

The Church of 150 Years

Ruth Putney Coghill

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The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston, West Virginia expresses deep gratitude to Mrs. Ruth Putney (Mrs. J. B.) Coghill for her preparation of this historical material on the occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the Presbyterian Church in the Kanawha Valley.

Mr. David Ruffner, who gave the land for the first Presbyterian Church, was the great, great grandfather of Mrs. Coghill. The Reverend Doctor Henry Ruffner, who presided at the organization of the first Presbyterian Church on March 14, 1819, was the great, great uncle of Mrs. Coghill.

Wm. A. Benfield, Jr.
Senior Minister

July 1, 1969

are reminded of God's goodness to us and our church through the many years that have gone before.

We look upon our past with thankful hearts; to the heritage that is ours, to the bedrock upon which this church was founded, and to those Christian men and women who helped to make it the church it is today.

The work and influence of this church in the sheltered valley long ago could be likened to the flicker of a tiny candle that has, through the years, grown into a mighty beacon, sending its light into the far corners of our foreign field.

THE BEGINNING

One hundred and fifty years ago when Charleston was only a little village of five hundred people with no paved streets or bridges and the leading hotel or tavern, as it was then called, charged twelve and one-half cents a night for lodging and twenty-five cents for meals, it was then that the work of our church was beginning in this valley.

Colonel David Ruffner, one of the leading citizens of the time, who, when a young man, had come with his father to this valley from Shenandoah, Virginia, was very much interested in its economic, educational and religious development. He and his brother had bored and operated the first salt wells west of the Alleghenies. He had discovered coal, the first known in Kanawha, and used it in his salt furnaces.

David's son, Henry, at an early age showed his interest in teaching and preaching rather than in salt making and other industries of the time. He was sent to Lewisburg Academy to study under Dr. McElhenny and then to Washington College. He studied theology under the eminent Dr. George Baxter and was licensed in 1815 by Lexington Presbytery.

At that time he began preaching in and around Charleston and up the valley beyond the salt works at Malden. In 1816 Dr. Ruffner performed a marriage service which was the first item on the first permanent marriage ledger in Kanawha County.

Preaching services were held each Sunday in the old log Court House which stood where our present Court House now stands. At that time there was no other building in town where a meeting of forty or more people could be seated. In Malden he preached in his father's house and later in the little church which his father built.

Colonel David Ruffner believed that education and religion should go hand in hand and for that reason he gave a tract of his land bounded by Virginia, Hale and Quarrier streets to be used for that purpose.

to the President and Trustees of Mercer Academy for a school and the half facing Virginia Street to the Society of Presbyterians for a church.

Mercer Academy was built in 1818 and there Henry Ruffner taught through the week and preached on Sunday. On March 14, 1819, in a small upper room of the Academy he met with a small group and organized the Presbyterian Church of Kanawha.

Dr. Ruffner's account of that meeting was as follows:

On this day the Rev'd Henry Ruffner attended at the Academy according to appointment for the purpose of constituting a church to be in connection with and under the care of Lexington Presbytery and Synod of Virginia.

Upon invitation given, a number of persons presented themselves as candidates for membership; and an election being held for two persons to serve as ruling Elders, Samuel Beaumont and Thomas Law, who had previously been members of the Church of Christ were chosen, and whereupon ordained to the office of ruling Elder in their congregation.

The aforesaid Elders with the officiating minister having convened in session, Mrs. Philena Whitteker, Mrs. Agnes Truslow and Adam (a black man) were upon examination admitted to baptism and baptized accordingly, after which baptism was also administered to an infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Truslow.

Session adjourned,
Henry Ruffner, Moderator

At the next service four more members were admitted.

Dr. Ruffner was to become a professor of Latin and Greek at Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, but he consented to assume the duties of pastor until a permanent pastor could be secured. This he did until November of 1819 when Reverend Calvin Chaddock became the first pastor of the church. At that time the number of communing members was fifteen.

Mr. Chaddock continued as pastor until his death four years later.

He had preached not only at Mercer Academy but other places along the river toward Malden. The rigors and exposure of the frontier travel probably caused his death.

