

OUR MEMORIES



OUR PRAYERS

A collection of memories and prayers in celebration of the

200th Anniversary

Of the founding of

Carrollton First United Methodist Church

2016

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From the Pastor's Desk...

It was in the winter of my second year as Pastor here at Carrollton First UMC. Viral pneumonia had set in, the kind that cannot be battled with antibiotics. As the doctor told me, “It has to run its course.” On top of that was a cough that would not allow me to sleep. I was more ill than I could ever remember.

Oh, the memory. It is one of the greatest gifts God has bestowed upon His creation. It is an incredibly powerful gift, in fact. Think about it: our memories can transport us to times and places we shared with people we hold dear. Memories also have the power to hold on to the incredibly positive or the painfully negative things that have shaped our lives. Most of us have a rock under which is hidden a horribly negative memory, and we go out into the back yard to check it every once in a while to make sure we will never forget what he did, or what she said! Oh yes, the memory is powerful, indeed.

So powerful, in fact, that before there was any written communication God used the memories of His people, Israel, to pass on the Story of God. It was in the telling and re-telling of God’s Story from generation to generation that the Story was perpetuated, eventually to be recorded in the written form we have today.

And now we celebrate 200 years of sharing that Story! From the early days when our town was called Centreville to this very moment, many hundreds, even thousands of lives have had stories to tell. Each one has had memories to share. Within those memories are the stories of how this church came to exist, and how it has reached this point in the church’s history. We have a legacy to share! From those who began that Methodist Class Meeting in 1816 to the nearly 600, who make up our church rolls today, peoples’ lives have been impacted by that story. Yes, God calls us to remember.

Within the pages that follow, you will read about moments in peoples’ journeys that have helped in shaping, even transforming, their lives. I pray these “God Moments” will inspire you to remember and to share your stories.

And now, as Paul Harvey would have said, “the rest of the story.” While I lay ill at home, God’s people surrounded this pastor and his wife with prayer. God’s people stepped up to fill the ministry void, even to the point of leading worship and preaching. The healing Hand of God touched this weakened man and made him whole again, while the healing love of God’s people touched my heart. Praise be to God—for God’s healing—for the MEMORY!

Rex Dan Lewis

Dear Father,

On behalf of the Church, at Carrollton First, help them to be faithful to the calling You have for them through Scripture. Forgive us, Lord, when we want to take the easy road. Help us to remember Your sacrifice for us, and to be willing to be faithful, knowing there is a cost to be Your hands and feet. Help us to persevere thru times of testing. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, to love one another and receive encouragement, and to reach out to others, who do not know the love of Jesus.

Bless our endeavors in Your name, for the furtherance of Your kingdom, that You would be glorified.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

Diana Ulman

Back in the 1960's we had enough VMW members to form two groups! The one was for mothers with very young children, I thought I would be eligible forever! I was privileged to make many wonderful friends

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In 2001, Dave and Lynda Blood were leaving Carrollton First and Lynda was leaving her Sunday School class without a teacher. As a friend, I felt the Lord nudging me to take this senior ladies class.

I went not as a teacher but as a friend, a student. We spent a lot of time praying, laughing, and sometimes even crying. We loved each other and we loved the Lord most of all.

There were enough of us that we celebrated a birthday about every other month and made it a special day with a nice brunch.

One by one they left to be with Jesus. I will never forget our time together. They taught me more than I could have ever taught them. I look forward to being together again in Glory.

 4/26
2016

Karyl Folk

My husband John and I moved to Carrollton in August of 1951, in time for football season. John had been hired as an assistant coach and teacher at Carrollton High School.

John and I came from Methodist backgrounds. We met because John's brother Arden was pastor of the small church I attended in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Soon after we came to Carrollton, we were invited to a "Meet the Teacher" dinner at the PTA. Mr. Albert Winings was asked to pray. When he was done, Mrs. Kathryn Hall, who was a leader in the local Lutheran Church, said, "Methodists can pray!" I thought, "That's the church for us!" Mr. Winings was very sincere in prayer. Rev. Clarence Yates, the pastor of First Church at the time, often asked Mr. Winings to close the Sunday service in prayer.

The first Sunday we attended a worship service, I sat beside Mrs. Bernice Johnson who had her little daughter Karen (Speedy) with her. Other people talked to us, welcoming us to church.

I pray that in the future, First United Methodist Church continues to be known as a praying church and one that welcomes newcomers.

Phyllis Beck

February 20, 2016

I was baptized by Rev. S. A. Gilmore at Carrollton First Methodist Church on December 26, 1937. Five others were baptized with me. I was confirmed on April 3, 1949. The minister was Dr. Bernard T. Lomas.

In grades 6, 7, and 8, we sang in the Junior Choir. In the early 1950s, I was in high school. Since I was a freshman, I could sing in the Chancel Choir.

The sanctuary had not been remodeled yet. The choir loft was under the curved stained glass window beside near the pulpit and organ. We were facing the congregation and the stained glass windows in the back of the sanctuary. The middle one of Jesus seemed to look down on all of us.

On Sundays, I could see my grandparents, Ward and Pearle Baker, and my parents, Bill and Helen Shepherd in the congregation. I knew most of the other people, if not all, also. I saw many of those people during the week in downtown Carrollton.

I felt so blessed and I knew that those people wanted the best for me.

Dorothy "Dot" Shepherd Horrigan

Memories of Carrollton First United Methodist Church

By Lynn Dunlap

Ellyn and my wedding was one of the last weddings in our church before the sanctuary was remodeled. Our wedding pictures show what the sanctuary looked like with the pipes of the pipe organ showing up front.

Not too long after we were married, Bertha Magee (head of education) asked us to teach the 3rd and 4th grade. At that time we had lots of kids in class –18-20. Ellyn was the teacher, and I was there to keep law and order! Sometimes I would play the part of a Bible character. I could get and keep their attention for a short while.

When I was in high school I was in FFA, where I learned parliamentary procedure. Because of this I was asked to serve as chairman of the administrative board. I was following the 27 year tenure of Judge Tom Richards. After 5 years, I kept seeing the number 27, so at that time I decided to resign.

At one board meeting, it came time for the trustee report. At that time the church still had a slate roof on the main building and a flat roof on the new education wing. Both had various problems and leaks. Paul Eshler stood up to give his trustee report and said, “I’m happy to report that the roof is not leaking, but that is mainly due to the fact that it’s not raining!”

One of my favorite memories of music in our church was one that wasn’t ever staged. When asked, she would just sit at the piano and play her rousing rendition of “Victory in Jesus”. We called her Grandma West – aka Margaret West, Rodger Roof’s Grandmother.

There have been so many men in our church over the years who have been “pillars of faith” – men you could look up to and try to aspire to, men who put their faith into action, usually in a quiet manner. I have fond memories of Clair Close, Bill Shepherd, Paul Eshler, Woodrow Coffy, Walt Wingerter, and Bud Smith – just to name a few.

Although I am a newer member—only seven years—what a blessing this church has been to me and my husband. Right away we were welcomed with open arms. How kind and genuine the people were.

On our first visit, we were so impressed with Pastor Dan's sermon and how it was related to our lives today. We loved how he uses his own life experiences in his sermons that we all can relate to.

The Bible Study classes have made me understand the stories in those Gospels and to understand what people went through years ago—all the struggles in their lives to shape our world today.

I appreciate the Sunday School teachers and all the volunteers of the church and how people will pray for you when lives gives us a curve ball at times and how this power of prayer really does work, and I too pray for my fellow man when they too need it.

I appreciate the music of the church—the many talents we have and how they share their talents.

Mostly I thank our Lord for directing us to this wonderful church.

Carolyn Morris

"OOOPS" By Paul Morris

Now Sparky hadn't been to church in over fifty years,
He never knew a sermon could drive a man to tears.

He surely was quite nervous walking down those halls,
But Cousin Bruce assured him the ceilings wouldn't fall.

One day in Church the Preacher talked, a special sermon broke,
The tears they came a welling up and Sparky nearly choked!

The message came across the room. It really was sincere,
And Sparky knew what brought him here after fifty years.

As he left the service he surely was in strife,
He boldly shook the Preacher's hand, then hugged and kissed
his wife!

Carolyn said, "You know you kissed the Preacher's wife,
not to say that she's not kissable,
But I've been thinking and I don't think that behavior is
permissible!"

Sparky gasped and caught his breath. He sat in disbelief.
What to say? What to do? Oh, My, My. Good grief.

He didn't know how it'd go or how it would be taken,
As Sparky met with the preacher his body was a shaking.

He told him of the sermon and how the story ended,
Sparky only hoped the Preacher wouldn't be offended.

Things went well, all was swell as they talked it out,
No malice was intended, that's what it was about.

Now when Sparky goes to Church he will surely tell you this,
As he greets the Preacher's wife, it'll be a handshake, not a kiss!!!

For me there are many wonderful memories associated with Carrollton First United Methodist Church. I grew up in an active Presbyterian church and was new to the Methodist Church when I moved to Carrollton in 1975 to become a member of the church my husband had attended his whole life. From the first Sunday, I felt welcome.

