

Seventy-fifth anniversary program of the Unitarian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, January 21, 1867--January 21, 1942.

First Unitarian Church (Ann Arbor, Mich.)

[n.p., 1942?]

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015071468493>

HathiTrust



www.hathitrust.org

Public Domain, Google-digitized

http://www.hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google

This work is in the Public Domain, meaning that it is not subject to copyright. Users are free to copy, use, and redistribute the work in part or in whole. It is possible that heirs or the estate of the authors of individual portions of the work, such as illustrations, assert copyrights over these portions. Depending on the nature of subsequent use that is made, additional rights may need to be obtained independently of anything we can address. The digital images and OCR of this work were produced by Google, Inc. (indicated by a watermark on each page in the PageTurner). Google requests that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially.

The images are provided for educational, scholarly, non-commercial purposes.

FA
43
A613
AU58
S497

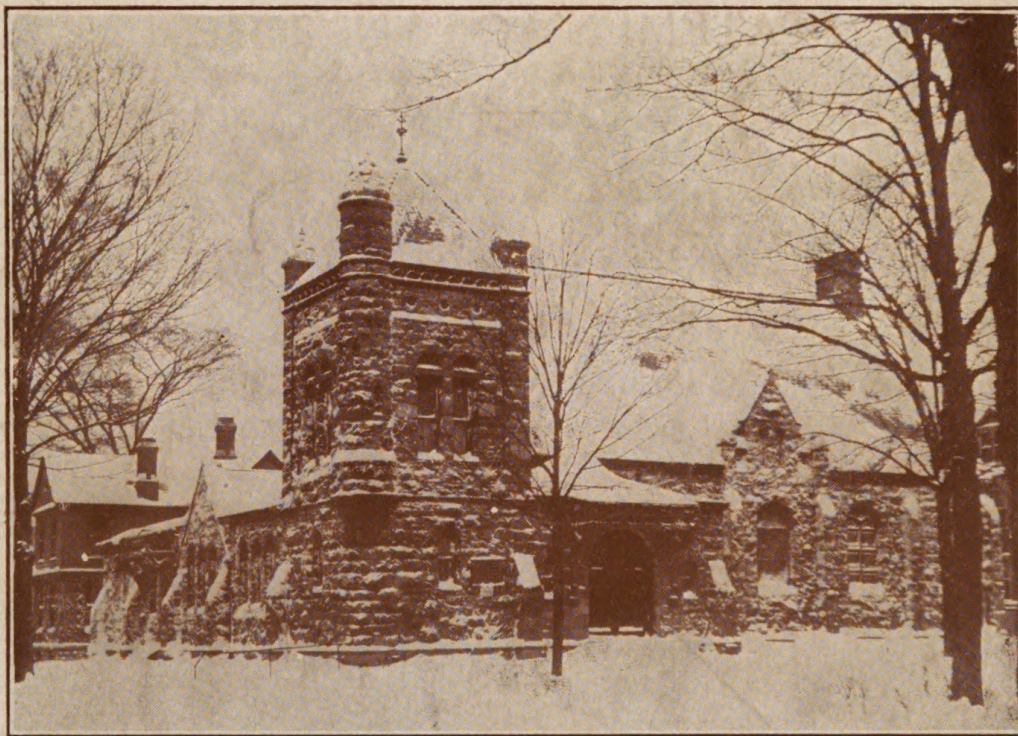
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Program

OF THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN



. . . through the Seasons . . . a Liberal Centre.



JANUARY 21, 1867 - JANUARY 21, 1942

**Bentley Historical
Library
University of Michigan**

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

“Believing in Freedom, Fellowship and
Character in religion and ethics”

We associate to provide and maintain:

A Sanctuary, for the mood of worship.

Discussion groups and forums, for
religious instruction,

An ethical critique of, and influence
in, the social order.

Program
FOR
ANNIVERSARY WEEK



Sunday, January 18th:

11:00 a.m. CHURCH SERVICE

Preacher, *Dr. Frederick May Eliot*
President of the American Unitarian Association of Boston.

7:30 p.m. STUDENT MEETING

An appreciation of the role played by the Unitarian Church on this Campus, and the contributions of liberal religion to social change. By former students of the University.

Wednesday, January 21st:

8:00 p.m. MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

Speaker: Dr. Sidney S. Robins, Professor of Philosophy at St. Lawrence University, and for nine years minister of this church.



