

One special memory has to do with a Thanksgiving Day. There was a worship service at the Rometown Church. At the close of the service someone told me that the roads to Erie were closed because of heavy snowfall.

It had been our plan to eat Thanksgiving Dinner in Erie with Don's parents. Sarah had prepared pies which were to be our contribution. When we learned that the roads were closed, we were in an interesting predicament. Then the telephone rang. It was Hazel Kerr with an invitation to bring our pies and join them for Thanksgiving Dinner. It was a lovely act of kindness which led to a lovely day.

I will close by admitting that I probably made many mistakes during our years at Bethel. I will also admit that the congregation probably listened to some poor sermons. However, if we could travel backward in time to live part of our lives over, we might choose the two years at Bethel and repeat them just as they were.

We thank God for the reality of His Love which surrounded us at Bethel.

Don and Sarah Horton



Dear Friends,

It was a joy to hear from you and have old memories emerge as a result. I seem to put communicating at the bottom of the pile of things to do, so this has taken some time to get to. Also, I'm either more busy or less efficient than in former days! Yes, Basil and I had some good conversations exploring ideas. And no one has ever done my shirts so well as you, Margie. I guess that's because since those days I have mostly done my own shirts!

I served Bethel from the summer or fall of 1959 to about June of 1962. The District Superintendent had assigned me to Bethel Church as I transferred to Allegheny College from Houghton College where I had served a couple churches north of Olean. As fledgling minister I did everything, and did so gladly. On Sundays I would rise early to make sure the furnace was fired up. (I still do that.) I usually would have done the bulletins on the spirit duplicator in the parsonage back room on Saturday. For at least one or two of those years I rehearsed the choir on Wednesday evenings and "directed" on Sunday morning. I ran the evening high school age youth group—a bunch of good, bright, and earnest young ones — and one summer was a counselor at district camp. I was the biggest eater—at least of deserts—at the wonderful pot-luck suppers the people of Shelmadine could whip up. One summer I was paid extra to paint the entire exterior of the church. Often I mowed the church lawn when I did the parsonage lawn.

Just across the street I saw Grandpa Hummer's pond get dug and become a reality. When I was married in '62 the shiverree gang threw me into that

pond after rousing us from bed with the racket of gunshots and powersaws. My wife and I planted a tree in front of the parsonage in an otherwise pretty empty lawn. The first two years I was a bachelor, a very lonely bachelor, who actually made a sort of pet of a mouse who would wander the kitchen while I studied late at night at the table. I didn't think it appropriate to date church women, though several tempted me, and I seemed too busy to get involved with anyone at Allegheny. Then Aunt Sylvia got her niece Carolyn and I together. (We had an always difficult but rewarding marriage of 17 years, adopted two boys and had two the regular way.) I recall basketball games in the small gym and the church participation in the bowling league. I was a pretty good athlete but bowling rather humbled me and I think I haven't bowled since. Elwin Kerr could out-bowl me but not out-shoot me. I recall his excited account of visiting the Rockies; now, for many years, I have lived in, traveled, hiked--and loved--the Rockies.

Looking back it is clear to me that people honored my calling and respected what I had to offer at the same time that they made allowances for and helped out with my youth and greenness. A good congregation indeed to know how to keep that balance. I wish I could bring names to mind as easily as faces flash through my memory; it has just been too long since I have used the names; the Kerrs and the Hummers get all mixed up and the others just slip into the shadows as I almost get a hold on them. I've never been good with names but it is embarrassing to think of folks with affection but no longer know their names.

So much is influential without our being aware; but one incident I remember as having a lasting effect on my religious outlook. Oral Roberts had conducted a healing service in Erie but a member had not received a miracle as expected. It seemed to me that if anyone deserved a miracle it should have happened in that household. Their faith was shaken and so was mine; we could see from his procedure that Roberts was really a shyster, but nonetheless, we had to reassess our ideas of the nature of God and reality and what could be expected from Faith. I've been wrestling with those and similar issues ever since as philosopher and theologian of sorts. As I went off to seminary (Union Theological in New York City) the family was strongly moving into more satisfactory understandings as well; I hope it continued. (Just previously another family had a son in the Shriner's Hospital in Erie, but that was a different sort of "test.")

Well, perhaps that is enough for now. I'm sure, if we ever get a chance to get together, we will be flooded with many more memories. Good luck with the history project and let me know how I can get a copy.

