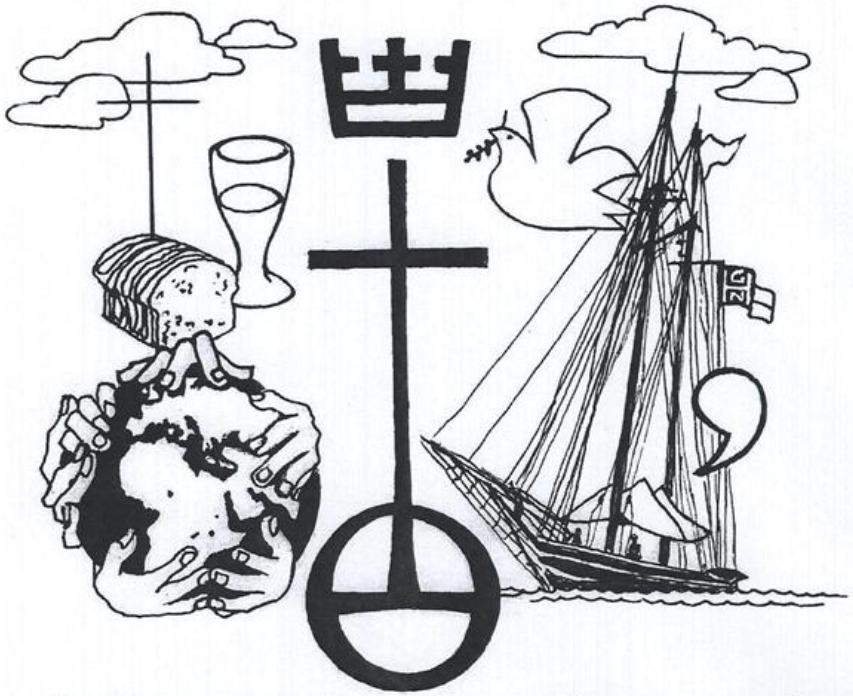
MISSION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES



The Remarkable Story of the Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC

Mission Without Boundaries

The Remarkable Story of the Pleasant Hill Community Church (UCC)
Pleasant Hill, Tennessee
1885-2010

Author: Ted Braun

Cover Artist: Herbie Naumann

Symbols on the Cover:

The four corner symbols from our church's 1985 Centennial Wall Hanging:
- The cross, crown, and orb (the logo of the United Church of Christ)
- The bread and cup of the Lord's Supper
- The dove of peace and God's Spirit
- The world with hands of teaching, preaching, and healing

The "Amistad" ship which played a significant role in the history of our UCC.

The comma, a significant UCC symbol with special meaning for our congregation. It comes from a quote by Gracie Allen: "Never place a period where God has placed a comma…"

December 2010
(revised)

Contents

Our Heritage (Our DNA).....4

Gathering on the Mountain.....6

Mission on the Mountain: Starting out in a schoolhouse.....7

Mission on the Mountain: The church in a new neighborhood.....13

Mission on the Mountain: The church in a changing neighborhood.....20

Celebrating an Anniversary and Moving On.....47

Appendix

- Our Original Confession of Faith.....50
- Our Original Covenant.....50
- Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.....51
- Our Current Covenant.....52
- Our Mission Statement.....52
- The Peace Fountain in the Chancel.....52
- Celebrating Our Centennial
  - Historic Wall Hanging.....53
  - Poem: "The Symbols of a Century".....54
- Celebrating Our 125th Anniversary
  - Hymn: "God of Holy Hills".....55
  - Poem: "Hindsight/Foresight".....55
- Members Who Have Served in Other Countries.....56
- Our Artisan Members
  - Visual Arts.....57
  - Performing Arts.....57
  - Literary Arts.....59
- An Introduction to Our Sister Church.....60
- Boundaries on Our Side of the Waters.....61
- Afterword.....62

Mission Without Boundaries

The Remarkable Story of the Pleasant Hill Community Church (UCC)
Pleasant Hill, Tennessee
1885-2010

Our Heritage (Our DNA)

Our church story actually begins in West Africa (in the Mende part of what is now Sierra Leone) in 1839. Sengbe Pieh, a young man of twenty-five years, was walking to his farm plot one day when he was captured by a group of four Africans. Although he had a wife and three children, they sold him into slavery. He was then taken to the island of Lomboko that was controlled by a Spanish slave dealer, Pedro Blanco.

Blanco was a key part of the international slave trade. Slavers would sail to Africa from Europe or the United States with rum and fabrics, sell their goods to slave dealers at various coastal forts in exchange for slaves, and then sail to the West Indies and Cuba. There the slaves were sold to the Spanish owners of sugar cane plantations, and part of the profits used to buy sugar and cotton. These raw materials were then taken by ship to the United States or Europe where they were turned into rum and fabric to be sold to slavers who then made more triangle trade trips.

Sengbe was placed aboard the slaver ship Tecora, along with some five-hundred other slaves shackled and crammed together on several layers of human storage on the ship for the two-month trip to the Spanish colony of Cuba. They were released from their shackles two times a day to come up to the top deck for food, while other slaves cleaned up the excrement and washed down the floors with vinegar to counter the stench. One third of the slaves died on that trip.

In Havana, Cuba, the slaves were given Spanish names to give the impression that they had been in Cuba a long time. Sengbe was given the name Joseph Cinque (pronounced Seen-kay). Two Spanish slave owners, Jose Ruiz and Pedro Montes, bought Cinque and forty-eight other men, plus four children, and chartered a Spanish ship, the Amistad ("Friendship"!), to transport them to Puerto Principe at the eastern end of the island. It left Havana on June 28, 1839. Normally the trip should have taken two days, but because of a lack of wind, the trip was beginning to take several weeks. Terrible heat and lack of food greatly worsened conditions on board.

At that point, Cinque was able to pick the locks on their shackles and the slaves were able to mutiny and take control of the ship. Several Spaniards lost their lives trying to put down the mutiny. Cinque then ordered the Spaniard at the wheel to head eastward to Africa. The Spaniard did so in the daytime, but at night he headed north to the United States.

In late August when they were near Long Island, New York, they were captured by the USS Washington, an American patrol vessel. The ship was towed to New

London, Connecticut (where slavery was still legal), and the Africans, including the children, were placed in a jail in New Haven. Students at Yale Divinity School began visiting the Africans every day, instructing them in English, the Bible, and religious studies. A trial was scheduled for mid-September to determine the status of the ship (to whom did it belong?) and the status of the slaves (were they now free or still slaves?). Spain was demanding that the Amistad with its cargo and human property be returned to Cuba.

On September 7, an Amistad Committee was formed by leading abolitionists. The murder and piracy trial for the Africans was scheduled for September 19 in the U.S. Circuit Court in Hartford. Issues arose concerning habeas corpus: some lawyers argued that it was not available to slaves because they were nothing more than property. The case was turned over to the Supreme Court to be heard on February 20, 1841. The captives had powerful defendants, including former President John Quincy Adams. The decision was announced on March 9. The blacks were free. Neither the Spanish slavers nor the Spanish government had proved that the captives had been slaves in Cuba. The justices pointed out that all human beings have a right to fight for their freedom.

The old Amistad Committee then became part of a new abolitionist organization, the Union Missionary Society, which then merged with other groups in 1846 to form the American Missionary Association. As Clara Merritt DeBoer wrote in a www.ucc.org article, "The AMA was founded by leaders of both races who had much in common: all were political abolitionists, members of the Liberty and Free Soil parties; all were opposed to colonization (the return of blacks to Africa); and all were church members of liberal communions. Most of the whites were Congregationalists. The blacks were Congregational or Presbyterian ministers. All believed in the equality of the races and insisted on integration in their activities." Included in the first AMA board of twelve men were four African Americans. They determined, also, that the AMA would be democratically organized, unlike the old mission societies whose boards were self-perpetuating and independent of their supporters.

Anticipating the day when four million slaves would be free, the AMA recognized the tremendous need for education. During and after the Civil War, the AMA founded throughout the South more than five hundred educational institutions (elementary and secondary schools and colleges) for freed African Americans and also for poor whites and those in isolated parts of Appalachia. Believing that education was not enough, and that the Christian religion was as important a gift as education, the AMA founded churches alongside the schools.

Between 1846 and 1935 the AMA published the *American Missionary* magazine that had a circulation of 20,000. Over the years the AMA, although still an autonomous body, became closely related to the Congregational Christian Churches and then the United Church of Christ. In 1999, when there was a restructuring of the UCC, the AMA was merged into the Justice and Witness Ministries division.

Today we find examples of AMA-founded colleges throughout the South: Howard University, Berea College, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, Fisk University, Dillard University, Tougaloo College, Talladega College, LeMoyne College, and Tillotson-Houston College. The Pleasant Hill Academy, which the AMA founded in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee, in 1884, carried on a vibrant and valuable educational mission to its surrounding area until 1947 when it morphed into the public educational system. The church that was established alongside the Academy, however, has continued to exemplify a remarkable life and mission over the 125 years.

Gathering on the Mountain

The Cumberland Plateau (2,000 feet elevation) stretches from West Virginia to Georgia. In the early days, its wooded wilderness with deer, bear, panthers, wolves, and smaller animals, had been the hunting grounds for the Cherokee people. Then settlers started moving in from North Carolina and Virginia. They found frontier living conditions on what they called "the Mountain" challenging. There were a few stores and saw mills, occasional three-month subscription schools, no doctors or churches to speak of. During the Civil War, Tennessee had been part Union, part Confederate, with several battles taking place in the state. But there was one advantage that caught people's attention and interest: the congenial climate of the 2000-foot high plateau. Land speculation ads and sales offers in northern newspapers emphasized the Plateau's "healthy climate."

One of these ads in an Illinois newspaper had an important role to play in our church's story. Amos and Helen Wightman were living in a Congregational "colony" in Hoyleton, Illinois. One of their children had died, and a second was frail with asthma. In 1869 they decided to move to Pleasant Hill, Tennessee, to find a healthier environment. Two other families were already there—Mrs. Elizabeth Lundy who lived on a farm and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Frey, German Lutherans, who operated a shingle and grist mill.

In 1873 a small schoolhouse was erected, and a three-month school was started, in Pleasant Hill. The Wightmans, however, were concerned about the quality of the education. Helen, who had grown up in Boston and knew about the AMA, wrote to that organization asking for a teacher. After some correspondence, she made the long trip to Boston in 1883 to plead their case in person. It turned out to be another formative event in our church's story.

Dr. Joseph Roy, field superintendent of the AMA made a visit to Pleasant Hill. He supported Helen's request, and in 1884 the AMA sent Mrs. Mary Santley as a teacher. After she arrived, she realized that a secondary education school and a church were also needed. She contacted the AMA about the need for a missionary teacher and pastor. The AMA then challenged Rev. Benjamin Dodge, a 66-year-old pastor in Maine to accept the call from Pleasant Hill. He agreed.

Again, it was a fortuitous development for Pleasant Hill. Mr. Dodge and his family had many gifts to share. He was a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary and had pastorates in Maine and Massachusetts, plus farming and building experience. He had also taught in a country school. His wife Phoebe had been active in religious and social work. Their eighteen-year-old daughter Emma, who had been planning to go to college in the fall to become a teacher and librarian, had to delay that because of her need to recuperate from a serious case of whooping cough. She also had a keen interest in the Chautauqua movement and in lifelong learning.

They were accompanied on their trip to Pleasant Hill in 1884 by two others—Hannah Lord, a teacher from Mr. Dodge's church in Lebanon Centre, Maine, who had previously taught at Fisk University in Nashville, and by Fred Williams, a deaf-mute friend and helper of the family who had nursed the Dodges' two sons who had died.

The group traveled by train to Nashville by way of Buffalo and Cincinnati. In Nashville they stayed overnight at Fisk University, hosted by Fisk founder and President Erastus Cravath (who had formerly been a Field Agent for the AMA). The next day they took the train for a day's trip to Sparta. Although Mark Wightman had come to meet them with an ox team, they decided not to make the long seventeen-mile overnight trip to Pleasant Hill. Mark headed back with Fred, and the rest of the group stayed overnight with a merchant family (all the hotels were full because of a country fair).

The next day someone from Pleasant Hill came with a team of horses. The two-and-a-half mile ascent onto the mountain was slow going, but finally about evening the group arrived in Pleasant Hill. The long awaited time had arrived for an Academy and church to be born!

Mission on the Mountain:
Starting out in a school house

As soon as Benjamin Dodge arrived late in 1884, he began planning for an Academy building. Stone was quarried, logs were cut, money was raised, a foundation was laid, the frame was set in place—it was a major construction project that would take twenty-two months to complete.

Early in 1885 Mr. Dodge initiated plans for organizing a church. In the middle of March, 1885, he presented a two-step process (the same kind of process used by the Pleasant Hill Community Church today in 2010!)—first, an informal meeting for discussion, without voting or decision-making, and then at a later time, a formal meeting for decision-making.

Mr. Dodge and two others, Amos Wightman and G.E. Wilson, comprising a Committee of Arrangements, sent out a letter inviting people to a meeting on Saturday evening, March 14, 1885, in the old school house to discuss the propriety of organizing a church.

"Rev. and Beloved Brethren: Whereas the Great Head of the Church has disposed a number of persons in this place to unite together for public worship and the celebration of religious ordinances under a Congregational form of Church government, the undersigned in behalf of their brethren respectfully solicit your attendance by your Rev. Pastor and delegate at the school house at Pleasant Hill on the evening of the 14th of March, 1885, at six o'clock to take into consideration the propriety of organizing us into a Congregational Church of Christ, and should such a step be deemed expedient assist us in the services of such an occasion.

"Wishing you grace, mercy and peace we subscribe ourselves Yours in the Gospel"

The church was organized the next day, Sunday, March 15, 1885. Rev. Joseph Roy, AMA field superintendent, served as moderator, and Rev. Henry Bennett of Fisk University served as secretary. A Confession of Faith and a Covenant were adopted (see Appendix). Sixteen people joined as charter members: Benjamin Dodge, Phoebe Dodge, Emma Dodge, Hannah Lord, Alex Mair, Jane Mair, Amos Wightman, Helen Wightman, George Wilson, Mrs. George Wilson by letter; Burtney Jones, Rose Wightman, Sarah Wightman, Robert Wightman by baptism; and Mark Wightman, Lydia Wilson, by profession of faith.

Later, on December 31 the church adopted a Constitution, and on January 16, 1886, it adopted the name The First Congregational Church of Pleasant Hill.

Original schoolhouse where our church gathered.

In 1886 our church organized a local branch of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. (The purpose of this nondenominational evangelical society founded in Portland, Maine, in 1881 by Francis Edward Clark was to bring youth to accept Christ

and to express their faith while participating in useful tasks of service. Within several years it had grown into a world movement.)

In 1887 the construction of the new Academy building with a chapel was completed. J.J.H. Gregory of Marblehead, Massachusetts, had donated a 1,100 pound bell cast in 1817 by the Revere and Son foundry (that had also cast the Liberty Bell) and this was placed in the Academy tower. For more than thirty years it called people to school and to worship, until it cracked and a piece fell out. (The bell is now hanging in the tower of the current church building.)

Academy building where our church gathered.

The dual role of the Academy building and the bell symbolized the fact that in the AMA's eyes, the school and church were joined at the hip. Emma Dodge in her book *History of Pleasant Hill* referred to this: "Character training has been a very important part of the work. Especially in the early years the teachers were to be Christian workers and do active Christian service outside the school room. The Sunday-school and the C.E. [Christian Endeavor] were guided by the teachers. The first building was dedicated as a church as well as for a school."

