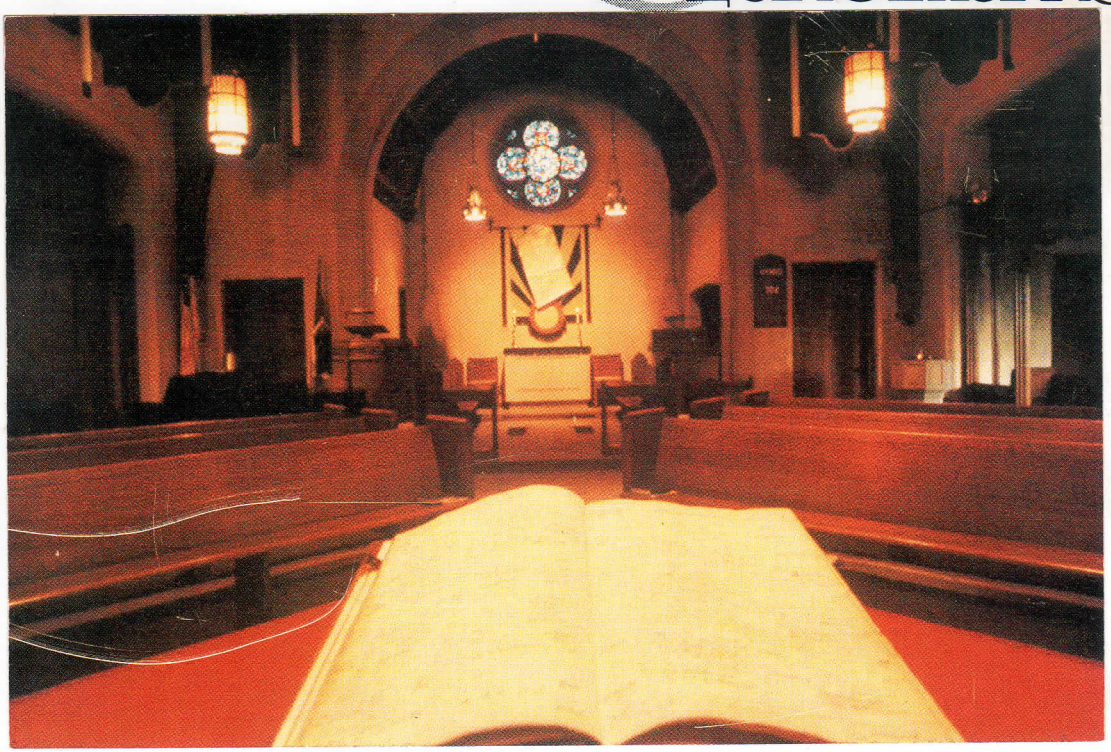
A History of The Unitarian Universalist Church of the

Restoration at 175: Milestones & Landmarks



Restoration at 175... Milestones & Landmarks

A continuation of the History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration

This book is structured in three main sections:

1 The first section, through page 32, reviews the overall saga of the religious movement called Universalism as it grew in Philadelphia and Southeastern Pennsylvania– from the earliest days to the present.

2 The second section, from page 33 to 64, deals with the most recent half century and narrows the focus to the history of a single church, The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration in Mt. Airy, the sole church in Philadelphia to have had its beginnings and most of its existence on the Universalist side of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

3 The final section, In the Beginning, was written for the celebration of the 155th anniversary of Restoration with primary emphasis on the era from 1820 to 1940. The 1975 document is reprinted here in its entirety.

About this book...

This book was prepared at the recommendation of the ad hoc committee on the 175th anniversary of Restoration. At least three earlier histories have been published. Two earlier documents were written by lay leaders– in 1920 for the 100th anniversary by Edward S. Deemer, a church moderator for 18 years, and in 1945 for the 125th anniversary, by Pearce W. Gabell. In 1975 for the 155th anniversary, the minister, Richard A. Perry, combined those two documents and updated them with his own considerable effort to create a third. That document is incorporated into this one as "In the Beginning..." on pages 65 to 94 of this publication.

Additions to the book for this edition have been the work of a number of people whose relationships to the church date back as far as 1939. Many of their recollections were taped in interviews and woven into the narrative as it picks up in the early 40s. Other contributions came from the several ministers (covered in section two.) All of them (or their wives and widows) were extremely helpful in sending us their recollections and impressions of their years with the church.

Photographs come largely from the personal collections of members and friends who have been a part of this congregation, some since those mid-century years. Many come from the collection of the editor and were originally created for the church newsletter. Special thanks to Dan Braxton who took many new shots for the book and to Julia Bradburd, Isabel Daly, Helen Oerkvitz and David and Christine Perry– each of whom made several photographic contributions. Thanks also to Patricia DeBrady and Helen Oerkvitz for writing portions of the text, as well as to the Dalys, Denny Davidoff, the Oerkvitzes and Pat DeBrady for reading the text and adding many good ideas and stories. The committee– comprising Harris Riordan, interim minister; Julia Bradburd, Dorothy Feely, Harald Grote and editor William Dikeman, expresses its thanks to all those who have otherwise contributed.

Special thanks are due to the Officers and Trustees of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention, without whose generous grant this book would not have been possible.

William Dikeman, Philadelphia, 1995

Colophon

This book was prepared on a Macintosh computer with black and white photos scanned in. The color photos were prepared by American Digital of Valley Forge, and the book was printed by The Print Center, a non-profit organization devoted to the arts, of New York City. Body type is Times Roman 11/12 and script headlines are in Bellevue. Captions are in Gill Sans. Sidebars (like this one) are in Times Italic. Occasional headlines are in Weidemann Bold.

Front Cover: The great record book, dating back to 1878 (earlier entries dating from 1820 copied in by hand) in the sanctuary in 1978. Photo: William Dikeman.

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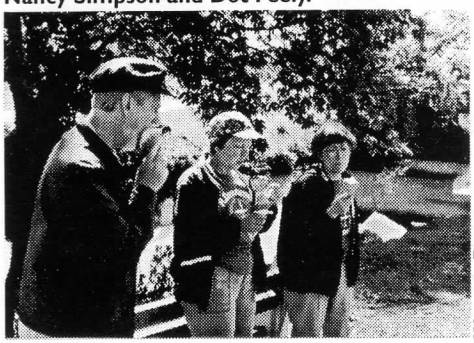
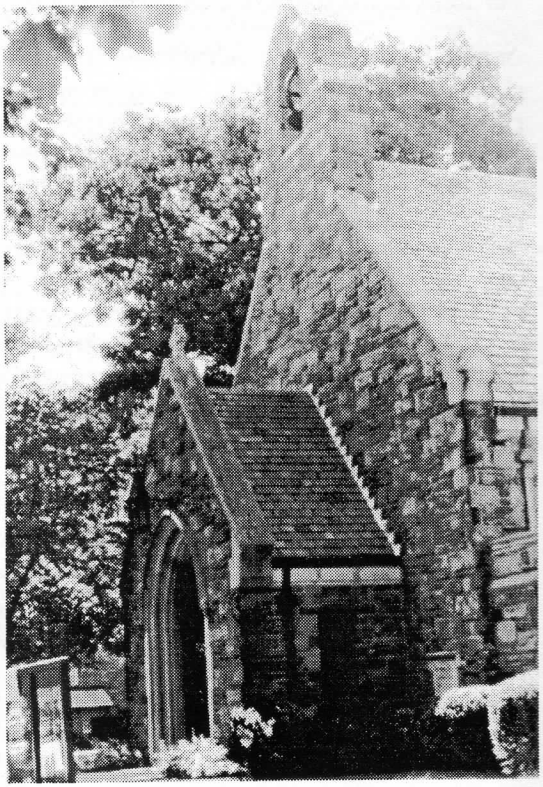


WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Sunday school program

DAVID POOR



Entryway to the main church building

Willliam Penn's Greene Countrie Towne and His Holy Experiment

When George DeBenneville arrived on the Philadelphia docks in 1742, Philadelphia– the largest English speaking city other than London– already could boast that it was a bastion of religious freedom.

Of course, DeBenneville knew that– indeed, that is why he had come to this city in the first place as he fled persecution in Europe for the crime of preaching universal salvation there.

He was met at the docks that summer day by Christopher Saur, a Universal Quaker, who came regularly to meet ships from Germany and elsewhere. There were always on board those who had fled their homelands and– either before departure or while on the open sea– had been robbed, cheated and otherwise swindled by greedy ship captains, conniving agents and others. No miscreant was ever glad to see

Religious believers of all stripes were welcomed by William Penn. Penn, himself a Quaker, believed strongly in religious tolerance. Today, more than 300 years later, nine churches from Colonial days still stand in Center City. Above is Christ Church as depicted in one of the Birch prints of early Philadelphia. The docks of Philadelphia in the year 1800 are also shown on this page.

George DeBenneville, M.D.
1703-1793

One of the most dramatic bits of lore of our denomination surrounds George DeBenneville, son of a minor Huguenot nobleman who was born in London and brought up in the court of Queen Anne. He had been converted to an early form of Universalism and had left England to preach on the continent. There, during the course of a series of revivals near Dieppe, he had been arrested, charged with and convicted of heresy. On the very day of his scheduled execution, as DeBenneville waited (since he was a noble, he was to be honored by being beheaded rather than hanged) a messenger brought his reprieve from the court of King Louis.

DeBenneville left that part of France and traveled in Germany and in the Low Countries, but eventually finding that the climate of opinion did not suit his plans for longevity, he came to America in 1741. He lived until 1793, a life span of 90 years.

the redoubtable Saur, who wasted no time setting things right once the vessels touched land in Philadelphia.

DeBenneville, who became a circuit-riding physician and clergyman, was to live and work with Saur for a year before he decided to carry his work to the Oley Valley– in Berks county– where he would minister to both body and spirit of the settlers and native Americans alike.

It should be noted that when William Penn first came to Pennsylvania, he found here on the land granted him by the king a thriving settlement of Germans, Swedes, Finns and others– often fleeing a homeland intolerant of their religious beliefs. These sects, categorized under the general designation of German Pietists, had grown out of Lutheranism, and many of them already embraced a form of universal salvation. Pietism represented heartfelt religious devotion, ethical purity and pastoral theology rather than sacramental or dogmatic precision. The term now refers to all religious expressions that emphasize inward devotion and moral purity. With roots in Dutch precisionism and mysticism, pietism emerged as a reaction to the formality of Lutheran orthodoxy.

It was to these Pietists, especially the Moravians and the Brethren, that DeBenneville– who had met them before in Germany and Low Countries as he fled the persecution that almost cost him his life– directed most of his message.

DeBenneville was to ride throughout Berks, Lancaster and York counties and as far west as Pittsburgh. One particular site that he visited often was the Ephrata Cloisters, the monastic community of Johann Conrad Beissel. Brethren from the Cloisters are believed to have included DeBenneville's message of universal salvation as they carried their own throughout the mid-Atlantic region– including the New Jersey area where a planter named Thomas Potter is said to have been so impressed that he built a chapel near Good Luck where he awaited the arrival of a minister who would preach that message to his friends and neighbors.

The hoped-for minister came ashore in 1770. John Murray, an Englishman– formerly a Calvinist– who had been converted by the preaching of James Relly in London, arrived to answer the prayers of Potter for a minister who would preach the gospel of salvation. (See the section on "In the Beginning" on page 67 for more of this

story. The story of the founding of Restoration and the details of our early struggles are more completely covered in those pages from the 1975 edition.)

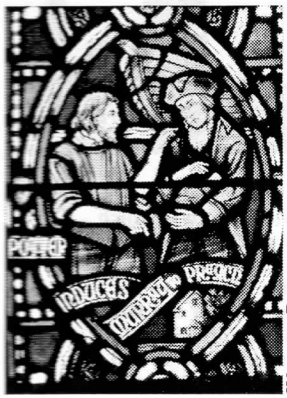
Meanwhile, George DeBenneville returned to the Philadelphia area in the 1770s with his family. He was active in the Germantown area. During the Revolution, at the time of the battle of Germantown, he and his sons treated the wounded from both sides. A British officer and two subalterns were killed during that fray, and when none other would permit them to be buried on their land, DeBenneville opened his family burying ground to the three. The commemoration of that act of kindness took place on October 4, 1987, some 210 years later, with the Church of the Restoration represented by the Reverend Robert P. Throne.

The occasion of the commemoration became a moment for reaffirmation of British-American unity. The British consulate was represented as was the civic and political leadership of the City of Philadelphia.

NELSON SIMONSON

The DeBenneville burying ground– which George DeBenneville opened to permit three British soldiers to be interred after the Battle of Germantown, is located just off Broad Street below Stenton.

The item at right is reprinted from THE PENNSYLVANIA UNIVERSALIST issue of March, 1995. The Murray Grove Association– active for years as the trustee for the property where John Murray came ashore in 1770– has been in financial trouble. The events described in this story are expected to ensure continuation of this memorial site as a UU shrine.



WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Detail from Restoration's "History of Universalism" window: Potter Induces Murray to Preach.

To clarify the reprinted story at the right:

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) had become owner of the property at merger and was therefore the recipient of the check from the land trust. The small photo from the clipping shows David Provost, the UUA vice president of finance receiving the check.


The Pennsylvania Universalist

Murray Grove Saved

Is it possible that January 19, 1991, will become as important as September 30, 1770, when John Murray gave his sermon in Thomas Potter's chapel?

January 19 was the date of a regular meeting of the Murray Grove Association Management Committee. It was anything but regular. Most of the meeting concerned seven resolutions that dealt with closing the camp and conference center. After considering the years of annual operating loss and little hope of change in the future, the vote was taken. It was a tie until the Chair broke it. The emotional decision was to close "The Grove."

Buried near the end of the meeting was one sentence requesting that further exploration take place about "the possibilities of a conservation easement for the land." By the February meeting, this possibility had moved into action. The Izaak Walton League would submit an application before the February 15 deadline to preserve Murray Grove by selling it through the New Jersey Green Trust program. A slim majority voted to keep Murray Grove open until August 31, 1992.

Several almost unbelievable events took place in the next four years. First, the State of New Jersey made up to half a million dollars available to purchase our property– the amount depending on the value of the land and on our contributing half that amount to the state.

Second, months passed and we undertook the steps required, but it became apparent that state officials were no longer responding expeditiously. At that point, contact was made with the Trust for Public Land, which agreed to provide us with an option to purchase Lot 8, to make available to us $20,000 in "Option Consideration Payments" and to provide us with 80 percent of the full appraisal value.

Third, Murray Grove survived, somehow, and even made the facility more attractive and comfortable. That is perhaps the miracle.

Then, on October 26, in 1994, in Morristown, New Jersey, David Provost, UUA vice president of finance, accepted a check from the land trust for more than $1.3 million. The UUA has invested it, and will pay 5 percent of the income annually to Murray Grove. This should give us a chance to overcome the deficits and to become financially stable in the years ahead. Equally satisfying is that we have lived up to our principles and will always be protected by becoming part of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

Universalism comes to America

Crucial to understanding the development of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration is an understanding of the nature of religion in America at the time of Universalist beginnings. Universalism was essentially an American phenomenon. Though the key concept– universal salvation– was known in Europe, the notion was particularly attuned to the American frontier, to the generation of a purely American philosophy and culture and to the general awakening of Americans about such ideas as religious freedom.

The predominant religious thrust in America, with the exception of the Lord Baltimore's Catholic colony of Maryland, was Calvinist. Predestination and foreordination condemned you– if you hadn't been lucky enough to be born to the elect who had already been marked for salvation– to an eternity of punishment to repair mankind's natural sinfulness. The concept of sinners in the hands of an angry God was the prevailing religious proposition.

Yet, the promise of the frontier was that you, by being right with yourself and with God, could be master of your own fate. This encompassed Universal Salvation, and throughout young America men and women– particularly those seeking escape from the misery and degradation of slave labor and indentured service– held it dear.

The Universalism of those days was yet a Christ-oriented religion– there was no reason to alter that. The advanced and even suspect philosophy of the free thinkers and the one-God Unitarians was thought inappropriate… perhaps even immoral. After all, one doesn't lightly abandon *all* the verities of mankind's search for the eternal truth. However, it was time to move, thought many, beyond the dismal and foreboding doctrines of the Calvinists. Something was needed which better complemented the frontier spirit.

Into this state of progressive religious yearning moved George DeBenneville, Elhanan Winchester, Abner Kneeland, Hosea Ballou and others who were to set the parameters for early Universalism.

DeBenneville might well be an icon for the Church of the Larger Fellowship, so broad was his service, so tenuous his tie to denominational concerns. Winchester, Kneeland and Ballou, however, all sought a pulpit in an established church– one of the first Universalist churches to be founded in America– the church at 412 Lombard St.

In his introduction to the 1975 edition of the History of Restoration, (reprinted in full beginning on page 66 of this book) the Rev. Richard A. Perry noted:

The idea of Universal Salvation, or that all souls would be restored to God after death, was not new. Undoubtedly many individuals had felt that God's plan could not be so cruel and unjust as to impose everlasting punishment even on the "unenlightened." But the alternative idea was heretical to the tenets of Christianity as it had evolved. The concept of an indiscriminately forgiving God undercut the teaching of the Christian church. Imagine! Everyone, regardless of race, creed or national origin would be saved! In 1770 it boggled the mind. Today we call it Christian Brotherhood.

The Church on Lombard Street

We are indebted to the late Georgene E. Bowen, a member of the Messiah Church and later of Restoration for this section on the Lombard Street Church. Her "Rescued from Obscurity" tells the story of the church building as of 1977 when a committee, with representation from the three UU churches in the city, had been formed to see if the Lombard Street church could be saved from further decay and deterioration. Miss Bowen was commissioned to write the history. Her history was excellent– unfortunately, her hopeful title was not equally good as prophecy as the photo opposite shows. The desired goal of preserving the church was never attained.

Miss Bowen, a New Englander, was an outstanding member of the family of Universalists. A prolific writer and teacher, she was sent by the Universalist Church to Japan where she was a missionary, head of a girl's school and advocate of the Universalist cause, prior to World War II.

The Church of the Restoration traces its beginnings back to the First Independent Church of Christ Commonly Called Universalist– which began its campaign to raise funds for a meeting house in June of 1793. According to the Rev. Abel C. Thomas, writing 80 years later, the original papers contained the names of 49 subscribers– all the leading Universalists of Philadelphia of that day.

Construction began and continued for more than a year at a time when the port city of Philadelphia was plagued by one in a series of terrible epidemics of fever during which 10 percent of the population of the city perished.

"When the house was first occupied for worship," the Rev. Mr. Thomas writes, "the walls were without plaster, and the only seats were plain benches. I was told that the first pulpit was a rough platform made by a mastmaker and a shoemaker."

During this period, Dr. Joseph Priestley had come to Philadelphia– only to find that because of his heretical views, most churches were closed to him. The Universalist church, however, was open, and here he gave the lectures which were to launch Unitarianism in America. In June of 1794 he wrote to the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay of the Essex Street Chapel in London, "A place of worship is building here by a society who call themselves Universalists. They propose to leave it open to any sect of Christians three days in the week, but they want money to finish it. My friends and I think to furnish them with money and engage the use of it for Sunday mornings."

Dr. Priestley gave the first of a series of six lectures on Unitarianism in this nation on February 14, 1796 in the Universalist meeting house on Lombard Street. Thereafter, he was said to have spoken to numerous and attentive audiences, including Vice President John Adams and others of both houses of Congress.

As the Universalists continued to organize, they elected officers and leaders, established a Vestry and raised funds for their own needs and the needs of others. They reported their "copper collection" on a regular basis: They sent $106.23 to fire victims in Richmond. They voted to raise a sinking fund to "liquidate the debts due the heirs of the Rev. George Richards," a former pastor who had committed suicide. They took up a collection for Cape Verde Island; they established a Mission which they called the South Philadelphia

Universalist Mission Society. They took up a collection for a Bible society.

Among the prominent pastors were Elhanan Winchester, Hosea Ballou, Abner Kneeland and George Richards. Richards took a group of 115 members out of the church to form a new church called the Church of the Restitution. He became emotionally upset and took his own life in 1814– which put an end to his own church and also ended much of the activity of the First Church until 1816 when Abner Kneeland came upon the scene. Kneeland revitalized the church and– since the distance from the Northern Liberties seemed much greater in those days of travel by carriage over indifferent roads– established a spin-off church on Callowhill Street, a church which was to later take the name of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration. Kneeland served as pastor of both First Church and Second Church simultaneously for more than three years.

The First Church was also to spin off the Church of the Messiah at Broad and Montgomery, at the Temple campus, as well as the Fourth Universalist Parish and Church of Our Saviour in South Philadelphia.

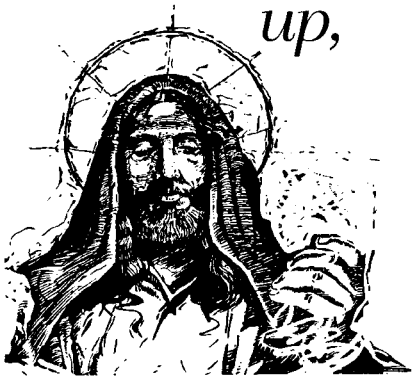
In 1887, a Jewish group offered to buy the Lombard Street church for $9,000– cash to be paid after the bodies were removed from the church's burying ground. Some 62 coffins were removed, after receiving permission of the families, and the Children of Jacob paid the money to a combined corporation made up of Messiah and First Church. The building was first occupied by the Chevorai B'nai Jacov and later the Congregation Kesher Israel.

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

The Lombard Street church, shown here, fronts for 100 feet at 412 Lombard. It is the oldest Universalist church building in the city. Those who would assign an earlier date to the Universalist church in Philadelphia– not just to the edifice itself– point to the fact that Elhanan Winchester was converted to– and began preaching– a version of Universalism as early as the 1760s, before John Murray landed at Good Luck in 1770 and long before the Lombard Street structure was built. Certainly George DeBenneville had preached Universalism here even earlier. The German Pietist movement, to which Winchester looked for so much of his direction, however, did not lead him to found a full-scale denomination, and so it is generally accepted that the denomination had its beginnings in 1780 in the John Murray church at Gloucester, Mass. The Lombard Street church still carries the name of the successor synagog to Chevorai B'nai Jacov-Congregation Kesher Israel.

Church of the Messiah– the Third Universalist Church

"If I be lifted up,



I will draw you unto me"

Words adjacent to the pulpit at the Messiah church at Broad and Montgomery

The Universalist Church of the Messiah– the third Universalist Church in Philadelphia– has special resonance for Restoration. When Messiah closed its doors in 1958, some of its members transferred to Restoration. Also, there had been close ties between the two churches through joint work at and support of the Messiah Universalist Home, which the Messiah church owned but to which Restoration had given, over the years, substantial support in both dollars and volunteer service.

The third reason was financial, although this was less direct and it came after the dissolution of Messiah. Impressive sums of money were passed to the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention when Messiah closed. That money has provided, for example, a fund for the advancement of UU religious education which can only be spent, by terms of the bequest, for religious education in the City of Philadelphia, which consequently limits that money to Restoration. In addition to that specific bequest, Messiah's legacy has bolstered the PUC's unrestricted endowment and continues to benefit Restoration.

Messiah was said to be a wealthy church. At its peak, there were 300 members– and those members were largely from the well-to-do classes. Restoration was looked down upon as a "poor" (financially) church, and indeed Restoration's records, as reported in the 1975 edition of our history, bear out the supposition that Restoration has had a continuing problem with finding and handling money. That perception was further, though perhaps indirectly, validated when the property of the First Universalist Church on Lombard Street was sold in 1887. The bulk of the funds from the sale went to Messiah, not to Restoration, by decision of First Church members because they sought a repository they believed would be most likely to insure the long-term survival of Universalism in Philadelphia.

Messiah moved on uptown from its earlier Broad and Juniper location to a spot at Broad and Montgomery, practically in the shadow of Russell Conwell's Baptist Temple on what was to become the Temple campus. Conwell was the founder of Temple University and the author of the allegorical and popular *"Acres of Diamonds,"* and though that title was not literal, it seemed to some that it reflected well the essence of the area into which Messiah had moved. Park Avenue stood behind the dramatic Messiah edifice– an area of

large and beautiful homes, and the church was a match for its surroundings. However, despite its auspicious beginnings, the building is now history, demolished within a few years of Messiah's demise in the 50s.

Theologically, Messiah was of the death-and-glory Universalist stripe, a theological approach which set it apart from Restoration. "Death-and-Glory" had been the promise of John Murray, and the words of Jesus, "If I be lifted up, I will draw you unto me," was emblazoned above Messiah's pulpit in verification of that promise. Murray's views were opposed by Abner Kneeland, Hosea Ballou and others, who contended that instead of immediate heavenly reward, there would be an appropriate period of punishment before restoration to the Almighty. It was that conflict, perhaps, that tended more to separate Restoration from Messiah than did the financial gulf between the churches.

By the late 1800s, Messiah had been led by its minister, Dr. Edwin C. Sweetser, a well-known and strongly conservative figure, famous throughout the denomination as leader of the conservative wing, to a position that Universalism was to be the final comprehensive religion– the universal doctrine of the future for all denominations. But Sweetser's far-seeing, almost apocalyptic vision, was largely ignored by main-line denominations and was even out of phase with the growing humanistic direction of liberal religion (see page 86 for further discussion of the humanist/theist controversy).

Messiah went on for a number of years, but in the end it proved unable to manifest the evolving spirit of liberal religion. In its last years, there was an attempt by Messiah's final minister, the Rev. David Hayeman, to keep the church open even after dissolution had been promulgated, with an annual "front porch" sermon from the empty, shuttered church, but the battle for member minds had been lost. Messiah's edifice was at length demolished. Several families moved over to Restoration. They were in large part older members– and gradually they drifted off, moved or died.

One member gave the epitaph– "Messiah was never a church of strong social action– what they preferred was home visits from the minister." Although the church had been noted for its charities to hospitals and institutions for the sick, poor and needy, in the end this was not seen to be sufficient to bolster it in its waning years.

Messiah– perhaps not your avant garde liberal church

Messiah was not a cutting edge church in social action. Dr. Herbert Ellman Benton– a much beloved minister– was conducting a meeting where an African American family was up for vote for membership. As the balloting went on, it was apparent that the family would not be approved. Dr. Benton stepped from the pulpit, flung off his robe and said "If this is all the good I have done for the years I've been here, I'm leaving."

