



PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
DULUTH, MINNESOTA

Centennial
1871-1971



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"How to be true to our heritage and at the same time true to our destiny" was the problem proposed to the congregation of Pilgrim Church by its minister, Dr. William Halfaker, on Sunday, October 18, 1970. This suggests a purpose, perhaps, of all church histories. Like a human being, a church cannot know where it is going until it knows what it is. It is not the purpose of this centennial history to revel in past achievements, even though there may be many in which to take pride. It is rather to try to understand what this Pilgrim Congregational Church is and what its reasons for existing are. But a church — particularly a Congregational church — is primarily people, and its reasons for being depend on the people who made it and what they were.

Part of the letter written on October 22, 1870, to the Reverend A. H. Clapp of Bible House, New York, asking about the Reverend Charles C. Salter of Brookfield, Missouri, as a minister for a Congregational Church in the pioneer community of Duluth tells us something of one of these men and also something of the times: "The opportunity for a good working Christian man, of large

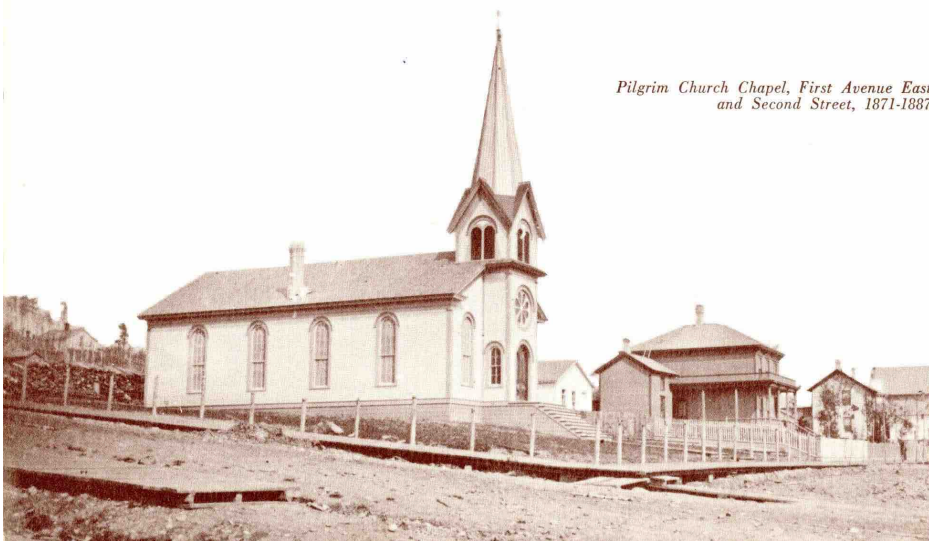
heart and clear head, one who can preach fair English and yet is not afraid to take poor men and rough men by the hand — for such a man the opportunity is a rare one."

Only imagination and a few rare pictures can help us visualize the Duluth of L. H. Tenney and the Northwestern Land Agency, whose letterhead his communication carries. Only fourteen years before the letter, promoters had platted six townsites now within the city and named one of them *Duluth*. Four years before the letter, in 1866, Jay Cooke, Philadelphia financier, had first visited the community, and one year before, in 1869, construction had begun on the Duluth end of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad, bringing a sudden increase in population. So from a reported county population of 406 in 1860, Duluth by 1870 is reported to have had about 3000 persons.

By November 25, 1870, a month after his first letter, Mr. Tenney was writing to the Reverend Richard Hall, State Superintendent of Home Missions, of St. Paul with evident urgency: "Mr. Hall, you must arrange matters in some way so Mr. Salter can and will come, for *he is the man*. Please write Mr. Salter at once." This was a man of action and impatience, because only three days later on November 28, Mr. Tenney wrote to Mr. Salter that a preliminary meeting of the "Congregational friends" had been held that evening and had authorized him to call Mr. Salter to come, pledging \$500 a year salary, "in addition to any amount the Congregational Society may give." He did warn the minister that "Some of the Presbyterians feel that the movement is a *wicked one* and feel bad."

Mr. Salter did accept the call, and on January 18, 1871, the church was organized by a Council with sixteen charter members: Thomas C. Cain, Catherine Cochrane (Mrs. J. P. Johnson), Thomas Dowse, Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Kimball, Mr. and Mrs. O. K. Patterson, Mrs. Roger S. Munger, the Reverend and Mrs. Charles C. Salter, Mr. and Mrs. Ezra L. Smith, George Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Woodbridge, and J. Perkins Johnson. For six months public services were held in a room in the Pendleton Block on Superior Street while the church struggled

Pilgrim Church Chapel, First Avenue East and Second Street, 1871-1887



to find ways to support itself. The future success of the church seemed evident, however, from a report on February 17, 1871, by the Deacons and Trustees to the Home Missionary Society, in which they record the number of members, 17, but the average congregation, 75.

No doubt a certain amount of denominational jealousy was present in formation of Pilgrim Church — as displayed in Mr. Tenney's letter and also in a letter from the Reverend Richard Hill, state superintendent, in his request to the American Home Missionary Society for \$900 to aid the little church: "I wish to save *our own* members at least from drifting unnecessarily into the Chs. of other denominations." But the ecumenism, which has in more recent years generally been part of Congregationalism, was already present in Mr. Salter's quarterly report, September 23, 1872. He had evidently heard the criticism that perhaps there were too many churches in Duluth: "The cure for 'too many' churches is to be found, not in trying to check the ardor of Christian advance, but in promoting that larger organic unity of the Church of Christ to which I believe the signs of the times are pointing."

Two lots on the corner of Second Street and First Avenue East were secured by the church and a chapel built for the total cost of \$5500. Although the Episcopalians claim him, the historical sketch which is part of the 1887 manual reports, "Mr. Jay Cooke gave \$1000 to the enterprise." A bell weighing 1200 pounds and costing \$365 was contributed by Dr. Charles L. Ives of New Haven, Connecticut, brother-in-law of Mr. Salter. The chapel was dedicated on July 16, 1871, and the bell rang for the first time on September 25, 1872. That bell also served the community, according to a resolution passed at the annual meeting in January, 1878: "That we give the Board of Education the privilege of ringing our bell once each week day until July 1, 1878, provided that the Board of Education make all needed repairs incidental to the ringing of the bell and provided that only the janitor of the High School building be permitted to do such ringing."