Many of the students had come to school with only one outfit to wear. Most of the teachers had come from the North, and they began contacting their families, friends, and churches in the North, asking for donations of used clothing. The response was great, and the first clothing store was set up in one of the classrooms in the Academy building. Prices were kept very low, and students were able to pay for clothing with berries, chickens, and eggs, or by working on the Academy farm or cannery. So much clothing came in that the store was moved into a small building on Cottage Street, renamed "The Grab", and opened to the community.

Since Pleasant Hill had few rooms for students to rent, Father Dodge soon began building a boys' dormitory (Pioneer Hall) and a girls' dormitory (Wheeler Hall). During these early years, the AMA supported both the Academy and the church salaries. For most of the building costs, however, financial support had to be raised locally. Churches and individuals in the North sent financial support, plus used clothing for the students and others in the area. Used books began the school library. Many people were not used to paying for a pastor's salary, believing that the gospel should be free for everyone.

Father Dodge, who had arrived in Pleasant Hill as a "senior citizen" at the age of 66, gave four years of vigorous and devoted service, helping to get the Academy built and started and organizing the church before retiring in 1889. He was followed by two pastors, Rev. W.H. Thrall and Rev. Henry Ballou, who also served for short terms as the Academy's first principals. Rev. Warren Wheeler then served two separate terms in both roles (1892-1900 and 1908-1915). What was remarkable about Rev. Wheeler is that he also served as first mayor of the newly incorporated town of Pleasant Hill and as superintendent of schools in Cumberland County! That probably explains why the Academy had two assistant principals during those years.

In 1917 Rev. Edwin Wharton became the Academy's principal (but not the church's pastor). His short term of three years (before his death in 1920) turned out to be one of the most significant ones of all for the mission of the academy and the church in Pleasant Hill—primarily because of his wife. May Cravath Wharton served as school doctor and teacher and was an active member of the church. She soon came to be known across the Plateau as the "Doctor Woman," beloved for her readiness to make emergency house calls across many miles and at all hours of the day or night.

Dr. Wharton, her husband, and Elizabeth Fletcher, the Academy art teacher, often talked about their dreams of a new day on the mountain when the people would have a new modern high school and hospital. Just before her husband died from a serious illness, he said to her, "Maynie, don't leave the mountain. They need you."

After his death in 1920, Dr. Wharton was making plans to move back east to her earlier home. But just as she was getting ready to leave, a man from the neighborhood, Clint Anderson, and four others brought her a note signed by fifty heads of families in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood:

"Dr. May Wharton: In behalf of the town and surrounding community we wish to express our sympathy for you in your trouble and we feel we have suffered a great loss in the death of Professor Wharton. The people here want you to stay here as their Dr. and pay you monthly and also help you with your hospital. We feel that we cannot do without you."

The hospital had been a great dream of Dr. Wharton and Elizabeth Fletcher. As Dr. Wharton wrote in her book, *Doctor Woman of the Cumberlands*, "We shared one consuming desire which unified our aims and used our individual gifts. We dreamed of a

new day on the Mountain when men and women, equipped with sound bodies and trained minds and hands, could meet the demands of their environment and achieve a more abundant life."

The two women decided to stay. As Dr. Wharton wrote in words that seem to be written for those debating health care issues today: "I resolved that mothers should be saved; that little children should be given a fair start in life; that pneumonia, pellagra, diabetes, anemia and all the rest should not go on and on until no medical skill could cure them; that the old and invalided should have some comfort and care even when they could not be mended; and that those far from doctors should have medical aid brought within reach—of their homes and their thin pocketbooks."

The next year, on August 7, 1921, Dr. Wharton and Elizabeth Fletcher opened "Sanex," a two-bed hospital in a small two-story building they had rented. On November 20 they were joined by Alice Adshead, a registered nurse. They made a potent threesome! A year later, on November 20, 1922, they opened a new eight-bed hospital called "Uplands Cumberland Mountain Sanatorium." Dr. Wharton got the idea for the word "Uplands" from a framed poem by James G. Clark on the office wall of her cousin, Paul Cravath, an attorney in New York:

The Call

I saw the mountain stand
Silent and wonderful and grand,
Looking out across the land.
When the golden light was falling
On distant dome and spire
And I heard a low voice calling
"Come up higher, come up higher,
From the lowland and the mire,
From the mists of earth's desire,
From the vain pursuit of pelf,
From the attitude of self,
Come up higher, come up higher."

Paul Cravath, the son of Erastus Cravath, the founder and first president of Fisk University, had grown up in Nashville. He had pursued his ambition to become a lawyer and had become a prominent and influential attorney in New York. His clients included Westinghouse, Royal Dutch-Shell, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, and General Motors. He was one of the founders of the Council on Foreign Relations in 1919 and served as president of the Metropolitan Opera. He died in 1940.

Apparently there was a lot of wealth in the Cravath family. *The First Hundred Years* history of our church mentions that "In her later years [Dr. Wharton] came into possession of considerable wealth from her brother, William Birney Cravath, and she

used this added income not only for endowing the hospital and the care of the aged but also for helping the development of her church for which she had great affection."

In 1927 Dr. Wharton spoke to a conference group in Nashville. A young minister in the group asked her so many questions about the Mountain, the people, and her work there that she suggested that he come up and see for himself. Soon thereafter Rev. Edwin White showed up at Dr. Wharton's office to see for himself! She took him on calls back in the hills. Alice Adshead took him to her home nursing class, and Elizabeth Fletcher took him to her Sunday School over in Browntown.

It turned out to be a successful evangelistic project! At this time Pleasant Hill had no pastor, and Mr. White decided to ask for the appointment. He preached a fine sermon before leaving and won the hearts of the whole congregation. He was soon back to stay. As Dr. Wharton wrote in *Doctor Woman*, "He never tired of seeing how people lived and of listening to their stories. Often the simple earnest prayer which almost invariably the patient's kinfolk asked him to say seemed to help as much as my medical attentions."

Through past decades there had been a growing desire for a "separation at the hip"—for the church to have its own building, separate from the Academy. Plans for a three-unit development—a church, community house and a gymnasium—were discussed, but because of a lack of funding, the community house was given priority—the first floor to be used for church worship and fellowship events, and the second for a custodian family. A parcel of land across the road from the Academy campus was obtained, and on May 4, 1929, Dr. Wharton turned over the first shovel of ground for the Community House.

Meanwhile, the church was carrying on a remarkable program of extension work in the surrounding countryside. In 1931 it sponsored twenty-one Daily Vacation Bible Schools, enrolling 730 boys and girls, with an average attendance of 521. Thirty-six young people joined with regular extension workers in carrying on these schools. A training conference for leaders was held in Pleasant Hill to help them prepare for this work.

Weekend Chautauqua programs included demonstrations of home nursing, discussions on eating for health, better farming, the value of education, entertainment, and music. Mr. White was assisted by a nurse, a doctor, and a number of extra summer workers. Boy Scout activities were carried out at Ravenscroft, Eastland, Mobery, and Flatrock, as well as in Pleasant Hill.

It was an amazing accomplishment that this congregation, with an active membership of forty-eight regular members and thirty-five "watch-care" (associate) members, was able to carry out such a strong mission program. (The average Sunday School attendance was fifty-five.)

In 1932 the church used the new community house for the first time for its Annual Meeting and a supper. Finally in 1934 it began using the Community House for church

worship and Sunday School. For forty-seven years, from 1887 to 1934, church services and Sunday School classes had been held in the Academy building, but now the church, still alongside the school, was "on its own" in town.

The Community House where our church gathered.

Mission on the Mountain:
The church in a new neighborhood

During Mr. White's pastorate, the church changed its name to the Pleasant Hill Community Church. During this same time significant denominational changes were also taking place on the national scene. In 1931 the Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches united to form the Congregational Christian Churches. In 1934 the Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States united to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

One would have thought that this small church, with its previous experience of extension work in the surrounding countryside, and now located off-campus in town, would begin to draw in many new members. But this was not to be. Perhaps Edwin White gives us a clue as to why in a book, *Highland Heritage*, that he wrote during his time here. It was about the economic, social, and religious needs of the people of Appalachia. He dedicated it to the members of the church and Friendship Press published it in 1937:

"Life is still divided into sacred and secular. Those who toil for better homes, better health, better food, better schools, and better communities for God's children and better farming of God's soil are all too likely to find not only that many [mountain] churches will not back them but that some of the devout will view them with suspicion. The religion offered by the average mountain church does not make them dissatisfied with ugliness, want, sickness, and lack of opportunity. The vision of an abundant life here and now for men and communities simply is not part of the accepted religion."

During these years of Edwin White's ministry (1927-1944), the church's "neighborhood" grew larger as church groups from the North toured through the South to visit AMA institutions and Congregational churches. A strong sense of fellowship and connection developed.

In the late 1930s, summer conferences were held in Pleasant Hill. The Academy dormitories, dining room, assembly hall, library, and gymnasium provided excellent facilities for gatherings of the Women's Fellowship, Pilgrim Fellowship, Southern Churchmen's Fellowship, United Christian Youth Movement, Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, and other groups. Rev. Victor Obenhaus, while principal of the Academy, was especially interested in this connecting ministry.

A significant conference took place during the time when Rev. Walter Mueller was principal. He wanted to invite all the heads of AMA institutions in the South to hold their annual Principals Conference at Pleasant Hill. Most of the attending principals would be black. (The Academy was the only AMA school for white youth in the South.) Mr. Mueller, before issuing the invitation, took up the matter with the officers of the church as to the wisdom of holding such a conference here. They assured him that so long as the conference was held on the Academy grounds and kept there, there would be no trouble. Many of the Academy girls served as waitresses at the table.

In 1945 the next pastor, Rev. Charles Drake (1945-1949), expanded the church's concept of neighborhood still further. He requested permission to be relieved from his pastoral duties for a month or two so he could participate in a relief project sponsored by the Church of the Brethren. This project, organized by Dan West at the end of World War II, involved transporting a boatload of cattle as a gift to the people of Poland.

Later this project became an independent ecumenical program named Heifer Project International and included, in addition to cattle, gifts of sheep, rabbits, pigs, llamas, water buffalo, heifers, chicks, ducks, goats, geese, honeybees, and tree seedlings!

Back on the Cumberland Plateau, Mr. Drake (who was our first pastor to live in the newly-constructed parsonage on Main Street) was active in carrying on the church's extension work in the surrounding area and in holding preaching services in Ravenscroft and Flatrock. In 1949, however, he resigned to take a teaching position on the faculty of the AMA-founded Berea College.

In 1947 the Academy closed, and the public school system accepted the responsibility for educating Pleasant Hill children. The AMA sold the Academy land to the county, and the county used the Academy buildings for its elementary and high school students. Eventually a new elementary school (through the eighth grade) was built, and after 1962, the secondary school students were transported into the Crossville high school. From the proceeds of the sale of the Academy land, the AMA paid for the construction of a Community Craft Building (now known as Heritage Hall) that was dedicated in 1950. Funds from this land sale came to the church to underwrite scholarships for many years.

When it became obvious that Crossville, the county seat, was becoming the area of rapid growth, Dr. Wharton and other area physicians moved the hospital there. In 1950 the Cumberland Medical Center was dedicated. Since then it has become a large regional hospital.

When Rev. William Wolfe (1950-1952) became pastor, he offered a resolution to consider reconstructing the Community House and also building a new church. Dr. Wharton supported this idea, urging that the Community House be completely repaired "so that we can go on planning for a Chapel. She enclosed a generous check to ensure that the work could go forward. While the construction went on (removal of the second floor, completion of the west wall and porch, and installation of gas heat), church worship and meetings were held in Pioneer Hall (formerly the boys dorm) which the AMA had turned over to the church for its Community Center program. Both the church and the Community Craft Center had their offices in Pioneer Hall during this time. The reconstruction was completed in 1953.

Rev. Paul Reynolds (1954-1959) was called to develop a new plan for uniting the ministry of the church and the Community Center. Greater emphasis was given to young people's work through the Pilgrim Fellowship, and recreation for young people on Saturday nights. The church also set up a building committee to plan for a new church building.

In 1955 the AMA deeded a plot of land east of the Community House to the church for a new building. All of the groups in the church took part in a fund-raising drive. Enough funds were raised to build a sanctuary, but unfortunately, the educational wing would have to wait.

Meanwhile, much was happening on the national scene that was to affect the life and mission of the Pleasant Hill church. In 1957, the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church united to form the United Church of Christ. The UCC chose for its official logo the following three symbols (ones that have had great meaning for our own congregation down through the years as we have tried to live out our DNA):

The cross, the main symbol of Christianity, reminds us of the life and death of Jesus. It was the main instrument of capital punishment for the Roman Empire in Jesus' day. It continues in our own day to raise important questions for us: What was there about Jesus that was considered such a subversive threat to the Roman Empire? What did Jesus' mission of good news and liberation (Luke 4:18-19) mean for Cinque—and for us today?

The crown symbolizes the sovereignty or lordship of Christ. Located above the cross, it makes a bold statement that this victim of the Roman Empire, and not Caesar, is our Lord and Savior. In Christian tradition, this double symbol has been called a "Cross of Victory" or the "Cross Triumphant," reminding us of Jesus' resurrection and God's veto of the Roman verdict of death.

The orb (the circle with an equator) symbolizes the world. It reminds us of Jesus' command to his followers to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8). We see this mission mandate as a calling to Christian witness and service, unity and ecumenical cooperation, in today's world—a mission without boundaries!

At the bottom of the logo are the words of Jesus' prayer (in John 17:21) "that they may all be one"—another part of our DNA impelling us to ecumenical cooperation and mission without boundaries.

The merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church had other important implications for our Pleasant Hill Church. The national AMA now had a different setting and "job description." Its chief task was now to provide support for higher education. The relationship with the churches that the AMA had founded and supported was turned over to the Division of Church Extension. (The AMA ended its subsidy for the arts and crafts work in the Craft Building at the beginning of 1961.)

On Sunday, May 4, 1958, the church held a ground-breaking ceremony for a new church building, with Dr. May Wharton (who had given generously to the building fund) turning over the first spade of earth. The same stone mason who had worked on the AMA Craft Shop then began constructing the walls of the new church.

Meanwhile, the church was carrying on a full program from its base in the Community House. A 1958 survey listed significant things the church was doing in Pleasant Hill and adjoining region:

> Conducting weekly vespers at the May Cravath Wharton Nursing Home and weekly visits to the Van Dyck TB Hospital.
>
> Ministering to young people: Making the young people an integral part of the church, giving them a part in all major decisions, in church services, visitations, and fund-raising. Organizing a regular and far-reaching program of recreation for young people, with special emphasis on folk dancing and singing. Organizing interested young people of the community into the largest Pilgrim Fellowship in the Southeast Convention, and providing leadership in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference and Southeast Convention.
>
> Serving the wider community: Aiding the Browntown Sunday School with Christmas gifts. Organizing a car pool to bring families without transportation to Sunday School, church, Vacation Bible School, and special meetings.
>
> Organizing a Community Health and Welfare Committee: Cooperating with the Baptist and Church of Christ groups in setting up a common fund for relief of sick and indigent in the community. Securing for a time the services of a trained community nurse. Packing boxes of food, clothing, and gifts for the needy at Christmas. Providing clothing and shoes for school children, thus enabling them to attend school.
>
> Providing a liberal church in a community where narrow views sometimes prevail. [This continued to be a special challenge for the church all through its years.].