Friday, January 23rd:

6:15 p.m. PARISH DINNER under auspices of the Laymen's League.

Speaker: Dr. Philip C. Nash, president of the University of Toledo and the next moderator of the Unitarian Church.

12/8/33

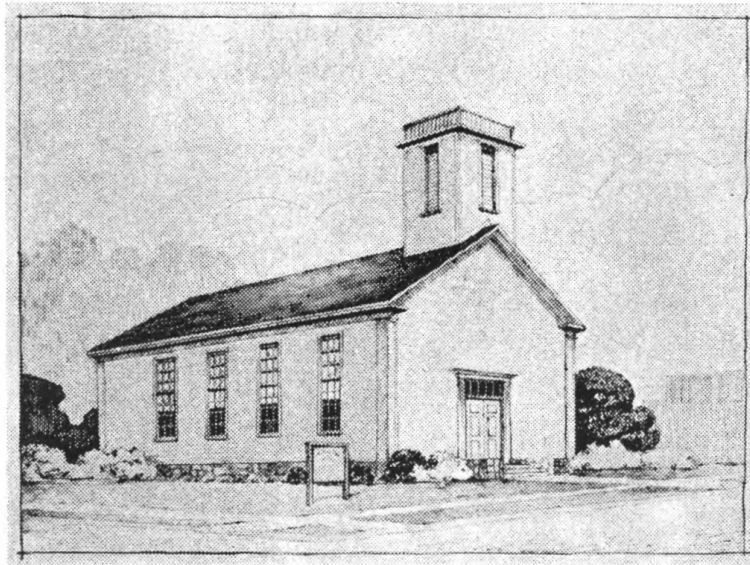
Historical

Pre-Unitarian

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. Originally from New York State, he was then in the "wild and trackless country" South of Lake Erie. Then past fifty, he writes in his Memoirs, "I felt justified in changing my position, so that I might enjoy at least a temporary release from the extreme fatigues I had so long endured."

He came to Ann Arbor in July via boat and stage from Erie, Pennsylvania, and found that his prospective parishioners, several of whom he had known in central New York, had a completed meeting house which he lost no time in filling with eager listeners. Promptly he plunged into the moot question of Universal salvation, and the columns of the *Weekly Argus* and the *State Journal* bear the virility of his message. No minister would join him in debate, save through the columns of the papers, where the arguments became heated with a frontier temper.

For five years he preached, occasionally converting a staunch Calvinist, and noting that "never, since the time of Saul of Tarsus, have there been more complete conversions." He was succeeded by Dr. T. C. Adam, a retired physician, educated at the University of Edinburgh. A Dr. Smead followed him, and in 1847, on a visit to Ann Arbor, Rev. Stacy found a Dr. S. Mills in charge of the parish.



Early Unitarian

Although the present church was formally organized in 1867, there was an organization which extended back several months previous to this. On May 14, 1865, Articles of Association were signed by thirty men and ten women, who were "desirous of securing to ourselves and our families the advantage of religious instruction and fellowship." Several of these were Quakers, the families of Jacob Volland and Richard Glasier being especially active. Within the year, they called Rev. Charles Brigham from Taunton, Mass., to be their minister. Services were held in the old Court House until the Methodist society moved to their new church on State Street. Their old meeting house at Fourth and Ann Streets was then purchased.

On January 21, 1867, at two o'clock on Monday afternoon, twenty-two people met at the Court House for the last time and went in a body to their new church home. There, the Articles of Association which were adopted had been drawn up by James B. Gott, a lawyer who sang bass in the choir. Rev. Brigham was elected president of the new society and Lawrence D. Burch, clerk. The six Trustees elected were Moses Rodgers, T. S. Sanford, Henry K. White, Hiram Arnold, George D. Hill and Randall Schuyler.

From that day forward, the work has proceeded without interruption. Charles Brigham laid strong the foundation, serving until 1877, when he returned to the East in ill health. J. H. Allen served as temporary pastor until 1878, when Jabez T. Sunderland came to Ann Arbor from the Baptist communion and began the longest ministry the church has ever had, two decades. During this time, as the town and University grew, a new church was built and dedicated in 1882—the fine Normandy structure of native field stone, in which we now carry on our work.

