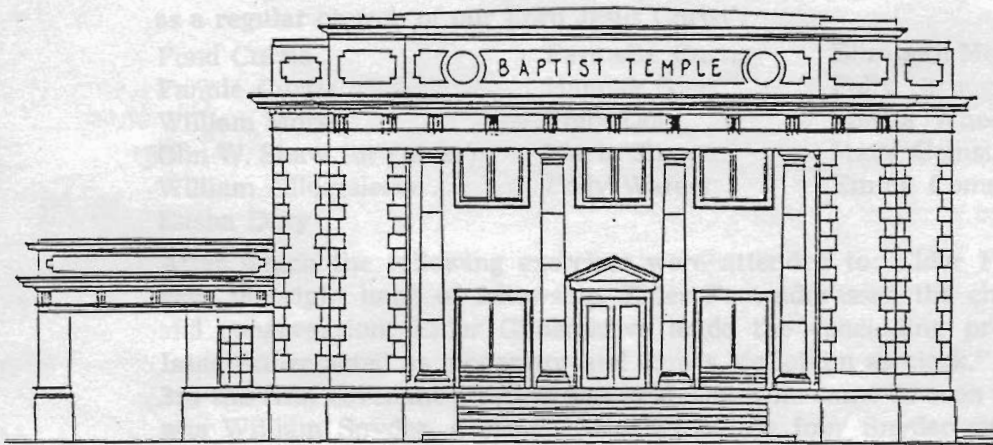


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
WARREN, PA

"OUR STORY"



WE BEING MANY ARE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

It was on Friday, May 2, 1834, that "By request of a number of Baptist Brothers and Sisters who had previously united in conference, a Council convened at the Court House to take into consideration the propriety of giving the brothers and sisters composing said conference fellowship as a sister church."

"Brethren were present from Pine Grove (Russell), Ashville and Carroll, namely: Pine Grove, - Thomas Foster, William Heaton, Silas Ruland, Levi Hitchcock, Hazel Tupper, Jacob Allen, James Love. From Ashville, - Elder Isaac Fuller, James McCollum. From Carroll, - Elder Adrain Foot, Levant Rathburn. Elder Martin Colman being present as a missionary from the N. Y. State Convention, was invited to a seat. These being accepted by the conference as their Council, the Council then proceeded to the examination of their articles of faith and practice, and of their circumstances. After which it was unanimously voted, 'That it is for the honor and glory of God to erect the standard of the cross in this place, where the ordinances of Christ's House may be administered as they were delivered to the saints, and that we give fellowship to the Brethren and Sisters whose names are here inserted, as a regular church of our Lord Jesus Christ':

Pond Curtis	Parmelia Curtis	Elizabeth Morse
Fannie Curtis	Hannah Gier	Polly Strong
William Morse	Polly Doty	Louiza Wheeler
Olin W. Shaw (or Oliver)	Maria Shaw	Mary Comstock
William Gildersleeve	Polly Waters	Emma Comstock
Elisha Doty		

After which the following exercises were attended to: Elder Fuller gave the right hand of fellowship, Elder Foot addressed the church and congregation; Elder Gildersleeve made the concluding prayer. Isaac Fuller acted as moderator and James McCollum as clerk." May 3rd the first covenant meeting was held. One who came in soon after was William Snyder, great grandfather of the four Snyder sisters, Laura, Anna, Annette and Agnes. March 6, 1841 the church adopted the articles of faith and practice held by the First Baptist Church of Jamestown, N. Y. May 4th a Mr. and Mrs. Jones were received and in a short time Browns and Smiths. It was said no church can hope to survive without Smiths, Browns and Jones in its midst. On October 1, 1842 the church adopted a new covenant. The first death was that of Polly Doty, November 14, 1842.

During the first eight years the church had no settled pastor but was served intermittently by traveling ministers and missionaries, among whom were T. S. King, Wm. Gildersleeve, F. Wilson and Elisha Gill. One cannot help but marvel at the courage, fortitude, loyalty and determination of this handful of pioneers in the faith, holding fast to their belief against all odds, meeting first in the old Court House

and later in the Academy. It was 25 years before they had a church building.

