

UCC



University Christian Church
Disciples of Christ
1959 – 2009



*“Lord, if it be thy will,
help us to build thy Church.”*

Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr., 1959

"Breaking Ground: Mrs. Beulah M. Rybon; Rev Marion B. Brinson;
Rev Wendell R. Turner, Jr (with Shovel); Dr. Laurence R. Bower;
Rev Van Boskirk; Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr.; Mr. Harry F. Sandberg;
Miss Trudy Fife; and Mr. William Wallace, Jr."



University Christian Church

A Half-Century of Christian Service

1959 – 2009:

The Beginning

Compiled by

Francis C. Stark, III
Charter Member

Edited by

Dr. Vern C. Falby
Director of Music



Preface

As one of the remaining Charter Members of University Christian Church (cUc), I was asked to Chair the Church's 50th Anniversary event in May, 2009. I was very pleased and excited to accept this responsibility. As I held one of the first of the preliminary meetings with my committee, one of the continuing activities suggested for the run-up to the Anniversary was that we bring the occasion to life for current (and future) members of the Church by relating some of the major activities that culminated in the first service being held in Northwestern High School's cafeteria on May 3, 1959. A series of presentations of this sort would give current members some sense of "what we were doing 50 years ago."

I was asked to do the research and serve as "presenter." It seemed clear that I would have to consult documented or first hand information from limited available resources, as most of the principals have passed on and available documentation commences only with the date of our first service. Thankfully, on second thought, I realized that I had access to a resource that could make this daunting task a much more manageable one: an in-depth, detailed description of the history of the Church safely and effectively documented within the two-volume memoirs of my Dad, Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr., a catalyst for and active member of cUc from its conception. His memoirs discuss the happenings from this concept phase through the time that his book, entitled *Another Day, Another Adventure*, "went to press" in 1997. The present document conveys these eye-witness and participant observations of my Dad (as often as not referred to herein as Dr. Stark) as he describes the founding of our church in his text [with some explanatory and clarifying comments generated by the present writer, indicated where they occur in quoted material within square brackets which, if they are longer than a word or two, are preceded by the abbreviation *ed.*:]. All the extended quotations are from *Another Day, Another Adventure*, and are offset by indentation. It is the goal of this writer that all who read this document will derive both some insight and pleasure from the experience.

Francis C. Stark, III

Chapter 1

Dr. Stark begins the saga of University Christian Church this way:

“The idea of starting another Christian Church as a mission, or satellite, congregation had been talked about from time to time, beginning in the 1930’s, and occasionally some member of the [General] Board of Mt. Rainer Christian Church (MtRCC) would bring it to the surface once more. Several times during my first two years [each year was an elected term of office] as Chairman (1951-1953) I heard the complaint that we were doing nothing about starting new churches.”



Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr.

He reports that this idea continued to come up between 1953 and 1956.

“During the 1955-56 year [*ed.*: Dad’s third term as Chairman of the General Board] I arranged to meet with Rev. [Marion B.] Brinson [the minister of MtRCC] and suggested I would like to see us either (a) do something about starting a new church, or (b) quit talking about it. It was a propitious meeting. Rev. Brinson was Chairman of the Church Extension Committee of the Christian Church Council at that time and the Committee had supported a new church effort in an area known as “Broadacres”, until it was determined that we could not be successful there. When I suggested my two options, then, Rev. Brinson and I mulled over the possibilities. He knew that a site on the western edge of Hyattsville, known as the Heurich [pronounced HI-RICK] Farm [often referred to as the Heurich Tract], was to be subdivided and wondered if we could get a prime location there at a price we could afford. The two of us, then mapped out how we would proceed (referring to a strategy to get the General Board to do something about the congregation starting a new mission church). Thus began the effort that culminated in the University Christian Church.”

In Chapter 12 of his book, Dad continues:

“The subject of purchasing land received further discussion at the February 1956 meeting [of the General Board] and interest in the Heurich site increased after some people had conversations with Harry Boswell, a local realtor and insurance man. By the March meeting, ideas were beginning to gel and about 1 ½ pages of the [March General Board] minutes were devoted to recording the heated discussion, which ended on a positive note, by approving 17 to 0, by show of hands, a motion by [Joe] Lynn, seconded by [George] Hall, that the [General] Board recommend to the congregation that we purchase a church site for the purpose of church extension.

“Mr. Lynn had previously been appointed chairman of a site survey committee. He completed his analysis of various sites including the Heurich Estate and reported his findings to the General Board in September 1955.

“Accordingly, I announced the need for a congregational meeting to be held after the worship service on April 15, 1956. The meeting was called to order at 11:58am and opened with prayer by Rupert Venning. Joe Lynn presented the matter [referring to prior analysis] and closed his presentation by moving:

‘That the Church buy, for purposes of Church extension, a Church site of 2 to 3 acres, at approximately \$7000 per acre in the area near University Park, MD, known as the Heurich tract, the exact site to be determined after final plans are drawn, subject to later approval by the congregation of the exact site and plat before a contract shall be signed.’

“Earl Sisson seconded the motion. Written ballots were distributed and S. Clifford Jones and C. Lyle Bock served as tellers. The vote was announced as 83 in favor, 1 opposed, [and] 3 abstentions. The [congregational] meeting adjourned at 12:28pm.”

Chapter 2

This chapter details the project of raising necessary funds for the purchase of the land for the new Church and reports on the progress of other parts of the project developing in the same time period:

“Having obtained the authority to proceed with the purchase of some land on the Heurich [HI-RICK] Tract, the next, and most compelling, question was how to go about raising the funds required. Mount Rainier Christian Church (MtRCC) had never mounted a fund-raising campaign of any magnitude, and they didn’t even take pledges to underwrite their operating budget. If a calamity should occur, such as needing a new furnace, or making a gift to the Christian Church Council for Church Extension, they had a ‘special Sunday’ on which special contributions would be earmarked for the designated purpose.But, we all knew we couldn’t raise 15 or 20 thousand dollars from the members on ‘special days’.