The new sanctuary was completed in 1959, and on Sunday, May 10, the congregation marched from the Community House to its new place of worship singing "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." It was a fitting hymn for Dr. Wharton to join in singing, for she had contributed so much to the church and its future. (Six months later, on November 19, 1959, she died.)

The new building where our church gathered.

Although the church had purchased the pews and the pulpit from a furniture company in Tennessee, some of the furnishings had special significance. Workers in the Uplands Craft Shop had made the communion table, pulpit chairs, and narthex table. The Pilgrim Fellowship raised the money for the choir pews as a memorial to Robert Kimball Smith, a twenty-year-old member who had been killed in an auto accident. Several years later, in 1963, the church purchased its first organ—a Hammond electronic model—from funds given in memory of Dr. Wharton.

Meanwhile, the Community House continued to serve as the meeting place for the programs of the Sunday School, Pilgrim Fellowship, monthly fellowship suppers, and other church events. Boy Scouts, folk dancers, and the Pleasant Hill Historical Society met there; work campers slept there; community residents celebrated anniversaries and held fund-raisers there; the county later placed voting booths there—it was truly a Community House!

In 1962 the AMA gave the Craft Building to the church, and the church then began leasing it to several local men for their craft-making business, and to bring in some extra income. In 1965 the regional library moved from the Craft Building to the Community House.

One remarkable church record needs to be noted at this point: Elaine Dodson (Mrs. V.J.) became the church's part-time office secretary in 1960 when the office was in Pioneer Hall. Later a desk became available in the church building. As the church's anniversary booklet, *The First Hundred Years*, mentioned, "She worked with seven different pastors and unnumbered interim pastors and supply preachers. Most of the time she coped with cramped work space and balky equipment. She resigned at the end of

1984, having served 25 years." Mrs. Dodson is still an active member of our church today. Mary Alice Bushong (Mrs. Eugene M.) followed her as office secretary.

There is another remarkable church record coming out of the 1960s decade. In 1968 the church started having an acolyte light the candles in the chancel for each Sunday morning worship service. Cathy Brown, who served as the first acolyte, is still serving as an acolyte today—42 years later!

During this period another important development took place on the national scene that had special significance for the theological self-understanding of our church. The UCC in 1959 adopted a new Statement of Faith based on seven declarations of God's activity in the world, and how we are called by God to respond in faithful and ethical living. It was presented not as a test of our faith but as a testimony to it. The Statement subsequently went through two revisions—the first in 1977 to a more gender-inclusive version, and the second in 1981 to a version in the form of a doxology (see Appendix). This Statement has found great favor among congregations in the UCC and in many other churches in our country and around the world, and we have found it an important one for our own faith expression.

On February 15, 1961 our congregation voted to accept the constitution of the United Church of Christ and to become part of the UCC. Although this provided a denominational anchor for our church, there were rising concerns about the health and welfare of our congregation. Some fifty participants (from nursery to adults) were active in varying degrees in our church school, but still the church itself seemed to hit a period of motionlessness. In 1962 and 1963 no new members joined, and in 1964 only two did.

In 1962, while Rev. Frank Snavely (1959-1964) was pastor, the church had a special opportunity to affirm its AMA heritage and to provide an example of its historical DNA. But it was reluctant to do so. The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference wanted to hold an integrated meeting in the Pleasant Hill church. The church Cabinet, however, believed that it would be inadvisable at that time, and the meeting was held in Nashville. Mr. Snavely and Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds attended for the church.

The reason for this was not spelled out in the church records, but one can surmise what lay behind this hesitation. During the early 1960s there were strong feelings in the South about efforts to desegregate public facilities. In the spring of 1960, black students from Fisk and other schools around the country had participated in a three-month-long nonviolent direct action campaign (from February 13 to May 10) to end racial segregation at lunch counters in downtown Nashville. Sit-ins were staged at a number of stores and cafes. The sit-in campaign, coordinated by the Nashville Student Movement and Southern Christian Leadership Council, culminated in a silent march by nearly 4,000 people to City Hall to confront Mayor Ben West who agreed that lunch counters should be desegregated. The next day Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking at Fisk University, said, "I came to Nashville not to bring inspiration, but to gain inspiration from the great movement that has taken place in this community."

Not all people gained inspiration from such an example, however. The 150 students in Nashville who were arrested for refusing to vacate lunch counters when ordered to do so by the police were represented by a group of thirteen lawyers headed by Z. Alexander Looby. On April 19 Looby's home was bombed. Fortunately, both he and his wife escaped injury.

James Lawson, a student leader at Vanderbilt Divinity School, was expelled from the Divinity School for his nonviolent protest work with fellow black students. Many of the Divinity School faculty members resigned in protest. These were turbulent times for the church in the South. (Today James Lawson is a member of the Vanderbilt Divinity School faculty!)

These courageous actions throughout the South helped bring about the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Our early abolitionist forebears on the Amistad and AMA committees would have been proud.

With such a DNA, it was a challenge to be a church in the South in such a time. In 1967 a representative from the New York denominational office came to Pleasant Hill to guide an assessment of the church's probable future. He was pessimistic. The church's dwindling numbers of children and youth, a small prospect of recruiting young families, and an influx of older persons coming to retire all portend the church's probable decline, he said. Adding to the difficulty, the church was without a resident pastor for two years.

Yet God had a surprise in store for this church

Mission on the Mountain:
The church in a changing neighborhood

Back in 1953 some visitors suggested that Uplands would be a great place for retirement. Uplands picked up on this idea (whose time had come!), and in 1956 the first retirement cottage was authorized. From that point on, the idea accelerated. In 1970 there were 50 residents living in houses and 22 in apartments—a critical mass that was beginning to impact the life and ministry of the church. This development was giving the church a new neighborhood: "The Church Alongside the School" had now become "The Church Alongside the Retirement Village."

Despite the gloomy prediction of the denominational representative in 1967, the arriving senior citizens, like Father Dodge many years before, brought with them a new energy and dynamism and a diversity of experience that contributed greatly to the church's understanding of community and mission. And with this upswing came a new series of resident pastors providing strong, progressive leadership.

The first of these was Rev. Willard Kratz (1970-1972) who arrived here, as Father Dodge had many years before, as an energetic senior citizen at the age of 68. He brought

with him a wealth of experience: as pastor of churches in Pennsylvania and Ohio, as teacher and counselor in numerous summer camps and conferences, as a two-term member on the church's Commission on Christian Social Action, and as a voting delegate to the Uniting General Synod that created the United Church of Christ in 1957.

Besides being a fine preacher and faithful pastor, visiting in the homes of members and at the Wharton Nursing Home, he left two special legacies. He believed in lifelong education and initiated a series of weekday adult seminars on various topics: the Bible and Christian faith, mission education subjects, social justice, and current events (the school alongside the church!).

He suggested starting a weekly church newsletter to help bind the members together. The mimeographed *Community Church Courier* began in January, 1971, with Viola Braun (Mrs. T.C.) as its first and continuing editor for seven years. As our church's booklet, *The First Hundred Years*, mentioned, "A valuable feature of the paper was the life stories of members, beginning with those who had been in the church the longest. These resulted from personal interviews by Mrs. Braun. They helped the members to know each other and were useful to those who had come in recent times in understanding something of the church's past."

Because of the drain on Rev. Kratz's energies, however, he had to resign after two years. The church, however, had turned an important corner in its life and was now on the upswing. During his two years of service, the church membership had grown from 108 to 137. There was a new optimism in the congregation, and a steady reservoir of new members from the alongside Uplands Retirement Village. (By 2010 it had grown to some 300 residents living in independent houses, duplex-condominiums, and apartments, as well as in an assisted living building and in four family-style nursing homes.)

This new neighborhood provided the church with a broader and more diverse membership that had a major impact upon the life and mission of the church:

> Many different <u>occupations</u>: retired ministers, missionaries, Conference ministers, public school, college, and seminary teachers, social workers, editors, librarians, doctors, dentists, nurses, farmers, salespeople, engineers, attorneys, bookkeepers, industrial managers, artists, and musicians.
>
> A variety of <u>denominational backgrounds</u>: primarily United Church of Christ, but also Christian (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal, Friends, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian, as well as Roman Catholic. Many of these members have been leaders in their former churches or in their denomination.
>
> Previous <u>service in many countries</u>: <u>Africa</u> (Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe); <u>Asia/Pacific</u> (China, India, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan); <u>Europe</u> (Austria, Portugal, Serbia); <u>Latin America</u> (Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico,

Venezuela); Middle East (Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Turkey). Over 600 years of service are represented.

Special gifts of time, talents, and treasure (the benefits of a lifetime of experience) that older people are able to bring to a community and church. Especially beneficial are the particular contributions of the persons who are drawn to an exceptional retirement community such as this, with its emphasis on well-being, wholeness, and health (shalom). This has been aided by the retirement community's ethos of caring and sharing, and its effort to make it possible (through keeping housing costs low and service fees at a minimum) for people of modest means to be a part of it.

Rev. Walter Hall (1972-1982) came here after serving churches in Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama. During his ten-year pastorate here, the church carried on a vigorous many-faceted program. The church made its sanctuary more user-friendly with carpeting on the cement floor, acoustical tile on the ceiling, cushions on the bench seats, air conditioning for the warm weather, and a cement walk leading to the front door. It installed a new roof in 1973, a carillon in 1975, and a new Allen electronic organ in 1978.

Another important innovation worth noting took place in 1973. Mr. Hall suggested the formation of a "telephone tree" to provide rapid communication when necessary, such as when a sudden snow or ice storm would cause the cancellation of a service or meeting.

Various church committees were busy carrying on the educational dream of the AMA. Adult study groups sponsored by the Christian Education Committee met on Sunday morning and during the week, focusing on Bible study, problems of Christian living, the world's great religions, and contemporary social problems from a Christian perspective.

There were few children in the church, so Helen Munson, a trained and experienced Christian Education worker, set up weekly after-school programs of Christian education for some twenty children from Pleasant Hill, Smith's Chapel, and Browntown who attended the elementary school across the road from the church. She started holding the classes in the Community House, but because of the difficulty in transporting audio-visual equipment and craft materials each week, she began holding classes in the basement of the Munson home.

The Christian Education Committee also served as a subscription agent for the denominational magazine—first the *United Church Herald*, and later *A.D.*—and also the conference publication, *Southeast News*. Free subscriptions were given to new member families.

The Social Justice Committee focused on such subjects as underprivileged children in our area, the need for health care, fair employment for minority persons, strip-

mining problems, the criminal justice system, the right to die, huge military expenditures, the world energy crisis, nuclear power, funeral costs, and foreign policy questions. In 1974 joint meetings were held with the Christian Education Committee on the subject of nuclear power, fossil fuels, and alternative energy sources.

An informal produce market on Saturday mornings at the Community House was started in 1978. Church members with gardens brought surplus produce and baked goods. Non-gardeners took what they could use and gave money in return that went to the denomination's Hunger Action Fund.

The Peace Committee sponsored meetings on what it would mean to be a Peacemaking Church. It organized a "Pens for Peace" effort to write short, well-informed letters on peace issues to senators and members of Congress. It also encouraged participation in Cumberland Countians for Peace (later to become Countians for Peace and Justice) and in other ecumenical groups working for peace.

In 1980 the church established a Historical Committee to conduct interviews with longtime members, collect news stories and historical records, and publish historical documents.

One six-year period (1974-1980) in Mr. Hall's pastorate turned out to be an unusual time of high activity in the area of the church's real estate:

Community House

In 1975 the church installed a second exit door in the Community House.

Craft Building

In 1975 the Craft Building was no longer being used for craft work. When Uplands expressed an interest in using the building, the church sold it to Uplands in consideration of a contribution of one dollar and other "good and valuable considerations." One of these other considerations was the following: approximately 600 square feet were to be reserved for use as church offices. After construction of office and meeting space for both Uplands and the church was completed, the building was renamed Heritage Hall and dedicated on September 27, 1980.

The Grab

For many years there were two thrift shops in Pleasant Hill—one started by Uplands as part of its service to the community and the other by the Academy to help students. Both were supplied with clothing sent by churches in the Northeast and Middle West.

After the Academy closed in 1947, its thrift shop, The Grab, became a program of the church's Community Center. For twenty years The Grab operated on the first floor of

Pioneer Hall (which the AMA had transferred to the church in 1947). In 1974 the two operations merged. After Pioneer Hall was turned over to the Pleasant Hill Historical Society, The Grab was moved in 1983 into the old water filter building next to the Wharton Nursing Home. But then in 2003 that building was condemned, and The Grab was closed.

But that wasn't the end of the story for The Grab! The rest of the story turned out in a way quite similar to the earlier one when Dr. May Wharton, who had been planning to move back to the East after the death of her husband, was met by a group of Pleasant Hill residents who asked her to remain. This time, concerned citizens of the community presented a petition with over fifty signatures requesting that The Grab be reopened. Their plea was responded to affirmatively, and The Grab was opened as a non-profit mission, with volunteer workers, and one salaried person at a location on West Main Street in Pleasant Hill.

Pioneer Hall

Father Dodge had begun constructing this building as a boys' dorm in 1887, and it was first occupied in 1889. When the Academy closed in 1947, the AMA gave it to the church for program use by its Community Center. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the church-sponsored thrift shop, The Grab, operated from there, and the church briefly used it for worship when the Community House was being renovated.

On April 15, 1976, Academy alumni and other interested persons in Cumberland County organized the Pleasant Hill Historical Society of the Cumberlands. They were interested in creating a museum in Pioneer Hall that would reflect the era of the Academy and life in the surrounding area in that period. To obtain a State History Grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission, however, the Society needed to be owners of the building. On April 9, 1980, the church conveyed title for the Pioneer Hall and land to the Historical Society.

Two years later, Mr. Hall's ten-year ministry ended. Some of the programs and county relationships that he had carried on during this ten-year period, however, were not continued. Mr. Hall had served as president of the Kiwanis Club, the local chapter of the Red Cross, the Cumberland County Ministerial Association, and was on the board of the United Fund in Crossville. He had also organized the county's eight-district volunteer fire department. As co-captain of the Pleasant Hill district, he carried a fire call beeper that sometimes interrupted a meeting! In 1973 our church and the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church held a Union Thanksgiving Eve service, with the Claysville United Methodist Church joining a later year. In 1976 our church's Board of Deacons initiated a community Good Friday service in Crossville.

As one of its parting gifts, the church gave Walter and Margaret Hall (who had served as the Historical Society's secretary, and also as a moderator of the Southeast Conference for four years) a lifelike replica of a pileated woodpecker created by a local carver.

The next full-time resident pastor, Rev. Robert Peeples (1983-1990), came here after pastorates in Pennsylvania and Ohio where he had taken an active part in Association, Conference, interdenominational, and community activities. As the church booklet, *The First Hundred Years*, commented, "From the beginning he proved to be a Scripturally-based, insightful and warmly persuasive preacher and a faithful, diligent pastor."

One of the first things Mr. Peeples did after arriving was to invite the members of the church to contribute devotional materials for a Lenten booklet. The members found this to be a valuable resource, and they continued to contribute material for devotional booklets each Advent and Lenten season. Mr. Peeples also planned for weekly noon luncheons during Lent and for celebrating the Lord's Supper seated around tables on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. A worship carriage for displaying objects of special significance for the Church Year was installed in the chancel.

