

A HISTORY OF THE
UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WINTHROP, MASSACHUSETTS

WINTHROP PUBLIC LIBRARY
2 METCALF SQUARE
WINTHROP, MA 02152-1514

by Patricia I. Brown



FOR REFERENCE

Do Not Take From This Room

IN CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF
MINISTRY ON TEWKSBURY STREET

November 12, 1989

L
974.46
Bro
1989
Glass
Case

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF
THE MINISTERS OF UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

1889-1895	Visiting Preachers
1896-1899	Arthur Truslow
1900-1905	James J. Goodacre
1906-1910	Alexander L. McKenzie
1911-1913	Seelye Bryant
1914-1917	Walter J. Sherman
1916	George Soper, Interim
1918-1919	Thomas C. Middleton
1919-1920	Ralph J. Haughton
1920-1923	Thomas Street
1924-1926	Martin E. Van de Mark
1926	Oscar Polhemus, Interim
1927-1930	Henry J. Wharton
1931-1935	Clement B. Yinger
1935-1938	Reuben E. Gilmore
1939	Vivian Bartlett, Associate
1939-1940	Rowland C. Adams
1940-1945	Carl Smith
1946-1952	Henry J. Chandler
1953-1959	Dewey A. Peterson, Jr.
1959-1961	William G. Miller
1962-1964	Linwood C. Potter
1965	none listed
1966-1968	Frank W. Archer
1969	Interim pastor
1970-1972	Daniel L. Johnson
1973-1977	George R. Tyson
1978-1979	George Paboojian, Interim
1979-1982	R. Jerry Morgan
1983-1984	John R. Coyle
1983	Laurel Greenwood, Associate
1984-1985	Robert Shire, Interim
1986 to date	Karen B. Fritz, Current Minister
1987-1988	June Fletcher-Hill, Associate
1988 to date	Deborah Lee Clark, Associate Minister

A HISTORY OF THE
UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WINTHROP, MASSACHUSETTS

by Patricia I. Brown

h
97
1989
Spase
Case
9/8/03



BREAKING GROUND c. 1950: REV. HENRY J. CHANDLER
WILHEMINA KERNER, JEANNETTE GREATHEAD, ALICE SNOW

WINTHROP PUBLIC LIBRARY
2 METCALF SQUARE
WINTHROP, MA 02152-1514

Winthrop, Union Congregational Church November 12, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ONE	The Birth of a Congregation	1
TWO	The Confirmation of the Young Congregation	5
THREE	The Experience of Growth	10
FOUR	The Challenge to Survive	18
FIVE	Hope: The Tension between Reality and Dreams	22
HISTORICAL SKETCHES - CHURCH GROUPS		26
BIBLIOGRAPHY - ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		31
CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MINISTERS		inside front cover

A FRAME OF HOPE

Through one hundred years of crashing surf
In salty wind, o'er rocky sod,
The spire of our little church
Rose like a finger, pointing God;

Our founding fathers first conceived
This quiet place for teaching good,
And in their piety achieved
A friendly house of humble wood.

What memories a church holds fast
In testament: Christ come to earth!
Here folk for 100 Yuletides past
Rejoiced anew the Savior's birth!

The heavenly scroll still incomplete,
She calls, her voice a plaintive chime,
To souls whose stumbling childish feet
May falter in the tramp of time.

All honor to the Pilgrim dream
Of humble folk with faith held high
Which built for sinners, brick on beam,
A frame of hope against the sky!

Dorothy Carmichael Didham

**A HISTORY OF THE UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WINTHROP, MASSACHUSETTS
by Patricia I. Brown**

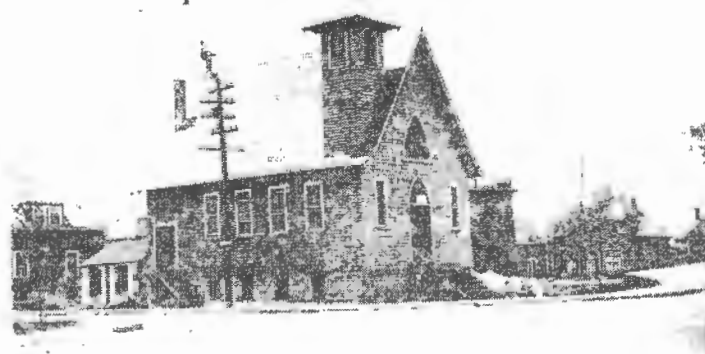
CHAPTER ONE The Birth of a Congregation

In 1754, the area we know today as Winthrop was called Pullin Point or Pullen Poynte. Point Shirley, as a part of Pullin Point, was often known as The Gut, and Deer Island, which has belonged to Boston since 1634, was called Deare Island (so named because of the large numbers of deer in the heavily wooded area) and was separated from Pullin Point by water. Pullin Point itself was part of a larger area consisting of Chelsea and Revere.

While farming and fishing were two of the main occupations, religion was very important to the early settlers and had been interwoven into their lifestyle for many years. From 1754 on through later colonial days, it was a time when many prominent ministers were traveling to Boston preaching and teaching.

For example, when George Whitefield, a well-known English Evangelist visited Boston in 1754, a spirit of religious revival prevailed throughout the New England area. The previous year the area known as The Gut had been newly named Point Shirley in honor of Governor Shirley who had visited there and praised their fishing industry. (Boston News Letter, September 13, 1753, in Clark's HISTORY, pg. 91). Some of the residents of Point Shirley heard Whitefield's messages and were earnestly moved by them.

Agnes Munn in her history of Congregationalism in Winthrop wrote that they "were so stimulated by his (Whitefield's) sincerity and oratorical skill, they decided to build a church, and in the summer of 1755, construction of the new Church began, the second Meeting House or Church in this immediate area. Previously there had been a church in the near-by Revere called 'The Old Meeting House,' and the one on Point Shirley was named 'The Meeting House.' John Hancock frequently worshipped here during the summer months."



SITE OF THE POINT SHIRLEY CHURCH

This "Meeting House" appears to have been the first Congregational Church in Winthrop, and a forerunner of today's Union Congregational Church. Although ministers visited local homes and preached from time to time, the residents of Pullin Point (Winthrop) had been taxed to support the First Church of Rumney Marsh (Revere), and their attendance was required on Sunday. During inclement weather it was often difficult to travel with the women and children to Revere, and the colonists were, no doubt, very happy to have a church closer to them at the Point.

The Point Shirley church was ready by the end of 1755, and the first minister, a Mr. Mather Byles, Jr preached his first sermon, according to Mrs. Munn's history, on November 23, 1755. An earthquake had shaken the area about this time, and true to the early preaching style of interweaving life's events into the sermons, Mr. Byles chose as his sermon topic, "Divine Wrath as Revealed in Earthquakes."

The Church was fairly successful and in 1756, Chelsea voted to increase taxation at the Point in order to pay for the minister. Point Shirley was still a part of Chelsea as the town of Winthrop had not been officially formed yet.

The Point was largely a successful fishing community while other parts of Pullin Point were engaged in farming, and by 1760 there were nearly 300 people in the Parish. A few years later, however, the fishing industry began to slow down, so that by 1780, there were only two families left in the area, and the church had to close.

By 1880 there was still no other Congregational Church nearby, and sometimes visiting ministers used the one at the Point to hold services. People would come from all around to hear their sermons. In this era, between 1800 and 1880, religion was still as much a part of people's lives as was their work or their day to day living experiences. But the population had begun to shift to Greathead (Winthrop Beach), and traveling to the now secluded Point Shirley Church by horse and wagon especially in the winter, was still not easily done.

Greathead was made up of large estates and farms owned by a few people. When we think of the thousands of homes and people in Winthrop today, it is difficult to conceive of the entire area of Winthrop being divided up into large estates owned by a few families. But so it was. According to Clark's HISTORY OF WINTHROP MASSACHUSETTS, an 1840 census at Pullin Point showed there was a population of 156. Out of 156 people, 142 were related to three families, the Tewksburys, the Belchers and the Floyds. By 1852, however, there was a successful copper works at Point Shirley which helped increase the population to about 300 people, and the rest of Pullin Point had grown a little also. There were now 45 houses and 62 property owners, and the people felt that the time had come to break away from Chelsea and govern themselves.

The residents successfully petitioned the General Court of 1852 "to be set off from North Chelsea and to be incorporated as a town to be called Winthrop." On March 27, 1852, Governor George S. Boutwell signed the bill, and Pullin Point became an independent entity.

But still, there was no nearby church building, so for many years the people at the Beach had been meeting at each other's homes for prayer meetings. Lucy Gordon's historical sketch, "Looking Backward Through Thirty Years" written in 1926, records these early events. "In 1878 Winthrop Beach section, then on the map as Greathead, consisted of sand, fields, two farmhouses, five small houses, and a line of white tents placed for the growing numbers of summer guests.