“The idea of using a fund raising organization to supervise a campaign to raise money was considered, and a special ad hoc Board meeting with the President of such an organization was held during the summer of 1956. Discussion was terminated after we found that although our people would do all of the contact work the fund raisers would keep some outlandish percentage, the amount depending on the total receipts. I don’t remember the formula for arriving at their portion but a range of 20 to 50% comes to mind. We learned then that the Board of Church Extension had recently gotten into the business of helping congregations raise funds for capital projects, and their charges were the reasonable costs of materials plus a small charge for travel and overhead.



“The Fund Raising Campaign Committee”: Rev Marion B. Brinson (standing); Mrs. Dixie R. Brown; Mrs. Dorothy F. Sisson; Mrs. Eleanor C. Bock (seated); and Mr. C. Lyle Bock; Mr. Elton H. Brown; Mr. Carl E. Nordeen; Mr. Earl S. Sisson; Mr. Joseph W. Lynn; and (possibly) Dr. William Pearcy (standing).

“At the September 1956 [General] Board meeting, a recommendation to use Dr. William Pearcy, President of the Board of Church Extension, to direct a campaign was approved. At the previous June meeting it was learned the Heurich Tract was being re-zoned, and it was recommended we purchase 5 acres rather than 2 or 3, since the plot plans were being laid out in 5-acre lots.

“The minutes for the April 17, 1957 Board meeting are silent on the results of the Fund Raising

Campaign ... [but] in fact, it was a rousing success, with pledges far exceeding the \$37,440 goal. My recollection is that pledges totaled about \$60,000.

“Also at the April Board meeting it was reported that the original site selected for the Mission Church could not be purchased, but that another site was available and was considered to be an even better location.” [ed.: The original site was of about 3 acres located approximately where the Plaza Towers Apartments now stand. The new site considered was the 5 acres we purchased where the Church is now located.]

With the beginning of the Church year in July 1957, Dad declined a fifth term as Chairman of the Board and Joe Lynn was elected to replace him. That left Joe’s position as Chairman of the Mission Church Site Committee open and Dad accepted that. In effect, they just switched positions:

“The planners, architects, lawyers, bankers, realtors and owners completed their work and their deliberations regarding the Heurich Tract during the fall of 1957 and the site selected for the Mission Church became available for purchase. The General Board held a special meeting on October 20th to consider the terms. I opened the presentation on the matter at that meeting and Blair Smith spoke on legal matters and answered many questions. Blair was a member of the Church and a prominent lawyer in the County and he provided all of his services gratis. After a general and lengthy discussion, I moved we recommend to the congregation the purchase of five acres of land at the intersection of Colesville Road [now Adelphi Road] and what would become Belcrest Road in [the] Heurich Tract, at a cost of about \$55,000. Then there was the question [of] where the money would come from and another recommendation to the congregation was passed to authorize the Trustees to borrow money to purchase the designated site. The recommendation to purchase the site was approved by the congregation on November, 10th 1957 by a vote of 51 in favor, 11 opposed and ‘some not voting’. The authorization to borrow passed unanimously. The Mission Site Committee was discharged at the November Board meeting three days later, their purpose accomplished.

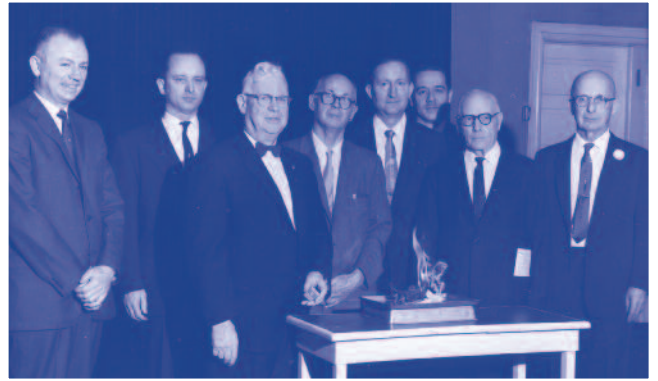
“The sales contract on the site was signed by the four Trustees on December 17, 1957 and by the seller on the 18th; the mortgage papers were signed on March 5, 1958.” [ed.: Dad does not specifically identify who these four Trustees were in his memoirs; but the question seems clarified in the signatories of the Property Transfer Deed, dated December 19, 1960:

Alden E. Imus, Jr.

Oscar T. Neal

Homer L. Stanforth

J. Rupert Venning]



“Combined University and Mount Rainier Christian Churches Boards of Trustees, (L-R) Mr. C. Lyle Bock; Mr. Alden E. Imus, Jr. (MtRCC); Mr. Elton H. Brown; Mr. J. Rupert Venning (MtRCC); Mr. Oscar T. Neal (MtRCC); Rev Wendell R. Turner, Jr.; Mr. Homer I. Stanforth (MtRCC); and Rev Marion B. Brinson (MtRCC)”.

Chapter 3

This installment explores the details of locating a temporary venue in which to hold services while the new sanctuary was being completed; and it answers a question that occurs to most members of our Church at one time or another—or even regularly—to wit: where and when did the acronym/logo cUc originate?:

“One of the early considerations in starting a mission church on the Heurich (HI-RICK) Tract was—where could the struggling group meet? That question was raised early, I don’t know exactly when but probably as early as 1956. The logical answer was to meet at Northwestern High School; but, no one had knowledge of any group meeting in a county school. (Those were before the days when the school system encouraged outside usage of their facilities. In the 1950’s, the schools were mainly in use from about 7:30am to 5pm, 5 days-a-week.) Someone at Mount Rainier Christian Church [MtRCC] ‘knew someone that knew someone’ in the county school administration, and a query there gave the promising answer that, yes, space in the schools was available for use by churches for six-month periods, not to exceed two years. There would be a rental charge to cover cost of heating and to pay for the services of

two janitors. Applications for such use were made to a certain Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

