

The First Century

Christ Church

Summit, New Jersey

1876 - 1976



One Hundred Years from Now...



By Allen A. Tinker
Minister

*Cover: First Baptist Church
about 100 years ago.*

*This booklet, "The First
Century," copyright © 1976
by Christ Church, Summit,
New Jersey.*

*Text: Sandy Brown
Photography:
Howard Boardman
Clift Roome*

*Design/Production
John Carman*

Assuming that the threats of nuclear annihilation and environmental collapse are averted, it's likely that one hundred years from now a generation as yet unborn will unearth this document in preparation for Christ Church's Bicentennial celebration. The thought that someone may be reading these words a century hence gives me pause for reflection.

I hope their curiosity will be piqued as to how it was long ago, and that they will read our current church minutes with as much unabashed enjoyment at our quaint 1976 ways as we have enjoyed the many hilarious antics of our forebears. I hope they will be able to grin at the Concorde and Interstate 78 controversies, remembering the time when the maximum speed of public transportation was only 1320 miles per hour and that in order to get anywhere you had literally to take command of an automobile and drive the thing.

In the meanwhile, this crucible of human experience called Christ Church, this incredible collection of saints and sinners, lives! And here we are, honoring the inheritance and traditions of our past, trying to live authentically in the present, and planning for the future with confidence. We continue to congregate to learn and grow as persons, united in the bonds of a community of friends which has as its model the spirit of the man from Galilee, a community now and again realized clearly—or obliquely—among us.

We are a house divided in beliefs, belief, traditions, language, social awareness and concern, but we are not a house divided against itself. At our first century's end all are welcome to come here, drop their labels, and be. Our persuasions—conservative, liberal, fundamental, radical, theist, atheist, and agnostic—sing and dance together, celebrate the good gift of life, break bread, ponder the eternal mysteries, mourn the inevitable losses, and set about the tasks of making life human and sacred.

This people is a good friend. This place is special.



A Men's Bible Class [?] in the early 1900's. Among those present: Messrs. Bert Underwood, Malcolm LaRue, Arthur Rahman, Frank Black, Clifford Bernard, E. C. Jewett, Albion Buckley, and Raymond Bailey. From an old Stereopticon slide.

THE FIRST CENTURY

Christ Church, Summit, New Jersey

1876 - 1976

Christ Church did not begin on a great scale, but for its dedicated and courageous Baptist founders, the undertaking was monumental. In the fall of 1875 the climate was right for establishing a Baptist Church in the Summit Area. The New Jersey Baptist State Convention was spurring the Home Mission movement, helping to establish new local churches. Summit, with its resort hotels and that new phenomenon, the New York commuter, was growing rapidly in size and wealth.

The Presbyterians' West Summit Union Chapel had been sitting empty since the construction of their new church, and at the same time the long buggy ride to the Millburn Baptist Church, three times each week, was

becoming a chore to the handful of local Baptists. When the West Presbyterian Church of Summit offered to give the Baptists their empty meeting house at 708-710 Springfield Avenue, provided they would assume its \$1,000 mortgage and maintain worship in it for at least a year, the Baptists showed great interest.

On the first Sunday in October, 1875, the Rev. A. B. Woodworth, an ordained Baptist minister, preached to a congregation of fourteen, and interest grew rapidly in formally organizing a church. It culminated on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1876, when "fifteen brethren and sisters entered into covenant together and constituted a church—the First Baptist Church of Summit.

In May of 1876 the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church officially deeded the meeting house and land to the New Jersey Baptist State Convention to be held in trust for the new church. On May 11 a council from the neighboring Baptist churches, of which Rev. George E. Horr of Newark was moderator, met in the meeting house and voted to approve the organization of the church and proceed with its recognition. "Bro. Horr preached from Matt. 17-8; 'And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only'."

The first items of business for the newly-elected trustees under Mr. James M. Woodruff were to find a sexton and make the needed repairs on the building, problems occasionally still with us. Mr. Woodruff, a prominent local builder, was just the man for the job.