A Sunday School, with W. S. Woodbridge as the first superintendent, was organized at the close of the first

Sunday service on January 22, 1871, with eight children and twenty-four adults. On December 26, 1872, the congregation voted to incorporate a children's song or anthem in the morning service, which was probably the beginning of a children's choir. A small square Sunday School room was added to the chapel later for the "infant department." A Ladies' Aid Society was begun in the 1870's, certainly by 1876 according to records, and typical of such societies, records for January 28, 1878, say, "It also appeared that the ladies had raised \$229.25 which had been largely used to pay off the church debt."

One of the indications of the community and social consciousness of the young church is the story told of Roger S. Munger, who in 1871, when the canal was being dug through Minnesota Point, worked all night and most of Sunday, foregoing his beloved choir practice and church service for the good of his community. Further evidence of service in the broader field was the organization of a Woman's Missionary Society, and in 1874 the first record of Pilgrim Church's contribution to missions of \$125.

1873 saw the downfall of Jay Cooke's empire, the halting of work on the railroad, and financial disaster for Duluth. Population declined from an estimated 6,000 to 1,500. The church, which had become self-supporting in 1872, was obliged to apply again to the Home Missionary Society for aid. Many Duluth churches closed their doors. Mr. Salter's salary, which in 1872 was \$1700, in 1874-75 was down to \$1200. Minutes for 1875 record that \$750 had been paid him for the first half, but "that the pastor had very kindly thrown off \$150 — leaving only \$150 yet due." Difficulties were blamed on a decrease in membership due to the removal of 30 families. Mr. Salter, whose health was failing, was forced for a time to preach on alternate Sundays in the Brainerd Church, which hoped to raise \$350 and perhaps more for his support. His resignation on April 11, 1876, forced the members of the congregation to consider the question of abandoning the church. The decision was resounding: "That the church *shall* continue."

During the next five years a series of part-time and temporary ministers came and went: Reverend C. A.

Conant, 1876-78; Reverend E. C. Ingalls, 1878-79; Reverend M. M. Tracy, 1879-81. Mr. Conant's letter of resignation of August 27, 1878, tells graphically the plight of the church: "I hardly need to state my reasons for taking this step, as it is well known that the arrangement by which I have supplied this church and the Congregational Ch. of Brainerd is no longer considered practicable and that the money raised here and that given by the Home Missionary Society would hardly constitute a living reasonable salary for my family."

Although the community and the church were working their way out of the depression by 1880, there occurred following the departure of Mr. Tracy an incident which most of our church historians have preferred to ignore but one which, nevertheless, demonstrates how church values and actions have changed. W. S. Woodbridge, in his historical address at the quarter centennial celebration in 1896, did say, "Pilgrim Church had, up to this time always been remarkably harmonious, and this harmony has existed since that occasion, but a church trial is never conducive to peace, and this was no exception."

Mr. Tracy wrote a letter of resignation on October 10, 1880, but after passage of a resolution by the congregation — "That the church request Rev. M. M. Tracy to withdraw his resignation as pastor of this church, feeling thorough confidence in him as a man and as a pastor" — he consented to hold his resignation in abeyance for six months. But on December 8 of that year his house burned, and the church minutes record, "it seemed best to make the change January 1st instead of April 1st." The Council, which was called on January 11, 1881, to consider his dismissal, resolved "that this Council regrets to part with Rev. M. M. Tracy and lose him from the ranks of workers in this State and that we cordially recommend him to the churches as an earnest preacher and faithful pastor and that wherever he may be called to preach we invoke for him the blessing of the great head of the church." Mr. Tracy left for Topeka, Kansas.

Was it then with surprise and shock that the church members read on February 3, 1881, the notice issued by

Deacon Jeremiah Kimball, or was it merely with interest and indignation at something they had known all along was coming?

To the Pilgrim Cong'l Ch.

Notice is hereby given that at the meeting of the church on Thursday evening one week from to night charges will be presented against our late pastor, Rev. M. M. Tracy for the action of the church as follows:

1st That of *persistently* assailing the estimable character of his wife, Mrs. Julia Tracy, by accusing her of being an immoral and wanton woman through charges which he is unable to sustain.

2nd That of deliberately making misstatements intended to deceive when he knew them to be false.

That February 10 church meeting called by Mr. Kimball resolved "that it is with deep regret that this church is forced to believe the charges preferred against our late pastor, Rev. M. M. Tracy by Deacon J. Kimball" and "that Rev. M. M. Tracy is hereby suspended from membership of this church until the above charges are removed." The church also returned Mr. Tracy's paper of dismissal to the Reverend L. H. Cobb, state superintendent of the American Home Missionary Society, with the statement, "For reasons which have become public since this Council which met on January 11, 1881, we the Pilgrim Church of Duluth have preferred charges against Rev. M. M. Tracy. We cannot therefore allow the endorsement of him to go as from us until he is cleared." In what today seems a surprisingly calm and considered letter, Mr. Tracy suggested an impartial review by two people he would choose, two the church would choose and one that the four selected would choose. Excitement and gossip in the small community around the little chapel must have been rampant on Tuesday, March 22, when at 10 a.m. the council which was to decide the case finally met. The trial lasted until 1:15 a.m. on Thursday morning, March 24. The first charge was sustained nine to four. Deacon Kimball's second charge was dropped during the trial "owing to lack of specifications." The four who opposed the motion were said to object to the word *persistently*. A statement of confession was drafted and the council resolved that Mr. Tracy's signing the statement would be considered "a full settlement of the case of the church against Rev. M. M. Tracy."

The statement which the minister signed said in part,

"I, M. M. Tracy, do now heartily disavow all charges, complaints, and allegations I ever made derogatory to the *Moral Character* of My Wife Mrs. Julia E. Tracy. I express my sincere and deep regret and sorrow for them and humbly ask forgiveness of Almighty God, My Wife, My Brethren in the Ministry, and the Church in Duluth. I cannot confess that my statements were intentionally false, for I believed them with all the intensity of a mind excited even to morbidness. But having been convinced by the arguments of my Brethren that they were untrue, in fact I bury them forever."

