



Born of God, abiding in Christ's Love,
we are called to worship, minister,
discover and share gifts of the Spirit.

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Date:

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Acknowledgements:

Dr. Eugene McAfee

Betty St. John

Harry Winsor

A History of Faith United Church of Christ Richmond
Heights, Ohio

For further information regarding the Richmond Heights Community
Church, Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church, Second Reformed
Church, Sixth Reformed Church, Seventh Reformed Church, St.
Mathew Reformed Church, Olivet Church, see "A History of Faith
United Church of Christ" by Harry Winsor

And to all those who contributed information and funds to print this
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A History of Faith, 1956-2007

Faith United Church of Christ

Introduction

What's Inside

Wallick	2
Foster	2
Fletcher	5
Rohrbaugh	6
Carr	10
Bruce	11
Carrion	16
Webb	17
McAfee	17
Coming Up	22

As time goes by and events and situations meld endlessly one into the other, we periodically sort them out so that our beginnings are not lost nor are the efforts and devotion of those who laid the foundations that support the present. So we start with eighty-two local residents of Richmond Heights who gathered to worship under the leadership of the Reverend Mr. Charles C. Wallick, Ph.D., who had been called to serve the new church by the Congregational Union of Cleveland. This was January 8th, 1956. Services were in the local school and the new church was called The Richmond Heights Community Church, the first church in Richmond Heights.

Organization of the new church was begun by the Congregational Union after it had secured an assignment from the Cleveland Church Federation to study the Richmond Heights area and provide a church to meet the religious needs there, in accord with the comity agreement of Protestant Christian churches.

The charter of the church, dated February 21, 1956, was presented to the congregation by the moderator of the Congregational Union of Cleveland. At the same service forty-three charter members were received and twenty-six more members joined on the first Sunday in May. The charter roster was closed when the one-hundredth member joined on Sunday, July 1, 1956. Richard St. John was the first Moderator of the new church.

(Continued on page 2)

A History

Introduction (cont.)

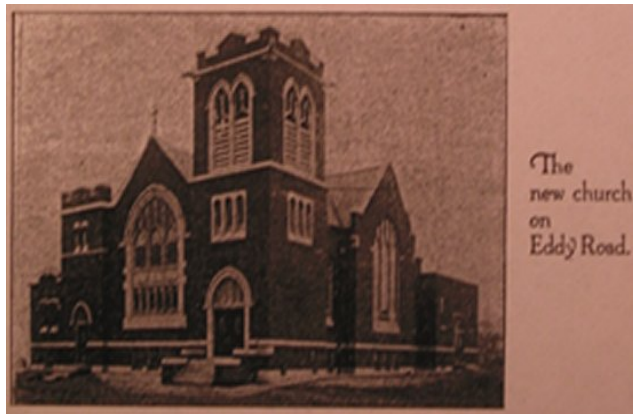
Early in 1956 the Congregational Union of Cleveland proposed the purchasing of a site at 575 Richmond Road, Richmond Heights, consisting of 13.1604 acres. In March of 1956 this small congregation raised several hundred dollars to take an option on the thirteen-plus acres that are now the site of the present Faith United Church of Christ. The monies raised were a loan from the Congregational Union, donations from church members and personal loans from church members and so the land was purchased.

The Wallick Years

November 4th, 1956 saw the Richmond Heights Community church officially received into the Congregational Christian church community. The church was now known as Richmond Heights Community Congregational Church and the Reverend Mr. Charles Wallick was installed as pastor. Mr. Wallick resigned as pastor on March 2, 1957.

The Foster Years

1957 was the year the Evangelical and Reformed churches were to merge with the Congregational Christian churches. As we were now Congregational Christian we were part of that merger. The particular E. and R. church to become part of our history was Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church, referred to as the "Eddy Road Church." The



(Continued on page 3)

The Future

As we continue to grow and evolve we are entering into the process of becoming one of the United Church of Christ congregations declaring themselves Open and Affirming, and a committee has been organized to give their attention to this process. This committee will be meeting with representatives from other churches who are engaged in the same process to bring information and guidance back to the congregation.

As we head into 2008 it is abundantly apparent that this is but a pause in the recording of the history of Faith United Church of Christ in Richmond Heights. With God's help, we will continue to grow and evolve and offer the Word of God and share the love of Jesus Christ with each other and the community at large.