Later Unitarian

Joseph H. Crooker, one of Dr. Sunderland's discoveries, succeeded him in 1898. Originally a school teacher at Napoleon, Michigan, and a self-made minister without an academic degree, he gave to the Ann Arbor Church a distinguished ministry which effectively coped with all the vexing problems which came at the turn of the century. His scholarly pen produced tracts which are still being printed by the American Unitarian Association. One of these was called "A Plea for Sincerity in Religious Thought," and was the gist of his controversy in *The Outlook* with Lyman Abbott. Rev. Crooker gave an address at Amsterdam in 1903 at the International Unitarian Conference on the subject, "American Ideals in Education."

Henry Wilder Foote came in 1906 and preached his strong Biblical sermons for four years, leaving to take a post in Boston with the American Unitarian Association. He did invaluable work in building a choir and strengthening the various church organizations, such as the Fortnightly Club. He was active in such interdenominational meetings

as the Congress of Religion and the convention of the Church and Guild Workers of State Universities. Through these he brought well-known Unitarians to Ann Arbor, such as Francis Peabody.

Percy M. Dawson came in 1910 from Johns Hopkins University, where he was a teacher. Eager to serve in the liberal ministry he brought what he later called "too much of the harshness of honesty, too much of the arrogance of insight." He befriended the socialist movement on campus, but failed to maintain the interest of the majority of the church which he said, "has for twenty years been recognized as conservative among the churches of the Western Unitarian Conference." His program was rejected but in later years of social stress, it is noteworthy that students then on campus who were influenced by him, have since espoused positions in the field of civil liberties and human rights which have brought them national recognition.

In 1912 Robert S. Loring came to Ann Arbor from another University church, Iowa City. He steadied the church, and carried it through the difficult war years. He had an apartment upstairs in the parsonage and a German family occupied the remainder of the house. In a time when card-playing and dancing were taboo among church people, he added the present parish house to the church and encouraged the social life of students under the auspices of religion. After six years, he went to Milwaukee, from which post he recently retired from the ministry.

In 1919, Sidney S. Robins came from Kingston, Mass. parish, and for nine years ministered to the church in the "jazz" period following the war. It was not a fruitful time for any church, and Dr. Robins took an active interest in community affairs, opposing gambling devices at the County Fair and becoming president of the Rotary Club. His sermons were scholarly and philosophic. From here he went to teach philosophy in Lombard College, and from there to St. Lawrence University, a Universalist school at Canton, New York.

Harold P. Marley came in the Spring of 1929 from a ministry in the Disciples of Christ church. Just as the church was recovering from a period of discouragement, the Depression struck, and the thirteen years which have followed have been surcharged with social problems, rumors of war; and now, war itself has again come. In this time the Minister and the Trustees have courageously faced the implications of world issues for religion. At the same time, Mr. Marley has sought to develop a dignified and aesthetic religious service which would provide an inner strength to those who have felt the pressure of the world outside.



Appreciation

“The Unitarian Church has always stood out in America because it is always found on our intellectual and social frontiers,” said one of the school officials in Ann Arbor. When asked about the local situation, he said, “Such an organization certainly has a place in a community as metropolitan as Ann Arbor. That the Unitarian Church has made a distinct contribution to this community in stimulating the development of liberal points of view, cannot be denied. That it has contributed greatly by teaching tolerance and forbearance there can be no doubt.”

A progressive business man writes for himself and his wife, “We feel that the Unitarian Church occupies a rather important part in our thinking. Not that we agree with all, or even most, of the opinions we find expressed. But we do see in it a most earnest attempt to explore every corner of contemporary living in the light of the most sensitive ethical ideas of the time.”

A minister, who has been in Ann Arbor for fifteen years, refers to the long and fruitful history of our church, and says, “standing for the intellectual presentation of religion and for an understanding approach to social problems, it has contributed to freedom of religious thought and discussion.”

An editorial in the *Michigan Daily* in 1937 speaks of this church as being “a center of activity in behalf of true democracy and a genuine force in our social thinking.” A feature story in the *Summer Daily* of the same year describes our scientific outlook of religion both in the field of personal guidance and world problems. It concludes that “the church has embraced a wider scope of duty to the people, and only as long as it retains an interest in the common man, will it cease fading into disuse.”



Our Tomorrow is Born Today

wings of hope. The bust of Emerson, done by Sidney H. Morse of Boston when he was in Ann Arbor, keeps ever before us the great mind-emancipator of early Unitarianism.

Slowly, the chancel took its present form. Through trial, and the experimentation of a Twilight Service during the winter months, we came into the possession of a Service of Aspiration which brings together many elements borrowed from other channels of religious experience. The period of silence, the fountain, and the interplay of light bring together the nature within and the nature without.

