

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

of the

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WARREN

1834 - 1934

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

of the

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WARREN, PA.

1834 - 1934

With Supplement 1934 - 1944

Twilight is falling to steal a text: Isaiah 51:1 - "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn". At the 50th anniversary of our church, May 3, 1884, this text was read by our then pastor, the Rev. Howard Lee Stewart. He said, "In the beginning of the world God hewed out of a rock the people of the tribe. They had been as hewn stones in the hand for the building. He says, 'I will use these stones to raise up children unto Abraham'. From the rudest material God can fashion masterpieces of grace. Lined without number the 'stone cut without hands from the mountain' has gone on to greatness, to glory and to grandeur, fulfilling God's ancient oracle. Full often 'the stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner'".

That sermon was delivered twenty years ago. Now we have come to another milestone in the life history of our church. Milestones are of no special value unless they are also sign posts. It matters not so much how many miles we have travelled, but whither are we going -- what is the goal, the ultimate aim of our program?

The ship drives west and another west  
While the sailboats heave to slide;  
The sea set of the sail and not the gale  
That bids them there to glide.

Like the stars of the air are the ways of fate  
As we journey along through life;  
The way set of the end that defines the goal  
And not the stars but the strife.

One hundred years! Shall we visualize the setting of the scene we are about to chronicle? Warren in 1834 was a quaint, attractive village, set amidst closely wooded hills which came to the very edge of the little town, boasting 388 souls, 100 houses, and three mercantile buildings. No bridges spanned the Conneango nor the Allegheny; there were ferries for use when the

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

of the

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WARREN

1834 - 1934

Written by Mrs Alice E. Sill upon the occasion  
of the 100th anniversary celebration of the  
First Baptist Church of Warren, Pennsylvania,  
December 16-20, 1934, and read before the Sun-  
day evening congregation for that event.

Tonight I am going to steal a text: Isaiah 51:1 - "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn". At the 80th anniversary of our church, May 3, 1914, this text was used by our then pastor, the Rev. Howard Ira Stewart. He said, "In the text the brilliant Isaiah portrays Israel as having been hewn out of a rock. The allusion is to Abraham, the Father of the tribe. They had been as rough as hewn stone, when God took them in hand for the moulding. We may apply the words in a general sense, for God 'Is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham'. From the rudest material God can fashion masterpieces of grace. Times without number the "stone cut without hands from the mountain" has gone on to greatness, to glory and to grandeur, fulfilling God's ancient oracle. Full often "the stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner".

That sermon was delivered twenty years ago. Now we have come to another milestone in the life history of our church. Milestones are of no special value unless they are also sign posts. It matters not so much how many miles we have travelled, but whither are we going - what is the goal, the ultimate aim of our progress?

One ship drives east and another west  
While the selfsame breezes blow;  
'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale  
That bids them where to go.

Like the winds of the air are the ways of fate  
As we journey along through life;  
'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal  
And not the storm nor the strife.

One hundred years! Shall we visualize the setting of the events we are about to chronicle? Warren in 1834 was a quaint, attractive village, set amidst closely wooded hills which came to the very edge of the little town, boasting 358 souls, 100 houses, and three mercantile buildings. No bridges spanned the Conewango nor the Allegheny; there were ferries for use when the

water was not too high; at some points the rivers could be forded and in winter crossings were made on the ice. The whole county was innocent of such a convenience as a railroad - none passed through Warren until twenty-five years later. The first line of stage coaches out of Warren was to Buffalo and Pittsburgh four years later. One could leave Warren in the evening and be in Buffalo the next evening and Pittsburgh in a correspondingly short (?) time. In 1834, however, one wishing to go to Pittsburgh had but to wait until the river was at the right stage, find a raft going down and embark as passenger or raftsman. This took about a week. To get back was simple - one had but to buy a horse and ride, or come part way by stage and walk the rest of the way.