On Thursday evening, April 7, the Rev. M. M. Tracy and his son Edward were granted letters of dismission and with them a recommendation to any Congregational Church with which they might wish to unite.

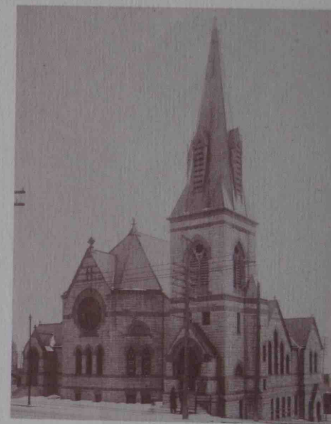
It must have been with considerable relief that the church welcomed back on May 1, 1881, the saintly and beloved Rev. Charles C. Salter, who after five years seemed to have regained his health. The church was at last, once and for all, self-supporting. But in November, his health again failing, Mr. Salter again resigned, with a unanimous resolution of the church, calling him "a man whose life and character were a blessing, and whose sympathies embraced every individual." Mr. Salter, however, returned to Duluth in 1887 and in spite of bad health which plagued him spent the last ten years of his life doing the work which he had always longed to do — ministering to the poor. He founded the Lake Avenue Bethel, holding services in a tent until funds could be found to build a suitable building. By the time of his death in 1897 he was known in the city as the "minister of the poor and the patron saint of newsboys." City and county offices and a number of business places closed during his funeral, indicating the love and high regard with which he was held by the entire community.

Again an acting minister, the Reverend J. J. Hargrave, served the church until June, 1883. During 1882, the city having lifted itself out of the depression and the population having increased to 5,415, the church was able to add a parsonage with a loan of \$2500. On September 26, 1883, the youthful, enthusiastic Reverend Edward M. Noyes

was ordained and installed. It was during his pastorate that the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, one of the first in Minnesota, was organized in 1885.

It was soon evident that the small chapel was no longer adequate, and on January 11, 1887, it was voted to erect a church. The new site on the corner of Lake Avenue and Second Street was chosen. The Social Review of the local paper, for August 22, 1887, said, "On Monday evening, the corner stone of the new brownstone Pilgrim Congregational Church was laid with imposing ceremonies and a crowd." The church was finished in November, 1887, but on the 27th of that month a fire, caught from "a stove placed in the audience room to keep plaster from freezing," demolished the building. The local paper reported that three watchmen were supposed to be there but had left their trust "to seek a saloon, for a glass of Sunday whiskey." Mr. Noyes wrote movingly about the experience: "Our beautiful building is in ruins, just as we had begun to love it. The fears which had troubled many lest it should appear 'squatty' had given way to almost universal satisfaction with its proportions, as the spire reared its graceful head and the exterior was completed. As the slanting rays of the declining sun gilded it, a few minutes before the fire, it seemed to me that I had never before appreciated its beauty. A single hour saw that beauty consumed."

Once again the fact that history is merely the lengthening shadow of a man is demonstrated in Mr. Noyes' response and leadership: "It may be that our hearts were too much absorbed in the externals of our work for Christ; that we were looking too much to our beautiful building with its luxurious appointments; too little to spiritual growth." It was this same man who, following a call to an eastern church, wrote a letter to the church in 1893, when Duluth's expansion was again stalled by depression and when the church was burdened by the extra debt which the fire caused, demanding, "That my salary be reduced by a sum of \$300 a year. I made this request last January and you refused to grant it. I think I am now in a position to demand that you accede to it." His salary was reduced from \$3000 to \$2700.



Pilgrim Congregational Church,
Lake Avenue and Second Street, 1888-1915

The church was rebuilt, the property on First Avenue East and Second Street was sold for \$14,000, and the first services were held in the new church in November, 1888. It was built of Mantorville sandstone, gray with Arcadian sandstone pink trimmings and could seat a possible 750 on the main floor, with a balcony for 250 or 300 more. The total cost was \$55,828.33, the church carrying a mortgage of \$15,000.

An organ concert held on February 6, 1889, was a social event of some note, as reported by the Duluth paper, "Pilgrim Congregational Church, Duluth's newest and finest addition in church buildings, presented a festive appearance last night. It had evidently donned its Sunday clothes, and the numerous incandescents threw their brilliant light on an audience which crowded the doors long before the concert began. Every pew held as many as it could accommodate and the aisles were crowded with chairs, while along the rear walls stood those who had come too late to gain a seat." The organist was James Watson of Chicago; a soprano, Miss Mary D. Hall of Chicago and a chorus of "thirty selected voices" under the direction of Professor S. W. Mountz completed the program. The same article recounts that following the concert many attended the coffee and ice cream sociable in the basement. "If those in charge of the entertainment didn't make a pot full of money, they must at least have decreased the organ debt considerably with the combined proceeds of the concert and sociable."

By 1890 Duluth's population was reported at 33,115, and in that same year Pilgrim Church received more new members than at any other time in its history up to that date. When the church first started to build, it was reported to have 120 members. Shortly after completion of the building, membership was 225. The growth of the church was noted also in the fact that in 1889 the membership of the Ladies' Union was so large as to be unwieldy, so the Union was divided into circles according to geographical lines. In 1893 property was purchased on Nineteenth Avenue East and First Street on which was built the Morley Congregational Church, which was dedicated on July 28, 1896.

These were years of growth, but also of hardship and service. Influenza and typhoid ravaged many homes. The pastor's daughter, Alice, died and later Mrs. Noyes. During her stay in Duluth Mrs. Noyes began the first kindergarten in the city, which the women of the church carried on after her death until the Board of Education took it over. In 1894 the ladies of the church turned the Lake Avenue parlors into outfitting rooms and the Sunday School room into a dining room for refugees of the Hinckley fire. A letter from Alfred L. Riggs, D. D., principal, tells of the arrival of a barrel of clothing at the Santee Indian Agency in Nebraska. The Women's Auxiliary of the YMCA, forerunner of the YWCA, held its organizational meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 1893. Mrs. C. F. Howe, the first president, was a member of the church, as were Mrs. W. A. McGonagle and Miss Ella Roe, who answered roll call that day.