Readings, Biblical and non-Biblical, arouse our thinking on great themes. The offertory, an integral part of the last minutes of the one-hour Service, does not intrude itself into the spirit of the meeting. Choir responses, instead of an anthem, are used to sharpen the musical content. Hymns, including some poems of well-known moderns, are sung from the new Unitarian hymnal.

Truly, to share completely in the fellowship of truth, it is necessary to find in it, beauty; for if truth is good, it is also inspiring.

Aspiration

A community comes to know a church by the newspaper comments and hearsay, but a church knows itself by what happens in its sanctuary. Here is a repository of the symbols of truth and here are the reminders of spirit-striving which the avenue of aesthetics keeps ever open before us.

The Tiffany window recalls the experience of death and the

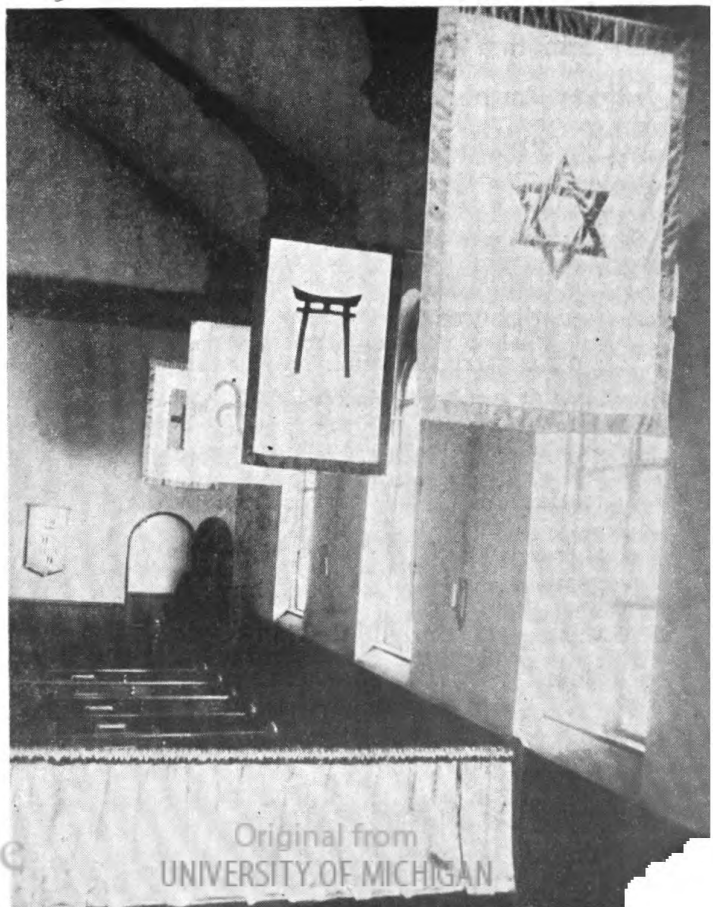
Religious Art

The colorful batik which hangs as a reredos in the chancel is a reminder of man's struggle to control his destiny. Originally submitted as a class exercise by the late Jane Higbie, our committee saw in it the evolutionary ascent of man, projected into the future. The tense body conveys a determination to direct the consuming forces of environment. The flaming forehead suggests the inner motivations, which also must be directed and controlled, lest they consume.

The banners of eight historic religions which hang from the side walls keep before the congregation the universal idea of truth as promulgated by all great religious leaders. Designed with the help of students from other lands, and done into silk by the women of the church, they bring the warmth of color, and the subtlety of symbolism to him who would ponder universal ethics. The two oldest living religions are Hinduism and Judaism. The four central banners represent religions all emerging about the seventh century B. C. The two religions late in the scale of time are Christianity and Mohammedanism.

Hammered copper designs on the staffs and the symbolic sconces were done by members of the church. The mural inscription of the sentiments of William Ellery Channing and James Russell Lowell is moveable, indicating that within these walls, religion can never become static.

We are what we Remember



Discussion



Here people talk . . . sometimes, reason . . .

Indispensible to the good health of the liberal church, is a place for free discussion the hearing of facts and the weighing of opinion. With the books of one of the few endowed church libraries in the world, all around, youth groups and other groups sit about this large oval table in seminar fashion.