Other important events took place in the sanctuary. After the Steinway grand piano was restored in 1984, the Music Committee began a yearly concert series. And just outdoors on the grounds near the sanctuary, the church started a Memorial Garden that was dedicated on April 14, 1988.

In addition to the educational programs carried on by the various committees, monthly fellowship (potluck) suppers incorporating educational features became one of the church's chief social functions. Due to the lack of children and youth in the church school, most of the church's educational work was with adults. This had been a continuing concern for the church down through the years, but with it had come a growing recognition of the sociological and theological "facts of life" for a liberal, progressive church in the Southern Bible Belt.

The report on the "Christian Education Program" in the church's anniversary booklet, *Ten Years into The Second Century: 1985-1995*, gave another corroboration of this "fact of life":

"Most of the people in Pleasant Hill define 'education' in the broadest terms. They are fully aware that learning is a life-long quest. The Church Covenant contains the words: 'We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us.'

"The growth of mind and spirit is not limited to a specific time or a designated place. Learning goes on through all our days and in all experiences of life. The church is constantly challenging us '…to seek and to respond to the Word and to the will of God.'

"Because of the nature of Pleasant Hill and Uplands, only a few children attend Church School classes. The liberal interpretation of the Bible, together with the emphasis upon social responsibility, is considered heretical by many churches in the South.

"Recently, several new families have moved from the north and have found this Church to be more to their liking, and better suited than most to provide the kind of education their children need. Should this trend continue, the teaching task of the Church will increase dramatically."

When the church membership reached 200, Mr. Peeples suggested dividing the parish into neighborhood groups to give members a chance to discuss opportunities for greater service to the area. The church started a Scholarship Fund for young people of the community who wanted a higher education. Proceeds from the Saturday Market originally went to the denomination's Hunger Action Fund but were later designated for local hunger needs.

Our church, through the leadership of two of our members, helped give birth to two important wider community ministries in Crossville. The first was Battered Women's Inc., a five-county, 24-hour shelter, counseling and support program for women who are victims of domestic violence. Its founder and first director was Ruth Peeples (Mrs. Robert). She had been the director of a Family Living program sponsored by the YWCA in Mansfield, Ohio, for four years, and also a probation counselor in that county's Juvenile Court for eight years. This thriving program now has a new name: the Avalon Center.

The second program birthed in Pleasant Hill was the Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP), a program that seeks to bring about reconciliation between victims and offenders outside the court system. Its local founder and first director was Leonard Stark.

Our congregation's mission of giving financial aid to other groups and institutions in need included six AMA-founded black colleges in the South as well as Uplands! By 1977 our church had contributed $10,456 to the UCC's 17/76 Achievement Fund Campaign for the benefit of the six black colleges. Our first Uplands Day Offering on May 14, 1978 amounted to $3,146. It gradually increased each year until in 1985 it reached $11,018. The church also began to reach out beyond our local area. When a black congregation in Atlanta needed a new roof on their building, our congregation provided necessary funds.

To help broaden our church's global vision, Bob and Ruth Peeples introduced SERRV products and crafts to our congregation and also to our Southeast Conference in 1989. SERRV is a nonprofit organization with a mission to eradicate poverty wherever it exists by providing opportunity and support to artisans worldwide. It was started in 1949 by the Church of the Brethren to help refugees in Europe to recover economically and socially from World War II. (The name SERRV was originally an acronym for Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation and Vocation.") SERRV is a founding member of the World Fair Trade Organization and a founding member of the Fair Trade Federation.

In 1984 the sum of our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Hunger Action, Peace Offering, The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, and

the Morgan-Scott project exceeded that of any other Southeast Conference church. As reported in *The First Hundred Years,* our contribution to Our Christian World Mission (OCWM)—the Southeast Conference and the world and homeland ministries of the UCC—was exceeded by only two other churches in the Southeast Conference, both located in cities and with larger memberships.

That mission accomplishment was an indication of how far our church had traveled from that moment almost a hundred years earlier when a small group of sixteen people gathered in a little schoolhouse in the mountain wilderness of eastern Tennessee to organize a church!

The congregation's Centennial celebration in 1985 turned out to be one of the high points in Mr. Peeples' eight-year pastorate. During the year there were six special events featuring speakers from various parts of the United Church of Christ:

March 24: Rev. Eric Gass (Secretary for Southern Asia of the United Church Board for World Ministries).
June 9: Rev. Walter Hall (former pastor).
August 4: Rev. Victor Obenhaus (principal of the Academy from 1938 to 1944).
September 15: Rev. Howard Spragg (former executive vice president of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries).
October 6: Rev. David Stowe (former executive vice president of the United Church Board for World Ministries).
November 10: Rev. Emmett Floyd (Southeast Conference Minister)

Three historical documents came out of the Centennial celebration: an 88-page booklet, *The First Hundred Years of the Pleasant Hill Community Church, United Church of Christ*, (which has been referred to a number of times in this history), a Centennial Quilt (which has been hanging at various times in the sanctuary and in Boyce Hall), and a Centennial Poem, "Our Church – The Symbols of a Century" by Mr. Peeples. A hand-drawn picture of the quilt (with the artisans' names added) and a copy of the poem—both treasured documents—have been copied from the church's 110th Anniversary booklet, *Ten Years into The Second Century, 1985-1995*, and are included in the Appendix.

Another sign of advancing congregational age was the introduction in 1988 of a new church position: a Historian. Margaret Ensminger and Anita Harris served in this position during the first six years, and then Alice Braunwarth for the next sixteen.

When it came time to retire, the Peeples decided that Uplands was an ideal place to spend the rest of their lives. They built a new home at the end of Church Drive that included a small indoor swimming pool because of Mr. Peeple's health needs. (Ruth Peeples has continued to share this pool with fellow Uplanders wishing to participate in water exercises.)

Realizing that most pastors today prefer to own their own homes, the church gave the old parsonage at 60 West Main St. to the Uplands Retirement Village for use as a land-lease home.

At a retirement dinner on January 3, 1991, the church gave the Peeples a money gift to cover the application and membership fees for joining the Retirement Village. It was indeed a symbol of the warm relationship between the church and its pastors over the years: that the church members have been glad to have their retiring pastor and spouse remain as a part of the church family, and that the two have been happy to remain as members of this retirement community and church.

This pattern of close relationship and affinity has continued down through the years. After Paul Reynolds died on October 4, 1974, Charlotte Reynolds continued living in Uplands until her death on July 19, 1980. After Willard Kratz died on November 16, 1974, Nancy Kratz became Activities Coordinator at Wharton Nursing Home in 1975, retiring in 1985. After Robert Peeples' retirement at the end of 1991 and death in 1998, Ruth Peeples continued to serve as one of the key environmental consciences of our church and our retirement community. She is also a member of the Board of Cumberland Good Samaritans, a role she has held since its inception.

Early in 1990 one of our church's first events-of-its-kind took place. Leonard and Betty Stark and Lillie Keene became the first members of our church to visit Cuba as participants in the annual UCC Cuba Study Seminar program. Leonard and Betty took along wood carvings of Uncle Pink and Aunt Jennie by Pleasant Hill wood carver Polly Page to present to the International Doll Museum in Havana. A story and photo of the presentation was carried in Havana's daily newspaper.

The Pastoral Search Committee, in its search for a successor to Mr. Peeples, found the task a daunting one. Rev. Roger Knight, Southeast Conference Minister, had sent the committee some sixty files from potential candidates in fourteen states. Most, however, expressed no interest in a liberal "New England" church in the South, isolated from the "main stream" of the denomination, and especially one alongside a retirement community with so many clergy and missionary types in residence and few children. They considered all of these as "handicaps."

One candidate, however, was not turned off or intimidated by these factors. After serving churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey, Rev. Edward Schneider (1991-2001) became our next full-time resident pastor. As our church's anniversary booklet, *Ten Years into the Second Century: 1985-1995*, states, "Ed and Goldie were warmly received and quickly settled into the life of the Church and the Pleasant Hill community. They soon became acquainted and found the congregation responsive to the ideas and plans of the new leadership."

After arranging with Uplands to buy a home on Yonside Drive, Mr. Schneider introduced some of his new ideas. The first was an annual "Festival of Life"—a weekend

of special emphases and speakers conveying themes of celebration, joy, vitality, and variety. The second was an annual "Blessing of the Pets" on or near the feast day of St. Francis to demonstrate the mutual association of humans and animals as God's creatures and to express gratitude for what animals provide humans. This celebration always included the residents of the Wharton Nursing Home. Mr. Schneider also began including lay liturgists each week. In 1991 the church also began providing van transportation between Wharton and the church.

Also in 1991 the church established a Child Enrichment Center (a day-care center) in Pleasant Hill for preschool children.

Throughout each year the church carried on its basic adult educational program through three committees—Christian Education, Social Justice, and Peace. The Christian Education Committee offered study groups each Sunday morning—one on the Bible led by the pastor, and one on current social issues. It also sponsored occasional "Conversations With…" led by visitors or by anyone who has had unusual experiences or knowledge to share. The pastor also presented special courses on "Human Sexuality" and "Death and Dying."

The Social Justice and Peace Committees presented videos and discussions on all kinds of social issues, including an annual eight-week study provided by "Great Decisions" and published by the Foreign Policy Association.

The Music Committee had responsibility for supporting the church's music ministry—the choir, choir director, and organist. In December, 1992, the Committee planned a congregational appreciation party in Heritage Hall on the retirement of organist John Grant (from 1978 to 1992) and choir director Barry Evans (from 1981 to 1992). The church was fortunate to have two excellent pianists, Ruth Mackenzie and Lauradell Peppard, who often played during the worship services. They and other musical individuals and groups also gave special Sunday afternoon concerts during the year.

The church was beginning to find the office and classroom space allotted to it on the west end of Heritage Hall too cramped. It set up a Study Committee that planned for smaller meetings in homes and larger gatherings in Heritage Hall to consider a solution. On April 15, 1992, the Study Committee recommended an addition to the present sanctuary to include a welcoming space, office rooms, choir/meeting room, accessible rest rooms, and a canopied entrance. A Building Committee was set up which eventually recommended constructing a new wing to the south and east of the sanctuary. The ground-breaking for this new addition took place on June 12, 1994.

Mention should be made at this point about an important program that was held in Heritage Hall during these final years of the decade. In the fall of 1994 an Artisan Fair was developed to sell more SERRV items, and was then expanded to include artisans from the Uplands and Pleasant Hill communities. Many people displayed, demonstrated, and sold their artistic work at this time. The Fair continued until 1999.

The last five years of the decade and century (1995-2000) also turned out to be very influential ones for the church in almost every area of its life and mission as it moved beyond past boundaries.

In 1995 the church completed the new wing which included a small fellowship hall, two office rooms (for pastor and secretary), two classrooms (a larger one with an accordion partition and a smaller one), a choir room, and two rest rooms.

The fellowship hall was named "Boyce Hall" in honor of two generations of Boyces who had been church members. In 1909 the AMA had sent Alexander and Sallie Boyce to Pleasant Hill, Alexander to be the business manager of the Academy and Sallie to be a home economics teacher. Alexander later served as treasurer for the church. When their son William graduated from Berea, he married Leola Piper who had been an operating room nurse and supervisor in Dr. May Wharton's hospital. Bill became director of the Community Center program (and Craft Shop) with offices in Pioneer Hall and managed the Farmers Cooperative. Both Bill and Leola served on various boards and the Church Council.

The church library (which had grown to 539 books) was moved from Heritage Hall into the former choir room at the back of the sanctuary to make it more accessible for the church. A Library Committee was established, and in time catalogued all the books that were bought or donated, reviewed the new ones, and included short reviews of these in the *Courier*. By 1999 the library had grown to 881 titles.

While those renovations were going on inside the church building, new parking spaces were created in front of the church, and later along Church Street up to Main Street. Two UCC/PHCC signs were placed on Route 70—one near Kroger's in Crossville and the second at the Main Street turnoff into Pleasant Hill.

One of the most significant events in the church's worship life took place in 1995 when the church purchased 150 copies of the *New Century Hymnal*. This gave the congregation access to a wide variety of contemporary as well as older hymns, including ones from other nations and cultures (Dakota, Japanese, Samoan, Hawaiian, Spanish, French, and German). It was meaningful, too, to discover that fifty-three of the 617 hymns had been written by UCC members. As we began using this resource, we discovered that the UCC hymnal committee had made a special effort to revise the language of older hymns that formerly relied heavily on militaristic, sexist, or racist terms. In many ways the new hymnal became for us a wonderful symbol of mission and worship without boundaries.

In 1996 Elizabeth Lewis became our church organist, and Jerry Lewis our choir director, both serving until 2003. Jerry, a trombonist and former high school band director, also became director of the Pleasant Hill Ensemble the same year.

Another important step symbolizing "mission without boundaries" took place in 1996 when the church decided that non-confirmed children who are at an age of

understanding may take holy communion. The next year, in 1997, another unusual event (for this church) took place: two confirmands, Mary Ann Dodson and Cynthia Marie Gilpin, joined the church! Focusing on the other end of the life span, the congregation began a bereavement support group which met as needed. In 1998 the church named its memorial garden the Robert F. Peeples Memorial Garden. And in September, 1999, another unusual event took place: the church hosted the Annual Meeting of the AlaTenn Association.

During these last five years of the decade the three primary program committees—Christian Education, Social Justice, and Peace—offered a robust menu of study groups and discussion subjects. The "Conversations With…" series sponsored by the Christian Education Committee featured quite a smorgasbord of topics: Angola, Peabody Legacy, Justice and Peace, Cuba, Thailand, Toshihira, Women's Conference, Global Ministries, China Trip, Japanese missionaries, and School of Americas protest. Special workshops were held on Disarmament, Conscientious Objection, Conflict Resolution, and Reducing Media Violence. In 1997 the church sponsored a two-month study of homosexuality.

Beginning in 1997, the church set aside funds in the annual budget to offer a sabbatical to the pastor. In 1998 Mr. Schneider became the first pastor to have this educational opportunity. He was able to take a three-month sabbatical to visit a number of seminary libraries in his study of the Jesus Seminar.

There were many examples of our church members' involvement in service and mission opportunities and outreach during these years. The church awarded over $6,000 in scholarship help to needy local students in Cumberland County. Financial contributions were sent to Back Bay Mission, the Morgan-Scott Gardening Project, Bread for the World, and Battered Women. The church sponsored Dhatchayani, an Indian orphan girl, the Mijatovic-Bojic families from Bosnia who settled in Pleasant Hill (and eventually, in Crossville), and a Habitat for Humanity House in Crossville.

Our church members contributed more than money. A number of members participated in a demonstration at Fort Benning, Georgia, against the infamous School of the Americas. Work campers from our church helped rebuild burned black Baptist churches in Georgia and Alabama.

In 1999 seventeen of our members, after visiting Cuba through the annual UCC Cuba Study Seminar program, proposed the establishment of a "sister church" partnership with the Second Baptist Church in Santiago de Cuba, a relationship ratified with joy by both churches. Our church then set up a Mission Partnership Committee that eventually became the Wider Church Relations Committee.

As the church approached the end of the decade, it became obvious that space in both the sanctuary and the new wing needed to be expanded. Various ideas were shared (expanding the sanctuary, building a new one, going to two services, expanding the

fellowship hall, adding another classroom or two, expanding the Community House). A building committee was set up.