November 1, 1842 we find a church of 29 members, a gain of 13 in eight years. This date is important as the time of the settlement of



ALFRED HANDY

First Pastor

"A good son of a good father"

the first regular pastor, Rev. Alfred Handy. He was born at Brookfield, N. Y., on January 7, 1807 and spent his boyhood in Fredonia, N. Y. where his father, Rev. Joy Handy, was pastor of the Baptist Church. Alfred entered Hamilton Seminary to study for the ministry and was ordained October 23, 1833. He began his ministry in Sardinia, N. Y. May 1, 1833. He came to Warren November 1, 1842 as first pastor of this church. After 3½ years here, he became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jamestown for 2½ years. Later, he was sent by the Baptist Home Missionary Society into Michigan and died in Mason, Michigan in 1862.

During Alfred Handy's pastorate 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, between the present Y.M.C.A. and the Post Office was purchased for \$99.45. Judge L. D. Wetmore in his "Reminiscences" under date of February 7, 1854, says: "Some five or six years ago when Elder Handy was laboring among them, the Baptist Society attempted to build a church, purchased the ground, got the foundation laid and the building framed. Failing to get some foreign assistance which they expected, the building was abandoned, the lot given up and the timber otherwise disposed of. Elder Everett preached to them for two or three years since that time. He left last fall for other fields of labor. The Society has diminished since the erection of the church was abandoned and is now in a similar situation with some spoken of by Elder Levant Rathbun in his report to the association on the state of religion, 'It has not only lost its vitality, but almost its visibility.' "

July 5, 1845 first mention is made of a Sunday School Superintendent so we are led to suppose that the Sunday School was organ-

ized about that time. Also in that year first mention is made 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 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 Warren "Ledger" of June 19, 1849, reports, "Baptist services are to be held hereafter in the Academy, the Court House being under repair. Rev. Everett will preach." William Smith 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.

A note here as to the discipline of those 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 minister 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.



In 1857 the people were losing hope of *ever* having a meeting-house and were about ready to give up when Rev. B. C. Williughby came to the rescue, bringing joy and renewed hope.

It was during Mr. Williughby's pastorate, about 1859, that an abandoned church at Kiantone, N. Y., was purchased, taken down in sections, brought to Warren and rebuilt. This was the beautiful old English type building which we vacated for the new church 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 of Chautauqua, N. Y., 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 Kiantone school house does at present.")

In 1934 my father, Gurdon G. Sill, then the oldest living member of this church, told me regarding it: - "The Baptist Church of Kiantone, N. Y., was torn down and moved to Warren the summer of 1859 when I was 12 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 Rev. Mr. Willoughby, pastor of this church. I distinctly remember 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 were my father's words after an intervening 75 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 people at that time, and the church improved spiritually and increased in membership.

During this period two members were received who proved to be ambassadors for Christ and an honor to the church: John G. Hutson was ordained in 1868 and held honorable pastorates. Rev. George W. Snyder, converted in the winter of 1857-58, graduated from Allegheny College 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 earnest student who loved learning for its own sake. A noble son of the mother church."

In 1861 when Rev. Mr. Willoughby left Warren for Meadville, even though a few additions had been made to the membership, 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 small did not distress him greatly. If Mr. Willoughby had remained here, no doubt the little church group 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: A. J. Hastings, Thomas Evans, D. T. Lockwood and I. Trowbridge. In March 1868, Rev. Thomas Evans in the Warren "Mail" expresses his appreciation for \$174.70 received at the "Donation Party."

Of this amount \$150 was in cash. Church sociables are occasionally noted in the press of the time, one at R. P. King's, at Mrs. James Olney's, at Mrs. I. S. Alden's and at Johnson's Hall. On September 15, 1868, a very successful "peaches and cream party" was held by the Baptists at the Lutheran church then in process of building and used for many church affairs by all denominations. Net gain from this party was \$250.00.

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 now in this belfry but seldom used. In 1870 the Warren "Mail" commented on this bell: - "It has a deep pleasant tone something like the Lutheran bell and is quite an addition to our Sunday morning music. It was purchased at Troy, N. Y. Our brethren are entitled to much credit for their efforts to improve the new church and keep it up."

March 6, 1870, the church had a membership of 34; the church had now been organized 36 years and had gained 18 new members. The population of Warren was now 2,001. The baptistery was installed and used for the first time April 17, 1870, the first candidate being Laura A. Walker. 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. In 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.

About this time, 1873, there came S. G. Waid and wife, and 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 W. Snyder, were appointed to go to Franklin where an Association was being held, to lay before that body the need of financial help from the State Mission Society. It was stated the church would pay part of a regular pastor's salary if the State Board would supplement it which they had declined previously to do. It was said to have been the earnest and intelligent plea of the young widow Snyder that induced the Board to grant the request.