Sunday services had been held before this in one wing of an old stable at Ocean Spray, but the first sermon preached at Greathead was in 1878 by Rev. Sylvanus Burnham, a guest of Deacon C. T. Underhill. The text was, 'The Sea is His and He Made it,' and the sermon was given in Captain Charles Tewksbury's farmhouse parlor. About one hundred people came, and sat upon the lawn after the Captain's parlor was filled. Other services were held that summer in parlors and on piazzas."

These home meetings were so successful and well attended that in 1879 John Tewksbury provided an open pavilion on the site of the present Union Congregational Church on Tewksbury Street. The Pavilion, as it was known, was a platform with an overhead covering to protect from rain and the heat of the sun. According to Gordon's historical sketch, the people had to bring their own seating accommodations, and on Sundays the Gospel was preached, while on weekdays entertainment events were offered.



THE TEWKSBURY MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The services, however, could only be held during the summer months because the Pavilion was wide open and had no heating facilities or permanent fixtures. Still, the meetings were enthusiastically welcomed, and soon the people began to consider the possibilities of year-round services. Weekly services were held every summer with visiting ministers presiding. In 1883 John Tewksbury gave the Pavilion outright to the residents of Greathead. The grant was to be administered by members of a Board of Trustees, the first of whom were Underhill, Perkins, Rand, W. J. Esterbrook and F. O. Bailey.

Now the residents began to improve upon the Pavilion, adding settees and lamps, painting it, etc. But nevertheless, because of the inadequacies of the structure, only summer services could be held in this open Pavilion. The people still had to meet in homes during the winter, and these circumstances did not satisfy their desire for larger religious gatherings year-round. They needed a sheltered structure.

As Alice Rowe Snow told the story in her history of the Union Congregational Church, "Little by little, money, labor and materials given by many willing hands made the present Church possible. First, home gatherings, then a pavilion, then additions and improvements to that, and next in 1889, the taking away of the pavilion and the building of the Tewksbury Memorial Chapel.

1889. One hundred years ago, the Tewksbury Memorial Chapel was finished. Located on the present site of the Union Congregational Church on Tewksbury Street, it was the first structure this group of people had suitable for year-round services, and as such, it was the forerunner of our present-day Church. Although today's Church is somewhat larger, the current sanctuary stands exactly where the old Tewksbury Memorial Chapel stood.

The historical records are somewhat sketchy as to how many people could be seated at one time, or how large the attendance was in the Chapel. Agnes Munn's "History", however, reports that the Chapel had no foundation under it. "It was neither sheathed nor plastered," Mrs. Munn continued, "and the settees from the pavilion were used. It was described in the Winthrop Visitor of January 11, 1889, as 'of attractive design, with a church looking tower in front.' The new bell, presented by Mr. Charles H. Perkins, was first rung on February 22nd, 1889."

One can almost sense the enthusiasm and joy of the people when in June, 1889, the Chapel was officially dedicated by Dr. J. Gordon of the Clarendon Street Baptist Church, with Deacon Underhill presiding. From then on, cold and drafty as it no doubt was, heated only by parlor stoves with their rather ugly-looking stove pipes, services were held throughout the year, even in the coldest of winter weather.

In fact, uncomfortable as it may have been physically, the fulfilling of the spiritual needs of the people was so successful that the gatherings grew in numbers rapidly. Agnes Munn states that by 1895 there were 200 families in the area in the winter and approximately 2,500 people in the summer. Now that they had a permanent meeting place, many of these people wanted a regular church organization.

CHAPTER TWO The Confirmation of the Young Congregation

At a meeting on February 22, 1896 to discuss the formation of a Christian Church at the Beach, The Trustees of the Tewksbury Memorial Chapel, under the guidance of the Chairman of the Board, E. T. Underhill, offered the Chapel as a place of worship, and at the same meeting, Dr. Gage, chairman of the Committee to get names of prospective church members, made the following motion: "That we are ready to proceed to take the necessary steps towards the organization of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ which shall be a Union Congregational Church." The motion was unanimously approved. A short time later, the exact date is unknown, the Church was officially named the Union Congregational Church.

From February 1896 on, events moved along rather rapidly. On May 27, 1896 a council of delegates from 17 churches met to participate in the forming of this new church. 21 members stood up to form the church, and a visiting minister, Rev. Alexander McKenzie addressed the members of the newly formed church. Rev. McKenzie's name is particularly mentioned here, because little did anyone know at the time that ten years later he was to become the third pastor of this same Union Congregational Church congregation to whom he now gave the charge to "pull together."

The first minister, Rev. Arthur Truslow, was installed as pastor on September 30, 1896. Truslow had been acting pastor prior to that date, but he had not yet graduated, so it was not until September that he was officially installed. One noteworthy event during Rev. Truslow's tenure occurred on October 14, 1896. The Union Congregational Church was incorporated and joined the Suffolk-North Association, a group of Congregational Churches in nearby cities and towns.

Membership and attendance information is somewhat sketchy, but there is no doubt about the poor and deteriorating condition of the building. There was still no foundation, and the church building was set on the ground. It was still unplastered and the settees originally used in the Pavilion were still being used in the Chapel.



REV. ARTHUR TRUSLOW



REV. ALEXANDER L. MCKENZIE



REV. WALTER J. SHERMAN

The second minister, Rev. James J. Goodacre, who served from 1901 to 1906, inherited the inadequacies and discomforts of the church building which was, in effect, still an unfinished building. Rev. Goodacre was instrumental in overseeing many improvements. The building was raised and a new foundation was built, thus creating enough space to add a vestry and kitchen. The walls were plastered; the settees were removed, and pews were built. And, for the first time, a pipe organ was installed.

These improvements did not come about easily. Money was in short supply, and, as is often the case today, some people were reluctant to part with their hard-earned money. Mrs. Agnes Munn in her history tells a rather amusing anecdote regarding Rev. Goodacre's unusual fund-raising tactics. "One Sunday," Mrs. Munn wrote, "Rev. Goodacre preached in a fur coat and said, 'It was a case of plastering the Church or burying the Minister.' He then went out and raised, in one week, the necessary sum for the improvements."

Rev. Alexander McKenzie, who had participated ten years earlier in the ceremony for the forming of the Union Congregational Church, became the third minister of the Church, serving from 1906 to 1911. Rev. McKenzie is remembered historically for two important things: many new people joined the church during his years, and the church was freed from debt.

Alice Rowe Snow was an eyewitness to the events of this era, and in her "Historical Sketch" she recalls Rev. McKenzie's hard work: "Our next captain was Rev. Alexander L. McKenzie. He worked hard and freed the church of debt. Well I remember when he held the mortgage and burned it in a spectacular manner at our annual Church supper, amidst great applause from happy members."

But, as with other pastors, Rev. McKenzie moved on to another ministry, and Rev. Seelye Bryant served next from 1911 to 1913. During this time membership decreased from 127 members in 1911 to 97 in 1913. Rev. Bryant left late in 1913.



REV. THOMAS MIDDLETON



REV. RALPH HAUGHTON



REV. MARTIN E. VAN DE MARK

Rev. Walter Sherman became the Pastor in 1914. He was very effective in creating and organizing new departments in the Church, and a spirit of enthusiasm and growth seemed to permeate the congregation under his guidance. Additional land was purchased to add to the Church's property for future growth. When World War I started, Rev. Sherman left Union Congregational Church to serve overseas as a chaplain. In his absence, Rev. George Soper temporarily filled in. Rev. Sherman returned to serve after the war, but he left for another pastorate on November 3, 1918.

Advance preparation, however, had been made, and on November 6, 1918, Rev. Thomas Middleton accepted the call to serve as Pastor. Unfortunately he died September 3, 1919. Middleton was followed by Rev. Ralph Haughton from November, 1919 to October 31, 1920 at which time he left to accept another pastorate. Haughton was quickly followed by Rev. Thomas Street, who served somewhat longer, from December, 1920 to September 21, 1924. Even though he served nearly four years, the available historical sketches give little information, other than to say that he was a fine preacher who did his work well and left to go to a larger church in the West.

The next minister, Rev. Martin E. Van de Mark, served the Church from 1924 to 1926, and was apparently successful with increasing the role of the young people in church activities. Lucy Gordon notes that there was a marked increase in attendance during this time, and that, "as never before, the young people have come to the front ranks of workers, assisting, through their Christian Endeavor Societies, in every feature of church work." Indeed, when one looks at the pictures of Rev. Van de Mark in the Church's archives, he is surrounded by large groups of young people.