The fledgling congregation chose as its pastor the same Rev. Mr. Wood-

THE INDOMITABLE FIFTEEN

We honor the names of the fifteen stalwart Baptist men and women who on March 17, 1876 "entered into covenant together" to found our church:

W. R. Cain
T.V. Carpenter
Mrs. M.E. Carpenter
Fannie N. Conklin
N. C. Powelson
C. B. Powelson
Elizabeth N. Jones
Joseph Richards
Mrs. Joseph Richards
J. M. Woodruff
Mary C. Woodruff
Newton Woodruff
A. B. Woodworth
Betsey Woodworth
Ettie Woodworth

worth who had preached to the original group. He served until December 1, 1878. Under him twenty-six new members were added, seven by baptism. Since the founding of the Baptist faith in America under Roger Williams in 1639, adult baptism had remained its cornerstone, so the addition of a baptistery to the property was important. A channel was dug from Salt Brook, which ran in back of the chapel, to an outdoor pool lined with brick and cement.

This rapidly became a mixed blessing. Dearly bought at \$5.00, it did not function properly, and the trustees voted not to pay its builder until it quit leaking. It never did. Also, the little Hann boy who lived next door at 700 Springfield, used to fill it with snakes and frogs when a baptism was scheduled and then watch from the tower of his home while the congregation removed the unwelcome visitors.

While enthusiasm stayed high, funds remained low. "Delinquent subscriptions" to the pastor's salary were a topic at every board meeting, with strawberry and ice cream festivals on the lawn helping to raise funds. One bleak December in the early years found the Trustees stone broke. They nevertheless raised enough money for the "settlement of the demands of Mr. W. F. Hyatt for his \$26.00 for twenty-five hymn books, *Songs of the Sanctuary*". A strong incentive was Mr. Hyatt's threat to repossess the hymn books.

In April of 1877, the budget was \$12.41 short; from the twenty-eight subscribers only \$12.45 was collected the next month. By July of the following year, the pastor's fund subscriptions were almost \$300 in arrears—more than half of the poor preacher's salary. How he took care of his family is a mystery, but he and the courageous young congregation kept going.

Things were looking up enough in



Our original church building at 710 Springfield Avenue, in the 1870's and today.

the spring of 1880 to buy a Vocalian organ in four installments, possibly the same organ given in 1905 to the new Baptist Church in Millington. The year 1881 closed with \$2.15 left after all the bills had been paid — truly an event for which to give thanks.

Problems with water seemed to be a Baptist specialty. The baptistery still leaked and now Springfield Avenue did, too. "On motion, Bro. Woodruff was appointed a committee of one with power to act to devise some means of carrying off the water from the road fronting the Church property." He was known as the "Water Committee". Bros. A. K. de Guiscard, George H. Williams and Woodruff were appointed an "Entertainment Committee" with power to devise some means of replenishing the church treasury. From a sociable held in January, they netted \$6.90, duly handed over to the treasurer.

Other concerns pressed besides water and lack of funds. Summit was growing up around the Lackawanna Railroad, and the little chapel in West Summit was too far away from the center of things. Only nine years after its founding, the church body voted on February 3, 1885, that it was "advisable to move nearer the Summit Depot", and the Baptist State Conven-

tion Committee endorsed the action. The Board of Trustees; A. R. Randolph, J. W. Woodruff, G. H. Williams, A. K. de Guiscard, and W. R. Cain, were given the power to "solicit and collect funds for the purchase of a site and the erection of a new Church Ediface". The church, although giving no limit to the cost of the building and land, would not assume any debt exceeding \$1500. The new minister, the Rev. H.G. Mason, urged this move and his dedicated flock agreed.

Truly this was where angels might well have feared to tread, for the Treasurer's report showed liabilities of \$99.04, forcing a special collection to be taken on the first Sabbath in March.

Getting rid of the West Summit Church proved only the first stumbling block in a long series of troubles connected with building the new "Church Ediface". When it was offered for sale, no buyers snapped up the old chapel, so in September of 1886, it was auctioned off. Mary Randolph bought it for \$1100.00, turning it into a double house, still in use today with a 1976 coat of green aluminum siding.

With some hard cash at last, the Trustees bought a lot from George Manley for \$2,000 at the corner of Morris Avenue and a new street which



The 1888 frame church where St. Teresa's playground is today.

Manley promised to put in. It was originally an extension of New England Avenue, but is now known as Locust Drive. The site was that of the present St. Teresa's School playground.

Thus began an adventure in building which proved the sturdy stuff of which the fifty-nine members were made. After going through two architects, several sets of plans, innumerable revisions, a threatened law suit from one unhappy architect, bids and re-bids, consultations with the Home Mission Board, and spiraling costs, at last a decision was made. The plans of the Key East Baptist Chapel were chosen, with adaptations, to be erected for under \$4500.