In April, 1877 the Board sent E. F. Crane, M. D., as pastor. He was the right man in the right place at this particular time. The house of worship was completely renovated and made more attractive. The outside and inside were repainted, the ceilings and walls tinted and papered, and stained glass windows put in. A new organ was purchased, a crescent or horseshoe gallery placed and the solid walnut seats we used so long were installed. The reopening services on December

20. 1877, were impressive, with eminent ministers present. 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. After visiting the church, the editor of the Warren "Mail" observes in issue of January 3, 1878: - "The services at the Baptist Church are very interesting. the church is beautiful; well warmed, seats easy, music good, Rev. E. F. Crane preaches excellent sermons. The public is urged to go and hear. Worthwhile."

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 in 1879, came H. H. Leamy, a graduate in the first class at Crozer and a classmate of Rev. George W. Snyder. James Rea, just graduated from Rochester Theological Seminary, succeeded him in 1881. 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 in 1884. He did not stay long, lost his wife while here, and accepted a call to the Penn Ave. Church, Pittsburgh.

Then in 1886 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 thriving church, present pastor (1959) being Rev. John Jones.

It is interesting to note the record at that time (1887): "Present membership, 144, of which one-third are male members. \$103.65 expended for benevolent objects during the year; estimated value of church property \$6,000.00. Officers: A. J. Hazeltine, clerk; D. L. Gerould, treasurer; H. E. Davis, Secretary of the board of directors."

During the summer of 1888 the church felt the need of more commodious quarters to carry on the work. Commenced during the pastorate of Rev. W. J. Coulston, the improvements were finished and dedicated Feb. 23, 1890 when Rev. Will C. King was the minister. The front vestibule was added, also the Bible School, prayer meeting room, kitchen and dining rooms at the rear. Also during this pastorate the Swedish Baptist Church of Warren was organized by dismissal of 34 members from this church. The pastor of that church, John Peterson, was ordained by the mother church, as was also the pastor of the Kinzua mission, B. J. Yates. At this time our church had increased to a 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 new building in 1926.

He was followed in 1895 by Dr. A. J. Ireby, who served for nearly 10 years, the longest pastorate in the church's history thus far. The records say 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." During this pastorate the financial, intellectual and spiritual tone improved. The main part of the church was made over completely, redecorated and the entire indebtedness paid off.

In 1905 came Paul J. Lux, rather a brilliant "light", somewhat 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 in 1909. We owe the beautiful pipe organ to his energy, artistic appreciation and unbounded optimism. He was a man of culture and fine intellect.

In 1913 Rev. Howard Ira Stewart made his presence felt among us by his energy, physical and mental endowments and a 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 later troubles might have been avoided. At that time the building would have cost less than half what it did 11 years later, and Mr. Stewart had a great following which could have put over the project to a successful completion. But we hesitated to venture into unknown paths; to some, his methods were considered radical and too aggressive. He left us in 1915 for Washington, D. C., later going to Richmond, Va., and Elmira, N. Y. He made enviable records of additions to church membership, literally thousands having been received into churches under his ministry. Mr. Stewart preached twice on Sunday, March 2, 1926 at the dedication of this edifice. In Sept. 1932, two days prior to his planned participation in the fall program of the Oil Creek Association meeting in Kane, he was stricken on the streets of Elmira while driving his automobile. He was to have been the principal speaker at the Kane meeting.

In the fall of 1915 Dr. William E. Staub and his wife arrived. In the 5½ years spent here, the community came to appreciate their many 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. It was she who organized and taught the Berean Class of young women. The Ladies' Aid Society also was organized at this time. 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 for \$15,000, in contrast to \$99.45 paid for the first site in 1850.

Shortly before the coming of Will C. Gates as pastor in 1921, 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. After a short pastorate Mr. Gates left for Franklinville, N. Y. He was an excellent preacher, of high mental caliber, but seemed over-concerned with minor matters beyond his control.

In October, 1923, looking scarcely out of his teens, came Harold F. Stoddard from an assistant pastorate at Pittsfield, Mass. The time was ripe for a new building; a large sum of money was in hand, the lot was purchased. Plans went forward until on Sunday, June 21, 1925 at 3 o'clock the cornerstone of the new church was laid with impressive services: Mr. Stoddard led in prayer and read portions of Matthew's Gospel, 28th chapter. Others participating were Mrs. Mary Blair, oldest member, Miss Helen Klinefister, youngest member. A. J. Hazeltine placed a copper box containing the history and membership list of the church in the cornerstone, L. H. Burkhart as chairman of the Building Committee sealed it over with mortar. Movies were taken of the exercises, also group pictures of those taking part. In February 1926 the new building was dedicated with 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 Rev. Howard I. Stewart were featured on the program. The total cost of site, building and furnishings was \$150,709; indebtedness \$63,496. The chairman of the Building Committee was L. H. Burkhart; of the Finance Committee, B. H. Donovan.