Early on I was invited to be a part of United Methodist Women where I learned a lot about making vegetable soup, roasted pork sandwiches, pie crust and spaghetti sauce as I helped with the fall bazaar and ice cream social. Later I learned about making great Swiss steak as I helped with serving the dinners. These wonderful women were so willing to share their skills and ideas about preparing and seasoning in ways that were new to me, and my husband says I became a better cook because of it.

The Chancel Choir was a group of talented musicians who took me in and treated me as though I had always been there. With Jack Shafer as the director and a small group of professional instrumentalists, the group presented several outstanding programs, including Handel's *Messiah* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*, along with providing music for Sunday services and special programs during Lent and Advent. There are also memories of other musicians in the church who have been very willing to share their talents, working together in many different ways and combinations.

As our children grew, I felt truly blessed by the many people—dedicated nursery caregivers, Sunday School teachers, Bible School staff, youth leaders, and musicians—who patiently helped our children and their friends learn about the Bible and God's love for them and guided them as they grew in their faith.

There are wonderful memories of seeing God's love as the people of this church work together to spread Christ's message locally, as they do through One Way, and far away, through missionaries we have come to know in Taiwan, Honduras, Jamaica, China and many other places. I have also experienced how they care for and support each other in times of crisis or sorrow and celebrate together in times of joy.

There are, of course, memories of times when there have been conflicts, but even when we disagree, we remain united in our love of Jesus and our desire to follow him and work for his kingdom. That central truth is what has held the First United Methodist Church together for 200 years and is at the core of all of our best memories.

Molly Winters

“But godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Timothy 6:6

IF ONLY I HAD...written for my grandchildren. A message from your great-grandpa, my dad, Raymond Tope, when I was probably 9 or 10.

While visiting Uncle Ken, I asked my dad if he wasn't jealous of all the things his brother had. Without hesitation he said that when I grew up I'd understand that it's not about things but being content with what you have. It's about being true to yourself and what's important.

Wonderful lesson in that, and I'm sure my dad never thought about it again, but it made an impression on me. I have always been content with life and the things that I have chosen to have.

Pat Tope Calvert

“...for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.” Phil 4:11

Carrollton First United Methodist Church has been a major part of my entire life. My parents, Ralph & Pearl Barnhouse and sister Mary moved to Carrollton from Perrysville in 1946. My parents lived in Carrollton the remainder of their lives, my mother until age 46 and my dad until age 85. I am sure they transferred their membership from the EUB church in Perrysville shortly after moving to Carrollton. I was born later that year. I wish I remembered more of my earlier years in the church but, unfortunately, many of those early memories have faded.

I remember many of the building details mentioned by Dr. Carl Winters back in February of 2016. I remember the old 3rd street entrance and the long hallway behind the choir loft with the noisy wooden floors. I also remember former teachers and choir directors like Ms. Bertha Magee, Mrs. Evelyn Shotwell, Mr. Warren Hays, Ms. Vassbinder, & Mr. John Saltsman. Mrs. Beck reminded me several years ago that I was in the MYF when she and John were the leaders. This was likely in my 7th & 8th grade years.

My mother passed away in 1958 when I was 11 years old and I remember that day like it was yesterday. Rev. Henry Sedlacek was the pastor at that time. My dad married Ruth Moore in 1962 and Rev. Clarence Achberger was the minister at that time.

Bob & I were married in the church in December of 1972 by Rev. John Clark. Bob joined church prior to that time and we have attended and been involved in various capacities at the church ever since. Our daughter, Stephanie, was born in 1977 and I recall that some of the first visitors at the hospital were Rev. Bill and Beth Ury. They had just arrived in Carrollton. I had not met them previously but was sound asleep and did not get to meet them at that time. Rev. Ury baptized Stephanie later that year.

Another memory that I have of the church were the Swiss steak dinners that the United Methodist Women prepared and served to various community organizations – to raise money for missions and other projects. This was in the 70's & 80's. I helped with serving many of these meals. Members of the UMW would start frying steak and peeling potatoes early in the day. The women I recall spearheading this endeavor were Helen Shepherd, Harriet Mitchell, Betty Roof, Ann Lloyd, Ruth Barnhouse, and many others that I don't recall. Phyllis Beck was in charge of recruiting people to serve and set up for the meal, as well as helping with clean-up. John Beck was the head dishwasher. Bill Shepherd and my dad, Ralph Barnhouse, were the main potato mashers in those early days.

Bob still reminds me every time we have Swiss steak that no one could make Swiss steak like the ladies of the church. He could never understand why they did not put on dinners for the church members. He would have been the first to buy a ticket. Not being a cook, he did not understand all the work that was involved. One of the best rewards of helping serve and clean up was when there was steak left over that we could buy to take home.

Another memory of the past church were the early ice cream festival days. I remember Bob & I being on the committee early in 1970 and meeting at the home of Ron & Betty Davis to organize the festival. We had it in the fellowship hall as we did not have the nice parking lot like today.

I have many other fond memories of the early church and the recent church as well. We have grown in our faith over the years and it is our prayer that we will continue on this journey for many years to come.

Bob & Carol Sanford

The Open Door Nursery School, begun and run by longtime church member Betty Knisely, was a part of the weekday life of our church from 1978 into the early 1990's. Many children from the church and the Carrollton community began their "school" life in Betty's classes. As the name of the preschool implies, Betty created it to serve our children but also as an outreach to families not otherwise associated with the church.

Many of you will remember that Betty began with Liz Sweeney as her assistant. Other helpers included Mary Pirics, Mary McNutt, and Pat Leatherberry.

The children began their day by saying goodbye to their parent, some not willingly or happily. They were taught to hang up their coats and then find their name on a rug where they sat for story time, singing, and a Bible story each day. There was unstructured time that allowed the children to choose an activity: water painting, sandbox play, pretend play in the kitchen, or riding toy trucks in another area. Are any of you the then high school aged boys who asked to ride the trucks, too? The children worked with letters and numbers by learning their names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Betty took advantage of what the Christian calendar offered, taking her students up to the sanctuary at Thanksgiving to see the decorations and food donations for Loaves and Fishes. At Christmas they saw the nativity and were invited to bring food or clothing donations for a needy family. Betty feels certain her four year classes understood the concepts of need, giving, and sharing. At Easter, of course, the children saw the cross and the spring flowers.

The daily "lineup" in the hallway outside the preschool rooms is remembered fondly. "Line up, please!" Betty repeated many times. Lining up, waiting until your name was called before bolting to a mother or father or grandparent, watching others reunited before you—were challenging exercises in self-control for these excited little people. But it was surely fun to watch!

Submitted by Betty Knisely, Debbie Longbons, and Brenda Stine

When I hear the name "The First United Methodist Church," my mind is crowded with fond memories. The church was, after all, the focus of the end of a week as well as a beginning, and I spent many hours there from my earliest childhood. It was Sunday School from nursery to senior year. I spoke my first public line in the children's program when I was three, that my mother, Wilma Vasbinder, helped organize. She later directed the junior choir. She, along with other women, had written and organized the children's program I was taking part in. I remember standing in front of the church beside the pulpit with dozens of other children with everyone's eyes on us. The pulpit itself fascinated me because it looked like a building with carved columns and arches, but there were no doors that opened so that I could look inside. I was so disappointed when I opened the little door in the back of it and saw it was just a big open space with one shelf and some discarded paper.

But I was fascinated also with the huge door that separated the main church from the side Sunday School room and tried to understand how that huge door could disappear into the wall. I would pretend to help my father push it, one of his Sunday morning chores as an usher. I can still see the preachers there, a new one every four years or so: Lomas, Yates, Haggard, and others, preaching with vigor and passion and all of them forming attitudes and habits that have stuck with me for a lifetime. It is impossible to thank them adequately. They taught me the power of prayer. I also remember clearly the warm feeling our church gave me when I sat in the pew singing or praying. It was, and still is, exceptionally beautiful.

I studied the beautiful art glass of the walls not realizing how unusual it was to have such detailed, symbolic images that must have cost a fortune that intensified the sacred atmosphere of the sanctuary. At one time I knew the pictures in each window by heart. I was particularly fascinated with the curved ceiling glass over the choir loft. I can still see my Aunt Sarah Vasbinder on the organ bench, whose palsied hands ceased shaking the moment she began to play those ivory keys. She had graduated in organ studies at Oberlin College and had begun to play in 1909 and was still playing in the 1950's.

In the early 1960's I had the honor of conducting the adult choir for three years. We made such beautiful music every Sunday with the talented Leland Smith at the organ console. Ah, the music we sang to the Glory of God! Such talented, dedicated vocalists who performed Sunday after Sunday famous choir literature that floated out over the appreciative congregation. I remember with nostalgia the solos I sang from the pulpit area over so many years, from my childhood, my youth, my high school years, and my early adult life. It is a special spot.

So there it still sits with its shape and past engraved on my heart. Much of what I am I owe to that special place and the people who taught me and served as examples to me.

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For the church memory scrapbook....

I was a very young child when I attended my Grandmother Wilma's Sunday school class. I lived in Canton with my family and would spend time in the summer, "On the Hill" at my grandparents' farm. Grandma would show me how to use carbon paper and very carefully trace paper that would be colored by her class. I loved doing it. Feeling quite special, I got to help her pass out the pictures to other children.