In 1834 the first bank was started and called the Lumberman's Bank after the town's principal industry - lumbering. Oil was not "struck" until years later. This bank occupied the building erected by its president Robert Falconer, now used by the Philomel Club on Fourth Street. This is perhaps the only building erected one hundred years ago whose exterior is practically unchanged. The first court house had been built in 1827 on the same site as the present one stands. It was the first brick building in the county. The bricks were made at the corner of Market and Fifth Streets where Charles W. Stone, later Lieutenant Governor, found the remains of the brick-yard when he applied his exhaustless energies to gardening there. Across Market Street was the first jail, and catacorner across on lots now occupied by the Christian Science Church, the Woman's Club and Dr. Hamilton's residence, the new Academy was built. All of these buildings were on what was then known as the Public Square. A string of one story wooden buildings on the river front were used as stores, blacksmith and wagon shops. In 1833 the Methodists had built a very good brick church; the Presbyterians had built in 1834 a frame meetinghouse. The Lutherans and German Evangelical were organized but as yet had no churches.

It was on Friday, May 2, 1834, that 16 men and women gathered at the new court house and with the help of delegations from Pine Grove, Ashville, and Carroll and a missionary from New York State, proceeded to organize the First Baptist Church of Warren. After an examination of the articles of faith and circumstances, it was voted unanimously that "It was for the honor and glory of God to erect a standard of the Cross in this place, where the ordinances of Christ may be administered as they were delivered to the saints".

The original sixteen were: Mrs P. Curtis, Miss F. Curtis, Mrs H. Gier, Mrs P. Doty, Mrs M. Shaw, Miss Elizabeth Morse, Mrs Polly Waters, Mrs P. Strong, Miss Louisa Wheeler, Mr E. Doty, Mr Curtis Pond, Mrs Mary Comstock, Mr O.W. Shaw, Mr W.M. Morse, and W.M. Gildersleve. The grand-daughter of Mrs Polly Waters is Mrs Belle Waters Phillips of Water Street and her great grandson is Wilson H. Waters.

One who came in soon after was William Snyder, great grandfather of Anna and Laura Snyder. A notable fact in this connection is that there has been no time from that day to this when some of his descendants have not been active workers in this church.

On Saturday, May 3rd, following the organization, the first Covenant meeting was held and the hand of fellowship was extended. The next day a Mr and Mrs Jones were received and in a short time Browns and Smiths so the coterie of familiar names was complete. It has been said that no church can hope to survive unless it has Smiths, Jones, and Browns in its midst.

During the first eight years the church had no settled pastor but was served intermittently by traveling ministers and missionaries. We cannot help but marvel at the courage, the fortitude, the loyalty, and the determination exhibited by this little band of early pilgrims in the faith,

holding fast to their belief against all odds, meeting sometimes in the Court House and sometimes in the Academy. It was twenty-five years before they had a church building.

November 1, 1842, we find recorded a church of 29 members, a gain of 13 in 8 years. This date is important as the time of settlement of the first regular pastor, Alfred Handy. With his coming, plans were started for a building, the church was incorporated and a committee appointed to secure a lot and raise funds for a house of worship. Evidently this project was too great an undertaking for it was 15 years before the site on Liberty Street where the Y.M.C.A. now stands, was purchased for just \$99.45.

July 5, 1845, the first mention is made of a Sunday School superintendent so we are led to suppose that the Sunday School was organized about that time. Also in that year is made first mention of a pastor's salary. The records contain the notation that a pastor, William R. Northrup, was called for six months at a total salary of \$70. At the end of the six months, it appears both pastor and people were mutually pleased for the pastor was called for another year with salary fixed at \$215., he to find his own manse and furnish wood for the same.

Two other short pastorates followed, William M. Everett and William Smith. The latter proved to be like the founder of the Mormon religion, not only in name, but in very fact, for it turned out that he had been a Mormon Elder. He left the field in five months.

In 1857 the people were losing hope of ever having a meeting-house and were about ready to give up when Rev. R.C. Willoughby came to the rescue, bringing joy and renewed hope. A note here as to the discipline of those early days is of interest: "Gossiping forbidden; dancing not to be tolerated; one member excluded for telling falsehoods; another for expressing lack of confidence in the church and imprudent conversation; another for unchristian conduct in his family. One member, a lawyer, whose conduct of his practice was questionable, was brought before the church and reprimanded several times. He admitted the charges but did not reform. Hearing he was to be excluded, he attempted to forestall it by calling a meeting in the pastor's absence and having the ministers and deacons all put out. This bold maneuver failed - he was excluded and peace reigned once more, though he carried away all the church records and it was five years before they were returned".