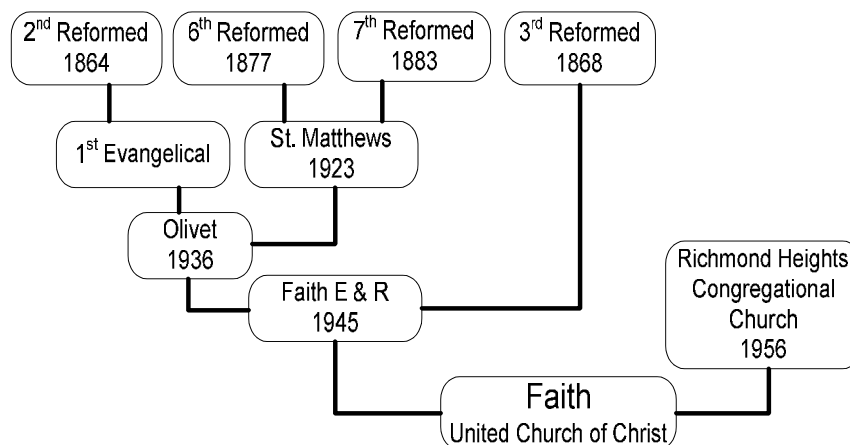
A History

Coming Events

In as much as the sign we have on the north side of the out driveway no longer serves the purpose of attracting attention to our United Church of Christ affiliation, it has been decided a new sign is needed. The proposed new sign would be an internally lit, 40 square foot, two-sided colored sign with the UCC logo. It is to have movable lettering to announce the sermon and call attention to special events. It is felt a new sign is important at this time as we prepare to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Faith United Church of Christ in Richmond Heights. It will highlight our presence on Richmond Road to the great number of motorists passing our door. Plans for the celebration also include donating a bench and a tree near the Richmond Heights School, where the church first met to worship. There is also to be a banquet and a special service of Thanksgiving and Celebration. Several of the members of the Church are joining Dr. McAfee who is leading a trip to England and Scotland to explore the roots of congregationalism.

The Foster Years (cont.)

Reverend Mr. Huxley C. Foster was pastor. This church evolved from the First, Second, Third, Sixth and Seventh Evangelical Churches as the following diagram shows.



The dates shown on the diagram are the founding dates of each particular church.

Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church purchased property at 5632 Wilson Mills Road and Mr. Foster and his family moved into the home on the property. This site was to operate as a mission and the large garage was made into a temporary chapel for worship services. Mr. Foster preached at both the Eddy Road and the Richmond Heights locations. He was assisted by the Reverend Mr. Thomas F. Redman, Associate Minister, who also preached at both locations, and later by the Reverend Mr. Ned H. Martin, who served as co-pastor.

In 1957, a Basis of Union was explored by Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church and Richmond Heights Community Church (Congregational Christian). In the preamble of this document it is stated, "We, the members of the Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Richmond Heights Community Church (Congregational), rejoicing in the union of our two denominations to form the United Church of Christ; and acting under the divine compulsion of a new awareness that God has thus appointed us for a special witness in these days and in this city; do hereby testify to our oneness

(Continued on page 4)

A History

The Foster Years (cont.)

in spirit and purpose and our willingness, with mutual trust, imaginative courage and loving zeal, to form one Church dedicated to the glory of God, the honor of Christ and the service of man."

Eleven months later, on August 3, 1958, ground was broken for the first building at 575 Richmond Road. The cost of the building was \$151,354.20, part of which was paid for as follows:

Congregational Building Association	\$6,643.00
Cleveland Union	15,000.00
Loan from Eddy Road Church	15,000.00
Loan from two members	20,000.00
Funds from Richmond Heights Church	33,661.00

When the cornerstone was laid for this building, which we now refer to as the Social Hall, the Sun Messenger newspaper reported, "This event will be of wide-spread interest since it is believed that this is the first new church building to be erected in the United States by



congregations joined when the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational and Christian Churches merged in June 1957." The interior of the new building was rather austere, there was a pulpit, a table and an organ in a large beautiful bright room. One sat on small folding chairs, whether you fit or not. The building also included classrooms and a

kitchen. To attest to the hospitality of this community, it is said the first dinner was served before the kitchen was completed. All felt blessed for the privilege of being part of raising a house of worship.