Mr. Stoddard's ability as a preacher needs no 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. Subsequently, he served at Lima, Ohio, First Church and then was called as Executive Secretary of the New Jersey Baptist Convention. In 1958 he was elected President of the Baptist Institute for Christian Workers at Bryn Mawr, Pa., a position he now holds (1959).

And now I want to mention, aside from the clergy, a few of the laity whose loyalty deserves mention. Some I have known, others of whom I have heard; Deacon Norman Snyder and his good wife, members of the church 35 years, deacon for more than three decades. The greater part of his life he lived on Quaker Hill but no day was too cold nor 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!"

Deacon Abijah 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 life-time. 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 gentlemen. A. J. Hazeltine, deacon for over fifty years, during which period he gave so freely of himself and of his means to meet every need of this church, and who, though having reason to be discouraged, kept his faith in us and in the God whom he served so long and so nobly. Hiley E. Davis served for years on trustees' board and filled other positions of responsibility with honor and competence. W. H. Lott's faithful-

ness 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 had no need to cause worry or anxiety.

In February 1932 a unanimous call was extended to Rev. Samuel A. MacDougall of Fall River, Mass. In 1934 the church centennial was celebrated; special services Sunday December 16 through Wednesday December 19 were held with addresses by the Rev. Burton C. Barrett, Executive Secretary of the Pennsylvania Baptist Convention and the Rev. Harold F. Stoddard of Bellevue Church, Pittsburgh. The pastor, Dr. MacDougall, spoke Wednesday on the theme, "The Purpose of a Church and its Mission". An evening of remembrance was enjoyed on Sunday evening, December 16 with the 100-year history of the church given by Mrs. Alice Sill which included a telegram from Gurdon G. Sill, her father, extending congratulations to the church and voicing his sorrow at not being able to be present. He at that time was the oldest living member of this church, temporarily living in Cleveland, Ohio. An all-church banquet was held Tuesday. Special music was featured: vocal solos by Viola Lindmark, a harp solo by Janet Putnam and organ numbers by Mrs. Charlotte Lohnes, who for many years served as church organist.

In the summer of 1936, Mr. MacDougall resigned, due to the many difficulties of that period of conflict, unrest, irreligion and unbelief.

The church then called Rev. Arthur M. Spiller of Troy, N. Y. He remained here three and one-half years, 1936-1940. During his pastorate a spirit of unity and harmony prevailed; the church regained her rightful place in the community, yet no solution of the heavy financial problems facing the church had been found. Stewardship of time and money had been stressed and continuing payments were made on building fund pledges, but in no wise large enough to approximate a solution.

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 A-1 condition in every detail.

In May 1940 Mr. Spiller accepted a call to First Church, Meadville, and his resignation was accepted with keenest regret. Both Mr. and Mrs. Spiller made many friends in Warren, both inside and outside the church membership.

In September 1940 a unanimous call was extended to James Allie Davidson of Knoxville Church, Pittsburgh, at a salary of \$2400.00, it being understood that Mr. Davidson might use the time required to complete his thesis for a doctorate at University of Pittsburgh. 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 F. H. Hetrick met to consider a debt-solution plan. The debt was \$50,000 with considerable back interest. The country 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 could *ever* be paid at face value.

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 each, contribution of lesser value to carry associate membership. The name "Roger Williams Association" was chosen for the organization and officers were elected, President, F. H. Hetrick. A total of \$20,086.32 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.

"A Service of Thankful Recognition and Re-dedication" which included the burning of the mortgage was held November 29, 1944, with the former pastor, Rev. A. M. Spiller presiding. The church history, written by Mrs. Alice Sill Branch, was read by her. J. J. Mitchell spoke on "Early Financing of the Church". The actual burning of the mortgage was by F. H. Hetrick; address by Rev. Mr. Spiller.