It was during Mr Willoughby's pastorate that an abandoned church at Kiantone, New York, was purchased, pulled to pieces, brought to Warren and rebuilt. This was the beautiful old English type building which was abandoned for this new edifice in 1926. It is thus described by one of the men who helped in its removal here - "It was built in 1830 - at that time the largest and most expensive meeting-house in the county, very high with arched ceilings, seats 400, pulpit elevated 10 steps, large raised choir, in center large chandelier with 40 candles". It stood where the school-house does at present.

My father who is the oldest living member of this church today tells me regarding it:

"The Baptist Church of Kiantone, N.Y., was torn down and moved to Warren the summer of 1857 when I was ten years of age. It formerly stood on the Warren-Jamestown Road, south of the village of Kiantone at a point nearly opposite the intersection of the Busti Road. It was moved in parts or pieces on wagons. Some or all of the trucking was done by the then pastor of the church, Rev. Willoughby. I remember distinctly seeing him enroute to Warren with a timber 30 or 40 feet long on a wagon drawn by one horse, the reach of the wagon extended so that the timber rested at suitable distance from either end of the stick. The pastor walked back of the front axle and at the side

of the timber which was roped or chained to secure it in the middle of each bolster". These are my father's exact words after an intervening 77 years.

As a result of pastor Willoughby's wise management and persistent efforts, the church building was dedicated in 1860. Too much praise cannot be given to the self-sacrificing pastor and the little band at that time, and the church improved spiritually and increased in membership. During this period two brothers were received who proved to be ambassadors for Christ and an honor to the church. John S. Hutson was ordained in 1868 and held honorable pastorates. Rev. G.W. Snyder, father of our members, was converted during the winter of 1857-1858 and at once began active work for the Master. He graduated from Allegheny and Crozer Theological Seminary and became pastor at Columbus, N.J. He died at the early age of 37 - the record says, "a devoted minister of the Gospel - an earbest student who loved learning for its own sake. A noble son of the mother church".

In 1861 when Mr Willoughby left Warren for Meadville, even though a few additions had been made to the church, funds were insufficient to pay a man who was capable of taking charge. He had been of independent means, and the fact that the salary was very, very small did not distress him greatly. If Mr Willoughby had remained here, no doubt the little church band would have been saved another long period of trouble and depression.

After his departure the church was closed off and on for a period of six years. During this time there is a record of four short pastorates with nothing of importance noted: A.J. Hastings, Thomas Evans, Mr Lockwood and I. Trowbridge.

The first ordination of a minister occurred October 21, 1865; in 1869 the bell was placed in the tower of the church - the same bell which now hangs above us but is seldom used any more.

On March 6, 1870, we find the population of Warren to be 2,001 and the Baptist Church with a membership of 34 persons. The church has now been organized 36 years and has gained 18 new members, one new member every two years. The baptistry was installed and used for the first time April 17, 1870; previous to that time all baptismal ceremonies had been performed in the Conewango or the Allegheny.

The year 1873 seems to have been a low period not only for the church but for the town as well. That year a street car track was laid from the Pennsylvania Depot to Glade Run with rolling stock of two one-horse cars which proved just too many - for the project was a complete failure and in a short time the tracks were taken up and sent away.

About this time came S.G. Waid and wife, Mr and Mrs A.J. Hazeltine, a young married couple from Busti. Mr and Mrs A. Gerould and Mrs I.S. Alden had come shortly before. A supply preacher was secured, and he, with Mrs Gerould and Mrs C.M. Snyder, a young widow who had just come to Warren after the death of her husband, the Rev. George Snyder, were appointed to go to Franklin where an association was being held to lay before that body the need of financial aid from the State Mission Society. It was stated that the church would pay part of a regular pastor's salary if the State Board would supplement it, which they previously declined to do. It was said that it was the earnest and intelligent plea of the young widow Snyder (mother of our members Laura and Anna) that induced the Board to grant the request.