In 1926, however, Rev. Van de Mark left and was replaced by an interim pastor, Rev. Oscar Polhemus who served briefly until Rev. Henry J. Wharton accepted the position in 1927.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY - APRIL 27, 1926

Rev. Wharton served nearly three years from 1927 to 1930, and there is not too much material available about his pastorate. The notes of a Cabinet meeting held on Friday, August 8, 1930 with 15 members present indicated that some members of the church felt Wharton was not getting the results they desired. One person stated that Mr. Wharton had filled the Pastoral office to the satisfaction of several members, and they were "convinced that the good far outweighed any other qualities that Mr. Wharton possessed." The final consensus of the Cabinet members was that: 1. The interest of the church had to be taken into consideration. 2. Nothing personal should be considered. A committee was formed to talk the situation over with Rev. Wharton. After that conversation, the end result was that Wharton agreed to attempt to find another pastorate, and he would resign from Union Congregational Church as soon as possible after his vacation. This was mutually satisfactory to all concerned.

Once again a search committee was formed to seek a new pastor. On March 4, 1931, at a specially called meeting of the Church, Mr. E. Bentley, a member of the Pastoral Committee, announced after interviewing several candidates, the choice was between Ernest M. Stone and Clement B. Yinger. After a general discussion of both candidates with special consideration to their interest in working with young people, a motion was made that Mr. Bentley be authorized to write Rev. Clement B. Yinger and invite him to become the pastor of Union Congregational Church at a salary of \$1,800 a year.

Lucy Gordon's historical sketch "Looking Backward Through Thirty Years" ends with the year 1926. Alice Rowe Snow's "Historical Sketch" ends with the year 1934, so Rev. Yinger was her current pastor at that time. With her keen interest in the sea and with comparing the Union Congregational Church to a ship, Mrs. Snow wrote of Rev. Yinger, "Finally, I come to the present time, and on the quarter-deck I see pacing to and fro a tall, blond commander--a descendant, I think, of one of the ancient Vikings--Captain Clement B. Yinger! He is doing a good job, keeping the ship on her course, steering clear of the rocks of sin and the shoals of worldliness. His chart is the Bible; his compass is prayer; his pilot is Christ and he aims for the Celestial City, and I know he will get us all there. God bless him."

Rev. Yinger was called in March of 1931, and he accepted. Agnes Munn recalls Yinger's years of service: "During Rev. Clement B. Yinger's pastorate, 1931-1935, a beautiful new organ, pulpit and lectern were dedicated and the chancel re-designed. The mortgage on the organ was burned two years later, a splendid accomplishment when everyone was feeling so keenly the depression."

Rev. Yinger was clearly concerned with improving the physical facilities of the church, with reorganization of groups and committees, with outreach, and with building up membership and attendance. At a Cabinet meeting called by Rev. Yinger on Feb. 3, 1932, he said that the Cabinet had been more or less defunct for the past year with the workload falling on the Prudential Committee. He successfully reactivated the Cabinet with meetings to continue on the second Wednesday of the month. At this same meeting he charged the Cabinet members to help make people feel the friendliness of the Church. His words, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting, were to the effect that we have "to show a kindly spirit to new folks if we want

them to come back. The members of the Cabinet are especially delegated to do this work and if possible get the names and addresses." One member, Mrs. Cusiter suggested having a guest book, and this was agreed to.

At another Cabinet meeting March 9, 1932, Rev. Yinger stressed the necessity of greeting visitors or infrequent attendants at church services. He also asked each member of the Cabinet to try to talk to friends who might be interested in joining the Church at Easter.

Today, the Union Congregational Church still makes the guest book available for visitors to sign. And today, also, it is not the function of the Cabinet members alone to greet visitors and make them feel welcome, but is the pleasant task of the entire congregation to make newcomers and "infrequent attendants" feel welcome.

At the 37th Annual Meeting, January 11, 1933, Rev. Yinger told those present that he was pleased with the attendance of between 120 and 150 people during the Sunday morning service. He also said that new front doors were needed and that the Church needed painting. Both of these tasks were accomplished, as well as having a new furnace installed. These improvements were in keeping with Rev. Yinger's attempts to improve the Church facilities.

This was a time when the Union Congregational Church had Sunday morning and evening services, as well as a mid-week service. It was a time when the Church records listed 254 members, with 33 new members joining in 1933. It was a very busy time, when the Church School consisted of a Primary Department, a Junior Department, an Intermediate Department, a Cradle Roll Enrollment, and a Beginner's Department. There were also three classes in the Senior Department, a group called the Pals with 12 members of high school age, the Pastor's class of 25 young adults above high school age, and the Men's Class, an interdenominational group of about 50 men.

By 1934 Church membership was up to 266, and the various groups were very active. There was the Woman's Association, the Get-Together Club (for younger married women), Senior Christian Endeavor (consisting of about 50 young people age 16 and over), Intermediate Christian Endeavor (for early teens), Junior Christian Endeavor (for younger children), and the Shipmates (a group for Senior girls organized in 1932 with Mrs. Yinger as leader).

There were also smaller groups created for a specific purpose. The Loyal Temperance Legion was founded to emphasize "the dire effects of drink and demonstrable values of total abstinence." The Prudential Committee was to oversee the care of the land and buildings belonging to the Church. Some of the previously mentioned groups still exist today, others do not. They will be discussed in a separate section of this history.

It was a wonderful, busy, fulfilling time for the Union Congregational Church and its members. Although there were problems, to be sure, they were not insurmountable, and the Church thrived under Rev. Yinger's pastorate. But on Sunday September 8, 1935, Rev. Yinger called for a special meeting of the membership immediately following the service. At that time he presented his letter of resignation, saying he had accepted a call to a pastorate in Bristol, New Hampshire.

CHAPTER THREE The Experience of Growth

Rev. Yinger left October 1, 1935, and the new pastor, Dr. Reuben E. Gilmore, took over December 1, 1935. Dr. Gilmore presided over the 40th Annual Meeting held on January 14, 1936. At this meeting, the clerk's report indicated that Dr. Gilmore had commenced his pastorate as of December 1st, and that "a very confident feeling of expectancy was evident that the church was going forward." And go forward it did.



COUPLE'S CLUB - 1935-36
REV. R. E. GILMORE

At the next Annual meeting, the 41st held on January 12, 1937, it was reported that there were now 300 members, 47 new members having been added during the year. Dr. Gilmore expressed his gratitude for the loyalty and cooperation of members and friends. He said that their hard work had resulted in increased attendance, growth in membership and increased giving, and further, that he looked forward to the new year with confidence.

This enthusiastic spirit and its resultant growth in the Church continued as the 42nd Annual Report (January 11, 1938) showed 30 new members joined the Church raising the membership to 324. Dr. Gilmore wrote an inspiring report for inclusion in the minutes of the meeting in which he rejoiced in the increased attendance, increased financial support, increasingly excellent music by the choir, increased service to the community, a splendid Christian spirit of toleration and cooperation, and evidence of deeper spiritual living.

For the future he urged members to plan ahead, to strive for ever increasing attendance. He suggested a "Look-out Committee" to report folks who should attend, and a "Motor Committee" to see that no cars came only half full. He further suggested striving for increased Christian education and future planning with regard to a more adequate Church building.



ROSE AND ERNEST BENTLEY

And in conclusion Dr. Gilmore stated, "It is given to us to inspire men to great, heroic living. To this end we must direct our endeavors, hopes and prayers."

Mr. Bentley, the clerk at the time wrote, "By vote of all members present this splendid report along with all other reports was voted accepted and placed in the file."

January 10, 1939. The 43rd Annual Meeting. It was reported that 40 people joined the Church. Membership jumped to 354. The Prudential Committee supervised the installing and housing of chimes. And at this time, 1938-1939, we find the first instance of a woman pastor at the Union Congregational Church. The Annual Report contains a report from the Assistant Pastor, Miss Bartlett. As of January, 1939, she had been serving for four months. Her duties consisted of organizing files, general office work, preparation of special services for Christmas, work with young people, and house visitation. No specific mention is made of preaching or leading adult group meetings or Bible study, and it is not noted whether she was an ordained minister or not. Dr. Gilmore's Annual pastoral report stated, "Miss Bartlett, the associate pastor has done good visible work which endeared her to all."

The picture thus presented was of a happy, enthusiastic, active, growing church. Soon, however, things were to take a rapid change for the worse. Dr. Gilmore, a very successful and well-liked pastor, was about to leave.

On March 8, 1939 a letter of resignation was received from Dr. Gilmore. A special Church meeting was called for March 19, 1939, and Dr. Gilmore's letter of resignation was accepted, with regret, effective May 1, 1939. There can be no doubt as to the effectiveness of Dr. Gilmore's ministry or of the love and affection which the congregation felt for him. At this special meeting the following resolution was submitted:

"Whereas our pastor Rev. R. E. Gilmore has indicated his acceptance of a new charge therefore let it be resolved: That, at this meeting of the members of the Union Congregational Church duly called together, we extend to him our sincere appreciation of the outstandingly good work he has done in the three and a half years of his pastorate. And be it further resolved: That we extend to him our best wishes and heartfelt prayers for the success of his labors in his newly chosen church. And be it further resolved: That a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the records of the church as a permanent record of our appreciation."