“In late 1958, if memory serves, I wrote the Assistant Superintendent to ask if we could rent space at Northwestern High School that would seat about 125 people, beginning some time in April or May, and if so, what would be the charge. The answer, in true bureaucratic style, indicted such a rental was possible in the cafeteria for a 6-month period, etc, etc, but a letter requesting such space to begin on a specific date should be sent about one month (or so) in advance. I don’t remember if a payment schedule was, or was not, provided. When the time was proper, I wrote the Assistant Superintendent again. In reasonable time we received an approval and were told the charge would be a certain amount for rent plus an amount for employment of two janitors for a half-day. I don’t remember how the amount was divided but the total was \$35.00 per Sunday morning. The approval was for 6-months; but, we were told we could apply for a 6-month extension three times for a maximum of two years. Actually, we received the three extensions without difficulty and when that time was exhausted we still needed another six months before our building would be complete. A fourth extension was granted with instructions that it could not be continued any further.”

And here is the answer to that question about the origins of the curious acronym (why, for example, we use cUc as opposed to the more literal UCC). Dr. Stark explains:

“Early on, we decided we should have a newsletter published weekly. Beulah Rybon gave yeomen service in editing that newsletter of two to six pages. She typed stencils on an old Underwood typewriter [that] they owned and took them to Larry Bower’s father to mimeograph for us. Beulah had her first issue dated April 27, 1959, and it was mailed to all members with instructions on how to get to the cafeteria in Northwestern High School, where we would be meeting the following Sunday. While writing the second issue, Beulah looked for some little something to separate individual items in the newsletter and rather than using a common series of asterisk’s or X’s or something else, she decided to use “cUc”. And ever since, cUc has been our acronym.”

Chapter 4

This Fourth Chapter recounts the origins of a group called the “Continuation Council,” which was to face problems inherent in the establishment of a Mission Church. As Dr. Stark tells it:

“At the December 1957 meeting I proposed to the [General] Board the establishment of a group to be called the “Continuation Council”, which was to face squarely the problems inherent in the establishment of a mission church – questions such as determining who would be willing to venture forth to a mission and the problems they would need to expect; and who would be remaining at Mount Rainier Christian Church [MtRCC] and what problems they would face. Brother Mitchell moved we adopt such a plan or something similar. Seconded by Brother Bock. Motion carried.

“The Continuation Council was created and I coordinated it. We were deliberative about our approach and divided into two committees, one dealing with MtRCC and the other with the Mission Church. A first report from the “Council” was not presented until a progress report was given to the [General] Board on December 2, 1958. In the interim, the annual Congregational Meeting in May received a proposed budget that included an income item of \$20,000 for the Mission Church Fund for the

1958 – 59 year, and the description of a sign to be erected at the Mission Church site was revealed with the following wording:

**The Future Site of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Sponsored by the Mount Rainier Christian Church
Mt. Rainier, MD. For information – call UNION 4-3869.**

“The [General] Board also heard a report from the Decision Day choices that 149 people will remain at MtRCC and approximately 93 indicated an interest in going to the New Church.”

The progress report is very detailed and lengthy, so I will summarize the identified specific subtasks as follows:

1. to ascertain the desires of members to affiliate either with the Mission Church or the Parent Church.
2. to develop a program for the reorganization of the Parent Church.
3. to develop a program and schedule for developing a Mission Church.
4. to recommend a procedure for the transfer of property to the mission congregation.

“Solutions were generated and approved by the [General] Board and January 4, 1959 was designated “D” (Decision) Day. On that date, all persons would be given the opportunity to indicate their intentions as to their future affiliation with either church:

“The New Church Group of the Continuation Council, including any others of those who elected to go to the new church, met on Sunday afternoon, January 25, 1959, with Elton Brown as Chairman.

“At this meeting Dr. William Percy, President of the Board of Church Extension, suggested missionaries of the new church avoid making the move on the previously scheduled Palm or Easter Sundays and, instead, plan that “M” (Mission) Day be pushed forward to May. He counseled them about the need to secure an interim minister for 3 to 6 months, to select temporary officers who could lead the new church, and to work out finances. The assembled then proposed Reverend W. Gerald Flinn as their organizing pastor; and Earl Sisson, Lawrence Bower and Eleanor Bock volunteered to consider names for the new church.

“The MtRCC Group of the Continuation Council, including any others of those remaining at MtRCC, met a week later, February 1, 1959 with [Mr.] William S. Egbert as Chairman. They were very upbeat and positive about their future.”

The Continuation Council as a whole reported the following decisions to the Mt. Rainier General Board, on March 11, 1959:

1. The name of the mission church would be University Christian Church.
2. “C” (Commissioning) Day would be observed April 26, 1959.
3. “M” (Mission) Day would be observed May 3, 1959.
4. A “Steering” Committee for University Christian Church was elected.
5. This Steering Committee was to employ a temporary minister, first negotiating with Rev. W. Gerald Flinn, and perform such other administrative functions as would be required.



“Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr. and Rev Wendell R. Turner, Jr. admire the sign identifying our future building site.”

Chapter 5

This fifth Chapter recounts work that was accomplished in the planning period of April and May 1959, when the Steering Committee was elected. This Committee would prove to be crucial, as its members appointed in turn the members of such temporary committees as would be required to conduct the work and business of the Mission Church, its Church School, and other functions. Additionally, this Chapter will list the names of the 93 people who would transfer, by commission, to University Christian Church becoming Charter Members.