Every corner was cut to make this possible. The stained glass windows came from the demolition of the Mt. Morris Baptist Chapel in Harlem, costing \$40.00 and cartage. At one point, the Board considered using a special wallpaper for the sanctuary walls instead of plaster, but somehow the cash was found and the plaster laid. An appeal was made to all neighboring churches for financial aid. The only three that responded refused

to help. But the dedicated and able Baptists of Summit persevered, and under the leadership of Bros. Williams and Woodruff as the Building Committee, the new meeting house was dedicated to the worship of God in May, 1888. During the interim, with the Rev. Mr. W. L. Giles acting as pastor, the congregation had been worshipping in Summit Hall, then the local school but now our City Hall.

To attract a permanent minister, however, a parsonage was needed. In August, the congregation obtained a \$5,000 loan and began to build a parsonage and barn at the rear of the church, together with sheds for sheltering the horses and buggies of the worshippers in bad weather. When the new buildings were ready in October, 1889, the Rev. George Edwin Horr was occupying the pulpit. With fewer than one hundred members, the church's estimated expenses for the coming year, 1890, were \$1,800.

In March of 1889, a disastrous fire destroyed the home and store of Deacon Randolph, destroying all the church records which had been in his keeping. The records of the Board of Trustees, however, survived, giving us

continued on page 6

In Their Own Words

A FEW QUOTATIONS FROM REPORTS, MINUTES AND VARIOUS DOCUMENTS OVER THE YEARS.

It was voted that this Board of Trustees recommend to the church and congregation the holding of a strawberry and ice cream festival.

Trustees' minutes, June 1, 1877

Treasurer reported net proceeds of Festival \$32.16.

Trustees' minutes, Sept. 5, 1877

Voted: that no call be sent to the brother who preached last Sunday.

Minutes of Church Clerk,

July 18, 1888

A sad experience occurred on the evening of October 10, which had a tendency of casting gloom over our last meeting. A wagon belonging to our Dea. Woodruff was carrying a number of our members and friends to West Summit, when the harness broke while descending the Van Cise Hill, causing an upset and seriously injuring Mrs. Geo. H. Williams, Miss Fannie Jones, Mrs. James M. Woodruff and Miss Fannie Conklin. All the other occupants were injured in some degree.

Unidentified Minutes of October 1895

(Editor's Note: Deacon and Mrs. Woodruff's great-great-grandson, William Taylor Kimberly, was baptized in Christ Church on Sunday, February 8, 1976! The Woodruffs were founding members of our Church in 1876.)

It was moved and seconded that Mr. Isaac Cain be authorized to purchase a new lawn mower for the church, and the offer of Mr. Phair to loan his in the meanwhile was accepted with thanks. Mr. Edgar F. Bailey was authorized to purchase two suitable lamps for the purpose of lighting the sheds.

Trustee's minutes, May 18, 1897

A special meeting was called by the president to present to the Ladies a request from the chairman of the finance committee of the church asking for a Loan of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to meet present expenses. After questions on the matter and a discussion it was voted to grant their request.

Minutes of the Ladies' Aid Society, Dec. 14, 1911

Annual porch and lawn party was held at the home of Mrs. Boye . . . A most delightful time was had by the 50 or more who attended. It was most refreshing to sit under the shade of the beautiful old tree which graces their front lawn and feel the delightful breeze and enjoy a short devotional service led by Mrs. Cora Morse and then for our president (Mrs. Harry Marshall) to proceed with a few snappy remarks, which would drive any frowns away; but there were none that day, as Mrs. Oaks made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Brown that we give \$500.00 towards a new kitchen.

*Minutes of Women's Society,
June 2, 1925*

our only first hand glimpses of these early years.

By 1891 new names began to become prominent in the church's life. W. T. Day was president of the Trustees, aided by C.M.K. Smith, W.T. Bailey, E.C. Jewett, G.H. Williams and Bro. Woodruff, in whose parlor the very first organizational meeting had been held. That year saw running water installed in both parsonage and church, the new doors and windows refitted to keep out the cold wind, twelve tons of coal purchased and the first Ways and Means Committee appointed.

The Water Committee having been dissolved, it fell to the Committee on Repairs and Supplies to "raise a mound at the entrance of the property to turn off the rain water that comes down the sidewalk of Morris Ave." With a new coat of gravel and, we presume, the aid of God, the rain water was "turned off". The year closed with only a \$400 deficiency, after the organ blower was paid his \$20. annual salary.

