

**THERE'S POWER IN THE BLOOD**

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of

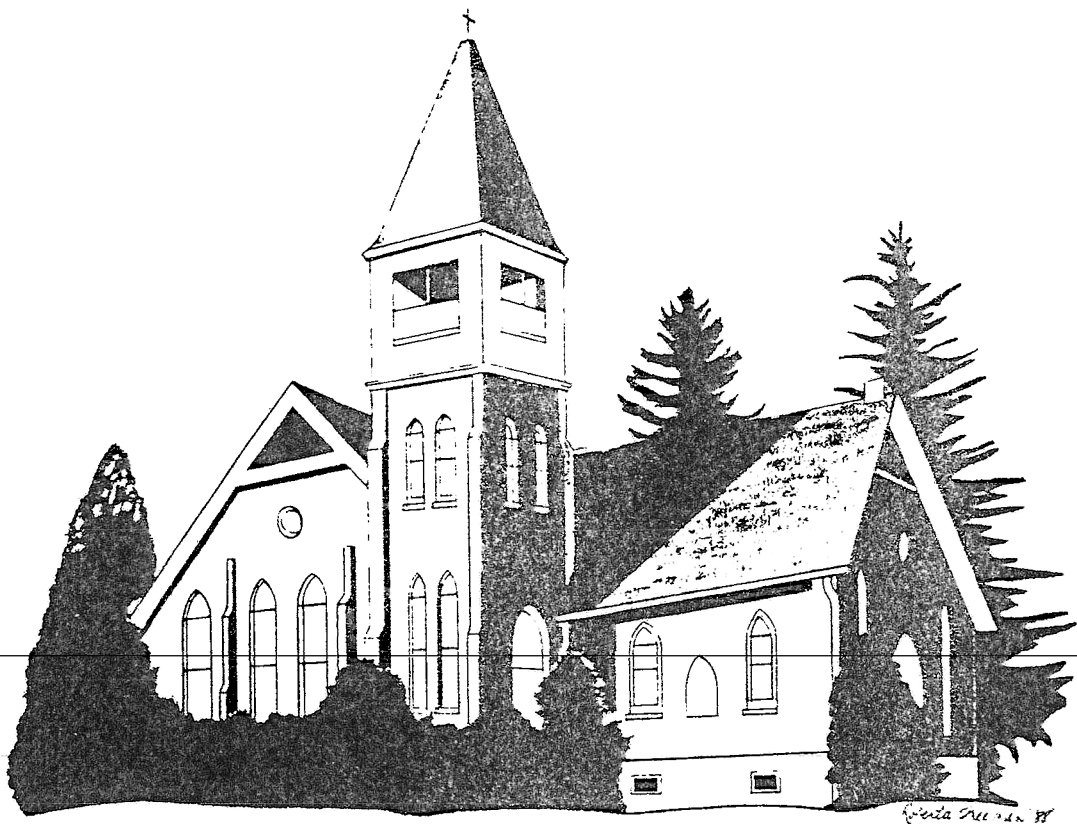
**GRAYS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

State College District

**November 12, 1989**

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Route 550 South of Route 322  
R.D.1, Port Matilda, PA 16870



GRAYS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1989 A.D.

## FOREWORD

A church is not a building, or a pastor, or a family name--it is people who band together in Jesus' name to do His will.

In compiling a bicentennial booklet, we were tempted to cram it full of every name, statistic, and activity we could find in the church records. But to publish such a record on a 200th anniversary would truly be concentrating on the trees instead of the forest. It would hide the true story and the things that are really important.

When we searched the historical records of 200 years we became painfully aware of how sketchy those records are, and how many names, events, and accomplishments are not recorded anywhere. The records either were not made in the first place, or they have been destroyed by the ravages of time, fire, or decay. Most of the statistics, class rolls, and records of giving and serving are lost or hidden in the records of other churches in the same circuit or charge.

The site of the first log building called Grays Church is unknown. The location of the original cemetery on Peter Gray's farm is lost, and the graves were plowed over long ago. The soil of the Half Moon Valley is now enriched by the dust of many unknown and unsung faithful souls who cleared our fields, established our churches, filled our pews, sang our hymns, cooked our church dinners, spread the Gospel, and served their fellow men.

Why did they, and why do we, serve God--to gain importance or salvation through our works, or to humbly seek to do God's will because of our faith?

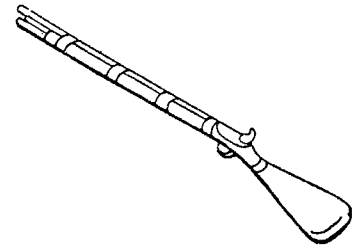
The name of Grays Church itself testifies to the fact that individual names are not important. The name is simply an identification, a location. That is the reason we omit the apostrophe which would denote possession or ownership.

Therefore, this centennial booklet is written to glorify no person, but to glorify God by telling the story of all of God's people, who for 200 years have proclaimed the only name that has any importance--the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer!

In 1916, when the Half Moon Charge held its Annual Homecoming Week at Grays M. E. Church and Grove, they chose as their theme the scripture in I John 1:7--"The BLOOD of Jesus Christ His Son cleanse us from all sin."

While we were preparing this 200th Anniversary Celebration, someone asked the question--"What keeps a church going for 200 years?" A wise man answered--"A few faithful people."

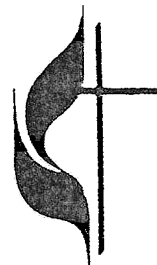
This book is dedicated to those few faithful people of our church family who always lead, and sustain us--who believe and live and demonstrate that THERE'S POWER IN THE BLOOD of Jesus Christ!



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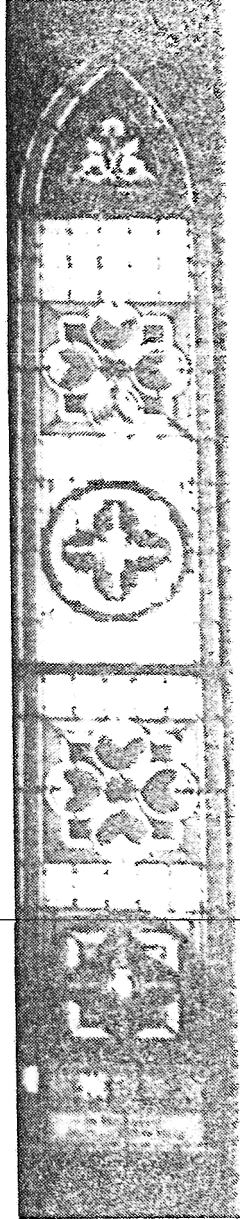


## TRIBUTE TO A COUNTRY CHURCH

I know a simple country church  
That hugs a leaf lined lane.  
It boasts no spire; no vested choir  
Joins with the organ's strain.

It's peopled with the gentle folk  
Who come to kneel and pray.  
There is no plush--just reverent hush  
'neath sunshine's overlay.

Yes just a humble country church  
With altar simply dressed  
But this I know; at vesper's glow  
God stops in there to rest.