The resolution was unanimously carried.

That was in March 8, 1939, and by June 11, 1939, the Pastoral Supply Committee had chosen Rev. Rowland C. Adams, a young man of about 28. The Committee had looked at his previous service at Newcastle, N. H., and was impressed with his work with young people and his systematic pastoral visitations. It was agreed that Rev. Adams be invited to become the fulltime pastor of Union Congregational Church for a period of one year at an annual salary of \$2,100. He accepted and began his ministry in August, 1939.

Just four short months later, however, it was obvious things were not going well at all. On December 31, 1939 without prior warning, Rev. Adams read his letter of resignation to the congregation at a Sunday morning service. This was not the standard procedure for resigning from the pastorate, and it was decided to take it up at the Annual meeting only nine days away.

It was customary for the pastor to attend annual meetings, but for the 44th Annual Meeting (January 9, 1940), the Cabinet requested that the pastor not be present until later in the meeting. They felt embarrassment could be avoided by an open and frank discussion of the pastor's resignation before he came in to take charge of the meeting. There appeared to be irreconcilable differences between Rev. Adams and some of the church members about how work should be conducted. At the meeting the moderator made a report of difficulties which had been met in adjusting the work of the church to the pastor. The result was that Rev. Adams read his resignation directly to the Church without notification to the Cabinet. The Cabinet immediately held a special meeting and concluded: 1. that a written statement be prepared setting forth the course of conferences between the pastor and the Cabinet, and 2. that the resignation of Rev. R. C. Adams be accepted at any time up to April 1, 1940, and 3. that a pastoral supply committee be appointed immediately.

1939 was a very difficult year for the Church. Dr. Gilmore was greatly missed, Rev. Adams had resigned, only 11 new members were admitted, and the current membership was estimated to be 256, down quite a bit from the previous 354. Besides the downward trend in membership, another factor beginning to become evident was that the number of female members were nearly double the number of male members. In 1939, there were 92 male members and 167 female members.

The Pastoral Supply Committee invited prospective candidates to preach and had narrowed the search down to three. Of these three, the Church voted to invite Rev. Carl Smith of California to become the full time Pastor of the Church at a salary of \$1,800 annually. He accepted and began his duties August 1, 1940.

Rev. Carl Smith served the Church from 1940 to 1945. When he became pastor the membership stood at 256. According to the Congregational Yearbook's statistical data from 1940 to 1945, the Union Congregational Church's membership steadily increased to 279. Thus, at least we know that stability had been restored to the Church, and the decline in the membership rolls had ceased and been replaced with a slow, but, steadily increase.

Over the course of Rev. Smith's five year tenure, 54 new members were admitted. Although the increase from 256 members to 279 represents a growth of only 23, this figure is deceptive. During his pastorate, 54 new members were admitted, the largest yearly number coming in 1943 when 22 new members were added. Others, of course, were removed from the list by death or transfer of letter. The average attendance at the Sunday services was about 100, and the Church School had a rather large enrollment of between 120 and 150. So, in spite of the fact that Rev. Smith's pastorate was throughout the turbulent years of World War II, the Union Congregational Church was maintaining a steady course once again.

From 1946 to 1952, Rev. Henry J. Chandler served as Pastor of the Union Congregational Church. Like Rev. Carl Smith, Chandler's tenure was a time of stability and steady growth. While attendance remained at about 100, the Church School enrollment grew to 217. The Church membership total took a drop to 167 in 1949, but that was because the rolls were cleared of those no longer active, and 124 names were removed from the list.

During the total time of Rev. Chandler's pastorate, 79 new members were admitted, and, as was mentioned earlier, the Church School was flourishing.

Agnes Munn's HISTORY says of Chandler, "Rev. Chandler brought a message of firm belief in the teachings of the Bible and a ministry of visitation and comfort to the older members of the Church and to the sick and shut-ins of the community. While he was here, a much-needed wing was erected to the rear of the building, providing added class rooms, choir rooms, new kitchen, parlor and an office. This addition was dedicated in 1951 and named for its founder as the "Henry J. Chandler Memorial Extension."



REV. HENRY J. CHANDLER

Thus, from 1940 to 1952, Rev. Smith and Rev. Chandler did an outstanding job of unifying the Church, stopping the decrease in membership, and maintaining an active Sunday School. So that by 1953, when Rev. Dewey A. Peterson was called to the Pastorate of Union Congregational Church, he had the nucleus of a strong spiritually led group of people who were eager to see the church grow in membership and expand in outreach. Rev. Peterson did not disappoint them.

Let the words of one who was there, who saw it all first-hand, speak. From Mrs. Agnes Munn's HISTORY: "The present minister, Rev. Dewey Augustus Peterson, came to the Church on February 1, 1953. Union Church was greatly honored and inspired by his ordination in the Church on February 22, 1955. He has brought great inspiration to all, old and young, and is giving untiring Christian devotion and service. The Sunday School is overflowing every Sunday and recently visual education equipment has been introduced. The Pilgrim Fellowship and Junior High Fellowship give Union Church one of the most active Youth Programs in town. In 1954, the front of the Church building was enhanced by the addition of an attractive portico and entrance... The Church is full every Sunday and three services are held on Easter Sunday to accomodate the throngs. There has been an increase in membership, substantially so!"

The statistical data emphatically backs up Mrs. Munn's statement about increased membership. During Rev. Peterson's six and a half years of service, 216 new members were added, the highest yearly number being 51, added in 1956. Membership jumped from 177 in 1952 to 274 in 1958. The average attendance at the Sunday services was around 182, the highest average yet so far recorded. The Church School enrollment reached as high as 190 in 1957, and there were 15 teachers. The groups and committees were also extremely active, and a newly formed Social Action Committee became involved with other churches to discuss with residents and town officials some of the community's current problems.

From a reported membership of 180 in 1964, the figures fell to 152 by 1968. Church School enrollment by 1968 stood at 84, the lowest figure in nearly 20 years. Without access to the Annual Reports for the 1960's, it is difficult to explain exactly why membership and Church School enrollment dropped so drastically and what steps were being taken to improve the situation. But there is no doubt that steps were being taken, for, although the Union Congregational Church was a struggling Church, it was not a defeated Church, and valiant efforts were being made to stem the backward slide and to move forward.

The decade of the 1960's was a turbulent time, filled with student unrest, the unpopular Viet Nam War, a wave of secularism, and, in many cases, a decrease in church attendance resulting in a merging of some smaller churches and a closing of other churches. So perhaps the decline can be partially explained by the events in our society of the sixties. But perhaps, also, some of the churches have to accept partial responsibility for the decline for not meeting the varied needs of a shifting, ever-changing population.

In 1968, Rev. Archer left, and an interim pastor served in 1969. Membership went down even further to a reported 148, with Church School enrollment at 76. There were no figures listed for new members admitted in the 1969 records.

In 1970, another minister assumed the leadership of the Union Congregational Church. Daniel L. Johnson began his pastorate on May 24, 1970, and the local newspaper summarized his concept of ministry, which Rev. Johnson said involved the conviction that people were "desperately seeking true meaning in life, and that human love and social justice built on Biblical foundations satisfy that need."

Under Rev Johnson's guidance emphasis was placed on doing the work of Christ as a community of disciples. In his annual report for 1971, he stressed that "the strength for Christ's work comes in the doing of it and the only training we have is on the job training." In addition to the regular duties of worship, Bible study, pastoral visits, and youth activities, Rev. Johnson was very interested in ecumenical study, church fellowship, and building up the Church School.



REV. WILLIAM G. MILLER



REV. FRANK ARCHER



REV. DANIEL JOHNSON

The report of the Board of Religious Education in the Annual Report of 1971 had indicated that the Church School might be facing difficulties in the near future. The Board had been called together to try to find a solution to the problem of decreasing attendance in the Church School. They even discussed the possibility of a combined Sunday School with all the Protestant churches participating. There is no evidence, however, that this latter proposal was ever implemented.

Through the combined work of the congregation and Rev. Johnson, 28 new members were admitted, the highest yearly number since 1958 when 42 new members had been added. Church School enrollment increased by 10. It was indeed an active time for the Church. Besides the increase in membership and Church School enrollment, there had been more interest in interchurch brotherhood, the operation of a "Drop-in Center" for young people, and a new publication entitled "The Eyes of Youth" was started by and for the young people. The Church groups were all very active, and things were beginning to improve.