Before coloring, however, we would sit in a semi-circle and repeat after my grandma these words: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up to the House of the Lord." Grandma would pronounce the words very distinctly so that our young minds would grasp what it was that she was saying. I find myself today listening to those words still ringing in my heart that I learned from my grandma in that yellow brick church so many years ago.

Barbara Schneider (Granddaughter of Harold & Wilma Vasbinder)
Delta Junction at Whitestone, Alaska

Remember, and Be Set Free

“Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.” (Deut. 32:7)

My first memory of the First United Methodist Church is not a very pleasant one. I was 3 years old and remember Mom literally dragging my 2 year old sister Lisa and me up the cement steps of the church. We were all decked out in our dresses, black patent shoes, white leotards and little white gloves. We both carried tiny white purses, each with a dime wrapped in a handkerchief for the offering. Mom explained that we were to unwrap our dimes at the proper collection time and not to mess with them beforehand. (I kept checking mine in my purse to make sure it was still there.)

The closer we got to the church door, the more terrified I became. A lump formed in my throat and tears were filling my eyes as the door opened and all I could smell in this place was “old”. It was the smell of old wood and old books, old floors and old furniture. I really didn’t want Mom to leave us there in that classroom. I looked at Lisa to see how she was handling this situation, and she seemed perfectly fine—just pulling at her sagging tights on her skinny legs. I think the dress and tights were the worst part of the morning for her, but for me, it was watching Mom leave the room.

We sat on miniature wooden chairs with spindle backs. They had the old wood smell too. Mom had said not to mess with the dime in my purse, but I was starting to panic as we sat on those chairs waiting for class to start. I carefully got my handkerchief out and smelled it, hoping it smelled like my Mom and our home, not this place. Then it happened. My dime fell out of my hankie and rolled out of my sight! No one else seemed to notice, and I was too afraid to get out of my chair and look for it. The class began, and when it was offering time, I had nothing to give. Lucky for me, Lisa forgot to give her dime, so I guess it just looked like our dear mother forgot to send any Sunday School money with her cherubs.

I remember nothing else about that morning except the smell of “old” and my fear. Thankfully, Mom and Dad faithfully took us to Sunday School and church over the following years, and I truly began to enjoy it. I had so many good Sunday School teachers to help me learn more about Jesus.

VBS week rolled around every summer and those teachers were saints! The church had no air conditioning in those days, and the classrooms were filled with sweaty kids. I remember looking forward to our snack break because I was so thirsty. The teacher would hand out little cups and then we would form a line. One by one we stepped in front of her as she held a stainless steel pitcher and filled each of our cups with the best and coldest orange drink I ever had! I remember her taking the time to look each of us in the eyes and smile as she poured that much-needed drink. I knew she must be miserable in the heat if I was so hot in my shorts. None of the teachers wore shorts then; they wore long skirts and dresses. I could tell those teachers did what they did out of love. At the time I thought it was love for us kids. Now I realize that there was even a greater love behind those sacrificial hours spent with us.

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” (Matt. 10:42)

Fast forward to my high school years at FUMC. I had long ditched all my fears about going to church. In fact, I loved going. My friends attended and we formed a tightly knit youth group. Equally important, I began to respect those who were part of the “seasoned” fellowship of believers. It didn’t take me long to realize that the world didn’t offer any real solutions to its problems or to mine. It was the consistency in faith and love that these people showed that caused me to respect and admire them.

On one particular Sunday as a high school student, I remember attending the adult Sunday School class my father was leading. We were meeting in the parsonage and it was packed. Mom and I were seated on the bottom steps of the staircase due to a limited number of chairs. On my right was the old wooden banister and if I tilted my head just right, I could see through the front door window to the outside world. On my left sat Mom with her Bible open on her lap. I remember looking at her beautiful hands resting on its pages and smelling the cinnamon rolls Mrs. Ury was baking, and seeing all those adults jammed into that living room to learn more about Jesus. I had a simultaneous view of the outside world on one side and Jesus followers on the other, and at that moment I knew that I wanted to be a faithful follower just like them. I embraced my faith and my love for this church.

“For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.” (2 Cor. 2:15)

Years passed. I left Carrollton to attend the University of Cincinnati, met my future husband there, got married, started a family, moved 4 times, and finally landed back in good ‘ole Carrollton, Ohio. Although Rob and I attended several great churches during these years, it was difficult to establish strong connections with those believers because we were so transitory. We were excited to begin attending FUMC, the church where I attended while growing up and the church where we were married. It didn’t take long to embrace the believers here as they ministered to us and our growing family. What a blessing FUMC has been to each one of us!

We pray a very simple prayer in the van on the way to church every Sunday. It goes something like this:

“Dear Lord,

Thank you for this day and that we can worship you in freedom.
Please be with all those leading us today.
Strengthen them and help them to tell us what it is You want us to know.
May we worship You in Spirit and in Truth.
And may we be a blessing to all those around us.
In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

Even though our once filled to capacity van has some empty seats now, we pray that God continues to use us to bless and encourage the believers at FUMC.

Wow! What a journey this has been. Remember my fear of the smell of something old the in the church building? I learned over the years to not **Fear** the old smells and traditions, but to **Respect** those who are more seasoned than I, **Embrace** them, and **Encourage** others to do the same. Why? Because the old wooden pieces of our church (even if most are covered up now) house the old Redemption Story. And that never gets old! We have Sunday School classes on every level of our church, telling the same story. Praise be to God! He has set me FREE!

Rhonda (Smith) Atkinson

These are notes I had written from a Rod Buchanan sermon. I remember that when I heard him preach these words, I was struggling in my single life with loneliness. This sermon challenged me to seek God more earnestly for truth and guidance. Three weeks later, I met my future husband and exactly two years later, Rod Buchanan married us!

Rhonda Smith Atkinson

"If ever there was a time when we need to saturate our minds with the word of God, it is today. If ever there was a time when we are needed to be on our guard against deception, it is now. We are not going to win the battle by letting our minds vegetate before the television screen and neglecting the sacred word of God. We need to know what we believe, and we need to stay close to God in order not to be drawn away by false religious spirits tempting us to believe a lie.

"There is a spiritual danger in going anywhere but the word of God for guidance and the answers to life. The Bible says, 'They perish because they refuse to love the truth and be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth.' (II Thess. 2:10-12)

"Jesus said, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.' (John 14:6)"

Rodney J. Buchanan

9/7/86

A leadership retreat was held in our home one wintry Saturday, in 2008. It was the first year Rev. Dan Loomis was pastoring First UMC of Carrollton. I believe there were twenty to thirty people here, invited to attend because they were the current lay leaders, chairs of ministry teams, administrative council members. As we gathered, Rev. Loomis described what he had been seeing in our congregation and suggested that we needed to come together in formulating a new, and personal to our congregation, directional statement. We broke into smaller groups, imagining, discussing, and even illustrating our perceptions of the current state of our fellowship. We then came back together into one large group, sharing our discussions and conclusions. Our current directional statement-**Following Jesus... Sharing his Love: Come-Connect-Grow-Serve-Go** came out of the ensuing discussion.

It was a time of rich sharing, of heartfelt prayer and, finally, excitement over what the Holy Spirit was giving to us. I believe we all left filled with hope and an assurance that our hopes were God-given. Looking back over the years since then, I think we all can agree that our directional statement has been a fruitful catalyst and guide for the life and mission of our church.

Scott and I attended our church for the very first time in late summer of 1986. We'd moved frequently in our years of marriage so "first Sundays" at a possible new church home were part of our experience. But I have to say that this first Sunday is the only one etched in my memory. As we were leaving the sanctuary after service, an energetic, friendly female voice before us exclaimed, "You must be the Stines!" The voice belonged to lifetime member, Ellyn Dunlap. We were delighted but surprised by her greeting. We soon came to understand that Ellyn's mother, Barbara Atchison, had alerted her to our possible appearance at church. Barbara heard the news from a dear friend, Dorothy Crabbs, Scott's aunt! Well, that greeting went a long way toward our decision to attend Carrollton First UMC and I have remarked many times that God led us there so he could bless us-and he did!

Rev. Rod Buchanan was acquainted with my brother-in-law, the Rev. Michael Stine, my husband's younger brother. Rev. Buchanan also knew that Mike did John Wesley impersonations. So, one Sunday a wigged and black-robed Rev. Stine, John Wesley, that is, put in an appearance during Sunday worship. Mike was a convincing Wesley and I think everyone enjoyed his "performance/sermon." However, what I recall specifically about Mike's words were said to me alone, after the service. He said, "I sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in your fellowship." He said this earnestly and in some awe. We have had many, and more I think than many Methodist congregations in the past thirty years, times where I have strongly felt the Spirit's presence, too. Praise God!

Submitted by Brenda Stine

The memories that I have of the First United Methodist Church are numerous. Most are good, but I have some bad memories too. The bad memories are NOT because of the church, but simply memories of bad times in my life when the church body banded together to love on me and help me get back on my feet.

I'm sorry to say that the first memory is of the Sunday after my husband left. I got up and made myself go to church! Most of the time if a person is in trouble, they go home. But I couldn't do that, so I went to be with my other family. I was angry, hurt, and I felt alone. But when I walked up to Barb Loomis, I started crying. She just wrapped me up in a big hug and let me cry and be angry.

I stayed that way for several months. It was finally time to move on. The congregation picked me up, and helped me move forward. From then on my memories were all going to be good. And they have been. They are memories of people gifting me with what I needed to be able to take care of my family.