The 1890's were years of great prosperity for Summit, with many wealthy families moving into the area. By 1895 the congregation of the Baptist Church was already outgrowing the frame building it had struggled so hard to erect. In August of 1896, while they searched for a new site, the Baptists offered to sell the church building to the Lutherans for \$8,000.

Meanwhile, the trustees planned to keep up-to-date by installing electrical wiring in the auditorium and two other rooms. Two small kerosene lamps, however, were purchased to light the sheds. Since regular services were held both Sunday morning and evening, with a prayer meeting on Wednesday night, proper lighting was important.

Electricity and running water were not the only modern touches; on May

11, 1897, the minutes of the Board of Trustees first appear in typewritten form. Also, the Trustees began to be addressed with the title "Mr." rather than "Bro.", and suddenly modern times were upon us.

In 1898 the Rev. Warren Giles became minister. At a dinner at the parsonage in 1901, the Boards of Deacons and Trustees began to plan for a new church. George H. Williams, who owned property in the area, offered to sell the big lot on the corner of Springfield and New England Avenues for \$6,500, returning to the Church \$5,000 on condition that it be spent on building a "brick or stone CHURCH EDIFICE on the lot, and that it be so expended within two years". (Trustee Williams' estate, "Meadowbrook", later became the Palmer Nursing Home at 768 Springfield Ave.)

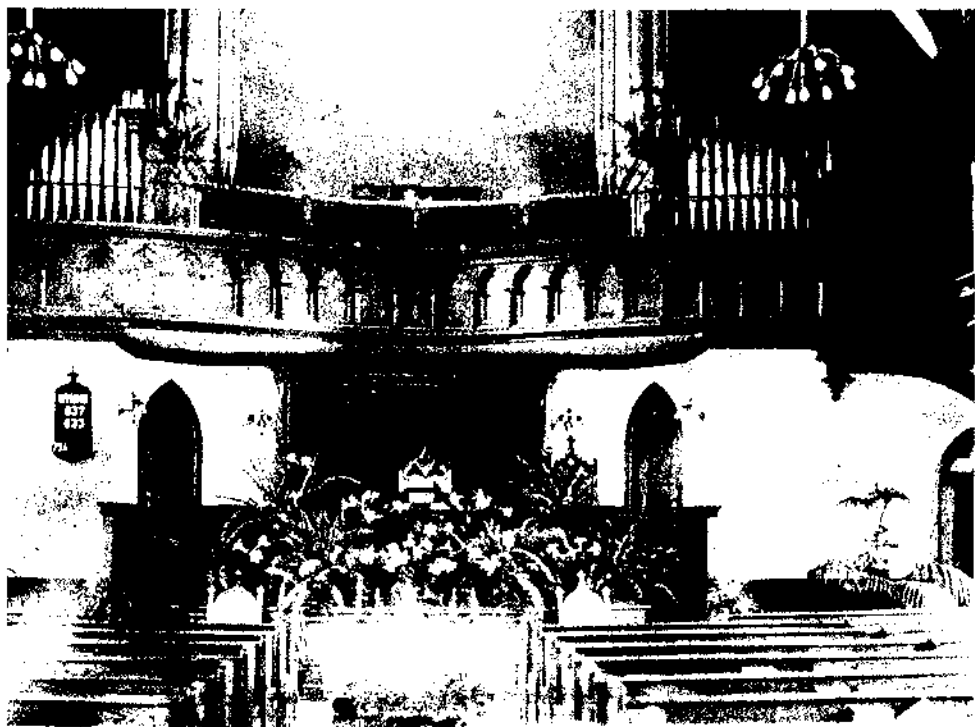
Ground was broken on November 3, 1902, and the cornerstone laid on October 3, 1903. The beautiful new building was dedicated with due reverence on Memorial Day, May 30, 1904.

In contrast with the Church's previous building enterprise, this one went off without a hitch—almost. There was that little Baptist problem, water. This time it was the cellar which leaked marvellously after every rain-storm. Among our legacies from 1904 is that same damp cellar, which has been fixed "permanently" over and over and still leaks.