But once again, the time came for a well-liked, well-respected, very effective, pastor to move on to another church. Rev. Johnson resigned from the Union Congregational Church to become associate pastor of a Congregational church in West Haven, Connecticut.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Rev. Johnson would be greatly missed. The feelings of the congregation were nicely expressed in the announcement of Rev. Johnson's resignation in the local paper. They wrote, "Few people are able to give of themselves as completely as Rev. Johnson. During the years he has been pastor of the Union Congregational Church his love, caring and consideration have been evident to all he has been associated with. He has instilled in all of his congregation great hope for their church's future. Wherever the future may bring Dan Johnson, he will always remain in the hearts of the people at the little church at the beach."



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1969

CHAPTER FOUR The Challenge to Survive

From 1973 to 1977, Rev. George R. Tyson served as pastor. By 1975 things seemed to be going fairly well. There had been 10 new members admitted the previous year. Although membership had decreased from 168 members in 1973 to 144 in 1975, the Church School was holding its own with over 50 children enrolled. In the Pastor's report for the 69th Annual Meeting (January 21, 1975), Rev. Tyson said, "This past year we have done some new things at the church. We held an ecumenical vacation Bible school this past summer. We have a counselor from CAPIC, specializing on alcoholism in the church five days a week. A confirmation class is functioning ..."



CAROL AND REV. GEORGE R. TYSON

Membership increased a little the next year with the addition of 13 new members bringing the total to 151. A tremendous amount of activity took place in church building repairs and improvements, largely to receive a certificate of occupancy from the town inspectors. It was at this time also that the House Committee was responsible for having signs made with the Church name and placing them on the Tewksbury and Perkins street sign poles. So, while on the surface, all seemed to be well, as the Church members were busy and productive, nevertheless, a steady decline was slowly undermining the workings of the Church.

According to the Annual Report of January 23, 1978, only one new member had been admitted in 1977, and membership was down to a new low of 123. Church School enrollment had dropped to 48, and the Diaconate was plainly worried. In the 1978 Diaconate's report Hazen Lipsett, the Senior Deacon and Gail Graves, the Senior Deaconess, sounded the warning: "Although there have been many good things happening this year, there is a growing concern on the part of the Diaconate for other things that are not good; our failure to meet our budget; the dwindling number of children in the Sunday School and mostly for the extremely apathetic attitudes many of us have had when strong support and concern are needed. We pray in the coming year that these things will greatly improve."

And yet, 1977 was a busy year with planning and participation in the Winthrop Inter-faith Service, serving food at the Pine Street Inn, and donations to the Home For Little Wanderers. The Union Congregational Church reached out still further, to the City Mission Society, to programs of the Metropolitan Boston Association, and to the Massachusetts Conference and the United Church of Christ.

These busy activities included lay participation in the worship services for the first time. Not all approved of this new feature, but the Diaconate report said, "Perhaps the best thing that has taken place this year (1977) is

the laity participating in the Sunday morning services. While not all have approved of this, the consensus of the Diaconate is that this is a good meaningful experience and need in the spiritual life of our church." Busy activities. New ways to involve the laity. Why then an apathetic membership?

Rev. Tyson was worried also. His report indicated the problems of financial difficulties and buildings which were beginning to show their age and in need of repair. But above all the other problems, apathy was paramount in his concerns. Rev. Tyson concluded his report with the following statement: "My major concern as your spiritual leader is the amount of apathy that seems to exist in our church. We cannot grow or be a vital part of the church of Jesus Christ if we just sit back and watch. It takes team work to make anything happen. If you are sure that we are going to fail then that is exactly what will happen and we should start to close down. If, on the other hand, you think that there is a place and a purpose for our church and that it can be successful in meeting its goals, then let's do something about it."

At this time, however, Boston and suburbs had showed a loss of nearly 40% in United Church of Christ membership. Concern for this dramatic drop in total membership prompted development of an Area Mission Strategy to coordinate efforts of the UCBHM and the Conference.

In an honest effort to solve the Church's problem several people from the Union Congregational Church participated in the Area Mission Strategy Program in order to look at their Church's programs and evaluate them. The result was enlightening, as reported by Rev. Tyson, "One of the things that did come out of the program was the realization that we had a need for more Fellowship. Thus, several fellowship suppers were held but with an extra added feature--a program. These were so well received that more are being planned."

More fellowship? Were there too many outside activities to the detriment of the unity and fellowship of the church? Was this renewed emphasis on fellowship too late? "Well," continued Rev. Tyson's report, "those are some of the things that make up the 1977 Chapter of the history of the Union Congregational Church. How we move into a new chapter--a chapter still to be written and which contains many opportunities for risk and growth and failure. The way we approach this new year will greatly affect the way we will look back at it a year from now."

But changes for the better were not to be. The 73rd Annual Report (1978) was extremely short. There were no club reports, and no pastor's report. The "new business" consisted of naming a treasurer and adjusting the by-laws with minor changes. One part of the new business, however, was the organization of a newly formed Stewardship Committee. But other than that, nothing much happened, and the meeting lasted only 1 hour and fifteen minutes. Rev. Tyson had resigned and a part-time interim pastor, Rev. George Paboojian, served until June of 1979 at which time Rev. R. Jerry Morgan became the full-time pastor.

Rev. Jerry Morgan started in June of 1979 and remained at Union Congregational Church until 1982. During 1979 membership had become alarmingly low, standing at 120, and by the time Rev. Morgan took over,

membership had dropped to 115, with a Church School enrollment of 38. It would not be an easy task to reverse this downward trend. For the 1979-1980 school year the Church offered its building to the Winthrop Alternative School, a program of the Winthrop School Department.

1980 was a year of change for the Deaconesses. Lest we take it for granted that Deaconesses always participated freely in the services, the records show that it was not until 1979 and 1980 that things began to change. In 1980, the Diaconate voted that the Deaconesses would once again collect the services offering at Communion Services. It was also noted that if there were not enough Deacons to perform some of the duties usually designated to the Deacons, such as serving Communion, taking up an offering at regular services, etc., the Deaconesses may be called upon to perform some of these duties.

By the end of the second year of Rev. Morgan's pastorate, active membership had dropped to 99 members. The Pastor's report in the 76th Annual Meeting (May 11, 1981) tells of the normal pastoral duties, preparing sermons, visiting, committee meetings, etc., and, once again, working with the Winthrop Inter-faith Council. Summer Sunday services were changed from 9:30 AM. to 10 AM. for July and August.

An interesting event which occurred in 1980 was the addition of beautiful stained glass windows. Lois Jackson, Chairperson of the Prudential Committee reported, "Our new stained glass windows, designed and built by Phyllis Corbin, were installed and back-lighted in September. They were dedicated in November. The beauty and symbolism of the windows is a real pleasure to experience when entering the church by way of Tewksbury Street."

By 1982, the Church was in serious difficulty. The report of the 77th Annual Meeting (May 24, 1982) contained a motion presented by Vivian Campbell to inform the members and inactive members by publishing the serious financial situation of the Church in the newsletter and the Church Bulletin. The motion was carried. The Church members were making a valiant effort to stop the declining trend, and were struggling to survive as a Church.

By 1983 Rev. Morgan had resigned, and Rev. John R. Coyle became the pastor. Until Rev. Coyle arrived, the Diaconate had to find supply ministers for each Sunday. They were able to find ministers for every service except one, and for that one Sunday, the Moderator of the Church, Charles Briggs led the service.

In Rev. Coyle's first report to the Church on May 16, 1983, he tells how he has spent several months getting to know the members of the Church and the community. "Specifically," he stated, "my efforts have centered around a prayerful assessment of your needs and your abilities as well as the anxieties which you expressed to me when I came here. The following has become apparent to me:

FIRST: It is a realistic hope on your part that this congregation can survive as a viable religious community in Winthrop, or, to put it more simply, things are not as bad as you thought. I conclude this because you have a membership which though small, is exceptionally dedicated,

resourceful and caring. With this asset, you will survive.

SECOND: Though you have good reason to view the future with hope, you must understand that the problems of the past were real and the consequences must be lived with today. Between 1970 and 1980, the membership declined by 44 members. This did not happen over night, and this fact will not be reversed over night. In short, Realism should be our watchword with regard to our expectations. This will prevent us from being needlessly discouraged and present us with a hope for tomorrow which we can expect to see fulfilled.

THIRD: Is there a solution to our problems? YES, and it has already begun to happen. We have begun to live and work as if we have a future. New Communion Silver, a new roof, a new look in Worship, a new Pastor and a new associate Pastor! These are signs of life! And they are but a beginning.

An INVITATION: I ask you to join me in September in the detailed study of NO CHURCH IS AN ISLAND by David S. King, which is a manual on the revitalization of churches. Our decline is real and not easily reversible, but it is possible for us to see a new day with God's help. ..."

Inspiring words indeed from the new Pastor. The Associate Pastor he mentions was Laurel Greenwood, who although not yet ordained, served as Associate Pastor, the second time a woman is mentioned in that capacity. The Church members picked up on this encouraging, uplifting report, and activity began to increase--in group activities and in repairing and improving the church building itself as well as the parsonage.