Sincerely,  
Dale E. Arnink

Dear Friends,

I stood on the porch of the parsonage, looked across the yard to the church and said, "I don't believe this!" I had just moved in as the new pastor of Bethel Methodist Church.

I was 19 years old and scared. Ace, the Heinz-variety dog I inherited from Dale (Arnink), must have been equally amazed - new master and a new pastor, all in the same day.

A year earlier I gave my life to Christ during senior high youth camp at Wesley Woods, but had no idea it would lead to a call into the ministry, nor did I dream that that call would be tested so soon.

Every pastor has to begin somewhere. Some church would have the unenviable assignment to take on a fledgling pastor. I wonder if I would have survived those first years of ministry if that church had not been Bethel.

You tolerated a teen-age boy who wanted to serve God but was still crawling spiritually. You put up with a lot of bad sermons and awkward pastoral care.

I remember with gratitude your patience and mothering. You seemed to sense that this boy had potential and overlooked his youthful inexperience. Thanks for giving me a chance.

With love and affection,  
Rev. Dr. Ted Cole, Pastor



Bethel United Methodist Church,

- The wonderful "first" experience as a parsonage family -- Bethel was our first appointment.
- Many cookouts at the fireplace with the congregational family.
- Our children always remembered Mrs. Mildred Vosburgh as the "cookie" lady. Somehow they always needed to stop on their way home after feeding their pony, Rocky, at Sylvia Reynolds.
- Sharing in the progress of making "home-made" maple syrup at various farms.
- Fast and furious basketball games when the "old timers" challenged the youth.
- How the Bethel families welcomed us into their "unique" circle of love.

- Julie and Sonya walking across pews with patent leather shoes. Their parents said NO – Congregational family said “aren’t they cute”.
- Martha and ladies polishing the gym floor. It was during this experience that Martha learned to drink “black coffee”.
- Sonya’s birth – bare ground at bedtime and then 12 inches of snow at 2:00 a.m. for the trip to the hospital March 24, 1968.
- Missionary Conference when Everett Woodcock landed his airplane in the field.
- The “great” Bethel Community Dinners.
- “Agricultural Experiences” with Harry, Ron Kerr and families.

Sincerely  
Dale Livermore, Pastor



Dear Bethel,

Herb and Roberta Boyd retired at the 1976 Annual Conference. They had been the Resident Director and Hostess at Olmsted Manor, Ludlow, PA, an Adult Retreat Center for the Conference. A new Director had been employed and the Boyds left the Manor October 1, 1976, and accepted the appointment to Bethel and White Oak, continuing there until July, 1981.

They were enjoyable and profitable years for the Boyds. The friendship and cooperation in both churches along with the country atmosphere helped make the change from 42 years of active service to 9 churches and 7 years at Olmsted Manor an easy and pleasant one. Several achievements come to mind:

- An active youth fellowship and United Methodist Women. A 20 foot Christmas tree from Wesley Woods, trimmed with many Chrismons made by the women.
- A Christmas pageant directed by John Reynolds, starring Jeff Kerr, Virginia Simpson and Ken Armstrong.
- Paying Conference apportionments in full each year and underwriting Bethel’s share of the Conference Quadrennial project.
- Mid-week Bible Study at Bethel and White Oak.
- Remodeling the Bethel basement, and constructing an anteroom off the fellowship hall for storage purposes.
- A cooperative spirit resulting in fifth Sunday union services alternating between Bethel and White Oak.
- A hunger offering using an old-fashioned black iron kettle, supported by a tripod, on the altar for the collection vessel.

- The Boyds were invited to be the host couple for the United Methodist House at Chautauqua in 1981, thus terminating the pleasant tour of duty at Bethel.
- Russell and Dick Vosburgh helped me put in the ramp at the church especially for Joan's use. I hope others have used it since.
- Our health is fair, Roberta is organist for two Sunday services in Wesbury and does a lot of volunteer work.
- I had 1573 hours of volunteer time from April, 1995 to March, 1996.

Sincerely,  
Herb Boyd



Dear Bethel Friends,

I received your note and am pleased to respond. There are many things we recall about Bethel which bring smiles to our faces. I remember especially the generous patience of the congregation in putting up with a "fresh" preacher. A "seasoned" pastor once told me that my first appointment would always be the most precious to *my* memory. I believe he was right. My six year stint as pastor to Hummers, Kerrs, Hasbroucks, Vosburghs and others remains a cherished experience and no doubt formative to my understanding of pastoral ministry. I came to you "fresh out of school, but you were my true teachers." I often thank God that you put up with me.