The early years in the new building were bustling and enthusiastic. Though the mortgage was a problem, the church leaders were capable men and women who got things done. The Church pews were rented by the year, paying their way and insuring everyone a good seat. Mrs. Francis M. Jaeger insured that it be a soft seat as well by giving cushions for the pews. The Hill City Success Club for boys and young men flourished, as did the



*Above: The new First Baptist Church in the early 1900's.
Below: The original chancel with center pulpit and balcony
for the choir and organ. Photo by Louis E. Stahl, Easter 1915.*



Boys' Brigade. The Ladies' Aid held its first Porch Party, continued its annual Strawberry Festival, and increased its work for the missionaries, while sewing for the Summit Children's Home, the Baptist Home, and making pneumonia jackets for the babies in Africa. Church sociables were held frequently. At one, partners were chosen by auctioning off the young ladies' shoes to the young men.

Ill-health forced the Rev. Mr. Giles to resign in 1907, and his replacement was Robert Chipman Hull, whose father, Robert B. Hull, served as interim pastor until his son could assume the pulpit.

The Hulls found a church that was all for moving forward. The Music Committee wished to hire a quartet, so "that we should have as good music in our church as is found in other churches." Improvements were constantly being proposed. The choir needed more light and the pastor wanted screens for the windows to keep out the June bugs. (We are still without those screens.) But such frills were bypassed in favor of tuning the piano (\$2.00), ash removal for four months (\$6.00), and linseed oil for the floors (\$3.20).

This came to a head in 1910 when Bert Underwood and Francis White, dedicated and concerned Trustees, called a meeting at the Lackawanna station as they got off the train from New York at 6:00 p.m. There and then they personally underwrote the church's overdue note. When George Williams offered to sell his lot north of the church property, the congregation couldn't afford to buy it. The full budget for the year was only \$5,500.

But the Baptist Church kept growing. By 1912 the Sunday School had 20 teachers and 80 scholars with a new Christian Endeavor Society for the young people. The Home Mission group helped sponsor an Italian Mission for newly-arrived immigrants in our area. The Ladies' Aid served lunch in the chapel to high school students, "for a moderate price", while the Inasmuch Circle brought 35 poor children from New York for an outing. During Mr. Hull's absence at Lake Chautauqua, a representative of the Anti-Saloon League preached on prohibition and local option.



Christ Church in February 1976, showing part of Barnwell Educational Building which was dedicated in 1966.

In 1912, George Williams again offered the lot next door for sale, this time making an offer the Church couldn't refuse: \$3,500, of which he would pay \$1,000. Today half of our Barnwell Building stands on this land. (The other half is on the property of 53 New England Avenue, which we acquired in 1955.)

The insular community that had spawned the First Baptist Church had changed. On May 17, 1914, Sunday evening service was omitted to accept the invitation of the Presbyterian Church to hear Dr. Booker T. Washington speak. The congregation grew

wheels: "About 30 of our young people accompanied our delegates in four automobiles to the N.J. Baptist Convention in Newark". World War I started in Europe and began to affect the church's life.

Summit responded vigorously to the war effort. A local Belgian Relief Fund was formed, with Mrs. George Muchmore representing the church. Seventeen Baptist women worked with the Red Cross unit, and in 1918, the Church's new Boy Scout Troop organized a fife and drum corps, which acted

continued on page 12





The life that has passed through these halls

By David K. Barnwell, D.D.
Minister Emeritus

Have we not noticed how, in old houses, whether on elm-shaded New England village streets, or cotton-girt southern plantations, or farm houses on Western prairies, there is a flavor, an atmosphere, a palpable personality, gathered from the families that have lived there over several generations? The houses seem to speak of the human lives that have known the joys and sorrows, the happiness and disappointment, the achievements and frustrations that have somehow marked the very walls of their homes. One walks through the rooms sensing the spirit, the quality of the lives that

have been there, a perceptible heritage from the past.

Just so churches, old churches a hundred years old, acquire a feeling, a spirit from out the past. The place where people have sung the hymns, offered the prayers, heard "the word" and reached out for hope and meaning, the place where they have strengthened their faith, becomes in truth a sanctuary. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground".

Christ Church is not a "large church", which is perhaps a great advantage. It is more possible for it to be a "family" instead of only a congregation. Its members can more readily know one another, and therefore share more fully all the varied experiences of our strange mortal pilgrimage.