The congregation rescinded the vote, and the family was accepted, but the sentiment was clear. African Americans were not welcome. Messiah was out of touch with its community, and perhaps with the liberal religious movement of the 20th century.

Church Life

From its beginnings, church life in the Universalist churches in Philadelphia was an epic of struggle. The Lombard Street church seemed always approaching the brink of dissolution. It fathered a second Universalist church on Callowhill Street (Restoration); the Church of the Restitution, a short-lived church at Front and Phoenix which dated to 1814; the Messiah Church, and the Fourth Universalist church, which grew out of a mission Lombard Street had established in South Philadelphia.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, born in Philadelphia in 1746, was a major influence on the growth of Philadelphia Universalism. He is acknowledged as one of the fathers of psychiatric medicine, and he was a pioneer of military hygiene. He missed badly, however, on the plague. As a physician, he had challenged many of the established theories of healing and constantly sought new ways to treat disease. His method of treating the plague, however, was bleeding and burning sulphur– a treatment not only ultimately useless but harmful as well. He came near disgracing himself because of it.

Dr. Rush was a social reformer– opposing slavery, capital punishment and the subjugation of women. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and was a member of Pennsylvania's ratifying commission for the United States Constitution. From 1797 on to the end of his life, Dr. Rush was treasurer of the United States mint.

In addition to an omnipresent worry about money and lack of it, death was a major concern– for the Universalists but for every other church in the city as well. Most churches had their own burying grounds. Repeated plagues which swept the port of Philadelphia had cost every congregation dearly.

Lombard Street purchased a lot behind the church at a cost of $400 as its own burying ground. The burial of their dead became a consuming concern of the Vestry. Who would be eligible to purchase a lot? How much should be charged? How deep were the graves to be dug? When the church property was finally sold in 1887, 62 coffins were moved– the majority of them small boxes, for it was mostly children who had been devastated by the plagues.

By 1842, with four Universalist churches active in the city, a weekly newspaper called THE NAZARENE AND UNIVERSALIST FAMILY COMPANION had sprung up. Announcements in its pages promote conference meetings, institutes, meetings of the Nazarene Temperance Society, the Marian Association for the Improvement of Sacred Music, the meetings of the Universalist Publishing Society and many such regular events.

Lectures in defense of Universalism were announced, with the doctrine of Rewards and Punishments a major topic. Week by week long and tedious tomes and arguments were printed and refuted– restated and rebutted. Mr. Thomas wrote one week of his worthy but sadly confused opponent, Mr. Lee– who replied the next week, jumping gleefully on the obvious inconsistencies in Mr. Thomas' arguments. Of course Mr. Thomas was lying in wait with an even better series of proofs which demonstrated by how much Mr. Lee had erred. So it went by mid-century.

As the end of the century approached, things seemed to be more comfortable for the Universalists. There came to Restoration in 1893, at age 28, a Frederick A. Bisbee who was to remain as minister for 16 years and to attain a Doctor of Divinity degree during his time at the Master Street church. (Full story on page 80).

Dr. Bisbee was a world traveler, lecturer, writer and poet who left Restoration in 1898 to accept the editorship of THE UNIVERSALIST LEADER. During his time at Restoration, he edited and published GOOD NEWS– circulation 1,000– devoted to presenting to its readers that "religious, social and political thought of the world which is optimistic in nature." The publication provides a glimpse of what church life was like at Restoration as the century neared its conclusion.

We learn of the meetings of the Young People's Christian Union, of the Ladies Aid Society, of the Sunday School Association and of the regular lectures given by Dr. Bisbee– who seemed to be deeply involved in all these groups.

"Our young folks who participated in the Japanese Wedding recently repeated it at the Southern Home for Friendless Children," we are told.

* * *

"The Sunday-school entertainment passed off very happily– and that evening it snowed. In fact, we had an over-zealous snow storm, and it came down heavy; but the youngsters had a good time for all that and so did the oldsters, too. The destruction of ice cream was enormous."

* * *

One of scores of editorial comments enjoins the reader to *"Purify politics by the introduction of pure lives into politics. Place the officers under obligation to the pure and law abiding, and they will see that the law is enforced. The remedy for inefficiency or corruption lies not far from the hand of every voter."*

* * *

"For five nights in succession did the Restoration lights shine out on Master Street, and each night was the occasion of a different department of church work... and still the campaign goes on. Verily it looks as if Universalism is waking up."

* * *

"The most encouraging endorsement a church can receive is evidenced by the desire of others to join in the work."

You said a mouthful...

In the early 1980s, when talk abounded about changing the name of the church to "The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration," the Rev. Walter Wieder, minister at that time, remarked, "Every now and then someone would say that we couldn't change our name to something that long... and when that happened I would chant the original name of the church: The Second Independent Church of Christ called Universalist of the Northern Liberties of the City of Philadelphia."

The Northern Liberties, which perhaps sound as though they might be some remote location in the far northeast of the city, is in fact one of Philadelphia's almost-downtown neighborhoods, just north of Vine Street and adjoining Kensington and the Delaware River waterfront.

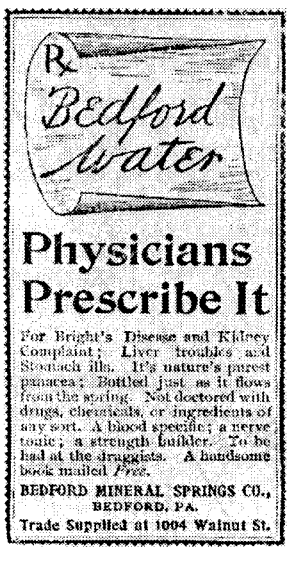
Restoration originally met in the commissioners offices of the Northern Liberties. Then, in 1823, the church moved into its own building at Fifth and Callowhill. In 1854 the trustees purchased a Methodist church at 8th and Callowhill, and from there built, in 1872, a $21,000 edifice at 17th and Master Streets. See the photo on page 18 for idea of how we had progressed by that time. The stained glass window of St. John of Patmos in our present north transept was moved to the current Mt. Airy site from the Master Street church.

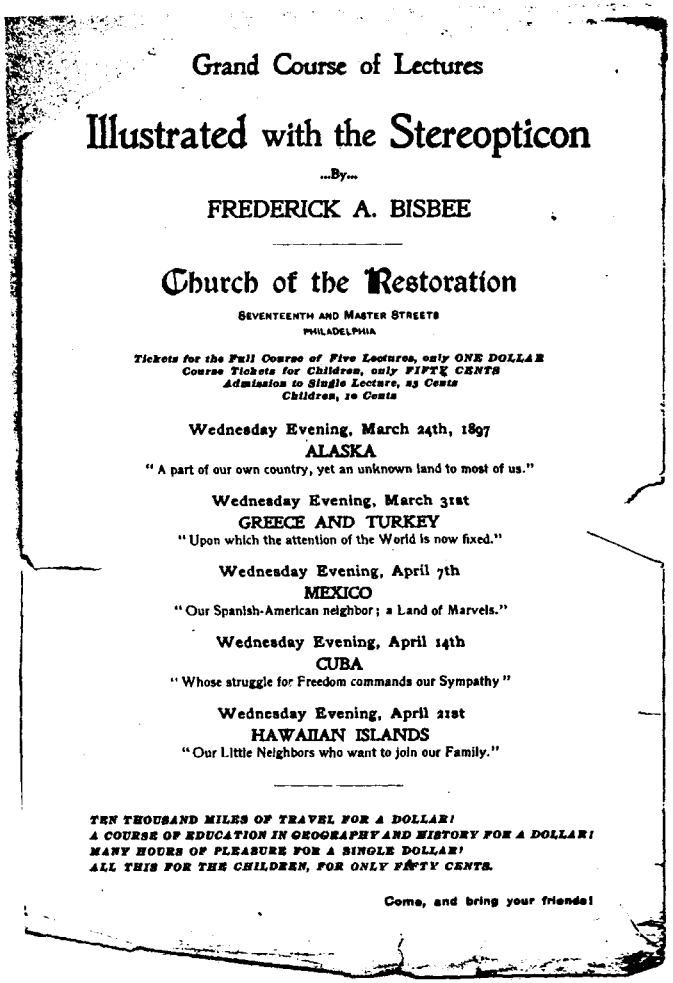
"The young men have recently organized the Universalist Athletic Club. This contemplates establishing regular classes for boys and girls in athletic exercises, beginning in a modest way and enlarging the work as opportunity offers. The ultimate object is to have a permanent gymnasium. They certainly deserve to succeed.

"The officers are: President, William R. Curry; Vice-Presidents, Elwood Blau and Harry Clayton; Secretary, Horace Gabell; Treasurer, George Stevens; Instructor; Elwood Blau. The names of these officers are the best possible guarantee that the club will prosper if hard work and ability to perform have anything to do with it."

As the advertising broadside at right states, "Ten Thousand Miles of Travel for a Dollar." Dr. Bisbee also regularly wrote of his travels for Good News.

On the opposite page, excerpts assembled from several pages of Good News, Dr. Bisbee's church newsletter, from 1892. One 16-page issue of that publication included 43 ads of 1-inch or more, including one from Columbus W. Gabell, a church pillar, as well as the one shown below.





Grand Course of Lectures

Illustrated with the Stereopticon

...By...

FREDERICK A. BISBEE

Church of the Restoration

SEVENTEENTH AND MASTER STREETS
PHILADELPHIA

Tickets for the Full Course of Five Lectures, only ONE DOLLAR
Course Tickets for Children, only FIFTY CENTS
Admission to Single Lecture, 25 Cents
Children, 10 Cents

Wednesday Evening, March 24th, 1897
ALASKA
"A part of our own country, yet an unknown land to most of us."

Wednesday Evening, March 31st
GREECE AND TURKEY
"Upon which the attention of the World is now fixed."

Wednesday Evening, April 7th
MEXICO
"Our Spanish-American neighbor; a Land of Marvels."

Wednesday Evening, April 14th
CUBA
"Whose struggle for Freedom commands our Sympathy"

Wednesday Evening, April 21st
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
"Our Little Neighbors who want to join our Family."

TEN THOUSAND MILES OF TRAVEL FOR A DOLLAR!
A COURSE OF EDUCATION IN GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY FOR A DOLLAR!
MANY HOURS OF PLEASURE FOR A SINGLE DOLLAR!
ALL THIS FOR THE CHILDREN, FOR ONLY FIFTY CENTS.

Come, and bring your friends!

"To the Worship of God and Service of Man."

THE NEW UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE RESTORATION.

Seventeenth and Master Streets.

Rev. FREDERICK A. BISBEE, B.D., Pastor.

SERVICES.

Sunday, 10.45 a. m. sermon; 2.30 p. m. Sunday School; 7.45 p. m. sermon.

Organist and Choir Director—Mr. F. E. Cressman.

OFFICERS

Secretary, G. W. Dessalet, 1413 N. 21st St.; *Treasurer*, E. J. Tiel; *Trustees*, Messrs. Kilburn, Keeler, Lincoln, Illman, Lawrence, Bonsal, Einwechter, Myers, Gabell.

The Trustees meet the first Tuesday evening in each month.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Superintendent, Rev. F. A. Bisbee; *Assistant Superintendent*, Mrs. M. Lent; *Secretary*, Miss Lillian Bonsig; *Treasurer*, James S. Stevens, Jr.; *Librarians*, Joseph A. Myers, W. K. Butterworth; *Organist*, M. P. Carr.

LADIES' AID SOCIETY.

President, Mrs. Warren Hale; *Vice-President*, Mrs. M. H. Lent; *Secretary*, Mrs. E. T. Justis; *Treasurer*, Miss L. Einwechter.

Meets every other Friday afternoon in the Parlor.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTIAN UNION.

President, Rev. F. A. Bisbee; *Vice-President*, Miss Clara Sheppard; *Secretary*, Thomas W. Lent; *Treasurer*, James S. Stevens, Jr.

Meets the second and fourth Monday in each month

FLOWER MISSION.

President, Miss Mary Gabell; *Vice-President*, Miss Lena Hale; *Secretary*, Miss Gerty Butterworth; *Treasurer*, Miss Eva Illman.

The people of the neighborhood are invited to regularly attend our religious services. Strangers are always welcome.

We invite parents to bring or send their children to our Sabbath school.

Good music is as necessary in the modern church as preaching and we are to be congratulated on that which is now furnished by our excellent choir under the direction of Professor Cresson. Next season Professor Cresson will give us an organ recital, which will be a treat.

The Anemone

FREDERICK A. BISBEE

'Twas a dainty little flower
That was sleeping in a bower
Underneath the
spreading branches of
the laurel and the pine;
Where a shadow was in hiding
From her sunlight lover, gliding
In his madly merry
seeking for his dusky
sweetheart's shrine.

Then the wind came gently drifting,
And the leafy portieres lifting,
Darted in and touched
the sleeping flower
with his magic art,
When she ope'd her eyes so tender
Lighted all the place with splendor,
And the sunlight clasped the
shadow to his
palpitating heart.

The Home Maker (August)

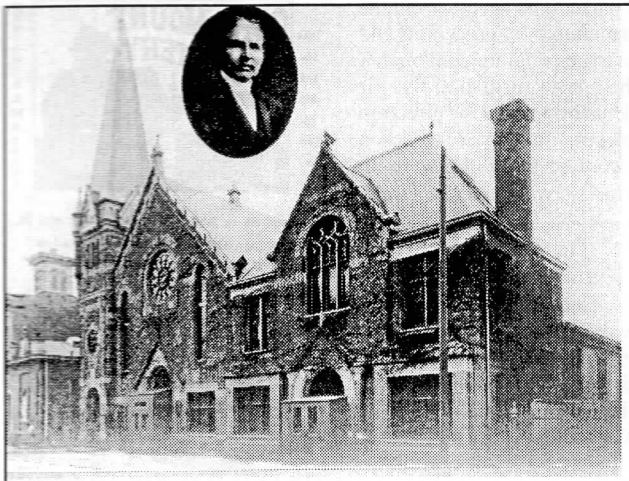
The Church of the Restoration shows its public spirit yet again by opening its beautiful parlors as a reading room. The Sunday School library with its 1500 volumes will be free for use, and 80 of the best periodicals, weeklies and monthlies, will be constantly on our tables. The rooms will be open from 7:30 until 10 each evening, and all are welcome.

The cake list is a novel feature of our union. A number of ladies give their names to the secretary, who notifies them when cakes will be needed for meetings. In this way, the supply of cakes never fails.

On Sunday, the 22nd, we had the pleasure of listening to the Rev. C. B. Lynn, representing the Universalist General Convention. The attendance at both services was good, and Mr. Lynn received a cordial welcome, with $200 and over in subscriptions to the educational fund for students for the ministry. He brought with him such news of progress in our church as made our people open their eyes with astonishment.

During its 25 year corporate life, the Universalist Church has accomplished a work probably unequalled by any religious body in history. One felt like cheering as Mr. Lynn presented the facts.

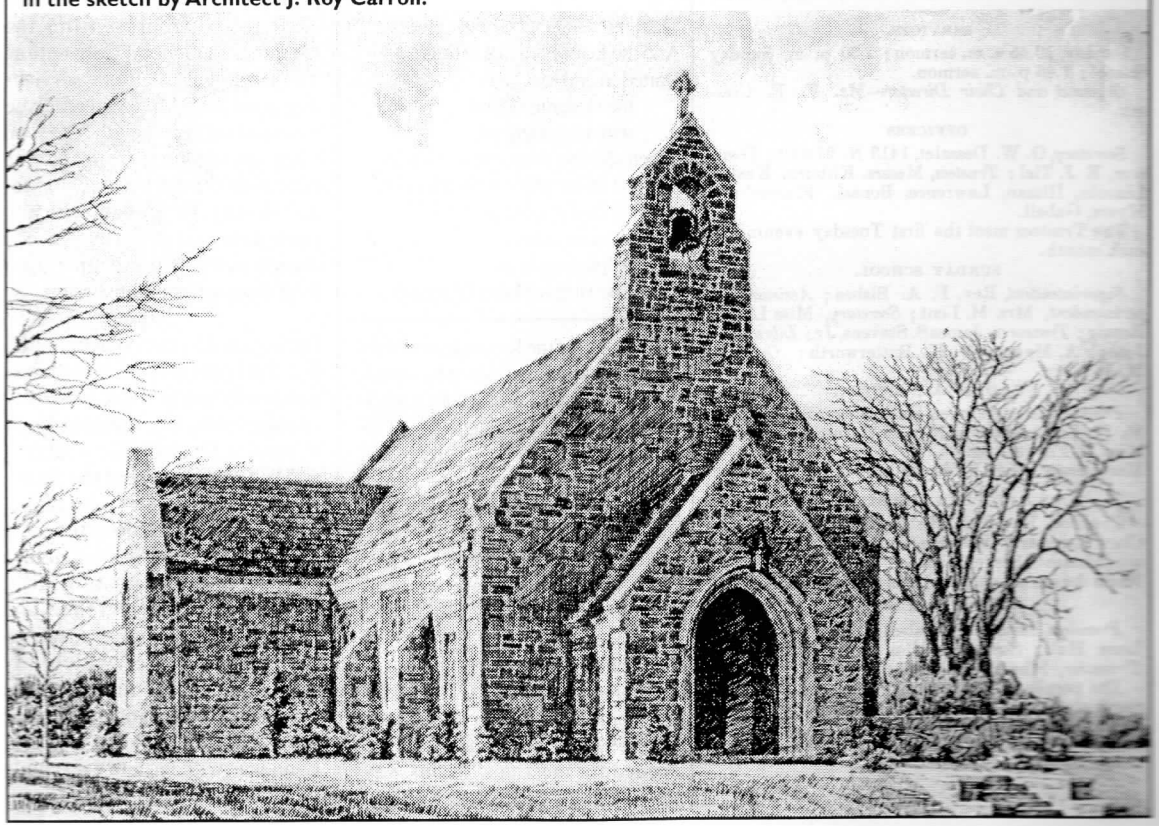
Then, in the afternoon of the same day, the Sunday School held a song service, and it was a treat. Six violins, a cello and flute, and Mr. Carr at the organ, made an accompaniment of which any school might be proud, and the way those boys and girls sang fairly made the building ring. Mr. Lynn was with us, and everybody looked bright and happy.

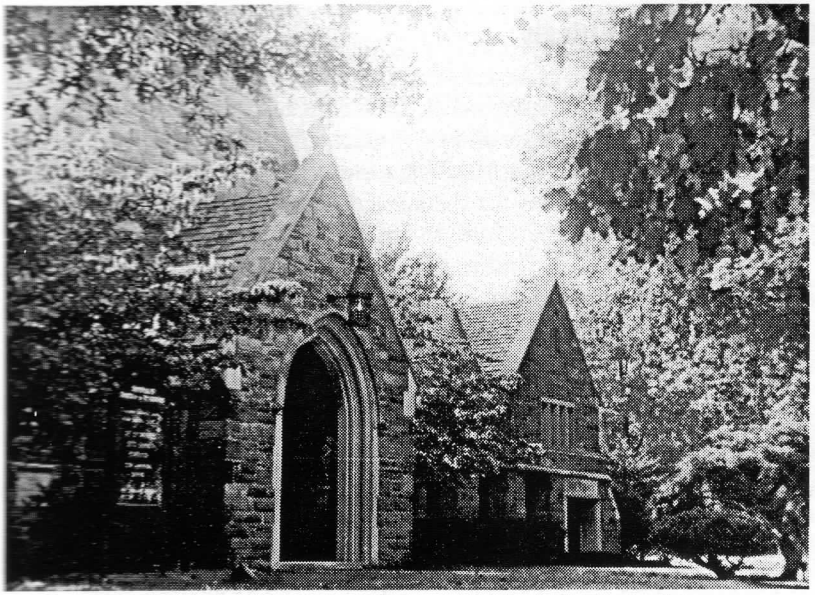


Above, the Master Street church. In the oval, John Clarence Lee, STD, whose ministry ran from 1900 to 1919. Below is Restoration as it was to look when built in Mt. Airy, as shown in the sketch by Architect J. Roy Carroll.

We move to Mt. Airy

It was the dream of Moderator Edward Deemer to continue the church's growth. He set up a substantial sum in his will toward that goal. The church at length purchased the present property for $7,500. In 1936, our move to Mt. Airy was equivalent to a move to the suburbs. Stenton Avenue was a two-lane road with a broad expanse of dirt on either side for parking. Across the street from the site of the church were a number of farms– including a pig farm which added its own aroma to Sunday services.





An inventory of the accoutrements of the church including everything from the Altar Dossal to the Superfrontal was presented to the congregation by the building committee as the building assumed its shape. (See page 83 for the complete report). In the photo below, the Chancel rail– into which was built a lectern for the big Bible– has been removed. Also moved out are the modesty panels which had fronted both the choir stalls and the front of the nave where the congregation sat. The baptismal font can be seen at left , just below and to the left of the high pulpit.

The Church in Soap

When the addition of the Hale Memorial Religious Education building was proposed– the gift of long-time member Lena Louise Hale– came a tricky architectural problem: How to design a two story building to match a three story and yet make the one look as though it belonged with the other?

There was much head scratching over how the concept should be presented to the congregation. At length, the minister's wife, Isabel Gehr, solved the problem with a sharp knife and several cakes of Ivory soap. She carved the model of the building which presented the concept to the congregation.

Still, all did not go easily with prospects for the Hale Memorial Wing (named in honor of Miss Hale's sister Carrie.) Her grant had been for the building itself, not for furnishing and equipping it. That would take at least an additional $10,000, and many in the congregation could not persuade themselves that the money could be raised or that there would ever be enough children to fill the wing. It was proposed by some that the entire gift be turned down– that the structure go unbuilt.

That the pro right-wingers prevailed is evidenced by the photo above which clearly depicts the architectural harmony and perfection achieved in the final design and construction.

Caring for our Elderly...

As The Church of the Restoration's story was unfolding, other aspects in the parallel streams of Universalist growth which are important today were also developing. One such major activity– one in which Restoration plays a major role– was the creation and support of a facility to serve the needs of the elderly of our association, specifically, the UU House of the Joseph Priestley District of the UUA.

The first two thirds of this article is based on information gathered by Georgene Bowen for her booklet on the history of the home: Messiah Universalist Home– It's Birth, Life and Merger, *published in 1964. Additional information was gathered from personal interviews and the minutes of the board of the Messiah Home.*

Special thanks to Julia Bradburd, Restoration member and current president of the Board of Managers, for additional information about the UU House of today. Mrs. Bradburd has served for 18 years on the board.

As early as 1878, the Universalist Church of the Messiah was noted for its charities to hospitals and institutions for relief of the "sick, poor and needy." Although Messiah gave to other institutions, they found that existing homes for the aged discriminated against Universalists. They decided, therefore, to create a fund for caring for those of the Universalist faith "but not for them alone, the belief being well rooted that doctrine or creed should not debar any deserving one of God's children from the ministrations of love and help in the time of need and suffering."

And so, the members established a permanent charitable fund to be used in maintaining and helping works of "charity and benevolence," for which they began to solicit and collect funds.

It was agreed that $25,000 would enable the church to open a home for the aged– and with that they began to solicit contributions. Restoration agreed to take part, and the program was begun with three residents and a Board of 15 managers– ten from Messiah, four from Restoration and one non-member. A building at Cottage Lane and Wister was selected, and on January 7, 1902, the Messiah Universalist Home was in business, operating there until 1906.

Two boards were established, along "traditional" lines... traditional in that the Board of Managers was made up entirely of men, who served as trustees, and a Women's Auxiliary Board "to do the work." No one complained about this division of responsibility.

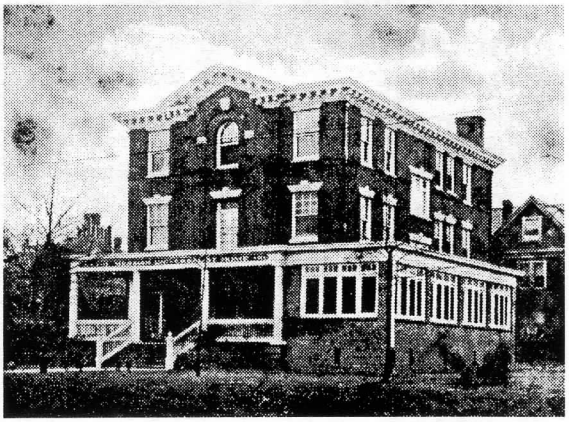
Fund raising was soon under way with contribution levels offering Life Membership, Active Membership, Contributing Membership and Honorary Membership. In addition, "Donation Days" were held twice a year. Donations– no matter how small– were listed: a bureau cover, a pin cushion, a table cover, a table broom, nine aprons, a dozen oranges, two bottles of grape juice, a pound of butter, a pound of flour. Such small gifts of love and compassion were offered and accepted for the home and its residents.

IN 1906, the Messiah home made the first of its moves. THE UNIVERSALIST LEADER of June 9, 1906, said this about the opening:

> "Wednesday, May 23, was a red letter day for the Universalists of Philadelphia, and it deserves to be noted with gratifi-

cation by all of like precious faith wheresoever they are, for on the afternoon of that day, in the presence of a large assembly of enthusiastic people, some of whom came from far away, the new building of the Messiah Universalist Home was opened and dedicated.

"The building is of Georgian style, three stories tall, of brick with limestone trimmings, surmounted by a moulded and panelled cornice. In front is a spacious covered porch, with a roof surrounded by a balustrade, for an open upper porch accessible from the second story.



Messiah Universalist Home on Old York Road at Ruscomb Street

"The interior has every modern convenience– sanitary sleeping rooms, commodious bathrooms, hot water heating, good ventilation, an infirmary, a laundry, storage closets, a clothes chute, a fire escape and ample kitchen facilities. The architect, Herman Kleinfelder, is a vestryman at the Church of the Messiah, and he has executed his important trust to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

"The location is excellent, on Old York Road at the corner of Ruscomb Street. Old York Road is one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and the lot is large enough for the erection of another building. The adjoining land has also been purchased to secure it against adverse occupancy.

"The home is under the direction of a Board of Managers, two-thirds of whom, according to its charter, must be members of the Universalist Church of the Messiah. It is supported by the income of the Charitable Fund of that church, of which the principal is now about $35,000, together with such contributions as it receives from individuals who are interested in its welfare.