But by the 79th Annual Meeting (May 14, 1984), Rev. Coyle was saying goodbye. In his farewell report he told the Church members to continue a program of responsible maintenance and capital improvements. "By doing these things," he said, "you live out your decisions to live as a congregation within the community. You are blessed with an exceptionally dedicated core group of members who work tirelessly for the good of the church. ... I have found my ministry with you to be a genuine pleasure and I am told by many that it has been helpful to you. I hope you remember me as fondly as I will remember all of you."

But the decline continued. 1983--membership 99, Church School enrollment 15. 1985--membership 64, Church School enrollment 0. Rev. Robert Shire became the interim pastor in October 1984 after Coyle left, and served a part of 1985. Since Rev. Shire was to be an interim pastor only, plans had to be made for a permanent replacement.

CHAPTER FIVE Hope: The Tension between Reality and Dreams

At the 80th Annual Meeting (June 13, 1985), the Long Range Planning Report suggested a "Permanent Part-time Pastor with Creative Seminary Student Relationship," the permanent part-time pastor to average 20 hours a week with certain specified duties, and the seminary student to average 10 hours a week. Church membership had hit a new low of 59, and the Congregational Yearbook shows Church enrollment at "NONE."

June 16, 1986, the 81st Annual Meeting. active membership list: 55; Church enrollment: 0. Rev. Karen Fritz had accepted the call to be the new permanent part-time pastor at Union Congregational Church, and began her actual service on May 6, 1986. Many of the members of the congregation felt a critical turning point had been reached in the life of the Church. Was the decline in membership to continue until the Church was forced to close? Or would the new leadership help to turn things around?

George Galgay, the Senior Deacon, in his 1985-86 report felt that things were indeed going to improve. "As senior deacon for 1985-86," he wrote, "I feel that the Union Congregational Church has reached a turning point due to the extreme effort of all the active members of the church. We were most fortunate to have so much help and support from the Rev. Bob Shire, our interim minister, who served the church well and was most helpful to the search committee. ... With the help of our new minister, Rev. Karen Fritz, our outlook for the coming year will stress an outreach program in which efforts will be made to bring new members into our church and offer them a place of worship to integrate into their lives with the hope that we can look forward to replacing ourselves with active young people to carry on in the future. We plan to re-institute the greeter program and visitor follow-up by the minister. ..."

It would appear that the congregation's confidence in their new minister was not misplaced. Within one month, from May 6 to June 16, 1986 when we read Rev. Fritz's letter in the Annual Report, she had plans for developing a church newsletter, encouraged a Clean-up day at the Church on May 31st, made plans for a Paint Day later in the summer, included more lay participation in the worship services, and made preparation for a Summer Vacation Bible School Program for young people. Rev. Fritz's plans for the summer of 1986 also called for an adult Bible study. The preparation of a flyer telling about the Church was in the works, and plans were made for a door to door survey in Winthrop "to discern the religious preference of the present residents to discover the perceived needs that the congregation may address in the community and to introduce those we meet to the Union Congregational Church." Also an Outreach Committee was formed for the first time.

It seemed apparent that the Union Congregational Church was on the move again. From May 1, 1986 to April 30, 1987, there were 11 new members admitted, increasing membership to 67. There were now 12 children enrolled in the Church School which had been defunct since 1985.

The Diaconate report for 1986-87 was indeed very hopeful for the future. Senior Deacon George Galgay wrote, "My report should begin by applauding the efforts and the energy of both the parishioners and our minister, Karen.

Their efforts are now beginning to show in the church service attendance. Also her supervision of the Church School is a great success with many of these young people joining the church. ... In an effort to bring more lay people into an active part of the Sunday worship service, Karen has been asking several members to read the scriptures. This for the most part has been accepted by the Congregation as being an addition to the service."

Once again new activity surfaced in efforts "to restore and beautify our church property," as the members of the Prudential Committee phrased it. The Moderator, Charles Briggs, said, "This 1986 year has been an upbeat year for U. C. C. Winthrop ... We have accomplished a first in Winthrop by calling a Lady Pastor. ... Union Congregational Church UCC Winthrop has accomplished much under Rev. Fritz's efforts and directions. Note a few as follows: 1986 Summer Bible School, Sunday School started, Regular meetings of Church organizations held, special services conducted, new member classes completed, baptisms conducted, weddings performed, Church and parsonage maintenance performed, Bible studies conducted, Community Party held at the Church, Outreach Committee established, and Thanksgiving dinner served at the church ... This is not intended to be a complete list," Mr. Briggs continued, "but shows delightful progress in one year. May 1987 continue and expand these activities."

There can be no doubt of the aforementioned being an impressive list of events, even more so when one realizes that they all took place in the span of one year. But questions must have been in many people's minds. Will the momentum last? Will we continue to go forward? Things seemed to be improving. Adult Bible classes, a weekly Bible study for Senior Citizens, two new member preparation classes resulting in 11 new members being added to the Church, and other events such as listed earlier. The biggest question of all must have been, will the Church be revitalized and expand?

The growth of the Union Congregational Church did continue in 1987. 13 new members were added, and the active membership went from 67 to 73. The average attendance for the Sunday morning service increased from 30 in 1985 to 41 in 1987. There were 28 children in the August 1987 Vacation Bible School, and the Sunday School had 12 young people. In November 1987, June Fletcher-Hill was hired as Associate Pastor to supervise an outreach ministry. She also worked with the newly formed Newsletter Committee.

Rev. Fritz's goals, as stated in the Pastor's Report for the 83rd Annual Meeting (January 31, 1988) were to "continue to have outreach and evangelism as a priority at Union Church ..." Once again the term Union Church slipped in instead the correct name of Union Congregational Church, but, nevertheless, the meaning was clear. If the Union Congregational Church were to grow, outreach and evangelism had to be given top priority while at the same time being careful not to neglect the spiritual well-being of the congregation and the normal duties of the Church.

Rev. Fritz was careful to try to balance the two spheres of ministry, an outreach ministry to reach new people and, what could be called, an internal ministry, to meet the needs of members of the congregation. With the help of her associate, Rev. Fritz was able to expand some of the services of the Church, and to have committees meet regularly.

When June Fletcher-Hill left in July 1988, Debbie Clark was hired as her

replacement and began her ministry in August, 1988 as Associate Pastor.

For the full year of 1988, even though eight new members were admitted, membership dropped to 64, while the average Sunday attendance remained consistent at 40.6. But the decline in membership from 73 to 64, however, did not mean a decline in the Church's enthusiasm or interest in continued growth. Two people had left by Transfer of Letter, while two other members were in nursing homes and their names transferred to the inactive list. A drastic drop in membership may be a sign of future troubles to come, but in this instance the small decrease was, more or less, a readjustment.

Mr. Charles Briggs, the Moderator, wrote for the 84th Annual Meeting report that "This (1988) has been a very demanding year for me as I am sure it has been for many of you. But our pastor Karen with much help from all of you has produced a successful year. I feel we have moved forward as a religious force again in Winthrop." After some discussion about the upcoming budget, Mr. Briggs ended his report with the following comments: "I wish to conclude my message with a thank you to all who have made our renewed progress and giving to missions possible this year. I look forward to more growth in services and giving in 1989. May our community find our activities worthwhile and join with us to make greater things possible. ..." This is a sample of the spirit of optimism and hope which was beginning to move throughout the congregation. There seemed to be a renewed vigor and a renewed sense of unity and purpose.

The Annual report of the Diaconate also showed signs of this new wave of optimism. Mr. Robert Herdt submitted the report, and he quite clearly gave his opinion as he wrote, "What I have to say now is my own personal feeling and I am not speaking for the other Deacons and Deaconesses. Being active in Union Church for forty years and seeing our ministry grow and decline, I feel that the present quality of worship and visitation holds a bright future for us. We are trying so hard to build attendance and involvement in the church. Reaching out to people through dinners, weddings, baptism, funerals, Sunday School, Bible School in the Summer and through interfaith activities means many, many hours have gone into all of this work. ..."

Here again was another note of optimism and hope. Perhaps the trend was about to change from apathy to concern, from disinterest to interest, from absence to attendance, from fear of failure to joy in success, and from struggling disbelief to belief and faith in God's power and love to see Union Congregational Church, not only survive, but to expand and develop into that successful religious force in Winthrop that the moderator, Mr. Briggs felt the Church could be.

It certainly was not going to be easy. Rev. Fritz had no sooner begun to get some form of organization going in 1988 when the Church secretary, Suzanne Ross resigned, the Sexton, Charles Chambers, resigned and moved to Detroit, and the Associate June Fletcher-Hill left to take a full-time position elsewhere. But the determination to overcome obstacles and the spirit of optimism as noted previously by Mr. Briggs and Mr. Herdt was clearly held by Rev. Fritz.