Such precious memories we have from Bethel. Our first child, Sarah was born there. Hannah's forth coming birth was first publicly announced at our farewell party. Two others, Rebekah and Leah, have joined us since. This past Summer on a trip to Wesley Woods, we swung by the little Church and parsonage with its beautiful grounds and own private fishing pond. It was fun to show the kids the "old homestead."

The pond holds many fond memories. I used to "meditate" by it with fish pole and tackle in hand, along with Bible and Prayer Book. The Great Blue Heron would drop by for a visit, as well as the Canada Goose. On Summer nights the Bull Frog Chorus would sing us to sleep. But the Bass usually kept their distance, which was fine with me. For me, the point of fishing never has been the catching.

One memory about the pond makes me chuckle. Those of you who remember us know that I sported a full bushy beard during our stay at Bethel. I also acquired a genuine Amish hat. One Summer evening I was fishing in the pond. Dick Vosburgh came walking across the road laughing out some-

thing. He said one of the neighbor boys had come into his yard yelling, "Mr. Vosburgh, come quick, you've got to see this." When Dick asked him what was up, he exclaimed, "There is an Amish man fishing in the pond. And he is wearing just a tee shirt and old cut-off blue jeans." Now since the lad knew something about Amish rules and regulations he added, "Do you suppose he'll get in trouble for that?!"

I don't recall getting into too much "trouble" at Bethel. Mostly you accepted me as I was and stuck with me through some difficult times. For this I have always been grateful.

Bethel is not the same place it was when we served among you. There is a children's Hymn in our Hymn book. It says, *The Church is not a building. The Church is not a steeple. The Church is not a resting place. The Church is a people!* People are the Church. This means that it will always be changing. Some great saints worshipped at Bethel and served the Lord during our tenure. Some of them are not there now. They have gone on to join the heavenly congregation. Others have joined you since we left. They are strangers to us but friends to you. So the congregation is not quite the same we loved and served. This is the way of the Church. It never remains the same.

There is a rock at Bethel, across the road, under the flag pole. One of the men used to set up a bench there every Spring. I was grateful for the gift of the bench. I used to sit in it and study the rock. It has a plaque set in it. If my memory serves me it says something like, "The eternal God is your dwelling place."

In the midst of changes that sometimes seem to bowl us over and sweep us away, those words ring true. God's love is eternal and unchanging. Bethel shall always be the same in my memory, a place where the faithful love of God was proclaimed and lived out in the lives of people.

Well done Good and Faithful Church  
Thank you for being a "touch stone" in our lives.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Dr. Dennis W. Swineford

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Dear Brothers and Sisters at Bethel,

It is so exciting to me that you continue to remember your past and your experiences with the Lord. You have my heartfelt prayers for the cooperation of all involved to bring to completion this worthwhile project. I know God blesses the endeavors of His people.

As far as memorable times and events, they are numerous. Please use what you want of the following:

**YOUTH** - all good times, working to raise money for camping at Wesley Woods, even picking rocks from fields and the slave auctions. Some of the youth worked very hard and some had the experience of being at someone's house and eating cookies and watching TV. Also Christmas caroling, and working with Rusty and Evelyn, also Youth Sundays.

**LUNCHEON BIBLE STUDIES** - always good study, fellowship, and food. **MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST** - Saturdays were a highlight with, again, good experiences (prayer and sending our prayers to others by the cards, fellowship, and food).

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS** - a privilege to be able to teach and learn from the group we so enjoyed.

**CELEBRATIONS** - sharing with Rev. Ohl the privilege of baptisms with his family. Other baptisms, weddings, communion, and the awesome privilege of sharing words of hope and encouragement during funerals of many folk's loved ones. Even the joy of "remarrying" Clarence and Dorothy Dressler and the wonderful slide program shared with us.

**LIBRARY** - the addition of numerous books to the library with the hopes that it will be used for knowledge, wisdom, and the growth of faith and grace.