The next memory is one of help. I was moving but renting a U-Haul was the only way I could think of to move all of my stuff without much hassle. God intervened and a moving crew was formed. Six vehicles and two hours later I was moved into a house with a nice yard and all the other things that would make my life easier.

My favorite "good memory" involves my daughter, Zara. Christmas 2014 is a season I will NEVER forget. Zara had always adored Barb and thought Pastor Dan was ok, but on the afternoon of the parsonage open house something happened that no one expected. Zora and I were getting ready to leave and I told her to give Barb and Pastor Dan a hug. I found out later that Pastor Dan was so happy to get that hug!

I could sit and write forever telling you all about the memories that I have of this church. Instead, I will just close with this thought. When life seems rough and your world is dark--just look up Jer. 29:11. It is a very powerful verse but one that has been proven in my life more than once.

April 26 2016

Jessica Postlethwait

Camp Aldersgate and My Heartwarming Experiences

Barb Lloyd Adams

Camp Aldersgate was my favorite destination for many years in the summer. As a part of the Carrollton United Methodist Church, my brother Steve and I were eligible to attend church camp at Aldersgate and the church would help pay the cost of our stay there. Camp Aldersgate is named after the street in England where Methodist founder, John Wesley, had a conversion experience which he referred to as a time when his "heart was strangely warmed." This change later led to his founding of what is now known as the United Methodist Church. Ironically, Camp Aldersgate always symbolized times in my life where I would deepen my commitment to Christ or have my own heartwarming experiences.

Even today, when I think of my camp experiences, I immediately feel closer to God and my heart is warmed and full.

None of these experiences would be possible without the generous financial help provided by the Carrollton United Methodist Church.



The first year my brother went to camp, I was so jealous. I couldn't wait till I, too, could go. The next summer couldn't come fast enough. Upon arrival to camp on that bright warm Monday morning, so many summers ago, I felt like this was my place. Somehow, I fit here, almost like the rest of the puzzle was there and I was the missing piece to finish the picture. Of course, I was extremely excited for our time on Leesville Lake which would happen later in the afternoon. That first day, we introduced ourselves to others, made nametags on little round pieces of wood (which I still have) then went to our cabins, unpacked and had our first group Bible study. After lunch, we were required to spend an hour of horizontal time in our cabins before making our way to the waterfront for afternoon activities. That was the longest hour and every day, every year, it would remain the longest hour ever.



Finally, on that first day of my many days to come at Camp Aldersgate, the horizontal hour was up and off to the lake we went.

There, we could swim, use the canoes and the Sunfish sailing boats. That first day we had to go through the training courses for how to use the canoes and the sailboats. Once I learned how to use the sailboats, then I found my path to God. There was nothing more freeing than sailing across the lake feeling the power of the wind. I would envision God watching down from the blue sky and clouds. Feeling the warmth of the sun made me feel his love so tangibly. I could talk to him there, out in the open and sometimes, I would look at the clouds and they would look like a face to me. God's face. Every day, during lakefront time, I would be first in line to sail.

In the evenings, each cabin would be responsible for preparing a devotional service that would be held in the outdoor chapel. Whoever designed the camp and picked the place for the outdoor chapel really knew what they were doing because in the evening it was right in the spot where the setting sun's rays would shine through the trees and on the cross that sat between the rocks at the front of the chapel. Singing praise and worship songs, praying and reading the Bible in combination with the location would help to focus all a person's thoughts on Jesus and his gift to us on Earth.

There was something about nature that was calming and allowed me to commune with God. Camp Aldersgate opened the door to my having a personal relationship with God and my faith grew. Even today, my connection to God through the outdoors is strong. I enjoy walking outside in the early mornings or late evenings and just talking out loud to God under the trees, watching the setting sun or gazing at the sparkling stars in the sky.



I continued to go to camp throughout junior high and high school. I will forever be grateful for those wonderful summers at Aldersgate and how my faith was encouraged there. I am so thankful for the funds provided for me by the Carrollton United Methodist Church so I could go. It gave me a whole new way to see God and all the good he has given His people!

We remember being in touch with Dave Nelson, a terrific youth director at Carrollton 1st UMC, while we were the youth leaders at Broadway UMC in New Philadelphia in 1990-1991.

Our groups of young people had a super time together at our overnight youth gatherings. Games, Bible trivia, skits and many more contests helped to keep the young people going all through the night. As we moved to Carrollton in 1998 it was a good choice to join the fellowship at Carrollton 1st UMC.

Bruce and Crys Burgett

When I think of the First United Methodist Church, verses and songs pop into my head at many times during a day or through a week.

Following Jesus, Sharing his Love. There are examples of these ideals in our church everywhere--from the pastors, the congregation, One Way Youth program, the choirs, the teachers, the many committees, and the list continues.

"The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ Our Lord" is the hymn that reminds us what really matters.

The scripture from Psalm 23 tells us not to be afraid, for God is there to comfort and protect us.

"In the Garden" makes us remember we need time alone to pray and reflect.

As children, we sang, "Jesus Loves Me," and he still does today.

From "On the Old Rugged Cross", we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made to save us and it reveals to us that our loved ones that we are missing are with Jesus and are watching over us today and every day.

So there really is "Victory in Jesus, Our Savior forever."

Jesus does "Shine" on our Yellow Brick Church and The Bridge--one Church paving the way to bring people to hear the word of God.

And to that, all of God's people can say Amen!

submitted by Pat Roudebush

My Memory

Emily J. Ulman

I had a special sister-in-law. She was sweet and compassionate and generous of her time and of her gifts. Dana was the first of our family to begin attending Carrollton 1st. That's been around 14 years ago, as best as I can recall. Before long my mother-in-law joined her daughter in attendance at this church that welcomed them so warmly. Dana battled cancer multiple times and during her last battle, I watched as her new church family kindly embraced our family in love, supporting and encouraging. Throughout Dana's time of dying and her death as well as during our time of mourning, the blessings received from the caring congregation of Carrollton 1st were numerous and genuine as well as much needed and much appreciated.

Dana's favorite Scripture verse was, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11). Our Lord spoke hope into Dana's spirit with this verse. He, through it, comforted her as her future here with us was nearing an end and her future in eternity with her dear Savior was nearing its beginning. I had no idea that as the Lord was changing Dana's future, He had plans to change ours as well. He drew first Dana here, then my mother-in-law, and with Dana's passing, my husband in comfort to his mom. Finally, with some nudging, I too left behind my former church family and brought our three children to join in here at Carrollton 1st. I believe that was shortly after the time Pastor Loomis began preaching here, for I recall my husband expressing to me how much I would like the new pastor. He was right.

Like Dana before us, we too have been graciously welcomed into this fold. My children have grown in Junior Church and VBS as well as in the Wild Wednesday program. For the feeding of their spirits and their gained knowledge in our Lord, I am grateful.

Having witnessed firsthand this congregation in action "Following Jesus" and "Sharing His love," I utter a deeply heartfelt, "Thank you so very much." Futures are impacted here.

“The Hawaiian Luau” Memory

The luau took place in the fellowship hall in February of 2003.

Our daughter, Dana, had always wanted to go to Hawaii. She had been fighting cancer, and so to my understanding, Associate Pastor Mark Statler initiated having a Hawaiian Luau for her.

He shared with me that the church body was all for it and they made it a special night.

There was Hawaiian food, decorations and gifts. Our son, Brian and his wife Mandi presented her with a ticket for her and Brian to go to Hawaii for a week as a surprise to her.

I was not a member at Carrollton First at this time but Dana was.

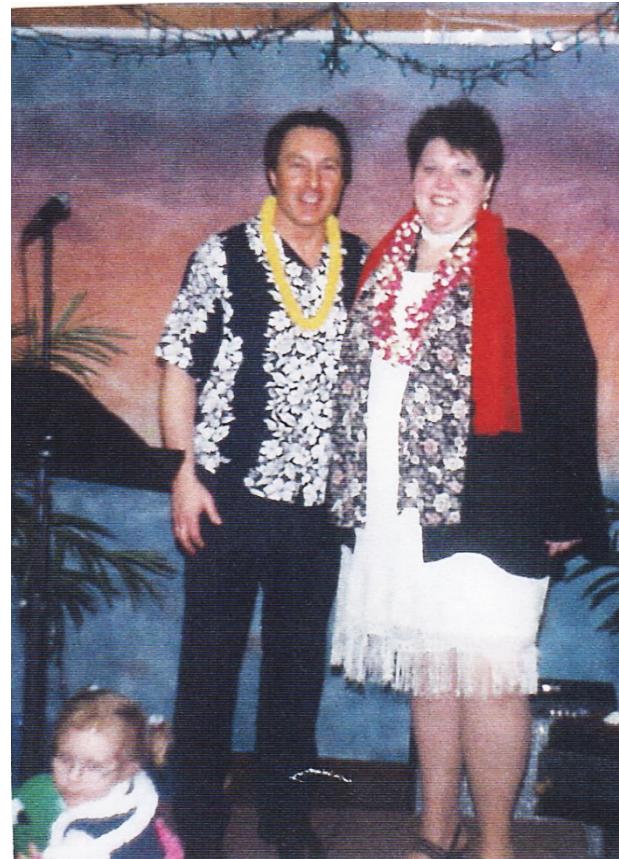
I want to thank you for your faithfulness to her and to our family!