FIRST BUILDING

In 1826 Reverend Nathaniel Calhoun became pastor. Services continued to be held in Mercer Academy until 1830 when the first little red brick church was built on the corner of Virginia and Hale Streets where the Masonic Building now stands. The church was dedicated on November 20, 1830. Reverend John McElhenny of

by the pastor and the dedicatory prayer was offered by Reverend N. Fisher of Gallipolis, Ohio.

The church had a spire and an entrance on either side with steps rising up to the gallery, which followed nearly all the way around the building. Sunday School was held in the gallery and Negroes sat there during church services. There were two aisles in the old church with side seats and a middle block. The pews were straight-backed and painted brown. The floor of the church was carpeted and the building was heated with barrel type stoves. Later something known as a "Lecture Room" was built on one side and there the Bible was taught on Friday evenings.

Mr. Calhoun resigned in 1835 and Reverend Andrew Morrison supplied the pulpit for two years.

In 1837, Reverend James Moore Brown, one of the beloved ministers of the past, was installed and continued in that relation until his death in 1862. At the beginning of his ministry the membership of the church was 129 and at the time of his death it numbered 197. During Dr. Brown's pastorate we find the first record of Women's work in the church.

In October of 1837 the "Female Benevolent Society" was organized. From their record book we find that they handmade (there were no sewing machines in use then) shirts for men, night caps, reticules, and pantalettes which were sold for the amazing amount of twelve and one-half cents.

In the cabinet in our Chapel can be seen the sterling communion pitcher and three cups which were purchased in 1841 from the fruits of their labors. The two silver plates for the bread are still in use in our church at Communion services.

In that first little church building, two or three steps led up to the platform where the pulpit stood. In front of it stood a plain wooden communion table several feet long. When the Collection was taken up, a long pole with a red velvet bag upon the end of it was used. That original pole and bag are now in the Museum of History and Archives in our State Capitol.

For a number of years the members of the "Female Benevolent Society" devoted their time and efforts to charitable works and making money to be used for the needs of the church. Their first Directress was Mrs. Cynthia Arnold and their first treasurer was Mrs. Ellen Noyes Rand.

Also during Dr. Brown's pastorate the church on a cold February night in 1846, caught on fire and was destroyed, all but the outer walls. During the fire Judge George Summers, although not a member of the church, climbed upon a pile of debris and told the assembled

crowd that the Presbyterian Church had such an influence for good in the community that he thought they should all contribute to rebuild it. There in the light of the fire Judge Summers and Dr. Brown received almost enough subscriptions to rebuild the church.

Again the name of Summers is thought of in connection with our church since the beautiful gingko tree on the lawn was planted by Mr. Edgar Summers in 1870. The tree had been a gift to Mr. Summers from a Chinaman, whom he had befriended, while living in Washington. His sister's granddaughter in 1914 sold the property to the First Presbyterian Church with the understanding that the tree be left standing.

SEPARATIONS

Dr. Brown, like his predecessors, was pastor at Kanawha Salines (Malden) as well as Charleston, the people of the two churches mingling, having common interest and a common church, holding services alternately there and here, until 1841 when it was thought expedient for the Malden people to have a church organization of their own. Dr. Brown brought before the Session the subject of the Malden church becoming a separate church and it was then "Resolved that Greenbrier Presbytery be requested to divide the Kanawha Church by constituting a church to be known by the name of 'Kanawha Salines Church' ". Dr. Stuart Robinson became its first resident pastor.

At the time of the Civil War in 1861 a Southern General Assembly was organized to take care of the southern churches. Sentiment in this valley was divided since West Virginia was a border state. The Church of Kanawha decided to refrain from sending delegates to either Assembly and for eleven years it did not become affiliated with either.

Dr. Brown died in 1862 and following his death Rev. J. McBlaney and Rev. J. C. Downing for five years supplied the pulpit successively.

In 1868 Reverend W. N. Geddes became pastor. In that year a young man by the name of John Calvin Barr came to Charleston from Lewisburg where he had been associated with Dr. McElhenny. Dr. Barr taught in the Charleston Institute and had charge of the Sunday School. He assisted Mr. Geddes by preaching every other Sunday. In 1872 Mr. Geddes' health failed and he was forced to resign, leaving Dr. Barr in full charge of the church. Dr. Barr was a man of firm convictions and he refused to become pastor of the church until it affiliated with one or the other Assemblies.

