

To look backward over the period now ended was an opportunity for reflection and celebration. We could pray about those things we had done, and those things we had left undone. These were times of difficult choices - time, energy, and money.

The church entered the 1990's and optimistically pledged to carry out four major fund drives: Organ, Mission/Bicentennial, Capital Improvement, and Stewardship Campaign. To support the Organ Fund a benefit concert by Dr. Steven Egler was held in October. In December, there was a Sing-Along Messiah concert. A consultant was hired for the organ, Dr. H. Lewis, Associate Professor of Music at Hope College. A restricted fund within the church budget was designated for the Organ Fund and was handled through Ruth Felter. An agreement was reached with Casavant Freres Limited of St. Hyacinth, Quebec to be the builder and with Michael Perrault, Pipe Organ Service of Chicago, to do the installation. The cost for the builder amounted to \$91,876. The new parts included a Drawknob Console, plus new pipes and chests for the Swell division. Robert Yuill, Chairman of the Worship and Music Committee, worked closely with Dr. Steven Egler on the organ project.

At a Special Congregational Meeting on September 23, 1990, the Long Range Planning Committee reported. The committee had developed a Mission Statement which would act as a guide for the church's work and ministry. William Peterson explained the statement and the congregation officially accepted it. A copy of the Mission Statement is framed and hangs in the church. It is as follows:

MISSION STATEMENT
1990

The First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan exists to the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom on earth.

We seek to further his Kingdom by:

- being a caring, accepting, reconciling fellowship in which all persons are needed and all share in worshipping, giving, learning, and growing in faith in God and in his Love for one another and for all others in God's world;
- being a message of hope to a troubled world by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ;
- creating beauty in our worship through music and other art forms;
- providing opportunities for fellowship, spiritual growth and nurture;
- educating ourselves and others regarding God's call to stewardship of time, talent, and resources;
- serving the world, near and far, through our personal commitment of resources and talents;
- committing ourselves to acts of peacemaking and social justice;
- demonstrating God's love by reaching out to the unchurched;
- empowering people to become all God is calling them to be;
- yielding as much of ourselves as we can at any moment, to as much of Christ as we understand.

At this same meeting, Deborah Slade distributed a proposed staffing design that was felt would serve the needs that the congregation had expressed during the year. Filling of the positions would depend upon future Stewardship results. Nancy Telfer introduced a Volunteer Information Sheet that had been developed to match needs of the church with members of the congregation who would be willing to share their time and talents.

Sandy Winter took over the Campus Ministry position. Beverly Ketcham filled the position of Sunday School Superintendent. Vacation Bible School was a cooperative venture with St. Johns Episcopal Church. The following year, Sandy was to resign and Mary Moomey was hired as Parish Life Director. The church was in need of the New Presbyterian Hymnal. Congregational people were asked to donate \$15 per volume and dedicate it if they so choose. Four-hundred copies were purchased. A new and badly needed sound system was installed at a cost of \$9100.

The church agreed to act as the official headquarters for the Habitat for Humanity of Isabella County. The church provided an official address and financial management of Habitat funds through the church bookkeeper. It also provided a meeting place for board and committee meetings. John Wolf was treasurer for Habitat for Humanity.



Choirs of First Presbyterian - the sanctuary is filled with joyous music to God's glory.

In April 1992, the Presbytery of Lake Huron approved a joint venture with the Wesley Foundation for a Campus Ministry Program. Matthew Eaton was hired as the Presbyterian's Campus Ministry Director in the program. The ecumenical program's overall director was the Reverend Steven Smith. The Presbyterian Church held a position on the governing board.

The Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert broadened his background and faith when he studied and traveled to Israel on a Holy Land Pilgrimage. This was sponsored by Knights Templars, and Mr. Shugert

was the Michigan representative. He was to follow this up in the next two years with other experiences abroad. In 1993, as a representative of Presbytery of Lake Huron, he went on a Mission Tour to Costa Rica. The following year he visited the Bakaert's medical mission in the Cameroon; West Africa. The church had supported the Bakaerts for many years. He also attended a Peacemaking Conference at Montreat, NC.

The Social Justice and Peacemaking Committee installed and dedicated a Peace Memorial Pole in the church courtyard. It was stolen by vandals but returned shortly thereafter by the police. William Peterson, a very active member of the congregation, felt called to become a seminary student and candidate for the ministry. The church supported this decision. A review of the contributions by the Parish Life Director, Mary Moomey, found her working with adult education classes, Crop Walk, Divorce Support Group, Ecumenical Singles Group, the worship services at Medical Care Facility, Advent Festival, Children's Christmas Eve Service, Christmas Outreach, assisting with pastoral calls, and doing individual counseling. Ms. Moomey left for full-time employment elsewhere in 1993.

Early in 1993, the Presbyterian Church acted as host to a mission visit by Keylor Soto from San Jose, Costa Rica. Soto was an interpreter for Fraternidad de Iglesias Evangelicas Costarricenses (F.I.E.C.). Subsequently the Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert joined others on a visitation to Costa Rica. The group lived and worked in Barrio squatter settlements while offering physical and spiritual support for the ongoing work. The Reverend Fernando Consantas, President of F.I.E.C. paid a return visit to our church after Mr. Shugert's return. Consantas preached on October 24, and this was followed by a Central American Mission Fair in the Fellowship Hall. On July 18, the congregation helped to celebrate the Reverend Dr. Stephen Shugert's 25th year of ordination.