Brian and Dana went to Hawaii on March 15 for a week and had a great time.

The following August 3rd, Dana went to be with our Lord.

God Bless you and “keep on keeping on” in your service for Him!

Love in Jesus, Diana Ulman



Bicentennial Memories and Prayers Regarding
The First United Methodist Church Of Carrollton, Ohio

The memories that come to mind when I think about the church are vast and varied, but they always point to God and His incredible love and grace. Parents of a friend of my Dad, William T. Allmon, brought my Dad to this congregation when he was a boy in the early 1930s. He kept on attending. When he married my mother, Lillian E. Rintanen, in 1944 when World War II was coming to an end, they settled in Carrollton and became very involved in the church, assuming the role as the high school youth leaders. My brothers, David and Tom, were baptized in this congregation, as I was. My parents brought us to church every Sunday; we attended as a family. God was the center of our family, and this church helped to reinforce the lessons we learned at home about Jesus and our need of His loving sacrifice for all of us.

My brothers and I were confirmed in this church. Reverend Richard Swogger was the minister in 1969 when I became a member. His confirmation class was instrumental in leading me to my own faith in Christ as I began to think for myself about the truths which I had been taught at home and in Sunday School and in youth group.

When my husband, Bill, and I were married in August 1977, we alternated Sundays between my home church and his for a few months. The arrival of Reverend Bill and Beth Ury in October 1977 led us to commit fully as a couple to the congregation at First United Methodist Church. The Urys' arrival marked the real and powerful anointing of the church by the Holy Spirit in a way that I had not experienced before. They preached the gospel in a unique manner and emphasized a daily reading of scripture and small group Bible studies. The church grew, and more importantly, the faith of individual attendees grew. This ministry of the Urys made God more real to many in the congregation and helped Bill and me establish our marriage and our home as God-centered. In looking back on these five years of our church under the leadership of Bill and Beth Ury, I am still awestruck by the way I saw God work in individual lives, and I witnessed so many persons come to our church for the first time and accept Christ.

When the Urys moved, Reverend Rodney and Sue Buchanan replaced them, and eleven years of an intense teaching ministry under Reverend Buchanan began. Rev. Buchanan's leadership continued the work of the Holy Spirit, and I learned so much about the truths of scripture and how to live daily by trusting God in all things. It was during the Buchanan's' time here that our children, Ethan and Maureen, were born and baptized into the church. The church was full, both Sunday services every Sunday, and the church was the center of our family life. Life-long relationships were formed through the fellowship on Sundays and during the week at Bible studies.

Pastors have come and gone in the years since, all of whom have ministered to the congregation of this church in ways God ordained. The church has experienced periods of growth and periods of stagnation, but God remains faithful. The bicentennial brings us all an opportunity to look back and understand how faithful and loving God has been throughout the years, and it reminds us that we inherited from those who came before us a trust which we are to keep. It is our privilege to not put the light of Christ in a hidden place, but to shine it openly in every corner of our community and the world. We are still called to be faithful to God and His love for all of us and to proclaim to all the saving grace that is ours because of Christ's death and resurrection. We should all be grateful for the saints who believe and who, from their belief, established and nurtured this congregation through the years. Our gratitude must lead us to faithfully follow in their footsteps to insure that God's purposes are ours.

There are so many memories...lighting the advent candles when I was five years old, memorizing Bible verses in 4th grade Sunday School classes, singing in the choirs, watching my children sing in the children's choirs and programs, small group Bible studies, sensing a love and acceptance by so many members of the congregation, the fellowship of church dinners, the examples of the adults in the church during my childhood and beyond, the friendship of so many. It is good to remember. When Bill and I moved to Oregon in 2009 intending to make our permanent home there near my brother, we were experiencing in Carrollton a deep and profound sense of loss of the fellowship we had known for years. When we moved back to Carrollton a year later, I was fearful that our church home would not welcome us back. Instead, I was overwhelmed by the grace and love that met us and accepted us without question. I am still grateful every day for the love God has shown us through the congregation and the pastor, Reverend Dan Loomis.

My prayer for the future congregations of the First United Methodist Church of Carrollton is that each member would make it his or her priority to trust God in all things, to love Him completely, to tell the community and the world about Jesus and to remember that we are all entrusted by God to be the bearers of His good news. In short, we are to reflect God's nature in our own and love others as God loves us.

With gratitude and love,

Kathy Stoneman
February 14, 2016

I have many wonderful memories of the Carrollton United Methodist Church. My grandparents, the Ward Bakers, and parents, Bill and Helen Shepherd, were members when I was born. My earliest memories were of how friendly everyone was. I appreciated all the ministers, Sunday School teachers, MYF volunteers, musicians and everyone else who gave of their time to keep the church going all these years.

I especially loved the pipe organ. It added so much to the singing of the hymns from the Methodist Hymnal. My sister, Dorothy Horrigan, and I sang in the choir in high school. We could observe Sarah Vasbinder playing the organ and it appeared to be difficult as well as beautiful. The organ is no longer there, but I still remember how much I loved it when she opened all the stops, usually on the last verse of the hymn. It filled the whole church with music.

I graduated, married, and had a daughter. We lived a short distance away. My daughter loved to visit her grandparents. When they took her to Sunday School and church with them, she felt as much at home there as at her own church.

I feel very fortunate that the Carrollton Methodist Church was my first home church.

Betty Shepherd Walters

I have so many wonderful memories from growing up in this church that it is hard to pick just one. This place and the people that have served here over the years helped shape me and my relationship with Christ. I would not be the woman I am if it had not been for the prayers, ministry, and love of the people that graced this church.

I remember as a little girl I wanted to grow up and be a woman of God like Beth Ury. Her smile and whole self showed the love of her Savior. The whole Ury family was like an extended family to my family. It was because of them and their willingness and excitement for Christ that lead my family to Christ. Another woman I admire is Bettie Roof. Everyone wanted one of Bettie's famous hugs! I know she said countless prayers for all of us kids and loved us like her own.

I grew up in the choir at church. I loved to sing and it was my favorite thing to do at church. I can still see Carla Hively smiling in front of us and directing us to do the same. Although the entire back row of gentlemen would sometimes test her patience, as children often do, I knew she loved us and loved helping us praise God with our voices.

This was not my only singing memory. I was encouraged to sing a solo for an upcoming Singspiration. I remember growing up wanting to sing like Andi Smith, who sang many solos at our church. It was Andi who helped me practice my solo and encouraged me to continue to use my voice in music ministry. I remember getting up to sing and being really nervous. The Singspiration was on a Sunday evening during youth group, which I was missing. As I prepared to sing my first line, in comes Chris Stratton and our ENTIRE youth group. About 20 kids lined the back of the church! The last singing memory for me is the best. Marc Dunlap, Devin Tharp, and I had a rap song, "Got 2B Tru", that we wanted to perform as a special.

Well...when people heard "rap", they weren't as enthusiastic about it as we were. Pastor Bob Smeltzer gave us an excited yes! We had so much fun doing that song and the people really enjoyed it.

Chris Stratton. I don't really need to elaborate too much because those of us who were blessed to be in youth group during his time could share so much on how he shaped us into disciples for Christ. He is still one of my most favorite people and still continues to shape young adults for Christ.

Monique (DeCarlo) Bailey

OUR JOURNEY LED BY GOD

We were a young couple who had just gotten married June 1, 1968, 10 days later answering the Army's draft call on June 11th, then separated by the Vietnam War in 1969-1970, during which time giving birth to our first daughter, alone, while Gene was serving in the war, along with enduring the devastating death of my 16 year old brother, Steve, after his two year struggle with cancer in November 1969. Neither one of us were truly deep in our faith. As young children, we had both been involved in occasional Sunday School attendance and once in a while participating in a Christmas program or two. But all along, we both felt safely led through our childhood and adolescent years and we both felt the presence of a higher power in our lives.

We were very fortunate to have been married by a wonderful young Pastor named Robert P. Hoover and during the years of our marriage, he ministered to us faithfully. He was truly my crutch through my brother's struggle and death and throughout Gene's service time in Vietnam. We still, to this day, feel that certain persons in our lives were placed there by God to lead us to Him.

After our second child was born, we decided we needed to locate a church closer to town that we could attend and become involved along with looking for a church to nourish our young daughters. We started attending First United Methodist Church in the 1980's and became members in 1982. The girls participated in church choir and became actively involved with the youth group. We were asked to join a Bible Study, along with several other young couples, led by John and Carol Saltsman. Our faith grew substantially during that time.

We have fond memories of the different Bible Studies in which we participated and felt our knowledge and faith grow. We made many friends through the church in our participation in various Sunday School classes and the Bible Studies series. We have been blessed through the years to have served in various capacities on several different committees within the Church.

It has been over 30 years since we became members and we feel very fortunate that we were led to have made the right choice for ourselves and our family. We have participated in various things that brought us out of our "comfort zone" and have been glad we ventured into those territories. One sees their faith expand as times goes on and we feel our faith has led us to push ourselves further than we anticipated in the

beginning. God knows our hearts and we practice our faith with servant hearts to honor Him. We have experienced the love of our fellow Sunday School members throughout the years and we truly feel God's love through them.