"But while it is thus subject to the preponderant influence of the Church of the Messiah, the other Universalist churches of Philadelphia may also have a voice in its management, and some of its most active and interested workers are members of the Church of the Restoration, which is represented on the board and the auxiliary board. Contributions have been

Feminism on Messiah's board– 1960s style

Louise Greene was a prominent member of Restoration– renowned as an organizer. When she was president of the Messiah Auxiliary, she suggested to Edward Smith, president of the home, the desirability of having women board members. He did not agree. She then wrote to all the Universalist homes in the country, asking about the makeup of their boards. The replies showed that many women served in this capacity– some women headed the boards. No board was all male. President Smith took this information with good grace, and thenceforth a fairly even number of men and women served on the board at Messiah.

received from Universalist friends in other parts of Pennsylvania and outside its borders, and it is the earnest desire that not only in Philadelphia but throughout this section of the country, Universalists shall take an interest in it and feel a sense of ownership in it.

When the Messiah church closed its doors in 1958, the constitution of the related Home was changed. The size of the board was increased to 21, and the responsibility for the auxiliary fell entirely on Restoration's Association of Universalist Women. The Restoration minister and many Restoration lay people have served on the board. Even the Rev. Harry K. Means from the Towanda Universalist Church, made regular visits to Philadelphia from his church in North Central Pennsylvania to serve on the board.

One crucial concern for the Home was the need to develop a program for skilled nursing care. The problem was solved in 1964 when the property at 4949 Old York Road was sold to a Ukrainian organization, and the Messiah Universalist Home and the Unitarian's Joseph Priestley House merged into a new corporation: The Unitarian Universalist House of the Joseph Priestley District.

The original Unitarian home, Joseph Priestley House, had its beginnings in the Samuel Longfellow Guild of the Germantown Unitarian Society in 1914. By 1923, fund raising had begun, and about ten churches from as far away as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Washington D. C. participated. In 1930, a private home dating to 1887 at 224 West Tulpehocken, was purchased, refurbished and opened in 1932 to five elderly residents. Today 23 residents in either independent living or supported care may live in the three-story mansion.

With assets from sale of the Messiah home, an expanded dining/social room and a new nursing wing were added and named the Benjamin Rush Wing in honor of the Universalist physician who signed the Declaration of Independence. Another wing, with more nursing beds, was added in 1976. An additional recreation space, named the Clara Barton Room in honor of the Universalist woman who founded the American Red Cross, was added in 1989.

When the Messiah Home first opened in 1902, there were three residents, with an average age of 68 and a per capita cost for the year of $274.04. Today, as the general thrust of care for the elderly has changed, the per capita cost has risen to more than $25,000 annually. The average age at admission today is 85+. The home has 25 rooms

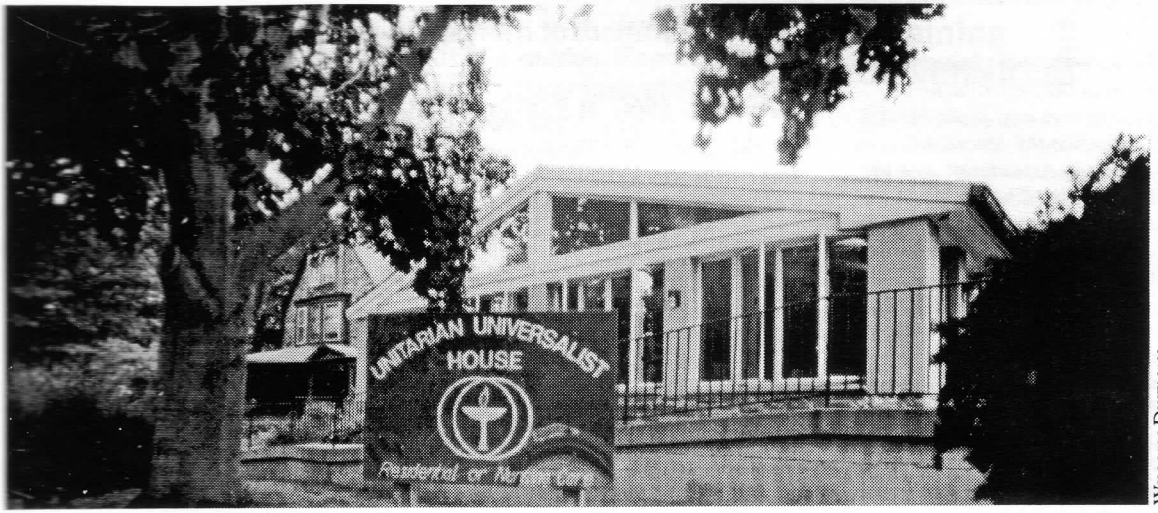
"Pick up that roast... take it back to the kitchen and bring in the other one!"

It only happens in jokes or at UU House...

Maintenance supervisor, to worker who has just pushed his ladder through a valuable large stained-glass window:

"Not to worry! I have another one just like it out in back."

In fact, he really did have another one just like it. When the decision was made to build the dining hall, it was decided to tear down the other half of the large twin which adjoined the main building of UU House. At the landing of the mirror-image staircases were duplicate stained-glass windows, and when demolition was underway, the maintenance supervisor had salvaged the duplicate window and taken it out back to his storeroom. There it stood, awaiting the day when a careless worker would trigger the event that would return the window to its antecedent life.



WILLIAM DIKEMAN

UU House today. The complex comprises a collection of buildings which include areas for independent living, intensive nursing care and common rooms for dining and recreation.

for independent or supported living in Priestley House and 39 beds in the Benjamin Rush wing for nursing care. The complex also includes the original carriage house where two apartments are suitable for independent living and where occupants often bring their pets, who become an important part of the life of the community.

The center today is governed by a board of more than 40 members coming from 12 UU Congregations. Restoration holds six seats on the board and many others are active on eight committees. An example is Isabel Daly who has volunteered at UU House for more than 40 years.

The professional management of the UU House includes an administrator, a full time social worker, an office staff of four, a dietary service with a staff of about 20, a housekeeping staff of 10, a medical director and a supervisor of nursing with six full-time registered nurses and about 30 nurses aides.

The center– enhanced by its gardens and grounds– continues to enjoy an excellent reputation in the field of geriatric care, and it lives up to the requirements of the Joseph Priestley District as an expression of UU principles.

1960– the Impact of Merger

Perhaps the most important event in the recent history of Restoration took place in 1960 when the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America merged into a single group called the Unitarian Universalist Association.

A plebiscite had been held, and in 1947 a Joint Commission on Union had been appointed to study the possibility of merger. In 1951, the first full report was made– and sent back for further work.

In 1953, the Unitarian and Universalist youth, in a joint convention, voted to dissolve their respective organizations and to reform them into what became known as the Liberal Religious Youth (LRY).

Two years later, in 1955, the two denominations voted to establish a Joint Merger Commission. A massive educational program was set up. congregations and fellowships all across America debated and voted, and at length, in 1960, at a meeting in Boston, approved merger. The new organization– to be called an association rather than a denomination– was born.

On June 14, 1960, at 3:00 in the afternoon, an era ended for Restoration. Another one began.

At an emotionally-charged meeting in Boston, the Unitarians and Universalists finally voted to merge internationally. Within moments of the vote, the new UU flag was flying over 25 Beacon Street, a bronze plaque gleamed on the front of the building and the switchboard operator could be heard intoning, "Good afternoon, Unitarian Universalist Association."

Merger between the denominations– Unitarians about 350,000 members; Universalists perhaps half that– had been a long time coming, but by 1960, merger had become a certainty. The long history of cooperation between the denominations, the literature and the discussions generated in and distributed by the Goals Commission, the parish votes taken in every Unitarian and every Universalist church or fellowship, the sheer economic imperative of the decision– all assured that the outcome of the vote would be positive.

There were, of course, glitches... disappointments... Restoration's delegates Nick and Louise Greene returned from a session wherein they had hoped that the district in which our church was to be included might be named the DeBenneville-Priestley District. That was not to be. They had hoped, too, that Phil Giles, our Universalist Church of America superintendent, might fare better than he did in the hierarchy– the top denominational jobs all went to the Unitarians.

However, the tide was flowing. The evening of the vote– at the service of celebration– the assembly opened the meeting singing, "As tranquil streams that meet and merge and flow as one to seek the sea..." The deed was done.

The impact on Restoration has never been fully assessed– indeed perhaps it cannot be assessed, because the question falls into the if-this-hadn't-happened-would-this-happen? category. At the time of merger, if a newcomer to the Delaware Valley had sought a Universalist church, Restoration was the only game in town. Two years earlier, Messiah had folded its membership into Restoration. In 1959, parishioners were coming from near and far– Mr. and Mrs. Earle Waite with his sister drove down to Stenton Avenue each Sunday from Allentown; Bill and Cis Golz came from Swarthmore;

the minister's brother, Cecil Phillips, crossed from New Jersey each Sunday morning for services. Now, all of a sudden, Restoration was no longer the *unique* Universalist church– it was instead one of half a dozen merged Unitarian Universalist churches– with more churches to come. The number of UU churches in the Delaware Valley today totals 17 congregations.

On both sides some resentment to the merger lingered. At a Restoration congregational meeting in the 70s, Fred Newman proposed that not only should our church change its name to "The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration," but that we should, in the spirit of harmony and union, suggest that other churches in the denomination in the Delaware Valley do the same. Some did. Others were appalled by the suggestion.

Almost from the beginning, merger had seemed inevitable. Hosea Ballou had unitized the Universalists in his arguments for atonement– indeed he was Unitarian in approach while some of the Unitarian churches still regarded themselves as Christian. In 1865 the Unitarians had considered a resolution supporting merger with the Universalists; in 1867 the Free Religious Association was formed from six religious groups including the Quakers, but nothing came of it.

Among the rigid opponents was Dr. Sweetser of Messiah who held that until the Unitarians could accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Universalists did, nothing could come of merger. He quoted Shakespeare: "an two men ride a horse, one must ride behind." The controversy went on– with many Universalists feeling closer to the Congregationalists than to the Unitarians.

In 1908 the National Federation of Religious Liberals included Unitarians, Universalists, Friends and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, followed by a group called the Free Church America, which survived until the late 1930s.

Action moved further forward in 1953 when the Unitarian and Universalist youth, in a joint convention, voted to establish the Liberal Religious Youth organization. At this time the offices of the American Unitarian Association at 25 Beacon Street in Boston were in easy shouting distance of the Universalist Church of America at 16 Beacon Street. The hymnal in use in both churches had been published jointly with the Unitarians through the Beacon Street Press, and the religious education department, under the leadership

Retaining Universalism?

Bill Schultz, when he was president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, used to smooth the ruffled feathers of those Universalists who felt aggrieved because the Unitarians had received "top billing" in the UUA (since they were named first in the merged association). He pointed out that, really, Unitarian seemed more to serve as a "modifier" to Universalist in the name, and therefore the Universalists really had the best of it– it was, he suggested, a universalist group which was unitarian in nature.

Not everyone saw it that way, however, and some hard-nosed Universalists refused to give ground. Louise Greene, a former Restoration member, was put in charge of the Murray Grove property for a few seasons. When Peter Zhuraw traveled down to the property to paint the sign, Louise insisted that it be labelled the Universalist Unitarian Murray Grove Center. That's the way the sign still reads today.

Sophia Lyon Fahs, at the association's headquarters in Boston, was the architect of the joint UU religious education curriculum at merger.

Boston's bizarre numbers game

If you go to Boston, seeking the original sites for the UCA and AUA, you may be puzzled. Unitarian headquarters at No. 25 Beacon is one spot down Beacon Hill from the Massachusetts State House. Conversely, the old Universalist headquarters at #16 Beacon is atop Beacon Hill, above the State House and on the opposite side of the street (and now occupied by the Boston Bar Association). How can #25 Beacon Street be said to be within easy shouting distance of #16? (per bottom of page 25).

The answer is that when, later, Unitarian headquarters moved down Beacon Hill to its current location, the bronze number plaque with #25 emblazoned on it was retained by special permission and therefore is now out of sequence with, for example, Little, Brown Co., publishers, next door. (It is also of interest that two statues on the state house grounds are of Horace Mann, a Universalist, and Daniel Webster, a Unitarian. The original red brick building was designed by Charles Bullfinch, a Unitarian.)

of Sophia Lyon Fahs, was preparing joint curricular works for the Sunday Schools of both denominations.

Gilbert A. Phillips, who in 1959 came to Restoration as minister from the job of admissions director of a school for boys, the Valley Forge Military Academy, was a Unitarian. It was he who supported most vigorously here the concept of merger and pushed for a favorable vote in the parish poll. The affirmation was granted.

Merger: The Pennsylvania Universalist Convention

One of the institutions which was expected to come to an end with merger was the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention– the PUC. It did. Many believe, however, that Restoration owes its continuing existence to the fact that with the demise of the organization, PUC funds were *not* turned over to the UUA. Trustees of the endowment of the PUC still control a fund which has supported seven active churches in Pennsylvania, all of which were formerly Universalist.

Universalist churches adhere strictly to congregational polity, calling and dismissing their own ministers and, in other ways, determining their own destiny. Universalist churches within an area, usually a single state, have traditionally formed into legal entities called state conventions (the Unitarians preferred districts, which took in all or part of several states). Originally, each state convention would look to the various activities of its member churches, including such things as ministry, extension, service, education and publications.

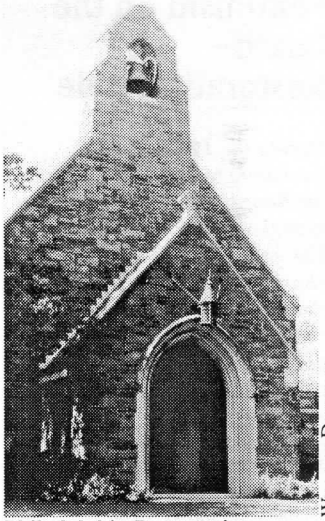
The PUC was one of a handful of state conventions which, at the time of merger, elected not to turn its funds over to the national association– although there still is a provision to do so in the future, should the member churches cease to exist. In fact, church closings have been an all too frequent event– the most recent being Linesville and Scranton. The PUC funds have come, over the years, from a variety of sources such as gifts and bequests, but the closing of member churches has been the most common source.

Today seven churches remain of the former PUC, the largest being the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berks County (at Reading). Restoration is next in size, and Brooklyn, Athens/Sheshequin, Smithton, Towanda and Girard are the others.

Delegates of the churches meet annually in the fall on a rotating schedule– each sending slates of both delegates and interested

persons– and the trustees meet in the spring at a central location, most frequently Reading. In advance of the spring meetings, the trustees receive and review requests for grants from many sources. The most crucial, from Restoration's standpoint, have been the grants which PUC trustees make for religious education, matching grants for improvement of property and a subsidy to each church's ministerial salaries. It is this latter grant which was noted earlier as an important element to Restoration's survival.

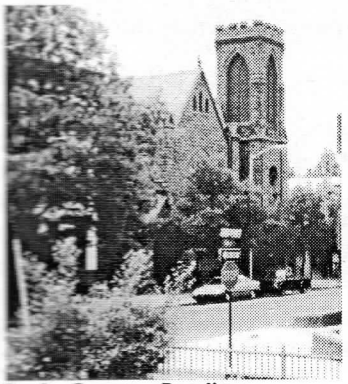
In addition, monies are granted to such institutions as Murray Grove, to the UU House and to special projects. One such project was the support for an extension minister, John Morgan, to go into Northeast Pennsylvania where he was successful in renewing and revitalizing three UU churches. It should be noted that these churches are not eligible for membership in the PUC, since the PUC as an institution no longer exists and because only those from churches who had been members before merger are eligible to serve as trustees.



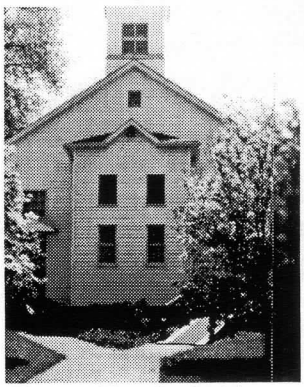
William Dikeman

Philadelphia-Restoration

Surviving churches of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention



Berks County– Reading



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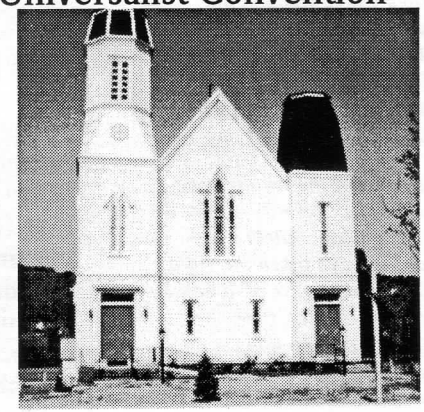

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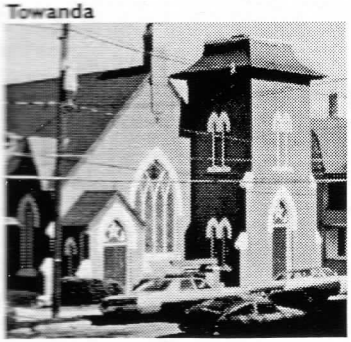

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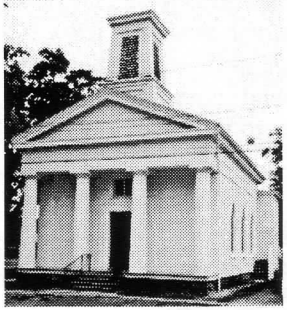

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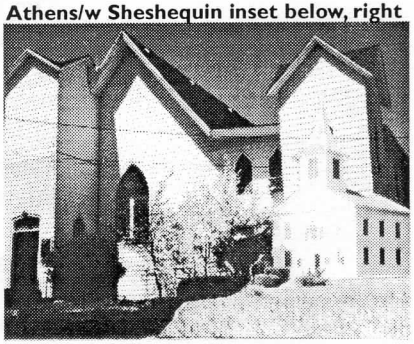


Feminism on the board– Restoration style

During the 1960s, Lillian Kushmore was a member of the Board and in charge of housekeeping for the church. The hours she put in on the church's behalf were prodigious– in terms of contribution for the common good, she was clearly a major asset.

Lillian could not abide smoke. At each board meeting the assistant treasurer filled the room with smoke from absolutely vile smelling cigars. Things got so thick in the lounge at board meeting that Lillian took to sitting out in the hall and taking part in the proceedings through the open door.

The irony of the whole thing was that Lillian was assumed by the predominately male board to have taken the right and proper course of action by banishing herself from the meeting– and no one ever suggested that the assistant treasurer should be required to quit smoking.

Women in church life

From the time it was chartered, Restoration has looked to women as a major part of church life. It took 150 years of church existence, however, before the first woman was named as moderator– the titular lay leader of the church.

The tradition of women in the denomination is long and impressive. Judith Sargent Murray, wife of John Murray, is a major figure in the early development of Universalism; in 1863, Olympia Brown became the first woman to be denominationally ordained. Other names such as Julia Ward Howe, Clara Barton, Mary Livermore and Francis E. W. Parker spring to mind. But in the local churches, it was assumed that women would serve as auxiliaries while the men held the major roles of moderator and would exclusively be chosen for the board. So it continued until 1970 when Marilyn Zhuraw, daughter of a Unitarian minister, John MacKinnon, became Restoration's first female moderator.

So what was the role of women? For the February, 1941, meeting, Marion Blaine, secretary of the Women's Guild, wrote this report:

> The program of the Women's Guild of the Church of the Restoration, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, is well rounded and follows a rather definite plan. We sew at 10 o'clock on the first Tuesday of each month, lunch at 12:30 and have our meeting at 1:30. Sewing for the Red Cross is done also on Tuesday of each week, and much work has been turned out for this organization, as well as for our own Universalist projects, by our own faithful few and by others from the neighborhood who drop in from time to time.
>
> The luncheons are served by a different group each month and are theoretically free, although of course we are careful to have a dish available for a freewill offering. The average attendance at these luncheons has been 25. We feel they foster friendliness for the church and are most enjoyable. We are happy to introduce our church activities to newcomers in this way.
>
> Our programs have been interesting and varied. In October the Forward Together program of the church was presented, and we saw a motion picture of the Clara Barton Diabetic Camp for Girls. We have also had an address on "Building

for International Peace" by a member of the Friends Service Committee, a speaker from the United Campaign and a representative of the consumer cooperative movement. Each month some part of the program has dealt with some phase of denominational activity, giving us information helpful to new Universalists. The program for the rest of the year is carefully planned along the same lines and should also be instructive and entertaining.

You can well see that all routine matters are handled with neatness and dispatch. But the high point of each meeting is always the treasurer's report. If there is a large balance on hand there is a steady flow of suggestions, motions and resolutions for its disposal. We are not specialists in the matter of spending money– we are willing to spend it on any worthy cause, as is borne out by this list of expenditures:

We bought dishes for the church, replenished the communion service, gladly shared the expense involved in welcoming our new minister (Harmon Gehr), made substantial gifts to the church four separate times (Easter, June, Christmas and for our Wayside Pulpit)– not to mention our vacation dollar, which we increased 50 times– bought a sewing machine, paid our yearly dues and current bills. To widen our horizons, and to show that our interests are varied, we gave money to the Messiah Home, managed the donation dinner there on November 16, entertained those living in the Home at teas held in March and June and gave them a treat at Christmas. We had a Christmas party for the Florence Crittenton Home for unmarried mothers, sent a generous contribution to the Clara Barton Home for diabetic children, sent Christmas boxes to North Carolina, helped do our share at the luncheon on Universalist day during Blind Educational Week, gave our unmatched dishes to the Curtin Community Center of Germantown, sent articles to be sold at the Clara Barton Home and bought 10 first aid kits to be sent to the women of England. On the side of pure pleasure, with no strings attached, we entertained at a men's evening party, an affair which was so enjoyable we hope to repeat it often!

The real power behind the throne is the social committee. Let there be a modest sum in the treasury– $25 or so– and they immediately announce various and sundry projects. They go

Sit-down dinners, teas and annual meetings

The 50s were a time for elaborate all-church meals and celebrations, usually held in the basement of the church. The annual meeting at the end of the church year might consist of two successive major sit-down dinners, one put on by the Women's Guild and the other on the following night by the K-Klub . Frequently, during the sixties, the church's annual meeting was catered by Rotzell Caterers– a roast beef dinner, with snapper soup as the first course, the whole meal served by tuxedoed waiters.

Elaborate white glove teas were also served in the spring. Punch (a ginger ale-lemonade with a quart of ice cream floating in the mixture) and delicate little cookies were on the table. A hostess in hat and white gloves sat formally at the silver tea service, pouring cups of steaming tea into china cups. The congregation partook on the lawn, depending on the weather. Few white shoes were in evidence, since the dictate was "no white shoes until after Memorial Day." This last was not a rule of the church, but it might as well have been, for it was followed by everyone who pretended to being fashionable.

by all sorts of names– card parties, a luncheon here or there, a dinner at the church, a congregational get-together or a trip to Longwood Gardens. The end aim is the same, to earn money for the Guild. We are cajoled and browbeaten. Before we know it, we have done as suggested, and once more there is a healthy balance in the treasury! Then the vicious circle begins over again.

Don Rose summed up our organization in one sentence in his column last night, even though he was referring to the Fort Washington Fire Company No. 1. He said, "The Ladies' Auxiliary has continued to function as usual throughout the year." When one realizes how much that *can* mean, too much credit cannot be given to the group of loyal women who have served the church so faithfully during the past year.

–Marion Blaine, Secretary

For a somewhat less detailed look at "women's work," here is a report of another church group:

In 1929, the Flower Mission received $63 from contributions and memorials. Ten crates of oranges were went to hospitals and 75 bouquets to the sick; 35 visits were made to shut-ins and they were given fruit, flowers, plants, ivy, candy, etc. $150 was given to the church.

A Strawberry Festival was held May 15, and we wish to thank the Delphinian Players and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sheppard for a fine evening's entertainment. A sale of cake, candy, marmalade and jelly held in the Church Parlor on November 21st, at the time of the Fall Supper, was a success, owing to the generous donations of friends.

We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of $50 from the Mattie P. Roy Estate. This amount was received through the kindness of Mrs. S. P. Town and invested by the Trustees of the Church for the benefit of the Flower Mission. Subscriptions for 1930 are now due.

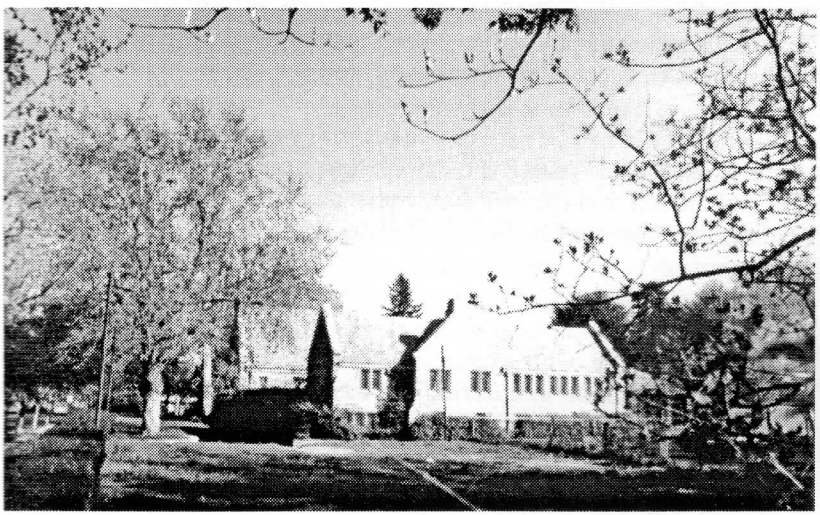
–Gertrude M. Butterworth, Secretary

With the second half of the 20th century, substantial change manifested itself in the role of women. Most obvious were the economic necessities which made working wives the rule rather than the

exception. World War II had made its mark– women who had been homebodies had begun receiving paychecks, and they would never return to economic serfdom; women who had come out of rural areas to the cities for the first time began to develop new views of the role of women.

At Restoration evidence of change came first in the creation of new groups such as the K-Club, said to be "for the younger women of the church." The Guild and the Flower Mission slipped gracefully out of existence. The Association of Universalist Women continued well into the 60s, but soon it, too, was but a memory of the way things used to be.

Gone with these groups were elaborate dinners and teas. The dishes today in the church kitchen in the basement were bought in the expectation of more of the celebrational dinners which had been the tradition– the annual meeting offered not one but two major dinners, each one a full sit-down meal. Outdoor "white glove teas" were held in the Spring in what Gil Phillips, our minister in the early 60s, called our "ecclesiastical breezeway"– the covered walkway from what is now the cloakroom to the Hale Memorial Wing. By the late 60s, the Christmas Bazaars were no longer the exclusive property of women's groups– one of the most popular bazaars and one which ran for three successive years was the Christmas Wonderland– a world of shops, candy canes, cooking demonstrations and Duke Russell's Ski Lodge (with hot buttered rum and hot hors d'oeuvres)– a design project of former moderator Hans-Harald Grote.