Late that same year 1873 the Board sent E.F. Crane, M.D., to become pastor. He was the right man for the right place at this particular time. The house of worship was completely renovated and made more attractive, a new organ purchased, a crescent or horseshoe gallery placed and the solid walnut seats we used so long and so well were installed. The reopening services were impressive with eminent ministers present: Dr. Fred Evans, the brilliant

Welsh preacher, eloquent Dr. Gunning then at Titusville, and the poetical Dr George Whitman then of Oil City. Three new deacons were elected: N.Loree, S.G. Waid and A.J. Hazeltine, and the church for the first time began to occupy its proper place in the community. It was said of Dr. Crane that he never knew failure and that he left his impress on Warren and other towns of this vicinity. The records note "this was one of the banner pastorates of the church".

Following Dr. Crane came H.H. Leamy, a graduate in the first class at Crozer and a classmate of Rev. George W. Snyder. James Rea, fresh from Rochester Theological Seminary, succeeded him. The church had the pleasure of ordaining him. An excellent feeling prevailed and many of the finest members who carried on during later years joined under his ministry.

E.D. Hammond followed. I find no record of his pastorate except that he did not stay long, lost his good wife while here and accepted a call to the Penn Avenue Church, Pittsburgh.

Then came William J. Coulston, described as "big, brilliant, beloved, and busy". Not satisfied with being the "Bishop of Warren" he organized missions at Kinzua and Kane. The former did not long survive but the latter has developed into a fine and thriving church doing a great work for the Kingdom through the years. Word has been received that he is now retired from active service at the age of 77, living in Texas.

It is interesting to note the record at that time, 1887: "Present membership 144 of which one-third are male members. \$103.63 expended for benevolent objects during the year; estimated value of church property now \$6,000. Officers: A.J.Hazeltine, clerk; D.L.Gerould, treasurer; H.E.Davis, secretary of the board of directors".

Under the next pastor, Will C. King, the Sunday School addition was built and dedicated February 23, 1890. Also during his pastorate the Swedish Baptist Church of Warren was organized by dismissal of 34 members from this church. The pastor of that church was ordained by the mother church as was also the pastor of the Kinzua mission. At that time our church had increased to membership of 250.

Next came C. Barnabas Smith, during whose pastorate the church observed its 60th anniversary and who was present and spoke at the dedication of this edifice. He has sent his own message to be read tonight.

He was followed by Dr A.J. Irey who served for nearly ten years, the longest pastorate in the church's history. It is said of him, "He was a man of God, a Baptist, but above all else a Christian whose chief aim in life was in trying to do the will of his Lord. A true ambassador of Christ, a fearless champion of righteousness, strong in message and persuasive in appeal. Dr. Irey manifested those fine human qualities that enlisted the highest esteem and won the affection of all who were privileged to know him". He passed to his reward in February, 1926. During his pastorate the financial, intellectual, and spiritual tone improved. The main part of the church was completely made over and redecored and the entire indebtedness paid off.

In 1905 came Paul J. Lux, rather a brilliant "light" but eccentric, who tired of us rather soon, and not only of us, but of the denomination as well.

Alfred Cookman Drummond, alert, alive, filled with zeal and enthusiasm, followed Mr Lux. We owe our beautiful organ to his energy, artistic appreciation and unbounded optimism. He was a man of culture and fine intellect. For the past several years he has been located in Chicago where he has been doing a splendid work.

In 1914 Rev. Howard Ira Stewart made his presence felt among us by his energy, physical strength and personality that won all those who came in touch with him. Had we been ready at that time to follow his lead in making the new

church a reality, many of our troubles today would be non-existent. At that time the building would have cost less than half what it did eleven years later and Mr. Stewart had a great following which could have put over a great project to a successful completion. But we were afraid to venture into unknown paths. To some, his methods were somewhat radical and aggressive so he soon left us to go where his work would produce worthwhile results. He had most successful pastorates in Washington, D.C., Richmond, Va., and Elmira, N.Y. following his work here. He has made enviable records of additions to church membership, literally thousands having been received into his churches under his ministry. Suddenly he was called out of a busy and successful life while driving along the street in his automobile. In September, 1932, two days prior to his expected participation in the fall associational program, where he was to have been the principal speaker, he passed away. While he was with us the 80th anniversary of the church was celebrated and from his historical sermon I have culled some of the facts herein presented.