To be a believer in anything requires a willingness at times to look foolish. For Christians, it demands a belief in a creator whose longing to be reconciled with His creation was such that He was willing to not only become human, but to accept death by *their* hand, for *their* redemption. For those who believe, Easter removes hopelessness from the human equation. Easter is the story of the infinite patience required to save people from *themselves*. In the secular, the idea that mankind even needs rescuing is regarded as ludicrous. Keep praying for those of that mindset to find their way to God.

We call ourselves children of God, we have studied God's word, we have surveyed the facts and we believe, we attempt daily to live by His word and acknowledge His presence in our lives and know we are forgiven our sins. We know that truth is the freedom of life (Psalm 51:6) and mercy is the necessity of life (Proverbs 16:6) and that perseverance is the diligence of life (Philippians 3:15). Our favorite verse to live by is 1 Corinthians 13 "*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things . . .*".

Blessings abound here at First UMC and the many spirit filled members of our congregation are daily participating together to fulfill our mission statement of "*FOLLOWING JESUS, SHARING HIS LOVE*".

With love in Christ, two of God's children,

Gene and Barb Roudebush

Memory of True Kindness by Pastor Smeltzer

Our daughter, Amy, was about to be married and had made the reservation for a honeymoon trip to Florida.

On the evening of the wedding rehearsal, Amy was notified that a hurricane had caused a lot of damage to the hotel and that the reservation had been canceled.

When Pastor Smeltzer heard this he went directly to the parsonage and quickly returned with the address of a condo at Cocoa Beach. He explained that he had gone home to make a call to arrange for them to spend a week at this condo for their honeymoon on him.

We were all truly surprised and quite taken back by his kindness to a young couple which he hardly knew, only through a few marriage counseling sessions.

We were truly blessed by Pastor Smeltzer.

Barb & Gene Roudebush

Memories of Attending the Carrollton Methodist Church

The first memory that comes to my mind is going to the nursery Sunday School class taught by Wilma Vasbinder...a warm, kind, caring person. She made all the children feel welcome. While passing the offering plate for our pennies, nickels, or dimes, we sang the first verse of a song called "Little Drops of Water" and Mrs. Vasbinder played the pump organ. To this day, I still hear this song in my head and catch myself humming this tune. If you would like to hear this tune go to: [You Tube—Little Drops of Water: A Peace Song.](#)

Another fun experience at the church was attending MYF on Sunday evenings. It was a nice way to begin a new week. Reverend Bernard Lomas was the church minister at the time. Also, Junior Choir directed by Corky Smith was great. A number of my friends also attended the church and that added to my pleasant memories of the church.

Thanks for the venue of memory sharing!

Susan Courtright Dewell
303-233-2336
13265 Willow Lane
Golden, CO 80401

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Doreen Abrahims

It all started with a bowling league and a two year old and in the blink of an eye, now thirty-four years later, our journey continues at Carrollton First United Methodist Church. The Lord and this church has definitely shaped our life and family along the way.

Growing up I called a little country church home. Bill began attending that same church with me when we were dating. We were married at that little country church called Baxter's Ridge in 1977. But as we became busy with our first chapter of married life, we fell away from attending church regularly.

Then in 1980 along came our daughter, Jamie. As we began to take the parenting thing rather seriously we decided it might be a good idea to introduce her to church. When she was 2, we joined a bowling league. Friends in the league who attended Carrollton First invited us to come. So in 1982 we accepted their invitation and walked through these doors for the first time.

Here we remain. God has blessed us in so many ways at this church through lots of different circumstances and people. For that we are truly thankful!

Here are just a few of the most memorable highlights that come to mind. Bill accepted the Lord and he and Jamie were baptized together by Reverend Ury. I renewed my commitment to God made as a young child. Natalie, our second daughter was born, welcomed, and baptized by Reverend Buchanan in 1983.

Through the years of raising our family, we were blessed and supported by so many pastors, church friends, and activities. There were numerous Bible Studies, Sunday School classes and youth groups with dedicated and loving teachers, friends, and volunteers.

One Way was created and young, Christian men like Dave Nelson, Chris Stratton, and Ray Heaston touched our lives in very powerful and precious ways. Bill even became the youth pastor for One Way during the years when our daughters were in junior high and high school. Such a precious time for him and our girls as they became very involved and molded spiritually by Christian growth and wonderful young friends. There were so many caring and devoted adult volunteers at One Way who were also so important at that time of their lives. We truly cherish their love and influence.

Thinking back, there were lots of memories of working on committees, the girls singing in different choirs, and Jamie and Natalie participating in church pageants, skits, and celebrations. Now that we are grandparents, we have been blessed to see our adult children and grandchildren growing spiritually through the new Bridge service. Another precious chapter!

Looking back at this journey I can see an endless mental slideshow of pastors and their families and friends who have loved us and whom we have loved. They all became our family along the way.

This brings me to the present. My prayer is that each person that comes to Carrollton First United Methodist Church may find the Lord and a wonderful church family that they can love and from whom they can receive love. May the Lord lead them to the spiritual path He desires for them. May we always remember to support and lift one another up as God does with each of us every day. May the Lord continue to bless Reverend Dan Loomis and Barb, Reverend Kimberly Arbaugh, Doug, Paige, and Phillip, and the wonderful, exciting work He is doing through them.

THE FLAME I SEE

By Steven Lloyd

From childhood eyes of wonderment the flame dances with joy.
Silent nights, holy nights.

The Carrollton Methodists hold steadfast celebrating renewal.
Once every year, the clock strikes eleven as the Choir sings,
“On December five and twenty, Fum Fum Fum.”

Parents, children, friends who gather sing aloud,
Candles stand ready to light,
With one small flame Christmas Eve begins.

Christmases come, Christmases go.
Candlelight holds secrets of joys and sorrows.

Many years pass, candles burn, generations turn.
Faithful gather to celebrate the birth of one so pure in light,
standing quietly together in a moment of clarity,
reflecting on challenges, triumphs, sorrows, victories.

Soft powerful glow emanates from shared candle flames.
With bittersweet tears flowing, young and old alike hesitate to extinguish this flame.
Still, revitalized with new hope, we move out into God’s world spreading this new
light.

This call will be felt by generations to come.
The Methodist Church of Carrollton will renew their light on Christmas Eve.

I would like to write a message about experiences and memories at Carrollton First United Methodist Church. A motorcycle and custom car ride began in 2014 the same day as the church block party. Both had a great turnout and enjoyed by all who attended. Many riders were asking about future rides as the fellowship with our church family created a positive experience. In 2015 another day of beautiful weather gave about 30 of us a great day to share with each other a joy for riding and the message of Christ's love thru action. A rest stop at Gnadenhutten Methodist Church with refreshments showed great hospitality by Pastor Seth and the church members there. We returned to our church parking lot for the block party with food and music. There has been more interest for future opportunities in this ministry as the Lord enables his servants. It is an inspiring sight to see visitors from our community in fellowship as we follow Jesus and share his love.

Monday, January 11, 2016

Vern Penny

Memories-2016

JD and Carla Hively and family

Memories of life in a church fellowship are similar to memories in the life of a family who share genealogy, but with one very large difference. It is a relationship knitted together by a loving Father God who sent His Son to redeem us, and then his Holy Spirit to guide us, which then binds our hearts and lives together in a way that mere genes could not accomplish. Pastors, assistant pastors, youth pastors, brothers and sisters in Christ within Carrollton First United Methodist Church are **family** to the Hivilys as surely as if we all were part of the same family tree. It means that regardless of challenges within the family, we are family, loving and serving Jesus as our Lord, Savior, and King.

JD and I moved to Carrollton in June of 1979. We were a family of four, soon to be five. Part of the process of ‘settling in’ was for us, choosing a church to attend. JD’s dad was a Methodist pastor and we both grew up in the Methodist tradition, thus making a visit to the yellow brick Methodist church on South Lisbon a given. A couple of months later, the pastor the, Rev. William Ury and his wife, Beth, showed up on our front porch to welcome us to the church. They encouraged us to worship there, and become part of its fellowship. We accepted their invitation, and met many wonderful people who shared our desire to grow as Christians. We found that Carrollton First was a Bible-centered and Spirit-filled church that believed in evangelism and discipleship. We joined the church and began to join in its mission to serve Christ.

Over the years, music of the church has kept me happily serving this ministry through playing the piano for praise and worship services, singing, teaching scripture and praise songs to the Junior Choir and later the Youth Praise Team, directing Christmas/Easter musicals, and accompanying Chancel Choir. My children were part of the singing groups, the Cherubs and Junior Choir, as they grew up in the church. They also enjoyed and benefitted from wonderful Sunday School classes, youth groups, retreats, and One Way Youth Center. Church life was rich with mission support events, prayer vigils, evangelistic services, concerts, picnics and potlucks, movie nights, ski retreats, skating parties, and so many scriptural studies and programs that it’s hard to remember and list them all.

JD and I especially enjoyed the parlor adult Sunday School classes that included many videos and discussions designed to help us appreciate and embrace God's desire to be at the center of our relationships as individuals, as a couple and as a family. We learned and grew so much as we joined a small group and worked through the Navigators Discipleship study. It was truly life changing! Sunday evening praise and worship during the early 1980s with Pastor Ury and 'young' Bill Ury still warms our hearts.