**CHALLENGES OF BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT** - the mimeograph that was quickly replaced by a copier in memory of one man I wish I could have met - Ken Armstrong, and the supplies for the copier being a memory for Alta. The roof of the entry of the church giving us fits when it leaked, and the willingness of the trustees to keep trying. Also the furnace in the parsonage that should have been a good one (There was surely enough cost for it to be a good one). And the painting of the parsonage, as well as the new roof put on while we were there.

**DINNERS** - Memorial Day along with the service was a great way to honor our loved ones. Also the fellowship dinners and the fundraisers that surprised us with the results.

I guess I could go on and on, but I will suffice it to say that the Lord is wonderful and the experiences we have are blessings to treasure and to share. I would name all the folks there as those I am privileged to call brother and sister in Christ.

God's greatest blessings,  
Pastor John Snyder



The Bethel Church Community want to pay a special tribute to Rev. H. Arnold Ohl and his wife Mary. After serving in 13 charges in the United Methodist Conference for forty four years, Rev. Ohl retired in 1973. They built a house at Bethel so they could be near their daughters and families. Rev. Ohl worked for P.C.A.P. for eight years after that. Rev. Ohl acted as our supply minister many times. It was a great joy to him to baptize his great grandchildren. Rev. Ohl died in 1992. Mary has always been a faithful member of the church.

The Ohl's had two daughters Barbara and Janet. Barbara married Ronald Kerr and their children are Gwen, Russell and Jeffrey. a) Gwen married James Come and they have two children Seth and Brianne. b) Russell married Evelyn Snyder and their children are Jacqueline and Joel. Jeffrey is a teacher.

Janet married Elwin Kerr and they have two children Elaine and Kevin. a) Elaine married Terry Bean and they have two children Taylor and Mikaela. b) Kevin married Darlene Nybert. Their children are Megan Maynard and Ethan.





Dear Members and Friends of Bethel,

You hold in your hand a very valuable booklet as it pertains to the history of The Bethel United Methodist Church located - at Shelmadine Springs between Titusville and Spartansburg. Many changes have taken place over the years in both the physical structure and the membership that makes up the congregation.

Just as the membership has changed over the years because of deaths and moves from the area, so has there been many pastors appointed to serve this parish. Each family and each pastor has helped to carry on the ministry of the church here. We have a rich heritage and something we can be proud of.

We hope that ten or twenty years from now someone will update the history so that future generations will have a good account of God's people who called Bethel their church home.

May God continue to bless this church and raise up new men and women who will carry on the ministry here with spiritual vigor and insight.

In Christian service and love,  
Pastor Everett R. Hammond



*The Bethel congregation expresses a loving tribute to Mary Hammond  
who went to her heavenly reward on February 6, 1997.*

# Chronological Membership

(April 16, 1952)

- 1890 1. Mae Hummer; 2. E. W. Hummer.  
1901 3. Will Hasbrouck.  
1902 4. Eber Kerr; 5. Loie Kerr; 6. Grace Vosburgh;  
7. Ruby Hummer.  
1904 8. Clyde Vosburgh; 9. Charles Kerr; 10. George Hummer.  
1915 11. Guerdon Hartman; 12. Bessie Hummer; 13. Ralph Hummer;  
14. Everett Kerr; 15. Neil Kerr; 16. Harry Vosburgh.  
1918 17. Esther Kerr.  
1921 18. Gladys Hummer; 19. Irene Hummer.  
1922 20. Hazel Kerr; 21. J. Reid Kerr; 22. Leola Hummer.  
1923 23. Arabelle Hummer.  
1924 24. Marie Hasbrouck.  
1925 25. Horace Hummer; 26. Margaret Klock;  
27. Mildred Vosburgh; 29. Virginia Simpson.  
1926 29. Edna Kerr.  
1927 30. Harry Kerr.  
1934 31. Barbara Beers; 32. Basil Hummer; 33. Shirley Kerr;  
34. Ruth Wiley; 35. Russell Vosburgh; 36. Paul Vosburgh;  
37. Margaret Twombly; 38. Neva Hasbrouck;  
39. Neal Hasbrouck; 40. Dorothy Dressler; 41. James Hummer.  
1937 42. Rachel Kunz; 43. Jesse Kunz; 44. Emilie Kunz;  
45. Paul Kunz.  
1940 46. Martha Vosburgh; 47. Bert Fitch; 48. Elizabeth Hummer;  
49. Rachel Hartman; 50. Dwight King.  
1941 51. Treva Kerr; 52. Freda Kerr; 53. Esther Watson;  
54. Joanne Watson; 55. Richard Vosburgh; 56. Lillian Proper;  
57. Clarence Proper;  
58. Clair Proper; 59. Marjorie Kerr; 60. Patricia Hummer;  
61. Donna Hartman; 62. Bette Hartman; 63. Evelyn Harger;  
64. Irene Proper; 65. Elaine Brown.  
1943 66. George Schwab; 67. Edith Schwab; 68. Beulah Stacy;  
69. Chet Stacy; 70. Leonard Meyers; 71. Anna Meyers;  
72. Mary Proper; 73. Victor Knapp; 74. Ruth Knapp;  
75. Lucy Harger; 76. Helen Goodwill;  
77. Byron Gardner; 78. Clarence Dressler; 79. Andrew Kerr.  
1944 80. Richard Brown; 81. George Hasbrouck;  
82. Ronald Vosburgh; 83. Albert Kerr; 84. Elwin Kerr;  
85. John Kerr; 86. Beverly Lake; 87. Walter Lake;  
88. Ermine Lake.  
1945 89. Rulin Kerr; 90. Ernestine Kerr; 91. Pauline Kerr;  
92. Margie Hummer.