In her pastoral report (January 29, 1989) she wrote, "We have lost some valuable new leaders ... For the first time in three years, Sunday attendance

has decreased (from an average of 41.2 to 40.6). Even though eight new members were received, membership has decreased from 73 in 1987 to 64 in 1988 (partly because those who have moved or not been active in the church for years became a part of the inactive list). ... But there are signs of hope! More children and their parents are becoming involved through the Sunday School and Summer Bible School. Some committees have been actively working. Baptisms have abounded. A variety of fellowship and fundraising activities have brought new people to the church. The Newsletter Committee has been working hard to keep everyone informed about our ministry here. Our mission giving has increased. Pledges show a greatly increased financial commitment by members. A group of people of many faiths have met at the church to plan community Interfaith events and projects. We have a lot to be thankful for." There is no pessimism in this report.

In spite of the slight decrease in membership in 1988, Sunday School enrollment increased from 12 to 16 children resulting in two classes, one for ages 4-7 and one for ages 8-14. The 1988 Summer Bible School was quite successful with 29 children participating.

In October of 1988, the Outreach Committee sponsored a survey of the congregation in which the members were asked to write down some of their hopes and dreams for the future of the Church. There were many suggestions, but the major emphasis in the responses overwhelmingly indicated that a filled church for the Sunday services would be the most welcome answer to their dreams.

Debbie Clark, the Associate to the Pastor, emphasized the hopes and dreams in her Annual report. She wrote, "In the last six months, I have sensed a tension in the congregation between disappointment and hope. This church is very much alive, as evidenced by your willingness to dream together. But the process of church growth is all too slow, and it can be very discouraging when our noblest efforts produce few tangible results. The excitement of having had a successful pledge campaign is balanced by the sobering realities of rising expenses. Still, in the midst of this tension between hope and disappointment, the church seems to find the strength to come back to the hope, to come back to the dreams. The strength to hope is evidenced in the commitment people have to the church, and in the caring people show toward each other. The Holy Spirit is very much alive in our midst, moving in ever-new ways. There is hope here, there are dreams and commitments; there is life here. I look forward to working together with you in the coming year, with each of us bringing our hopes and dreams and commitments and life. I look forward to discovering together how we can reach out to others, how we can open ourselves to new ideas, new people, new ways the Spirit may be moving among us."

From the Moderator, from the Diaconate, from the Pastor, from the Associate to the Pastor, the reports are all filled with enthusiasm, hope, a sense of purpose, and a strong belief in the future of the Union Congregational Church. And this type of dedicated commitment is a good sign for the future of the Church.

In 1989 and so far, three new members have joined the church. A new staff person has been added as Director of the newly formed Referral and Resource Center. A new Church Library has been organized. The 1989

Summer Vacation Bible School, with 41 children attending, was very successful, as many people in the congregation worked hard on this project. Also there was a well-attended Ordination Service at the Church as Ms. Deborah Clark, Associate to the Pastor became Rev. Deborah Clark, Associate Pastor. The Wednesday night Bible Class had fifteen people signed up, and by September 1989, the fall Sunday School had begun. Yes indeed, things are definitely moving forward. As has been mentioned before, the Union Congregational Church is very much alive.

The tension between reality and dreams will always exist. But the gap between the two can be shortened. Dreams can become reality through prayer, through dedication and hard work, but above all, through faith, love and trust in the God in whose house we worship.



REV. KAREN B. FRITZ and REV. DEBORAH L. CLARK

HISTORICAL SKETCHES - CHURCH GROUPS

There have been many fine organizations at Union Congregational Church, such as Christian Endeavor, various other youth groups, Sunday School groups, Pilgrim Fellowship, etc., --in fact, too many groups to cover in such a short history. But the individual groups, past and present, are all extremely important to the story of the Union Congregational Church. The organizations which still exist today, as well as those which no longer exist, make up the history and the life of the Church.

The next few pages contain a brief sketch of the following five organizations: The Woman's Association, The Men's Club, The Get-Together Club, The Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Choir.

THE WOMAN'S ASSOCIATION (1896 to the present)

The Woman's Association is historically the oldest existing benevolent organization in the Union Congregational Church. On October 14, 1896, the church was officially incorporated, and on October 20, 1896, the Ladies' Aid Society was formed. By 1899, the group was not only helping in the affairs of the Church, but was sending out "missionary barrels", and supporting a missionary in India.

During World War I (1914-18), the Ladies' Aid Society worked hard sewing and preparing items for the Red Cross and the war effort as well as continuing to actively support church affairs. In December of 1921, the Ladies' Aid Society changed their name to the Woman's Association and continued to combine missionary activities with church work.

Then came the Depression of the 1930's. Money was scarce, but the 1934 Church Directory has an interesting comment about the Woman's Association: "Like most churches, we lean heavily upon the woman's organization for financial help and interest in keeping the church property in repair. We have never been disappointed in any response of the Woman's Association for such help. The most patent proof of their industry and interest is that during the year of financial stringency through which we have just passed, the Woman's Association took in more than \$650." \$650 was a lot of money in 1933-34, and, no doubt, meant sacrificial giving from the group.

Over the years, the members of the Woman's Association have been very generous in sharing their time and money, and very faithful in fund-raising. Wherever there was a need, they tried to meet it. Besides giving a yearly pledge to the Church, they have made special donations whenever the need arose, whether it be a new refrigerator, church siding, the Parsonage Fund, helping to pay the yearly telephone bill, or helping to purchase a mimeograph machine when needed.

In the 1960's under the leadership of Pauline McKinnon and Hazel Black as President and Vice-President, the Association was very active with 6 regular meetings, and 9 all-day meetings, with an average attendance of 27 members. They also sponsored the farewell reception for Dr. and Mrs. Peterson.

By 1977, however, as with all the groups, membership began to decline. Gertrude Overturf, as Secretary, reported that while they still carried on their normal activities and met their usual obligations, the average attendance at each meeting was down to 20.

In the 1986 report, Dorothy Doane noted that average attendance for each meeting was now 11 members. Nevertheless, somehow pledges were met, missionary activity was successful, and the Association continued to survive as an active organization in the Church.

And today, some 93 years after its initial formation, the Woman's Association continues to be an actively strong force serving the Church faithfully.

THE MEN'S CLUB (c.1914-1960)

It is not known exactly when the Men's Club began at the Union Congregational Church, but Lucy Gordon's history stated that a group of men met together as a Bible class under the pastorate of Rev. Walter J. Sherman. Besides meeting for Bible study, the men also met to help the Church, the town and people in different ways. The large class, Mrs. Gordon wrote, "was known throughout the town for its activity. ... Mr. Ernest Bentley is now President (1926). The Men's Class has done much to promote the social life of the men of the community."

In 1934, Alice Rowe Snow wrote, "The Men's Class also has been extremely helpful in the church and community, being often found assisting needy families and generous in many ways, about which they say little." According to the 1934 Church Directory, the Men's Class met every Sunday at noon for Bible study and once a month on Sunday evening for supper and special service. They participated in helping the Church financially and in doing charitable work. Interestingly enough, on Monday evenings they had a bowling league made up of six teams named the Kings, Dukes, Barons, Earls, Lords and Counts.

The Men's Class annual report in 1936 indicates they erected a chain link fence around the lots at the rear of the church, and they supplied both the money and the labor. Thus while the group was still active, because of the diversity of their activity, the name "Men's Class" didn't seem to be any longer appropriate. Somewhere between 1940 and the 1950's, we read reports of the Men's Club, and, while they held regular meetings, apparently they no longer met on Sundays as a Bible class.

The 1957 Annual Report stated that "The Men's Club have 3 hobby craft groups which make gifts for the Fair. They painted the Sanctuary, and put on a very successful family supper." In 1958, the group was very active, holding numerous events such as a fish chowder supper, a magic show, and a special meeting with Rev. Peterson as guest speaker. They were also busily engaged in projects: taking part in the annual fair, painting lines in the parking lot, painting the kitchen, putting down a tile floor in the kitchen, and doing a lot of painting in the buildings. A bowling team, although no doubt with a different name, was still active.

By 1960, however, there was no longer a Men's Club report in the Church's Annual Reports, and even though the Club gradually became a thing of the past, it was still an active group for many years and accomplished a great deal of good work. The Men's Club is, therefore, an important part of the history of the Union Congregational Church and should not be forgotten. Who knows? One day it may rise again.

THE GET-TOGETHER CLUB (c. 1927 to the present)

In the late 1920's the women's Get-Together Club was started at the Church. Originally it consisted of young married women who gathered together twice a month to socialize, enjoy Christian fellowship, plan fund-raisers for the church, and to do what in the early days was called "good works."