Activities of some of the organizations of the church are of historical interest. The calendar for Sunday, March 29, 1891, announced: "Monday — Pilgrim Club for young men meets at the residence of W. S. Woodbridge, 311 E. Third Street at 8 p.m. Supt. Wardwell of the Street Railway will explain the electric car and Mr. J. H. Crawford will exhibit the phonograph." Of further historical interest is a rather curt motion made at a congregational meeting on September 27, 1889: "That the use of the church be declined for Susan B. Anthony."

In September, 1894, Mr. Noyes was forced to resign because of bad health, and in February, 1895, the Reverend Cornelius H. Patton of Westfield, New Jersey, assumed the duties of pastor. It was during his stay that the Christian Endeavor became a very active part of the church. His sermons on missionary work were said to be an inspiration to the church, which only some fifteen years before had itself had to appeal to the Home Missionary Society for aid. It was largely through his influence when he later became Secretary of the American Board that the church was encouraged to sponsor the Reverend Herbert M. Irwin in Turkey as missionary pastor. One evidence of the growing concern for world problems was an open mass meeting held in Pilgrim Church

and reported by a local newspaper article "to lift up the voice of American protest against the continued butchery of Armenians by Turks and Kurds."

During Mr. Patton's ministry the Quarter Centennial was celebrated, from January 25 to 30, 1896. Both Mr. Salter and Mr. Noyes returned for the occasion. The celebration began on Saturday evening with a historical address by W. S. Woodbridge, greetings from the Reverend Mr. Salter, the Reverend Mr. Noyes, and the Reverend Jeremiah Kimball, and letters from other former pastors. Two Sunday worship services followed, one at 10:30 a.m., about which the *Duluth Herald* wrote, "the church was filled to overflowing, and the service was a grand one," and one at 7:30 p.m. Tickets for the Tuesday evening supper were sold for \$.25. Following the supper came greetings from ministers from the surrounding area, a Sunday School Anniversary, and the pastor's annual report. On Thursday evening the festivities concluded with a "Social Prayer Meeting, with Reminiscences and Words of Cheer from past and present Members of the Church."

Mr. Patton resigned on August 22, 1898, to answer a call to St. Louis, Missouri. In July, 1899, the Reverend Alexander Milne arrived to begin his twelve-year pastorate. The Fiftieth Anniversary history describes him as "a man of exceptional attainments, a profound student and a forceful speaker." During his time the \$15,000 mortgage on the church was paid, and in 1909 the parsonage at 1131 East First Street was purchased. The variety of activities of the church increased. In 1903 the church, following a letter from its former pastor, Mr. Patton, assumed the support, for between \$500 and \$650 a year, of Reverend Herbert Irwin in Talas, Cesarea, Turkey. This interest in the work of Mr. Irwin continued until his death in 1927. The church at the same time agreed to help support a home missionary in Grand Marais. 1907 found the Woman's Missionary Society packing boxes for students at Fiske University and raising money for scholarships there. On Tuesday, November 17, 1908, in response to a call from eight men of the church and the pastor, the Men's Brotherhood met for the first time. In 1910 the Salter Circle of the church established the first

free classes in domestic science in Duluth. The church also took an active interest in local politics, as indicated by a resolution passed at a church meeting on January 2, 1908: "That it is the earnest desire of Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth, Minnesota, that those men, regardless of party, should be elected to office in the coming city election who are in favor of a strict enforcement of all municipal laws and regulations, including those related to the liquor traffic."

The rigors of a pastorate at Pilgrim Church must have been great, because once again, in 1911, the pastor had to resign because of failing health. The church must certainly have felt its prosperity, because for the first time the Trustees voted to pay a minister \$1500 in addition to his salary at the termination of his pastorate.

The members of the Committee on Pulpit Supply in 1911 and 1912 found themselves facing the usual problems of such committees. After apologizing to the congregation for their delay in recommending a minister, they wrote, "We despair of finding anyone who will please all equally well, or be equally strong along all lines . . . As a people we should not be unduly critical. Any man, and especially any strong and worthy man, will have peculiarities of his own." But on October 13, 1912, such a "strong and worthy man," the Reverend Charles N. Thorp of Chelsea, Massachusetts, began his productive ministry. The Fiftieth Anniversary history says of him, "Mr. Thorp's remarkable executive ability, his broad vision, his great genius for friendship, made this era possible."

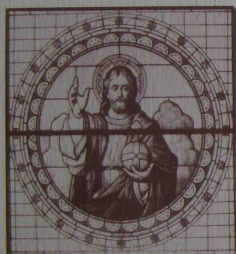
He immediately recognized that the city and the congregation were moving eastward. The *Duluth Tribune's* Sunday, July 12, 1910, thumbnail history of Duluth records that as early as 1895 the fashionable residential area located on Mesabi Avenue and West Third Street in the 1880's was moving to the East End. Figures on the back of a copy of the 1905 directory with Mr. Thorp's name on it seem to show the thinking of the pastor. He records that in 1905, 40 families lived west of the church, and in 1913, only 10; between the church and Tenth Avenue East lived 75 families in 1905 and 35 in 1913;



Ruth Alta Rogers first began playing in Pilgrim Church in 1903. Her service was interrupted for study abroad. From 1919 until her retirement on September 1, 1964 she was choir director and organist.



Present church under construction 1916-17



The Munger Memorial Window, brought from the Lake Avenue church.



The Woodbridge Memorial Windows, created by J. B. Anglade of Paris in 1888 and brought from the Lake Avenue church.

and from Tenth Avenue eastward lived 75 families in 1905 and 115 in 1913. His conclusion was that in 1905 Seventh Avenue East was the geographical center, but in 1913 Sixteenth Avenue East was.

The result was that in his first annual report in January, 1913, he recommended that a committee be elected to secure a site in the East End, saying, "The easy thing would be to stay down town and hold the fort until the ammunition is exhausted. The heroic thing is to occupy higher ground and win in the end larger things." The site for the new building was purchased at Twenty-Third Avenue East and Fourth Street, and in March 1915, a building committee was elected. The Lake Avenue property was purchased by Julius Barnes and Ward Ames, Jr., where they erected the building which was known as the Boys Department of the YMCA, as a memorial to Ward Ames, Sr. The property is now used by the Duluth Board of Education. The last services in the Lake Avenue church were held September 19, 1915.