A mission study ad-hoc committee collected a congregation wide mission profile. They collected information from 260 questionnaires sent to randomly selected church members. This resulted in a Church Growth Task Force which was formed to develop strategies for achieving the four goals resulting from the Mission Study. Members of this task force were David Lindley, Lois Miller, John Yantis, Kathy Stevenson, and Sherry Sponseller. The congregational survey had shown four main concerns:

1. church growth and hospitality
2. increasing pastoral care for members
3. youth ministry
4. broadening the financial base of the church

As 1993 came to a close, the congregation was already looking forward to its 125th Anniversary in 1996. Jerry and Ruth Felter, together with Jerry and Marcia Tuma, were selected to co-chair the celebration. The church established a Rosebush Church Fund to receive contributions to support the rebuilding of the Rosebush Presbyterian Church following its total destruction by fire in January 1994. In February, the Congregational Life Committee sponsored a Spaghetti Supper for this benefit and raised \$1000.

The year 1994 had been designated nationally by several groups as "Year With Africa." Nancy Hinge who worked for the New Sudan Council of Churches spoke at the church on July 31, emphasizing the needs of displaced Christians in Africa. The Reverend Stephen Shugert made

his trip to Cameroon, Africa and was hosted by the Reverend Guy and Monique Bakaert. Their mission included evangelism and church growth at Yaounde, Cameroon and medical assistance to the natives there. They had long been our Presbyterian partners in the Cameroon.

The Presbyterian Women lost their chief source of revenue when the Mt. Pleasant Rotary Club moved their Monday luncheon meeting elsewhere. The women had been serving these luncheons continuously since 1930. Many, many church women had dedicated their time to this project, with Louise Decker and Marydeana Duckworth being particularly deeply involved with the cooking and the administration. In the more recent years, the U.P.W. had averaged an annual net gain of approximately \$5500 from this Rotary undertaking. This was the primary means of supporting their various mission projects. The group's main mission had always been a contribution to the Presbytery of Lake Huron and its large outreach program. This demise left the women with a real challenge as to how they could they raise enough money to continue their worthy mission projects? The last Rotary luncheon was served on June 5, 1995. This same year a Poinsettia Sale project had replaced the previous Craft Show, raising \$1227. A successful rummage sale was held in August 1995.

Sallie Scheide continued as Christian Education Coordinator and was accepted as a candidate to become a Certified Christian Educator by the Presbytery of Lake Huron. Beverly Ketcham remained Church School Director. When Dr. Steven Egler went on leave for one semester, Dr. Richard Featheringham assumed the role of Director of Music/Organist.

At the conclusion of the two major fund raisers, pledged over a three year period, the Bicentennial Fund had raised \$14,038 and the Organ Fund \$81,543. There were still outstanding commitments. A design team began work on an Endowment and Development Program. This group consisted of John Yantis, Bruce Eldred, Robert Krapohl, Larry Johns, and Eleanor Wood. This program was to emphasize endowments, trusts, and wills which could broaden the financial security of the church.

In cooperation with Habitat for Humanity the Session entered into an agreement to build a home for a low-income eligible family in the summer of 1996 - "in thanksgiving to God for providing members with a church home for the past 125 years." It would be part of the church's 125th Anniversary Celebration. The church was to provide volunteer construction crews (500 hours) and \$20,000 toward the \$35,000 cost of the house.

Dan Conway replaced Matthew Eaton as the church's Campus Ministry Director. Like Eaton, he was a UW-2 missionary, in a program run through the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Dan worked with the Reverend Steven Smith, Director of the Wesley Foundation, on campus. Dan had an office at both locations.

On July 23, 1995, the Rosebush Presbyterians dedicated their new church. Many members of the Mt. Pleasant congregation attended the service. As a gift, the Mt. Pleasant church presented a painting of Noah's Ark, entitled "New Beginnings," as painted by church member, Carole Howard. Copies of the painting were made and later sold to help support construction of the "Habitat for Humanity" house as part of the 125th Anniversary Celebration.

Former church member and now retired Presbyterian Minister, the Reverend Peter Russell, was called as Parish Associate to assist

church staff in pastoral callings and with Bible studies in the summer of 1995. Earlier, Peter had been a member of this church and had married wife, Verna, in the church. The Mt. Pleasant church had supported Peter in his preparation at McCormick Theological Seminary. He had been commissioned as Chaplain in the U.S. Naval Reserve for twenty-three years and was affiliated with Presbyterian Kirk of the Lakes in Houghton Lake from 1991-1995. Peter and Verna were welcomed back to Mt. Pleasant at a reception in the Witherspoon Room on September 17, 1995 following the worship service.

First Presbyterian Church gained inspiration to continue and expand its broad mission program from Marjorie Carpenter, Moderator of General Assembly in July 1995. One of her quotes was "Get back to the basics - the basics are Mission-Mission-Mission!".

Each year a special recognition is given to all of the members of the various choirs for their faithful service. In September 1995 one of the recipients was Dorothy vonReichbauer. She was recognized for 61 years of church choir singing experience, with 35 of these being at First Presbyterian Church.