The building was dedicated on October 15, 1959. That same year a

(Continued on page 5)



The McAfee Years (cont.)

tween the congregations of Lyndhurst Baptist Church and Faith United Church of Christ, following an approach by the Lyndhurst congregation about the possibility of a merger. Committees were formed in each church who met in full fellowship to discuss the issues. There was a sincere, devoted effort by both parties to accomplish the merger, but as discussions progressed and the hopes and understandings of both became clearer the discussions were ended on January 29, 2006. This situation had been explored thoroughly and although the outcome was disappointing, it was graciously accepted by both parties. As part of the preparation for this merger a survey was made to determine the monetary worth of our church building.



This same year the Stewardship Committee undertook a project to contact inactive members and update the membership roll by removing names of those who no longer wished to be members of Faith Church. These people were contacted by mail and asked to respond. Regular Sunday worship was just under one-hundred at this time. With the idea of attracting and informing the vast world of cyberspace of our presence, a website was established, www.faithucc575.org. The website continues to be updated and revised. The website carries Dr. McAfee's sermons as well as a photo gallery.

The Prayer Team was reactivated in 2005, offering prayer for specific requests, communion to shut-ins and participating periodically as part of the Sunday service offering prayer and anointing. The following year a new program called "Fifth Sunday Offering" was introduced.

The offerings of each fifth Sunday of the month are to be used to offset the operating deficit by applying the proceeds to meet specific needs of the church or its ministries.

A History

The McAfee Years (cont.)

inspired and motivated by faith to be part of the committees, to engage in research, to be involved in the legal aspects, to be part of the financial arrangements and conduct and attend countless meetings regarding the backland.

The Bell Choir was reactivated this year under the guidance of Mary Stoops Ober, who was appointed Music Director in July of 2003. The congregation looked forward to an innovative music program.

A new cooler was purchased for the kitchen and cost \$1,300.00. It is not a freezer but is needed to hold food at a safe temperature until served.

On November 21, 2004, Emmaus Bible Fellowship, a new congregation that had been meeting in Euclid, began holding Sunday worship service in our church building. Their service is held in the afternoon.



Our Christian Education time was changed to 9:30 a.m. from 10:30 a.m., which enabled Adult Education to be at the same time as Sunday School. As a result of this adjustment, the youth of the church are able to take part in the Church Service and the congregation of Faith and Emmaus are able to share coffee hour. At this same time, in keeping with environmental concerns, a paper retrieval program was started. A large bin from the Abitibi Paper Retrieval Company is located at the east end of the parking lot to receive recyclable paper. The income from this is minimal but the program enjoys the participation of the congregation and the

community in the recycling effort to help protect the environment.

April of 2005 saw the first of the several joint worship services be-

(Continued on page 21)

The Foster Years (cont.)

new constitution for Faith United Church of Christ was adopted, and on September 30, 1960, Mr. Foster left Faith United Church of Christ, having served three years and five months.

The Eddy Road building and property were sold about this time to The House of Prayer and the property at 5632 Wilson Mills Road was sold to the Cleveland Presbytery. In July of 1960 the parsonage on Covington Road was purchased.

The United Church of Christ was officially established on July 4, 1961 when the General Synod meeting in Philadelphia approved the National Merger. When asked their affiliation, people no longer said "United Church of Christ, Congregational," or "United Church of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed," it was simply United Church of Christ, in our case Faith United Church of Christ.

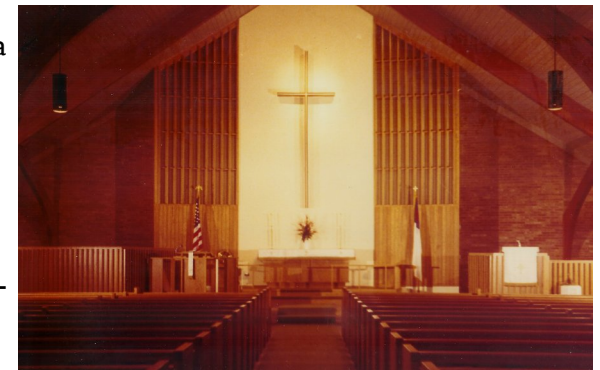
The Fletcher Years

On July 1, 1961, the Reverend Mr. Douglas W. Fletcher began as Pastor. Mr. Fletcher and his family moved into the Covington Road home. He was to be with us six years, resigning on August 27, 1967.