An old program of the Liberal Students' Union speaks of "the exchange of novel thoughts on serious subjects as an enemy of Sunday night student ennui." The president, who later got an M. D. degree, said "there is a talk, perhaps, or a book review, or the reading of a play, by a student, a professor or an out-of-town guest the talk is brief. There is much with which you disagree and many questions you wish to ask, so the discussion is on. From current events to standards of life, through scientific facts and philosophic theories, one thought leads to another."

Around this table the Trustees meet, and the business of the church is transacted. Here, high school students learn the discipline of liberal thinking, and their parents in the Laymen's League listen to a variety of speakers. Some non-church groups have held meetings in the Library, though these are usually accommodated in Unity Hall which has had a specially created Board to advise and arrange its activities.

On the walls hang the pictures of great Unitarian poets and thinkers.

Along the Way

The oldest document of the church, Articles of Association, preceded the official incorporation by several months. It has been framed, and hangs in the Library. The forty men and women who signed this, just after Appomattox, were agitated over the post-war politics and reconstruction. In University circles, there was pressure to have women admitted, and homeopathy had become a "question."

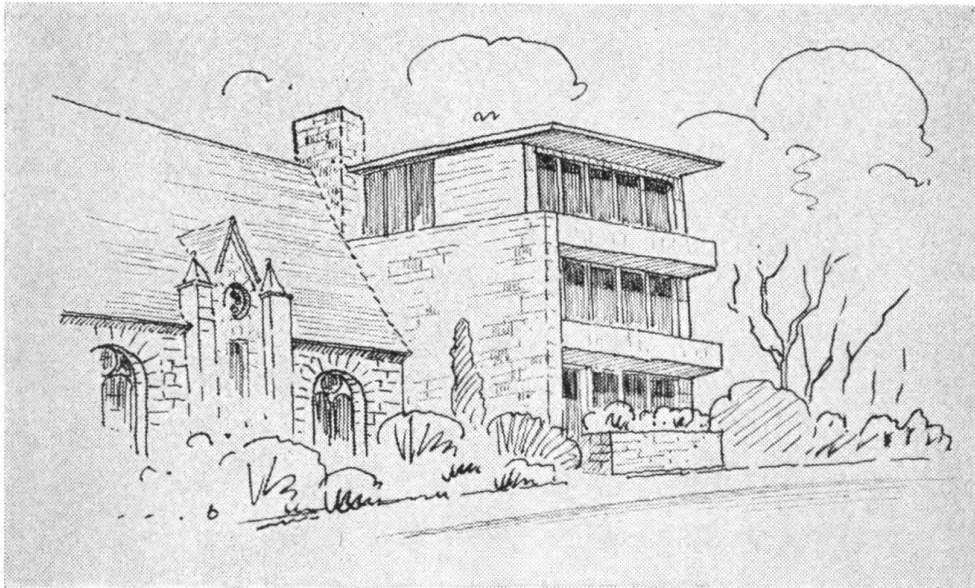
Simultaneous with the sending of Charles Brigham to Michigan by Eastern Unitarians, local Methodists were collecting funds to send "missionaries" to Kansas. At the first meeting in the vacated Methodist church, the Unitarians heard their minister speak on "Lottery Gambling" and give gift concerts and raffling Fairs, according to *The Argus*, "a scathing." That he believed the frontier to be still in Michigan, is shown by his topic announced for the following Sunday, "The Signs, the Results and the Remedies of Drunkenness."

Initiative for getting a new building on the present site came from the women of the church, who procured the lot. At the Parish meeting in January, 1881, a building committee was appointed, consisting of Charles E. Greene, B. E. Nichols, Jabez Sunderland, J. M. Alden, A. McReynolds, Mrs. Martin P. Langley and Mrs. Patten. The Detroit Unitarian minister and Governor John J. Bagley, who was at Lansing for two terms from 1873 to 1877, were added.

Joseph Whitlark, who left an endowment to the church library, was of English descent and had a peach orchard a mile out on Dexter Road. Another bequest of one thousand dollars was made by E. C. Seaman. Judge W. D. Harriman, who went to Florida after his retirement here, was active as an official of the church for years. Moses Rogers ran an implement store on the site where the White Swan Laundry is now located. The carefully penned signature of B. E. Nichols recalls the fact that he was head of a

school of writing. One of the early signatures was that of W. B. Carlock, a student in the Law School, and a great-Uncle of Mr. Marley.

