute for the church based upon the popularizing of science in such a way as to open up expression for the emotions. . . man will never live by his intellect alone . . . human nature will suffer for having no outlet for its deeper feelings."

IN 1942, THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of the founding of the Ann Arbor Church was celebrated, and Mr. Marley left shortly thereafter. When asked to recommend his successor, he suggested Edward Redman, whom he had met when the latter worked for the Unitarian Service Committee at Willow Run. Mr. Redman was to remain in Ann Arbor for 18 years before going on to the church at Arlington, Virginia. During his tenure, he carried on the tradition of social service, being a member of the Ann Arbor Cooperative Society, the Council of Churches, the Citizens Council, and many other organizations. The church property at State and Huron was sold, and the property at 1917 Washtenaw purchased from Dr. Dean Myers. In 1956, the addition of an auditorium, social hall and parsonage designed by Professor Brigham was completed on the present site.

A MOST GENEROUS BEQUEST WAS WILLED TO THE CHURCH by Mr. and Mrs. George L. Jackson in 1955. The Jackson Social Welfare Fund, derived from the income of this trust, is to be used "for the purpose of advancing the understanding and acceptance of the great principles of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for the promotion of the use of reason and understanding as the effective method of solving in a peaceful manner domestic and international conflicts and

difficulties." This fund, administered by a Church committee, has been used to help defray legal expenses incurred in court cases defending the freedom of speech, the separation of church and state; it has also been used to further the Civil Rights movement, and has supported many of the activities sponsored by the A.C.L.U.

DR. ERWIN A. GAEDE CAME TO THE CHURCH in 1961 and has participated in its continued growth during the last several years. In 1963, two Sunday morning services were instituted, and the church school enrollment continues to soar. To what may we attribute this ever-increasing interest in liberal religion in Ann Arbor? The answer is probably four-fold. Certainly, Dr. Gaede's profound and pertinent sermons stimulate lively discussion and interest. And his activities, as well as those of many other distinguished members of the church, generate community awareness of many of the social issues of the day. We also live in a most uncertain age; and there are many more of us to live in it. Whatever the causes, the thought which must concern us as we close the chapter on the first 100 years is this: The Unitarian Church as an institution in Ann Arbor is firmly established; the unending task before us is to make Unitarianism a living, dynamic witness to the freedom and greatness of the human spirit. As our predecessors of 1931 stated so well in their declaration of purpose: "Let us rededicate ourselves to the quest for the good life, a life inspired by love and guided by knowledge, and for the brotherhood of man in its highest sense."

ERWIN A. GAEDE

One only needs to read the forgoing history of our church to know what a privilege it is for me to be its minister. The achievements of this church through a century of worship and work are impressive and inspiring. Think of the hundreds of people, young and old alike, who discovered new meaning and courage because this church became a part of their daily lives!

The opportunities of the second century will be equally great and all of us will be challenged to think deeply, to work creatively, and to love bravely. This church brilliantly reflects those best traditions and tendencies of our denomination as it endeavors to come to grips with the crucial social, political and philosophical issues of our time. With confidence and trust we greet the beginning of the second one hundred years!