In March of 1962, plans were adopted for the building of the sanctuary, to be an addition to the first building. Ground was broken on July 5, 1964, and the cornerstone was laid September 20. A Service of Dedication for the new

addition, followed by a Farewell Service for the first building, was held on March 21, 1965. The rooms in the first building were to be used for Christian education, administration, service and fellowship. A dedication of the whole

church was held on the same day. March 28, 1965 saw the dedication of the organ designed by the Moeller Organ Company and consisting



(Continued on page 6)

A History

The Fletcher Years (cont.)

of two manuals, 574 pipes and full pedal board. The purchase of the organ for \$14,400.00 was made possible by the Blecking Memorial Fund. The organ is dedicated to the memory of Henry and Katherine Blecking. It was during this year the Pilgrim Hymnals were presented to the church by Ralph and Marie Smail.



In 1967, The Ninth United Church of Christ, formerly known as Ninth Reformed Church, after seventy-nine years at Seventy-Fourth Street and Lockyear Avenue in Cleveland, merged with Faith

United Church of Christ. This church dated from 1898 to 1968 when the merger was finalized. The records state that Ninth Reformed Church and its one hundred and twelve members, practically none of whom lived near the church building, bowed to the changing times and conditions and closed its doors. The Ninth Church property was deeded to the Western Reserve Association. Mr. Fletcher resigned as Pastor on August 27 of this same year. We remain grateful to Mr. Fletcher for seeing us through this merger and the second building program especially.

The Rohrbaugh Years

On December 3, 1967, the Reverend Paul Rohrbaugh accepted the call to Faith United Church of Christ. He and his family moved into the parsonage on Covington Road.

The following year, Mr. Rohrbaugh celebrated twenty-five years in the ministry and a set of hand bells was donated by the Rohrbaugh family in honor of this occasion. In 1969, the parsonage on Covington

(Continued on page 7)

The McAfee Years (Cont.)

Coalition to obtain its opinion. Concerns were satisfied and after other discussion and reflection the Finance Committee recommended that the congregation accept the offer of Wager and Associates to purchase the real estate for \$214,000.00. The sale closed in July 2005. One-half of the sale monies were placed in a restricted account and invested. Five percent of the market value of the restricted

account would be distributed for benevolent use every year according to the mission fund proposal approved by the congregation. "The restricted account is never to be used to meet the church's obligations. Should the day come that Faith would have to close its doors, the assets in the benevolent fund would be distributed to benevolent organizations."

A large sewer assessment was paid out of the unrestricted proceeds from this sale in the amount of \$38,000.00 as the Finance Ministry felt this was preferred instead of financing the assessment over twenty years. A money market account was opened at McDonald Investments and the balance was deposited in the church checking account to be used for day-to-day needs.

Of the original property purchased for Faith Church, 6.198 acres were sold to Mr. Edward Debartolo, 2.917 acres were sold to Wager & Associates, leaving 4.0446 acres for the current church building, parking lot and lawn.

This is the disposal of the backland. It has figured in our history since its purchase as a site for the building of the church and has had more attention, thought and energy devoted to it than words can express. Limitless gratitude and respect is owed to all those who were



(Continued on page 20)

A History

The McAfee Years (Cont.)

received from Visconti Company and it was voted the land could be sold. This proposal came to us through the efforts of Mr. Guy Totino, of Polaris Real Estate Equities Company, who had a son in the Faith Pre-School and through that association became aware of the availability of the backland. His interest was to develop a soccer field for Richmond Heights, to be called "Faith Church Field" and to erect a Lowe's Home Improvement store on the property. The purchase price was to be \$1.5 million. In the agreement, Faith Church would also receive snow removal for twenty years, a landscaping contract and attorney fees paid among other concessions. The MLC and the Finance Ministry held several "Back Land's Town Hall" meetings to provide information and answer any concerns of the congregation about the agreement and how it would affect the church. On our part we were approaching this change with anticipation and diligent effort and were frustrated and disappointed when a problem arose between Sears and Visconti Company. The Purchase Agreement was terminated August 31, 2004.



At approximately the same time, an offer also was received from Wager and Associates, associated with Whitlatch Builders, to purchase the same real estate east of the church, 2.917 acres with an offer price of \$214,000.00. Whether we sold this real estate or not, building would proceed on properties adjacent to ours, effectively land locking our property. Especially important at the annual meeting was the question of Whitlatch Builders' "Green Building" practices. Mr. Wager stated the practices of Whitlatch builders in a letter regarding this subject and Dr. McAfee contacted the Greater Cleveland Green Building

(Continued on page 19)

The Rohrbaugh Years (cont.)

Road was sold as Mr. Rohrbaugh wished to purchase a home of his own and the proceeds of the sale placed in the Building Fund.