Another end-of-the-decade idea was submitted to the church (and to Uplands) by one of its members: establishing a new kind of Pleasant Hill Academy for the New Millennium. This idea was discussed in neighborhood groups and received strong support (although the Academy alumni did not want their name used by another group or institution). One early suggestion was to have the church and Uplands elect representatives to the governing board, but neither the church nor Uplands desired this. The name "Shalom Center for Continuing Education" was chosen, and with an independent board and a 501c(3) status, it came to life in 2000.

The Center's Statement of Purpose provides a good indication of how the Center sought to honor and carry on the Academy's purpose: "The Shalom Center for Continuing Education is a non-profit educational center whose purpose is to provide opportunities for holistic education in areas of social, economic, cultural, ecological, and theological importance on behalf of shalom (wholeness, health, and peace). Through conferences, workshops, forums, retreats, institutes, and courses the Shalom Center seeks to engage those in Pleasant Hill and beyond in a learning process that is lifelong, inclusive, imaginative, and celebrative, recognizing the integrity of creation and the unity of its inhabitants."

One of the early programs of the Shalom Center, "Transforming Faith into Action," was led by Millard and Linda Fuller, founders of Habitat for Humanity. Although sessions were held in Adshead Hall, Mr. Fuller wanted to take a look inside the Community House. He remembered that he had preached there many years before when he was president of the Southeast Conference's Pilgrim Fellowship!

The 2000 new year began with a January 6-13 visit by the co-pastors of our sister church in Santiago de Cuba, Elmer Lavastida and Gisela Perez. Their visit, and the visits of twenty-seven members of our congregation to the Cuban church, helped strengthen the partner relationship tremendously. During this same year the two churches joined in a mutual study of *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life* by Ross and Gloria Kinsler.

The new year also brought a sad development—the retirement of Mr. Schneider, but one with a happy outcome since he and his wife, Goldie, would be continuing to live in the Uplands Retirement Village and remain members of the church. This gave Goldie a chance to continue singing in the choir and serving in her important work as a tutor and liaison with the Pleasant Hill Elementary School.

In this historical roster of full-time resident pastors, we haven't included the many interim pastors along the way. But we do want to mention three recent ones by name, Rev. Ben Welch, Rev. Bill Ring, and Rev. Jack Seville, with gratitude for their valued service in our midst. The two have chosen to continue on, with their wives, as members of the church and the local community.

After Mr. Schneider's retirement, the church continued its extensive educational and service programs through various committees. It sponsored a series of Islamic studies, an Alternative Christmas Fair during Advent, a Longest Night Service for those alone during the Christmas season, and a New Year's Service. The Library Committee began a Remembrance Story Hour honoring past church members. The church also replaced its electronic Allen organ with a more versatile Rodgers organ.

In its outreach ministry, the church purchased twenty-four dulcimers for the Pleasant Hill Elementary School fourth graders to learn to play, and the Social Action Committee gave the school $200 to put on a play. Via a Pastors for Peace caravan the church sent to Cuba nineteen wheelchairs (no longer meeting the code for Wharton Nursing Home but still very usable), a computer, medical supplies, and theological books for Matanzas Seminary graduates.

Meanwhile, the Pastoral Search Committee had been hard at work. After looking at many profiles, one especially caught the attention of the committee members: the profile of Thomas Warren. After getting a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Sociology, he had taught for a year and then become a drug counselor. But feeling called into the ministry, he went to Eden Seminary and then served a church in New Orleans for five years where he had turned a dying church into a strong congregation with increased giving and involvement in community and ecumenical activities.

The Search Committee told Rev. Timothy Downs, the Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference, "We want Tom Warren!" At first Mr. Warren was not sure that he wanted to come to a church with so many older people in it, but the Conference Minister highly recommended this church to him. When he came to visit our church in November, 2001, the congregation voted unanimously to call him as our next pastor, and at the age of thirty-six, he became the youngest of all our pastors. He and his wife, Kim Miller (who also has a master's degree in Sociology), brought with them two young children, Daniel (3) and Abigail (1), a new experience for our church!

Since such a young pastor was ineligible for housing in the retirement village, Mr. Warren and his wife found a house to their liking on the western side of Crossville. This turned out to offer a happy proximity to later benefits such as soccer fields for Daniel and the Playhouse dance school and programs for Abigail. And Kim Miller was able to use her Sociology background on the staff of the Avalon Center as a court advocate, program director, and domestic violence therapist. (She is now an independent contractor.)

Rev. Thomas Warren (2002-) began his ministry with us on Ash Wednesday. He soon discovered that it was a lively congregation that empowered, challenged, and liberated its pastors with a smorgasbord of ongoing programs and interests, and yet one that was open to new ideas. That year the church began an annual Leadership Transition Retreat for old and new boards and committees to help them organize for the year ahead, an Undershepherd Ministry, and a Founders Day program to recognize those who had been members for over twenty years. Eighty books were added to the library, and 105

withdrawn, bringing the total to 896 titles. Groups studying the Bible and current issues were active on Sunday mornings, and a group discussing selected books met on Friday afternoons.

The church's presence was not overlooked in the wider community. A lighted sign with the church's name and removable lettering was installed at the corner of Church and Main Streets. The church also sponsored an annual VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program in the Community House for the first time—an AARP-related program of great help to taxpayers in the area. And church members held a prayer vigil on the Courthouse lawn in Crossville to protest President Bush's proposed war against Iraq.

When Liz and Jerry Lewis retired as organist and choir director that year, the church enlisted Uplands newcomers Dan and Emily Byrens for these positions, and in 2004 gave them the title of "Directors of Music" with shared responsibilities as organist and choir director. Often on a Sunday morning their musical accompaniment has included a piano and electronic keyboard as well as the organ. In 2003 they started a handbell choir. For four years they also served as director and organist for the Cumberland County Community Chorus in Crossville. The Byrens had previously been on the faculty at Olivet College in Michigan for fourteen years, and had served on the faculty of Silliman University in the Philippines for four years (plus six more years part-time).

In early 2003, Mr. Warren participated in the annual UCC Cuba Study Seminar program and preached in our sister church in Santiago de Cuba. In July of that same year in Minneapolis he joined the editorial staff of *Balaam's Courier*, a daily publication of critical theological and sociological commentary that had been handed out to delegates and visitors at every General Synod since 1975. In Volume 7 ("United and Uniting") of *The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ* (one of the books in our church library), editors Frederick R. Trost and Barbara Brown Zikmund acknowledged the importance of B.C.'s theological critique and commentary for the UCC over the years. Tom Warren continued as a staff member at the following General Synods in Atlanta (2005), Hartford (2007), and Grand Rapids (2009).

Although the Building Committee had received approval at congregational meetings to proceed with expansion plans by a slim margin, concerns over the building plans continued to take up time and energy. The pastor recommended that there be a five-year moratorium on new building plans, and the congregation voted in December to begin such a moratorium. This immediately released a lot of energy for other church concerns.

The following are brief summaries of highlights for each year until the end of the decade:

In 2004 the church started singles and drama ministries, a Lenten study group, a Hanging of the Greens service at the beginning of Advent, and a confirmation class for

DeLisa Allen and Grace McCloud. It appointed an Evangelism Committee to give special attention to church outreach, informing the wider community about the ministry of our church and our heritage, welcoming visitors and reaching out to potential new members. Eighteen new members joined the church, bringing its membership to 230 (including fifty associate members). The church began showing a slow steady growth over the following years, despite the fact that a large percentage of the members were advanced in age.

The church purchased and installed pew Bibles, a stand for Advent candles, a new steel roof for the church building, a new heating/cooling unit with a programmable thermostat for the sanctuary, energy-efficient light bulbs in all the church fixtures, and a new pole light next to the Church Street parking lot.

The Board of Trustees invested in Oikocredit and the United Church Foundation. The Wider Church Relations Committee started the monthly "Power of the Penny" offering. A national UCC Cuba Seminar Alumni Gathering was held at our church in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the seminar program.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 170 extended the Community House roof over the front porch, improved the outside lighting, and installed outdoor benches.

In 2005 the church adopted a revised Constitution that provided for four new committees: Evangelism, Hospitality, Personnel, and Long Range Planning. All-church gatherings were now called "Gatherings." A new carillon in memory of Anne Kingsbury was installed in the church, and also a new sound system. Twenty-one new members joined the church, bringing its membership to 238 (including forty-five associate members). An interesting fact here is that twenty percent of these members were non-Uplanders living in the Sparta, Crossville, or Fairfield Glade area—another example of a "mission without boundaries" thrust taking place.

There was a special focus on the Community House during the year. In preparation for the housing of three youth work camps during the summer, the church installed a new roof and renovated the two bathrooms, installing a shower in each. Tricia Gardner, a student at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, was added to the church staff as Work Camp Coordinator for the summer. Several other additions represented the work of local artisans. Tiles displaying local flora and fauna that had been created by Trudie Palm were placed above the fireplace, and a wooden fireplace screen created by Dick Lammers was placed in front of the fireplace. A handcrafted wooden plaque indicating that the Community House had served as the church building between 1929 and 1959, also made by Dick Lammers, was placed next to the front entrance.

A special art-related event featured the work of a Cuban artisan, Livia Carreno, whom UCC Cuba Study Seminar participants had met in Havana. An exhibit of her fabric artwork was held in the Crossville Depot. Examples of her art can be found in the homes of a number of church and Uplands members and also in the parlor area of one of the Wharton residential units.

Our church's interest and involvement in Cuba have become an important part of its commitment to a "mission without boundaries." Between 1990 and 2005, forty members of our church visited Cuba through our denomination's annual Cuba Study Seminar program. In 2000, as mentioned earlier, our congregation established a sister church relationship with a congregation in Cuba.

In this special mission relationship, we have found the message of Ephesians 2:13-15 a very powerful one for us: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace."

Participating in such a mission beyond boundaries, however, has had its hurdles and difficulties. Our government, in its hostility to Cuba's independence and its political, social, and economic development, has erected boundaries and walls between our nation and that nation only ninety miles from us: a blockade, travel restrictions, and other kinds of impediments.

In recent years our government has required U.S. citizens wishing to travel to Cuba to obtain a travel license from the U.S. Treasury department (to control the use of money spent in Cuba). In 2005, the U.S. Administration refused to renew the two-year travel licenses of church denominations and universities (but still allowed individual, mostly conservative, congregations to obtain licenses for use by only their own members). As a result, our Global Ministries department lost its travel permission for the Cuban seminar program.

This hostility has also affected the pastor of our sister church. Elmer Lavastida had been invited by Eden Seminary in St. Louis to teach a course on the book of Romans. The U.S. State Department has twice denied his travel application on the grounds that his trip would be "detrimental" to the interests of the United States. .

Meanwhile, in September, 2005, our church celebrated Rally Day with a picnic on the Dodson farm. And on the five Sundays in October in Boyce Hall it held a Mission Fair with artifacts and international finger foods. Part of Room 3 was converted into a display area for SERRV and Fair Trade products.

In 2006, the church changed the time of the worship service from 11:00 to 10:45 to provide more time for the sharing of concerns, announcements, and various liturgical components. Gracie Allen's statement "Never place a period where God places a comma" came to have special meaning for our congregation's theology and mission. Twenty-three new members joined the church, bringing its membership to 252 (including forty-five associate members).

Church committees had a busy year. The Christian Education Committee purchased comma pins for sale to members and as gifts to new members. On Mother's Day it recommended "Give yo' Momma a Comma!" It also sponsored "Living the Questions," a multi-unit DVD-based study series. Six-to-eight children attended Sunday School.

The Peace Committee donated a Peace Fountain in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. The fountain, now located in the front of the sanctuary, is described in the Sunday bulletin as follows: "The gentle, flowing water of the peace fountain serves as a constant reminder that we are called to be peacemakers in an unjust world and of the 'waters of baptism' by which we all enter the 'new life in Christ.'" Members of our church joined with members of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Fairfield Glade in weekly peace vigils in Crossville, and in a contemporary Stations of the Cross on the Courthouse lawn on Good Friday.

The Evangelism Committee sponsored "Getting to Know You" dinners for the whole congregation in various homes. A booth at the Cumberland County Fairs was staffed by church members.

The Wider Church Relations Committee had a year's emphasis on Christian-Muslim relations. During July a Pastors for Peace caravan stopped by church to pick up theological resource books (a Biblical dictionary, concordance, and commentary in Spanish) for each graduating student at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba. This project was started some years ago by participants in the UCC Cuba Study Seminar program..

The Music Committee sponsored a concert by the Sweetwater Japanese School Bell Choir.

After seven all-church gatherings to hear and discuss becoming "Open and Affirming," the vote to become this was overwhelmingly positive.

The Alabama-Tennessee Association held its Fall Gathering in our church with former UCC President Paul Sherry as keynote speaker.

The UCC's Council for Health and Human Services Ministries (CHHSM) presented its Local Church Stewardship Award to our church for its support of a CHHSM ministry (Uplands).

The church purchased a portable public address system for use in Boyce Hall and other places. Thermal windows and weather stripping were installed in the Community House.

In 2007, the church commissioned a Visioning Team to develop a strategic plan for the future direction of the church. An all-church retreat on the theme "Invitation to a Journey" was held at the 4-H Center in March with over 100 in attendance. Twenty-three

new members joined the church, bringing its membership to 262 (including fifty-one associate members).

The church purchased a new electronic keyboard, laptop computer, and S-Video cable for powerpoint presentations. The sacristy/storeroom was eliminated in order to expand the choir loft space in the sanctuary. (The choir now had thirty-five members.)

In the education department, "Living the Questions" seminars were held in the spring and fall. Church member Annie Crabtree of the Cumberland County Playhouse staff became director of the church school children's program and brought new levels of creativity and enthusiasm to the educational endeavor. The children's classroom (combined rooms 1 and 2) was painted and equipped with new curtains, tables, chairs, and storage cabinets.

The church remodeled the kitchen in the Community House, installing new cabinets, flooring, counter tops, stove, and dishwasher.

2008 turned out to be an especially significant year for the life and mission of our church. Three important programs got underway with the help of Rev. Cameron Trimble, Associate Conference Minister for Church Development. A Visioning Team was given the responsibility to lead the congregation in "recognizing who we are as a church, envisioning the development of our church's future ministry, and offering recommendations for a strategic plan to fulfill that vision." It organized twenty-one small group meetings with over 200 participants followed by a congregational gathering to discuss the vision and a draft of a Strategic Plan (subsequently adopted). The church appointed an Implementation Team to oversee the carrying out of the Plan's directives, and a Space Expansion Task Force to gather information about space needs.

The following "Continuing Vision" came out of the group process: "Pleasant Hill Community Church, United Church of Christ, seeks to be an inclusive community committed to the worship of God, the work of God's justice and peace, the sacredness of all God's creation, and the recognition of our common humanity in the struggles of life; to be a Christian presence and voice in our upper Cumberland region."

The church chose the following three strategies:

Strategy One: Nurturing a faith to live by… (Kerygma)
"When we gather together to hear the Word proclaimed in preaching, music and prayer, when we join together in small group study, and when we informally share our faith in fellowship, we strengthen and focus our commitment to embrace more fully the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Strategy Two: Embracing a people to live with… (Koinonia)
"As a community of faith, we aim to strengthen and enliven the church through invitation, education, inclusion, care and advocacy."