The next two years, during which plans for the new church were going forward, were most trying. For the first time in forty-five years the church was without a building of its own. Fears were expressed that the members would become scattered. But Sunday services were continued in the Masonic Temple, and other services were held at the Unitarian Church. When the church was at last completed, resolutions of appreciation to the Masons said in part, "We can never repay the Masons in a material way, but we can and must by our service to the community in which we live, demonstrate that their confidence in us is justified." A clock with suitable inscription was presented to the Board of Control of the Masonic Temple.

On October 22, 1916, the cornerstone of the present church was laid with appropriate ceremonies. Into the box in the cornerstone were placed the following items: a Bible; an address list of members; a bound volume of bulletins, January 24, 1915 to January 23, 1916; bulletins from January 30, 1916 to October 15, 1916; a picture of Reverend C. C. Salter; a report of the Ladies' Union at the annual meeting, January 18, 1916; a sample "share"

toward the building fund; views of Duluth; a photograph of the Lake Avenue Church; *Congregationalist*, October 12; *Advance*, October 12; *Duluth Herald* October 19; *Duluth News Tribune*, October 20; a list of donors to the new church building; and a United States flag. Brought from the Lake Avenue church were the cornerstone, which is located in the northwest corner of the nave of the new church, the Munger Memorial window, now in the ceiling of the chapel, and the Woodbridge Memorial windows, now in the Narthex. The Gothic structure is red tapestry brick, heavily trimmed with Indiana limestone. The subfoundation is laid with stone from the old church, from which also came part of the slate roofing.

The new building was dedicated on Christmas Sunday, December 23, 1917. The Ames Memorial Organ, with its echo organ and chimes, was presented to the church as a memorial to Ward Ames, Sr., by members of his family. The organ was dedicated on January 16, 1918, with a concert by Charles Courboin, distinguished Belgian organist from Springfield, Massachusetts.

The cost of the new building, including site, parish house, furnishings and organ was \$157,016.08. At the annual meeting in 1919, Oscar Mitchell, chairman of the Board of Trustees, reported, "The church owns free of encumbrance its church property and parsonage, and comes to the annual meeting with all bills paid and a balance on hand of \$151.56." The pastor, however, reported that the year's work was broken into and the church closed about 1/4 of the Sundays. The reasons he gave were Billy Sunday meetings, influenza, and the great forest fire. He concluded, "Yet never in its history has Pilgrim Church done so much for others as in the year now closing." In spite of missing so many church Sundays, in 1919 fifty-two new members were received at one time.

These were war years and the *Pilgrim Church Messenger* for November 28, 1918, contains a message from the pastor to the men in service. Typical of bulletin announcements for the same period was a proclamation from President Woodrow Wilson asking for help for the 4,000,000 Armenians, Greeks, and Syrians who were starving

and a request from Mr. Thorp to the congregation to aid in the \$35,000 Duluth was aiming to raise. The same 1918 *Pilgrim Church Messenger* described the relief work during the great fire of October 12, 1918: "Pilgrim Church women met at the church daily for several weeks and sewed hundreds of garments for those whose outfits were lost in the flames. One floor of the Parish House was placed at the disposal of the Red Cross Surgical Dressings Department which was obliged to withdraw from the Armory on account of fire-relief work." In the fall of that year the Ladies' Union commemorated the tercentennial of the landing of the Pilgrims with the presentation of a masque, the proceeds from which — \$1150 — were sent to the Hoover fund for starving European children. In 1920, turning from the specific problems to the larger problem, Pilgrim Church subscribed \$6500 to the Congregational World Movement.

Mr. Thorp resigned on October 20, 1919, to take a pastorate in Holyoke, Massachusetts. With the war over, a new church, and the impending Fiftieth Anniversary, the Pulpit Committee declared, "One of the first things settled upon by the Committee was that this church was worthy to have and it ought to secure, as its pastor, the best available man in the country." The Reverend Noble S. Elderkin, D. D. of Chicago was that man.

January 16 to 25, 1921, were "ten days set apart for rejoicing," as the Fiftieth Anniversary program described them. On Sunday, January 16, seventy-nine new members were received and the Hoopes Memorial Window, designed by Louis C. Tiffany of New York, was dedicated. Tuesday, January 18, saw the fiftieth annual meeting. The Girl Scouts, Woman's Missionary Society, Christian Endeavor, and Sunday School all had their special celebrations. On Sunday, January 23, the Reverend Edward Noyes, the Reverend Cornelius H. Patton, and the Reverend Herbert Irwin were all present for the service. Dr. Elderkin was installed on Monday, January 24, and on Tuesday the Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner concluded the festivities. Five charter members of the church were present: the Reverend and Mrs. Jeremiah Kimball, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Johnson, and Mrs. C. C. Salter.

In January, 1922, the annual report showed the second fifty years beginning with a membership of 1,664, an increase of 140 members in 1921. \$6196 had been spent for benevolent purposes, and all state and national obligations were fully met. On July 30, 1926, members of the church were invited to a housewarming and twenty-fifth wedding anniversary celebration for Dr. and Mrs. Elderkin at the new parsonage at 2426 East Fourth Street. Bulletins of the '20's and the *Pilgrim News*, a publication for young people of the church, tell of very active youth work. A Director of Religious Education, the Reverend William M. Hall, arrived in January, 1922. *Pilgrim News* carried the activities of many Sunday School departments, the Junior and Intermediate Christian Endeavor, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Boy Rangers, Young Peoples Council and athletic teams. It was during Dr. Elderkin's pastorate that the church began to take a special interest in Northland College by sending gifts and by supporting the Carrie Katherman Wallace Scholarship Fund.

1929 came and with it the stock market crash and a depression which put one-third of Duluth's labor force out of work. The December 8 bulletin for that year reports that the every-member canvas, which collected pledges for \$25,760.20 fell \$700 short of the previous year. "This is not the best record the church has made. But it's a good record," the report concludes.

In the fall of 1929, the Reverend Ray E. Phillips, missionary in Johannesburg, South Africa, became the special representative of Pilgrim Church abroad and continued that relationship until his retirement in 1958. Mr. Phillips had grown up in Pilgrim Church and was ordained there in December, 1917, on the first Sunday the present church was used.