This same year the Faith Day Nursery School, now called Faith Church Preschool, Inc., was started under the direction of the Board of Christian Education and the supervision of Margaret Bardou, Director of Christian Education. Licensed by the State of Ohio, it continues to operate today with an enrollment of approximately eighty students. The Nursery School is under the direction of Marlene Kole and offers classes for three-year-old, four-year-old and Pre-K children. It provides opportunities for children to discover the world around them with appropriate activities in a safe environment. All of the teachers have degrees in Early Childhood Education. This Nursery School enjoys a reputation of excellence within the community.

About this time a communication was received from Edward DeBartolo, representing the Richmond Mall, regarding the purchase of a portion of our backland. The Mall was expanding by adding a large department store and they needed more parking space. An offer was made to Faith to buy three and three quarters acres. This offer was changed and the new offer presented was to buy 6.198 acres of the land east of the present parking lot. We formed a Land Study Committee to give its attention to the physical layout and use of the property. After discussion and deliberation, in 1971 at a General Meeting the congregation approved the sale of 6.198 acres. This same year, Cyril Chinn became organist and choir director.



This "offer to buy" focused the attention of the congregation to the use of the backland. Among the many suggestions raised and discussions held regarding the use of the property, one of the most agreeable to the congregation was that it be used for housing for the elderly. There were several ways to proceed and the Trustees chose to obtain authority from the congregation to establish a non-profit organization

(Continued on page 8)

A History

The Rohrbaugh Years (cont.)

and go ahead with the housing project. The non-profit organization would have a board and authority to sell the land needed to proceed with the housing project. In 1972 a Judge of the Court was brought in to advise the officers of the Board and declared the following: "Be it known that this board has been empowered to bring into being a non-profit corporation to be known as Faith Housing Corporation for the purpose of buying land from Faith Church, taking the required steps to promote the building of housing for the elderly, and building said housing and developing a suitable plan to fill and operate the project." A director and members of the board were appointed, but this project did not develop because of problems concerning access to the backland, mainly ingress and egress. Thus the plans and hopes and efforts that would have established a home for the elderly on the backland ended in disappointment.

During the time we were pursuing the housing for the elderly project, Mr. DeBartolo was endeavoring to solve his problems regarding the 6.198 acres previously discussed on which he had made an offer.

The problem to be solved involved having the land that was zoned residential, as our church property is, rezoned commercial before he could proceed with his plans. This, of course, would require a zoning decision by the Richmond Heights Zoning Board and Mr. DeBartolo asked for a short extension of the contract.

At this time, the Executive Committee of the Western Reserve Council had several meetings with us to consider the factors involved in sale of the six-plus acres. One of those factors was the reverter clause in the deed which states: "If Faith Church sells the property without written permission of the Western Reserve Association, the property reverts to the Association."

The Western Reserve Association was advised that some money should be expected for their written consent to sell the property, and



(Continued on page 9)

The Reverend Ms. Pamela June Webb, Interim

Ms. Webb began as interim minister March 11, 2003. Ms. Webb came into a very difficult situation. She followed an extremely well liked interim minister and faced a congregation who was still adjusting to the changes within the church together with seeking a senior pastor. She extended every effort to be part of and assist the congregation as they faced these conditions. Ms. Webb was interested in and involved in promoting the Safe Space Policy. The Safe Space Policy states that all persons associated with Faith United Church of Christ should know that the church is strongly opposed to all forms of harassment, exploitation or intimidation. The Safe Space program was initiated to create a "worship and work community in which friends, staff and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of abuse." The Safe Space Policy creates a safe and healthy environment for young people to learn about and experience God's love. At least two students must be present in order to hold a class and the program also requires the Lead Teacher and nursery volunteer be an adult of eighteen years or more. There is an open door policy in the church school and in the nursery. The complete Safe Space Policy is on file. Ms Webb left in 2005, the Search Committee having extended a call in April to the Reverend Dr. Eugene Clifford McAfee.

The McAfee Years

Dr. Eugene Clifford McAfee accepted the call to Faith United Church of Christ and his first service at Faith was on October 5, 2003. A native of Springfield, Ohio, he came to Faith Church from St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland. Dr. McAfee was installed as Pastor on April 18, 2004. Prior to entering full time parish ministry in 2001, he had served as a college administrator for six years at Harvard University. He is the third graduate of Yale Divinity School to serve as Pastor of our church and is the first openly Gay minister to be called by Faith Church.