“The annual Congregational Meeting at Mount Rainier Christian Church [MtRCC] was held on 12 May 1959. One of the hand-outs at that meeting was a list of the Mount Rainier Christian Church members who transferred, by commission, to the University Christian Church [cUc] on 26 April 1959. The list included in the minutes is as follows:

Edwin H. Anderson	Donia Collins	Leonard A. DeGast
Ruth C. Anderson	Lyle F. Creager	Mary Ruth DeGast
Jerry D. Anderson	Lorraine Creager	George S. Edmunds
Donna D. Anderson	Lynda L. Creager	Irma Edmunds
Sharon D. Anderson	Bill R. Creager	Frank R. Edmunds
Otis Jean Benson	Alberta Cissell	Georgene L. Edmunds
C. Lyle Bock	Norman A. Crone	Nancy Edmunds
Eleanor C. Bock	Christine Crone	Robert H. Edmunds, III
Christopher E. Bock	Nancy Crone	Earl Fife
Georgia A. Bock	Kenny Crone	Molly Fife
Dr. Laurence R. Bower	Worthy B. Daggs, Jr.	Trudy Fife
Fern Bower	Marie Daggs	Denny Fife
Linda G. Bower	Allison Dalzell	Rev. W. Gerald Flinn
Duane Bower	Wm. Carroll Davis	Lena Flinn
Elton H. Brown, Sr.	Virginia D. Davis	Mary Kay Flinn ”
Dixie R. Brown	Carolyn R. Davis	
Ruth L. Burke	Duane B. Davis	

These last seven (in the right hand column above) were not members of Mt. Rainier Christian Church, but transferred their membership from other Disciple churches in the area to cUc on first day of worship.

To continue:

“Lura J. Fowkes	Mary H. Lauthrip	Edna T. Sandberg
Irving G. Gray	Charles R. Madison	Harry F. Sandberg
Lillian E. Gray	Naomi Madison	C. Anne Sandberg
Lloyd B. Grenell	Clara Belle Moore	Rex D. Shaver
Helen Grenell	John W. Parks	Earl S. Sisson
Kenneth L. Grenell	Alta Parks	Dorothy F. Sisson
Mildred Hessert	John C. Rybon	Blair H. Smith
Kathryn J. Killian	Beulah M. Rybon	Francis C. Stark, Jr.
William R. Kinney	Paul C. Rybon	D. Lucille Stark
Joseph W. Lynn	Ruth Rybon	Carolyn P. Stark
Jacque Lynn	Robert Sandberg	Francis C. Stark, III

Wm. H. S. Wallace
 Martha O. Wallace
 J. Morgan Watson
 Dorothy C. Watson
 Robert Watson
 James Watson

Louis M. Wiest
 Betty Wiest
 Louis M. Wiest, Jr.
 John A. Wiest
 Harry T. Wynn
 Linda Wynn

Robert W. Yoho, Sr.
 Alice Yoho
 Jacque C. Young
 Virginia B. Young
 Rosalind S. Young and
 William A. Young”

Children of these members who had not yet joined MtRCC when they transferred to cUc, and also children born to these members after their arrival have always been, traditionally, considered to be a ‘special category’ of charter membership of cUc.

“Mr. Elton Brown reported to the April 1959 [General] Board meeting that the cUc group of the “Continuation Council” had elected a Steering Committee to act until June 30, 1959, composed of Joseph Lynn, Eleanor Bock, Beulah Rybon, Lawrence Bower, with Francis Stark as Chairman. During this planning period’, the Steering Committee named 22 people to various duties in the new church, so we would be ready for a full worship service when we began services on May 3, 1959.

“Those assignments were shown in the first newsletter: [and listed here]

“The Steering Committee, elected by the congregation ... has appointed or accepted the offers of these people to serve in the following fields of endeavor:

Church Clerk
Treasurer
Financial Secretary
Elders

Mrs. Lillian Gray
 Lyle Creager
 Lloyd Grenell
 Earl H. Fife, Jr.
 George S. Edmunds
 Elton H. Brown
 Wm. C. Davis
 Irving G. Gray
 Edwin H. Anderson
 Worthy B. Daggs, Jr.
 Jacque C. Young
 Wm. H.D. Wallace
 John C. Rybon
 John W. Parks
 Leonard DeGast
 William A. Young
 Mrs. Dixie Brown
 Mrs. Clara Belle Moore

Deacons

Deaconesses

Head Usher
Worship
Evangelism
Finance
Membership
Missions
Church School Sup’t
Public Relations
Music Director
Organist
Historians

Robert Sandberg
 Mrs. Eleanor Bock
 Joseph W. Lynn
 Francis C. Stark, Jr.
 Laurence R. Bower
 Mrs. Jacquie Lynn
 C. Lyle Bock
 Mrs. Beulah Rybon
 Mrs. Lena Flinn
 Mrs. Mary Ruth DeGast
 Mrs. Lucille Stark
 Mrs. Fern Bower”



“The Sanctuary of Mount Rainier Christian Church, circa 1959”

Chapter 6

We now arrive in our chronicle at April 26, 1959, which was designated “C” (Commissioning) Day. This Chapter tells the story of the day we celebrate this year in our April 26 return to worship at Mount Rainier Christian Church (MtRCC), as well as providing a glimpse of the first budget of the new Church for the period May and June, 1959.

At this point, our sources still include Dr. Stark’s memoirs but are expanded to include the existing archives of University Christian Church (cUc) in the form of the bulletins and newsletters delineating the events of the first year. This is how he and the archives describe the events of “C” Day, with some editorial commentary generated by this writer.



“We were prayerful of our future after departing Mount Rainier Christian Church, April 26, 1959”.

“On April 26, 1959, 93 people from Mount Rainier Christian Church were commissioned and sent on their merry way to begin University Christian Church. People assembled from far and near to either join the procession outward, or to see the people leave. As you can guess, the entire service was around and about the commissioning. Rev. [and Mrs.] Flinn, and Mary Kay were there, having been previously commissioned by the Maryland Park Christian Church, where Jerry had recently served as interim minister. Communion was taken. Rev. Brinson, in his best form, served up a heart-wrenching, challenging sermon. As the 93 assembled in the aisles, [Rev] Brinson laid on a commission to go, and grow, and prosper, as a Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church. Thence,

we walked out of the building while people waved us good-bye, we got into our cars and reassembled at the Heurich [HI-RICK] site near the large sign proclaiming a new Christian Church would be located there. Rev. Flinn led us in prayer, read a scripture and gave a brief charge and the deed was done. The next Sunday we were to assemble at Northwestern High School at 11:00 [am] for worship.”