As a minister here for near forty years (and a member for forty-eight years), my remembrance is filled with recollections: young people christened, dedicated, baptized here, brought by their hope-filled, loving, anxious parents; later coming themselves, to stand with hearts beating high, and eyes shining as they whisper to one another "I do", and exchanging the rings as pledge of their love. Again, the host of older folk, nearing journey's end, here taking a firmer hold of their eternal faith, before they go hence. And, in between, the unnumbered folk who have come, with the immemorial questions, problems, doubts, yearnings, often with gratitude, sometimes with aching pleas, all of them stretching their inmost souls out to God, if haply they might find Him.

A very few of their names are blazoned in our lovely windows, more in the Book of Remembrance, and uncounted hundreds of others, lingering only in our personal memories.

Yes, if we have sensitive hearts, and if we wait quietly in our pews, the sanctuary becomes a treasury, an

authentic record of our friends who have written their very souls into these walls.

A centennial celebration is a time to herald and celebrate the life that has passed through these halls. So many memories crowd my heart, and can never be told!

Allow me one small recollection: Three months after I came to Summit the Great Depression struck America. Our little church had some hard years. We were few in number then, and not affluent. But hard times can reveal unsuspected treasures of love and loyalty. A simple incident comes to mind. Our hymnals were old, and shabby, and falling apart. One of our older members, herself without much of this world's goods, and without a word to anyone, unobserved, began taking home a hymn book each Sunday. With needle and thread and glue, she restored loose pages and cracked bindings, then returned the book to the pew.

This went on for weeks, months, and none of us the wiser. It was only after she had gone on into the heavenlies, that her daughter told me. I went through the pew racks, and found book after book, neatly repaired, as sound and useful as an old book could be. We could thank her only in our prayers! Need I say that, by no means merely because of *this* quiet, unobtrusive service to our church, she lives in my memory as one of the loveliest, humblest, most unpretentious souls I have known in all my ministry. (Now her family is a fifth generation among us, spanning most of our hundred years!)

Space forbids more stories, some very amusing, some tender and moving, stirring, heartening, and all comprising the stuff of human experience. The very walls of our Church are vibrant with the lives that have known and loved this place. A hundred years of living is worth our celebrating!

Our Ministers

Since that first chilly Sunday in March 1876, Christ Church and its parent congregation, First Baptist, have had 17 ministers. In the early, struggling years, pastorates tended to be brief—ten ministers in the first 22 years, for example.

We have been more fortunate in recent years. All tenure records were of course broken by the remarkable 39-year pastorate of Dr. David K. Barnwell, our Minister Emeritus. He and Allen Tinker, between them, have occupied the pulpit for all but three years of our second half-century.

The rose window over the chancel is fittingly dedicated to all the ministers who have served our church:

A. B. Woodworth	1876—1878
W. Lawrence	1879—1880
J. G. Noe	1881—1883
P. A. H. Kline	1883—1886
H. G. Mason	1886
T. F. Griffiths	1887
W. L. Giles (supply)	1887—1888
George E. Horr	1888—1892
N. B. Randall	1892—1897
Daniel J. Ellison	1898
W. Warren Giles	1898—1907
Robert B. Hull (supply)	1907—1908
Robert C. Hull	1908—1915
Rolla E. Hunt	1915—1916
S. Baynham Hiley	1917—1928
David K. Barnwell	1929—1968
Allen A. Tinker	1968—

Since 1946 a succession of assistant and associate ministers have contributed greatly to our church's life: Elmo Pascale, Claude Roebuck, J. Rentz Thomas, David H. Eaton, James A. Moss, Richard L. Brubaker, Lewis L. Richardson, Allen A. Tinker, Peter C. Clarke and currently Howard F. Boardman. Edward C. and Barbara Peterson were ministers of Christian Education in the mid-1950's and Marguerite Beissert in 1971-1972.

as escort to Summit's draftees as they left for camp. The troop sold over 250 Liberty Bonds.

During the war years, Rev. S. Baynham Hiley became minister, and his welcoming party was one of the highlights of the 1917 social scene.

Peace came in 1918, but not prosperity. Beginning with Mr. Hiley's nervous breakdown in 1920, the congregation's fortunes began to change. Some stalwart members moved away. Others died. New members did not keep pace with losses, and the church ran a large deficit. Without doubt, the changing social patterns of the 1920's—including the family automobile—played a part in the problem. Church attendance was off throughout the nation.