This 1978 photo, taken from the northwest side of the church, shows both the Hale Memorial Wing and the large lot which lies across an access drive from the building. This area, available for expansion, is used now for the flea markets and, at right in the photo, for the playground for the Sunday School and Restoration Nursery School.

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

The Female Moderators– 1970 to 1995

Marilyn Zhuraw, daughter of John MacKinnon, former minister at the Wilmington church, was moderator from 1970 to 1972.

Julia Bradburd, had recently arrived from the First Universalist Church in Chicago and was moderator during the 1976-78 period.

Charlotte Newman, aka Trink, moved from presidency of her local League of Women Voters to moderator at Restoration in 1978-80.

Dorothy Feely, who founded and directs such programs as Bookreaders and Playgoers, was moderator from 1983 to 1985.

Marion Napper, our first African American female moderator, served two years from 1986 to 1988. She co-founded of the Singles Scene.

Elizabeth Lutz came aboard to guide the ship for the years 1988 to 1990. She was also a stalwart of the choir.

Margaret Heineman joined the church one year, was treasurer the next and moved into the moderator post during her third year– from 1990 to 1993. She was the first female moderator to serve three years.

Adrienne Morrison, who worked as assistant moderator with Maggie Heineman, was moderator during the 1993-1995 period.

ALL PHOTOS EXCEPT LUTZ AND ZHURAW BY WILLIAM DIKEMAN

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Preface to the 1975 History

What is the Universalist Church of the Restoration? How does one describe a congregation that has existed for one hundred and fifty-five years? Much information is contained in the Parish Record. For example, more than 1,500 people have signed our membership book over the years. There are sections listing the dedications, the marriages and the funerals. But a church is more than mere statistics. One hundred and fifty years ago almost half of the funerals were for young children, many too small to have been given names. Not until the turn of the century did medical advances reduce the high proportion of early deaths.

There are notations to show how the world intruded on the life of the church. (One member died in Andersonville Rebel Prison, for instance.) We see, too, generations of one family joining the church, such as the Gabells. What influence did the church have in the life of that family and others like them?

To trace the history of a church is a difficult task. Much of the real church history lies in the relationships the people of that church have with their minister and with each other. The important issues with which the church wrestled over the years rarely appear

(Continued opposite)

Part 1: The Beginnings

We have traveled a long and tortuous road since the day in September of 1770 when the English brig, Hand-in-Hand, landed at Cranberry Inlet in New Jersey. The ship, having failed to dispose of its cargo in Philadelphia, was sailing up the coast of New Jersey on its way to New York City. In the midst of a dense fog, the captain lost his bearings, and the ship struck a bar. Finally it passed into a small arm of water called Cranberry Inlet.

The ship was prevented by anchor from being driven onto the shore, and a part of the cargo was removed to a sloop which chanced to be nearby and was engaged for the purpose. At the request of the captain, John Murray, a Universalist minister who had sailed as a passenger from London, went on board the sloop to take charge of certain articles which were deemed to be too valuable to be entrusted to irresponsible and unknown persons.

On the following morning, the Hand-in-Hand, aided by a high tide and a favoring wind, again put to sea, but– the wind suddenly changing– the sloop was unable to follow the larger vessel. There being no provisions on the sloop, later in the day Murray went on shore in search of food. He was directed to the house of Thomas Potter, a well-to-do planter, who not only furnished him freely the desired supplies but also warmly invited him to pass the night at his home.

On Murray's return from his vessel to his new-found friend, Potter informed him that he had been awaiting his coming for a long time and that on the following Sunday he would be expected to preach in a meeting house near by. Surprised beyond measure at his peculiar reception, Murray, who had resolved before leaving England that he would never preach again, declined the invitation. The wind, however, remaining the same and preventing his departure, he finally consented. On the next Sunday, September 30, 1770, Murray preached his first sermon in America. The wind changed in the afternoon, and Murray left for New York. He continued to preach the Universalist message in the new land, and today he is known as the Father of American Universalism.

Preface (continued)

in the Minutes of the Meetings; the controversies which strained friendships and loyalties can only be assumed in most cases. The history of Restoration is no different.

The following account is based on two articles. The first was written in 1920 by Edward S. Deemer, long-time moderator of the Board, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the church; the second by his successor, Pearce M. Gabell, for the 125th anniversary in 1945. Other material has been taken from the book "UNIVERSALISM IN AMERICA, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY." edited by Ernest Cassara, and from Clinton Lee Scott's "THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AMERICA: A SHORT HISTORY". It is interesting to note that the Reverend Scott's ministry to Restoration started on February 1, 1920, exactly 50 years before the current minister's term began, on February 1, 1970.

The early years of Universalism were filled with theological disputes as the young movement tried to establish its identity. Being made up of the working classes, largely self educated and attempting desperately to gain acceptance and respectability, the Universalist labored mightily to establish a common set of beliefs.

As early as 1785 in Oxford, Massachusetts, and in Philadelphia in 1790, Universalists held conventions in order to define and clarify their positions. They came out against war and against slavery, but their attempts at establishing articles of faith were plagued by a healthy streak of non-conformity among the members and the ministry. Nevertheless, they attempted right up to 1935, with the "Bond of Fellowship and Statement of Faith," adopted in Washington. But independent congregations and a free-thinking clergy could never resolve the natural differences which were always present.

(The Unitarians never felt the need to define themselves in terms of mutually-held beliefs. They knew who they were. They represented, along with Congregationalists, the established church of Massachusetts. They comprised the leading figures of politics and the intellectual elite of New England.)

In the early days of Universalism, the differences were between the followers of John Murray and the adherents of Elhanan Winchester. Murray was a believer in the Universalism of the Englishman James Relly. Such issues as the Trinity were not considered as important as the act of Salvation, performed by Jesus. Winchester, on the other hand, believed in punishment for sin before eventual salvation.

Winchester's theology had gone from New England Congregationalism, through the "New Light Congregationists" of the Great Awakening, to the Baptist movement. He became a Baptist preacher. It was on his return to his pulpit in South Carolina that he passed through Philadelphia and was persuaded to take the vacant pulpit of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia. The building could not hold the crowds attracted by his eloquence.

Winchester was also encouraged in his work by Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, physician and reformer. (Dr. Rush's home in Philadelphia was shamefully bulldozed to the ground in recent years in the city's zeal for urban renewal.)

The tension between the two extremes of Universalism continued throughout most of its history, the followers of Murray believing the death of Christ sufficient atonement for all sinners, and the adherents of Winchester holding to the so-called restorationist position, which called for an indeterminate period of purification in purgatory for the cleansing of the soul. The two positions came in later years to be known as "Ultra–Universalism," or "Death and Glory," and "Restorationism," respectively.

Abner Kneeland– Restoration's founding minister, from 1820 to 1823

The First Independent Church of Christ commonly called Universalist meeting in their house of public worship in Lombard Street in the City of Philadelphia was the name adopted by the first permanent congregation in this city. This group purchased a plot of ground on the south side of Lombard Street, 100 feet west of Fourth Street on July 30, 1793, and erected a building which still stands and now serves as a synagogue. When the house was first used for worship services, the walls were unplastered, and the only seats were plain benches. The first pulpit was a rough platform made by a mastmaker, probably Brother Cuthbert, and a shoemaker.

In 1818 this first church was served by Rev. Abner Kneeland, who was born in 1773. Like Winchester, he had been a Baptist minister before he was ordained as a Universalist. He was a versatile, liberal, and energetic man of commanding personality– and a promoter. At this time he was 45 years of age. With his coming began a new era in the history of Universalism in Philadelphia. All his predecessors had stood firmly upon the Trinitarian platform; Rev. Kneeland was distinctly a Unitarian. In his letter accepting the position of pastor he referred to the Articles of Faith and claimed the right to interpret them for himself. This should have given fair warning of his style as a minister.

Part 2: Forming the Congregation

The Church on Callowhill Street

In the Lombard Street Congregation were a number of members from the "Northern Liberties"-- a section of Philadelphia County roughly north of Callowhill Street and west of Kensington. Mr. Kneeland saw an opportunity to promote a new church (which many years later became known as the Universalist Church of the Restoration). A Universalist society was organized February 15th, 1820, and met in Northern Liberties Commissioner's Hall. The Rev. Abner Kneeland presided at meetings. On March 14th, 1820, this organization, The Second Independent Church of Christ called Universalist, appointed a committee to raise funds to purchase land and erect a building. The efforts of the committee apparently did not produce much money. But Kneeland had a friend, Charles Horner Rodgers, in the hardware business on Market Street. Rodgers agreed to lend a mortgage of $7,025, thereby enabling the church to buy a lot on the north side of Callowhill Street, east of Fifth Street. This lot was purchased in March 1822 and Rodgers was induced to increase his loan to $10.000 to help finance construction. Still more money was raised by the sale of burial lots in the churchyard. In addition an association was formed to own the equity in the property. Shares in the association were sold at $25 each, and a total of $8,775 was raised. The cornerstone was laid in September, 1822. The building was completed and dedicated on Friday, October 17, 1823 at 3 p.m. Abner Kneeland "supplied the desk" for $700 a year.

To give the reader an idea of social concerns of the early church, it is noted that the church opposed the Blue Law for the stopping of Sunday mail deliveries. It also declined to stretch a chain across the street in front of the church during worship services, as was permitted by an Act passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania in 1789 granting any religious society in the City of Philadelphia the right to stretch a chain across the street in front of the church edifice on Sundays during the hours of worship (which could be very long in those

days). The act was very precise in its details and any miscreant who dared disturb the worship of those inside could be fined $30. In 1816 the act was supplemented to include the district of the Northern Liberties. Although the Universalist church was within the new boundaries no chain was ever stretched.

In July 1824, the Rev. John Chambers of the Presbyterian Church at the northeast corner of Broad and Sansom Streets attacked Universalism, stating: "The tendency of the doctrine is the destruction of all morality and religion. In twenty years were it to prevail there would be scarcely a vestige of Christianity– in fifty years none. There is not a vice that is not the offspring of the doctrine of Universal Salvation– all proved upon the ground that they will escape punishment."

The Rev. Mr. Chambers may not have realized there was a limit even to the liberality of the Universalists. In October 1824, it became necessary to expel from the congregation one who by poetic justice was named Robert Cain; for he "was taken up in riot" and "taken before the mayor." A committee had waited upon him but "notwithstanding, he has been seen intoxicated, especially on October 12, 1824– with frequent use of profane language".

During the years of 1820 to 1824, Kneeland supplied the pulpits of both the Lombard Street church and the church on Callowhill Street. In 1823 William Morse was ordained and became co–minister with Kneeland. This arrangement between the churches to use the same pastors proved unworkable, and the church fell behind in its payments to Morse. As a result both Kneeland and Morse had left Philadelphia by April, 1825.

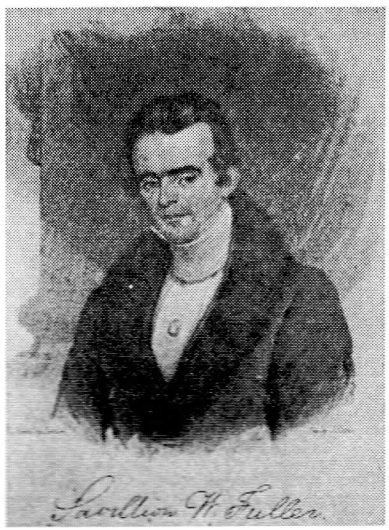
From the Church on Callowhill Street, Abner Kneeland took the pulpit of the Prince Street Universalist Church in New York City. His rationalistic preaching led to a division of the congregation, and taking with them the more liberal members, they established in 1827 the Second Universalist Society of New York. But after only two years, his new congregation was lagging behind his

increasingly liberal views. Mr. Kneeland left the Universalists at this point and moved to Massachusetts. There he lectured under the auspices of the First Society of Free Inquirers. He also founded a newspaper called "The Investigator." It was through the pages of this radical publication that Kneeland had troubles with the secular authority. As editor, Kneeland advocated land reform, the abolition of slavery, public education, and birth control. By supporting the ten-hour working day, his paper became one of the leading labor papers of the day. His blasts against the orthodoxy of Boston brought a charge of blasphemy. By then he was a Deist and in one article claimed a disbelief in the God as conceived by the Universalists. The public prosecutor ignored the context of the statement and as a result of the trial, Kneeland was sentenced to 60 days in prison. His appeal to the State Supreme Court was lost and in spite of a petition signed by 168 persons of high repute, headed by William Ellery Channing, Kneeland served his time. He is thought to be the last person to be convicted of blasphemy in the United States.

Kneeland left Boston and moved to the Iowa Territory, where he founded a successful commune based on families deriving their living from the soil and their mental and emotional well being from intellectual pursuits; hence the name, "Salubria," a place of healthful, wholesome living. The commune was a success until Kneeland died in 1844.

The Rev. Stephen R. Smith came to the pulpit of the Second Church in June 1 825, and after Kneeland had left was called upon to serve the First Church also. In January, 1826, our trustees recorded that the "sister church must pay for Bro. Smith" or not use him. Our trustees were having their own financial troubles. By November of 1826 they owed Bro. Smith $259 arrears of salary. Consequently, Bro. Smith left the church October, 1828.

He was succeeded by Zelotes Fuller, who remained until May, 1832. In February of that year he had informed the trustees that he could not preach unless the money



Savillion Fuller, the sixth minister of the church

due him was paid. Although little is known of Rev. Fuller's ministry, he holds the record for the number of marriages performed– a total of 95 in three and one half years. One wonders what appeal he had or what social conditions led to such a large number of weddings.

In October 1832, Rev. L. F. W. Andrews was called and resigned at the expiration of one year. His salary was $700.

Rev. Savillion W. Fuller succeeded– beginning his pastorate in October, 1833, presumably at a salary of $700. He was about 30 years of age, and very much loved by the congregation. Every person who knew him spoke of him in the highest terms. About a hundred years ago there were possibly half a dozen or more boys in the Sunday School who bore the name of Savillion. Perhaps his youthful indiscretion prompted the trustees in September 1835 to "Resolve that the Board of Trustees do not recognize the right of the pastor to make public the private affairs of the society." Mr. Fuller had evidently tried to raise much needed money by an appeal from the pulpit.

(The trustees then applied themselves to determining the status of the ownership of the church and the extent of debt. The church was not owned by the members, who were represented by the Board of Trustees, but by stockholders in the Association formed at the time of construction in 1822, which stockholders were represented by a Board of Managers. The trustees had by this time acquired nearly half of the stock of the Association, but evidently a complete audit of both organizations had to be made to get at the truth, since no one had paid much attention to financial details for so long a time.)

Beginning new, more careful management, the trustees granted the use of the church to a National Convention of Business Men at $10 per day. They requested the anti-slavery people to pay their back bill and fixed their future rental at $10 per night. They engaged an attorney to defend the suit for salary by Zelotes Fuller, who was then the third pastor counting backwards. They put the

bills for back subscriptions to the pastor's salary in the hands of the Sexton for collection. Because of the Fuller suit, the Board found it necessary to acquire a corporate seal. In May the trustees offered Zelotes Fuller $200 to settle his claim and published advertising to distinguish his identity from that of Savillion W. Fuller, their beloved present pastor.

Whether the young pastor inspired such action is not clear, but at the close of 1838 a concert was suggested to raise money to introduce gas lighting into the church. This was accomplished in the summer of 1839 at a cost of $230 for piping and $220 for 31 fixtures.

In February of 1839 Fuller notified the Board of a call to Hartford, Connecticut, and he was given permission to leave, but by June was offered $900 per year to remain. Unfortunately, in November a committee had to be sent to him with the news that the $900 in his contract could not be paid. Later, on January 14, 1840, the amount of $225 was realized by a concert at which the National Brass Band played.

On May 17, 1840, at the age of thirty–six, the pastor died. He was laid to rest in the churchyard. A committee of "thirteen females" was organized to solicit subscriptions for a monument. In December a committee on inscriptions reported six different suggestions. The following was accepted:

"In memory of the Rev. Savillion Waterous Fuller, died may 17th, 1840, aged 36 years, seven months, seven days, after six years pastor of the Second Independent Church of Christ. The ladies of Church have erected monument as the last tribute of respect for their late pastor."

Then, on the side of the monument toward the street, simply "Savillion," inside a wreath.

The cause of Savillion Fuller's death was given as "consumption" as the following committee report of December, 1840, implies:

"The committee has examined the present construction of the pulpit and (the members) have concluded that it presents disadvantages which can be remedied at small expense. One of the greatest inconveniences is that the speaker is compelled to remain in an immediate current of cold air caused by the rarefaction of air in the church and presence of the atmosphere without which thereby jeopardizes the health if not the life of our pastor. To obviate this difficulty, the present doors of ingress to the pulpit should be closed and an opening made immediately into the church– thereby causing the speaker to enjoy a uniform temperature in common with the congregation."

The pulpit was fixed by closing the doors and erecting steps for access from the congregation.

The Rev. T. D. Cooke accepted a call to the parish at $1,000 a year starting January 1, 1841, specifying quarterly payments and three months notice of renewal of contract from year to year. He must either have been a pessimist or have heard of Zelotes Fuller's lawsuit– and he was right. His pay was behind as usual after he became pastor, and his salary was cut to $800. He resigned at the close of 1843. (He was later paid $25 a month until the debt was cleared.)

The next year saw the pulpit occupied by a succession of pastors– The Rev. H. Torry (for three months); The Rev. L. B. Mason (for six months); "Father" Hosea Ballou (for a few Sundays), and the Rev. A. B. Grosh (for July and August).

In June of this year (1844), the trustees had trouble somewhat different from the usual financial sort. The Pennsylvania State Convention requested them to demand surrender by Bro. C. S. Bailey of his letter of fellowship. A year later a committee reported to the Convention that Bro. Bailey had merely thanked the society for its interest in his moral and Christian welfare.

January 1, 1845, began the ministry of C. C. Burr, which continued for three years. He was an orator with a wide

reputation. During these three years, the church was crowded, people standing or sitting upon the window sills. But that was all. When he left, the church was deeply in debt, everyone was discouraged and no services were held for two years.

At the beginning of 1848, a committee had been appointed to inquire into the claims against the church. From April of that year until 1850, no minutes are recorded, but somehow the Rev. A. B. Grosh became pastor with the advent of 1850.

It was about that time that Edward S. Deemer, to whom we are largely indebted for our present building in Mt. Airy, came to the church as a boy of 10 years. His family lived at Eleventh and Girard, and he walked to church at Fifth and Callowhill. He has told us that the Callowhill Street Church stood behind an iron railing with a center gate, which opened to a path that carried one to a portico. From the portico, doors gave access directly into the auditorium and as one entered, one faced the congregation. The pulpit was behind the visitor as he entered. The events that follow were well known to Mr. Deemer.

Early in 1850 the name of The Second Independent Church of Christ called Universalist of the Northern Liberties of the City of Philadelphia was changed to The Second Universalist Church. "Ways and Means" were evidently being sought by those who had renewed interest. The basement was rented at $400 per year and the church itself for a series of lectures on anatomy and physiology at $12 per night. E. H. Chapin was engaged to lecture on "Ideal and Actual" for $50. The Rev. A. B. Grosh resigned on August 1st, 1861.
The church building was now 28 years old and in need of renovation. How to accomplish this with very little money forthcoming from the congregation presented a problem. A committee waited upon Charles H. Rodgers, who still held the mortgage and evidently secured an agreement from him not to call the principal of his mortgage during his lifetime in exchange for payment of the delinquent interest. He must have been much pleased for he made a donation of $50. The committee had

succeeded in having the tenant of the church cellar pay a year's rent in advance, which provided the interest money.

It was now March 1852. A church meeting called Rev. Nelson Doolittle to the parish at $1,000 a year.

The trustees had their usual schedule of difficulties. The "Spiritual Rappers" were refused the use of the church and Bro. Spear, the bill collector, found such difficulty in his work that some of his accounts were directed to be sued out. The German Free Society was refused the use of the church because its "belief was not in accord with true Christian doctrine."

A plan of the proposed alteration to the church was submitted by Samuel Ashton and greatly approved. It involved removal of the dead lying in the front churchyard and this was arranged with the various lot owners. Then in the fall of 1852 the front churchyard was rented to Samuel Ashton for ten years with privilege to build upon the land. In payment of rent, Mr. Ashton undertook renovation of the church, including among other things a heat furnace in the basement to replace the old stoves in the auditorium, venetian blinds and new carpet and furniture for the pulpit. In addition, an organ was purchased for $650. The renovation cost amounted to $2,143, which surprised the trustees, and they were even more surprised at being unable to find their copy of the lease to Mr. Ashton and his building agreement. The bill was more than the rent to be paid and Mr. Ashton, being unable to get any action on the amount due him, started suit.

About that time, Rev. Nelson Doolittle resigned because he felt he got little more than food, clothing and shelter as compensation.

Mr. Ashton had control of the church cellar where the heaters were and refused to give access so that a fire might be kindled Sundays. His real estate man agreed to build a fire each Sunday for $3, however, and the trustees had to stand for the charge. Mr. Ashton was a hard man to handle. He failed to keep appointments and

was generally unsatisfactory. By the end of 1853 it had become quite evident that permitting him to build stores and a hall in front of the church had been a mistake– for reasons indicated in the following advertisement which the trustees had published in the PUBLIC LEDGER, December 13th, 1853:

"The Board of Trustees of the Second Universalist Church on Callowhill Street, north side above Fifth, are constrained by recent events to say to the public that neither the vestry nor the society of said church was in any way concerned or responsible for the Dancing Association and Ethiopian Concerts, nightly held to the desecration of the spot and serious annoyance of the congregation in certain rooms attached to the church property and claimed to be leased by Mr. Samuel Ashton and further that such occupying meets with their entire reprobation."

This public notice must have hurt attendance at Ashton's Minstrel Show for after much negotiation he purchased the entire property for $17,500, subject to Rodgers $10,000 mortgage. More trouble was to be had with Ashton before he finally settled, but the church came out of the deal very satisfactorily.

The church on Master Street

The Church on Eighth Street

On February 19, 1854, the same day the sale to Ashton was completed, the trustees purchased from the Eighth Street Methodist Church, which had moved to Green Street, its old church on the east side of Eighth Street above Noble Street, for $17,000, subject to noncallable encumbrances totalling $6,500. There is no complete record of the buildings acquired, but in addition to the church and sessions room (Sunday School) on Noble Street (later rented to the Public School System on weekdays), there was at least one dwelling house.

Inside the church the walls were frescoed, the woodwork was grained oak and the venetian blinds ivory. The pews in the lower portion of the church were lined all around and stuffed with hair. The choir was in the gallery, separated from the congregation by railings. The pulpit was of white marble.

(The sale and acquisition of the property required use of the corporate seal. A former secretary of the church had resigned and refused to deliver the seal– admitting the device belonged to the church but claiming the metal as his personal property. The trustees declared the old seal lost and adopted a new one which consisted of "An all seeing eye in the centre of glory, surmounting a balance, whose pendant and index– lengthened into the sword of justice – form with the scale beam a cross.")

Court approval was necessary to complete moving, for each property had a church burial yard and the bodies had to be transferred to other locations. The Callowhill Street Church acquired lots in Odd Fellows Cemetery for the purpose. Among the transfers were the remains of Savillion W. Fuller. His monument was broken, but a new one was supplied much later.

Although The Rev. Nelson Doolittle had resigned, he was still supplying the pulpit, and the congregation, which included many who were not church members, favored him. The trustees had closed the church pending moving, but on June 4th, 1854, Doolittle was accused of breaking open the building and having himself elected by the congregation. The church members followed with a meeting of their own on June 20th and since the congregation had failed to name a term or salary, the members interpreted the period to be from June 4th to June 20th at his old salary, and he was paid for the time. The Rev. Abel C. Thomas, then pastor of the Lombard Street Church intervened, but the controversy continued and developed into a suit by Doolittle and a verdict against the church; payment was made at the end of 1855.

In February 1855, The Rev. Richard Eddy was called as pastor at $1,500 per annum to serve in the new church. From January, 1850, to May, 1863, the church had five ministers, an average of less than three years for each.

The year 1856 brought difficulties– from little ones, such as a frozen gas meter to large ones like the inability to meet Bro. Eddy's salary– which he cut to $1,250. Other problems were a suit and judgment obtained by a

sexton for salary and a protested promissory note. The trustees urged Bro. Eddy to seek another call since they could not pay him, so he went to Canton, New York, in November.

Moses S. Ballou calls the period during which the Church was at Eighth and Noble Streets "The Age of Controversy." During the terms of the Rev. J. T. Goodrich and Moses Ballou, Edward Deemer was commissioned to watch notices in Saturday's PUBLIC LEDGER to see which Orthodox ministers would attack Universalism the next day, and Deemer would then attend the Orthodox services to report. During this period The Rev. H. S. Hoffman of the Reformed Episcopal Church in the course of one sermon said "Universalist Churches are composed of wicked, immoral men and lewd and abandoned women." Some of the members of the Eighth Street congregation were in his audience at the time, and having found a willing witness, threatened prosecution for libel and were able to force a withdrawal of the accusation by Hoffman from his pulpit on the following Sunday.

The Rev. Moses Ballou was followed by The Rev. B. M. Tillotson, who served four years.

Deemer recalled the Rev. J. T. Goodrich who followed on May 20,1863:

> "He had a large acquaintance outside of the church, and there were many upon our roll of pew renters who seldom came to church. He was an energetic speaker and the church was well filled at all services. This was another period of controversy. While J. T. Goodrich was not a Chapin or a Beecher, he had always at his command a lot of sledgehammer blows which he could use when occasion demanded. I recall an illustration. Elder Knapp, the revivalist, had been holding forth at a Baptist Church on Thirteenth Street below Vine for several weeks, assailing John Murray and Universalists generally. He became so offensive that Goodrich decided to give him some attention. The church was

> crowded. The aisles were full and every standing place was occupied. Elder Knapp had used the 25th Chapter of Matthew a great deal against us, and Goodrich used it for his own purpose. He made the broad assertion that nothing but Universalism could keep Elder Knapp out of hell. He called him before the judgment seat and began to catechize him. He enumerated the several offenses with which the Elder had been charged and then came the climax: "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The nature of these charges was carried to those who had charge of the revivalist, and next morning the Elder left the city, never to return.