Strategy Three: Engaging a mission to live for… (Diakonia)
"We continue to struggle for peace, justice, and compassionate care as expressions of our inclusive Christian faith, and service within our congregation, among our local neighbors, and with our brothers and sisters around the world."

The time came for Tom Warren to take a three-month sabbatical. During the summer months he and his family went to Latin America—first to Guatemala for Spanish language study, and then to Cuba and Venezuela to study the role of the church in times and places of social change. (They were able to use a special Cuba travel license from U.S. Treasury that could be used by only our own congregation members.)

In Cuba they visited Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Martin Luther King Center in Havana, the seminary in Matanzas, and then spent several weeks with our sister church in Santiago de Cuba. Daniel and Abigail had the special experience of participating in the Vacation Bible School there. In Venezuela they were hosted by the Pentecostal Church, a partner of our UCC's Wider Church Ministries. In a real sense, their whole family became an example of Christian presence and voice in those places beyond our upper Cumberland region.

During the summer the church hosted the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference, held an all-church picnic at the 4-H Center, and hosted a work camp by a youth group from Claremont, California on its way home from the National Youth Event in Knoxville. Debbie Douglas, formerly on the development staff of Uplands, left for three years of studies at Eden Seminary in St. Louis. The church provided scholarship support for her.

The church sponsored two children—one from Haiti and the other from Zimbabwe—through the UCC Child Sponsorship Program, and the children's Sunday School class also sponsored a child from Zimbabwe.

A Prayer group and a Grief group began meeting regularly and a Forgiveness Workshop was held. Members of the church formed a new group, Action by Christians Against Torture (ACAT-USA-TN). Members checked 1016 books out of the church library during the year. Fifteen new members joined the church, bringing its membership to 265 (including forty-six associate members).

After the General Synod meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, in 2007, the United Church Press invited the staff of *Balaam's Courier* to write an unofficial handbook of the UCC. In 2008 this book, *Balaam's Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of Christ*, co-edited by Ted Braun, Tom Warren, and two others, was published. A number of churches and conferences are now using this resource to introduce the UCC to new members.

At the beginning of 2009 the church adopted a new mission statement: "The Pleasant Hill Community Church is a congregation of the United Church of Christ witnessing to the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ. This local church is committed

to being a Just Peace, Open and Affirming, Whole Earth congregation inviting all God's children into its ministry of peacemaking, healing, compassionate outreach, environmental consciousness, and extravagant welcome." Toward the end of the year, Global Ministries gave our church a fourth designation: a "Global Mission" Church.

During 2009, sixteen new members joined the church, bringing the membership to 271 (including forty-three associate members). Two of these, who had moved back to Pleasant Hill, brought with them a lot of history. Frank Meisamer had been born at Uplands. His father had been manager, superintendent, and then administrator of the Uplands General Hospital, and his mother had been its first director of nurses. Then when the Wharton Nursing Home started, his father was its first administrator, and his mother, its first director of nurses. In the 1950's Frank served as chair of the Building Committee for the new sanctuary building completed in 1959. Ann Meisamer's father and mother were graduates of the Academy, and her father had been manager of the Academy farm. All had been active members of the church in their day.

But something new was happening, too. PHCC now had members not only from Pleasant Hill, but also from Crossville, Fairfield Glade, Sparta, and Cookeville and was becoming a regional church.

As Moderator Lyle Weible mentioned in his year-end report, "The vitality and vibrancy of PHCC was evident throughout 2009." And as Pastor Tom Warren mentioned in his report, "We continue to grow both in terms of members and in terms of programming and outreach." He mentioned highlights such as "Christian Education programs which continually push us all to expand our horizons and understandings about the world and our faith; a strong witness for social justice and peace locally and throughout the world; and inspirational worship services anchored by our choir and the gifts of Emily and Dan Byrens."

We had moved from being a small to a moderate-sized church. As such, the church had become a highly organized and participatory one, with most of its work being carried on through various boards and committees (involving ninety-seven members out of the 271). There were two Boards (Deacons and Trustees); seven Program Committees (Christian Education, Evangelism, Music, Peace, Social Justice, Stewardship & Church Support, and Wider Church Relations); nine Service Committees (Audio-Visual, Churchwide Events, Flower, Hospitality, Library, Memorial Fund, Reception, Scholarship, and Thrift Shop); and five Administrative Committees (Audit, Long-Range Planning, Nominating, Pastoral Relations, and Personnel).

The Christian Education Committee had an especially busy year. A five-day Vacation Bible School headed by Annie Crabtree and involving more than twenty-five children was one of the highlights. Many volunteers helped out, and Debbie Douglas, who had been assigned by Eden Seminary to our church as a summer intern, was a special asset. It was unusual for a student intern to be assigned to a home church, but the seminary recognized the excellent experience that this exceptional church offered.

Ms. Douglas also spent a week at General Synod in Grand Rapids serving on the editorial staff of *Balaam's Courier*, along with Tom Warren and Ted Braun. (A footnote: B.C., a non-official publication, is funded each time by contributions from supporters around the country and from delegates and visitors at General Synod. This time, one-third of the contributions came from members of our own Pleasant Hill church—an indication of our congregation's support for this prophetic endeavor at General Synod.)

The number of children attending Sunday School occasionally reached a dozen or more. A large number of adults were involved in study and discussion classes on Sunday mornings and during the week. Three important study books were *The First Paul* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *Unbinding the Gospel* by Martha Reese, and *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith: The Eye-Opening, Hope-Filled Friendship of a Pastor, a Rabbi, and a Sheikh* by Don Mackenzie, Rabbi Ted Falcon, and Sheikh Jamal Rahman. Three factors made the last book especially meaningful for us: Interfaith relations were becoming a contentious issue in our country; the Shalom Center for Continuing Education had brought the three authors to Pleasant Hill for a weekend educational event; and Don Mackenzie's mother, Ruth Mackenzie, is a member of our church and of Uplands!

The Theology Among the People (TAP) program involved between four and nine people in its courses. The "Conversations With" programs presented topics such as Kids on the Rise, mission in Sudan, and the results of a study about memory.

The Evangelism Committee created name tags for new members as well as for the old, and took along a loaf of bread when visiting newcomers. It placed ads in the Crossville Chronicle to announce the Easter and Christmas special services. The ads followed the "God is Still Speaking" format of red and black colors and the comma. The Committee also hosted a trip to the Cumberland County Playhouse to see "Nunsense." This was followed by a pizza party at the Community House.

The Music Committee presented four special musical events during the year—a concert by the North Central College Choir of Naperville, IL; a piano recital by a woman from Vienna, and two vocal concerts. The congregation especially appreciated the outstanding variety and excellence of the choral, organ, piano, and bell choir music that filled each worship hour with wonderful sound. A thirty-five member choir, a fourteen-member bell choir, a packed sanctuary of worshipers singing in four-part harmony provided a great weekly experience. Adding to the appreciation was the coherence between the words of the Scripture, sermon, hymns, anthem, and the hymn-verse refrains and responses that have become such a valuable component in each Sunday service.

The Sunday worship atmosphere has also been enriched by the creative use of fabrics and three-dimensional pieces contributed by various members. These have included both objects accumulated from their varied lives throughout the world and creations of their own handiwork. As with the music, these have helped integrate pulpit, communion table, spherical orb, and front wall into the church season and sermon themes. This special chancel décor has been designed and coordinated by artist Herbie

Naumann on behalf of the Deacons. In addition to this, the Flower Committee has been responsible for the imaginative arrangements of greenery and flowers each week.

The church and Uplands have traditionally shown a great appreciation for the arts and crafts and for the creators of such. After the annual Artisan Fair ended in 1999, a program of one- and two-person exhibitions evolved into almost monthly shows in Adshead Hall. Featured displays have included paintings, drawings, photography, textiles, needlework, quilts, beadwork, woodwork, sculpture, basketry, weavings, metal or stone work, and written materials—along with group shows of assorted arts and crafts. (A listing of the church's artisan members is included in the Appendix.)

In April of 2010 when UCC theologian and sculptor Charles McCollough was here for a Shalom Center event, one of his sessions was on "The Art of Parables: Reinterpreting the Teaching Stories of Jesus in Word and Sculpture." He brought several sculptures with him to illustrate his theme. Two of them portrayed the great joy that is felt in finding a lost coin or in rescuing a lost sheep. Fortunately our church was able to obtain both of these sculptures for placement in our new expanded facilities—symbolizing our joy in a mission of discovery, reuniting, and celebration.

The Peace, Social Justice, and Wider Church Relations Committees worked cooperatively on a yearlong emphasis on Immigration and Immigrant Rights. This included developing a sense of friendship and solidarity with the members of a Hispanic congregation in Crossville, sponsoring a potluck supper and talk on immigration legislation and reform by Alex Douglas of the Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC, showing the film "The Cats of Mirikitani," and planning our church's observance of Immigrant Sunday on May 3.

The Committees also had their own separate programs. The Peace Committee presented "Peaceable Moments" during the worship services in months with a fifth Sunday and sponsored a study on "God and Violence."

The Social Justice Committee sponsored the Alternative Christmas Fair (that Don and Jean Clark had initiated in 2001) which raised $15,053 in donations for various local and community projects. It also supported Neighbors Together with food and money, the work of the Tax Aide Team, and PFLAG's showing of the film "For the Bible Tells Me So" at the Palace Theater in Crossville.

The Wider Church Relations Committee sponsored the following mission programs: a Mission Jazz evening with Jan Aerie and the Oikos Ensemble from UCC Wider Church Ministries in Cleveland, talks on mission by Phyllis Byrd (Kenya), Steve Hodges (Sudan), Martha Mensendiek (Japan), and Alex Douglas (world sex trade). During the year the church helped sponsor and support two children in Haiti and Zimbabwe, plus another child in Zimbabwe supported by the children's church school class. Through the "Power of the Penny" offerings we sent additional contributions to mission.

An indication of the church's financial support for mission can also be found in the report that in 2009 our church had the highest per capita giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing of all churches in the UCC. In recognition of our church's commitment of time, talent, and treasure to "mission without boundaries," Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as mentioned earlier, designated us a "Global Mission Church."

The Library Committee reported that 977 books were checked out during the year. Thirty new books were bought during the year and forty-three were gifts. In March the Committee sponsored a Remembrance Story Hour featuring remembrances of Erston Butterfield, David Howell, and Lauradell Peppard.

The Churchwide Events Committee sponsored five events during the year: a St. Patrick's coffee house in March, the annual church picnic at the 4-H Center in July, the Rally Day picnic at the Dodson farm in September, a display of over fifty nativity/creche sets from different parts of the world in December in the Community House, and a Christmas party in Adshead Hall on December 12.

The Scholarship Committee helped eleven students with their college and post-high school education.

The Grab (Thrift Shop) had so much clothing that prices were reduced to 50 cents for any clothing item. $1.00 bag sales were held twice during the year. In August 204 school children of ages from Head Start through Senior High School were given five free outfits, accompanied by two pairs of new socks and five items of school supplies. Donna Iles, the Thrift Shop manager, is an employee of the church.

Public Communications Coordinator Jean Clark continued to promote our church through articles and photos in the *Crossville Chronicle*; Corey Boniface took on responsibility for our church's report in the religious section each Friday; and our office manager, Veronica Wright, has taken responsibility for editing the Courier during the summers and for maintaining our church's website (www.pleasanthillucctn.org).

While these committees and individuals were busy in their assigned areas of work, plans started moving ahead to address the space needs of the congregation. The Church Council appointed a Space Expansion Committee in April, and called a Gathering for Covenant of the church members in July to determine their particular concerns. A core list of space needs for worship, fellowship, church school rooms for children and adults, library, international gift shop, offices, and storage was drawn up.

After visiting various churches in Franklin, Nashville, and Knoxville, the Committee chose the architectural firm of Street, Dixon, and Rick with special experience in church and "green" remodeling. During the latter part of the year, the Committee worked with the architects concerning what our needs were and the direction in which we hoped to grow. The architects were also asked to investigate the possibility of utilizing a geothermal system.

In January, 2010, there was another Gathering for Covenant with 105 members present. The architects presented slide pictures of their preliminary drawings and conceptual plans for expanding the present building. They received strong affirmation from the members. The next step was to choose a contractor—Orion Building Contractors.

In March, 2010, another Gathering for Covenant was held in which the Church Council was authorized to set up a Capital Funds Committee. The estimated cost of this expansion project came to $2.6 million.

During this process the Expansion Committee and architects had a helpful session with Dr. Robin Jensen, professor of History of Christian Art and Worship at the Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville. Her professional perspective and suggestions aided in developing the new chancel. The church committee also got helpful advice from an acoustical expert concerning both the sanctuary and Boyce Hall. In June geothermal availability tests brought very positive results.

During this whole process the congregation was kept informed through reports in the *Courier*. This process has been described in some detail here because it provides an interesting contrast to the process 125 years ago when Father Dodge and a number of others constructed the Academy Building and the two dormitories with their own hands and the help of local sawmills.

Another interesting contrast comes from comparing the various voluntary service opportunities available to the members of the church (and Academy) 125 years ago and those available to members of our church today. Following is the smorgasbord of opportunities our present-day church members have for participation in educational, civic, and mission/service programs:

AARP Income Tax Assistance (initiated by members of our church)
Action by Christians Against Torture-USA (TN) (initiated by Charles Hein)
Alternative Christmas Fair (initiated by Don and Jean Clark, now sponsored by the Social Justice Committee)
Armchair Theater
Avalon Center (formerly Battered Women, initiated by Ruth Peeples) (support for adult and child victims of domestic violence and sexual assault)
Balaam's Courier (initiated by Ted Braun and two others in 1975)
Book Reviews (every third Monday morning in Adshead Hall)
Boy Scout Troop 170
Church Women United
Cumberland Adult Reading Council (tutoring in reading, math, and English as a second language)
Cumberland Countians for Peace and Justice (CCPJ) (initiated by members of our church in the early 1990s)
Cumberland County Band

Cumberland County Chorus
Cumberland County Film Society
Cumberland County Habitat for Humanity
Cumberland County Playhouse (members as actors and ushers)
Cumberland County Recycling Center (initiated by Irene Dickinson)
Cumberland Good Samaritans (a multi-service project with our members serving as volunteers and Board member)
Kids on the Rise
Monday Morning Craft Group
Neighbors Together (Food Pantry)
Noters (Dulcimer Group)
Obed Watershed Conservation Group
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays/Cumberland County (PFLAG) (initiated by Ted & Marty McKnight)
Pleasant Hill Elementary School (tutoring, assisting teachers, teaching specialized subjects, attendance at programs, support of fund-raising projects)
Pleasant Hill Ensemble (initiated by Charlie Lord)
Pleasant Hill Historical Society (docents at Pioneer Hall Museum and members on the Board)
Pleasant Hill Town Council (members serving on the Council and as mayor)
Rural Health Clinic of the Cumberlands
Saturday Market (donations formerly went to Hunger Action Fund, now to Neighbors Together for its local food bank)
Save our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) (education and advocacy group)
SERRV products (initiated by Bob and Ruth Peeples, now carried on by Don and Jean Clark)
Sew-and-Sew Quilt Group
Shalom Center for Continuing Education (initiated by Ted Braun in 2000)
The Grab (Thrift Shop)
UCC Cuba Study Seminars (initiated by Ted Braun in 1980) (forty participants from this church)
UCC Volunteer Ministries (Disaster Recovery Mission Trips) (coordinated by Bob and Connie Waidmann, formerly coordinated by Will Rabert)
Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) (initiated by Leonard Stark)
Wharton Nursing Homes (volunteer service, visiting, weekly worship)
Writers'Group (first Tuesday afternoon in homes)

Another interesting contrast can be found in comparing the limited financial resources of our early forefathers and mothers, and those of our members today. Following are the special monthly offerings during the year that are supported by our members:

January: Just Peace (Shalom Center for Continuing Education)
February: Matanzas Seminary Book Fund (Cuba)
March: One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC National)
April: Blanket Sunday (Church World Service)

May: Strengthen the Church (UCC National)
June: Parents Day (Avalon Center)
August: Theological Education Scholarship (Eden Seminary)
September: American Indian Sunday (Council for American Indian Ministry)
October: Neighbors in Need (UCC National)
November: Reconciliation Sunday (Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program, VORP)
December: The Christmas Fund (UCC National)

A fourth interesting contrast can be found in comparing the preaching ministries of our church's first pastor and of our present one. 125 years ago Father Dodge preached at the Pomona Congregational Church on Sunday mornings and at the Pleasant Hill Congregational Church on Sunday afternoons. Today Tom Warren preaches to a congregation that fills the sanctuary and overflows into Boyce Hall every Sunday morning. The service is received live at Fletcher House and recorded to be shown later at the Wharton Nursing Homes. His sermon (and the worship service) can also be accessed by additional folk who visit the church's website (www.pleasanthillucctn.org).