The newsletter from cUc designated No. 1, was dated April 27, 1959. It’s letter-head was hand-written and read “University Christian Church Newsletter” “. . . to declare God’s Good News” and the “boiler plate” data below was typewritten, mimeographed and stated: “Meeting at Northwestern High School, Colesville Road and Belcrest, Hyattsville, MD, P.O. Box 652, W[est] Hyattsville, MD. W.G. Flinn, Minister;” giving his home telephone number as JUniper 7-7151.

The newsletter contained a message from Rev. Flinn on page 1, stating that the next week was the first worship service of cUc; that it would be held at Northwestern High School; and urged all members to attend. He requested their prayers

“that God may lead us and use us to accomplish His purpose.”

Further, he requested:

“that each of you assume responsibility in advising us as to those who are ill, and particularly those in hospitals, or who will be hospitalized.”

In a Steering Committee report, appearing on page two of that first newsletter, the Committee expressed their appreciation to the individuals who volunteered to take on the duties and responsibilities necessary

to “run” the Church. Further, they delineated these duties and gave the names of those assigned (these were noted in Chapter 5 of this tract) and requested that all members assist them as they were able.

That second page also reported the following noteworthy developments:

“A choir is already organized to take part in the worship on May 3. Jackie Lynn and Lena Flinn have been very busy organizing this important adjunct to our worship. And we are privileged to have Mary Ruth DeGast as our organist. In Mary Ruth, we feel we have one of the best organists in this area. We are grateful for the use of the portable organ which was presented to the nursery of the MtRCC in honor of their son Peter, by Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Bock. The first rehearsal will be Wednesday, April 29, at the Mount Rainier Church.

“Fern Bower and Lucille Stark will serve jointly as our historians, and would like to have any items concerning our church, that might be included. It is our hope that our development and history may be documented as completely as possible.

“Please telephone prospects for membership to Joe Lynn, or those members of his Evangelism Committee: George Edmunds, Francis and Lucille Stark, Carroll and Virginia Davis, Wm A. Young and Mr. and Mrs. Elton Brown.”

The second page ended with thanks to all who assisted in the preparation of the newsletter and a request to send or phone:

“information or news items to Mrs. John Rybon, WEBster 5-5130”

Page three contained a letter from Rev. Flinn entitled “Dreams Do Come True”. In it, he discussed his thoughts and feelings surrounding our formation as a new Church.

Page four contained a hand-drawn Northwestern High School floor plan and specific instructions on how to access the worship service the following week.

Page five contained the Financial Report and stated that:

“The Steering Committee has made plans for a unified budget for our current expenses and missions. Bible school expenses and receipts will be assumed by the Church treasury. A monthly budget drawn up for the first two months (through June 30) based on estimated expenditures is as follows:”

[ed: In *Another Day, Another Adventure*, Dr. Stark summarizes the numbers:]

“the budget for May and June, 1959, was drawn up well in advance. It was decided to have a unified budget with 20% [25% appears to be closer] going to outreach causes. That early monthly budget, prepared without any history of potential receipts as a guide, was as follows:

Minister’s salary	\$150.00
Minister’s pension	\$ 13.50
Rent and janitor service	\$157.50
Flower fund	\$ 20.00
Post Office Box rent	\$.75
Postage (3 cents/ounce then)	\$ 15.00
Stationary and office supplies	\$ 50.00
Music	\$ 10.00
Advertising	\$ 15.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 68.25
Subtotal	\$500.00
Outreach	\$125.00
Total per Month	\$625.00”

The following financial notes were also included in the newsletter:

“This monthly budgeted total is approximately 50% greater than our currently estimated receipts for current expenses and mission. We hope that everyone will do what is possible to remove this discrepancy.

“As planned earlier, all receipts for the “Mission Church Fund” will be sent to the Mount Rainier Church by our treasurer, to be paid on the church property. The University Church will receive and transmit these funds for you.”

And the last notice in the first newsletter related to something near and dear to all parents:

“Sorry, no nursery...yet! Because of the lack of facilities in the High School, it will not be possible to have a nursery during the worship service in the beginning. Mr. Flinn assures us that children will not disturb him during the service, and hopes that you will come and bring your children to participate in the worship. We are sure that every parent will see that other worshippers are not disturbed.”

Chapter 7

We have now arrived at the events of May 3, 1959 which was designated “M” (Mission) Day. In this chapter I undertake to convey an account of the first service and to discuss major events of our first year of life as a congregation.

This is how Dr. Stark and the archives describe the events of “M” Day, with some explanatory and clarifying comments by this writer interspersed:

“The first worship service on 3 May 1959 was a glorious success. Those present numbered about 100. Mary Ruth DeGast opened with an organ prelude—not long because the organ was a military field organ that was pumped with the feet. After the call to worship we sang *The Church’s One Foundation* followed by the invocation and some announcements. The scripture was read from Genesis 1, followed by singing *This Is My Father’s World* and by the pastoral prayer. Acting Executive Secretary Chester Barnett brought greetings from the Capital Area Council of Christian Churches and we celebrated communion . . .

[ed.: According to both the bulletin notes and the newsletter the Elders appointed by the Steering Committee to serve during this formative period of the church were all at the Communion Table. They were: George S. Edmunds and Earl H. Fife, Jr. (who gave the prayers) and Elton H. Brown, Sr. (Chairman) and Wm. Carroll Davis (served).]