(Poem by Harriet Jane Meek, Centre County Poet, 1828-1851)

## GENESIS

(From the Prologue to The Forest and The Fort, by Hervey Allen)

In the beginning was the forest. God made it and no man knew the end of it. It was not new. It was old; ancient as the hills it covered. Those who first entered it saw it had been there since the beginning of habitable time. There were rivers in it and distant mountains; birds, beasts, and the mysterious villages of red men. The trees were vast, round, and countless columns of the roof of heaven. The place beneath was endlessly aisled. There were green glades where the deer fed and looked at the buffalo; trails that went back into the animal time. There were valleys where the clouds lay and no man came there; caves where the wolves mated; peaks where the panther screamed.

But the forest itself was silent. It slept and dreamed of something in a perpetual grey-green shadow in the summer. The lightning flashed at evening and the thunder echo rolled. In the fall the leaves fell and the stars looked down through a roof of sticks. The snow sifted and glittered. Winds heavy with the silver breath of winter smoked on the mountains. The trees burgeoned. Red flashed into the green flame of spring. The grey-green shadow brooded in the forest again, gestating sunlight.

Birds, those free spirits of the weather, were the only beings who saw the spectacle entire. As the earth rocked, every spring and autumn their blood burned. They rose, trillions of them, feathered nations with innumerable tongues and various languages, and took to the air. Their nests and their love songs followed the tilting ecliptic like a paean of time. They also sang the praise of the Almighty One with innocent, unthinking hearts. High in cold atmospheres, they beheld the grandeur and beauty of His thought.

Northward a necklace of great lakes glittered across the breast of the continent. Eastward the tabled plains of the Atlantic flashed lonely to the unbroken water rim. Not a sail gleamed. Only the steam clouds over the warm river in the ocean cluffed towering into heaven. The moon rose out of them at the full and looked at the sun setting beyond the Appalachians into a sea of western grass. Between lay the forest, green, gladed, unbroken, beautiful; riding the still waves of the long mountains, stretching from ice blink to palms.

The fingers of innumerable days trailed across the roof of the forest, while spring and autumn ran up and down it countless thousands of times. The stars shifted in their houses. Eastward over the waters the wings of gulls wheeled; gleamed and vanished; vanished and gleamed--prophetically. Until in the fullness of time something whiter glinted there; held the sunlight steadily; discovered the tracery of sails. Man-made thunder saluted the land.

The harbours reflected the lights of ships' lanterns; the windows of gabled houses gleamed orange in the dusk. Broad plumes of smoke arose from capes and along the estuaries by day. Fire and steel axes ate the forest away, thinning it westward. Field patches and road scars began to show among the trees. The haze of wood smoke gathered over towns.

Generation after generation the ships kept coming. From one century into another the white man increased his town bases behind him. The tentacles and network of roads began reaching out for the hills. Vainly the silent stone-tipped arrows flitted from the forest at twilight. The flash and roar of musketry replied. Manitou and Jehovah wrestled in the valleys together--and the tasselled corn-god lost. Death like a mist out of lethal nowhere fell upon the red man until he vanished. The forefathers he left behind him slept in quiet mounds beside east-running rivers. Only tobacco smoke lingered like memorial incense scenting the breeze.

Beyond the cloudy rampart of the mountains the Indian gathered his surviving tribes. In the years numbered 1700 he and the forest stood at bay together. And for a while the forest prevailed. In the quarrel between the two houses of the Great White Fathers lay the Indian's chief hope of continuing to exist. Now on one side, now on the other his hatchet rose and fell. What he fought for was to preserve the forest beyond the Alleghenies. If the trees and the game went, if the white man came there, the Indian must go, too.

He knew that. His great men and prophets arose by the secret council fire and said so. The wampum strings of alliance flitted from tribe to tribe. Many laid hands upon them and promised never to let go. Meanwhile, with sonorous oratory, he smoked the peace pipe or exchanged the war belt with the French or English--always on the side of the trees.

And for a while, for a long time, the forest stood there. It stemmed the onrush of the colonists of Europe. The frontier ceased to flow westward majestically. It blundered against the barrier of the trees, the tribes, and the mountains. It recoiled. The inflow of its peoples pooled like the trickle of waters rising slowly behind a dam head; fanned out northward; flowed notably south.

Beyond the mountains lay the Valleys of Eden. But to go there was to slip one's finger out of the handclasp of mankind. To go there was to go lonely; to defy the forest, the Indians, and the lawful king. To go there was to move westward without the baggage or the impedimenta of the past. It was to drop everything, except God, language itself, and the memory of simple numbers. It was to begin all over again, to become a something new and unique in time.

But that was the fascination of it. That was the lure. That was at once the refuge, the opportunity, and the goal.

The American did not begin by overthrowing society, by reorganizing an old civilization. He left all that completely behind him. He disinherited himself. He reinvented and reincarnated society. For the first time in memorized history man was free to act entirely on his own responsibility. He was back in the forest again. He had nothing but himself, the animals, and the trees to contend with. There liberty was not a dream and an idea to die for; it was a state of nature to be successfully lived in. In the Valleys of Eden, west of the Alleghenies, that was where and how new America began. The seeds of it were scattered in lonely cabins, lost apparently in an ocean of trees.

Out of them genesis.

## THE SETTLING OF THE CENTRE COUNTY REGION

The first white men to penetrate central Pennsylvania were hunters, explorers, and traders interested in searching out strategic military locations and forming military and trading alliances with the Indians. The French and British armies built forts to control the waterways and trade routes. Since fur trading was quite profitable, some hardy trappers built crude shelters and wintered over, emerging at frontier trading posts the next spring with piles of luxurious pelts for European markets.

Once the land was scouted out and its character became known, hardy groups of pioneers formed and entered the wilderness to locate a spot to their liking that had water, fertile soil, some level land, and suitable trees for building. The country at that time was a wilderness. Deer and wolves were the most common wild animals, and there were still some eastern bison, for which several landmarks were later named, such as Buffalo Run and Buffalo Run Valley.

Because of the mountainous terrain, the rivers of Pennsylvania were its early highways--the Susquehannah River and its North, East and West Branches, and the Juniata and Little Juniata to the west central portion. Farther west was the Ohio River and its tributaries, the Allegheny and the Monongahela. There were no natural entries to the interior of Pennsylvania from the northeast, and the Allegheny mountains created a series of barriers that furrowed the state from northeast to southwest. Fortunately, through Maryland to the south there were entrances to the west, such as the Cumberland Gap, which became a major supply and jumping off point into the wilderness. So instead of being settled from east to west as one might expect, central and western Pennsylvania were settled by pioneers traveling west through the rolling hills of Maryland, then up the valleys between the mountain, traveling from southwest to northeast.

The Centre County area was explored and developed in a kind of "pincers" movement." The northern claw of the pincers curved northwest to southwest up the North and West Branches of the Susquehannah River, then southwest up Bald Eagle Creek as far as could be traveled by water, which was almost to Port Matilda. The southern claw came north up Aughwick Creek in Huntingdon County to the Little Juniata at Mount Union, then west up the Little Juniata to Spruce Creek and on to Tyrone and Altoona. The pioneers came up into Centre County by traveling from the Little Juniata up the Spruce Creek Valley, and traveling farther west from Spruce Creek to the "Warrior's Mark" and then on up the Half Moon Valley.