Dr. Elderkin took a special interest in the Finnish Church, and it was during his time that Pilgrim Church began giving encouragement and financial assistance especially to the church at Cloquet. The Reverend James E. Tuomisto, in his history of the Cloquet church, "Minister's Memories," writes, "we must say that it has been the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth, through its financial help and moral support, which has made it pos-



Chapel



Sanctuary

THE WOOD CARVING on the screen at the back of the choir loft was done by Anton Lang, Bavarian wood carver who was perhaps best known for many years as the Christ in the Oberammergau Passion Play. Between productions of the play, Mr. Lang did wood carving for the American Seating Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which had the contract for this work.

sible for this pioneer mission work to make definite progress and go forward these last 30 years." The Cloquet church, built by the Finnish men of that community during days of unemployment, was dedicated in 1932.

In 1929, Dr. Elderkin declined a very impressive position, that of secretary of the American Board, and the *Duluth Herald* wrote, "He is very able, he has the gift of extraordinarily felicitous expression, and above all he has courage. The Herald is very happy to know that he is to stay where he is." But on July 26, 1930, the *Labor World* announced that he was leaving for Akron, Ohio: "He is a man of courage. He has faced his Golgatha. True to his concept of what a real Christian should be he consistently refused to support war. For this he lost a pulpit during the World War."

The Reverend Clarence Stanfield Dunham, who was Religious Education Director, became acting pastor for a few months, and on December 6, 1931, the Reverend T. K. Vogler of Walla Walla, Washington, began a four and one-half year pastorate characterized by leadership in the civic and religious life of the city and by growth in membership among young people. The Reverend B. T. Marshall served as interim pastor during 1936-37.

The Reverend Thomas Craig McQueen, characterized as "a big man in a big pulpit," arrived on September 12, 1937. His coming was followed by a period of growth in inter-church relationships with neighboring Catholic and Jewish congregations. Mr. McQueen was instrumental in the organization of the Duluth Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and was chairman of the Duluth Salvation Army Board. During World War II, Mr. McQueen traveled to camps of air units under the auspices of the National Conference with the Reverend Joseph A. Cashen, a Duluth priest, and Rabbi Albert Gordon of Minneapolis. In the fall of 1944, while Mr. McQueen was State Moderator, Pilgrim Church was host to approximately 350 delegates to the Midwest Regional Conference. The facilities of both Catholic and Jewish congregations were offered and used.

The annual report on January 21, 1945, found the church "in sound financial condition with all bills paid, and

with the highest actual membership in its history." An address by Father Joseph A. Cashen, rector of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary, was the highlight of the annual meeting. The bulletin for the following Sunday reports, "It came as a fitting climax to the cordial relations that have existed between our church and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary. Many people commented on the occasion as one of the finest ever in Pilgrim Church." But on January 28, 1945, Mr. McQueen submitted his resignation.

As the church looked forward to its seventy-fifth anniversary, it called Dr. John Milton Phillips from Omaha, Nebraska. A handsome seventy-fifth anniversary booklet discusses a proud history of early struggles, growth, and social service. The anniversary program on January 18, 1946, included a tea for visiting pastors' wives in Salter Hall from 3 to 4 p.m., an annual meeting at 4:30 p.m. and a \$1.25 dinner at 6:30 p.m. On Sunday, January 20, the morning service and reception of new members concluded the celebration. Dr. Phillips' sermon was entitled "No Resting Place for the Tortoise." Two former pastors and their wives, Dr. and Mrs. Noble S. Elderkin and the Reverend and Mrs. Thomas C. McQueen were present.

World War II was just over, leaving in its wake problems and causes to pique the conscience of a church. The Easter offering in 1946 of \$1133, which was larger than usual, was used "to relieve a world scourged by war." On May 19, 1946, gifts of canned goods were received from children of the church school to be used for European relief. During the 1950's the church was frequently asked to aid families displaced by the war. The first family helped by Pilgrim Church was a Latvian family, the Graudums, who were later detained in Germany by the illness of a son. The first of three Dutch families displaced from Indonesia at the end of Dutch control there whom Pilgrim Church brought to this country — the Johan Koorenhofs — arrived in July, 1956. They were aided in setting up a home in Duluth, and a job was found for Mr. Koorenhof at the Western Electric Company, but he later found more suitable work in Hawaii with the Libby Company, where he could make use of his specialization

in tropical agriculture. In January, 1957, the J. C. Winkelaar family with their five children came. Mr. Winkelaar was employed at the Clyde Iron Works, but later the family moved to Hoyt Lakes. In December of 1960 Mr. and Mrs. Albert Knecht came. He found temporary employment at Chung King and later employment at the Duluth Terminal. The church continued its interest in and concern for these families for a number of years. Some aid was also sent to the Konstantin Grab family of Harbin, China. This family, however, decided to remain in San Francisco.

During this period Pilgrim Church played a part in the beginning of the University of Minnesota, Duluth. With the crowding of the lower campus the sanctuary was used for convocations. The church was also used for Baccalaureate services every year from 1948 through 1959, with the exception of 1958.

Although the history of the last twenty-five years of Pilgrim Church has been characterized by an increased social and world concern, hanging over it all was a growing cloud, which was not the making of the local church, but which eventually demonstrated its weakness. When Dr. Phillips resigned in November, 1951, the treasurer reported "that subscriptions had fallen off; that members were neglecting to pay their pledges; and also that plate collections were diminishing." One of the reasons given was "The fact that factions had been created in the church, some of which were attributable to the merger effort." It was under these conditions that the Pulpit Committee looked for a "young man but a wise man with experience" and chose the Reverend William Halfaker of Edina-Morningside Church in Minneapolis, who preached his first sermon here on November 15, 1952.

On May 18, 1947, the local bulletin first mentioned the possibility of a merger on the national level of the Congregational Christian Churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. A Merger Study Committee was appointed by Pilgrim Church, and on November 2 of that year the members of the committee posed the main question they felt had to be answered: "Will the Union, if effected, hold back the Kingdom of God, or will it advance

the Kingdom of God?" A town meeting of the congregation was held in January, 1948, for information and questions. In April the voting members of Pilgrim Church, along with other Congregational Churches, were asked to respond to two questions: (1) whether they favored the proposed merger, and (2) whether they would participate in the church formed by such a merger if it were carried out. On the first question the vote was 524 against and 176 in favor; on the second Pilgrim Church decided to reserve judgment.