. . . followed by the offering and the Doxology. A small, but well-balanced, choir of about a dozen people rendered a real rouser as our first offering after only one practice, and Rev. Flinn preached on ‘In the Beginning God’. At the invitation hymn all



“Representative communion service held at Northwestern High School: (L-R, seated at table) Mr. Worthy B. Daggs, Jr.; Rev Wendell R. Turner, Jr; and Rev W. Gerald Flinn; Mr. Paul C. Rybon and unknown congregant (seated in foreground)”.

those coming by commission stood on the first verse, all others stood on the second verse, and Bob Benson [ed.: This was the husband of Otis Jean Benson, commissioned by MtRCC] presented himself for transfer of membership from the Roman Catholic Church. Jerry Flinn then gave the benediction and the service ended.

“Earl and Molly Fife and their two children Trudy and Denny [ed.: a third child, Betty, appears to have been omitted here and on the list in Chapter 5, though she is listed in our cUc records as coming with them] had been commissioned by the Georgia Avenue Christian Church and Jerry and Lena Flinn and Mary Kay Flinn by the Maryland Park Christian Church. Everyone left the service with the feeling that all would be well with our adventure in faith.

“We believed we could not start a church school on 3 May, but we were anxious to have it underway by the second Sunday, and it was. The school opened 10 May with about 100 people in class—60 children and 40 adults. The children met in six different classes in various corners of the cafeteria, and the adults met as one class in the basement of Elton and Dixie Brown’s house. C. Lyle Bock was the Superintendent and had a staff of 17 teachers and officers. A 15-minute opening exercise was held in the cafeteria and then teachers were available for the following classes: Nursery, Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Young People. I taught the adult class by starting with a 15-minute lecture from the International Bible Studies Curriculum followed by a discussion led by a prepared member of the class. By September 5, 1959, the janitors had arranged things so the adults could meet in a classroom in the school building. On October 5, 1959, Carl Bock reported church school enrollment stood at 133, including 110 pupils, 16 teachers and 7 officers.



“Primary Christian Education with Mrs. Otis Jean Benson; Mr. William Wallace, Jr. (at lower right)”

“University Christian Church was given 25 copies of the hymnal and one service book, plus all church school literature and worship bulletins for three months by the Christian Board of Publication. This was a gift of the brotherhood publishing house to help any new congregation.

“The Steering Committee reported on many issues in the May 11, 1959 Newsletter, but opened the report with these comments: ‘Your Steering Committee, elected by the congregation to serve until June 30, 1959, has been meeting once each week to discuss, suggest and make decisions on a myriad of details important to the operation of our new Church. It is unbelievable that there could be so many things to decide in these meetings, which last from three to four hours - - from the size of the offering envelopes and what to have printed on them to the question of calling a church architect. We are looking to the future as well as trying to anticipate the needs of the present. At the last meeting, the Steering Committee made a complete review of worship services to date and discussed ways of possible improvement. A number of arrangements may be tried, and the order of service may be changed, until the most satisfactory arrangements are found. Among recommendations the Committee referred to the congregation were (a) to operate with a Steering Committee until January 1, 1960, or later, (b) to increase the Committee to seven persons, (c) to elect certain church officers, (d) to request an architectural survey by the Board of Church Extension, and (e) to ask for program and budget planning help from the Department of Church Development and Evangelism of the United Christian Missionary Society.’”

Chapter 8

This final chapter recounts additional events occurring in the first years of University Christian Church's life as an independent congregation. Dr. Stark reports:

“A congregational meeting was required to request inclusion in the Annual Yearbook of Christian Churches. A resolution was prepared and voted on June 28, 1959 to accomplish that purpose.

“Joe Lynn was a first-rate leader of our evangelism effort. New members joined almost weekly. Those additions noted in the first volume of the newsletter include Bob Benson, Charles Collins, George and Edith Keahey, Carol Wilson, Vivian Killian, Beverly Parks, Patricia Parks, Kenneth Crone, Max and Margaret Libbee, Francis Yator, Ellen Walters, Bert and Ruth Smith, Mary Andrews, Janet Rybon, Bruce Young, Elsie Trace, Eleanor Pernia, Rosalie Rice, Barbara Olson, Clifford and Catherine Lien, Lance Lien, Betty Webb, Paul Young, William Gerlach, Mrs. Jerry (Diane) Anderson, Jesse and Pat Rawley, Walter and Josephine Owens, Douglas Gerlach, Wayne Benson, Ocie Dodd, Joyce Ann Lynn and Mrs. A.W. Moran. Undoubtedly, this list is not complete. In October, Joe Lynn reported eight teams went out to call on 58 people. On April 25, 1960, Joe reported membership had increased by 39 people and one (Donna Anderson) had withdrawn her membership to join the church of her new husband.

“The Steering Committee voted on December 1, 1959 to extend associate memberships to university students who are members of Christian Churches elsewhere.

“The Steering Committee was elected, in the beginning, to serve until 30 June 1959. Elections and congregational meetings were common occurrences that first year of our existence. Most of the congregational meetings were held after worship services. At a congregational meeting on May 27, 1959 the Steering Committee was increased to seven for the next 3-months by adding Irving Gray and Earl Fife to the original five. At another congregational meeting on September 20, 1959 ten persons were nominated to fill seven seats on the Committee and the election was postponed until September 27, 1959 when the seven incumbent members were elected for another 3-months beginning October 1. On December 27, 1959 the following were nominated and elected to a six-month term on the Committee, effective January 1, 1960: Laurence Bower, Earl Fife, Margaret Libbee, Joe Lynn, Beulah Rybon, Earl Sisson and Francis Stark. Eleanor Bock and Irving Gray withdrew at that time to provide an opportunity for some new blood on the Committee. I served as Chairman of the Steering Committee

from April 1959 until June 30, 1960. On May 11, 1960, at an annual congregational meeting, the following were elected for a 6-month term: Laurence Bower, Lyle Creager, Virginia Davis, Leonard DeGast, Jerry Flinn, Margaret Libbee and John Rybon. I [Dr. Stark] was elected Treasurer for that semester. Laurence Bower was elected chairman by the Committee.