The "Warrior's Mark" was a large oak tree which still stands in a woods just to the west of the town. The base of the tree is scarred by a multitude of deep cuts, which may at one time have had a meaning which has been forgotten. The Half Moon Valley reportedly got its name from the shape of the crude blazes that early settlers found upon trees that marked the route of an old Indian path passing through the valley.

Linn's history of Centre County reports that the first surveys in Ferguson Township were made in 1766-67, and they included tracts west of Pine Grove Mills and extending west to the Ross farm and tracts formerly belonging to General Patton. Another surveying party in 1784 camped at "Stewart's" in the Warrior's Mark area on their way to Moshannon and Clearfield. On that trip, "George Meek killed one large buck, pretty fat not unwelcome news to the company."



According to one source the first settlers of the Half Moon Valley were Scotch-Irish, who came into the Huntingdon area during the French and Indian Wars in 1755, the year of Braddock's defeat, and then spread farther west during the late 1780s and early 1790s. Another source claims that the first settlers were Amish, who moved to Amish settlements in Ohio when they became outnumbered in this area. The probable truth is that both sources are correct and that the early settlements were almost simultaneous.

During the Revolutionary War the Indians sided with the British, who had made a pact with the Indians to prevent any settlement beyond the mountains. Life was perilous for settlers at that time, and a number of the earliest settlers were massacred by the Indians. Others were carried off into captivity. Southern Centre County was evidently too sparsely settled to have a fort to which settlers could flee for safety. Potter's Fort to the north was too far away, as were also the forts at Huntingdon, Frankstown, and Altoona.

Central Pennsylvania was settled very rapidly after the end of the Revolutionary War, when the British soldiers and the Indians had been driven out and when many veterans received bounty lands in the wilderness in compensation for their service to the nation. Although many of the earliest settlers are unknown, some have left a mark. In 1769 the Andrew Boggs family pushed up the Bald Eagle Creek from the West Branch of the Susquehannah to make their home at the site of Bald Eagle's "Nest," now Milesburg.

In July 1787, Philip Antes moved into the Bald Eagle Valley with his family and effects crammed aboard two canoes lashed together, up the West Branch of the Susquehannah to the mouth of Bald Eagle Creek, and thence up the creek to the Curtin Furnace area.

In 1784 Abraham Elder settled in the Stormstown area, and in 1804 or 1806 he built a stone tavern along Route 550 at the northwest edge of Stormstown. Another source says that Stormstown was founded in 1800 by Jacob Storm who bought land, laid it out in lots, and named the town.

In 1790 the George Meek who killed the deer mentioned previously purchased a tract of land in Ferguson Township. Thomas Ferguson, for whom the township is named, purchased a large tract of land in 1791.

The part of Ferguson Township about Gatesburg and vicinity was settled at quite an early period by the Gates, Rider, and Rumbarger families, all of whom had many children who spread throughout the area, and into the half Moon Valley. John and Suzannah Ross moved into the lower portion of the Half Moon Valley from Mifflin County in 1820. Henry Benn moved into Penn's Valley in 1786, and a thriving community began to grow which later became Centre Hall. About 1799 most of the Benns moved farther west and the leadership of the community was assumed by the Pennington family, who had settled in the upper part of the valley.

In 1788 General James Potter built a house and mill at the present site of Potter's Mills, and a community began to grow in that area.

In the Buffalo Run Valley an early inn was established by Paulser Sellers, who was succeeded by Caleb Kephart. The name of the village then became Kephart's Corners. In 1851 W. I. Furst built a store in which a postoffice was created and named Fillmore. The store and postoffice were later discontinued, but a later general store was built one-fourth mile to the west which still is in operation.

The early settlers of Patton Township experienced the usual hardship of pioneers in a new country. At first their nearest grist mills were at Huntingdon Furnace and Milesburg. The journeys to them were made over Indian trails by horseback. As late as 1811 John Gray had to go as far as Lewisburg for a ton of plaster, and it cost him \$26.00. In the early days the Stormstown area boasted of a distillery, grist mill, sawmill, blacksmith, shoemaker, weaver, wagonmaker, tannery, chair-maker, and pottery.

Deposits of iron ore were found fairly early in the southern part of Half Moon Township. Development of these deposits in "The Barrens" in the latter part of the 1800s led to the establishment of several villages, most of which have long since passed out of existence.

The village of Scotia was established in about 1864, near the close of the Civil War. It was a flourishing iron ore mining town that really "boomed" in the era between 1881 and 1911; however, it was shut down by 1926 because richer ore was found elsewhere. During World War II a brief attempt was made to rejuvenate the Scotia works, but it was abandoned because of refining difficulties. Many other small villages in Patton Township sprang up in connection with the iron ore operations in the late 1800s, including Benore, Boogersburg, Pleasant Hill, Booksburg, Marysville, and Paradise.

The town of Centre Line was located on Route 550 nearly a half-mile south of the Huntingdon County line where the Centre Line UMC now stands. It had several churches and a school.

In the southwest corner of the township was Loveville, founded in 1855 by James Love. It had a grist mill, blacksmith shop, carriage shop, and store. In 1867 the post office was moved there as successor to the Centre Line post office. In 1881 Mr. Love moved to Huntingdon County and sold his land to an ore-processing company. The workings were on a hill about one-fourth mile south of Loveville, and that place became known as Dunkirk. Ore was mined, washed, and hauled to the Loveville Siding of the Fairbrook Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Tow Hill was a village located between Scotia and Gatesburg. It was the site of an iron ore development between about 1882 and 1890, and was located on the Fairbrook branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The only remains today are crumbling ruins.

Buffalo Run is a village at the intersection of Routes 550 and 322, which dates back to 1769. Its name was derived from a buffalo lick on the farm owned in the 1880s by Mrs. John B. Linn. The Buffalo Run Valley Post Office was originally at Fillmore, but it was subsequently moved several times between Buffalo Run, Fillmore, and Matternville.

Matternville was located several hundred yards north of Buffalo Run on Rt. 322 at the foot of the mountain. It evidently received its name from John

Mattern, who owned a large tract of land in the area. The road that passed up the Half Moon and Buffalo Run Valleys was heavily traveled by farm wagons, conestoga wagons, and four-horse mail carriages. It was maintained by men "working out their taxes" under the direction of a road supervisor elected by the voters.



## THE SPREAD OF METHODISM INTO THE FRONTIER

The first Methodist society came together in England in the latter end of the year 1739, and 27 years later (1766) the first Methodist society was formed in America in New York. In 1784, John Wesley appointed Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to be superintendents over the Methodist brethren in America. However, because of differences between the Methodists of England and America resulting from the American Revolution, the American Methodists separated from the English Methodists and in 1784 in Baltimore organized a separate denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The first Methodist local preachers came to America in 1766. Francis Asbury and others came in 1771. The first conference was held in 1773 and included all the local preachers as well as the few itinerants. In the following years many more local preachers and circuit riders were licensed to serve the rapidly spreading congregations. This is where one of the major strengths of the Methodist Church emerged to make it ideally suited for evangelizing the frontier.