Two University buildings bear the names of early Unitarians, Victor C. Vaughan, who was Dean of the Medical school, and Charles E. Greene, first Dean of the School of Engineering. Some of the signatures are those of students, many of them from other lands. In the eighties, there are Japanese names and in 1935 the name of Ralph Neafus appears. Three years later he was lost in Spain while fighting in the International Brigade. Deceased members who were prominent in the University include Karl E. Guthe, John R. Effinger, James B. Pollock, Max Winkler, Byron Finney, Warren Lombard and Dr. U. G. Rickert. Students were also familiar with the names and places of Charles C. Freeman and George S. Chubb. Names well-known in town circles included such members as Dr. Conrad Georg, Sr., who carried on a debate with Professor Wenley; E. N. Bilbie, for his music; and Arthur Brown, courageous and devoted civic leader.



Proposed Expansion for Larger Service

The Larger Parish

To bring the larger parish into the scope of the local parish, is to enlarge the local parish to include the whole social scene. Sermons of nearly every minister which this church has had, indicate a faithfulness to this larger trust. Dr. Sunderland was vitally interested in all social questions and later became a staunch champion of a free India. Joseph Crooker warned against imperialism in the period following the Spanish-American War. In the Depression years there has been a tremendous sharpening of all the problems which cut across the science of learning and the art of daily living.

Mayor Frank Murphy of Detroit was one of the first to comprehend the need for Federal assistance in the care of the unemployed. He was brought to Ann Arbor to speak in Hill Auditorium, along with a social worker from Lansing and Robert Dexter of the American Unitarian Association. A state-wide plebescite was taken on Capital Punishment. The Socialist Local was revived and members of the church stood for election. Charles E. Coughlin became an annoyance, and then a direct threat to the democratic processes. Spain suffered on the rack of capitalistic and clerical intolerance. Sit-down strikes came to inflame the public mind. Locally, the city needed a water-softening plant, and the real estate interests blocked the offer of Washington to build fifty houses free of charge to the city for welfare clients. In welfare circles there was dismissal for "radicalism" and even, jailing. Worker's education was promoted through classes, forums and journalistic expression.

The campus life has not been free from the pressures which go with social stress and strain, but student needs have always received sympathetic attention. As early as September, 1932, Unitarians helped students organize the first out-and-out co-operative, which remains today as the most economical of all the houses since established. When the Wolverine student eating co-operative was established and when it moved to its present large quarters, invaluable assistance was rendered. The Hearst-sponsored Teacher's Oath bill was fought in the Legislature and when campus buildings were closed to speakers like

John Strachey and others, the question of "freedom of assembly" came squarely before the Trustees of the church. They took the stand eight years ago, and have abided by it since, that any group meeting for legal purposes, might use the facilities of Unity Hall if they would reimburse the church for actual expenses, and if they would announce that their meeting was sponsored by them and not by the church.

Our church has repeatedly opened its doors to outsiders and has kept the pulpit free. Among those who have spoken have been Rockwell Kent, Goodwin Watson and Kermit Eby. Homer Martin told about the auto worker and William Voisine, mayor of Ecorse, about the Black Legion. L. M. Birkhead talked about fascism at home and Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, about fascism abroad. At the Sunday evening discussion group and at the Sunday morning Forums in May, many other noteworthy people, both from the campus and from out of the city, have been heard on topics of vital interest. Many others have spoken, not under church auspices, in Unity Hall, including Scott Nearing and leaders in the leftist groups in the State.

Time has shown that this responsibility to the larger parish has prepared the smaller parish for the events of the world today, as well as helping to effect many reforms which will undoubtedly help to ease the difficulties of the present moment.



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.

In the attempt to enrich and improve the life of all mankind, by the search for and application of the truths of human experience, wherever they may lead, even if this means rejection of established and time-honored concepts.

In honoring all great teachers of truth and in promulgating great truths from whatever source derived, not in emphasizing the teaching of merely one sect or creed.

In the continual readjustment of ideas to new truths in all fields of thought and in the necessity of struggling for the freedom of the human mind, for freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of the press at all times.

Since the Unitarian Church is a creedless fellowship of liberal religion, free to change with increasing knowledge, we are happy to be part of this group which looks always to the conquest of ignorance, evil and suffering, to the unfolding of the highest powers of mankind and to the banishment of false and obsolete creeds, practices and institutions.

We are united in a quest for the good life, “a life inspired by love and guided by knowledge,” and for the brotherhood of man in its highest sense.

Statement signed by nineteen professors of the University and circulated during the Campus-wide Religious Emphasis Week in January, 1931.

1027
FA