On March 14, 1872 two rolls were prepared. One was placed on either side of the door and as the congregation entered they were to sign according to their choice. One hundred and fifty-three preferred the Southern Assembly and twenty-three the Northern Assembly. It was agreed that the church divide.

were John Claypool, E. S. Arnold, L. L. Comstock, W. T. Thayer, John O. Carr and E. B. Knight. It was decided that the 153 be given the church and they had to build a manse, and the 23 were given the manse and they had to build a church. The manse was on Kanawha Street, then called Front Street, with the lot extending back to Virginia Street, then called Back Street. That lovely old home was used as the manse for the Kanawha Presbyterian Church for many years and is remembered by many of Charleston's citizens.

Church services were held by the Kanawha Church, which retained the original name, Kanawha, first in the Senate Chamber in the State Capitol and then in the old Asbury Chapel, which had been vacated by the Methodists as their place of worship. In April of 1885 the present building, having been erected on the Virginia Street section of their property, was dedicated.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The 153 who signed to go with the new Assembly were given the church building. The new church membership was the First Presbyterian Church, so named from the site of the first church, and Dr. Barr was installed as the pastor. Dr. Barr continued his energetic work in preaching, teaching and organizing mission churches.

In 1867 the church sent out its first missionary, a bride, Mrs. Virginia Wilson Hall, wife of Rev. John G. Hall. They were sent to Boraquilla, Columbia for two years and then to Mexico.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in the eighties and a few years later the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies. Mite socials were held at the homes of members. The admittance was five cents and the hostess furnished the supper. Christmas suppers and bazaars were recorded as beautiful affairs.

In the late eighties the first little church building had become inadequate and a new and larger building was needed.

The lot where the Mercer Academy had stood was purchased from the School Board of Charleston for the sum of \$2,200. The Ladies Aid Society paid most of the money. A plan for the new church was secured from J. C. Blaby, Palmyra, N. Y. Work on the new building was commenced in June of 1888, and by August of the next year the congregation was occupying its new home. The auditorium had a seating capacity of 600. The entire cost of the building was \$24,883. The cost of the furnishings, with cushioned pews, carpet, organ, pulpit furniture, heating apparatus and furniture for the Sunday School was \$6,682. The entire cost of the church was \$33,715. The building was of stone.

The first sermon in the new church was preached by Dr. Barr on August 4, 1889. His text was Joshua- 4-6, "What mean ye by these stones." The church was dedicated free of debt in June of 1890. Dr. Edward O. Guerrant preached the dedicatory sermon.

DR. THOMPSON'S PASTORATE

By 1902 Dr. Barr was feeling the need of a co-pastor to help carry on the increasing duties of the church. It was then that Dr. Ernest Thompson was called from Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Thompson accepted the call and for forty-four years, until his death, he was an able and beloved minister to all who knew him.

Dr. Thompson preached his first sermon in November of 1902. His text was from First Corinthians, Chapter 2, Verse 2, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

When Dr. Thompson came to our church our Sunday School was a two story building connected to the church. There were just two departments. The younger children met downstairs and the older ones on the second floor. Shortly after her arrival, Mrs. Thompson took charge of the younger children. She organized the Primary Department for children from six to nine years and the younger children were under the care of Mrs. James Kuykendall.

The Primary Department was under the supervision of Mrs. Thompson assisted by several devoted helpers; among them, Miss Hattie Hoferer, Mrs. Reginald Hewes and Mrs. W. P. O'Dell.

By the age of nine every child had learned the names of the Books of the Bible, several Psalms, and had recited the Children's Catechism to Dr. Thompson or to their teacher. Once a year the graduating class stood before the congregation in the Sanctuary and recited several Psalms. So enthused were they that they would recite the Books of the Bible from Genesis to Malachi hardly stopping to take a breath. Dr. Thompson announced that those children had completed the work of the Primary Department and would be graduated to a class upstairs. Each one was presented a diploma and Testament for having recited the Catechism.

On the second floor of the building were classes from the age of nine to adult. Mr. George E. Price was Superintendent. Those classes learned Psalms, hymns, chapters of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism.