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

It was within this pastorate that the first board of deaconesses was appointed by the pastor and deacons. They were: Mrs. Chas. Lindmark, Mrs. Harold Jackson, Mrs. B. H. Donovan, Mrs. H. G. Buerkle, Mrs. Robert Carlson. Also at this time the constitution was amended in order to provide for a board of junior deacons, 12 in number. These were: Llewellyn Gibson, Gerald Snyder, Virgil Erickson, Vance Ross, John Mitchell, George Toner, Clarence Hendrickson (and a little later James Wilson and Louis Lind). Now also the church entered into the program of "released time religious education" in co-operation with the school system of Warren and with other denominational bodies. This has been a rewarding venture and is still continued.

As planned, Mr. Davidson was able to complete his thesis on "Baptist Beginnings in Western Pennsylvania" and was awarded his doctor's degree. The author of this present history (Alice Sill Branch) had the privilege of proof-reading and typing the hundreds of sheets of this superb manuscript, copies of which are preserved in the University of Pittsburgh, in the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester (20) New York and in Mr. Davidson's personal library. An abstract of this document is to be found in the Warren Public Library. It was evaluated at the University of Pittsburgh as one of the very best dissertations ever to be presented at that institution of learning.

No comment need be made as to the place Dr. and Mrs. Davidson hold in the affections of this people and in the community. Their influence has been far-reaching in all walks of life and among all classes. His enlistment in the chaplaincy of the armed services in May 1942 called for church action which granted him a leave of absence for one year. An interim pastor, Rev. Ernest C. Ruark, was called for one year. Dr. Davidson had offered his resignation due to the uncertainty of war service for which he had volunteered. The church declined to accept his resignation when submitted at two different times, but upon his further insistence in the fall of 1944 the resignation was accepted with sincere regret.

In February 1945 a meeting was called to vote upon the establishment of a parsonage fund. The one year interim term of Mr. Ruark having expired, in March, 1945, a call was extended to Rev. Milton G. Perry, of Trenton, N. J., to become pastor. Both Mr. and Mrs. Perry were much beloved by members and a wide circle of friends. A goal under "The Christian Life Crusade" was set at this time:— 200 at morning worship, 100 at evening worship, 75 at prayer service, 200 at Sunday School. Steady, encouraging progress was made with a fine fellowship existing among people and pastor.

A parsonage on Brook St. was purchased for \$13,500. The church sanctuary was redecorated at a cost of \$2200 and a special service to mark the event was held May 20, 1949. Mr. Perry resigned September 2, 1951, assuming a less active charge in Florida. On September 30, 1951, a call was extended to Rev. Leland D. Hine of 34th St. Baptist Church, Philadelphia. Under his ministry the church made good progress; his sermons were scholarly, inspiring and thought-provoking. It was with keen regret that his resignation was accepted in June, 1953. He was desirous of accepting a teaching position in Chicago and associating himself in a field where he could continue graduate study.

On September 27, 1953, the Pulpit Committee, Clarence Hendrickson, Chairman, recommended for pastor the Rev. G. Forrest Sparks of Homewood Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, and he was given a call. The trustees arranged for the sale of the Brook St. parsonage for \$13,500 and the purchase of a larger one at 1002 Conewango Ave. at \$15,000.

There has been a normal growth in membership; the pastor makes many calls on the sick and shut-ins in particular. He holds a monthly service at the Watson Home for women and serves as a chaplain at the State Hospital at North Warren. A successful missionary emphasis series with various speakers was held on six Wednesday evenings. The Laymen's Movement as outlined by the American Baptist Convention was carried out during the winter of 1958-59.

The organ which came from the former church building on Liberty St. when that was vacated, has been rebuilt and many additional features added at a cost of \$4,119. A number of much needed improvements to the interior of the building have been made within the last year or two; i. e., new kitchenette off the prayer meeting room, filling a long-felt need for

social gatherings, wedding receptions and the like; complete renovation of the basement kitchen at a cost of \$1200; relocation of doors and partitions in nursery with installation of additional much needed equipment; concrete floor in teen-age department, also greatly improved lighting by fluorescent installations. The brick garage on the rear of the church property was razed to make a sizable parking lot, a much needed addition.

1959 - 1990

In 1959 our Church celebrated it's 125th anniversary.

Our pastors:

1953 - 1960 - Rev. G. Forrest Sparks
1960 - 1972 - Rev. Howard Faulkner
1972 - 1973 - Rev. John A. Waugaman (Interim)
1973 - 1979 - Rev. Richard Visser
1980 - Rev. Earl H. Staples (Interim)
1980 - 1990 - Rev. Paul T. Fitzgerald

1981 was the 150th anniversary of our church.

The church mortgage was paid off in the spring of 1990.