By 1924 internal strife between the minister and boards had developed, with accusations and gossip

dividing the congregation. Coming as it did in the middle of all this, the Church's 50th anniversary was rather low-keyed. On Sunday, May 16, 1926, Mr. Hiley gave an "Historical Sermon", with Rev. Warren Giles returning to preach an Anniversary Sermon that evening. Monday brought "Denominational Night", and the Home-Coming Banquet was held on Wednesday, May 19.

But the troubles wouldn't go away, and on top of everything else, the Deacons had to deal with such a controversial group as the Ku Klux Klan, which wanted to be invited en masse to a Sunday service. (The invitation was not issued.)

Finally, in January 1927, a special meeting was called for all board and church committee members to "study the serious problem of lack of interest in the Church and congregation."



The Seventy-Fifth Annual Meeting in 1952 honored two long-time members—Deacon Isaac S. Cain, baptized in our original church in 1884 and Mrs. Ada Cowperthwaite, a member since 1888. Mr. Cain was the son of W. R. Cain, one of our founding members. Mrs. Cowperthwaite was the daughter of George R. Williams, a pillar of the church in the 80's, 90's and early 1900's. Our present church was built on property formerly owned by the Williams family.

The not-yet-completed Church School wing [now the church offices] suffered minor damage after this 1950 windstorm.



Unfortunately, dissension continued. In 1928, Mr. Hiley resigned his pastorate.

A new era began on July 1, 1929, when First Baptist Church welcomed to its pulpit the youthful David K. Barnwell. His dynamic and broadening influence was felt immediately, both by the church and in the community. In conjunction with the YMCA, Lenten Forums were initiated featuring nationally-known speakers. The Church School curriculum was modernized and new emphasis was placed on the youth of the Church. Prayer Meetings were updated. The public was invited to hear outstanding guest preachers who occupied the pulpit on special occasions.

The most far-reaching change, however, was the adoption in May, 1933, of the plan pioneered by Harry Emerson Fosdick's Riverside Church in New York. As at Riverside, our membership basis was enlarged by dissolving all sectarian barriers. Baptism by immersion was no longer required. "We are greatly liberated," declared Mr. Barnwell. "Henceforth, our loyalty is centered in no rule or restriction, but in the person of Christ."

Within the month the first new member, Mrs. Cora Alesbury Bowen,

was received under the new plan. She had worked and worshipped for years in the Church, but just didn't agree with adult immersion. (The Saint Luke window is dedicated to her.) Soon after, Mrs. Marguerite Conover, who had also been active for years—and still is—became officially a member at last.

On Palm Sunday, 1935, a "Joyful Fire" took place, for, in the heart of the depression, the First Baptist Church burned its mortgage. Burton L. Boye, head of the Mortgage Club which had been formed several years before, touched the mortgage papers to a lighted candle while the choir and congregation sang, "Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart".

In honor of the Church's 60th birthday, 1936 was made a Jubilee Year with special events throughout the year. Unfortunately, David Barnwell was ill in California, but his letters kept everyone enthusiastic and involved in the planning and what we now call "dialogue". The Fireside Forums, originally held in private homes, were another innovation of that time.

By 1941 the Church had about 400 members, but World War II took thirty-six into the armed forces, with many more going into government

work. Surmounting wartime difficulties, the congregation became even more involved in the world around it, strongly supporting the War Emergency Relief Fund and similar programs.

Among the "Barnwell Prizes" given at the 1942 Annual Meeting was a tribute to Joseph C. Hazen, Jr. (then serving in the army) "for his splendid work in designing and supervising the construction of the new chancel."

At the war's end, a period of reassessment and growth began, with continued emphasis on outreach and ecumenicalism. By 1951, the congregation contributed to nineteen separate outreach projects.

The present character of our interdenominational fellowship was established on May 28, 1958, when the church voted to affiliate with the Congregational-Christian Churches while maintaining its traditional membership with the American Baptist Churches. The name "Christ Church"

was adopted at this time, reflecting the broad ecumenical background of our members. Incidentally, the Congregationalists were involved in their own ecumenical movement at the time and the merged denominations are now known as the United Church of Christ.

After the war it became apparent that the Church School had far outgrown its scattered cubicle classrooms. An educational annex—the first addition in 48 years—was dedicated in 1951.

A growing membership and the postwar baby boom soon made tight quarters out of the new annex. Then in 1955 the property next door, 53 New England Avenue, came on the market—our only possibility for future expansion. Funds were subscribed to purchase the property, and the Church School expanded into the rooms—including kitchen, hallways and attic—of the old frame house. By 1965 a determined congregation had pledged support to a new Building



Unloading our church bell, given by the Thomas Lencis in 1958. Supervising the operation are Sexton Pieter Van Kroonenburg, George Simson and Dr. David Barnwell. The bell was hoisted into the tower after tearing out part of the vestibule ceiling.