At the annual meeting of the congregation on January 12, 2003, the sale of the remaining backland was discussed in response to a proposal

(Continued on page 18)

A History

ship Ministry, the Finance Ministry, etc.

The Ministry Leadership Council signed the separation Agreement between Faith United Church of Christ and Mr. Robert Bruce on November 28, 2000 and Mr. Bruce tendered his resignation. At this time there was much unrest within the church. Attendance was dwindling and there was a lack of communication between the congregation and leadership and among the leadership itself. As usual in this type of unfortunate occurrence several families left the church. The process of finding a Senior Pastor was undertaken and a Search Committee was formed.

The Reverend Mr. Felix Carrion, Interim

In 2001 an agreement was signed with The Reverend Mr. Felix Carrion, who came to us from the United Church of Christ headquarters, to serve as interim. His contract was extended through March of 2003. Mr. Carrion introduced us to Spanish vocabulary and that is why, during communion we sing the Sanctus in English and Spanish. He came at a difficult time in the life of Faith Church and did much to restore the spirit and the closeness of the congregation. Mr. Carrion left March 9, 2003 to become Pastor at Euclid Avenue Congregational Church. During the time Mr. Carrion was with us the parlor was re-decorated and newly furnished by a committee organized in February 2002. This committee raised the funds it needed to support and complete this project. New furniture, carpet, window treatment, entertainment cabinet and painting were all part of the end result.

Three other new events occurred at this time, an anonymous donation provided for the purchase of new sanctuary Bibles and one hundred copies of the New Revised Standard version were purchased. Also, an outdoor Sunday service was held on the front lawn in August and was so well received the service was added to the annual events of the church's ministry. The third event concerned the entrance to the church. Because entrance to the church does not face Richmond Road, the church building was more or less invisible at night as it sets a good distance from the road among quite a few trees. This side of the church was illuminated in 2001 in memory of Ralph A. Sinzinger through memorial gifts.

The Rohrbaugh Years (cont.)

came up with a figure of \$21,358.00. Our lawyer, Clemens Frank, felt he could get us a quitclaim deed and settle with the Association; however, the Association felt a money settlement was needed first. In addition to a loan, the purchase of the property was enabled by \$3,000.00 from the Congregational Union, \$5,000.00 from members and \$1,500.00 from the Home Board. This matter was settled with a payment of \$200.00 to the Western Reserve Association for the quitclaim deed. All papers and documents were signed at this point and the matter of zoning was all that remained to be determined by the Richmond Heights Zoning Board.

As of January 1975, the sale of the property was still pending as the Richmond Heights Zoning Board had not voted either for or against rezoning of the property. As the contract had been for one year, Mr. DeBartolo asked that the contract be extended to one and one-half years. In August of 1975 the Richmond Heights Council voted against rezoning of the church property.

Early in 1976, the zoning determination now went to court and Mr. DeBartolo worked on a compromise plan with the City hoping to settle out of court. All loans from the Western Reserve Association were paid off at this time – nothing verbal or written remained between us. We also had a clear title from Park Federal for the sale of the property. Mr. DeBartolo was able to resolve his problems and on February 14, 1977 the check for the sale of the backland was deposited.

Sale Price	\$175,000.00
Taxes	1,790.42
Sewer & Paving Assessment, City of Richmond Heights	12,683.16
Escrow, Title, Attorney, Quitclaim Deed, etc.	8,475.85
Cash Received	\$152,050.57

The money was deposited in CD's, interest to be used for benevolent projects and improvement of church property.

A History

The Rohrbaugh Years (cont.)

Celebration 78

The “burning of the mortgage” took place on Sunday, December 3, 1978 and the day was called CELEBRATION 78. A Xeroxed copy of the mortgage was burned during the service and Mr. Rohrbaugh wrote: “Last Sunday was one of the most moving of my entire ministry. The worship service – coming to its climax in the ‘burning of the mortgage’ and the dinner with its tremendous surprise helped make CELEBRATION 78 a day I shall never forget.” The “surprise” was recognition of the thirty-fifth anniversary of his ordination and he was presented with a watch and other gifts. A new pictorial church directory was published this same year.

In 1980 and 1981 the entranceway project was started and completed. Extensive decorative brickwork topped by large round post lights were built on either side of each driveway at the Richmond Road entrance and exit. This was a great improvement, as the side of the church facing Richmond Road was not lit up and it was most difficult to find the driveways at night. A year later the ceiling fans were installed in the Sanctuary.