Many Methodists were among the first settlers to penetrate the wilderness, and as soon as they settled they started Sunday School classes in their homes. The first circuit riders were really scouts, who followed the movements of the settlers. When they located a Methodist family, they would establish a "preaching point," and then connect a number of preaching points into a circuit that could be covered by an itinerant minister or circuit rider in two or three months. They were thus available at least once a quarter to preach, marry, bury, baptize, hold communion, and perform any other needed functions. The practice of holding communion once each quarter persists in many Methodist churches to this day.

The circuit riders' efforts were often augmented by local pastors, lay preachers, exhorters, and class leaders, all of whom were an integral part of the extremely effective Methodist "method." The church was also very organic, for as the circuits grew and new preaching points and churches were set up, they were split and reassigned so that they were kept a manageable size. The church thus was also very effective at producing new ministers to meet the burgeoning needs of the constantly advancing frontier. The Supervising Elders, District Superintendents, and Bishops saw to it that in their connectional itinerant system, every church had a pastor and every pastor had a charge.

One of the original regional conferences of the early Methodists in America was the Baltimore Conference, and the early church activities in Pennsylvania were carried out under its jurisdiction. Methodists spread north up the valleys from Maryland into central Pennsylvania, and in 1781 the Little York Circuit was formed, which fathered many later circuits in Pennsylvania.

It is said that Philip Antes formed the first Methodist Society in Centre County at Bald Eagle. The settlers of that day were too busy to keep records; but it is tradition that the first Methodist class was formed there as soon as Antes had a roof on his cabin. The first mill was constructed in the summer of 1787, and preaching was held there regularly, on arrival of a preacher, until 1806, when the first Chapel was built at that place.

Another regular station on the circuit was the residence of Robert Pennington in Penn's Valley. He came from Maryland to pioneer Methodism in the upper Penn's Valley in the late 1780s. In 1791, the Little York circuit fathered the Northumberland Circuit. From the time of its formation until 1806, this circuit extended from Wilkes-Barre down the North Branch to Northumberland, and thence up the West Branch and Bald Eagle Creek to about four miles above Milesburg, then back to same distance up Spring Creek, thence to Penns Valley near and south of Potter's Fort, thence back east by the old Horse Path to Buffalo Valley and Northumberland. It took a full month on horseback to cover its 40 preaching stops.

The Allegheny Circuit was formed farther west in Maryland in 1783, and it fathered many more Pennsylvania circuits. In 1787 the Bath circuit was formed extending north from Maryland into Pennsylvania's Bedford County. A Bath circuit rider set up the Huntingdon circuit in 1788. This early circuit extended up the Aughwick Creek to Mt. Union, Huntingdon, Spruce Creek, Warrior's Mark, and Half Moon.

Bell and Berkheimer's thesis on Methodist Circuits in Central Pennsylvania before 1812 states, "Huntingdon circuit spread north to the Warrior's Mark Section. An early Methodist, Benjamin Hyskell, came there in 1792 from Hagerstown. To the east Peter Gray had settled in 1788 coming from Hagerstown."

They also quote from a description of the Huntingdon Circuit written in 1814 which states that it went "from Huntingdon to Williamsburg, thence up the Juniata to Frankstown, thence through the Sinking Valley, over the Allegheny to Philipsburg, thence to Union Church three miles above Clearfield on the Susquehannah, thence back again through Philipsburg by a powder mill which then stood beyond the town, to Warrior's Mark, thence to Half Moon, thence to Bentons, now Pennsylvania Furnace, thence to Spruce Creek, taking in Huntingdon Furnace and several other appointments, to Kishacoquillas, thence to Stone Valley taking in some five appointments, back to Huntingdon."

The circuit riders preached every day, except when the distance was too great, as from Penns Valley to Buffalo Valley. Of these early pioneer preachers, nothing but "the shadow of a name" remains. They were young in itineracy, the oldest, Samuel Breeze, admitted on trial in 1783; David Combs in 1787; Daniel Combs the same year; Michael Leard in 1786, Thomas Workman in 1789, John Rowen in 1788, and Richard Parriott in 1790. The generations who heard them with gladness have long since broken and disappeared upon the shores of the eternal world, but their long journeys to this their little silent world of wild mountains and stoney hills, through forest and swamp, along the "warriors' path," and from one log cabin to another, their toils, their hardships, their labors for the Master among the generations now dead and gone, are recorded on a leaf that will never fade.



## TRIBUTE TO A CIRCUIT RIDER

In the annals of early Methodist circuit riders, a more remarkable character than Jacob Gruber cannot be found. He served in eastern and western Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, and New Jersey. In the 1830s he was appointed to the Huntingdon and Warriors Mark Circuits. Upon his death in 1850 after 50 years in the itinerant ministry, he was immortalized in a poem by Harriet Jane Meek, a Centre County poet who had evidently known him.

Rest from thy labors, rest!  
Warrior, resign thy trust!  
The memory of thy name is blest,  
The memory of the just.  
A star is lost below,  
An orb is found above,  
To spread anew the burning glow  
Of everlasting love.

For threescore years and ten  
He walked the earth till even;  
For fifty years he offered men  
Salvation, life, and heaven.  
Then to his promised rest  
He turned with faltering tread,  
And found on the Redeemer's breast  
A place to lay his head.

Fallen--at close of day;  
Fallen--beside his post;  
At sunset came the bright array,  
The chariots and the host.  
With triumph on his tongue,  
With radiance on his brow,  
He passed with that exulting throng,  
And shares their glory now.

Warrior, thy work is done!  
Victor, the crown is given!  
The jubilee at last begun,  
The jubilee of heaven.  
Rest from thy labors, rest!  
Rise to thy triumph, rise!  
And join the anthems of the blest,  
The Sabbath of the skies.

The last line of the poem is a reflection of some of Gruber's last words. A few hours before he died he asked whether he could stand it another night and was told that he could not. "Then," said he, "tomorrow I shall spend my first Sabbath in heaven! Last Sabbath in the Church on earth, next Sabbath in the Church above!" and with evident emotion he added:

"Where congregations ne'er break up,  
and Sabbaths never end."



*John G. Jones*  
*J. G. Jones*

## BRINGING FREEDOM TO THE CAPTIVES

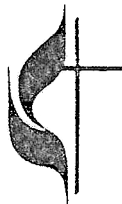
Henry G. Hartsock and Rush Petrikin are said to have been the first two Abolitionists in Centre County. Hartsock was a fearless and unflinching advocate of the principles that taught him that slavery was wrong. Despite the popular prejudice against his theory, and despite, too, the social ostracism to which his course subjected him, he never flagged in his outspoken and active zeal on behalf of the American slave. He lies buried in the Grays Cemetery near Stormstown, and upon his tombstone stands the eulogy:

"A FRIEND OF THE AMERICAN SLAVE DURING AMERICAN SLAVERY."

There were many in the Half Moon Valley, Methodists in particular, who helped with the "underground railroad," which was a secret organization that helped escaping slaves from the South to make their way to Canada. The organization was so secret that close friends and neighbors might be involved but never know the others were.