By 1933 the Club was so large that it was split up into groups based upon geographical location in the town of Winthrop. The groups were from the Center, the Point, the Hill, and the Beach, but they still met every two weeks as one

group. In the 1934 Church Directory Alice Rowe Snow wrote of the Get-Together Club, "This organization is composed of the younger married women, and also does a good deal of helpful work for the church. The program of the Club includes not only various projects for making money, but also time for sociability. ... The Get-Together Club is a very helpful society in the church ... They have fine times and are always on the watch to do good."

Over the years as membership in the church decreased, membership in the Get-Together club decreased also, but the Club survived. In 1958-59, they held many fund raisers, such as a Turkey Supper, an ad booklet, a Bean Supper, and an auction. They also purchased a new stove for the parsonage. From 1960 to 1984, the Club continued its excellent fund-raising activities and social meetings, contributing such things as curtains and drapes for the parsonage, paint for the Church, Christmas decorations, a new vacuum cleaner, etc. All this was in addition to meeting the Club's yearly pledge to the Church and still fulfilling its obligations to missionary activities.

Even though the group was somewhat smaller by 1984, meeting once a month, and no longer limited to younger married women, there were no indications of ceasing activities. June Briggs, President of the Get-Together Club said in her 1985 Annual Report, "Our Club is trying to keep active with fewer members each year, and help support the church's activities. The money earned by the Get-Together is used for the church. ... We pledge our support as long as we possibly can."

And now, today, some 60 years after its beginnings, the Get-Together Club is still very much an active and integral part of the Union Congregational Church.

THE BUSINESS and PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB (c. 1938 to the present)

According to the written reports there is some discrepancy as to whether the Business and Professional Woman's Club started in 1936 or 1938. The Annual Meeting of 1940 gives the starting date as 1938. The minutes of the meeting state: "This young club was reported for by Miss D. McClintock who stated they organized in October, 1938." The report continued, "Besides regular meetings, contributions to several charities and the production of two plays, they had provided a much needed new pulpit Bible. ... Their purpose was to contribute whatever was in their power to the good of the church."

Helen Smith reported in 1959 that although the Club was limited in numbers, "it accomplished much. They made contributions towards the siding, the sanctuary drapes and furnish all the candles used on the altar." In 1959 and 1960, the Club's Secretary, Vivian Campbell reported that there were only 9 members in the Club. Nevertheless, they were still busy with rummage and food sales, a gift table at the Fair, and with donations to the Parsonage Fund and towards renovations of the Sunday school room.

From 1961 to date, the Business and Professional Women's Club has remained active in the life of the Church, and, as with the other clubs and organizations, the desires and goals of the members are to serve God through service to the church. As was stated in the 1940 Annual Report, "Their purpose was to contribute whatever was in their power to the good of the church."

THE CHOIR

One of the greatest pleasures in church services is the music, and the Union Congregational Church has a fine tradition of music represented by its Choir. A 1926 photograph entitled "The Church Choir" shows 24 people in the choir. In 1934 Alice Rowe Snow paid tribute to the choir in these words, "Too much cannot be said in praise of our faithful choir. For many years they have given their services for the good of the church ... The new pipe organ that was installed in the summer of 1931 has been a fine addition to the church."

In a 1955 pamphlet a picture entitled "The Union Congregational Church Choral Choir" there are 23 members shown, a clear indication that music was still a very important part of the spiritual life of the Church. Over the next many years the Choir was not only active at the Union Congregational Church, but also sang at various special services, and there was talk in 1960 of enlarging the Choir Loft to make room for more singers.

Another important part of the church music was the organ. From 1962 until 1976, Mr. James Boujoukos served as organist, and, in addition to supplying music for the Choir, he gave many fine organ solos. But in 1976, after 14 years, Mr. Boujoukos resigned, and, paralleling the decrease in church membership, the Choir gradually dropped in numbers to between 10 and 12 members. It was about this time, also, in 1975 that funds were donated in honor of the 60th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Bentley. A plaque was made designating the organ as "The Bentley Organ."

In 1977, Mr. Boujoukos returned as organist, and was gratefully welcomed back. The Choir participated in the Inter-faith Ecumenical Service at the Winthrop High School in June, 1977. In 1979 a new Choir Director was named, Lillian Fagerholm, an experienced choir director and Professor of Music at Boston State College.

The Choir remained very active. As the Music Committee Report stated in 1979, "The Choir participated in the memorial service for David Carter, provided excellent music for Christmas and Easter Services and has contributed much to the worship of God through our music at each service. ... Also this year we presented a special Christmas concert by James Boujoukos and Carolyn Nickerson which was well received."

In 1981, the Music Committee with Lillian Fagerholm as Chairperson reported that several members of the Choir sang at the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and at the Ecumenical Good Friday Service. One unusual service performed by the Choir was when the members sponsored the activity of "Pictures with Santa" at the Christmas Fair in 1980. As the Music Committee wrote "We're grateful that Santa would share his time with us and with the kids of all ages who had pictures taken with us."

1982-1988. The Choir continued its activity, both in the Church and outside, participating in the Inter-faith Service, performing Christmas musical programs at the Historical Society (1985 and 1987), and participating in the Bicentennial Service for the Deane Winthrop House (1987). We have to remember that all these special events were in addition to the Choir's regular rehearsal time and Sunday morning worship musical presentations.

1989. Under the guidance and direction of organist, James Boujoukos, the Union Congregational Church Choir continues to sing today, ministering musically to the people wherever they perform.

L 974.46 Bro 1989 Glass
Case
Brown, Patricia I.
A history of the Union
Congregational Church



BIBLIOGRAPHY

FOR REFERENCE

Do Not Take From This Room

ANNUAL REPORTS. Winthrop, Union Congregational Church, various years.

Clark, William H. THE HISTORY OF WINTHROP MASSACHUSETTS, 1630-1952. Winthrop, Massachusetts, Winthrop Centennial Committee, 1952.

CONGREGATIONAL YEAR-BOOK. ANNUAL.
Boston, Congregational Publishing Society, 1897 through 1988.

DESCRIPTIVE HISTORY AND REAL ESTATE GUIDE OF
THE TOWN OF WINTHROP. Pamphlet. Boston, C. W. Hall, 1879.

Gordon, Lucy S. LOOKING BACKWARD THROUGH THIRTY YEARS.
Pamphlet. Winthrop, Union Congregational Church, 1926.

Munn, Agnes B. CONGREGATIONALISM IN WINTHROP: 200TH
ANNIVERSARY OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN WINTHROP, 1755-1955.
Pamphlet. Winthrop, Union Congregational Church, 1955.

Sanderson, Ross W. TOWARD A DENOMINATIONAL STRATEGY
FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE BOSTON AREA.
Pamphlet. Boston, Boston Area Associations: Suffolk North,
South, West, and Woburn, 1952.

Snow, Alice R. HISTORICAL SKETCH. Pamphlet.
Church Directory and Manual of the Union Congregational Church,
1934. Winthrop, Union Congregational Church, 1934.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE (Hazen Lipsett, Chairperson, Patricia I. Brown, Stefan Lochiatto, June Briggs, George Galgay, and Karen Fritz) WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO HELPED GATHER PHOTOGRAPHS AND MATERIAL FOR THIS BOOK.

UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 846-4005

CHURCH OFFICERS
1989

Charles Briggs, Jr
Moderator 846-3063

Irene Simington
Clerk

Elizabeth Lipsett
Church Treasurer

Pauline McKinnon
Assistant Treasurer

Mary Vitiello
Auditor

DIACONATE

Stefan Lochiatto
Helen Quirck
Edwin Butters
Barbara Butters

Geraldine Mullen
George Galgay
Lois Jackson
Robert Butters

Robert Hughes
Cynthia Butters
Hazen Lipsett
June Briggs

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE
Robert Hughes

Rufus Madison
George Galgay

David Barchard
Edwin Butters

STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION
Mary Vitiello

Lois Jackson

Hazel Black

OUTREACH & CHURCH GROWTH

Carol McCarthy
Patricia Brown

Cynthia Butters
Vivian Campbell

Lois Jackson
Laura Larson
Wesley White

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
Helen Quirck

Winona Madison
Pauline McKinnon

Irene Simington

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Carol McCarthy

Cynthia Butters

SOCIAL SERVICE

Pauline McKinnon

Janet Galgay

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
Lesley Traver

Charles Briggs
Hazen Lipsett

George Galgay
Stefan Lochiatto

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Vivian Campbell

June Briggs
Helen Quirck

Lois Jackson
Stefan Lochiatto

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Lesley Traver

Karyl Langill

Joanne Kelty

Kathy Deneen

ALTAR COMMITTEE Janet Galgay

Hazel Black

Helen Quirck

DELEGATES

Mary Vitello

June Briggs

Stefan Lochiatto

STAFF

Patricia Brown Director of Referral Center 846-4558

REV. KAREN B. FRITZ
Minister 646-1342

REV. DEBORAH CLARK
Minister 265-4320

James Boujoukos
Church Organist