- 1946 93. Jacquelyn Hartman; 94. Mary Lou Hartman;  
95. Russell Hummer; 96. Ronald Kerr.
- 1947 97. Dorothy Hasbrouck.
- 1950 98. Dorothy Bimber; 99. Phyllis Kunz; 100. Nancy Zimmerman;
- 1951 101. Henry Zimmerman; 102. Evan Hummer;  
103. Harold Hasbrouck; 104. William Schwab; 105. Donald Lake;  
106. Bob Wolfe; 107. Donald Stacy; 108. George Schwab, Jr.;  
109. Paul Hummer; 110. Erwin Kerr.
- 1952 111. Frank Kerr; 112. Ione Kerr; 113. Wanda Metzger.
- 1953 114. Wilda Metzgar; 115. Sara Jane Hummer;
- 1955 116. Betty Metzgar; 117. LeRoy Metzgar; 118. Alta Armstrong;  
119. Kenneth Armstrong; 121. Norma Kerr;  
122. Janet Kerr Buser; 123. Clarence Martin;  
124. Joan Vosburgh; 125. Sylvia Reynolds; 126. John Reynolds;  
127. Vernon Knapp; 128. Lucy Walters; 129. Kenneth Kerr;  
130. Joyce Kerr.
- 1956 132. David K. Hummer; 133. Gerald Kerr;  
134. Susan Vosburgh; 135. Cinda Dressler; 136. Charles Knapp;  
137. Donald Kerr; 138. Bruce Stacy; 139. Craig Twombly;
- 1957 140. Dolyne Hasbrouck; 141. Lawrence Twombly.
- 1958 142. Carol Armstrong; 143. Donald Armstrong;  
144. Richard Bimber; 145. Jane Dressler; 146. Linda Kerr;  
147. Jody Hummer; 148. Ann Vosburgh; 149. Nancy Kerr;  
150. Barbara Kerr; 151. Janet Kerr; 152. Patricia F. Hummer.
- 1962 153. James A. Kerr; 154. Robert Vosburgh;  
155. Lois Armstrong; 156. Hazel Kunz; 157. Kathryn Metzgar;  
158. Richard Hasbrouck; 159. Thomas Hasbrouck;  
160. Cheryl Hummer.
- 1963 161. John Vosburgh; 162. Clyde Ted Kerr;  
163. Arthur Bimber; 164. Lance Hummer
- 1964 165. Patricia Hummer.
- 1967 166. Janet Harger; 167. Kandy Hasbrouck;  
168. LuAnn Hasbrouck; 169. Joyce Kunz; 170. Karen Kerr;  
171. Martha Kerr; 172. Kenneth Robert Armstrong;  
173. Curtis Paul Vosburgh; 174. John Kunz;  
175. Harry Hasbrouck; 176. Kirk Watson; 177. Kim Hasbrouck;  
178. Hiram Graham; 179. Joyce Graham; 180. Bruce Frost;  
181. Mary Jo Frost.
- 1968 182. Judy Hummer; 183. Trudy Hummer; 184. Paula Kunz;  
185. Denis Dressler; 186. Steven Kerr; 187. Sally Knapp;  
188. Terry Graham.