The runaway slaves always found protection and aid at Henry Hartsock's home, and as this fact was not slow of dissemination he was frequently called upon to exercise his humanely charitable impulse. In 1846, a party of runaway slaves, numbering ten, called at Hartsock's home one Sunday morning, and in an instant found not only a hearty welcome, but a capital breakfast. Fearful that his neighbors might discover and seek to return the fugitives, Hartsock concealed them in a woods near his house until nightfall, and then conducted them to the house of a black man by name of Samuel Henderson, whose place was recognized as one of the stops on the "Underground Railroad." Henderson put them safely on their route to Canada, and soon afterwards both he and Hartsock were rejoiced to learn that their wards had the happy land without further hindrances.

A man and his wife, escaping from Virginia slavery, passed by way of Cross' Tavern, enroute to Hartsock's house. At the tavern, however, the slave-catchers came up with them and bore them away toward the South. Word of the affair came to Hartsock's ears and he shouldered his gun and set out to rescue the captives; but his chase proved hopeless, and he was at last compelled to abandon it. A party of Abolitionists rescued the unfortunates at Hollidaysburg and returned them to Patton Township, where they settled and lived for many years afterward. When the American Blacks were freed by the President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Mr. Hartsock rejoiced with exceeding great joy to see the fulfillment of a dream that he had cherished for years.





## THE HISTORY OF GRAYS CHURCH

A church is not a building but a people, hence our claim that Grays Church was founded in 1788.

The Peter Gray family and the Conrad Hartsock family came to the Half Moon Valley in 1788, from Frederick County, Maryland, and settled in what is now Patton Township. As soon as Peter Gray had a roof on his log cabin, and probably before, he began a Sunday School class. These settlers also made pilgrimages to church at Warriors Mark, 12 miles distant, because that was the nearest regular preaching point on the circuit. In about 1790, Gray arranged for Methodist preachers to stop at his house to hold services, and for nearly 30 years his house was a temple where the surrounding community gathered once a month, and sometimes oftener, to enjoy the privilege of worship.

Peter Gray was the chosen leader when the Sunday School class was formed, and for 35 years he stood faithfully at the helm. His successor was his son, Peter B. Gray, who was likewise a local preacher. After him followed Samuel P. Gray, Jacob Gray, and J. G. Gray.

In 1826 a rude log church was built near Peter Gray's home by Joseph Atley, John L. Gray, William J. Meek, and others. In 1883 the class leaders were Isaac Gray and J. C. Hartsock. A member of the Gray family was class leader for 100 years. The old log church stood from 1826 to 1851, when it was destroyed by fire.

In 1853 the log church was replaced by a more pretentious frame structure near the Peter Gray farm, which was used until the building of the present handsome edifice in 1888. The new large brick church was built through the efforts and contributions of Isaac Gray, who then owned Skytop Farm near the church. Due to an unavoidable delay, the new structure that Isaac Gray helped build was not dedicated until two weeks after his death.

The early records of the Grays Sunday School and Church no longer exist. Since Grays Church was considered a part of the Warriors Mark Circuit, its statistics were combined along with those of other churches in the Half Moon Valley into the statistics for the Warrior's Mark Circuit. In the early days no distinction was made. Sometimes, however, they were reported separately, as in 1846 when the Warrior's Mark Circuit was served by two preachers, Revs. George Bergstresser and J. W. Langley. The entries for Grays Meeting House in that year are as follows: Class No. 1--Jacob Gray, Leader; Class No. 2--James Chambers, Leader; Class No. 3--John L. Gray, Leader. Eighteen other preaching points were listed on the circuit at that time, including Warriors Mark, Franklinville, Huntingdon Furnace, Mouth of Spruce Creek, Bald Eagle Furnace, Wrye's Schoolhouse, Beckwith Class, Martha Furnace Class, Walkersville or Stormstown, Boalsburg, Centre Furnace, Buffalo Run (Henderson), Hunter's Schoolhouse (Buffalo Run), Pennsylvania Furnace Class, Julian Furnace Class, Meek's Meeting House Class, Pine Grove, and Gatesburg.

In 1848 the Warriors Mark Circuit also listed 19 preaching points arranged into the following stations or circuits: State College, Pine Grove Mills, Half Moon, Port Matilda, and Warrior's Mark. Spruce Creek had been removed and placed on the Birmingham Circuit.

The 1855 report of the Missionary Society of the Baltimore Conference contained the following reference which contains some Grays people:

Warrior's Mark Circuit by the Rev. W. Lee Spottswood--\$20 from Miss Jane Meek to make Fletcher A. Meek life member of the Parent Society; \$5 from C. Buck for Five Points Mission; \$260 to make William Hull, Lucy A. Spottswood, Christian Hartsock, P. B. Waddle, J. W. Matron, Mary F. Gray, Catherine Matron, Mary Campbell, H. Sweetwood, David DeOiment, Jacob Rider, Thomas Hyskill, and Richard Wells, life members of Parent Society.

A similar entry in the 1864 report also lists contributions from Grays people:

Grays \$52.40, viz.: James Chambers; Jacob Gray and S. P. Gray each \$5; Isaac S. Gray \$3; George S. Gray W. S. Gray, Green Gray, S. T. Gray and John Chambers each \$2; Jas. Chambers Jr., John Hartsock, J. G. Mattern, M. G. Pottsgrove, Miles D. Gray, H. A. Harnden, M. A. Furst, M. F. Gray, Eliz. Gray, David Moore, Sally L. Gray and John Mattern, each \$1; Sarah Gray, Harriet E. Gray, Eve Chambers, Mary Gray, W. Rowen, Hust. Hartsock, Tho. Gray, Emma Gray, Beth Gray, Davis McAee, Mary Mattern and Olin Meek, each 50 cents; in smaller sums, \$3.40.

Over the years many circuit changes were made, creating an impossible tracking job for any one church, particularly since many church records are either missing or never existed. The present Half Moon Circuit was formed in 1888, the year the present Grays church was built.



Rev. H. Willis Hartsock

When the 120th year of service by Grays Church was celebrated in 1946, the Rev. H. Willis Hartsock sent a letter of congratulation and reminiscence to the church in which he stated the following:

"My public confession of Christ was made on the altar of the old (frame) church on the evening of my 11th birthday. As a boy I had some small part in taking down the old building, and for getting out the stones for the foundation of the new one. My father was selected by the overseers to oversee the building of the new church, and spent a great deal of time helping. Much of the work was done gratis by the members. The brick were burned by Miles and Jacob Mattern at the cost of \$6 per thousand at the kiln. Father made the small pulpit for the Sunday School Room. For more than 60 years he was a member of the church. He was a trustee, class leader, exhorter, and Sunday School teacher.

"I have vivid recollections of the buggies and spring wagons filling the church yard, that brought worshippers--whole families--on Sunday mornings. The quarterly meetings were great occasions and brought many visitors. Some families entertained as many as 37 guests for dinner. The revival services were occasions of sincere reconsecration, deep conviction, repentance, and conversions under sincere gospel preaching. With so many loyal men and elect ladies, pillars of the church, no wonder it is that the church still survives and that so many persons, ministers, and lay people have gone out to be leaders in fields of Christian service."