The Rev. Moses Ballou returned as pastor in November, 1866, and was to stay until 1872. During his latter pastorate the Eighth and Noble Street Church was sold for $20,250 excluding the organ and other "personalty."

The Church on Master Street

The trustees attempted to purchase the Green Hill Presbyterian Church on Girard Avenue, and being unsuccessful, moved the services to a hall at 17th and Poplar Streets and stored the church organ temporarily. After several unsuccessful attempts to purchase property, the trustees finally acquired the lot at the Southwest corner of Greenhill Street and Masters Street, 70 x 109 .

Benjamin D. Price was retained as Architect, and on June 3rd, 1871 a building contract was awarded to Edward Halescost, excluding furnishing, $20,920. The cornerstone was laid in July. In December, 1871, the name of the church was changed to Church of the Restoration.

At 17th and Master (Greenhill and Master Streets) the pulpit was occupied by:

> The Rev. Moses Ballou until November 1872
> The Rev. M. F. Bowles for five years
> The Rev. G. W. Bicknell for one year
> The Rev. H. R. Nye for three years.

The Rev. Frederick A. Bisbee then came to the church in

1883– a young man, 28 years of age. During his pastorate, he was made Doctor of Divinity. He left the church to accept the editorship of THE UNIVERSALIST LEADER. Dr. Joseph K. Mason followed for a term of two years and resigned to take charge of St. Paul's in Chicago.

Then came Dr. John Clarence Lee and with him Mrs. Helen Crumet Lee. Dr. Lee was greatly respected in religious and intellectual circles in Philadelphia and invited to his pulpit many speakers; their presence reflected toleration if not mild acceptance of Universalism in intellectual and religious circles. In Dr. Lee's time– specifically in 1903 – the name was changed to The Universalist Church of the Restoration.

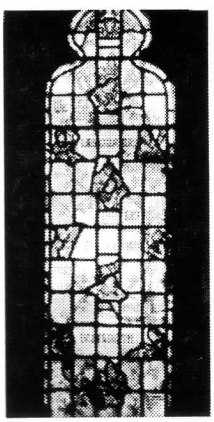
Dr. Lee was followed by The Rev. Clinton Lee Scott from 1920 to 1923. Following in the footsteps of other of our ministers, whose religious views continued to change and grow during their tenure and afterwards, Dr. Clinton Scott was the only Universalist minister, among the many Unitarians, to sign the Humanist Manifesto in 1933, only ten years after leaving Restoration.

An interesting controversy arose during the ministry of Dr. Clinton Scott. Dr. Scott was an inveterate pipe smoker. When he came to Restoration, smoking was not permitted anywhere in the building. The first battle was with the Sexton, who in the tradition of all church sextons, held a proprietary attitude towards his building. When the sexton discovered that Dr. Scott was smoking his pipe in the minister's office, he posted a no smoking sign prominently on the study door. Sensing that a power struggle was taking place, Dr. Scott removed the sign from the door. The next day the sign was back. Dr. Scott's pipe prevailed, the sexton left the job.

Dr. Scott then convinced the Board, all of whom were great cigar smokers, that it would expedite their meetings if they permitted themselves to smoke in the Board room during meetings rather than take frequent smoking breaks in the out-of-doors. Finally, a motion was made at the Annual Meeting in 1921 that a smoking room be set aside in the church. At first it was tabled, and then it was brought up for reconsideration and passed. Thus a

This 1990 photo from Isabel R. Daly shows the chancel window. The original Altar Dossal, still in use almost 60 years later, has been supplemented by several cloths used on appropriate occasions. The "off-center cross" was an icon which became popular during the 60s and 70s. This particular version was designed and rendered by Elmer Ketterer.

Below is the workers' window, a gift of the artisans who worked on constructing the building. It is said they became so moved by what they saw that they wished to make a contribution. A fund was raised, and this window was the result. The words are from one of Paul's letters to an early church in Corinth, and in the King James version they read, "We are all labourers together; let every man take heed how he buildeth."



controversy was settled by the democratic process, to remain settled until reawakened by the Surgeon General's Report of more recent history.

In those days members of the Board were proud of their status in the community and zealous in their churchly responsibilities. During their Board Meetings, the minister, who was not expected to concern himself with temporal affairs, was expected to be present in his office in case he should be Summoned by the Board to answer any questions. The piety and respectability of the leading members of the congregation was reflected in the top hats and tails worn to church on Sunday mornings. A holdover from those days was the brief, "bare feet in the sanctuary" controversy which arose over the Liberal Religious Youth service in 1969.

The Church in Mt. Airy

Dr. Scott was followed by The Rev. Francis A. Gray of whom little mention is made. He remained for four years, 1923 to 1927. The Rev. Will Robert Tipton came to the church in 1927 and served until 1939. During his pastorate Brother Deemer died on May 9, 1929, at the ripe old age of 89 years. Among the provisions of his will was the following:

"Item THIRD: All the rest, residue and remainder of my Estate I give, devise and bequeath to the Universalist Church of the Restoration, now located at 16th and Master Streets, in the City of Philadelphia, with whom I have long been identified; the said fund to be kept intact until this particular legacy shall reach the sum of fifty thousand ($50,000) that is, the principal thereof with its accrued interest thereon, and then that fund shall be added to such other funds as may have been contributed to the Building Fund of the said church. The restriction, however, to this legacy is that from the pulpit of the said church shall always be promulgated the Faith of the said Universalist Church."

Kate A. Deemer, his wife, died November 19, 1930, and Laura V. McCauley, Mrs. Deemer's niece, an annuitant under the will, died on the 26th day of February 1936. The legacies had then reached the sum of fifty thousand

dollars. A contract was entered into with Frank A. Stewart Company of Philadelphia for the erection of the present building under the direction of J. Roy Carroll, Jr., architect, of Philadelphia, and work was begun on January 17, 1937. The old Master Street church was sold in the same year, having served the congregation for 66 years.

The following is the report of the Building Committee:

"The Building Committee would respectfully report that acting under the Resolution adopted at the Meeting of the Congregation held on the 21 day of June A.D. 1936, a lot of ground, containing 115 feet frontage on Gorgas Lane and 150 feet on Stenton Avenue, was purchased for $7,500, final settlement being made on September 14, 1936.

"On September 16, 1936, Mr. J. Roy Carroll, Jr., was engaged as Architect. Preliminary studies and conferences resulted in the adoption of final working drawings and specifications, and on January 7, 1937, a contract was awarded to Frank A. Stewart Company of Philadelphia for the construction of the Church Building, the base bid for the main building and basement wings being $41,154. This contract did not provide for the completion of the transepts, a chancel window of Rose design of stained glass or an organ of the capacity of the one installed. It did, however, provide for substitutions and changes, and subsequent cash subscriptions for memorials and general purposes made it possible to complete the transepts, install much stained glass and provide an organ of wide range and excellent quality. these, with the specific gifts, added much beauty and completeness to the building and ground.

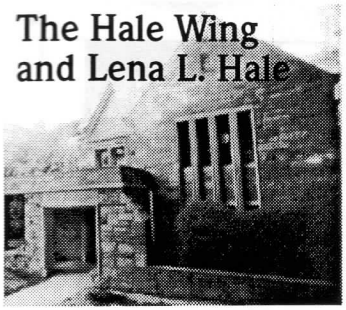
"The Memorials are indicated either by carvings or engraved metal plates, the tribute to Edward S. Deemer, composed by our Pastor Robert Tipton, being carved on the left of the portal to the Church.

JULIA BRADBURD

It was at the renowned 1968 General Assembly in Boston where a similar cloth to this one hung in the Arlington Street church. Chuck and Judy Oerkvitz were both there, and, for their report to the congregation, they decided it would be ideal to recreate that banner. By very late on the Saturday night before their presentation, the Oerkvitz family and a Servas visitor from overseas had glued the words into place. With the glue still wet, they transported it to the church that night and hung it.

Little did they reck upon the rising tide of feminism in the church. The original words read, "The place where men meet to seek the highest is holy ground." Intoned one woman: "That sexist phraseology abideth not well with me." In a twinkling (well, at least by 1992), the offensive wording was changed– all it took was to stand the "M" in men on its head and to remove the "N." How swiftly do UUs solve the problems of the world!

The Hale Wing and Lena L. Hale



"Let's meet in Hale lounge" is frequently heard around our church, but few know of the Hale family's part in our church's history. Henry Hale and his wife Frances joined the Church of the Restoration on June 1, 1872, shortly after its opening at 17th and Master Streets. Their daughter Lena Louise was dedicated on Sunday, June 8, 1873, when she was one year old. She joined the church on April 4, 1893. Her sister, Carrie Mabel, six years younger, joined the church in 1897. Henry Hale became wealthy manufacturing the reversible seats used in trolley and train cars.

After their parents' deaths, Carrie and Lena continued to live as socially prominent single women in an apartment on the Main Line. Note her listing as vice president of the Flower Mission for the church on Master Street at age 20 on page 17. When the church moved to its present location, Lena taught Sunday School in the basement of the church and recognized the need for space dedicated to Sunday School use. She and Harold Deemer cooperated on the building of a religious education addition– Deemer purchasing the land and Miss Hale financing the building. She had favored the type of building in which classrooms ringed around a central auditorium. However, the Rev. Harmon Gehr and others persuaded her to recognize the need for larger quarters for the church office and minister's

(Continues on opposite page)

"The Organ was built by Samuel H. Barrington of Norristown, one of our own people. The Bell was purchased from the Foundry of John Taylor & Company, Loughborough, England, the same firm who furnished the bells for the Bok Singing Tower at Mountain Lake, Florida.

"The Rose Window and the Workmen's Window are from the studio of the Willet Stained Glass Co. of Philadelphia. The windows in the Nave are from the studio of Oliver Smith of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. The Window in the North Transept is the work of the D'Ascenzo Studios, Philadelphia, and was moved from the old Church.

"The Altar Dossal and Super Frontal are silk woven by hand on ancient hand looms by the Talbot Studios of Germantown, and The Brass is by David Aukburg, a metal worker of Philadelphia.

"This report does not cover expenditures for repairs to furniture or purchase of equipment properly charged to the House Committee.

" Final payment on the contract was made on the Third day of January, A.D. 1938, the total cost of ground and building being $61,886.86, for which itemized vouchers are on file with the Investment Committee.

"In the planning, the end sought was economy in upkeep combined with as much artistry as funds would permit, to the end that this Church might express both in outline and content the beauty of that faith which Edward S. Deemer in the paramount gift stipulated should always be promulgated from its pulpit."

Committee
Lorin C. Powers
Edna Sellers Paterson
C. W. GabelI, Jr.

Ground for the new building on Stenton Avenue was broken January 18, 1937. The cornerstone was laid June 20, 1937. The first service was held in the new building September 27, 1937, and the church was dedicated at this service.

On March 4, 1940 the Rev. Harmon Gehr came to serve the church. It is said that he arrived as a candidate for the pulpit with his violin under his arm. As an accomplished musician he added much to the beauty of the church service and the cultural life of the city.

Between the time that the building on Master Street was sold and the congregation moved into their new home, the membership of the church had dwindled. Harmon Gehr was forced to play down the liberal aspects of Universalism in order to appeal to the neighborhood. Gradually the congregation was expanded. Harmon then began to speak his mind on such topics as the doubtfulness of the Virgin Birth. Some of the new people were appalled by such liberal sentiments and left the church. But enough stayed to maintain a viable church. From then on Harmon Gehr created a strong church of people who believed in Universalist principles and were attracted to his ministry.

That ministry was a long and fruitful one, and during it came the building of the Religious Education wing of the church, due to the generosity of Miss Lena Louise Hale, who was born into the church and became a member in 1893. She donated the wing in 1951 in memory of her sister Carrie Hale. This beautiful structure has enabled Restoration to maintain its religious education program and later to operate the Restoration Nursery School during weekday mornings. Miss Hale, a philanthropist well known for her support of many causes, and a generous contributor to the church during her life-long membership, passed away on May 3, 1974, at 102.

Harmon Gehr's ministry ended in June 1956, when he moved to California to take the pulpit of the Throop Memorial Church in Pasadena. In 1973, when he retired from the ministry, a special retirement fund of $10,000

(Continued from page 84)

study (which were then in what are now the altar decorations closet and the coatroom) and to accept the present plan. The building was named in honor of her sister, who had died in 1948. The Hale Building was dedicated in 1953.

Miss Hale continued to attend church regularly, driven by her chauffeur and accompanied by her companion (who was of a different faith and read other materials during the services). In addition to substantial donations to the church, she generously supported other organizations such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, to whose Friday afternoon concerts she subscribed. The Academy of Music had no elevator until she donated the money in 1968 for the elevator which bears her name.

The sixties and seventies brought changes that were difficult for Miss Hale to accept. When minister Dick Perry criticized President Richard Nixon from the pulpit, Miss Hale felt that such criticism was inappropriate and switched to The Unitarian Society of Germantown. (The Board supported the minister's freedom of expression.) Members read with delight of the Philadelphia Orchestra's playing "Happy Birthday" to her when she reached her 100th birthday. She died on May 3, 1974, at age 102, and many members attended her funeral service at Germantown church. Harmon Gehr kept his promise to come back from his church in California and preach that service. We honor the memory of Miss Hale's strong convictions and generous actions as we benefit from her legacy to this congregation. – *Helen Oerkvitz*

DAN BRAXTON

The 1975 reference by the Rev. Richard A. Perry to "young and old, black and white" (see page opposite) has been a part of the Restoration culture since the early 60s. During the 1980s, the metaphor was crystallized in a shimmering satin banner designed and executed by Mary Clark Thompson and Marion Napper. The banner is in three colors, black, brown and white, and the chalice in the middle is clasped in a block made up of three hands in those three colors.

The banner was first shown to acclaim at the General Assembly at Palm Springs, California, in 1987.

was created and an annuity purchased in his name, to indicate the warm feelings that members of Restoration had for him during his pastorate. Harmon is still active in his retirement. He is now serving as treasurer of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

The Humanist/Theist controversy occupied the Unitarians and the Universalists, and burned up much emotional energy in spite of the Great Depression and World War II, from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s The fact that the controversy raged in both denominations indicated the common concerns and similarities shared by the two groups. The thrust of humanism was to make religion humankind centered. Meanwhile, the theists clung to the traditional belief in a God who intervened in worldly affairs. The religious journals of the period reflect the bitterness of the feelings on both sides. Letters to the editor rang with unequivocal statements of the incompatibility of Humanist and Theist sentiments.

It wasn't until the publication of the Goals Committee Report in 1967 that the then combined denomination discovered how far down the road of humanism it had traveled. Less than 3 percent still believed in a supernatural God who reveals himself in human experience and history. The rest of the denomination covered a spectrum of beliefs from God as a ground of all being to a God as a concept that is harmful to a worthwhile religion. The dispute had been settled by consensus. But even today, the UU WORLD will contain an occasional letter to the editor denouncing the denomination for an overconcern with worldly problems as opposed to "the fundamentals of religion."

Following Harmon Gehr's ministry, Dr. Fenwick Leavitt and Gilbert Phillips served for one and five years respectively. During the Phillips ministry came the merger of the Universalists and the Unitarians in 1961. Although there had long been cooperation and similarity of beliefs between the two denominations, it took over one hundred years from the first suggestions to the final agreement of merger. The Universalists feared that they would be swallowed up by the more numerous and affluent Unitarians. But there comes a time when practical considerations overcome fears. Since 1961, Restoration has been a member in

good standing of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Although still "Universalist" in name, the church had moved very much closer to the mainstream of Unitarian-Universalism, just as it was in the mainstream of Universalism during the first 141 years of its history.

On February 1 , 1964, Rudolph Gelsey was called to serve as minister. The Gelsey years were not calm. It was the era of Civil Rights and the Vietnam War. It was a decade of discontent, and Restoration was not immune. Rudi was concerned about social responsibility. Through his increasing activism he drew the church and its members into the fray. An increasing number of black people became involved. Social action became the byword. This placed a great strain on the membership of the church. Some left the church; others stayed and fought both to maintain the church as an institution and to keep it relevant by its involvement in social concerns. Rudi is now serving the First Unitarian Church in Detroit, Michigan. After Rudi's departure, some of the social-action-oriented members drifted away, as have many of the issues which strained relations during the 1960s.

The Church Today

On February 1, 1970, in its one hundred and fiftieth year, Restoration called Richard A. Perry to its pulpit. During the past five years the congregation has taken on a broader makeup. Young and old, black and white, have all come together to create a warm, vigorous family-like atmosphere. The future appears brighter now than in many a year. After 155 years, it looks as though we are going to make it. It will be up to some future minister or member to bring this history up to date for our two hundredth anniversary.

This has been the history of a Universalist church. It was the faith and hope of past members such as Edward Deemer that its principles would always be promulgated from the pulpit. It is to their credit that Universalism is no longer a lonely, despised heresy. The principle of human brotherhood has been passed to future generations through wider acceptance. Society has become more humane because of the humanistic principles espoused by Universalists, as well as Unitarians, over the years. We now go

Appendix A

Moderators since 1926
1908–26 Edward S. Deemer
1927–34 Columbus W. Gabell, Jr.
1934–40 Dr. G. Wilmer Suplee
1940–41 George Litchfield
1941–42 Gordon W. Gabell
1942–44 G. Freed Otto
1944–46 Perry S. McNeal
1946–49 Richard J. Walker
1949–50 Nicholas H. Greene
1950–52 Adrian S. Marmor
1952–54 Brian Daly
1954–56 Dr. J. David Evans
1956–58 William Golz
1958–60 William H. Earle
1960–62 Richard Clegg
1962–64 William Dikeman
1964–11/64 George Bartholomew
11/64–65 Earl Finbar Murphy
1965–67 Haldor Reinholt
1967–69 Charles Oerkvitz
1969–70 George Parrish
1970–72 Marilyn Zhuraw
1972–74 LaForrest Russell
1974–76 Hans-Harald Grote
1976-78 Julia Bradburd
1978-80 Charlotte Newman
1980-81 George Ross
1981-83 Thomas Parker
1983-85 Dorothy Feely
1985-86 Willard Lutz
1986-88 Marion Napper
1988-90 Elizabeth Lutz
1990-93 Margaret Heineman
1993-95 Adrienne Morrison
1995- Larry Hain

Appendix B

Charter (1823), amended (1903)

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to all whom these presents shall come sends greetings.

Whereas The Rev'd Abner Kneeland, Jonathan Johnson, William Skinner, Isaiah Conrad, Edwin T. Scott, Ishi Craven, Michael Brown, John M. Brown, John Sands, David Elwell, Abraham Jones, Eppes Haskell, Henry A. Beck, Jacob Culp, John W. Kelly, Peter Harper, James M. Cormick, Sarah Brown, Mary Morris, Mary Redheffer, Mary Lockard and others, all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with a view of extending those objects and principles which teach men to love God with the whole heart and their neighbor as themselves and with a gratitude to their Heavenly Father that they are permitted to worship Him agreeably to the dictates of their own consciences have associated themselves together as a religious society or body of Christians under the name of "The Church of the Restoration" (1903) professing the following Articles of Faith

1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain the revelation of the attributes and will of God and are a rule of faith and practice.

2. That there is One God whose perfections are all modifications of infinite, adorable and unchangeable Love.

3. That there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus who gave himself as ransom for All, to be testified in due time, and through whom the whole human family will be finally restored to holiness and happiness.

forward building on those principles and creating new ones, which too, may someday be adopted by mankind. By whatever name our church is known, it will still be concerned with the welfare and future of all mankind and in that sense we will always be a church in the Universalist tradition.

Afterword

Appropriately, this is not a complete account. Rather, it is a brief of events that have occurred prior to 1975, the year of Restoration's 155th anniversary. The scope of this booklet, by necessity concentrates on the major events known. Furthermore, and for at least two reasons, the book scarcely describes what happened in the past five years.

One reason is, of course, that the relatively recent events are still fresh in many people's minds. They are, therefore, not yet history for most of us but are events which still mold church life and our view of it. A second reason is, that it has been exactly five years since the author, Richard A. Perry, our current minister, came to Restoration. Modesty prevented his describing any of his and his family's considerable contributions to the church during this period. That his work deserves and receives much appreciation from the congregation is evident, however, in the warmth and vitality which is present at Restoration today.

Finally, the account in the book is incomplete because it ends– as is the nature of a history– while church activities continue. It was written in the midst of an ongoing and lively period in church life. The legacy of 155 years has been passed on to a new generation. We, the present members, have the opportunity to give the current period vitality, to make it relevant to today's concerns, and to bring joy into the lives of adults and children alike. If we are to any degree successful in this endeavor, it will be worthwhile to continue this account someday.

Hans-Harald Grote
Moderator of the Church
February 1975

good standing of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Although still "Universalist" in name, the church had moved very much closer to the mainstream of Unitarian-Universalism, just as it was in the mainstream of Universalism during the first 141 years of its history.

On February 1 , 1964, Rudolph Gelsey was called to serve as minister. The Gelsey years were not calm. It was the era of Civil Rights and the Vietnam War. It was a decade of discontent, and Restoration was not immune. Rudi was concerned about social responsibility. Through his increasing activism he drew the church and its members into the fray. An increasing number of black people became involved. Social action became the byword. This placed a great strain on the membership of the church. Some left the church; others stayed and fought both to maintain the church as an institution and to keep it relevant by its involvement in social concerns. Rudi is now serving the First Unitarian Church in Detroit, Michigan. After Rudi's departure, some of the social-action-oriented members drifted away, as have many of the issues which strained relations during the 1960s.

The Church Today

On February 1, 1970, in its one hundred and fiftieth year, Restoration called Richard A. Perry to its pulpit. During the past five years the congregation has taken on a broader makeup. Young and old, black and white, have all come together to create a warm, vigorous family-like atmosphere. The future appears brighter now than in many a year. After 155 years, it looks as though we are going to make it. It will be up to some future minister or member to bring this history up to date for our two hundredth anniversary.

This has been the history of a Universalist church. It was the faith and hope of past members such as Edward Deemer that its principles would always be promulgated from the pulpit. It is to their credit that Universalism is no longer a lonely, despised heresy. The principle of human brotherhood has been passed to future generations through wider acceptance. Society has become more humane because of the humanistic principles espoused by Universalists, as well as Unitarians, over the years. We now go

Appendix A

Moderators since 1926
1908–26 Edward S. Deemer
1927–34 Columbus W. Gabell, Jr.
1934–40 Dr. G. Wilmer Suplee
1940–41 George Litchfield
1941–42 Gordon W. Gabell
1942–44 G. Freed Otto
1944–46 Perry S. McNeal
1946–49 Richard J. Walker
1949–50 Nicholas H. Greene
1950–52 Adrian S. Marmor
1952–54 Brian Daly
1954–56 Dr. J. David Evans
1956–58 William Golz
1958–60 William H. Earle
1960–62 Richard Clegg
1962–64 William Dikeman
1964–11/64 George Bartholomew
11/64–65 Earl Finbar Murphy
1965–67 Haldor Reinholt
1967–69 Charles Oerkvitz
1969–70 George Parrish
1970–72 Marilyn Zhuraw
1972–74 LaForrest Russell
1974–76 Hans-Harald Grote
1976-78 Julia Bradburd
1978-80 Charlotte Newman
1980-81 George Ross
1981-83 Thomas Parker
1983-85 Dorothy Feely
1985-86 Willard Lutz
1986-88 Marion Napper
1988-90 Elizabeth Lutz
1990-93 Margaret Heineman
1993-95 Adrienne Morrison
1995- Larry Hain

Appendix D

Significant Dates in Unitarian Universalist History

1531 Michael Servetus, Spanish physician and theologian, published ON THE ERRORS OF THE TRINITY, epoch-making analysis of traditional Christian theology. Book immediately suppressed.

1553 Servetus, after living incognito for 20 years, was discovered, tried and burned at the stake at Geneva for heresy.

1568 Francis David, court preacher in Transylvania (Hungary) supported Unitarian teaching in historic debate before King John Sigismund, himself a Unitarian, who issued edict of toleration.

1579 Francis David, tried for heresy after death of Sigismund, died in prison.

1585 Unitarian Press at Rakow, Poland, began publishing; more than 500 titles circulated throughout Europe before the press was destroyed.

1687 The publication of the "UNITARIAN TRACTS" begun in England.

1747 Jonathan Mayhew became minister of West Church in Boston, Mass., the most outspoken of many men who called for free inquiry and the right of private judgment in religion.

1770 John Murray emigrates, begins preaching Universalism in America.

1774 Theophilus Lindsey opens Essex Street Chapel, Unitarian, in London, regularly attended by Benjamin Franklin.

1779 Thomas Jefferson, who declares himself to be a Unitarian, pens the Virginia Statute of Religious Toleration.

Therefore, Know Ye, that the said Abner Kneeland, Jonathan Johnson, William Skinner and such other persons as shall be hereafter admitted members of the said Society, and their successors shall be, and they are hereby and by force and virtue of the Act of the General Assembly of the said Commonwealth, entitled, "An Act to confer on certain Associations of the Citizens of this Commonwealth, the power and immunities of corporations or bodies politic in law," passed the 6th day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand seven hundred and ninety- one, made, declared and constituted to be a corporation and body politic in law, and in fact, to have continuance forever, by name, style and title of "The Church of the Restoration." (1903)

Charter Members

1820, February 15

Rev. Abner Kneeland
Ishi Craven
John Sands
Abigail Hewitt
William Skinner
Jas. McCormick
John D. Ferguson
John W. Kelly
Henry A. Beck
Michael Brown
Edwin T. Scott
John M. Brown
Isaiah Conrad
David Elwell
Jonathan Johnson
Abraham Hones
Jacob Culp
Jessee R. Burden
John Eckstein
Tracy Taylor
William Taylor
Louis Bodin
Epes Haskell
Mary Morris
Mary Redheffer

Appendix C

Ministers Since the Church Began (as of the 1976 edition)

1. **Abner Kneeland*
   Feb. 15, 1820 to Oct. 16, 1823
2. **William Morse*
   Oct. 16, 1823 to Apr. 20, 1824
3. *Stephen R. Smith*
   Jun. 26, 1825 to Oct. 5, 1828
4. *Zelotes Fuller*
   Oct. 14, 1828 to May 1, 1832
5. *L. F.W. Andrews*
   Oct. 1, 1832 to Oct. 1, 1833
6. *Savillion W. Fuller*
   Oct. 1, 1833 to May 17, 1840
7. *Theodor W. Cook*
   Jan. 1, 1841 to Jan. 1, 1845
8. *C. C. Burr*
   Jan. 1, 1845 to Jan. 1, 1848
9. *A. B. Grosh*
   Jan. 2, 1850 to Aug. 1, 1851
10. *Nelson Doolittle*
    Apr. 1, 1852 to Oct. 1, 1853
11. *Richard Eddy*
    Apr. 1, 1855 to Nov. 1, 1856
12. *Moses Ballou*
    May 1, 1857 to May 9, 1859
13. *B. M. Tillotson*
    May 9, 1859 to May 9, 1863
14. *J. T. Goodrich*
    Aug. 16, 1863 to May 20, 1866
12. *Moses Ballou*
    Nov. 1, 1866 to Nov. 1, 1872
15. *B. F. Bowles*
    Feb. 2, 1873 to Mar. 30, 1878
16. *George W. Bicknell*
    Dec. 10, 1878 to Dec. 7, 1879
17. *H. R. Nye*
    Jun. 1, 1880 to Jan. 9, 1883
18. *F. A. Bisbee*
    May 6, 1883 to May 26, 1898
19. *Joseph K. Mason*
    Sept. 1, 1898 to Mar. 13, 1899
20. *John Clarence Lee*
    Sept. 1, 1900 to Sept. 30, 1919
21 *Clinton Lee Scott*
    Feb. 1, 1920 to Oct. 15, 1923
22. *Francis Alonzo Gray*

1787 James Freeman ordained; King's Chapel becomes the first Unitarian church in America.

1791 Unitarian Book Society founded; first official Unitarian press in England.

1796 Joseph Priestley clergyman/scientist driven from England, helps found First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

1802 Church founded by Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth, Mass., 1620, becomes Unitarian.

1803 Winchester Profession of Belief adopted by New England Universalists.

1805 Henry Ware elected professor at Harvard, a clear victory for the religious liberals henceforth to be known by the name Unitarian.