At the national level the General Council, after considering the vote of the churches, in January, 1949, voted to proceed but was delayed by litigation begun in New York state. In December, 1953, the decision was handed down and the General Council was free to proceed. The General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church then created the United Church of Christ, and in Cleveland, Ohio, in June, 1957, the Uniting General Synod first met.

Following the vote to proceed with the merger on the national level, a report from the Deacons and Trustees of Pilgrim Church was considered at a specially called meeting on December 18, 1955. The resolution, which was passed unanimously by the congregation of 350 persons, read in part: "That Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth, Minnesota, does hereby highly and solemnly declare its steadfast purpose to continue, under God, as a free and autonomous Congregational Church until such time as its membership . . . shall decide otherwise." The Deacons and Trustees, determined that nothing should divide the church, recommended that "no action be taken either to defeat or promote the merger." Those who opposed it, the report explained, feared that "the merger might bring about changes in relationships between the church and the fellowship which would interfere with the free and autonomous nature of Pilgrim Church and make it subject to ecclesiastical authority outside the local church."

As time went on, however, the problems of remaining a single "free and autonomous" church grew greater.



Walker Memorial Windows



Weaver Memorial Windows

There was the question of the allotment of benevolences. A National Association of Congregational Christian Churches had been formed in 1955, headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Some wanted their benevolences to go there rather than to the Minnesota State Conference. Several attempts were made to work out complicated systems of percentages. There was also the problem of delegates voting at the Minnesota Conference meetings. At one point they were instructed to take part in all business except when the Conference was considering the proposed consolidation with the Northern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Following a meeting on November 28, 1960, at which Mr. George B. Hastings, moderator of the 1958 General Council and member of the Commission to Prepare a Constitution for the United Church of Christ, discussed the affirmative and Dr. Howard C. Conn, minister of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, discussed the negative, members were again canvassed with the result that Pilgrim Church refused to approve the constitution of the United Church of Christ 351 to 195.

On February 20, 1962, balloting on the following resolution took place: "Be it resolved that the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth hereby becomes a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches." The result was 236 yes votes and 367 no votes. Still attempting to find a compromise, the congregation at a special meeting in November of 1962 agreed to be an "associated church" of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ and also to request associate membership in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

Throughout the disagreements and indecision annual minutes speak of the impartial leadership of the pastor and the congregation's appreciation for his service. But such problems must someday be resolved, and at the annual meeting in 1964, Dr. Halfaker, expressing concern over the merger controversy which "has often distracted us from what should be primary concerns and has seriously damaged our public relations for nearly twenty years," recommended that the church reach its decision on

affiliation with either the United Church of Christ or with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. At a special meeting of the congregation four days later on January 29, 1964, he recommended that the ballot read: "Be it resolved that the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth hereby becomes a member of the United Church of Christ." The vote, which was announced at a special meeting on February 5, 1964, resulted in 304 votes in favor and 291 votes opposed. Some felt that the vote was not decisive enough. As a result, the following years saw quite a number of members leaving Pilgrim Church to join the new Duluth Congregational Church. The annual meeting of January 19, 1966, records 146 transfers to the new church.

And so a church has divided, as has happened innumerable times in history. But through it all, the teaching and the ministry continued; growth and improvements occurred. At the annual meeting in 1958 plans and recommendations of a planning committee to remodel the church were approved. Church School and youth work facilities were improved, the kitchen remodeled, and a new parlor for the women and a chapel provided. The cost was \$140,000. At a special meeting on September 6, 1964, the Hearing property at 2305 East Third Street was purchased in order to alleviate the crowded conditions of the Christian education facilities.

A most welcome addition to the church and its services were the Carillon Bells, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Nordal in memory of their parents. These bells, dedicated on March 20, 1955, are designed to provide the music of 25 English-type bells and a tonal equivalent of 40 tons of cast bells. They are played each Sunday morning from 10:15 to 10:21 a.m. and daily at 12 noon and at 6 p.m. The Walker and Weaver Memorial Windows in the vestibule were dedicated on October 6, 1957. These beautiful windows, designed and created by Edward M. Leighton of Minneapolis, depict six historical events particularly significant to Congregationalism: the Pilgrim's farewell feast at the home of their pastor, John Robinson in Leyden, Holland; the signing of the Mayflower Compact; the declaration by Thomas Hooker before the Independent

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General Court as the communities of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersford withdrew from the control of the Massachusetts Bay Colony; the founding of Harvard College; the Haystack Prayer Meeting in 1806, which led to the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; and Lyman Abbott preaching his famous sermon on slavery in 1860.

During this period also Pilgrim Church ordained three of its young men: on September 13, 1953, George Macaulay III, who was later installed at the Granite Falls and Belview Congregational Churches in Minnesota; on July 8, 1956, John Edward Nutting, who went to the Second Congregational Church of Hyde Park, Vermont; and on July 1, 1962, William James Halfaker, who began his ministry at the Federated Church of Milton-Freewater in Oregon. The Reverend John Bertsch, who came to Pilgrim Church at its associate minister, was also ordained here on October 12, 1959.

The Cambridge Club, an organization of college young people, held its first meeting under the leadership of Mrs. Mary Van Evera, on November 10, 1946. In 1954-55 this organization became the United Youth Fellowship, sponsored jointly by Pilgrim Church, Lakeside Presbyterian and Glen Avon Presbyterian Churches. The ecumenical movement has moved swiftly among the young. Today work in the United Campus Ministry is carried on on both the UMD and Superior State campuses under the United Ministries in Higher Education, an organization which on the national level includes the American Baptists, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Moravian Church in America, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Interest in Northland College has continued with regular offerings and donations. Dr. Halfaker has served on the Northland Board of Trustees since 1954, and since 1967 has been its chairman.