The church had 50 members in 1888. The trustees were Isaac Gray, Jacob Gray, and Jacob Mattern. and the Sunday School Superintendent was Isaac Gray. The church was attached to the Half Moon Circuit in charge of the Rev. James Beyer, who held services at Grays every two weeks. The circuit included six preaching points--Stormstown, Grays, Ross, Scotia, Fillmore, and Buffalo Run.

Grays Church has held many fruitful services, the most successful was the one conducted by Rev. George Guyer, when about 30 members were received.

In 1909 Grays Church had the following leaders: Class Leader--J. C. Hartsock; Stewards--William Furst, T. M. Huey; Trustees--J. C. Hartsock, J. W. Hartsock, T. M. Huey, William Furst, Miles Mattern, Esther K. Gray, Anna Gray, T. M. Hartsock, Berry Hartsock; Parsonage Committee--Esther K. Gray, Ira Clemson, Sallie Mattern; Sunday Schools--Charles Hartsock, T. M. Huey, Anna Gray; Tracts--Mary Cuss; Temperance--Mrs. Furst; Education--Sallie Meek; Music--Anna Gray, Ira Clemson, Mary Furst; Missions--Esther K. Gray; Church Extension--George S. Gray; Freedman's Aid--C. E. Hartsock; Church Records--William Furst.



*Reuben H. Meek*



*Isaac Gray*

## GRAYS CHURCH IN 1989

We at Grays Church have had a very busy year in 1989 preparing for our Bicentennial Celebration. In addition, major work was done on our facilities, including paving of the parking lot with blacktop. This has greatly eased the parking situation.

One of the most significant actions we took this year was to expand the church mission budget from \$200 per year to over \$1670, which is 10% of our total income. This is something that we hope to continue to build on for future growth. Further details on our mission activities are given on the following page.

Other activities that we continued or began in 1989 are the following:

- o We have continued our twenty-four-hour ministry. Pastors or leading laypeople are always available by phone.
- o Our young people have joined with those from our other churches to form a Christian youth organization to help provide Christian activities and positive peer pressure to other young people in the valley.
- o We offer Christian Education classes for all ages from preschool, children, youth, adult, and young family, meeting at 10:00 on Sunday mornings. Our Sunday School teachers are committed to teaching biblical truth in practical, relevant, and positive ways that are sensitive to the needs of each student.
- o We regularly offer special Christian Education programs on many topics of interest during the course of the year. These short-term classes provide ample opportunity to learn more about issues the Christian faces in today's complex and turbulent world. New classes are constantly being prepared.
- o Our Sanctuary Choir provides special music for worship and other services of the church. Opportunities exist to contribute to the music ministry in other ways also: in special presentations such as our annual Talent Night, and also in participating in our charge-wide cantata choirs and hymn sings.
- o The Praying and Helping Hands Women's Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month. We offer a wide range of service projects and meet monthly for the purpose of fellowship, projects, prayer, and ministry to all.
- o We believe in prayer, and have established a twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week prayer chain. The Prayer Chain can be called at any time by anyone for any purpose and the prayers will begin immediately.
- o We hold a monthly fellowship covered-dish supper and program on the first Sunday of each month, from September to June. We also have seasonal programs, church fellowship nights, Bible studies, and other programs of outreach.
- o We constantly seek ways to minister to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of our community.

### Grays Church 1989 Mission Project Support

Our 1989 mission budget included a figure of \$1620 for mission support. This figure represents an amount of 10% of our entire church budget. Below is a full listing of the projects, and amounts budgeted for each.

#### Local Needs -- 50% (\$800.00)

1. Local Relief Response Fund -- \$200.00. This fund is set up to meet immediate needs of people within our parish boundaries. It is designed for emergencies or situations of genuine need.
2. State College Christian Mission -- \$300.00. We continue to provide funding support for this worthy project which provides direct help to those in need in the Centre region.
3. Meals on Wheels -- \$150.00. This service provides hot, nutritious meals to those who may otherwise lack them. Meals are prepared and delivered at little or no cost.
4. Centre Home Care -- \$150.00. This service provides home nursing care for families and individuals who, while remaining at home, require care.

#### Conference -- National -- 25% (\$410.00)

1. Missionary and Evangelism Support -- \$210.00. This project is to support missionary and evangelism projects dedicated to spreading the good news about Jesus Christ.
2. United Methodist Home for Children -- \$100.00. This is our Conference home which helps provide housing and counseling for troubled and abused children.
3. Neighborhood Center -- \$100.00. This is a Christian youth and family center located in the midst of the city of Harrisburg. It provides an alternative to drugs, gangs, and the streets.

#### World -- 25% (\$410.00)

1. United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) -- \$410.00. This organization provides emergency relief as well as rehabilitation efforts on a world-wide basis. 100% of the monies given go to the projects they are designated to.

Grays Church Officers for 1989

Administrative Board

Chairman: David Barr  
Secretary: Vivian Zeek

Vice Chairman: Paul Myers  
Treasurer: Gerald Flenner

Members-at-Large

Crowl Way  
Mary Zeek  
Beverly Beck  
Margaret Mattern  
Tom Anderson

Dorothy Way  
Dorothy Myers  
Helen Barr  
Susan Allison

John Zeek  
Roy Beck  
Helen Watkins  
Chris Musser

Spiritual Council of Ministry

David Barr  
Clem Flenner  
Diane Struble  
Vivian Zeek  
Margaret Mattern

Gerald Flenner  
Susan Allison  
Pam Tressler  
Kathy Dittman  
Sandy Rogers

Helen Barr  
Dorothy Way  
John Zeek  
Mary Zeek

Trustees

1989  
Paul Myers  
Roy Beck  
Susan Allison

1990  
John Zeek  
Katherine Reed  
Crowl Way

1991  
Mike Barr  
Gerald Flenner  
John Wilson

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Nominating Committee

Katherine Reed  
Gerald Flenner

Donna Barr

Helen Watkins

Charge Officers

Charge Pastor/Parish Relations Committee--Donna Barr, Clem Flenner  
Charge Trustees--Paul Myers, Gerald Flenner

Other Officers

Music Director--Helen Barr  
Christian Education--Donna Barr  
Youth Group--Chris Musser  
Christian Education--Donna Barr

Organist--Katherine Reed  
Historian--Helen Barr  
Youth Choir--Kathy Dittman

Sunday School

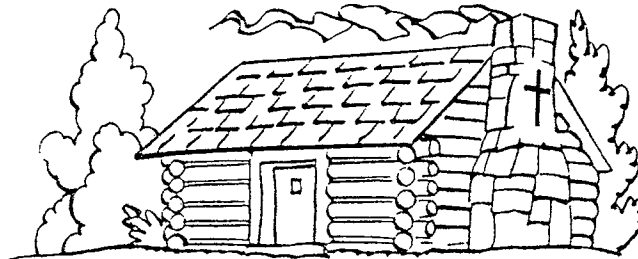
Upstairs Superintendent--Charles Dittman  
Downstairs Superintendent--Kathy Dittman  
Secretary/Treasurer--Helen Barr