Ministers and members share informal talk at the coffee hour following Sunday morning service.

Fund and construction began. On December 14, 1966, the new building was dedicated as the Barnwell Educational Building—"an expression of affection and profound gratitude for the man who gives so much of himself."

The Barnwell years—especially the postwar period—saw many of the special gifts that so enrich our church today. Our Book of Remembrance reminds us of them all—the beautiful stained glass memorial windows being perhaps the most visible. Only a few of these gifts can be mentioned here: our fine pipe organ in memory of George F. Simson; the chimes and choir room from the Newton A. Burgess family; the choir stalls from the R.R. Wil-

liams; the church bell from the Thomas A. Lencis; Grace Chapel from the W.T.C. Carpenter family in memory of Grace Carpenter; Lile Hall in memory of Lile Bernard Rasmusson; memorial rooms in Barnwell Building given by friends of Margaret Acker, the Edward Babbotts, the J.H. Conover family, the Don G. Mitchells and Curtis Youngdahls.

Acker House is one of the most recent of these generous gifts. For many years, before he was married, David Barnwell had an apartment in the home of Miss Margaret Acker. When this gallant lady died in 1974, a few days after her 100th birthday (on March 17!), her house was willed to the church for use as our parsonage. It

is now the attractive home of the Tinker family.

Dr. Barnwell retired in 1968 after 39 years of devoted leadership. His were difficult shoes to fill, but by an overwhelming vote, a packed congregation called to its pulpit the Reverend Allen A. Tinker, who had been associate minister for the past two years, following his graduation from Union Seminary. Young, capable and caring, with the remarkable ability to make each person feel that he has something important to contribute, Allen Tinker has filled those shoes admirably.

With declining church attendance a widespread fact, Christ Church has maintained its steady growth. More than ever, the membership comes from varied religious backgrounds. Unique in most members' experience is the diversity of opinion and theological belief found in Christ Church, together with the acceptance and respect of other's opinions. Reflecting the enthusiasm of the congregation, the church program and budget have also grown steadily—even during the recent years of recession.

Currently the entire church is setting goals, planning, and dreaming of

the future. Within the congregation are many who have been involved significantly in such issues as racial justice, low income housing and world peace. We enter our second century as diverse a group as can be found, yet firmly united in the bonds of our Christian fellowship.

Woodruff, Martin, Marrow, Williams, Acker, White, Alesbury, Boye, Young, Oakes, Lester, Underwood, Kent, Betts, Muchmore, York, Chisholm, Simson, Ridings, Cain and too many more to tell, they march in a line through our hundred years—men and women of piety, vision, devotion, tenacity, warmth and wit. Many of them never knew one another, but God in his wisdom lent them all, and others like them, to our church. Our greatest legacy from them is an enormous amount of love from which we all can borrow and to which we all add. They set us on our way.

Would they approve of all the changes that have taken place through the years? No, probably not. But they would certainly approve of where Christ Church stands now, reaching out with concern to its members, its community and the world, a rock and a haven for us all.

A HELPING HAND

Christ Church has been responsive to one of the great tragedies of our time—the plight of political refugees. In 1951 we sponsored Dr. Ahmet Samedov and family from Russia. When the Soviets moved into Hungary in 1956, the Lajos Szabo family escaped with only the clothes on their backs; today Mr. Szabo is our valued church sexton.

The following year we brought the Martin Tchepinians, an elderly Armenian couple, to this country from a D.P. camp, and after the Cuban revolution we took responsibility for resettling the Milagros Delgado family. Now, two new members of our church family are Nguyen Con and Nguyen Dang Khuc from Vietnam. We feel privileged to help them start a new life in a new land.

Our Church Calendar

MOTTO FOR THE YEAR—"Lo, I am with You Alway," Matt. 28:20

VOL. I

SUMMIT, N. J., July 24th, 1904

NO. 3



The First Baptist Church of Summit, N. J.

REV. W. WARREN GILES, Minister

6 New England Avenue

"I have a message from God unto thee."—Judges 3:20

*Church calendar for July 24, 1904, shortly
after the dedication of our present building.*



CHRIST CHURCH

1876·1976