The Sunday School of those days had no trained teachers but they were men and women with God touched hearts and through their love and influence the lives of many of their scholars have been useful in the church and the community for many years.

came quite active. Through their work many of the needs of the church were cared for. Well do I remember as a little girl the meetings of the Ladies Aid. The old sewing machine would be brought down into the parlor for the meeting and from twenty to thirty ladies would meet to sew on checked gingham aprons that they made for sale. One lady would sew busily on the machine, others would sit and baste by hand, while others would just sit. Times have changed, but human nature hasn't. At the end of the meeting elaborate refreshments were served.

Several times during the winter bake sales were held in a downtown store, and cakes, pies, and doughnuts were sold. One day a cake was sold to a man whom one of the ladies believed to be a gambler. Much discussion followed, and as a little girl standing by listening, I decided that a gambler must be some kind of dreadful person who was not supposed to eat good church cake.

The work of the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies also increased greatly and a children's missionary society was organized. The sum of \$50.00 to supply a bed in a hospital at Sutsein, China, was sent each year from the children.

In May of 1908, on account of increasing infirmities of age, Dr. Barr, at his request, was formally relieved of the active work of the pastorate and was made pastor emeritus, in which position he continued up to the time of his death in 1911.

In 1908 Dr. Thompson became pastor, assuming all the duties of the church. During his pastorate the church membership increased from 500 to 2,200.

Attendance at church services and at Sunday School grew to such an extent that the church building was too small to accommodate the congregation. In 1912 a committee was appointed to investigate the purchase of a lot for a new building. It was at that time that the present site of the church was purchased.

Work was commenced on the new building in 1914 and it was completed the following year and dedicated on June 27, 1915.

The exterior of the building is of White Bedford stone and terra cotta, with bronze green tile dome and terra cotta lantern above.

The architects, Messrs. Weber, Werner and Atkins went to the Basilica church of St. Marlo's in Venice for the motif of many of the richly ornamented details of the interior. The spacious auditorium has four great arches, carrying a pendentive dome fifty-two feet in diameter. Both arches and dome are ornamented with coffered octagon and square panels with ornate mouldings and rosettes. The ceiling and dome are done in antique gold, the decoration being a modern imitation of the ancient mosaics of the Old World. The four figures represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

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carved balastrades.

The pulpit furniture was a gift of Mrs. Henry Dickinson in memory of Mrs. Sally Dickinson and Mrs. Henry Dickinson. The silver collection plates were given in memory of Mrs. Henry Dickinson in 1951 by her daughter Mrs. Sally Lewis Dickinson Chase (Todd).

The organ was given by Dr. and Mrs. Louis Pritchard at the time the church was built. In 1949 a new console for the organ was given in memory of Mrs. Jane Kennedy Adams and that same year the organ was repaired and enlarged in memory of Mr. Winfield D. Scott and Mr. George W. Scott.

The Italian marble baptismal font was a gift from Mrs. Andrew Allemong in memory of her mother Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson.

The six large windows on the two sides of the auditorium are filled with antique glass selected from medieval examples and were a gift from the Ladies Aid Society.

The antique Persian jars on the pulpit posts were given to the church in 1943 by the McCorkle Bible Class.

The auditorium and balcony provide for the seating of eleven hundred people.

The exterior of the building is an exact copy of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church of New York City which was built in 1906 and torn down in 1919. It was considered the Stanford White's masterpiece.

The cost of the lot, the building and its furnishings was a little over \$200,000.

By request of the session, the dedication sermon was preached by Dr. Thompson's father, Dr. Gilbert T. Thompson. The text was from Isaiah 60:11 - "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought."

In the building back of the sanctuary was the Lecture Room used as an assembly room for the Sunday School. Classrooms were on the first and second floors of the building. The pastor's study was to the left of the Broad Street entrance and across the hall was a reception room which was later used as an office. The dining room and kitchen were in the basement. The dining room, a large semi-circular room was used for luncheons, Home and Foreign Missionary programs, Christmas bazaars and congregational dinners.

The women's activities increased rapidly and by 1919 there were seven women's societies in the church. It was decided that they would combine into one group known as "The Women's Auxiliary" and adopt the circle plan which the Assembly had endorsed.

twenty-five circles, the Business Women's Circle and a circle for High School Girls. Miss Katie Belle Abney was the Auxiliary's first president.