Grays United Methodist Church  
Expense Budget for 1989

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10% of Gross Receipts for Missions.....	\$1,682.00
UMC Apportionment 1A.....	1,562.00
UMC Apportionment 1B.....	702.00
UMC Apportionment 2.....	791.00
Insurance.....	381.00
Heating Oil.....	1,790.00
Janitorial Service.....	1,200.00
Senior Pastor's Salary.....	3,744.62
Senior Pastor's Travel.....	550.00
Senior Pastor's Pension.....	449.35
Senior Pastor's Social Security Offset....	219.12
Senior Pastor's Continuing Education.....	110.00
Asst. Pastor's Salary.....	769.92
Asst. Pastor's Travel.....	330.00
Asst. Pastor's Pension.....	89.40
Asst. Pastor's Social Security Offset....	42.00
Foster Child Support.....	184.00
Parsonage.....	426.00
Loan Payment.....	900.00
Loan Interest.....	400.00
Repairs/Maintenance.....	300.00
Miscellaneous.....	200.00
TOTAL.....	\$16,822.41

Note: In 1989 Grays Church was one of five churches making up the Half Moon Charge, as it has been for a number of years. The five churches on the charge are Fillmore, Grays, Stormstown, Centre Line, and Ross. Charge expenses such as the pastors' salaries are shared proportionately.



## A BICENTENNIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTORS

Here we stand at the end of two centuries of ministry in this valley, taking time to reflect and celebrate what the Lord has done. It is--and should be--a proud moment in the life of our church family.

In this bicentennial booklet we will try to recapture some of the flavor of our history, including the beginnings of civilization and Christianity in this valley. It is a rich history of God's people in this place, extending over 200 years.

Yet for all the joy this day brings, our true focus must not be on the past, but on the future. What challenges will we be faced with, and what directions will our ministry take in the years to come?

Here and now, in the Year of Our Lord 1989, we can anticipate many of the challenges that lie before us because many of them are already upon us. It seems the very foundations of our society are being shaken. Families are being torn apart, evil abounds, church memberships are in decline--it seems that all around us doubt and pessimism are the mood of the age. How will our church respond? Do we have anything to say?

Our church at Grays has endured many changes and has faced many challenges during her 200 years. They have come from within and without. Yet one thing has stood during these years of change, challenge, and turmoil: this church has been telling the old, old story of the great love of God shown through Jesus Christ.

This is still our task for today and tomorrow. We must continue to be a place where people can come to learn about God. We must continue to be a light shining brightly in the darkness of a dying world. We can make a genuine difference in people's lives!

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We honestly believe that the best years of our church are yet to come. In the past, we have seen God's faithfulness and sustaining grace. We continue to see it today. And in the future, we will see His power and ability to accomplish His will through His people. What a privilege to be a part of this!

What specific directions our church will take or how large or small we will be, only time will tell. But one thing we all pray for is that we continue to faithfully proclaim Christ in season and out. May each person who enters our humble church feel this spirit and encounter Jesus.

If we do this we will know--just as our brothers and sisters over the past 200 years have known--what it means to be a vital part of God's mission here on earth and in this valley.

God bless you all.

Signed by all the pastors who have served Methodist churches in the Half Moon Valley for 200 years.



## LIST OF PASTORS

(Earlier Ministers may be listed on the Warriors Mark Circuit)

1868	Rev. J. W. Cleaver
1870	Rev. George A. Singer
1871	Rev. Elisha Butler
1873	Rev. John Lloyd
1875	Rev. George Guyer
1879	Rev. George W. Brouse
1881	Rev. J. S. Beyer
1883	Rev. R. W. Whitney
1884	Rev. W. F. D. Noble
1887	Rev. A. Parker Wharton
1894-1895	Rev. R. L. Armstrong
1895-97	Rev. George A. Singer
1897-1902	Rev. R. W. Runyon
1902-05	Rev. E. L. Eslinger
1905-08	Rev. R. S. Taylor
1908-11	Rev. A. L. Frank
1911-12	Rev. Hugh Strain
1913-14	Rev. M. J. Runyon
1915-17	Rev. Franklin A. Lawson
1917-20	Rev. Harry F. Babcock
1920-22	Rev. Wilson W. Reeder
1922	Rev. Charles H. Monroe
1923-25	Rev. J. W. Remley
1926	Rev. W. S. Rose
1928-30	Rev. C. E. Fuller
1931	Rev. Charles S. Brewer
1932	Rev. B. C. Bastuschek
1935	Rev. R. M. Naylor
1936-37	Rev. Harry F. Babcock
1938-40	Rev. J. Wallace Cummings
1940-42	Rev. David A. Downin, Jr.
1942	Rev. R. E. Breth
1943-45	Rev. Henry H. Shissler
1946	Rev. Forrest R. Stong
1947	Rev. Wayne Hull
1948-52	Rev. Harold G. Ash
1952-55	Rev. Henry H. Shissler
1955-56	Rev. Donald W. Carruthers
1956-61	Rev. Truman L. Baker
1962-63	Rev. C. Mitchell Hammond
1964-67	Rev. Donald E. Drake
1967-69	Rev. Marvin H. Runner
1969	Rev. John Uhrin, Jr.
1973	Rev. Daniel C. Milheim
1973	Rev. Michael Druck
1977-78	Rev. John Betlyon
1978	Dr. Ferdinand Derk (Interim)
1979	Rev. Richard Feeser
1980	Rev. Jeffrey W. Tilden
1983	Rev. Richard A. Creamer
1984-	Rev. Stevan Atanasoff
1984-87	Rev. Karen Atanasoff (Assoc.)
1987-88	Rev. Doris Lohr (Assoc.)
1988-	Rev. James W. Hill (Assoc.)

## PROPHECY

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith  
God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh;  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions, and your old  
men shall dream dreams:" Acts 2:17

The reader will please note that the scripture is the only legitimate prophecy in this section. And we do not pretend that these words of ours speak for the church; they are only the opinions of a few of us who prepared this booklet. But we thought it would be fun to prophesy, based on our present information, intelligence, biases, and ability to prognosticate, all of which are quite questionable. We also thought it might be interesting for the readers in the days to come to know some of our present concerns and thoughts. In the end, it will be up to time, God's revelation, and the reader's judgment to tell how well we have done.

The scriptures tell us that there will always be wars and rumors of wars. We have seen this to be true throughout the 200 years of our history, and there is no reason to expect it not to continue. However, we believe that there will be no more "world wars" because of the threat of nuclear war, the increasing complexities of a global economy and multinational corporations, and the emergence of a united Europe as a balancing political power between the United States and the Soviet Union. There will, however, continue to be regional wars in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. The most serious political confrontations will possibly be in the far east between Japan and China, not only because of their ancient rivalry, but also because China, as it begins to explore free markets, will become an economic competitor for Japan as Taiwan and Korea have already done. We only pray that in the future we might be instruments of His peace in a warlike world.