On one Sunday morning in 2010, however, something different happened. On September 26, Tom Warren was the featured preacher on Day 1, a weekly radio program carried by over 200 radio stations across the country. Day 1 describes itself as "the voice of the mainline churches across America and around the world."

Despite this contrast there was still an important link between Father Dodge and Tom Warren. The stated theme of Day 1 is "Proclaiming a Passionate Faith for Thinking People." That would describe both Father Dodge and Tom Warren! And that would also describe the Pleasant Hill church 125 years ago and that church today.

Marcus Borg has commented that Mel Gibson in his film, "The Passion of Christ," had it all wrong. The passion of Christ was not what took place so violently during the last twelve hours of his life. The passion of Jesus was what he was passionate about all through his life. He was passionate about justice, love, peace, reconciliation, and God's kingdom (reign) on earth. And that is what this church has been passionate about all through its life.

Celebrating an Anniversary and Moving On

The church celebrated its 125th Anniversary on five festive occasions during 2010:

On Saturday, January 16, the congregation gathered amid a sea of balloons for a potluck supper in Adshead Hall. Rev. Timothy Downs, Southeast Conference Minister, spoke, and the next day preached during the morning worship service.

On Saturday, March 13, the congregation celebrated at a banquet at the Druid Hills Country Club in Fairfield Glade. Dr. Barbara Brown Zikmund, UCC Historian, gave the keynote address, and the next day, preached during the morning service.

On Sunday, May 30, the congregation sang a hymn, "God of Holy Hills," that UCC hymnologist Rev. Dosia Carlson had written for our church's anniversary (included in the Appendix). Dosia Carlson was present, and in her sermon talked about the hymn. In the afternoon she led a workshop on favorite hymns. One of the important symbolic meanings in "God of Holy Hills" comes in the last note of each verse. The tune instead of going down goes up, suggesting an openness to the future and a mission without boundaries!

On Saturday, June 5, the congregation gathered for a potluck meal of international foods in Adshead Hall. Retired missionaries who are church members and Uplands residents shared special experiences from their service overseas: Ann and Hal Schoup (Iraq, Syria, and Turkey); Jeri Abbott (Rhodesia, Zambia, Turkey, and Zimbabwe); Marian Ziebell (Yugoslavia, East Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Japan); and Dick and Joyce Riesz (India). Rev. Lucius Walker, founder of Pastors for Peace and keynote speaker for the evening, gave a talk about the Pastors for Peace mission to Cuba. On the following day, Rev. Walker preached during the morning worship. His presence was a special gift to our congregation, for on September 14, at the age of 80, he died.

On Sunday, September 12, about 200 members of the congregation gathered for a Rally Day picnic on the Dodson Farm. After supper thirty members presented a pageant about the arrival of the Dodge family to Pleasant Hill in 1884, written and directed by Dick Disseler.

The special 125th Anniversary Committee planning these events was co-chaired by Alice Braunwarth and Ruth Peeples.

Also during 2010, study groups read and discussed two books that had many important things to say about the church's life and mission, especially our church's "mission without boundaries":

A group on Sunday mornings discussed *Confessing Our Faith: An Interpretation of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ* by Roger Shinn. In the chapter "God Bestows the Holy Spirit," Shinn writes "One characteristic of the Holy Spirit is a

capacity to break through conventional boundaries of law and authority. People in the power of the Spirit have defied emperors, popes, parents, agencies of law and order, biblical authority. Such freedom can be creative." This is the creative freedom in God's Spirit that our congregation has found in participating in a "mission beyond boundaries" down through the years.

Shinn goes on to write, "The church is always under judgment, always in need of renewal. And renewal goes on continually." "Sometimes the renewal of the church goes on in especially notable and invigorating movements. We may think of Saint Francis of Assisi, of the Protestant Reformation, of the confessional church defying the idolatry of Hitler at Barmen, of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, of liberation movements in Africa and Latin America, of current local and international ferments that shake the church out of stodgy habits and invigorate it to meet the special challenges of the contemporary world."

Another group on Wednesday evenings discussed *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What's So Good About the Good News?* by Peter Gomes. In the chapter "An Offending Gospel," Gomes shares a word of caution: "The problem of perception is at the heart of a serious hearing of what Jesus has to say, and most people are smart enough to recognize that although Jesus came preaching a disturbing and redistributive gospel, we do not preach what Jesus preached. Instead we preach Jesus."

He goes on to write "Desmond Tutu is fond of the African proverb that says that when the white Christians came to Africa they had the Bible and the Africans had the land. 'Then,' he says, 'the Africans were given the Bible and the white Christians took the land.' The legacy of worldwide colonialism is in many cases the pacification of a culture by the Bible, and the misappropriation of that culture by those who use the Bible as an instrument of control. For the Bible to be seen as an instrument of control rather than as one of liberation is to do violence to the substance of the Bible."

In his chapter on "The Risks of Nonconformity," Peter Gomes shares some further thoughts that relate to how we view our "mission without boundaries": "Millions are hungering and thirsting for genuine good news that will take them beyond the alleged securities of the status quo and into a promised land not yet experienced."

And an even more challenging thought: "When Christians state categorically that Jews, or Muslims, or believers in other faith systems are outside the provisions of God, they utter arrogant nonsense. A respectful agnosticism is called for when often there is offered in its place a self-interested certainty. If God is the God of all, and not just a tribal deity, then God has made provision, not necessarily known to us, for the healing and care of all his creation, and not simply our little part of it."

"Mission without boundaries"—this continues to be our church's passion as our journey continues into the coming years. All of us are here together on this beautiful mountain for only a few years (in the world's time), but in God's time they are precious years together in which to celebrate life, love, justice, and shalom.

A particularly fitting hymn for our journey on this mountain and beyond is “Beauty Around Us.” The words were written by B.S. Ingemann and translated by S.D. Rodholm (alt.) The tune is the Silesian folk tune used in the hymn “Fairest Lord Jesus” (# 44 in our hymnal).

Beauty around us, glory above us,
Lovely is earth and the smiling skies;
Singing we pass along, pilgrims upon our way
Through these fair lands of paradise.

Ages are coming, roll on and vanish,
Children shall follow where parents passed;
Never our pilgrim song, joyful and heaven-born,
Shall cease while time and mountains last.

Appendix

Our Original Confession of Faith

(adopted March 15, 1885)

Receiving the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God and the only infallible rule of religious faith and practice, we confess our faith in the only living and true God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, whose purpose and Providence extends to all events and who exercises a righteous government over all his creatures.

We believe in the universal sinfulness and ruin of the race.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having taken upon himself our nature, has by his obedience, sufferings, and death provided a way of salvation for all mankind and that through faith in his name whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that although salvation is offered freely to all who truly repent and believe in Christ, yet those obeying the Gospel are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

We believe that the Christian Sabbath, the ministry of the Word, the visible Church, the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are divinely appointed and are binding on the followers of Christ.

We believe that there is a day appointed in which God will raise the dead and judge the world, and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

Our Original Covenant

(adopted March 15, 1885)

You who now present yourselves to be received into our fellowship do by this act avow your personal sense of the love of God, in the forgiveness of your sins, and trusting that he who hears and answers prayer will uphold and strengthen you, you do give yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and promise to be his disciples, receiving him as your only Saviour.

You do dedicate yourselves to God as the object of your highest love, and to his service as your highest joy, engaging to walk with us in the observance of the Christian ordinances, and that by the aid of the Divine Spirit you will honor your profession by a consistent Christian life.

We then, the members of this church, in view of these your professions do affectionately receive you and welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the gospel and the service of our Divine Redeemer. We promise to love and watch over you in Christian fidelity and seek your advancement in the life and the likeness of Him whose name we bear. May you walk worthy of your profession. The Lord guide and preserve you till death and at last receive you and us to that blessed world where our love and joy shall be perfect. Amen.

Statement of Faith
of the United Church of Christ

(1981 revision in the form of a Doxology,
affirmed by the Fourteenth General Synod)

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,
create persons in your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life and death.
You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior,
you have come to us
and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Our Current Covenant

We covenant with God and with each other to seek and to respond to the Word and to the will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the church to witness by word and deed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, worshiping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace.

As did faithful followers of all ages, we depend upon the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming Kingdom of God. And we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and to the life everlasting.

Our Mission Statement

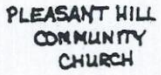
The Pleasant Hill Community Church is a congregation of the United Church of Christ dedicated to the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ. We are a Just-Peace, Open and Affirming, Whole Earth, and Global Mission congregation, welcoming all God's children into our ministry of peacemaking, compassionate living, environmental consciousness, and extravagant welcome.

The Peace Fountain in the Chancel

The gentle, flowing water of the peace fountain serves as a constant reminder that we are called to be peacemakers in an unjust world and of the "waters of baptism" by which we all enter the "new life in Christ."

Celebrating Our Centennial

HISTORIC WALL HANGING
Pleasant Hill - 1985

Ruth Peeples	 Dorothy Kappelman	Margaret Manon
Margaret Ensminger Nettie Grant	Mary Peters	Alma Spindler
Leola Boyce	Helene Munch	Nena Triplett
Mary Alice Busbong	Louise Davis	Ruby Blalock
Louisa Galt	Betty Seely Carla Weatherhead	Carla Weatherhead

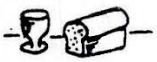
SEWERS

DESIGNERS-CONSULTANTS
Beverly Roberts
Alma Spindler
Betty Seely
Myrtle Deichler
Margaret Manon
Nena Triplett

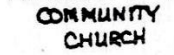
ASSEMBLED BY: Ruth Peeples, Margaret Ensminger, Leola Boyce

OUR CHURCH - THE SYMBOLS OF A CENTURY

You see this beautiful hanging - viewed by all of the "flock".
So we ask that you center your attention on every meaningful block.



Central to our worship and decades unfolding to one hundred years,
The body and blood of Jesus, members received in joy and in tears.

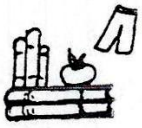


It is Pleasant Hill Community Church where the faithful gathered for prayer,
With a growing concept of service, and a willingness to dream and dare.

Its people were caught in a power - a power as if from above -
With a focus on "Peace in Our World" - like the heaven-descending dove.

Here among the mountain folk many skills and crafts were well taught;
Carving, woodworking and weaving by friends and visitors were brought.

To teach the young of the "Plateau Land" our Academy stood strong and proud.
And for the clothing needed by many, the "Grab" always attracted a crowd.



The music ran fresh and new - like an effervescent fountain,
With the melodious tune so true, "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

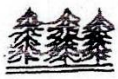
There's the first school building, where regular worship was found,
Stood with its simple beauty on the old school ground.

The bell is the pleasant summons, and is still sweet music to our ears,
As we gather each time for worship, spanning one hundred years.

Look for a moment, dear friends, at the beauty of our church today
Where constant prayers ascend from to God from both clergy and lay.

And what fellowship is offered when our community suppers proceed;
Programs of interest to all, with scrumptious food do we feed!

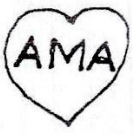
And what dear memories are conjured up by Adshead, Fletcher and Dr. May?
That little black bag of compassion, and nurses faithful in by-gone day.



The symbol of green pine trees - all in a very neat row -
Bespeak of our "Uplands community" like a beautiful flower did grow.

The symbol of the United Church we now proudly unfold;
With its cross and its crown of victory, His history we uphold!

The American Missionary Association planted Academy and church so strong;
To declare upon our mountain God's beautiful heavenly song!



And finally that glorious symbol of our world and the outstretched hands,
Of teaching, preaching and healing among the peoples of the lands.

So, pictured here is our story of a church one century old,
May it live and grow and worship as God's Word is shared and told!

- Robert F Peeples

Celebrating Our 125th Anniversary

A hymn written for our church's anniversary by Dosia Carlson:

God of Holy Hills

God of holy hills and havens summoned faithful souls,
Who would form community with covenantal goals?
There were pioneer people with a purpose, such a hopeful band,
Building, teaching in response to God's providing hand.

Jesus gives the great commission: "Go and be Good News."
Who will model peace with justice as the path to choose?
We are passionate people with a purpose, lifting hearts in praise,
Serving, caring in response to God's unfailing ways.

In the future still unfolding we must nurture earth.
Who will heed the Spirit's prodding, giving faith new birth?
Pray the pilgrim people with a purpose welcome each new dawn,
Worshipping, working in response to God who leads us on.

A poem written for our church's anniversary by Berwyn Coovert:

Hindsight/Foresight

The verses herewith are far too many, they caused me blood, sweat and tears.
But it's hard to sum up quickly one hundred and twenty-five years.

A family moved here from Illinois in eighteen eighty-two.
They found no church, they found no school, so they had much to do.

The Wightmans had six children; there was not time to waste.
She went to Boston seeking help, leaving Pleasant Hill in haste.

The A.M.A. sent Father Dodge in eighteen eighty-four
To build a school needed first—church could meet within its door.

March 15 of eighty-five Pleasant Hill Church first met,
With sixteen members, six of whom were Wightmans you can bet!

Activities at that early church were unlike those of today.
There was a Women's Fellowship and youngsters had their say.

In the active Christian Endeavor, beloved by many teens,

A monthly fellowship supper was another fun-filled scene.

Dr. May's vision never caught on for Academy grads to return
And live here in retirement in the quiet they had earned.

When Uplands Village began to grow the church began to change.
Retirees came from everywhere with agendas to arrange.

They often came from mission fields in foreign land or city.
With retirement time on their hands they needed perhaps a committee.

To carry on some needed work and keep folks from just sitting,
Worthy projects became routine and kept time from wasteful flitting.

So this church has grown and grown 'til what you see today
Is perhaps the busiest UCC in the entire USA!

May this church live on and on to reach the ones still seeking
A right relationship with God who surely is still speaking!

Members who have served in other countries

Africa

Angola: Robin and Fran Markham.
Ethiopia: Owen and Carol Manchester.
Ghana: Dick and Trudy Braun.
Kenya: Gaby Hein.
Mozambique: Ted and Marty McKnight.
Togo: Gaby Hein.
South Africa: Ted and Marty McKnight.
Zambia: Jeri Abbott, Robin and Fran Markham.
Zimbabwe: Jeri Abbott, Robin and Fran Markham.