In May of 1922 the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church held its meeting in our church.

In 1925 "The Men of the Church" was organized. About 150 men were present for the dinner and for the program that followed. Mr. Ernest M. Merrill was elected to be their first president.

The Sunday School which had only two or three departments in the old building grew rapidly and was composed of a Cradle Roll, Beginners, Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Departments. Also Bible classes for men and women doubled in number.

In the old church the Bible Class for men was taught first by Dr. W. W. Tompkins and then by Joel H. Ruffner. After moving into the present church it became known as the McCorkle Bible Class and was taught by Gov. W. A. McCorkle until his death in 1930 and at that time Mr. Arthur Dayton became the teacher. The Women's Bible classes doubled in number. Classes that have continued to the present time are the Susie Early Class, the Vanguard Class and a number of new classes.

By 1922 the classrooms of the Sunday School had been stretched to the limit. Classes were meeting in the sanctuary, the dining room, and even in cloak rooms and staff offices. It was obvious that a new Church School Building was necessary. In that year a Sunday School Building Committee was appointed.

The first order of business was to secure a lot preferably on Broad Street adjoining the church building. After that was accomplished it was necessary to secure acceptable plans for a building and also the funds to build it. These plans spread over a period of ten years. In November of 1932 the new building was completed and dedicated.

In May of 1933 Dr. Thompson was elected Moderator of the General Assembly, the first Moderator to be elected from the Synod of West Virginia.

Home Missions was a cause very close to Dr. Thompson's heart and a number of new mission churches were organized throughout this area.

In 1938 Dr. Thompson's health was failing and he asked that his resignation be accepted and that a successor should be considered. With much regret the session considered his wishes and a resolution was adopted expressing appreciation of his ministry and that it was the sense of the Elders present that upon the installation of his successor he should become Pastor Emeritus.

gospel, an earnest evangelist and one who rendered distinguished service to the church.

He will always be loved and remembered by those of us whom he received into the church, performed our marriage ceremonies, baptized our children and buried our dead.

Dr. Thompson suffered a stroke in the fall of 1942 and was confined to his bed until his death in January of 1946.

DR. ALSTON COMES

In October of 1938 Dr. Wallace Alston became minister of our church. His first sermon was preached on October 9, 1938. The theme of that sermon was "Arise . . . Go". Dr. Alston felt strongly the need for a Chapel. A room for Wednesday night prayer services, small weddings and funerals.

A committee was appointed to consider a plan to convert the Lecture Room of the Sunday School into a chapel. Mr. C. K. Payne who had been chairman of the building committee for the church building was appointed chairman. The chapel was completed and dedicated in 1942. The organ for the chapel was given in memory of Mrs. Bertie Proffit. The baptismal font in memory of Mr. Arthur Dayton. The rose window above the pulpit was a gift from Ouida Smith Caldwell (Davis).

The room to the right of the chapel was furnished by Miss Marie Cablish in memory of the Cablish family.

The case which stands just inside the chapel doors rests on the memorial table given to the church a great many years ago by Mrs. Albert Rand in memory of her mother, Bettie A. Goshorn. In the case is the first communion service bought by the Female Benevolent Society in 1841; the communion service bought by the church in 1890; the silver baptismal bowl used from 1874 until 1914; the old Bible which was bought by the church about the time of the completion of the church on Hale and Quarrier Streets in 1890; two silver collection plates that were used in the second building; and several small items that have been added from time to time. There are two other cases in the chapel which contain valuable old Bibles dating back to the sixteenth century.

In 1944 after six years of dedicated service to the church, Dr. Alston accepted a call to the Druid Hills Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. For one year our pulpit was supplied by our assistant minister, Rev. Moody McNail and guest ministers.

In 1945 Dr. George H. Vick accepted our call from the First Presbyterian Church of St. Joseph, Missouri. His first sermon was preached on November 18, 1945, "Little Human Gethsemanes."

In 1946 a Weekday School was established for children four and five years of age. Also a nursery for young children to be taken care of during church services.

Pre-Easter and Pre-Christmas luncheons were served to the men at twelve o'clock on Wednesdays.