Rev. Buchanan continued encouraging small groups, designed praise and worship led by Dave Nelson, and delivered sermons challenging our thinking and understanding of God's desire that our lives reflect and demonstrate His love. Each Pastor that God has led to this fellowship, since we began worshipping with this church family, has brought a unique understanding and expression of that Love and how it is designed to be lived out in the lives of His children. All are dear to us and have gifted us with hearts and lives devoted to serving our Lord.

Many memories of instances when God used members of this church family in our lives come to mind, but an especially sweet one was Christmas Eve, 1990. JD's father was in the end stages of cancer and our plans following the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service that year was to load up the family and travel to Florence, South Carolina to be with family there. A good plan, but Grandpa Hively died late that afternoon. Plans were made to bring him to Carrollton for preparation for burial in Cambridge, so now we needed to stay in Carrollton. JD was on his way to the airport in Pittsburgh to pick up our oldest daughter, who was on Christmas break from Asbury College but finishing up ringing bells for the Salvation Army in upstate New York.

I was playing for that 7:00 p.m. service and my other two children were singing in the choirs, which we did. Because Plan A had been not to be home for the holidays, we had not stocked up on food. And, since at that time all stores were closed for the Christmas holiday, Christmas dinner was likely going to be soup with all of us pretty somber, already missing and grieving Grandpa. Rev. Buchanan and his wife, Sue, invited us to share Christmas dinner with them. At a time when families usually gather together to celebrate with one another, I cannot express how loved and cared for that we all felt when their family included us in their Christmas celebration. God's love abounded through many expressions of love and care from brothers and sisters at Carrollton First Methodist Church during that time. Their gifts of food, running errands, listening to and praying for us carried us through the next few days of goodbye to Grandpa. We are still thanking God for that very real and tangible expression of love.

Our family at Carrollton First has celebrated many family milestones with us, grieved losses with us, and encouraged us in many life challenges along the way, often used by God to remind us of His desire to walk with us and His presence in each situation. Words truly cannot express how real and essential God's word is to guide thoughts and actions daily. JD and I have grown in our faith in ways so profound and essential to our lives that we've been forever changed as Christians. The ministry of this church that "follows Jesus and shares His Love" endeavors to be that kind of presence in the lives of all it can reach with the gospel. God's word, Jesus's sacrifice, message of love and redemption, and the Holy Spirit's reach into our very spirits are foundational to this church's witness over the years, and prayerfully, will continue for many years to come.

For more than a year I listened quietly; spending time deep in prayer. Where does God want me? One night while praying I felt Jesus' presence. His warmth. His embrace. I was a child of God sitting, snuggled on His lap. Everything else in the room disappeared. I believe with all my heart I felt the very love of God.

I knew peace at that moment. I knew what I was called to do and where God wanted me to be. Here I am, "Following Jesus, and Sharing His Love".

I had a different presence about me that night; a glow. I felt it then and best of all, I still feel the awesome presence of God.

Dear Jesus, I want to be your hands and feet.

Pat Calvert

Tom and I began attending Carrollton First in 1980. In those first years we learned so much under the weekly teaching of Rev. Buchanan and we were introduced to small group Bible studies with our first leader being Carol Saltsman. During that time we learned that although we had attended church most of our lives, we had never committed to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Carol Saltsman led us through that important process. We watched our children thrive under the care of a fantastic Sunday School staff and they both participated in the music ministry of the Cherub and Junior Choir.

Our family was part of the founding of One Way Youth Ministries. What an exciting time: a congregational meeting with overwhelming backing of this ministry, meeting and selecting the first youth director, finding a place for the youth to meet and seeing over 50 youth meeting on a Friday morning to pray for a safe weekend and youth meetings on Sunday evening. What a privilege and joy.

In 1993 my relationship with the church changed a little when I became the church secretary. The next fourteen years were a blessing to my life. I got to know so many new people who were also part of the Carrollton First family, but I hadn't had contact with them until then. Some of my best memories are from being at the church during the week.

The United Methodist Women used to serve baked steak dinners to raise funds for their mission projects. These wonderful ladies would come and sit in a circle down in fellowship hall and peel fifty pounds of potatoes in an afternoon. Their voices and laughter filled the church with joy. The day of the dinner they would be down in the kitchen early dredging the steak in flour, browning and then making the gravy as they got it ready for the oven. One of these ladies was short in stature and there was a small wooden step that had been made so she could reach all of the burners on the stove in the kitchen. The sounds and smells of those days is such a joy in my life.

There were also a group of ladies that came in about six times a year to help assemble and prepare our newsletters for mailing. This was an intergenerational group, some older, some young mothers with preschool children. I remember one morning when there were measles going around and one of our ladies took the circular white stickers that sealed the newsletters and put about a dozen on a three-year-old and told him he now had measles.

Throughout the years of my service to this church there were several remodeling projects. It was always such a blessing to see men and women bring their creative talents to update the parlor, the sanctuary, the offices, new carpeting or new paint. Sometimes these projects would cause conflict with differing visions on what to do or how to do it, but I always saw people genuinely cooperating, laughing their way through the wrinkles. One time we had men spraying the pews in the sanctuary with a new coat of varnish. The fumes were wicked, but there were jokes about being high on the Lord. Our church has been richly blessed with people who love the Lord, who work on loving each other and serve God and each other with special hearts.

It has certainly blessed our family and it was a blessing to me to be part of the staff.

Tom and Debbie Longbons.

Our Father,

May we all become so awestricken by your great love—continually before us, expressed by Jesus' life and death, and by the agency of your Spirit in the universe—that we may forget ourselves, engulfed in love for you and love for others.

Amen

Carol Saltsman

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Having been a member of Carrollton First United Methodist Church since 1957, I have vivid memories of the past 59 years.

However, I must admit a “confession” at the outset of this writing. One of the reasons I joined church and the Chancel choir was to get HELP from a very respected choir member with my Algebra and Latin. Thanks to the “after choir rehearsals” on Wednesday nights, the late Betty Janet Rutledge “saved me” from flunking those two subjects.

But on a more serious note, the Church has been such an inspiration to me and a lot of other parishioners because of its longevity and spirituality. When thinking back over those years, the church has come a long way in not only expanding its programs and reaching out to people, but has always been a pillar in the community as one of the leading and respected churches.

Some examples include hosting annual events such as community Lenten and holiday services, parishioners and volunteers cooking and serving the many banquets and now expanding to three services. It’s really amazing when you stop and think about what has happened and how the church has grown both spiritually and attendance wise over the past 200 years.

I know I’ve only touched on a few things, but this church has taught me the value of friends and church family. I, like most others, have lost family members and had some disappointments, but our church members are always there to support and encourage you to look at the positive. Also, I’ve learned to accept people for who they are rather than what I want them to be.

In closing, I’m reminded of a Benediction given by one of our former church pastors which has always “stuck” with me. It goes like this:

The Sun be warm and kind to you;
The Darkest night some star shine through;
The Dullest Morn a radiance brew;
And when dust comes, God’s hand to you.

I pray God’s blessings on the Carrollton First United Methodist Church for years and centuries to come.



My family will confirm that I remember very little of my childhood. Some of my favorite memories though were all associated with the people and ministry of Carrollton First UMC. I was probably in 3rd grade when I attended VBS. I don't remember the lessons or the crafts or the games, but I remember feeling loved and cared for there. I learned that church was a safe place and where I should go when I needed help. As I lead children's ministry today, I make it a priority to show care for each child because of my early memories at First UMC.

I didn't go to church again until I was in 9th grade. A new youth ministry was starting and my friends wanted me to meet Dave Nelson, who was finishing his senior year in college and wanted my ideas about what a youth program should include. I was amazed that he would care about what I had to say! Over the course of the next year, the love of the friends in that group and the biblical teaching of Dave led me to understand God's great love for me. My heart yielded to Jesus and I have been following hard after Him ever since.

The church loved our group of high school youth. Bettie Roof's Sunday morning hugs became something I looked forward to all week. The youth were allowed to lead the Easter sunrise service and experience God using us. During one church service I was asked to share with the congregation about something the youth were doing. I have never been fond of dress shoes and I frequently took them off during the service. This day I forgot to put them back on before I went up front to speak. My friends made sure I didn't forget that day. The adults were generous as they supported us financially when we went to a ski retreat where I saw God bring others to Himself. It was here that I began to feel the need to be a part of bringing people to Jesus.

The sanctuary itself holds a very special place in my heart. I knew where the key to the side church door was, and I would often spend Sunday evenings on my knees at the altar praying as I watched the sunset shine through the stained glass window of Jesus. Still brings tears to my eyes as I remember those special moments with my Savior. On my wedding day I remember the doors of the sanctuary opening as I stood next to my dad. I saw the place where God and I had spent special moments together. I saw the people who had invested in me. I saw the man that God had prepared for me to spend my life with. Complete joy is the only way I can describe that moment. The opposite emotion happened 20 years later as I sat in the

sanctuary the day after I had said my final good bye to Pastor Buchanan as he prepared to meet Jesus face-to-face. I broke down in uncontrollable tears when I saw Carla Hively. We cried and encouraged each other on that very lonely day.