Mr. Rohrbaugh was involved with the United Church Homes of Ohio, serving as Vice President. There are three homes in Ohio involved with care for the elderly. When Mr. Rohrbaugh resigned at the end of July 1983, he was honored with the title of Minister Emeritus of Faith United Church of Christ. The Rohrbaughs were with us for sixteen years and the parting deeply affected everyone. This family added in many ways to the ministry with their musical talents, concerts, taking part in productions and so forth. Mrs. Paul E. Rohrbaugh, Marian, was a music teacher in the Bratenahl Public School System and at Faith she led the Bell Choirs and the Chapel Choir among other endeavors. She is an accomplished pianist and organist as well as a vocalist.

The Reverend Mr. Aute Carr, Interim

The Reverend Mr. Aute Carr was interim between Mr. Rohrbaugh and the Reverend Mr. William Robert Bruce. He saw us through the alignment with Trinity Congregational Church. In 1983 Trinity Church disbanded and their building was sold. The funds resulting from the

(Continued on page 11)

The Bruce Years (cont.)

name tag rack, a cabinet for brochures and a cabinet for storing the supplies for the Hunger Center. The Accessibility Committee held several functions to raise money to fund their projects.

Meetings were held in April of 1997 for the purpose of developing a mission statement, and the Reverend Mr. Rodger Knight, of the Euclid Avenue Congregational Church, was the facilitator. At the September 28th congregational meeting action was taken to receive the mission statement adopted by the Executive Board. In this same year an amendment to the constitution was approved by the congregation to establish an Endowment Fund.

Mission Statement:

We are born of God and abide in Christ's Love; we are called to worship, to minister, and to discover and share gifts of the Spirit.

Also in 1997 a ten-year contract with American Wireless leased them a very small space in the backland for a telephone tower.

With the departure of Associate Minister, Mrs. Miryam Hammond, in 1997, Mr. Bruce asked the Western Reserve Council to change the terms of the Trinity Fund with the intent of hiring a part-time Director of Christian Education. The council approved distributing the remaining eleven months of compensation allotted for Mrs. Hammond over the next four years, to be used solely for this position. In 1998 Mrs. Barb Holtz became Director of Christian Education. Barb is totally dedicated to the welfare and Christian education of our young people through Sunday School curricula, camping experiences, outreach activities and in-house programs.

Cyril Chinn retired in 1998 after serving as organist and choir director for twenty-seven years during which he provided music for Sunday worship, concerts and special occasions.

During this year the congregation approved a recommendation to suspend the existing constitution and by-laws so that a new governing structure could be put in place. The Executive Board became the official body for all substantive decisions. After the dissolution of the Board of Trustees and Diaconate, the new governing body was established by the Executive Board and was named “The Ministry Leadership Council”. Their first meeting was held on February 9, 1999. The title of “committee” was changed to “ministry,” such as the Steward-

(Continued on page 16)

A History

The Bruce Years (cont.)

proposed constructing two twelve-unit single buildings to house physically handicapped persons; Hope Homes would erect a six-unit apartment facility or a duplex to provide housing for developmentally handicapped persons.

However, after consultations and study, this property was considered "land-locked" as the same problems arose of access and easements that we wrestled with before. Both of these were abandoned. At this time the Reverend Mr.



Stephen Gifford, a church consultant, suggested we enter into a program to define our ministry and mission goals that might give us a clearer idea of the direction we would want to take. We entered into a Visioning Retreat in March at the Solon Community Church to address the process of defining our mission and ministry.

As the public in general was becoming more aware of the necessity to review their facilities with the goal of making them handicapped accessible, we became personally involved when a family whose young person used a wheelchair attended the Sunday service. Although the building itself was handicapped accessible by a ground entrance at the south end, wheelchairs were awkwardly confined to the rear of the sanctuary. It was plain to see that some adjustment in the configuration of the sanctuary was necessary to accommodate this situation. Pews were removed at the rear of the sanctuary to provide space for wheelchairs and in an effort to make the church even more handicapped accessible, there was now an Accessibility Committee. They installed railings for the handicapped throughout the church and more pews were removed from the middle of the sanctuary making adequate wheelchair accommodations. The rest rooms also received attention. Along with these changes Howard Rasmussen handcrafted a

(Continued on page 15)

The Reverend Mr. Aute Carr, Interim (cont.)