Mr. Conrad Eaddy was called as Minister of Music to direct the Chancel Choir and to organize and train children's choirs. In the early days of our church the Chancel Choir consisted of a quartet choir. Mrs. Bradford Noyes was organist from 1900 until 1926 when her resignation was regretfully accepted. In 1926 Mr. Walter Hausen became organist and organized a chorus choir. After Mr. Hausen's resignation in 1929 Mrs. Helen Ziebold and then Mr. John Martin were organists for short periods of time. Then in 1937 Mrs. Gladys T. Hover became our organist. In 1930 Mrs. Annie Laurie Leonard was choir director until 1952. Mrs. Elizabeth Reese Johnson became organist in 1949 and has continued in that position. Mr. Eaddy has been Minister of Music directing both the Chancel Choir, the children's choirs and has presented the choir in many programs and oratorios.

Attendance at church services increased to the point that it became necessary to have two services in 1949.

In 1952 the General Assembly met again in our church.

In the fifties our Church School had grown to such an extent that more classroom space was needed and a place for activities for our young people during the week. A building committee was appointed. Mr. George L. Coyle, Sr. was the chairman. The expansion involving more than one million dollars resulted in acquisition of additional property; the erection of the Activities Building; the creation of two floors of additional classrooms and establishment of an activities program with Mr. Robert A. Francis as full time director. The Activities Building offers many educational, athletic and social opportunities for our young people as well as a large dining room, lounges and a splendid library for all our people.

There was an establishment of prayer groups and Bible study groups for adults. A program of pastoral care including Pastor's Aides, Men of the Yoke and a program for Senior Citizens. The officers of the church held annual weekend conferences at Bluestone Conference Center. Missionaries supported in full or part increased from four to eleven.

In 1962 Dr. Vick accepted the position of Executive Secretary of the Board of Annuities and Relief with an office in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Vick was an outstanding preacher of the Gospel, an executive of church affairs and dedicated to its work for seventeen years and it was with deep regret that the church accepted his resignation.

For the following year Rev. Robert Kirkpatrick, our assistant minister supplied the pulpit.

IN THE PRESENT TIME

In 1963 Dr. William A. Benfield, Jr. accepted the call from Shreveport, Louisiana. His first sermon was "Behold He Reigns."

Dr. Benfield inaugurated a new course of study on Wednesday evenings, reading and studying through the Bible. The Covenant Life Curriculum was started in all adult classes and the Church School.

Communion Services are held the first Sunday of each month in the Chapel at 9:00 a.m.

The young peoples activities are stepping up all the time and there is an increased interest in the children's choirs. The children's choirs and also those taking part in athletic training of all kinds have been taken on trips over the weekends to several states where they have performed and competed with classes or other churches and schools.

All the work of the church is continuing at an accelerated pace.

This year of 1969 we commenced our 150th anniversary celebration on March 9, with our former minister, Dr. Vick, preaching the two morning services. On Wednesday evening, Dr. and Mrs. Wallace Alston, another former minister and his wife, attended a congregational dinner. It was followed by a service in the sanctuary at which time Dr. Alston delivered the sermon. The service was followed by a reception in the Activities Building and at that time Dr. and Mrs. Alston met the congregation.

On Friday evening, March 14, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.

On Sunday at 10:30 a.m. a joint service with Kanawha Presbyterian Church was held at the Municipal Auditorium. On Sunday evening at 8:00 o'clock in the Municipal Auditorium the combined choirs of Kanawha Presbyterian, First Presbyterian and West Virginia Tech presented Mendelssohn's famous oratorio, "Elijah."

In connection with our 150th anniversary the church is conducting a Capital Funds Campaign. The amount of \$780,000 will be used for a gift of \$150,000 to the Union Theological Seminary; \$150,000 to Davis and Elkins College; an addition to the Church School Build-

and the sanctuary.

Our church, with other churches of the Synod, has built a home for older people of moderate income. It is expected to be ready for occupancy about July 1, and will be operated by a Board of Directors elected by the Synod of West Virginia.

Dr. Benfield was honored by being appointed Chairman of the Plan of Union Commission for the Consultation on Church Union. It is a very responsible position and requires much work and travel.