1805 First edition of Hosea Ballou's TREATISE ON ATONEMENT, which directs Universalist thought toward Unitarian views of God and Jesus.

1819 Universalist magazine published.

1819 William Ellery Channing, leading Boston minister preaches sermon on Unitarian Christianity at Baltimore. Bold, unequivocal statement of Unitarian position. Pivotal in shaping movement.

1820 Universalist Church of the Restoration founded in Philadelphia; first minister Abner Kneeland.

1821 Christian REGISTER (now UU WORLD) founded to spread Unitarian views.

1825 American Unitarian Association founded by American Unitarian ministers on May 25.

1833 Founding of the General Convention of Universalists in the United States.

1838 Ralph Waldo Emerson delivers the *Divinity School Address.*

1841 Theodore Parker delivers *The Transient and Permanent in Christianity.*

1844 Founding of Meadville Theological School.

1852 Western Conference formed.

1856 St. Lawrence University and Theological School founded.

1865 National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches founded.

1867 Free Religious Association formed in protest against National Conference.

1888 National Conference explicitly embraces principle of full freedom of belief.

1898 Isaac Atwood elected as First General Superintendent of Universalist General Convention.

1899 Essential Principles of Universalism adopted at Boston.

1904 Starr King School for the Ministry founded.

1914 Beacon Press. Unitarian book publishing house organized.

1934 Commission of Appraisal under chairmanship of Frederick Eliot makes drastic recommendations for structural revision of Unitarian movement.

1940 Unitarian Service Committee formed.

1953 Council of Liberal Churches (Universalist-Unitarian) Inc. organized.

Dec. 1 6, 1923 to Jun. 20, 1927

23. *Robert Tipton*
Oct. 16, 1927 to Dec. 1939
24. *Harmon M. Gehr*
Mar. 4, 1940 to June 1956
25. *Fenwick Leavitt*
Jan. 2, 1957 to July 1, 1958
26. *Gilbert A. Phillips*
Oct. 20, 1958 to Aug. 1, 1963
27. *Rudolph C. Gelsey** Feb. 1, 1964 to Mar. 31, 1969*
28. *Richard A. Perry*
Feb. 1, 1970 to June 25, 1978
29. *Walter F.Wieder*
Mar, 12, 1979 to August 18, 1986
30. *Laurel S. Sheridan*
Sep. 9, 1986 to Aug. 3, 1987
31. *Robert P. Throne*
Sep. 1, 1987 to Aug. 31, 1994
32. *Harris Riordan*
Sep. 1, 1994 to

*Co-ministers

**Rev. Diether Gehrmann of Offenbach, Germany, exchanged ministry with Rev. Rudolph Gelsey, from June 1966 to June 1967.

The Board Minutes of June 11 , 1967, expressed "enthusiastic appreciation for (his) work at this church as international exchange minister."

1960 Establishment of Commissions on The Free Church in a Changing World.

1960 Unitarian Universalist Association founded at the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America.

1980 Restoration changes name to The Unitarian Univeralist Church of the Restoration.

1987 Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes adopted.

Readings in Unitarian Universalism

History

THE LARGER FAITH: A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN UNIVERSALISM; Charles Howe; Skinner House; 1993; 168 pp. An introduction to the history of the Universalist denomination.

A STREAM OF LIGHT: A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN UNITARIANISM; Edited by Conrad Wright; Skinner House; Revised 1989; 178 pp. A history of Unitarian thought from 1805 until merger in 1961.

BLACK PIONEERS IN A WHITE DENOMINATION Mark Morrison-Reed; Introduction by Andrew J. Young; Skinner House; 1994; 280 pp. The first (and still the best) volume on our struggle to become an anti-racist religious movement.

Contemporary Unitarian Universalism

OUR CHOSEN FAITH: AN INTRODUCTION TO UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM; John Buehrens and F. Forrester Church. A concise introduction to the spirit of Unitarian Universalism today.

BEING LIBERAL IN AN ILLIBERAL AGE WHY I AM A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST; Jack Mendelsohn; Skinner House; 208 pp. A personal statement about the power of a liberal faith in a changing society.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM AND THE QUEST FOR RACIAL JUSTICE; UUA; 1993 269 pp. A history of the UUA's attempt to combat institutional racism during the years of 1967-1982

THEOLOGY ON BEING HUMAN RELIGIOUSLY; James Luther Adams; Skinner House; 1986; 252 pp.

AN EXAMINED FAITH SOCIAL CONTEXT AND RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT; James Luther Adams; Beacon Press; 400 pp.

MYTHS OF TIME AND HISTORY: A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST THEOLOGY; Alice Blair Wesley; (Wesley) 121 pp.

IF YES IS THE ANSWER, WHAT IS THE QUESTION?; George Kimmich Beach; Skinner House; 1995; 216 pp.

Section II:

As the Minister goes... so goes the Church

During the past half century, Restoration has enjoyed a group of innovative and dedicated ministers... men and women who have found the unique Restoration experience to be rewarding and challenging. Dick Perry's history of the earlier ministers of the church (pp. 65-93) provides insight into the first 125-year period plus a brief account of the period from 1940 to 1975. In this section, some of the events of the recent half century are featured.

A comparison between the chronicles of this past half century with the first 125 years of Restoration's history will demonstrate, too, the rapidly accelerating pace of change in the church. WTD

Dr. Harmon Gehr

The clouds of war were gathering when Harmon Gehr arrived in March of 1940 to serve as minister to a church which had moved to a new location four years earlier and was finding attendance short of expectations. It was to be Harmon Gehr's task to fulfill the hopes for growth of those who had brought The Church of the Restoration to its almost-suburban Mt. Airy location.

MIKE JENNINGS

Minister from 1940-1956
Harmon Gehr came to Restoration from Columbus, Ohio, in 1940. His 16 years of ministry was one of the longer tenures in Restoration's history. His wife, Isabel, was active in many church activities– for example as one of the founders of the K-Club and as our representative to the Philadelphia Council of Churches. In 1956, Gehr left to take the pulpit of the Throop Memorial Church of Pasadena, Calif. He was active in the minister's group in the Los Angeles area, and is now residing in a nursing home in that community.

World War II, unlike other wars before or since, involved almost every man, woman and child in some aspect of the war effort. For Harmon Gehr it was to put him in the role of a circuit riding minister, because each week from 1943 on, he traveled to Reading on Sunday nights plus one day a month as he added service as acting minister at Reading's Church of Our Father– filling the pulpit for a minister called to the Navy– to his duties at Restoration.

With hostilities over, Gehr once again took up the task of building Restoration's membership. In 1940, at his arrival, attendance averaged 55 a Sunday. Ten years later it was up to 72 a Sunday and by the time he left the church in 1956, attendance was around the 80 mark.

How did he do it? Certainly the regime he set for himself was fundamental to his success. Personal contact was a cornerstone to his member-building strategy. In one year he reported 343 parish calls and "countless unanswered doorbell ringings." This record is unequalled, even unapproached, by any minister since. He chuckled about the boys who asked him to take them to the circus, because he was the only man they knew "who didn't work during the week."

The vigorous activities program he spearheaded for the church also brought in members– in 1946 these activities included the Women's Guild, the church school, two girl scout troops, a boy scout troop, the couples club, a 13-member orchestra and sundry other activities. "We are beginning to fall all over each other," he noted in a xreport to the congregation. "It is surprising we don't get into each others hair more than we do. However, it is

encouraging to see the Expansion Committee already hard at work."

The orchestra deserves special mention. Gehr himself was a competent violinist who played a major role in building the group. Its membership was drawn from the community as well as from the church's own membership rolls, and it played at a number of services during the year. The group was described by Brian Daly, the church's music director, as consisting of "two research chemists, an advertising specialist, a precision mechanic, a secretary, a piano tuner, a lawyer, two students, a doctor, a minister and two of uncertain status."

During that same year, Daly's heart was gladdened because the church now owned a state-of-the-art Hammond Model E organ, acquired for $2,400 installed. Cost of installation did not include cutting through a side wall of the sanctuary to fit the instrument in behind the right hand choir stalls.

The "falling over each other" to which Gehr had alluded was not surprising. While the church today seems spacious and comfortable– that comes as a direct result of Expansion Committee efforts– helped by a huge grant from long-term member Lena Louise Hale, which led to construction of a Religious Education wing in the 50s– and with it, added space for offices for the minister and the church secretary and for a church lounge. In 1946, the minister's study had been located in the tiny room behind the pulpit, about five feet wide by 12 feet deep, which now serves as the closet where decorations, candles and other church paraphernalia are stored.

The church secretary's office had been at the rear of the church– now in use as cloakroom and bell room. In the earlier days, the organist sat at the front of the church with his back to the congregation.

The Sunday school had met in the basement of the church. Tracks along the ceiling provided for room-dividing curtain walls which could be opened wide when the entire space was needed for a large event. The kitchen was much smaller when the church first opened

than it is at this time– it was the task of the women's group to revamp it and to pay for the institutional-style steam table, range and serving equipment it has enjoyed since it was improved. The revision of the kitchen was not completed until well into the 60s.

How did the numbers stack up?

If Harmon Gehr's figures on membership and potential membership were accurate– and some would question sharply his estimate that the church could seat 175 comfortably– the financial performance of the members was clearly far short of its potential.

The 1958 census showed 193 members– and let's agree with Harmon's assumption that at least 83 should be knocked off that number. That leaves 110 members who were to support the church. The budget for that year was $16,000. Income from investments was $4,000. That left $12,000 for the members to make up or a $109 pledge per member– an average of $2.00 a week. Did they do it? Just barely.

The expansion– even with the grant from Miss Lena Hale, which led to the wing being named Hale Memorial in honor of her sister, Carrie– did not come easily. Her grant did not provide for the furnishing of the building or for equipping it as a Sunday School. That, she felt, should be left to the congregation and would come at an additional cost of almost $10,000, The difficulty of obtaining a favorable vote from the congregation and the reluctance of many to participate in the subsequent raising of the funds which had been pledged in later years almost scuttled the project.

The 16 years which Harmon Gehr gave to Restoration came to an end in December of 1956. Attendance was up... substantially. And with the achievement of that goal, was Harmon Gehr, satisfied? That he was not is evident, because he told the congregation shortly before his departure:

"We have 193 members on the rolls– although 80 of these live in distant cities or are completely inactive. Our sanctuary can comfortably seat 175 (*sic!*), but only about 80 attend. The new Religious Education wing can handle 120 students, but there are never more than 50.

"We should aim for 250 members... for a constituency of 600... for a Sunday School of 100!"

Within a few months, Harmon Gehr had moved on to a pulpit in California where those figures were more fully attainable.

NOTE: Almost 20 years later, in 1973, when Harmon Gehr finally retired, Restoration still remembered. A $10,000 annuity was purchased for him in appreciation.

The Stenton Players

Among the memorable activities ranking high in Restoration's halcyon halls are the Stenton Players. The life of this group was about six years in the late 50s with a brief attempt at revival in late 60s.

In the basement of the church, a track, from which plush wine-colored curtains were suspended, had been added to the ceiling about 12 feet in front of the kitchen. A wooden platform was constructed as a stage platform, and from this snug site, short one-act plays, radio plays and other performances were given on a schedule which suited the availability of Restoration's thespians.

In the 60s revival, the venue moved up to the church proper, much simplified– rather than memorizing their parts, the actors read their lines. An example is The Zoo Story, performed on a park bench with slides of zoo scenes unfolding on a screen in the background.

Dr. Fenwick Leavitt

In the summer of 1956, Moderator Bill Golz was visiting in upper New York State when he received a call that someone had heard– and was enthusiastic about– a minister who was completing a 15-year ministry in Barre, Vermont. Golz was asked to go hear him. He did, and he was delighted. Upon his return, the name of Fenwick Leavitt was installed at the top of the list of potential ministerial candidates. By January of 1957, Dr. Leavitt had begun his brief tenure at Restoration.

Dr. Leavitt, like Harmon Gehr, felt strongly the importance of publicity for the church and for the Universalist point of view. He vigorously backed a promotional program and was successful in increasing attendance to the 80 mark during his stay. By the beginning of his second year, however, personal concerns had made it clear to him that he must return to New England, and in July of 1958, he accepted a call to the Lynn, Mass., UU church, and he left Restoration. Jim Weakley, then secretary at the Messiah Home, proposed sending him off with cheers, "for he *is* a jolly good fellow!"

ADRIENNE MARMOR

Minister from 1958 to 1963

Gil Phillips had been a Unitarian minister and, just before coming to Restoration, had served as an admissions director at Valley Forge Military Academy, a boarding school for boys. He came to Restoration in October of 1958 and remained here for five years. He was called to the UU church at Belmont, Mass., a Boston suburb, where he completed his ministerial career.

It is interesting to note the changing mores. When Gil candidated for the pulpit at Restoration, he had been out of the settled ministry for several years. The reason: he had divorced his wife while interim minister for First Unitarian Church at 23rd and Chestnut. The Unitarians in those days had a rule that if you divorced your spouse, you could not be a settled minister for a period of five years. He was allowed to serve as a supply minister– and did so at the Unitarian fellowship Chuck and Helen Oerkvitz attended in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The Universalists were perhaps more liberal, but still it was thought proper to read into the minutes of the meeting at which he was named minister that he had divorced his wife.

Gilbert A. Phillips

A Sunday at Restoration, c. 1960

Sunday morning services began at 11:00. Miss Hale was there in her accustomed seat in the front row… escorted by her chauffeur who then returned to the Cadillac to read the Sunday paper. Her companion was a sweet looking little lady who knitted throughout the service and made it clear that she was of another faith and shouldn't be listening to a Godless Universalist sermon.

Many of the women of the church wore fussy, flowery hats with veils as well as white gloves. The men were attired in dark suits, white shirts and ties– advice to the job seeker of that day was "dress for your job interview as though you were going to church."

Miss Hale, as has been pointed out, was at her usual spot, front and center on the aisle. Back three rows, another familiar face was in place– and back behind, nine rows on the other side, was still another familiar face. In fact, almost all were in their own places, although the days of pew rental– with spots marked out on an elaborate map– were gone. Still, the congregants had chosen their preferred locations, and this is where they sat, Sunday after Sunday. This anomaly was not made apparent until one member was heard remarking to a visitor that she was welcome to sit in his pew– in *his* pew! Territorialities die hard.

In the back of the room were four silent ushers, usually the deacons of the church. (An Usher's Club had earlier reported the recruiting of five groups of three ushers each, but the steadily growing congregation now required four ushers a Sunday. The Usher's Club had also reported that the collection plates were too small. They needed larger plates, and they needed four rather than two– a report received with great glee by the board.)

George Keller was in the narthex (read: vestibule, in non-ecclesiastical, non-architectural jargon) to greet each arrival and to shake every hand. At 11:00, Norman Smith would end his organ prelude and touch a button to

light a little red light in the cloakroom– the signal for the head usher to ring the bell.

The robed minister entered from his office at the right front side of the church and walked forward to the lectern, mounted on the chancel rail where the big Bible lay open. The congregation rose. The choir, in dark red robes, processed down the main aisle and took its place in the choir stalls. As the processional ended, the minister spoke the opening words, the choir responded with a choral "amen!" and the service was underway.

There was to be a reading from the ancient scriptures... later a reading from a modern work. There would be two anthems... the choir was led by Norman Smith who sat out of sight at the organ console but had full view of the choir through a convex mirror mounted on the wall, a mirror which a year before had been attached to a PTC bus so the driver could observe mounting and dismounting passengers.

The choir at that time had three tenors (one a paid soloist) three basses, a full complement of altos and sopranos (one paid) and a strong penchant for singing "No Man is an Island" and selections from "Frostiana," a suite of Robert Frost poems set to music. They also liked to do sevenfold amens and the doxology– all part of the morning program. The paid tenor, Sam Soifer, contributed a solo almost every Sunday morning.

The Lord's Prayer and a responsive reading were also part of the service. When the four ushers collected the offering, it was brought to the front of the church where it was handed to the minister to be placed on the altar. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..." burst forth from the congregation, and the minister took his place in the pulpit. Organist Norman Smith lowered the house lights and brought the spotlight up on the minister.

Gil Phillips was a powerful pulpit presence, and his sermons continued to draw more and more members. Sunday morning services were regularly attend by 80 or 90 by now, and the congregation sat still and listened to a sermon often Bible based– Gil felt his congregation was largely Biblically illiterate, and he thought he

Questions & Answers

A tour de force in Sunday morning preaching, performed on several occasions by Gil Phillips during his time at Restoration, was his ad libbed "Questions and Answers" service. During the early part of the service, members of the congregation were each given a slip of paper on which to write down any questions they had about Unitarian Universalism, the history of the movement, aspects of music or liturgy which intrigued them or their own struggles with UUism as a living religion... anything they chose.

As the morning offering was collected, the slips of paper were placed in a container passed along by the ushers, and then, as the choir sang the second anthem of the morning, Phillips sat in his chair alongside the altar where he read through the slips, assembled them into whatever order pleased him and briefly considered his answers– all in a time span of no more than five minutes.

When the choir finished, the sermon began, and, relying on whatever ministerial alchemy and ecclesiastical revelation he could bring to bear, Gilbert Phillips strung the answers to the questions together into a cogent and reasoned sermon... with a beginning, a middle and an end. It can truly be said that this particular service always brought the house down.

The Fund for Florence

In August of 1961, Chuck and Helen Oerkvitz responded to a request from International House to host an African student for the weekend. They were assigned a delightful young man named Bazil Igwe from Nigeria. Here Helen takes up the story:

That winter my Sunday School class did a series of lessons about a project that the Universalist Service Committee was carrying out in the village of Awo Omamma in Nigeria. I learned that Awo Omamma was the next village to the one Bazil came from, and he knew the people in charge. On March 18, Bazil came from Yale for the weekend and spoke to the church and two Sunday School classes about village life in Nigeria and about Awo Omamma.

During his visit, Bazil shared with us a personal problem which deeply troubled him. His 13-year-old sister, Florence, had completed the free elementary schooling in his village and was offered an opening in the secondary school. But his family had no money to send her. All secondary schools were resident schools, and the cost including clothing, books and living expenses was $180.00 for the year. Bazil's father, who could neither read nor write, fed his family of five children with what he raised in his hand-tool-cultivated plot of land. Cash income was limited to that from the sale of surplus food in the village market and to receipts from the sale of palm oil, made in a hand press from palm nut trees in the surrounding forest. This income was now strained by putting the older sister through a secretarial course.

should do something about it– but the sermon was just as likely to be contemporary and highly informative. Gil was a Unitarian, but here he was in a Universalist church, and he was able to act in Rome as the Romans acted.

The recessional was completed, the minister followed the choir out and the benediction was delivered. The congregation was greeted by the minister as it left the church and proceeded to Hale Memorial Lounge where coffee hour was held. It should be noted that the 60 to 90 people there far exceeded the capacity of that room, and so the gathering spilled over into the hall, out the front door on good days and back into the corridor past the minister's office. There was talk during board meetings about changing the location of the coffee hour, but it was concluded that physical contact with each other by the parishioners was a positive affliction, so physical contact there was– aplenty.

Sunday School that year was attended by about 60, divided into classes by grade (1, 2 and 3; 4, 5 and 6; junior high and a Liberal Religious Youth group, anchored by such stalwart youth as Wes Orser, Nan Jennings, Roger Gordon, Isabel Phillips and others.)

Norma Winther was the Religious Education director that year, and she reported such Sunday School events as two covered dish dinners, UNICEF Trick or Treating, Christmas presents for the Germantown Settlement Home, panel discussions, Caroling at Messiah Home, museum trips, establishment of a junior high "Coke" service during adult coffee hour and a regular Sunday Children's Worship service. A somewhat misanthropic assistant treasurer reported in one board meeting that there were a lot of envelopes for the children's collections still out, and the children were not getting them back in properly.

After services, Gil walked a few feet and was home. In the months leading up to Gil's installation, a property came on the market which seemed a natural for Restoration. The home of Herbert Estrada at 611 Gorgas Lane had been put up for sale, and Restoration was invited to bid on it as a parsonage. The home immedi-

ately adjoined the church at the rear. The church bought the property for $24,000.

Four ministers and their families occupied the parsonage– Gil Phillips; Rudi Gelsey; Diether Gehrman, International Exchange Minister, and Dick Perry. Purchase of the property had seemed a logical move... until it was pointed out by one or two minister's wives that living right next to the church extended the minister's working hours (and by extension, those of the minister's wife) until long into the evening... with requests for the church keys, with "Well, you live right next door, so why don't you just drop over?" and with special demands for care of the church property. In addition, Walter F. Wieder, the next minister in line to move in, pointed out that it was wise for ministers to begin to build equity in their own property. Housing allowances used for that purpose were treated much more liberally by the Internal Revenue Service which already seemed to take delight in auditing ministers because some at the periphery of the ministerial profession had shown interest in establishing their own personal churches purely for the purpose of obtaining the tax deductions allowed to those who wore the cloth. Walt and Suzanne bought a home on Boyer, a good mile away.

During Gil's time at the church came our estrangement from the Philadelphia Council of Churches. Isabel Gehr had been one of the earlier workers with that organization, but there were those in the council who clearly would not accept UUism and were laying for us. There were small rifts, and before long the Council decided that a creedal test would be important for membership in the organization. We UUs were out.

Fund (Continued)

By the time Bazil could finish college and earn enough to help her, Florence would be too old. In a nation where 80 percent of the people lived as her family did, there were only jobs for those with marketable skills. Florence would have no future except to help work the farm. If she could get into secondary school, she'd have the opportunity to win a scholarship to pay her way as Bazil did. Given this one year, she could make her own future.

The Sunday School class decided to try to raise the $180 for her– an amount which would be equivalent to about $900 today. We went to the parents and congregation with our story. Friends added their bits, and within a few weeks we had good news for Bazil. Florence would have a chance for the future. He came back to visit us that fall and to express his joy in person. Florence sent us a picture and a letter of thanks. It's always nice for a story to have a happy ending, as this one does. Florence completed secondary school, became trained as a midwife and, the last we heard, was busy delivering babies in Nigeria. —Helen Oerkvitz

Florence Igwe of Nigeria

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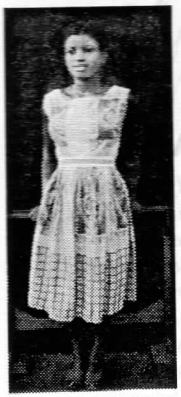
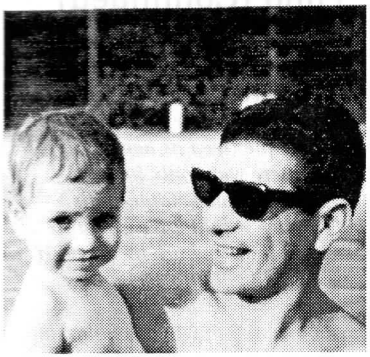


Florence Igwe of Nigeria



Rudi Gelsey: Minister from February, 1964 to March, 1969

Rudolph Gelsey, shown here with son Andy, came to Restoration from the Unitarian Church of South Bend, Indiana. After leaving Restoration he went on to the First Unitarian Church in Detroit, Michigan. He later served other congregations and is currently helping get a church in Blacksburg, Virginia, underway.

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Patricia DeBrady, a member of Restoration since 1964, wrote this article on the Gelsey years as a memoir of her longtime personal experience with the events she describes and as one who was particularly close to the work of the Rev. Mr. Gelsey.

Rudi Gelsey comes to Philadelphia

BY PAT DEBRADY

Rudolf Gelsey came to Restoration in 1965, at a time when the congregation had become a congenial gathering of friends who worked together and sought both recreation and comfort within the confines of its membership. Some even referred to it, lovingly, as a country club. Then as now, we had neither pool nor parking lot, but the asset of conviviality was unmatched. The choir was enhanced by professional musicians; our religious education program spanned the age spectrum from tots to late teens; the congregation reflected the demographics of most UU churches of the day, and all seemed right with the world. We were aware that the neighborhood in which the church was located was on the periphery of a black neighborhood which, for the most part, did not extend beyond Blakemore Street.

It is important to understand that Restoration saw itself remote from the agitation that was stirring the cities of the nation during the sixties. A minister's role was seen as sufficient if calls to conscience and an occasional sermon alluding, none too specifically, to the rights of all human beings to justice and equity were delivered with no mandate for institutional involvement, no call to direct confrontation of social ills or issues. Restoration, not unlike most of the denomination, seemed comfortable with the view that the pen is mightier than the sword. The distant social revolution trumpeted in the press could be quelled by a phalanx of well crafted prose delivered up to the inspection of fellow UU's for debate at annual meetings. Direct involvement would then be delegated to the appropriate institutional authority and response to issues made via the channels provided and as directed by the denomination or by the social concerns organ of local churches.