In the fall of 1915 Dr. William E. Staub and his fine wife came as our leaders. In the 5½ years spent here, the community came to love and to appreciate their fine qualities. His war work made for him a high place in Warren's affections. Mrs Staub was a woman of unusual mental attainments, a leader in every good work, beloved by all. Her place is hard to fill. During this pastorate, a good start was made toward securing funds for the new church building and benevolences assumed a higher standard. The lot on Market Street was chosen and purchased, NOT however at \$99.45 as the one was in 1850.

Shortly before the coming of Will C. Gates as pastor, Mr Hazeltine made the generous offer of dollar for dollar up to \$30,000 for the new building, all to be paid by May 1, 1927. Mr Gates, after a short pastorate, left for Franklinville, N.Y. He was an excellent preacher, of high mental calibre, but seemed over-concerned about conditions beyond control. He left many friends who are glad to know that he and Mrs Gates are well and happy in their retirement after long service in the Kingdom.

In October, 1923, looking scarcely out of his teens came Harold F. Stoddard. He had been assistant pastor at Pittsfield, Mass., for two years. The time was ripe for a new building; a large sum of money was in hand, the lot purchased. Plans went forward until in February, 1926, this new edifice was dedicated with impressive ceremonies extending over a full week. The dedicatory address was given by the Rev. John F. Vichert, D.D., of Rochester Theological Seminary. Dr. A.W.Beaven, Dr. Bernard C. Clausen, and Dr. Howard I. Stewart were also featured on the program. The total cost of the building, furnishings and site was \$150,709; indebtedness \$63,496. The chairman of the building committee was L.H.Burkhart; of the finance committee, B.H. Donovan. The building speaks for itself. We are sorry to have to record that the times and conditions of men, business, corporations and even nations have contributed to the inability of our people to make more progress in the wiping out of the heavy debt which still hangs over us. Some have done nobly their part; others there seem to be who have yet to realize the meaning of Christian stewardship.

We are all blind until we see  
That in the human plan  
Nothing is worth the making if  
It does not make the man.

Why build these churches glorious  
 If man unbuilded goes?  
 In vain we build the work, unless  
 The builder also grows.

Mr Stoddard's ability as a preacher is too well known to you all to need further comment here. He proclaims the truth in a fearless and convincing way and was much in demand about Warren for special addresses. As advisor of the young people of the association and dean at Kiski he made himself felt among the younger generation. He resigned after eight years' pastorate to go to Bellevue, Pittsburgh.

In February 1932 we gave a unanimous call to our present pastor, Rev. S.A. MacDougall, who came from Fall River, Mass. He who writes the next history - ten, twenty-five or fifty years from now, will pass in retrospect upon the measure of the man who today, in a world of conflict, unrest, irreligion and unbelief, is seeking to hold aloft the banner of Christ in our midst under discouraging and trying conditions.

And now may I mention briefly, aside from the clergy, a few faces which flash before me. Some I have known, others of whom I have heard. Deacon Norman Snyder and his good wife, member of the church for 35 years, deacon for 27 years. The greater part of his life he lived on Quaker Hill but no day was too cold or too hot for him to be at church. Of him this is the superb but simple record - "He sacrificed for the church when it was weak; he stood firm when it needed friends and when enemies broke the walls he knelt on the ruins thereof and prayed that Zion might be restored". What a tribute! Deacon A. Gerould in that office for 34 years, served also as clerk and treasurer. A worthy son, Deacon D.L. Gerould, served in various important offices during his lifetime, was deacon many years. Deacon S.G. Waid, a member from 1873 to 1920, deacon 47 years; N. Loree from 1873 to 1916, a deacon 43 years; George W. Thompson, deacon for over 50 years and for many years our most faithful treasurer. Faithful almost to a fault was this monumental Christian gentleman. How we miss him! A.J. Hazeltine, deacon for over 50 years during which period he gave so freely of himself and of his means to meet every need of this church and who though often having reason to be discouraged, kept his faith in us and in the God whom he served so long and nobly. W.H. Lott's faithfulness to the financial secretaryship was a model of devoted service. For many years quietly he kept the financial wheels oiled and in good repair. Strange, but true, in those years the finances needed not to cause worry nor anxiety.