Just within the past year we have had a graphic demonstration of how God controls history. Ever since World War II the United States has been confronting and warring with international communism, and neither side has won a decisive victory. But God's hand has been moving mysteriously behind the scene. In the past few years the system of international communism has proved to be a universal failure, and the Soviet Union has been beset by a wave of self doubt and criticism. There have been freedom movements in most of their European satellites and millions of people have fled their territories and influence. Our daily newspapers are now full of stories about the millions of East Germans who are fleeing to the West. Should Germany, the source of so many wars, be re-unified? We don't think so.

We predict that this freedom movement will continue, and that most of the satellite nations, and many parts of the Soviet Union itself, will successfully break away from Russian influence. This will not diminish the Soviet threat, however. They will emerge leaner, stronger economically, and just as much of a military threat. Their pernicious influence will continue to be felt in Latin America, where they will continue to exploit ignorance and human and economic deprivation. This area will continue to be of serious concern to the United States, but at the same time it will grow to be an area of major opportunity for the United Methodist Church.

God commanded us to be good stewards of His wonderful creation, but for centuries we have been foolishly exploiting our resources for short-term profit. Although time has healed many of the scars left by earlier industries in the Centre County area, in 1989 there are still many vestiges of old ore and limestone pits, quarries, railroad lines, furnaces, and forges. Industrial development, septic systems, agricultural chemicals, and garbage dumps have all contributed to widespread water pollution. Our once crystal clear air is being progressively polluted by smog drifting northward from the Pittsburgh area, and the smoke from our own woodstoves forms a ring around Mount Nittany on winter mornings. On a global scale, we are concerned about the buildup of ozone at ground level and the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere. We are concerned about the "greenhouse effect," and whether it is changing our weather patterns. We are also concerned about "acid rain" and its effects on our ecology.

The Centre County/State College area was recently rated as one of the nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas. This rapid growth will produce many problems that our local governments and churches will have to contend with. One of the most serious effects will be the spread of housing developments throughout the State College area. So far this has been a random scattering, but large developments are coming, such as Gray's Woods just across the road from Grays church. We predict that on the whole the growth will be correctly controlled so that there will be a desirable combination of neighborhoods and open space. The major problem, however, will be the spread of undesirable influences into our area--crime, drugs, pornography, promiscuous sex, and a general lowering of moral standards.

This will represent the greatest challenge to Grays Church, and to the other churches of our charge. We do not expect a proportionate growth in the size of our churches, but a moderate growth that speaks of quality rather than quantity. We predict that just as it has done for 200 years, our church will be an uplifting influence in our community, particularly in its youth ministry. Just this year, in cooperation with the other churches of our charge, we formed a Christian youth group in the Half Moon Valley to provide peer pressure for the right and against the wrong. The group has had a successful beginning, and we predict that it will grow and multiply and be a major influence on the young people of the valley for many years to come.

As we write these pages, the nation, the state, and our church are debating the question of abortion. We believe that most unwanted pregnancies, and abortions, are the result of the breaking of God's word about the proper use of sexuality and regard for human life. However, we also understand the traumatic effects that an unwanted pregnancy can have on mother, father, child, and family, and we pray for guidance. We believe that this problem will be controversial for many years before it is finally resolved by a moderate set of controls that will prohibit all but the most traumatic pregnancies. Regardless of the outcome, we hold out God's commandments as the only way to eliminate the serious human penalties that inevitably result from misusing sexuality and tampering with His elementary life forces; and we continue to hold out His promise of forgiveness to those who truly repent.

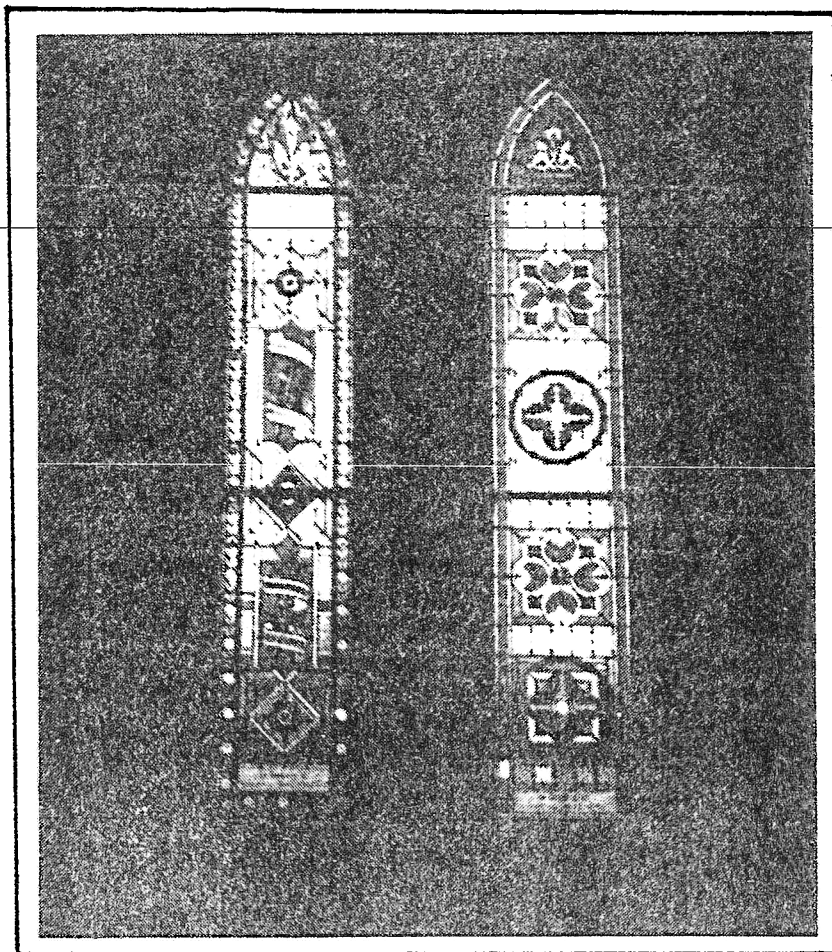
Over the past 40 years there has been a serious decrease in the quality of education in the public schools of the nation, resulting from a general lowering of standards of teaching and discipline, and compounded by the difficult problems of racial strife and drugs. In this area we are

fortunate to have few of these problems at the present time, but with further metropolitan and suburban growth these problems are bound to increase. We predict a long, difficult period of adjustment and gradual improvement. At the same time, we predict a continued rapid growth in private Christian schools, which have generally demonstrated their capability of delivering an education that is superior to that obtained from the public schools. Major confrontations will occur between the advocates of public and private education, but neither side will overcome the other.

Even though many of these predictions are conjecture, there is one prediction that we can make with certainty,--there will be good days and bad days in the future, just as there have been in the past; and, as in the past, a faithful few will carry us forward. And we can be sure of the promise He gave us:

"If My people, which are called by My name,  
shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek  
My face, and turn from their wicked ways;  
then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive  
their sin, and will heal their land." II Chronicles 7:14

There is POWER IN THE BLOOD of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.



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## BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Cochairpersons--Helen Barr and Katherine Reed

Members--David Barr, Vivian Zeek, Dorothy Way, Susan Allison, Gerald Flenner, Jan Musser, Clem Flenner, Mary Zeek, Mim Shawley, Margaret Mattern, Stevan Atanasoff, and Jim Hill.