During his accelerated studies at Meadville Seminary, Rudolf Gelsey, a European, had become increasingly aware of the prevailing climate of racial and social polarization in this country. A short ministry to the South Bend, Indiana church raised the specter of political involvements which resonated with Rudi's perception of post World War II Europe. An anticipation

of either mischief or a volatile situation led to his accepting a ministry to placid appearing Restoration. This seems to have been a case of out of the frying pan and into the fire for Rudi.

Along with the changes experienced by the entire country with respect to its relationships involving its largest racial minority was a change in demographics. Black people were not only asserting themselves politically but also expanding beyond heretofore accepted territories: East Mount Airy was not to remain isolated from the currents being experienced around the United States. Subtle shifts in population produced a none-too subtle reaction. The Blakemore Street boundary had been breached. Unscrupulous real estate speculators in the Mt. Airy area soon engaged in a practice of blockbusting. The process entailed going from door to door or leafleting areas warning white owners not to be the last to sell since their property values would assuredly reflect significant depreciation should they hesitate. White flight would then become an exodus of biblical proportion. The admonitions were heeded with greater alacrity than that inspired by the warnings at Lexington and Concord. Using the power of the pulpit, Rudi Gelsey and Richard Traylor, an African American member, organized East Mount Airy Neighbors to combat the practice and to restore sanity into an atmosphere of supercharged emotionalism. The church supported this effort. EMAN continues today to operate as a viable proponent of a successful multi-racial community. Its success and continued existence are regarded by Rudi and others across the nation as the major accomplishment of his ministry to Restoration.

Rudi's community activities became a source of concern for members who chose other avenues and causes by which to act out their social consciousness. A number of members felt that the church should hold itself aloof from direct engagement and should leave the responsibility to do so within the discretionary powers of each individual member. Rudi's persistent pursuit of justice and civil rights alienated many since he fully utilized the pulpit to promote his moral vision. We can recall his leadership involving the congregation in the Philadelphia to Philadelphia Project and Reverend

Roger Gordon and the Resonator

Roger Gordon, with his wife Herschel, was a distinguished public servant who became, first during the Phillips years and then in the Gelsey years, one of the first African American couples to be active in our congregation. While a member here, Gordon was struck by throat cancer which he fought for several years. He was, in fact, so esteemed that he was named the city's deputy commissioner of human services even after his laryngectomy.

One of his ways of fighting his disability was with a hand-held, battery-operated resonator, which he held against his throat when he talked so that the device became a mechanical voice box.

One Sunday morning at a pre-services discussion session, Gordon had delivered a long and cogent comment. When done, he sat still for a moment. Then, as if suddenly conscious of the load he had put on his batteries, he lifted the device and added, "There. That cost 25 cents!"

In the explosion of laughter which followed, one member began his own next comment, "If only we were all charged 25 cents for each of our remarks..."

The Gordons, Roger and Herschel, joined the church in 1960 They had been parishioners of Gil Phillips during his time at First Church, and they go back even further as Unitarians, for they were members of Donald Harrington's UU church in New York City before they came to Philadelphia.

Clinton Collier visiting our church from Neshoba County, Mississippi. Fritz Jennings helped organize our church community to meet the needs of our sister-city and kept us abreast of the political and social dynamics so different from our own in some respects, yet so similar in others. Our interpretations of personal heroism were expanded through Rudi's sermons detailing acts of individual courage like that of Florence Mars, whose testimony led to the conviction of Sheriff

The international ministerial exchange; 1966-1967

Wife to Roast Turkey for First Time, New York Minister a Guest at Dinner

INDIANS AND TURKEYS:

Continued on Page 14

Traffic Study Request Before Councilman Carr

Of Diether and Dorle's four boys shown here, two (Ronald and Axel) have become UU ministers. The others are Rainer and Derek. Says Diether, "Among my memories, I recall my visits to Miss Hale, almost 100 at the time... Elmer Ketterer's art (one of his sculptures is still a favorite piece in our home)... intensive discussions with Dr. Earl Finbar Murphy, whose book *'Sun and Brightest Star'* we still treasure... and the Christmas Eve when the candlelight service, elaborately planned with youth participation, finally had to be cancelled because it snowed... and snowed... and snowed..."

This clipping, from the LEADER, in November of 1966 , marked an exchange within an exchange. On Thanksgiving day, Restoration had traditionally exchanged pulpits with Reform Congregation Beth Or, now located in Ambler. The newspaper played up this exchange as an exchange with Diether Gehrmann's 4,200-member congregation in Offenbach, Germany.

Diether Gehrmann was, in fact, the son of Max Gehrmann, the Offenbach minister, and was standing in for his father in the exchange of pulpits with Rudi Gelsey who had gone to Germany as part of an international ministerial exchange arranged by the Department of Ministry in Boston. Rudi was in Offenbach on that day.

Dorle and Diether Gehrmann, with their four boys, had arrived at Restoration in September after a 4,000 mile automobile trip from California. Diether had just completed his work at Starr King Divinity school there and was beginning a career which would ultimately lead him first to the UU Society of Rockland County and then on to become General Secretary of the International Association for Religious Freedom in Frankfurt, Germany. He retired from IARF in 1990.

Rainey. The energies of this congregation were devoted to the proposition that it could, through individual and collective efforts make the world a better place for all of its peoples... Severe disagreement, as befitted Unitarian Universalists, as to how and in what arena this mission was to be achieved became counterpoint to the level of activism that Rudi's leadership represented within the church and the denomination.

One of the signal events of Rudi's tenure at Restoration was the opportunity to visit with Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. at dinner in the home of Pat and Ed DeBrady. Rudi cherishes a memory of Dr. King's being thoroughly understanding of the dynamics which impelled his work but, also, as being a man of great humor and sensitivity. Dr. King was the seminal figure of the 60s, the man most symbolic of the age. To have shared in the occasion of his last visit to Philadelphia and his last birthday continues to be a source of inspiration and pride.

Every age undoubtedly presents us with opportunities to act out our convictions. Rudolf Gelsey came to us during a time of unprecedented social and political change. The challenges to our definition of ourselves as religious liberals were never so pronounced and even yet persist.

His support of The Black Affairs Council (BAC), taking as evidence of his commitment, a major role in the subsequent organization of FULLBAC, organized to promote full denominational support for this organization, proved to be pivotal in the church's assessment of its need for healing and a period of measured and reflective rebuilding.

Rudi did not ask the church to support the extent of his involvement in civil rights activities. He witnessed at Selma, Alabama, and counts that experience as pivotal. Standing against racism wherever it evidenced itself became, for him, a personal credo– the motif of his ministry. This position in the end was a source of alienation, and it proved insufficient to the needs of an entire congregation, leading to the unfortunate circumstance of other choices for Rudi and Restoration.

PHILADELPHIA-TO-PHILADELPHIA PROJECT

The murder of three Unitarian social workers near the small community of Philadelphia, Miss., triggered the establishment of this project. Rudi Gelsey was one of the sponsors, along with Leon Sullivan; Milton Shapp; Spencer Coxe; Dave Parke, minister at the Germantown Unitarian Society, and others.

The stated goal: To serve the needs of our sister city in any way that will help replace despair with hope, violence with understanding, and hatred with love. It is not conceived as a one-way street from here to there, but as a two way highway of mutual benefit.

Restoration became the focal point for receiving checks and coordinating the project.

LRY– The Liberal Rebellious Youth...

Sunday, May 12, 1968:

Surely, concluded some of the old timers, our world is slip sliding into madness...

... for here came Vicki Ketterer, barefoot, hopscotching along the stone floor with a basket of flower petals which she tossed into the air and onto the occupants of the pews.

...and here was Chuck Bartholomew, in torn jeans, going at that very moment into the high pulpit... climbing up to sit on one side... slowly and deliberately putting his foot up on the other side... to the accompaniment of an audible gasp from the congregation.

It was Youth Sunday, and the Liberal Religious Youth of Restoration was asking the question: "Can you still listen to people who don't look, act and think the way you do?"

For many of the old timers, the answer was clear. Some responded with near apoplexy... others with stony silence.

The best some others could do was to repeat to themselves a phrase from Kahil Gibran's "The Prophet" which began... "Your children are not your children..." to which several could only intone, "Thank goodness."

From that point on, there was poetry, music and ideas, but from that initial moment, the annual Youth Sunday and its celebration was to be viewed in new light. It was celebrated again– other youth took their places in the pulpit– but never again did it have the impact of the that Sunday in the 60s.

UUism in ferment– the stupefying 60s

The year 1969, Rudi Gelsey's final year of ministry to Restoration, saw Unitarian Universalism in ferment.

Institutional racism was a key issue. At a 1967 UUA conference in New York City, *"The Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion,"* a group of African American attendees walked out– to begin planning for the first of the caucus groups aimed at establishing Black identity and empowerment. These were tumultuous times– gang warfare, confrontations in the South, urban riots and more. The new group, calling itself the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus (BUUC) sought to create a grass roots institutional model that could gain the help of (and use the resources of) UUA churches to confront the economic, political and social evils that gripped the ghetto– but an institutional model that was authentically black, not merely an appendage to a white institution. Money was basic.

At the 1968 Cleveland, Ohio, GA, the needed dollars were forthcoming as delegates supported a $1 million grant after a group of Philadelphia ministers including Rudi Gelsey, Vic Carpenter from First Church and Dave Parke from the Germantown Society, along with the Rev. Jack Mendelsohn and Restoration member Dick Traylor, had met at Restoration to found a continent-wide support program called FULLBAC, aimed at supporting funding for the Black Affairs Council (BAC), the funding arm for BUUC. At the 1969 Boston GA, the vote was reaffirmed, although to the accompaniment of contentious debate which saw more than half the delegates walk out over agenda issues. In 1970, in serious financial trouble, UUA trustees rescinded the GA commitment. Just one $250,000 payment was made.

However, the caucus movement was underway, thereafter based on the sale of BAC bonds, and it featured a massive educational program– one which brought the African-American point of view to the pulpits of many Unitarian Universalist churches which had never before seen black skin in their pulpits.

Perhaps the era was best summed up best by the words of a folk-singing group, the Weavers, "Wasn't That a Time?" At Restoration it certainly was.

Restoration Nursery School

In 1947 there was officially registered in Harrisburg a community co-operative kindergarten known as the Stenton School. The school was, by its charter, limited to 20 students and was aimed at the needs of post World War II baby boomers, The school operated at Restoration under the direction of Katherine McCord and survived into the early 60s.

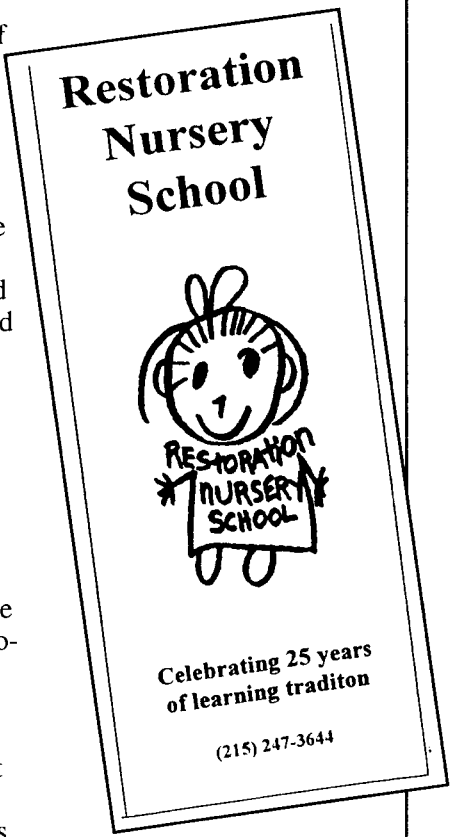
By the late 60s, at the Church Sunday School itself, attendance– which seems to run in cycles– had once again grown to a respectable size, with some 40 to 50 children enrolled and attending classes. The need for nursery school had once again begun to be talked about, and in 1968, with church member Ginny Tunnell as director, a church-sponsored nursery school was begun– partly to meet the needs of members and partly as a form of church outreach.

The program began with 17 children on a three-mornings-a-week basis. During the next 25 years, enrollment was to reach 57 children who came into the Hale Memorial Wing on a full time and part time basis, between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Today the co-op school has its own staff, its own directors and a steering committee apart from the church.

Restoration Nursery School has played a significant role in our church planning and development. In 1980, when RNS began its classes for two-year-olds, our own Sunday School was at a low ebb. One year the enrollment dropped so low that no Sunday School was held at all, and it was only the presence of RNS which kept the Hale Wing from looking dismal and abandoned.

Today, RNS is thriving and is in the process of becoming an independent entity, fully incorporated and chartered by the Commonwealth, instead of being a branch of the church. Its staff is interracial and its classes offer gender and racial balance.

—Helen Oerkvitz



The Restoration Nursery School is a professional operation on a co-op basis. Parents of the children who attend take part on regular basis in the day-to-day program of the school, under the direction of the professional staff. The rooms and storage closets are replete with materials for a child's learning and exploration.

HARALD GROTE

Richard A. Perry

Minister from 1970 to 1978

Dick Perry came to Restoration in 1970– somewhat short, as he noted later, of a unanimous vote. Some felt an African American minister should have received the call– a result precluded by rules of the settlement process. Others had insisted on a promise that Jesus would be brought back into the church– a promise he felt he could not make. Despite this, he notes, he made a leap of faith– and his resulting term lasted eight years, and included signal improvements to the church.

Dick and Wana Perry served as a team for Restoration– Wana was director of Religious Education for several years. She and Chuck Oerkvitz did the first "About your sexuality" program. The Perry's also took in a troubled teenager as a foster daughter.

Dick Perry went on to a parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia (where Wana managed an art gallery and an ice hockey and curling rink.) When Dick went later to Grafton, Mass., Wana worked with a human services organization and became director for the Senior Center in nearby Upton. She is now administrative assistant for the wild life sanctuary in Worcester.

Dick reports that he is still busy grinding out sermons, marrying, burying and bending the end up whenever possible.

As intense as his predecessor had been, Dick Perry seemed as much laid back. Yet, he too proved a powerful agent for change. One Sunday morning during his third year with Restoration, after he had enlisted the help of some other venturesome souls, a shocked congregation discovered that the church had a new look. Willard Lutz had previously lobbied for a "coffee house look," a proposal never taken too seriously. But now a comparable change was actually here.

A large square crimson rug had been purchased, and it lay like a huge red ruby… diamond shaped… in the middle of the floor in the front half of the church. The pews, unbolted by Dick and his helpers from the bluestone flooring, were placed along the edges of the carpet to form a square. That morning Dick Perry abandoned the high pulpit for good, took his place at a lectern placed at the front corner of that red carpet and became on that day a lecturer rather than a preacher.

The mystery of the cross which had disappeared from the altar during an earlier incumbency immediately paled into a minor prank. Even Rudi Gelsey– despite his intensive activism– had continued to speak from the high pulpit in full ministerial regalia– his services had been traditional in format. Perry's new look ushered in something startling. How would the congregation react?

Dick, his wife Wana and Moderator Harald Grote waited through a nail-biting afternoon and on through the next week for the congregation's reaction. No reaction at all would, of course, be tragic. If nobody even cared, that would send a message of heroic proportions about the future of the church.

Of course the reaction did come, but the church leaders had persuaded enough supporters that this represented a positive step forward that the shock of displacement was overcome. The storm abated, and the church went forward.

Among the ideas Dick Perry brought with him when he arrived at Restoration was the conviction that the

Sunday in the open square

invitation to "Come, let us break bread together," was a serious proposition and not merely a suggestion to do a power lunch. Wana Perry arrived with a complete cabinet of beautifully illustrated cookbooks and a flair for cooking and for the dramatic. The Perrys were Anglophiles, and one day under the influence of heaven only knows what, they proposed a Medieval Feast.

The pews having already been unbolted, it was relatively easy to move them aside so that a long table could be set down the middle of the sanctuary– a sanctuary which closely enough resembles the great hall of a castle that the setting seemed reasonably authentic. Of course, when Ken Oerkvitz brought in the roast boar (carefully crafted of papier mache), the illusion was complete. The menu included:

Hearty Lentil Soup
Fish Marinade Green Salad
Roast Turkey
Red Cabbage Herbed Rice
Beef and Onions Braised in Beer
Homemade Breads Relishes
Baked Apples Flambe
Wine Beer Coffee
Serving knaves and serving wenches
$4.00 per person (reservations required)

Food was not all the Perrys provided. Both had a flair for the dramatic. And when Restoration is mentioned to the old timers of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention, they immediately speak of the belly dancer.

The Sun Room, the Nut Closet and the Speaker Loft...

Tidbits of nomenclature known but to a few chosen insiders (and you):

The Sun Room: It was the age of Aquarius, and Peter Zhuraw, happily equipped with purples, reds, oranges, yellow and anything else at the sunny end of the spectrum proceeded to adorn ceiling, walls, doors, panel covers, restroom walls and even the heating pipes in the hall with supergraphics in all the glorious hues and tints of the setting sun. The sun itself, a resplendent orb of yellow orange, was dabbed onto the wall adjoining the library. With such radiance of color, how could the room be called anything but the Sun Room. Well, today it's a pallid white and it's called the fellowship room.

The Nut Closet:
It has also served as a room to store tables and choir robes, but in the 70s a group in Georgia– Koinania– offered boxes of pecans, pecan candies and fruitcakes which Vivien Lang had arranged for us to buy to support them and to resell. They were stored in that tiny room under the stairs leading to the Sun Room from the church. The room was kept under lock and key. To keep the nuts in. To keep the nuts out.

The Speaker Loft:
No, not that kind of speaker, but the electronic speakers for the organ. The speakers for our Hammond organ were situated above the choir on both sides of the choir stalls, and to reach them, it was necessary to go through a trap door above the organ... up over the top and down to the second set of speakers on the other side. Originally the space had been planned for organ pipes. Today it is empty.

The Older Adults and the Singles Scene

During the 70s, singles groups sprang up in UU churches all over the Delaware Valley. Today, two decades later, only the Singles Scene at Restoration remains.

This project, and the Older Adults, were the work of Dick Perry and Alice Murphy, a senior African American, retired from her government job, who couldn't abide inactivity. Older Adults met weekly in Hale Memorial Lounge, and she brought in speakers and entertainers. With the church's help, a nutritious lunch was served. She also planned casino trips and other jaunts she felt would interest her group. She brought in a solid mix of African American and Caucasian elders. Older Adults ended when her health problems and those of many of the group co-incided.

The Singles foundation was laid by Perry/Murphy and maintained by Alice and Marion Napper. It is known throughout the Delaware Valley as a "class operation." Predators would often arrive upon the scene, intent upon their own agendas. Alice Murphy spotted them quickly, steered them to the door and banished them forever. A high level of integrity and rectitude befitting the church has been maintained to this day.

Attendance ultimately became almost entirely African American. Events include early evening discussions, dancing later in the evening and a scheduled routine of entertainment planned by the steering committee.

Over the years, the Singles Scene has contributed heavily to the church budget, including air conditioning of the church fellowship room.

Cynthia Raim & Stephen DeGroot

Ministerial One Upsmanship

Dick and Wana Perry were attending a party at the home of the British consulate on Washington Square when a friend from another UU church remarked to them, "See that apartment across the way there? That's the home of Rudolph Serkin. A young women from Detroit is beginning her studies at Curtis Institute, and she'll be Serkin's protege. We're planning to sign her up to play at our church. Won't that be great?"

Said Wana, "Yes it will. But you're too late. We've already signed her to play at Restoration."

Cynthia Raim was one of those students who, when other students received applause, received cheers. She went on to play concerts world wide and was a winner of the international Clara Haskell piano award.

On occasion when Cynthia was not available, Curtis provided us with another promising young pianist, Stephen DeGroot. Stephen, from South Africa, went on to become a Van Cliburn winner before his tragic death in an auto accident.

Buying a Piano

Dick Perry, upon his arrival from Minneapolis, had discovered the church's need for a piano– the Hammond organ purchased in 1946 was in dismal condition, and so his own grand piano was loaned to the church. The instrument did not long survive the extra wear and tear, and so it came time to buy a new one. Chuck Oerkvitz was on the purchasing committee, and one morning he took Cynthia to Wanamakers where a sale was underway. She sat down to play– and in little time an awestruck crowd had found its way to the impromptu concert. The piano's audition was a total success, and the Cunningham piano on which Cynthia Raim played so often stands in the sanctuary today.

The Perry's eldest daughter, Tara, had learned the art somewhere, and though she performed only once for the PUC, the recollection of the dance has been so magnified that it seems as though she had gyrated and twisted before them a hundred times.

Dick recalls especially two of his most moving experiences at Restoration as having been the midnight memorial service for the students killed at Kent State and the funeral for little Julie Webber. "I have not felt such upwelling of emotion since then.

"I remember Bill Lutz telling me to 'bend the end up' after too many sermons with downbeat endings. Little Frankie Green with his toy lawn mower at the first 'I Care' Saturday. Bill Dikeman and Duke Russell cooking and serving tableside at one of our first gourmet dinners. Wana's Tipsy Parson dessert, so popular with Duke that he paid to have her make it again. The amnesty petition for Abner Kneeland we sent to Boston– it should have gone directly to then first term governor Michael Dukakis, but 25 Beacon Street never followed through."

During Dick Perry's time at Restoration, the church's first female moderator, Marilyn Zhuraw, took office. The first African-American moderator, LaForrest "Duke" Russell was selected. In a quiet but effective way, many of the principles and accomplishments for which the church has come to stand were installed and put into operation. Perry was responsible for the short history of Restoration published for the 155th anniversary, the final section of this book.

Unfortunately, churches all over the nation were beginning to lose members. Numbers at the Sunday services dropped to 40 and 50 a Sunday. Also, despite Wana's hard work, the Sunday School had fewer and fewer attendees.

The numbers prevailed, and the church sought a new minister. Dick Perry moved on to the Maritime provinces and the furthering of his career north of the border.

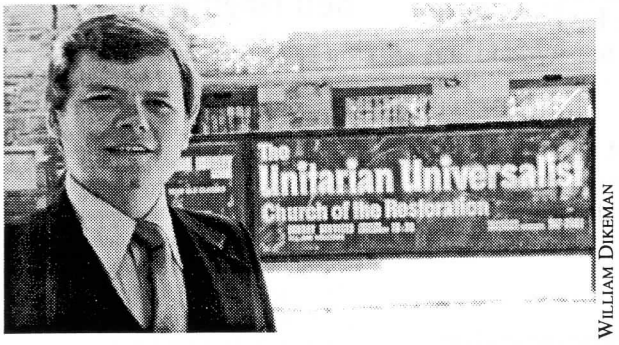
Adventures in bell ringing

The church bell, usually rung to initiate services, had hung silent for several weeks. A tyro rope puller, during the excitement of an LRY conference and not fully understanding the bell's mechanism, had jerked upon the rope and broken the big wheel which drove the bell in the tower. (The wheel can be seen in the detail from the architect's sketch of the church shown below.)

One morning a few weeks later, while Dick Perry was writing in his study, an itinerant workman came by with a ladder on his shoulder, professing knowledge of all things ecclesiastical and asking if there was any work he could do. Perry immediately negotiated for him to make the tortuous climb into the tower where he could once again repair the wheel and set it to work.

Satisfied with the subsequent test, the Rev. Mr. Perry immediately prepared a card which was affixed to the wall. "Please pull the rope with long, even strokes," the card read. "In bell ringing, steadiness is prized over exuberance."

Walter F. Wieder



WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Minister from 1979 to 1986

Walt Wieder came to Restoration from the El Paso Community in 1979 and was minister here until 1987 when he returned to Texas to a larger church– this time to the Plano church, north of Dallas. He is a member of the Fraters, a UU ministers group which has existed for more than 90 years.

Suzanne Wieder, had– among many other good qualities– a way with chocolate that made her the belle of a dozen dinner parties as well as the annual Christmas Eve open house held at the Wieder house after the candlelight service.

Walter Wieder was at the helm of the ship when the computer came to Restoration. Computers were not universally taught at divinity schools as an essential to the study of revealed religion. Walter *did* respect tradition but was not awed by it. Among the earliest computers to become available as a home or small business computers was the Radio Shack TRS-80 (affectionately the Trash 80). Wieder was an early owner, and he spread a digital gospel, both at Restoration and in the denomination.

Among those he taught to use the machine (for non-religious purposes) were Brian Daly, who ran actuarial spreadsheets on it for his classes at Temple… Bill Dikeman, who wrote brochures and sales letters and printed them out on Walt's dot matrix printer… Ronnie Sussman, who was involved with a variety of projects. Not only were they taught the computer, they were also given a key to his home and full access to the machine when Walter was away. All three are indebted to him.

Since there are more things under the sun than anyone imagines, the computer proved to be much more a necessary tool for practical day-to-day religion than predicted. Wieder went on to prepare a course in word processing for ministers which he taught at Ferry Beach in the summer. He also gave lectures on using computers in churches throughout the Delaware Valley and the Joseph Priestley District. It's not surprising, then, to find that increasing value was placed on this technology to support management of a church office… for budgeting, annual report production and Sunday morning bulletins.

Wieder and his wife, Suzanne, had excellent rapport with the youth of the church, and Sunday evening at the Wieder household became a regular part of the life of many high-school age children of the church.

He was also a counselor to Ann Grover, who was

working on her studies to become a minister of religious education. It was during Wieder's ministry that Restoration, a church of only about 100 members, could say that four percent of its members were ministers. Ann Grover (Faith Scott) is soon to become a minister. She married Peter Lee Scott, son of Clinton Lee Scott, the Restoration minister from the early 1920s. Peter, who was between churches at the time, has since served churches in Virginia and on Long Island. Wayne Maxson, had been an ordained Methodist minister, before leaving his church over disagreements on dogma. Similarly, Eric Saunders had been a Unitarian minister serving churches in New England. Wieder was the fourth.

During his time at Restoration, Wieder received some unusual opportunities from the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston– assignments Restoration assisted him in carrying out. The first of these took him to Tulsa, Okla., one of the largest churches in the association, where he was the first already-settled

How quickly the time goes by

Walt Wieder had left Restoration for a pulpit in Texas. One Sunday morning some seven years later, he made an unannounced visit to Philadelphia and dropped in to one of the informal summer services. While he was chatting with some old acquaintances, a member who had been a particular confidante came by and happily joined the conversation. Suddenly, she stopped in mid sentence and stared at him. Her mouth dropped open. "You're not supposed to be here!" she blurted. Generally adjudged not to be the warmest greeting he had ever received.