sale were disbursed by the Trinity Congregation. From these funds one in particular was established called the Trinity Assistance Fund, in the amount of \$400,000.00 to be administered by the Western Reserve Association. Faith church had first priority to use a portion of this fund to obtain and support an Associate Pastor. Ninety percent of the salary of this person could be from the fund. This Associate Pastor was expected to develop a youth program, help with increasing membership, with visitation, as well as assist the senior minister. Trinity Church also presented Faith Church with a check from the Closing Committee for \$10,000.00 with no restrictions. This was not a merger, it was an alignment with Faith United Church of Christ. About thirty people came from Trinity. Although Mr. Carr was with us for a relatively short time, we were fortunate to have his guidance to see us through this alignment. Mr. Carr has several writings listed under the Guide to Yale Divinity School Faculty Publications including "The Missionary Force of the Pacific Islands" and "New Missionary Calling of the Church."

The Bruce Years

The Reverend Mr. W. Robert Bruce was called as Minister and installed October 10, 1984. Mr. Bruce came to us from St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. During the Bruce years, funding from the Trinity Assistance Fund enabled us to add the Reverend Mrs. Claudia Lewis as Associate Minister, and later, the Reverend Mrs. Miryam Hammond as Associate Minister to our staff.

The Reverend Mrs. Claudia Lewis, Associate Minister

November 2, 1986 to March 31, 1991

Mrs. Lewis was installed as Associate Minister of Faith United Church of Christ in March 1987. It was under her guidance that the Women's Network was formed. The Network was an evening group of ladies meeting the third Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. By this time, many women had careers and community involvement and they could not attend the meetings of the Women's Guild, the precursor organization for women, as they were held in the afternoons. The

(Continued on page 12)

A History

The Bruce Years (cont.)

Network started with a pajama party held at the church. It became a group of women who gathered together to explore current issues, discuss spirituality, share in worship and often to just have fun. It was open to all women of the church. Mrs. Lewis left to assume a pastorate at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

Mr. Bruce started the Men's Breakfast Group during Lent of 1989 and they continued to meet on Thursday mornings for several years.

Hope Congregational Church of E. 260th Street, Euclid, merged



into and with Faith United Church of Christ in 1990. Hope Church was an incorporated church of the United Church of Christ and merged because of dwindling attendance. The monies and property of Hope Church were distributed according to commitments made by the

Hope Church congregation. The closing services at the church were on October 14, 1990. Hope Church presented Faith with a certificate of deposit in the amount of \$45,062.00. There were about fifteen families who joined us from Hope Church.

In September a Pastoral Relations Committee was set up to enable the congregation and pastor to share goals, visions, ideas and interpretation of mission. A person or persons wishing to be heard had only to approach any member of the Committee, who would then confer with the pastor. It was felt that it would be easier for members of the congregation to voice their concerns and aspirations in this manner.

Ever since the sanctuary portion of the building was built, the main entrance to the building was much exposed to the elements. There was no roof over the landing which resulted in parishioners being rained upon or snowed upon when entering the church. Inasmuch as the steps needed repair and railings were needed, the congregation voted in 1992 to have the main entrance on the east side of the church

(Continued on page 13)

The Bruce Years (cont.)

rebuilt. This entailed rebuilding the steps, wall, and adding a roof with a skylight. An architect, Travis Walsh, was engaged and the work proceeded. A Capital Improvement Fund had been established for the church, but with the repair, re-striping and resealing of the parking lot, together with the cost of the entrance project, this fund was depleted. This was the first time a Capital Improvement Fund campaign had been implemented and the idea was well received. It is interesting to note a small wooden replica of a church was set up in the narthex to receive special donations for the Capital Improvement Fund.

The Reverend Mrs. Miryam Hammond, Associate Minister

June 1, 1993 to December 28, 1997

Mrs. Hammond was installed as Associate Minister on November 14, 1993. Among her contributions to the ministry, she sponsored the Healing Prayer Team that held services on the second Thursday of the month. The services were open to the larger community as well as the congregation. People were encouraged to come to the service with their prayer requests and the Healing Team offered prayer and anointing for those who desired it. The group enabled people to meet in a private two or three person prayer experience if so desired. The Prayer Team had a study period and visitor speakers who spoke of other facets of healing prayer. They also visited other faiths to learn of their approach to healing prayer. Mrs. Hammond left Faith to become Pastor of the United Church in Gorham, New Hampshire.

In 1993, 2.9 acres of backland were still available for sale and Maximum Independent Living, a subsidiary of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries and Hope Homes, an Ohio partnership of the United Church of Christ, both expressed interest in the property. Maximum Independent Living



(Continued on page 14)