In 1919 Miss Anna Snyder in her history says she would like to write a book called "These Women", for a history of this church is not complete without mention of the noble contribution made by the faithful, loyal women of the past years. She mentions particularly the following: Mrs I.S. Alden, Mrs A. Gerould, Mrs Susan Snyder, Mrs S.G. Waid, Mrs Catherine Synder, Mrs Mary Sill, Mrs Emma (Gurdon) Sill, Mrs A.J. Hazeltine, and Mrs G.W. Thompson. To these I would add Mrs J.W. Miller and Mrs Anna Wilson Parker.

They are all gone - yet

They are not gone who pass  
 Beyond the clasp of hand,  
 Out from the strong embrace,  
 They are but come so close  
 We need not grope with hands,  
 Nor look to see, nor try  
 To catch the sound of feet.  
 They have put off their shoes

Softly to walk by day  
 Within our thoughts, to tread  
 At night our dream-led paths  
 Of sleep.

They are not lost who find  
 The sunset gate, the goal  
 Of all their faithful years.  
 Nor lost are they who reach  
 The summit of their climb,  
 The peak above the clouds  
 And storms. They are not lost  
 Who find the light of sun  
 And stars and God.

There are many today within the sound of my voice whose names should be inscribed hereon for faithful and devoted service, but of necessity I must leave that to future historians. Time would not suffice to mention them all. I shall <sup>but</sup> mention the two oldest living members in point of membership: Mrs John B. Cable who joined January 7, 1877, and Mrs Addie C. Page who joined April 1st of the same year.

My father, Gurdon Giles Sill, nearing his 88th birthday is the oldest member. He joined the Baptist fold when a very young man. His record of devotion to a struggling Baptist church in Ohio for more than twenty years would read like a book of fiction. In this church he was deacon for 15 years, a most painstaking financial secretary for a number of years, always a faithful attendant and participant in every activity regardless of on-coming age and the freaks of the weather. He had hoped to be with us today but was unable to come. He sent the following telegram: "Sending greetings on church's 100th anniversary. Very sorry cannot be present."

And now to us who are so fortunate as to be living today and enjoying this beautiful house of worship and all that it should mean to us, builded for the honor and glory of God, as we continue through these momentous days of our 100th anniversary celebration, and on into the unknown and veiled future, shall we not honor the noble heritage that is ours as a church and go forward to proclaim the Truth in His name -

Here is the Truth in a little creed  
 Enough for all the roads we go  
 In love is all the law we need  
 In Christ the only God we know.

We search the world for truth. We call  
 The Good, the True, the Beautiful  
 From graven stone and written scroll,  
 And all old flower-fields of the soul;  
 And weary seekers of the best,  
 We come back laden from our quest  
 To find that all the sages said  
 Is in the Book our mothers read.

May 1944

At the request of the officers of the church in 1944 when the church debt was paid off, I have written briefly the events of the 10 years since the foregoing history was presented at the 100th anniversary celebration, and append same herewith.

(Mrs) Alice E. Sill-Branch

Following the pastorate of Rev. S.A. MacDougall which was terminated by his resignation in the summer of 1936, the church called Rev. Arthur M. Spiller of Troy, N.Y.. No solution of the heavy financial problems facing the church had been found during Mr MacDougall's pastorate. Mr Spiller remained with us  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, during which time a spirit of unity and harmony prevailed, the church regained her rightful place in the community. Stewardship of time and money was stressed and continuing payments were made on building fund pledges, but in no wise large enough to approximate a solution of the hampering debt. In 1938 the church entertained the Pennsylvania Baptist Convention - nearly 500 delegates from all parts of the state attending - who were loud in their praise of our church's fine facilities and gracious hospitality. Much credit was due our pastor who handled this gigantic task skillfully with a corps of loyal workers. By volunteer labor the church had been put in the pink of condition in every detail.