“One of the mandates given to us by the Mount Rainier Christian Church was that we must become incorporated. We gave that matter our early attention, therefore, and on June 8, 1959 the Steering Committee decided to authorize Blair Smith to draw up Articles of Incorporation. At Blair's request, the congregation passed a

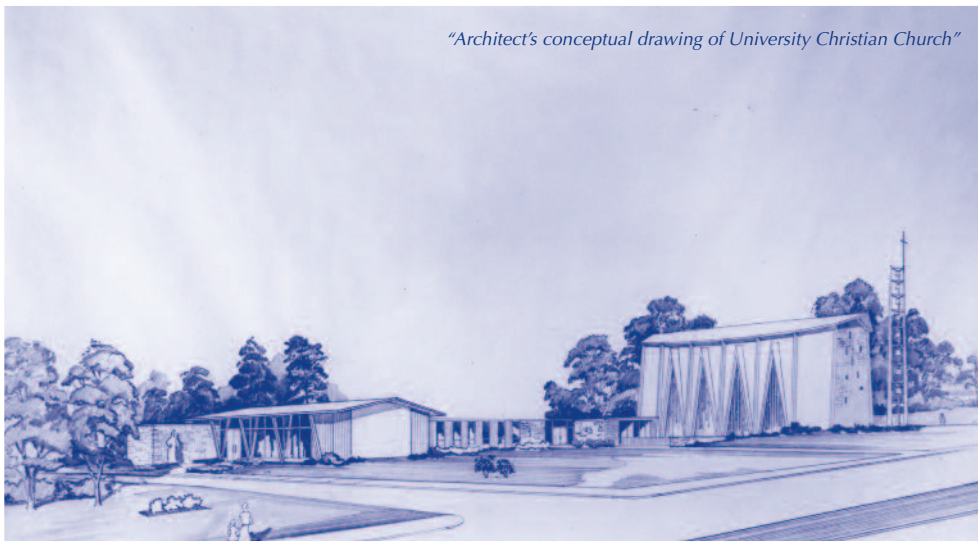


“University Christian Church Board of Trustees, elected November 8, 1959: (L-R) Mr. Elton H. Brown; Mr. Blair H. Smith, Esq; Rev W. Gerald Flinn; Mr. C. Lyle Bock; and Mr. Earl S. Sisson.

resolution on September 20, 1959 requesting him to perform that duty, and on November 8, 1959 the congregation voted to approve the Articles of Incorporation and elected Blair H. Smith, Elton H. Brown, Earl S. Sisson, Carl L. Bock and the incumbent minister to serve as [T]rustees until June 30, 1964. At the close of worship on December 6, 1959, the Articles of Incorporation as approved by the State Corporation Commission were read to the congregation and the elected [T]rustees were declared to be in office. Following the service, Elton Brown was elected chairman by the Trustees.

“A pulpit committee was appointed on June 15, 1959 to search for a full time minister. The Committee included Irving Gray [chairman], Earl Fife, Elton Brown, Mary Ruth DeGast, Kitty Killian and the Chairman of the Steering Committee ex officio. I attended the international convention at Denver in August 1959 and interviewed some possible candidates. In September the Steering Committee accepted the recommendation to invite Rev. Jim C. Spiller of Tulsa, OK for interview, but before he received the invitation, Rev. Spiller accepted a call to be Associate Minister at Central Church in Dallas. Rev. and Mrs. Wendell Turner were invited for interview and had a chance to meet the congregation at a square dance on November 13, 1959. A call was extended to Rev. Turner and he accepted the call by letter on December 3, 1959. His letter of acceptance was printed in the December 14, 1959 newsletter. Mr. Turner arrived in late January and began his ministry on February 1, 1960.” [ed.: Rev. Turner served until he was succeeded by permanent Minister’s Rev. Roger Zimmerman on January 4, 1970; Rev. Dr. J. Marshall Dunn on July 1, 1974; and (following the interim pastorate of Rev. Douglas L. Clark), Rev. Cecil H Cook on February 1, 2008.]

We now begin a new adventure as we walk in the light into the next fifty years.