Asia/Pacific

China: (Margaret Vogel, early childhood).
Guam: Alice Braunwarth.
India: Joyce Baur, Alice Braunwarth, Quessie Krell, Robin and Fran Markham, Dick and Joyce Riesz, (Ralph Baur, early childhood).
Japan: Tony Carter, Jeanne Chappell-Kingsbury, Dick and Martha Lammers, Jan Landis, Herbie Naumann, Jack and Mary Schwarz, Marian Ziebell, (Mary Alice Shepard, early childhood).
Philippines: Dan and Emily Byrens.

Europe

Austria: Gil and Lois Miller, Marian Ziebell.
Serbia: Marian Ziebell.

Latin America

Chile: Corey Boniface.
Ecuador: Betty Streich.
Honduras: Joyce Baur.
Mexico: (Grace Inglis, early childhood).

Middle East

Afghanistan: Margaret Vogel.
Cyprus: Mary Alice Shepard, Marian Ziebell.
East Jerusalem: Marian Ziebell.
Iraq: Hal and Ann Schoup.
Iran: (Etha Miller, early childhood).
Syria: Hal and Ann Schoup, Mary Alice Shepard.
Turkey: Jeri Abbott, Hal and Ann Schoup, Mary Alice Shepard.

Our Artisan Members

Visual Arts

Beading (especially Native American): Shirley Berry.
Basketry: Rita Kummer.
Ceramics: Trudie Palm (tiles above fireplace in the Community House).
Cross-stitching: Sharron Eckert, Dorothy Faunce, Jean Harsh, Ginny Nixon.
Handmade Paper: Etha Miller.
Knitting: Maryls Baur, Gaby Hein, Joyce Riesz, Mary Alice Shepard, Betty Streich, Margaret Vogel.
Long Leaf Pine Needle Fine Craft: Sharron Eckert.
Needlework: Dorothy Faunce, Carol Manchester.
Painting: Finley Brown, Tom Eckert, Gail Ford, Roberta Goodwin, Eleanor Lake, Herbie Naumann.
Shirret: Grace Inglis.
Textiles and Fiber Arts (Weaving, Tapestry, Banners, Wall Hangings, Quilts): Elaine Ahrendt, Corey Boniface, Dorothea Bowling, Janeen Carrell, M. Jean Clark, Jeanne Elrod, Gail Ford, Dixie Hosto, Quessie Krell, Rita Kummer, Alberta Manzi, Helen Olds, Ruth Peeples, Pat Robbenolt, Marie Stampfl, Dorothy Stark, Adele Tinney, Margaret Vogel, Connie Waidmann).
Wood Decorating: Wayne Edwards.
Woodworking: Bob Ahrendt, Dick Lammers, Jan Landis, (Dick Lammers: fireplace screen and door plaque at Community House).

Performing Arts

Armchair Theater: Corey Boniface, Betty Cole, Donna Dalenberg, Barry Evans, Gail Ford, Bette Halverstadt, Ted McKnight, Don Nelson, Don Peppard, Pat Robbennolt, Roy Siewert, Walter Stark.

Cumberland County Playhouse stage: Dick Braun, Trudy Braun, Rachel Charbonnet-Baker, Annie Crabtree, Dick Disseler, Eloise Disseler, Debbie Douglas, Steve Douglas, Barry Evans, Bette Halverstadt, Howard Palm, Ernie Simon., Abigail Warren, Daniel Warren.

Biblical Monologues: Will Rabert.

Contra Dance Group: Shirley Berry, Corey Boniface, Betty Cole, Jackie Dwenger, Rose Hermanot, Jeanne Chappell-Kingsbury, Gil and Lois Miller, Bill and Herbie Naumann, Sid and Marian Nichols, Pat Robbennolt, Lyle and Sharon Weible.

Musicians:

Clarinet: Jack Yates.

Dulcimer: Elaine Ahrendt, Janeen Carrell, Marjorie Childs, Jean Clark, Jackie Dwenger, Mary Hartz, Betty Hoover, Rita Kummer, Peg Muenstermann, Mardelle Pond, Dorothy Stark, Connie Waidmann, Sharon Weible, (Bev Hull, friend of the church).

Flute: Dick Braun, Phyllis Dickinson.

French Horn: Dorothy Faunce, Bill Naumann.

Guitar: Tom Warren.

Handbells: Janeen Carrell, Phyllis Dickinson, Barry Evans, Eddie Everson, Dorothy Faunce, Betty Hoover, Liz Lewis, Fran Markham, Robin Markham, Helen Olds, Jim Olds, Ruth Peeples, Marie Stampfl.

Harmonica: Lyle Weible.

Percussion: Jane Heald.

Piano/Keyboard/Organ: Dan Byrens, Emily Byrens, Dorothy Faunce, Liz Lewis, Carol Manchester, Carolyn Rogers, Marian Ziebell, (Bev Hull, friend of the church).

Saxophone: Mary Ruth.

Trombone: Don Nelson

Tuba: Robin Markham.

Violin: Marian Ziebell.

Choir: Bob Ahrendt, Marvin Albright, Ralph Baur, Connie Begley, Shirley Berry, Dorothea Bowling, Dick Braun, Donna Braun, Trudy Braun, Rachel Charbonnet-Baker, Donna Dalenburg, Wayne Edwards, Jeanne Elrod, Dorothy Faunce, Ed Hitchcock, Ellie Kress, Dick Lammers, Jan Landis, Liz Lewis, Carol Manchester, Owen Manchester, Ted McKnight, Gil Miller, Don Nelson, Jim Olds, Dick Riesz, Joyce Riesz, Mary Ruth, Goldie Schneider, Sue Schroeder, Mary Schwarz, Mary Alice Shepard, Elaine Sipe, Marie Stampfl, Callie Stone, Win Stone, Lyle Weible.

Directors of Music: Emily Byrens, Dan Byrens.

Literary Arts

Articles by church members for:

Writers' Group (monthly Uplands activity)

The Courier (weekly newsletter of the church)

Editor: Pat Cavanaugh

Book Reviews (new books in church library): Joyce Baur

Crossville Chronicle

"Pleasant Hill Ramblings": Jean Clark

Reviews of Cumberland County Playhouse stage productions: Pat Robbennolt

"Lion and the Lamb" (weekly column sponsored by Cumberland Countians for Peace and Justice): Emerson Abts, Ted Braun, editors.

Recent books by church members:

Ted Braun: *Perspectives on Cuba and Its People* (Friendship Press, 1998), *Balaam's Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of Christ* (co-author, United Church Press, 2008).

Forrest Johnson: *A Parson's Tales* (Xlibris, 2000), *Ordinary People and Other Stories* (AuthorHouse, 2003), *Saint Francis' Shadow: And Other Stories* (AuthorHouse, 2004). *Unfinished Business: Dialogue with Thomas Merton* (AuthorHouse, 2006), *Fox Run: The Journal of a Country Parson* (2010).

Bill (Ox) McDermet: *Try the Damascus Road* (Eagles Publishing, 2005).

Roger Robbennolt: *Tales from the Heartland* (Forest of Peace Books, 1991), *Tales of Gletha the Goat Lady* (1993), *Tales of Hermit Uncle John* (1993), *Tales of Tony Great Turtle* (1994),*The Unicorn at the Manger: Yearlong Stories of the Holy Night* (1996), *Carnival Tales for Blind Ben See* (1999).

Fanny Seville: *Sing Stories of Jesus* (United Printing, 2005), *The Story Teller* (Xlibris, 2007).

Jack Seville: *Through His Eyes Only* (Prospect Press, 2001, *Something Due (* Xlibris, 2004), *Settling Accounts* (Xlibris, 2008).

Gene Skipworth: *Wear Your Collar* (Providence House, 2010).

Tom Warren: *Balaam's Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of Christ* (co-author, United Church Press, 2008).

Franklin Parker (friend of the church): *George Peabody, A Biography* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1995 revision).

An Introduction to Our Sister Church

The Second Baptist Church of Santiago de Cuba is our "sister church" through which we share faith, fellowship, and a desire to bring the people of Cuba and the U.S. closer together. Served by co-pastors Elmer Lavastida and his wife Gisela Perez, Second Baptist Church is a congregation filled with passionate Christians of all ages committed to the love and justice of Jesus Christ.

The church, founded 87 years ago, has 380 members and between 280 and 300 in the Sunday School. It has a vibrant young adult ministry, music ministry, and theological reflection and advocacy ministry. It is giving special attention to three groups: "third age" people (senior citizens), youth and children, and alcoholics, and has also established four "daughter" churches. Its Vacation Bible School each summer has over 200 children involved. The church was the first and still only one in the Eastern Baptist Convention to ordain a woman to the ministry.

The church has helped found and continues to provide housing for the Christian Center for Service and Training, the only ecumenical center in the eastern part of the country. It has six program areas: Bible and theology, Ecology, Gender and the role of women, Renovation of liturgy, Family, and Health. It is involved in such areas of interest as nutrition, gardening, sunlight purification, rehabilitation of houses, treatment and prevention of cancer (the primary cause of premature death in Cuba). In January, 2011, the Center will begin offering (in connection with the ecumenical Matanzas Seminary) a three-year course leading to a B.A. degree in Christian Education.

The library of the church is named the Frank Pais Library—a name that ties it into the important history of Cuba. (Pais is pronounced Pah-ees.) Frank was a son of the pastor of First Baptist Church in Santiago de Cuba. After graduating from normal school in 1953, he taught in the El Salvador Secondary School run by the Second Baptist Church, and also became its organist and choir director.

During this time he was also studying education at University of Santiago and teaching as a volunteer at a school for workers in the university. As he became more familiar with the miserable life of most peasants, his passion to help poor Cubans increased. He began to organize students and workers in a movement that included education, finance, and action.

It was during this same time that a young lawyer, Fidel Castro, began actions against the dictator Batista. Fidel was captured and brought to trial, during which occasion he presented his own defense, "History Will Absolve Me." When Frank read a copy of that July 26th speech, he found that it resonated with his deepest thoughts and that it provided a program of social justice for the whole nation. He had it printed and then distributed it widely.

Frank became the leader of the 26 of July Movement against Batista in the Oriente province around Santiago. In 1956 he went to Mexico to meet and coordinate plans with Fidel who had gone there after being released from prison. Fidel was so

impressed with the leadership ability of this 22-year-old young man that he made Frank chief of the national clandestine action program. Upon returning to Santiago, Frank resigned his job at El Salvador, telling the pastor "You'll need to find somebody else for my place, because Cuba needs me." He then began to prepare for uprisings and other actions to coincide with Fidel's return.

In 1957 the Batista forces intensified their search for Frank. He started using a disguise and moving from house to house in Santiago for protection. On July 30, however, one of his former students recognized him and identified him to the police, who gunned him down on the street. The whole city turned out for Frank's funeral—a silent procession, the largest demonstration that had ever taken place in Santiago.

On December 6-7, 2010, the church is celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of its Frank Pais Library by holding a seminar on Frank's life on the evening of December 6, and an ecumenical service on the evening of December 7.

The story and witness of Frank Pais is a part of the DNA of Second Baptist Church. Over the years our sister church has had an important and continuing role to play in moving beyond boundaries, both in its own mission and in Cuba's mission as a nation.

Boundaries on Our Side of the Waters

The warm, collegial ties between our church and our sister church have been difficult ones to sustain and broaden over recent years due to the long-standing hostility of our U.S. government toward Cuba. In 2005 the U.S. Administration refused to renew our Global Ministries' two-year Cuba travel license which enabled the UCC Cuba Study Seminar program to gather a large enough ecumenical group each year to make the trip financially reasonable.

Nor has the U.S. Administration renewed our congregation's two-year license (which can be used only by members of our own congregation). Tom Warren and his family were able to use this license for his month-long sabbatical visit to Cuba just before it expired, but so far it has not been renewed.

Elmer Lavastida has also found this U.S. boundary a barrier. For two years Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, has invited him to teach a fall course on the book of Romans. Rev. Lavastida is fluent in English as well as in Spanish, and would be a tremendous asset to the seminary as a visiting professor. Each time his U.S. visa has been denied, however. The reason: his presence would be a "detriment to the interests of the United States."

A bill to open up travel between the U.S. and Cuba has been bottled up in Congress. Hopefully these boundary waters between the U.S. and Cuba can be turned into healing waters of reconciliation and life-renewal, enabling brothers and sisters in the faith in both countries to gather at a common table and for the common good.

Afterword

As we come to the end of our 125th Anniversary year, and to the end of this brief narrative of events and developments during the past 125 years, it may be useful to mention three important books that the church has been studying during 2010. All three have contributed much to our church's theological grounding and understanding of mission. A brief look at each will provide a perspective on where we are at present and the direction in which we are heading.

The first book is *Confessing Our Faith: An Interpretation of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ* by Roger L. Shinn. In its preface Dr. Shinn writes, "As a testimony of a church, the Statement rises out of the context of Christian history and the contemporary church. I try to show its relation to the Bible, to traditional belief, to Christian thinking in our time, and to the world in which we live. I point out where it takes clear stands and where it invites Christians to further thought and discussion about their faith."

The second book is *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What's So Good About the Good News?* by Peter J. Gomes. In its introduction Dr. Gomes writes, "Now I write another Bible book to go beyond the Bible and embrace that to which it points: the gospel, or the good news. In a time when it is easier to write about doom and gloom than about hope and promise, I suggest that Jesus came into the world not as a Bible teacher directing us back into a text, but as one who proclaimed a realm beyond the Bible. He proclaimed his good news against the conventional wisdom of his day, taking up with unacceptable people and advancing dangerous, even revolutionary, ideas, nearly all of which remain to be discovered and acted upon." And in his concluding chapter Dr. Gomes writes, "Jesus' proclamation is meant to take us from a world that is to a world that is to be."

The third book is *Journey to the Common Good* by Walter Brueggemann. In its introduction Dr. Brueggemann writes, "Within this book, I will explore some ways in which Scripture—ancient text as authorizing word—may impinge upon the faith and life and practice of the church as we journey together toward the common good that God wills for the world. The task of interpretation that gives contemporary access to the scriptural text is an ongoing one that is never finished. It requires, moreover, venturesome imagination that is always risky; those tasks, however, are not as great as the risk of that flat, one-dimensional reiteration that does not connect."

In this book, Dr. Brueggemann considers three biblical sources: the Exodus narrative as the account of the journey now required of the faithful in the move from a culture of anxiety to a practice of neighborliness; the Jeremiah oracle as an invitation to a radical choice for life or for death; and the Isaiah sequence of texts as a reliable script for contemporary practice of loss and restoration in a failed urban economy.

Dr. Brueggemann concludes in his introductory comments, "In my judgment, these texts will summon and engage and reassure the church in its demanding missional

stance, permitting the church to live faithfully amid hegemonic ideologies that suck the life out of our socioeconomic neighborhoods. I have no doubt that when such an exercise in contemporaneity is led by the Spirit, it will make a difference for that church."

To follow up on these thought-provoking and faith-deepening/broadening resources, our church has chosen the following study books for continuing the conversation in 2011: *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer* by John Dominic Crossan and *Out of Babylon* by Walter Brueggemann.

And so the calling to participate in God's "Mission Beyond Boundaries" continues to challenge us on our journey into the future.