In May, 1940, Mr Spiller accepted a call to the First Baptist Church of Meadville, Pa., and his resignation here was accepted with keenest regret. Both Mr and Mrs Spiller have many friends in Warren, inside and outside the church membership who have found it hard to reconcile their leaving after so short a time among us. They are always welcomed enthusiastically on their return visits, and we are fortunate in having them with us tonight.

The coming of James A. Davidson as pastor was by unanimous vote in September 1940. The new pastor and family had little more than unpacked their household effects than the knotty problem of the church debt had to be faced. In November, trustees and deacons headed by Francis H. Hetrick, met to consider a debt solution plan. The debt was \$50,000 with considerable back interest. We had passed through a severe depression - many members had pledged and had been unable to pay. Discouragement prevailed and little hope was entertained that such a large debt at face value could ever be paid. Therefore the officers of the church looked about for some sort of a plan whereby a compromise settlement could be effected. Mr Hetrick submitted plans for an organization - outside the framework of the church - whereby funds could be solicited and accumulated, membership in such organization to be \$100 per capita, contribution of lesser value to carry associate membership. Those having paid-up memberships before December 15, 1940, to be charter members. These were Dr. and Mrs James A. Davidson, Mr and Mrs J.J. Mitchell, Mr and Mrs Ralph Owens, F.H. Hetrick, Mr & Mrs Harold A. Lee, Misses Anna and Laura Snyder, Miss Viola Lindmark, Lewis E. Elder, C.W. Elmquist, Robert Carlson, L.W. Archibald, E.V. Mellander, Addie D. Thompson. In December the name "Roger Williams Association" was chosen for the organization and officers were elected: President, F.H. Hetrick; Vice-president, J.J. Mitchell; Treasurer, Ralph Owens; Secretary, Robert Carlson. Later L.J. Stoddard became treasurer in place of Mr Owens.

From that time to the present, a total of \$20,086.32 has passed through the Association treasury. Included is the bequest of Mr and Mrs Chas. Fairchild of \$1300 and many amounts raised through the building fund as set aside in the regular church budget and pledges to building fund through former efforts at liquidation. Settlement was effected with one bondholder at 40¢ on the dollar - with others at 50¢ on the dollar. Number of members contributing 161; non-members 12.

During Dr. Davidson's pastorate, his whole-hearted enthusiasm in this project as well as his sacrificial giving created an encouraging optimism that was well-nigh contagious. Mr Hetrick has worked tirelessly, traveling many miles and making scores of calls of solicitation which should have public recognition on this occasion. He and other officers of the Association rejoice in the culmination of their labors - a debt-free church.

No comment need to be made as to the place Dr. and Mrs Davidson hold in the affections of this people and in the community at large. They have made a place for themselves in Warren which is theirs alone. Their influence has been far-reaching in all walks of life and among all classes.

His enlistment in the chaplaincy in May 1942 necessitated securing an interim pastor for one year, he having been granted leave for that period. Rev. Ernest C. Ruark served in that capacity for 12 months, leaving for a charge in New Jersey this fall. In June of this year, upon his urgent request, Pastor Davidson's resignation was accepted on account of the uncertainty of the war's termination and his enlistment for 6 months thereafter. His and Mrs Davidson's presence among us several times during his war service has brought an increased realization of their matchless loyalty to the church and their devotion to the cause of Christ. It is understood that his departure for overseas service is imminent. Countless prayers will ascend that God's richest blessing may be upon him and his family in the critical days which lie ahead.

In attempting to present the salient facts of the church's 110 years of development in a brief 30 minutes, it is impossible to name all those stalwart warriors of the Cross who served devotedly in the years gone by, without whose faithful and valiant loyalty this happy occasion could not have been possible. Their labors were not in vain. They have sown, we reap the reward - their long-cherished hope of a beautiful house of worship unencumbered by debt.

Those of us so fortunate as to be living today and enjoying the fruits of their labors, humbly acknowledge the noble heritage that is ours and with thankful hearts go forward with greater zeal and confidence to proclaim the Truth in his name.