Restoration under Canvas

CHRISTINE PERRY

The Memorial Day campout has been a tradition at Restoration for almost three decades. On the long Memorial Day weekend, church is left behind and tents and camper trailers are set up at Belle Plain, Elks Neck and, for the past fifteen (plus) years, at Tinicum, a Bucks County park. Left to right: Dot Feely, Doris Holtzman, Dawn Shuman, Sue Lawlor, Linda Geiser and Suanne Wright. Walking away from the table is Herman Banner. At right, Bill Dikeman flips an omelet.

CHRISTINE PERRY

For Walt Wieder, roughing it had always meant the Holiday Inn without an electric blanket. On the one year he decided to be a sport and come out to Tinicum campground overnight, he made the tactical error of bringing Romeo, his big black Newfoundland. A night in a tent with a wet Newfie almost your own size is almost guaranteed to reduce dislike of camping down to the level of loathing.

Fund Raising– Group Style

Fund raising once again became a major concern during Wieder's ministry. In one year, an experiment was tried where the congregation was divided into three teams, each with the goal of raising $500 for the church– spouses were split so that it would not be too easy for couples. The teams were given carte blanche– make personal donations. Hold a dinner. Start a project.

Among the things to come out of the contest: the Flea Markets (which have raised thousands and thousands of dollars since then), the church auction, poetry readings, gourmet dinners and a wide range of creative ideas.

minister to work as a Preaching Fellow with the Rev. John Wolf. The six-week course included videotapings of sermons, full-scale critiques and study of the craft of preaching, a major segment of a minister's job. The second assignment took him to Georgia. Here he carried out an extension project of the UUA as a Minister-on-Loan to see if a small fellowship could be assisted in a meaningful way to decide if they should hire a minister.

A tougher ordeal for Wieder came with the church's challenge to him to give up smoking. At one of his Tuesday brunches (Walt fixed soup and beverages, lunchers brought their own sandwiches) members promised to raise $1,000 for the Minister's Discretionary Fund if he would quit. The struggle proved heroic, Those who rode in an car with him sometimes asked if he minded if they smoked.

"Only if you promise to blow some in my direction," he would mutter.

Flea Market

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

At left, Gael Braxton chats with a vendor at an early flea market. Busy Stenton Avenue in front of the church makes Restoration an ideal site for a flea market. Restoration's income from the event comes largely from vendors who have learned over 15 years of markets that they will do well financially, because the four-times-a-year flea market attracts crowds. Many vendors come not only to sell but to see people they oftentimes did not otherwise see.

This is a cover of a mailing piece supporting Arnold Bradburd's candidacy for the UUA board. It was created for him as part of a support program carried out by members of the congregation.

Brad for UUA and other notes from around the denomination

Restoration has long been active in the larger Unitarian Universalist community. Our banner has become well known in the Parade of Banners at General Assembly (see photo on page 86), and the church has regularly been an honor society in the Annual Program Fund.

Active in the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention (PUC), we also helped revive a moribund area council in the Delaware Valley, where Arnold "Brad" Bradburd served as treasurer. He represented that council in the Joseph Priestley District. He was next appointed to an unexpired term as the JPD's representative on the national UUA Board of Trustees and subsequently elected to a full term. He was later elected as Financial Advisor to the UUA. He is also Financial Advisor to the Trustees of the PUC funds. Charles Oerkvitz is treasurer for the latter organization.

Julia Bradburd served as president of the United States chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom from 1990 to 1993, after which she went on the international Council of the IARF. She has actively supported the Delaware Valley Association of Congregations. Christine Perry was instrumental in starting and building the Young Adult Network for the DVAC, which flourished under her leadership. Dorothy Feely, another leader in denominational work, was registrar and treasurer of UNILEAD, the annual leadership conference of Metro New York and JPD, for many years.

Church of the performing arts... Bob Bennett

Restoration has been long on creative talent–musicians, writers, artists, actors, architects and others.

During Wieder's ministry came the death of Roberto DiBennedetto–aka Bob Bennett. Bob played the accordion and was a regular at church singalongs.

Few members knew that Bob had, in his youth, founded a society band which played parties and events for the rich and famous. Best known were the Duponts, who regularly transported Bob and his entire band to Italy on their summer holiday jaunts.

At the time of his death, Bob had a dozen filing cabinets in his garage filled with the band's complete set of arrangements for everything from Red, Red Robin to the Indian Love Call. The charts, largely useless to anyone else at that time, were carted away as the big band era ended at Restoration.

Minister from 1986 to 1987

Laurel Sheridan is one of many ministers who have served Restoration who came to the UU ministry after achieving success in another career. She came to this church from service as an interim at Bangor, Maine, to a one-year interim position covering the 1986-1987 church year. At the conclusion of her appointment, she returned to New England to become a settled minister at the UU All Souls Church of Braintree, Massachusetts.*

** Laurel had been a registered nurse. Dick Perry had been a computer technician. Bob Throne was a human resources executive with the Hartford Insurance Company.*

Laurel Sheridan

Laurel Sheridan served one year as interim minister at Restoration, and in doing so became the first woman to serve the church in that role in its 165-year history.

In recalling her ministry, she says:

The Church of the Restoration is a warm and caring community of diverse people who work together to foster the Unitarian Universalist faith and to support each other as they search for truth and work toward justice.

I was particularly moved by opportunities I had to minister to congregants in need, to cry together and to laugh together in those places truly human, beyond all differences of class or race or cultural background.

One of my humorous recollections was not at all humorous at the time– which is often the case.

One Sunday morning during the worship service, my worst fear came to fruition. I was preaching a sermon on the Right to Die with Dignity, and as the congregation sang the sermon hymn, "For everything there is a season, a time to be born and time to die…" a woman in a pew near the front turned white as a ghost and collapsed. "Please don't let her be dead," I prayed. God forbid she should have taken me all that seriously. I do believe that people should be allowed to die with dignity, but not right here when I am preaching a sermon.

Joe Geiser, who was sitting behind her, ran down the aisle and across in front of the altar into my office to call 911. The organist, Brian Daly, realizing there was a problem, played on and on. I, an RN besides being a minister, calmly (at least on the outside) went to the woman's side to see if there was something I could do. A few minutes later, the woman regained consciousness, and the Rescue Squad arrived and took her to the hospital.

I sat in the pew for a few moments to catch my breath, and then I returned to the pulpit to begin my sermon.*

For Marion Napper, the church's first African American female moderator, the arrival of Laurel Sheridan was unexpected... and at first somewhat unwelcome. It had nothing to do with Laurel, but when she accepted the nomination for moderator, it had been Marion's expectation that the job would be easily within her capacity, since she felt she could work well with Walter Weider. Her complacency was shattered when Walt announced that he was moving on to Texas.

"If I had known," she remarked, "I never would have taken on the job. However, it all turned out all right. Laurel had a way of cooperating and smoothing, and she made it easy for me."

Things were so easy, in fact, that Marion stayed on as moderator for another year and took on the trials of startup for still another new minister in her second year.

During Laurel Sheridan's brief time at Restoration, a temporary change in the flow of the music program came about as Karl Middleman became the church's music director. Middleman had been at Media, and after his year at Restoration went on to become music director at First Unitarian Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

He is best known for his scholarship on the works of Mozart. He is an orchestral composer and founder of the Philadelphia Classical Symphony, a group which features music performed on period instruments.

*The woman was Peg Meyer from the Media church whose husband, Henry, was president of the Delaware Valley Memorial Society. The couple had come specifically to act as a coffee hour resource for that morning's sermon on death and dying. Mrs. Meyer recovered.

Bookreaders...Playgoers...Playreaders

A group of Unitarian Universalists, it is said, came to a fork in the road. To the right, a signboard indicated, was the path to heaven. To the left was the path to a discussion about heaven, and each UU instinctively turned left.

The Restoration of the 80s fit the mold of a discussion oriented church. For example, group discussions of books– all kinds of books– has been an organized activity at the church for 20 years or more. A thriving book club meets monthly at the home of a member. Classics and current best sellers, fiction and non-fiction are all on the docket for the lively exchanges that take place. In addition, even the theatre has been turned into a discussion group, as a core group of regular attendees from the church at a local theatre was able to persuade its actors and directors to stay after the performance to discuss the evening's work with the group.

Of the three clusters mentioned in the headline, only Playreaders have lacked staying power. The reason, perhaps, is that this group met to read aloud the complete text of the play– and the plays always proved so long that there was no time for the "mandatory" discussion.

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Minister from 1987 to 1994

Bob Throne came to Restoration from The UU church in Saco, Maine. He, too, was a lay person moved to enter the ministry later in life after being inspired by a minister in the city in which he worked, Hartford, Conn.

Terry Throne, his wife, was also active, particularly in religious education, first at Restoration where she served as a teacher and later at the UU Church of Delaware County as Director of Religious Education. The Throne's daughter, Cambria, participated in many church activities, especially in a youth group which included members from several Philadelphia churches.

Throne served the church for seven years from September of 1986 to September of 1994, and during that time he brought many new younger families into the church who became involved in new social justice programs, music programs and other activities still developing as this history is written.

Robert P. Throne– He shall have music...

Of all the ministers in the last half century, the one to most positively recognize the value and potential for building a highly diverse congregation through a ministry of music was Bob Throne. Although he sang the hymns with gusto, he was not particularly a performing musician himself, as some of his predecessors had been (Harmon Gehr had been a violinist; Walt Wieder sang and accompanied himself on the guitar). Throne, however, enjoyed and supported music from many cultures: choral music, jazz, folk music and polyrhythmic African drumming. He was resourceful in teaching the congregation to use music as a means of surmounting barriers to intergenerational and interracial harmony.

His support of music as an expression of the religious experience was both tied into his Sunday morning services and into work in community building and in personal expression of the religious spirit.

He was quite willing to give over all or almost all of his Sunday morning service to music– one time to the thunderous, pulsating sounds of African drummers... another time to the introduction of the new hymnal, *"Singing our Living Tradition"*... and on several other occasions to a full Sunday morning jazz service.

Other music events he encouraged included a series of Sunday afternoon jazz concerts which began with a remarkable program by individuals from the local music scene. These were women club singers from throughout the Philadelphia area, each one of whom normally performed solo, and each one of whom was brought to the concert through the efforts of member Wendy Simon-Sinkler, herself a professional jazz singer who remarked, "This was a real treat for us. We almost never get to hear each other sing, because we are working while our sisters are performing." At the conclusion of the concert came an unparalleled ensemble performance by the entire group, each of whom had performed individually earlier in the program. The afternoon was a triumph, and other sessions with internationally known performers such as Byard Lancaster followed.

The Folk Factory

Many folk musicians have started, nourished, and sustained their careers in UU church basements. Restoration pioneered this (e.g., helping rising star Susan Werner fund her first recording) through The Folk Factory coffeehouse, the brainchild of Bob Throne, spearheaded by Gael Braxton, in 1988. Culturally diverse musicians reflect UU principles (justice, human rights, concern for the earth and peace) at regular monthly concerts and special events. Bruce and Linda Pollack-Johnson began leading the Folk Factory in 1990, initiating a regular Open Stage/Open Circle: an intimate, inclusive, supportive, community-building sharing of music, poetry, stories, etc. culminating in an annual People's Choice concert. In a smoke-and-alcohol-free atmosphere for all ages, Folk Factory audiences often learn about UUism for the first time.

The Folk Factory is an affiliate of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle (PMN), co-founded by UU Pete Seeger. In 1995, the Folk Factory hosted PMN's annual Winter Gathering, a huge concert, with a weekend of workshops, the Community Quilt which now graces our sanctuary, hundreds of volunteers and over 1500 participants. The Folk Factory share of the proceeds is being used to provide childcare and ASL interpreting for the deaf at events and to help make Restoration more wheelchair accessible. In 1993, the Folk Factory began giving out its annual Award for Music and Progressive Social Change. The first recipients were Kim and Reggie Harris, who helped start the Folk Factory.

The Folk Factory has often been responsible for Sunday services, both during the school year and during the summer. Individual members of the group have frequently taken part in Sunday School activities as well as other services, programs, and events. In 1992, the Folk Factory obtained a grant from the Philadelphia Folksong Society to purchase a sound system that is available for use by the church and community groups. It has even brought couples together, such as members Christine Winchester and David Perry, who met at the Open Stage, and has inspired the creation of other coffeehouses.

Top, community quilt, prepared for the 1995 Winter Gathering of the People's Music Network. Restoration's block is at the left end of the fourth row; Folk Factory is third in the second row. At left, UU Pete Seeger, in Philadelphia for his 75th birthday, was honored by the Folk Factory and the Anna Crusis choir. Jane Hulting is fifth in the second row. Above, Kim and Reggie Harris, winners of the first Folk Factory award for Music and Progressive Social Change.

John Gilmore

In the late 80s, a young man from Chester took a long motor cycle trip to California and returned with a new perspective on life. Whether it was the Zen of that trip or his contacts with Marguerite Lovett at the Unitarian Society of Germantown– John Gilmore discovered Unitarian Universalism and was on his way to becoming a UU minister. In 1992 he served a part-time internship at Restoration, under the supervision of Bob Throne, while enrolled at the Eastern Theological Seminary.

After completing his year with us, Gilmore went on to study for a Master of Divinity at Meadville-Lombard, the Unitarian Universalist-connected divinity school in Chicago, and then to a full time internship at the UU church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. After completing that internship, Gilmore was named Associate Minister at First Unitarian Church of Chicago, which serves the University of Chicago area where Meadville-Lombard is located.

All but the last of the programs mentioned above have come to the church because of the rapport Throne had established with Jane Hulting, the church's musical director. Hulting is an innovative musician who fulfilled Throne's musical visions superbly. She is director of the Anna Crusis choir, a feminist choir which sings throughout the area, and as such she is the musical resource person for the church and the fountainhead of a flow of musical events which oftentimes astounds the congregation with its richness and diversity.

WILLIAM DIKEMAN

Both Jane and her husband Jim Cohen are skilled musicians. Jim has set up many Sunday morning jazz services drawing on local musicians. His western swing band, Beats Walkin', performed at our 175th Anniversary

Said one member, "When people come here for the first time of a Sunday, they may hear and be delighted by one of Jane's spectacular and innovative musical services. So that they won't go away with the idea that there isn't any "religion," only music, in a Unitarian Universalist church, I start to tell them that, of course, this is not one of our normal services. But then I stop and think– but wait! What *is* a normal service at this church? We once had normal services, but somehow today each service seems new and unique."

Throne's other great musical interest– and yet another way to attract people to the church– was the Folk Factory. Through the leadership of Bruce and Linda Pollack-Johnson and the support of others in the church from Gael Braxton and Alma Reinholt to David and Christine Winchester Perry, the regular concerts the Folk Factory mounts have put Restoration on the map as far as the Folk Music scene is concerned in the Delaware Valley. Throne is recognized as the founder of the group– a group which continues to be vigorous today.

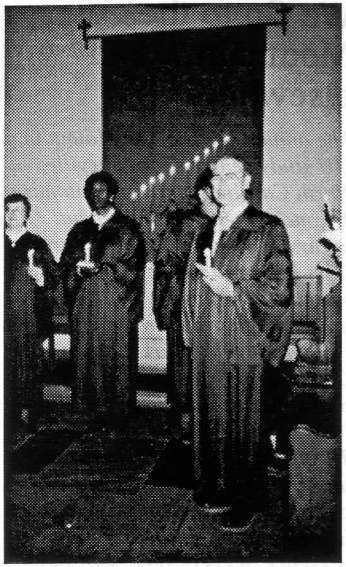
Also among the contributions made by Throne to the growth of the church were a series of adult education courses which he led. Many members were introduced to Unitarian Universalism through the Wednesday night series, which included Building Your Own Theology (I and II), Parents as Resident Theologians, Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, The Road Less Traveled, The Power of Myth and Committee ABCs.

Perhaps the overriding theme of the Bob Throne years centered around his desire to increase understanding of and ability to overcome racism. Throne saw this as one of the crucial problems of our times. "I sense a deepening of our candor and caring for one another around the issue of race," he has written. "It is not an easy thing to do... to talk about pain and frustration... to break the norms of avoidance and nice-ism, but it *is* how we grow. And by doing so, it enhances what we have to offer the wider community and the UU movement."

In Throne's writings there is a reference to homeostasis– the tendency of an organism or an organization to fight to retain its balance... its equilibrium. He saw his role at Restoration as disrupting homeostasis, because only in this way, he believed, can an organism grow... only by "continuing to stretch your horizons and to release the enormous potential pulsing within you can you achieve the promise of our Faith.

"I hope I brought in enough energy to disrupt the homeostasis," he writes. "I hope I at least cracked the mold, even if I was unable to break it, because the mold was holding in some creativity and caring and contributions that were crying to be set free. I hope I have quickened the pace, shifting the norm of expectation of what is possible."

The exhilaration that comes with success at mold breaking can be rewarding and gratifying, but the price is often high. Seldom is the Agent of Change– the one who shatters the mold, in Bob Throne's prophetic words– given the opportunity to repair that mold or to replace it. Such was the case with the Rev. Robert P. Throne, who in 1994 moved on to new challenges.



The choir at a Christmas Candlelight service. Vivian Dikeman, Pat DeBrady, Terry Sheridan and George Ross.

When visiting ministers come to Restoration, a frequently heard comment is, "You folks really sing!" Universalists have, perhaps, traditionally been known as the singing half of the merged association, but it is more than mere tradition. The backbone of congregational singing is a strong choir. Even the effort of a semi-singing congregation is enhanced and magnified when a well-schooled choir fills the gaps in the high notes and carries the melody. Also contributing to the successful expression is Restoration's acoustically-alive building.

Husbands and wives have often sung together in the choir in near perfect harmony, and one family, the Holtzmans, have provided three generations of singers with Bob Holtzman, grandfather; Howard Holtzman, son, and Dawn and Miles Shuman, grandchildren bolstering the tenor, bass and soprano sections.

We Go to the Mountain... and elsewhere

The annual trips to The Mountain, a UU study center near Asheville, North Carolina, perhaps epitomize Throne's interest in interracial affairs. For several years, a group from Restoration has gone each summer to meet with representatives of other integrated UU churches in New York City and Chicago for discussion of shared problems and solutions.

Throne also sought to deepen the authenticity of African American culture within the congregation by incorporating some kind of Black presence in every service through music, readings, program covers, decorations... something. He was the local chair for the African American Unitarian Universalist Congress; he helped establish a racism audit with the Northwest Interfaith Movement, and he played a major role in the celebration for Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, an early black female Unitarian.

In describing that last event he says, "There were 500 people from all over the Delaware Valley, several dozen city dignitaries and descendents of the honoree in attendance, a wonderfully diverse crowd. The hymns sounded warm and full. The choir from Mother Bethel AME sang; our choir was to sing. But Jane Hulting's father had died, and she couldn't be there. So Howard Holtzman, who had filled in at some rehearsals, stepped forward... and Restoration's voices brought to the moment the joy and energy and spirit that it deserved. The experience itself was memorable, but knowing the circumstances and knowing the hearts of our singers was overwhelming."

The Rochester Plan and NPIHN

The Rochester Plan, a strategy for selecting the most effective ways to participate in social justice activities, originated in the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York and was introduced to Restoration by member Helen Fascione. The plan helps congregations express the will of the majority by selecting a preferred project (one or more) from the many alternatives open as they seek to optimize what are usually limited resources. Possible choices for a program to be emphasized during the year are presented to the congregation. By vote, a preferred course of action is chosen. Restoration selected a program for helping the homeless, a plan sponsored by the Northwest Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (NPIHN).

Under the program, participating congregations throughout the Northwest area of the city/suburbs help the homeless reestablish themselves in homes and jobs. The NPIHN central office screens applicants for assistance to ascertain that they have the potential to find jobs and permanent homes. Participating congregations, on a rotating basis, provide living quarters and meals for a week or two at a time. Freed from the need to worry about survival, the participants seek– or prepare themselves for– jobs and homes of their own.

Commented Bob Throne, "Having a dozen folk from homeless families living in our sanctuary gives a new depth of meaning to the word 'sanctuary,' and the hard efforts of all the volunteers and the opening of the heart of the congregation have left a deep impression upon my own heart."

Restoration has now been active in the program for three years, working though our representative to the program, Mary Longstreth, and our social justice committee chair Frank Gerould.

Harris Riordan

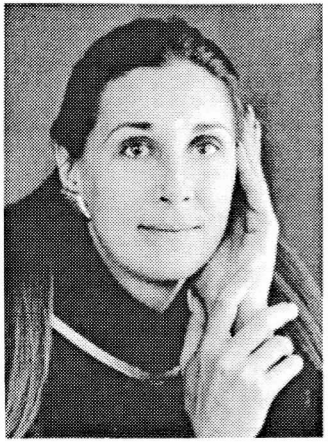
When a church makes the decision to seek new leadership, the Department of Ministry of the UUA recommends a waiting period– a waiting period in which the church can assess the changes which have taken place and look afresh at options now open to them. During that waiting period, the UUA offers to help such churches fill their pulpits through the leadership of an interim minister.

The interim minister chosen to help Restoration prepare for its future and to lead the church through its 175th year is Harris Riordan.

A minister for more than a dozen years, most recently associate minister at the Brooklyn, New York, church, Riordan is skilled in church dynamics as well as the dynamics of related organizations. She has, during her first year at Restoration, worked with the congregation through a series of retreats and through such groups as the Long Range Planning Committee in their regular meetings to explore and analyze the issues.

She has proved to equal to the task of helping Restoration reassess its priorities and goals during her first year. During the remainder of the church's 175th anniversary year, Harris Riordan expects to help the church set a path that will carry it into the coming century.

It seems certain that the congregation will cope with the challenge of change, for change has been the hallmark of Restoration for the past 50 years... perhaps throughout the entire 175 years of our existence.



MARION ETTLINGER

Minister from 1994-1996

She was brought up in the First Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, New York, and returned there to become associate minister prior to coming to Restoration as interim minister here. Soon after receiving her degree at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, she became, in 1982, the first woman to be ordained by All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City. She was also associate minister and religious education director at the White Plains Community Unitarian Church in White Plains, New York.

The all-church photo– Taken June 4, 1995

Front row: Kira West, Jessica Schantz, Laura Fox, Elly Walters, Samantha Fox, Sarah Dunaway, Geno Jasper, Sabre Jasper, Cisco Harris, Tiffany Harris,Desiree Aikens, Jonathan Hulting-Cohen, Destinee Aikens.
Second row: Dorothy Feely, Vivian Dikeman, Doris Holtzman, Shirley Green, Adrienne Morrison, Liz West (with Riley), Harris Riordan, Catherine Harris, Herschell Gordon, Mary Longstreth, Jane Ragland.
Third Row: Bill Ragland, Julia Bradburd, Jane Hulting, Nancy Simpson, Pat DeBrady, Irene Hudson, Doris Mooney, Marilyn Dyson, Nancy Poor, Ione Vargus, Judy Zanger, unknown, Joan Blake, Alma Reinholt.
Fourth row: Bill Dikeman, Bob Holtzman, unknown, Leslie Scott, Stephanie Aikens, Zakia Gates, Ronnie Sussman, Marjorie Cizek.
Fifth row: Dan Braxton, Walter Hienlen, David Simpson, Chris Kenty, Annette Lareau, Helen Oerkvitz, Ginny Vanderslice, Jane Hain, Barbara Ellerbee, Charley Dunaway, Glenna Dunaway, Unknown, Stephanie Garrett, Christine Perry
Sixth row: David Poor, Kirk Mooney, Jim Cohen, Mitchell Robinson, Jim Walters, Carl Hienlen, Barry West, David Perry, Jennifer Rose, Margaret James.
Seventh row: Frank Cizek, Charles Oerkvitz, Franklin Green, Mark Dressler, Arnold Bradburd, Howard Holtzman, Parker Lamas-Vanderslice, Andy Lamas, Larry Hain, Vadra Fulany, Ann Homan, Eric Saunders, Rick Homan, Jean Allen, Eileen Donahue. –Photo by Dan Braxton.


POTTER
WINCHESTER
ORDAINED

The Gabell Memorial Window

The Left Lancet
The lowest panel shows John Murray, a founder of Universalism, arguing against Universal Salvation. While yet a zealous Calvinist, he had tried to reclaim a young woman influenced by James Relly, a London preacher of Universalist principles. She instead converted him.

Murray's arrival in America is depicted in the middle panel. After running aground in New Jersey, he met Thomas Potter, who persuaded him to preach in America. The church at Good Luck is at lower right.

The top panel pictures the founding of churches by circuit riding preachers such as Murray, who rode circuit from New Hampshire to Maryland. Clement of Alexandria, a church father who taught Universalism in the third century, appears at the head of the lancet.

The Right Lancet
Dr. George DeBenneville and the Rev. Elhanan Winchester, pioneers of Universalism, meet at Germantown. The Native American and the Black next to Winchester symbolize early ministry to these groups.

The middle panel depicts the dramatic ordination of Hosea Ballou, as Winchester impulsively picked up the Bible and said, "Brother Ballou, I press to your heart the written Jehovah." Ballou became the greatest thinker the church has produced. His "Treatise on Atonement" set Universalism on the path to religious liberalism.

The upper panel describes development of educational institutions and national organizations within the denomination.

Quatrefoil
Here the Declaration of Principles, ratified in 1899, is symbolized– The Universal Parenthood of God, the Spiritual authority of Jesus, the Trustworthiness of the Bible as a revelation from God, the certainty of just retribution for sin and the final Harmony of all souls with God.

Inscription
"To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Columbus W. Gabell, Jr., and Ella M. Gabell, his wife." Donors are Mr. and Mrs. Pearce M. Gabell.

A Word from the Artist
"The first purpose of this window would be a ministry of color. For that reason, the medallion type of window was selected, so that within the small scenes and smaller pieces the window could be carried out in a glorious jewel effect... as the beholder studies the window, the various scenes and symbols reveal themselves and teach their lesson. The small scenes keep the window in better scale with the Church and make the finest complement to the architecture." Henry Lee Willet.

The above is adapted from Harmon Gehr's program notes prepared for the dedication of the window on May 9, 1943.

In the beginning...

The pages which follow are reprinted from the book: THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE RESTORATION, 1820 TO 1976– A HISTORY.

That book was prepared by the then minister Richard A. Perry with the support of Harald Grote and Sandy Grote at the time of the 155th anniversary of the church in 1976.