The Pilgrim Church Covenant, which appears on many church bulletins and is used as a basis for church member-

ship, was adopted by the church at a meeting on November 15, 1953:

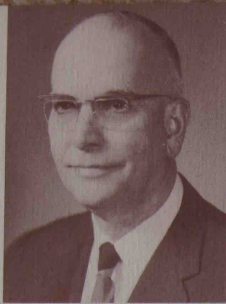
We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose, to walk in the ways of the Lord made known or to be made known to us. We therefore join and covenant with each other to worship, work and serve together as loyal disciples of Jesus, to live among our fellow men a life of righteousness and brotherly love, and to do all within our power to promote the reign of God's will in all human relations.

In December, 1956, appeals were made for funds for Hungarian relief. The envelopes and loose offering on Christmas Sunday were used for this, and added funds were requested, with the result that \$3,490.11 was sent, in addition to six large bags of clothing sent to the Church World Service. In 1960 ninety new members were received, the largest number since Mr. McQueen had brought 121 into the church in 1943.

Pilgrim Church stands today with a membership on January 1, 1970, of 631 persons. Pledges reported at the annual meeting in 1970 totaled \$75,028, a gain over the previous year of \$2400. Benevolences amounted to \$14,032.

The history of a church has events which make us smile, certainly events which make us proud, and some which may make us weep a bit. But what Pilgrim Congregational Church is today each individual must first decide for himself and then work out in association with other individuals in a congregation, for that is what Congregationalism is. What the original sixteen members decided Pilgrim Congregational Church was is certainly not what it is today, nor what those who write the two hundredth history will decide it is. Perhaps the Reverend Alexander Milne expressed it best in his farewell sermon, "Behold as in a Glass" in Pilgrim Church on December 31, 1911: "The thoughts of men change; philosophies and theologies are adopted and given up; generations pass; but the need of the human heart remains, and that need Christ alone will satisfy."

William L. Halfaker



Mrs. H. W. Austin,
Religious Education Director

Dorothy Belt,
Religious Education Director, 1950-55
Church Secretary, 1955-



Pilgrim Church Choir with Director and Organist Ray R. Baker "Their music is such that this would be a cathedral even though it were a warehouse." Harmon Bro



PILGRIM CHURCH STAFF

Minister — Rev. William L. Halfaker, D. D.

<i>Director of Christian Education</i>	<i>Financial Secretary</i>	<i>Youth Choir Director</i>
Mrs. Hubert W. Austin	Miss Myrtle R. Beane	Miss Andrea Belluzo
<i>Church Secretary</i>	<i>Organist and</i>	<i>Custodian</i>
Miss Dorothy B. Belt	<i>Choir Director</i>	Harold Watson
	Ray R. Baker	

CHURCH OFFICERS

<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Historian</i>
Mrs. Harold O'Dell	Jesse D. Bradley	Miss Anna Lee Stensland

BOARD OF DEACONS

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Dr. Gordon C. Amundson	Robert H. Engstrom	Rolland G. Nelson
Edward B. Appelquest	John M. Glendenning, Jr.	Roy T. Osterland
Samuel F. Atkins	Richard B. Heimbach	Robert M. Owens
John M. Dickerson	Robert L. Heller	Lawrence D. Stratton
	Kenneth A. Johnson	Richard G. Ver Wey
		David Zentner

BOARD OF DEACONESSSES

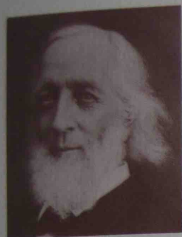
Mrs. Warren J. Brooker, <i>Chairman</i>	Mrs. George M. Macaulay, Jr.	Mrs. J. A. Robb
Miss Mira Childs	Mrs. Rolland G. Nelson	Mrs. Arthur Roberts
Mrs. Wilbur M. Fox	Mrs. William M. Reynolds	Mrs. C. L. Thomas

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Edward T. Fride, Jr.	Bruce C. Kruger	George H. Spencer, Jr.
	Walter W. Matzke	A. W. Taylor, Jr.
	Ray G. Palmer	

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

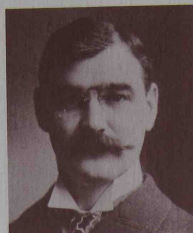
Dr. William A. van Druen, <i>Chairman</i>	Mrs. F. C. Jacobson	Dr. E. I. Parson
Mrs. Clark B. Crowell	Theodore J. Lee	Mrs. V. R. Plumb
	Roy T. Magney	Mrs. Allen A. Young
	John D. Morrison	



Charles C. Salter
1871-1876; 1881



Edward M. Noyes
1883-1894



Cornelius H. Patton
1895-1898



Alexander Milne
1899-1911



Charles N. Thorp
1912-1919



Noble S. Elderkin
1920-1930



Theodore K. Vogler
1931-1935

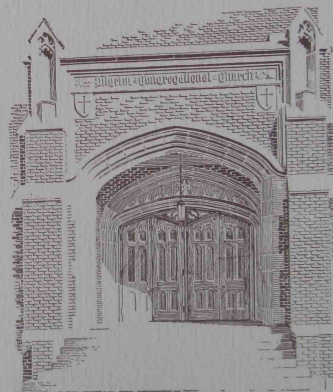


Thomas Craig McQueen
1937-1945



John Milton Phillips
1946-1951

Ministers of the past



Centennial Services and Program

Wednesday, January 13

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 17

10:30 a.m. Centennial Service

Speaker: DR. CARL A. HANSEN, Conference
Minister, Minnesota Conference of the United
Church of Christ

4:00 p.m. Church Family 100th Birthday Party

Wednesday, January 20

Centennial Banquet

Speaker: DR. DAVID M. STOWE, Executive Vice
President, United Church Board for World
Ministries

Tuesday, February 2

Organ Recital: MARILYN KEISER, National Reg-
istrar American Guild of Organists

Formerly assistant organist at Cathedral of St.
John the Divine, New York City

Musical Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese
of western North Carolina, Ashville

Centennial Committee

JESSE D. BRADLEY, *Chairman*
BRUCE BUCHANAN
JOHN M. DICKERSON
ROBERT F. EATON
CLIFFORD H. GRINDY
MRS. ELLEN HEDENBERG
MRS. GERTRUDE JACOBSON
MRS. JEAN MATTER
HARRY NEIMEYER
MRS. MARY ROBERTS
MISS ANNA LEE STENSLAND
MRS. JANET YOUNG