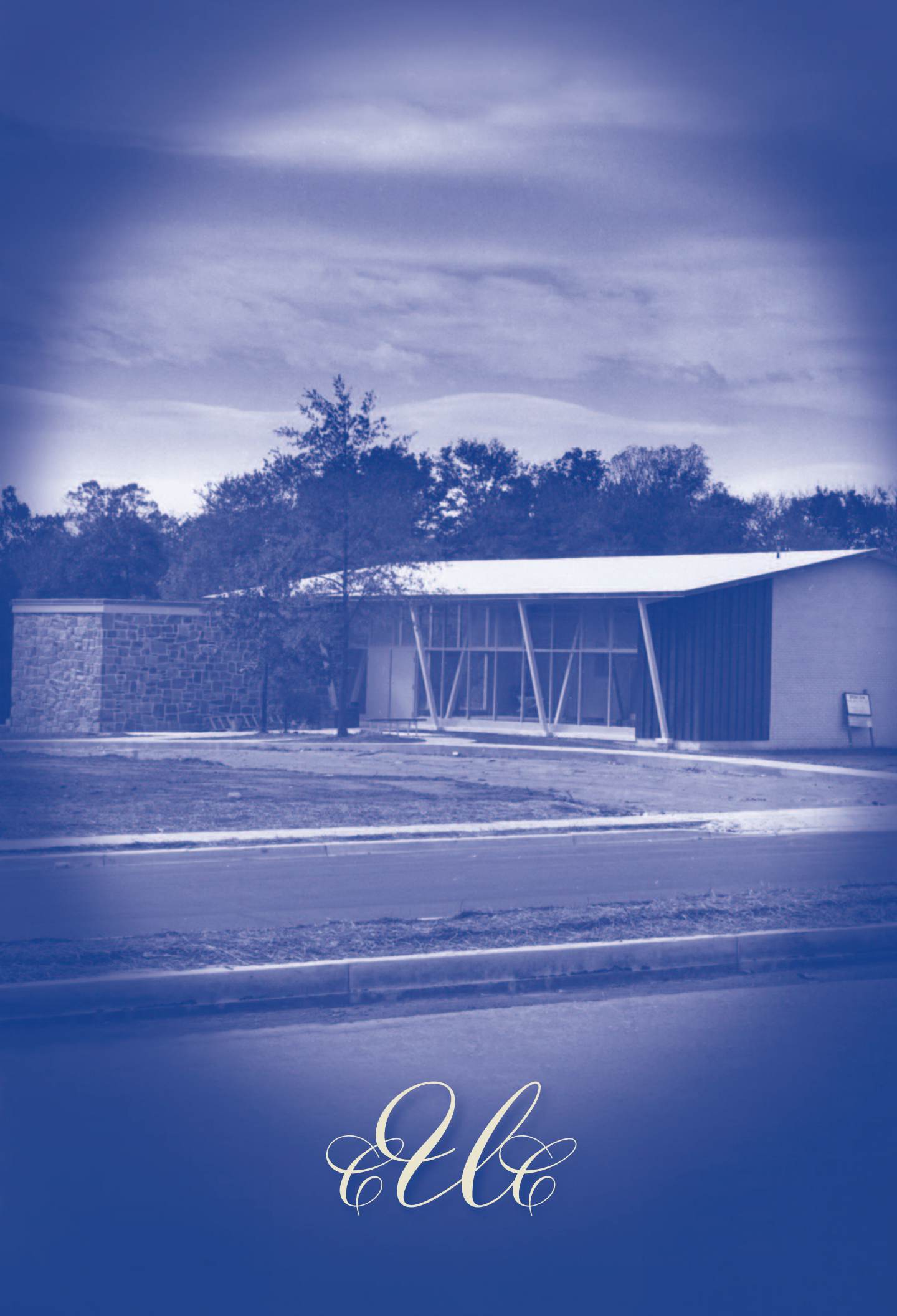
*“Lord, if it be thy will,
help us to build thy Church.”*

Dr. Francis C. Stark, Jr., 1959

Appendix A

“The Chairman of the Membership [Committee] announced that Charter membership in the University Christian Church closed with all those who were members on 24 April 1960. This included the following individuals:

Diane Anderson	Earl Fife, Jr.	Beulah M. Rybon
Donna D. (Anderson) Fogarty	Mary Fife	Paul C. Rybon
Edwin H. Anderson	Trudy Fife	Ruth (Rybon) Boysworth
Jerry D. Anderson	Earl D. Fife	Janet N. (Rybon) Demetro
Ruth C. Anderson	S. Elizabeth Fife	Robert Sandberg
Sharon D. Anderson	Rev. W. Gerald Flinn	Edna T. Sandberg
Mary (Andrews) Vuncanon	Lena L. Flinn	Harry F. Sandberg
Otis Gene Benson	Mary Kay Flinn	C. Ann (Sandberg) Michael
Robert P. Benson	Lura J. Fowkes	Rex D. Shaver
C. Lyle Bock	Marie Gerlach	Kathryn J. (Killian) Shaver
Christopher E. Bock	William B. Gerlach	Earl S. Sisson
Eleanor C. Bock	Irving G. Gray	Dorothy F. Sisson
Georgia A. Bock	Lillian E. Gray	Blair H. Smith
Laurence R. Bower	Lloyd B. Grenell	Bert A. Smith
Fern Bower	Helen Grenell	Ruth E. Smith
Linda G. Bower	Kenneth L. Grenell	Francis C. Stark, Jr.
Duane Bower	Mildred Hessert	Dorothy L. Stark
Elton H. Brown	Linda Johnson	Carolyn P. (Stark) Reich
Dixie R. Brown	George O. Keahey	Francis C. Stark, III
Ruth L. Burke	Edith Keahey	Elsie Trace
Alberta Cissell	Vivian Killian	H. Ann Turner
Charles R. Collins	Elizabeth C. Kinney	Rev. Wendell R. Turner, Jr.
Donia Collins	William R. Kinney	Wm. H. S. Wallace
Lyle F. Creager	Mary H. Lauthrip	Martha O. Wallace
Lorraine (Creager) Hebrew	Margaret N. Libbee	Ellen Walters
Lynda L. (Creager) Self	Max S. Libbee, Sr.	J. Morgan Watson
Billy R. Creager	Catherine Lien	Dorothy C. Watson
Norman A. Crone	Clifford Lien	Robert Watson
Christine Crone	Lance C. Lien	James Watson
Nancy Crone	Joseph W. Lynn	Louis M. Wiest
Norman K. Crone	Jacqueline Lynn	M. Elizabeth Wiest
Worthy B. Daggs, Jr.	Charles R. Madison	Louis M. Wiest, Jr.
Marie Daggs	Naomi Madison	John A. Wiest
Allison Dalzell	“Clara Belle-Coffman Moore	Carol E. Wilson
Margarete E. Dalzell	Barbara Olson	Harry T. Wynn
Wm. Carroll Davis	Josephine M. Owens	Esther E. Wynn
Virginia D. Davis	Walter C. Owens	Linda Wynn
Carolyn R. (Davis) Frye	John W. Parks	Francis H. Yator
Duane B. Davis	Alta Parks	Robert W. Yoho, Sr.
Leonard A. DeGast	Beverly Parks	Alice Yoho
Mary Ruth DeGast	Patricia E. Parks	Jacque C. Young
George S. Edmunds	Eleanor Pernia	Virginia B. Young
Irma Edmunds	Jesse R. Rawley, Jr.	Rosalind S. Young
Frank R. Edmunds	Patricia A. Rawley	William A. Young
Georgene L. Edmunds	Betty Reynolds	Robert B. Young
Nancy Edmunds	Rosalie W. Rice	Paul Young “
Robert H. Edmunds, III	John C. Rybon	



ELC



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