Assistant Ministers through the years have been:

Rev. J. E. Booker, Assistant to Dr. Barr 1885-1887
Rev. Hay Watson Smith, Assistant to Dr. Barr 1894
Rev. Robert M. Mann, Assistant to Dr. Barr 1895
Rev. Robert Ernest Vinson, Assistant to Dr. Barr 1899-1902
Rev. Charles Myers
Rev. S. M. Glasgow, Rev. Walter Gilian 1814
Rev. J. Blair Morton, D.D. 1910-1940 - Mission Pastor
Rev. Frank C. Brown, 1912, 1913, 1914
Rev. Ernest Trice Thompson (Summers) 1915 and 1919
Rev. B. F. Sperow, 1916-1920
Rev. S. B. M. Ghiselin, 1921
Rev. J. H. Viser, 1920-1921
Rev. F. B. Schreimer, 1921
Rev. Walter N. Getty, Assistant Minister and DRE, 1921-1923
Rev. Tenny Ingalls Deane, 1924-1925
Rev. Eric Grimshaw, 1927-1931
Rev. David Bitzer, 1931-1936
Rev. J. B. Ficklen, Student Assistant, 1936-1937
Rev. W. B. Ward, 1937-1938
Rev. Watson Street, Summer Assistant, 1940
Rev. Harvey Glass, 1941-1943
Rev. Moody McNair, 1943-1945
Rev. James Blanton, 1946-1948
Rev. Ralph E. Kipp, 1948-1957, also DRE
Rev. Dean Bailey, 1953
Rev. Robert W. Kirkpatrick, 1956-1963
Rev. J. Harrell Harper, 1963
Rev. Percy H. Hagan, Jr., 1964

Directors of Girls Work:

Miss Lucy Payne, 1916-1919
Miss Florence Dolphy, 1919-1920
Miss Jo Royer, 1920-1923
Miss Pearl Champe, 1923-1926
Miss Nona Joyce, 1926-1928

Miss Gordon Link, 1928-1929
Miss Jean LaLance, 1929-1930
Mrs. Dorr Tucker, 1931

Directors of Religious Education :

Miss Ann Pharr, 1936-1941
Miss Mary Boney, 1941-1944
Mrs. R. E. O'Connor, 1944-1948
Rev. Ralph Kipp, 1948-1957, Minister of Education
Miss Elaine Hayes, 1950-1952
Miss Edith McMillan, 1952-1956
Miss Juanita Goodman, 1956-1961
Rev. A. D. Ellison, 1957-1964, Minister of Education
Miss Sara Lee Moore, 1961-1965
Dr. Jack B. McMichael, 1964-1968, Minister of Education
Miss Nancy Smith, 1966-

Ministerial Candidates :

Ernest Trice Thompson
B. F. Sperow
W. T. Baker
Charles Friedman
Donald Goshorn
Rand Schoolfield
Paul Long (also missionary)
Charles Eckerson (Medical missionary)
Joe Brooks
John Edmunds
John Handley
Walter Sutton
Paul Allen, Jr.
Edson Johnson, Jr.
Robert E. Johnson
Julius deGruyter, Jr. (also missionary)
Samuel M. Stone, IV
Charles Dickinson, III
Meriweather Anderson Sale
James A. Leggett, III
John McNeel

Candidates for Christian Service

Miss Alice Ann Klostermeyer
Miss Polly Harrop (now Montgomery and a missionary)
Miss Grace Payne
Mrs. Jean Field Russell
Miss Kay Sattes
Miss Marian Badgett

Miss Ruth Sinnott has been our church secretary since 1928 and has carried on the work of the church office with remarkable ability and faithfulness. Probably no one has ever had as much information about the church at their fingertips. If Ruth is unable to answer a question concerning the work of the church, it probably never happened.

Through the years there have been hundreds in our congregation who have been loyal and devoted members, having made possible the church we enjoy today. Space in this history does not allow me to mention them all by name but their good works live after them and their memories shall be a light to guide us through the future.

We look back upon this great band of men and women and we should remember that we are the bridge that spans the years between the past and the future.

Let us keep the faith and give our hearts and our hands to the work of our church that it may go forward to the furtherance of God's Kingdom. We should also remember that "Him to whom much has been given, much will be required."

Ruth P. Coghill
1969

First Presbyterian Church
BROAD AND VIRGINIA STREETS
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25301

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