My husband and I spent over 15 years as missionaries in San Diego's inner city. This church body not only faithfully supported us financially the entire time, but we truly felt cared for by the church. Brenda Stine, Ellyn Dunlap, and many other mission team members made sure to remember our birthdays and email encouragement and ask for prayer requests when we lagged behind with our newsletters.

As this church celebrates 200 years of ministry, I pray that by remembering the past you will see clearly God's faithfulness and boldly press on serving God alone. Remain in Him dear friends.

Sharon (Walters) Walker

January 2016
Cedar Falls, Iowa

I don't remember when we started going to Sunday school and Church. I think we started going when I was in middle school or late grade school. I don't remember who the teacher was or who was in that class. I do remember getting to Sunday school early and wrestling with another boy in the class. I don't remember going to church at that time.

By high school our Sunday school teacher was Dick Saltsman, who regaled us with FBI stories. By high school I sang in the choir and played in the band. The band and choir director was Wayne Thomas. The church hired Wayne to be the church choir director. As a result most of the high school choir sang in the church on Sunday mornings. The choir became so large we moved to the balcony because we would not fit where the choir sat in front of the church.

MYF was either on Sunday nights or Wednesday nights. Sunday, I think. After a program we played games then had sloppy joes and went home. Bernard Lomas was our pastor during my high school days. I think Carrollton was his first charge. He had been a running back for Eastern Michigan football and was a magnet for the young people in the church.

I graduated from Carrollton High School in 1951, graduated from Ohio University in 1955 with a bachelor's degree and in 1956 with a master of fine arts. I do remember Martha Jackman as my 7th?-8th? grade home room teacher. These are a few memories of my time attending the Methodist church as a high school student.

Bill Shepherd, Jr.

MEMORIES

We started to attend in 1960 after Earl got out of the service. It felt natural since we were both Methodists. Mrs. Stanley (Pauline) Beresford, a fellow teacher, invited us. Rev. Achberger was minister. His wife subbed for me at school also.

I believe we transferred our membership in 1963. We can remember the 8:15 service beginning. We went to it for quite some time. It was frowned on by some of the older members. I also recall the disagreements over the remodeling of the sanctuary. Several members left because they felt their opinions and ideas were not being accepted.

When Grandma, Mrs. Elsie Criss, lived with us the church was looking for someone to keep attendance. Rev. Swogger asked her to do it. She wasn't able to attend so she felt it would be a way of serving. We got the sheets and she would do them.

In 1972 our Rob joined us. He would attend the service since we never left him in the nursery. As he grew older, his favorite hymn was "Holy, Holy, Holy". Sometimes you could call out a page number for a hymn. That would be his choice.

Once during Maundy Thursday service three ladies behind us were laughing. He joined in—he was 3 years old. I took him out in the vestibule and talked to him. That did it! He was afraid of being in darkness so he said "I will be good." He was.

At ages 5 for the candlelight service, he wanted to play. He recorded the piano part and played the snare drum to "The Little Drummer Boy".

This church has been our home. We have watched changes in it but it is and always will be our church home.

Joyce, Earl and Rob Ferguson

April 2016

When we moved to Carrollton in 1992, we were determined to continue worshipping and participating at our then home church, St. Paul's United Methodist in Canton. After all, it was the church in which Brian grew up and Melanie attended and later joined. That is where we were married, Chris, Peter, and Sarah were baptized, and we grew in our walk with the Lord and were blessed by many saints that passed through the doors of St. Paul's.

During our first year in Carrollton, Youth Musicale was singing one morning at Carrollton First and we wanted to hear them sing and see their director Jeff Trump (who was the children's choir director at St. Paul's). We signed the attendance pad and were pleasantly surprised later in the week when Jim and Grace McConnell showed up on our doorstep with a friendly greeting and a loaf of bread from the church!

We continued going to Canton on Sunday mornings, but were no longer able to participate in extra activities during the week due to the distance. So...after about a year of traveling to Canton on Sunday, we decided to "shop around" Carrollton for a new church, planning to try different churches each Sunday until we found the right one for us. The first church we visited was Carrollton First and we were welcomed by Dave and Sandy Thomas, Tom and Debbie Longbons, and Adrian and Rhonda Tharp. After worship, we were directed to a Sunday school class in the parlor taught by Scott Stine. Jacob (about 6 months old) was well taken care of in the nursery by John and Phyllis Beck and Chris, Peter, and Sarah went to Sunday school and knew several children from school.

After leaving church that morning, we looked at each other and said, "We think we found home!" Carrollton First has been home over the past 23 years as all of us (Robert arrived in 2000) continue to make memories and continue to grow in our Christian walk and share with so many saints in our own backyard.

Our prayer is that everyone that passes through the doors of Carrollton First is greeted as we were, comes to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ, grows in grace and the word, takes the love of Christ to all they come in contact with, and continues to support the Lord's work at Carrollton First United Methodist Church.
Love and Blessings- Brian, Melanie and Robert Husted

Brian, Melanie & Robert Husted

MEMORIES

For many reasons in my late teens and early twenties, I had no church to call home. My family had been Methodist for a number of years, but because my stepdad was in the Air Force, we moved around a lot. When I went off to college, I no longer had any church ties in my life.

Ralph and I were married in his home church in Uniontown, PA. When we moved to Carrollton we had a new baby, a house to fix up, and he was just starting out in his teaching career. We made our church decision based on his previous denominational experience. It was okay, but I never really got comfortable there, so when I was expecting my second child and Steve was a busy toddler, I pretty much stopped attending.

After Barb was born I began feeling the need to go back to church. Ralph agreed to go to the Methodist Church with me one Sunday morning.

We enjoyed the service. There was a pleasant nursery for the kids. Reverend Achberger's sermon was inspiring and I was delighted with the familiar Methodist hymns of my youth. As soon as the service ended, Bernice Johnson, a dear lady we came to love, just about pounced on the two of us and said, "You two have to join the choir!"

I felt like I had come home at last.

Of course, we did join the choir and it has been a big part of my church life ever since. This family within the greater church family has meant so much to me over the years. They held me up when I went through difficult times. Their commitment to the church and its music is unquestionable and we have been blessed with extraordinary directors in Jack Shaffer and Molly Winters.

Other aspects of church life have left the gift of many memories over the years. I will always remember the hard-working ladies who put together the wonderful dinners that were served to outside groups. It was hard work in a hot kitchen but they did it cheerfully and raised a tidy sum of money for such purposes as scholarships for kids to go to church camp, decorations for

various rooms in the church, books and, of course, sponsorship of various missions. Ladies such as Helen Shepherd, Phyllis Beck, Ruth Barnhouse, Betty Roof, Maxine Rutledge, Harriet Mitchell, Evelyn Shotwell, Martha King, and many others cooked and served the delicious meals that are still remembered by those who ate them. I must include not a few men—especially Bill Shepherd, Ralph “Barney” Barnhouse, John Beck, Pete Rutledge and others-- who mashed potatoes, set up tables and chairs, washed dishes and carried heavy stuff around.

Another favorite early memory is of being part of a women’s circle consisting of a number of young women and operating under the umbrella of the Woman’s Society of Christian Service along with several other circles. We met separately in each other’s homes once a month and shared each other’s joys and concerns with family life. Eventually, all these groups were merged into the United Methodist Women and separate meetings were ended.

In the late 80s I became part of a Bible Study group that met every Wednesday before choir practice. Early on Dale Guchmand led the group but later John Beck and retired Pastor Jim McConnell took turns leading the study. It was a congenial group and over the years we supported each other with prayer and caring.

* * * *

My prayer for the church is that it will continue to be blessed in the future as it has been in the past by faithful pastoral families, loving fellowship each with the other, and a determined outreach to those who stand in the need of a connection with the Lord. May it always be a gracious home for those who enter its doors.

Ann Lloyd

Memories from Ellyn Atchison Dunlap

I don't have too many early childhood memories from coming to our church, but I do remember getting together to sing before class time. I remember our 5th-6th grade class being in the old Jr. High room. I remember several different rooms where we had our high school class – one being where the tables and chairs are now stored off fellowship hall, in the kitchen before it was remodeled, and upstairs in what is now Pastor Kimberly's office. The teachers I remember are Bettie Roof, Betty Janet Rutledge, John Saltsman, and John Beck.

We always had a Methodist Youth Fellowship when I was in Jr. and Sr. High. John and Phyllis Beck were our leaders for at least part of that time. We met in the fellowship hall, which wasn't carpeted at that time, so there was a shuffleboard court painted on the cement floor.

I remember the pot luck dinners with hymn singing afterwards and playing shuffleboard in the fellowship hall.

Lynn and I were married in our church on June 2, 1968, right before the remodeling began, so the sanctuary looks quite different in our pictures. Our reception was in the fellowship hall and consisted of cake and punch. Only chairs were set up and the United Methodist Women helped with the decorations and set up and take down.

Lynn and I began teaching the 3rd-4th grade Sunday School class that fall. While the church was being remodeled, our class had to meet in various places around town. Miss Magee encouraged us to do outside activities with our class, so we did. Thankfully, Lynn's parents operated Twin Valley Campground by Harlem Springs. We had many outings there for picnics, wiener roasts, scavenger hunts, train rides, holiday parties, and campouts. Often we invited the 1st-2nd grade class, taught by Bob and Ruth Morgan, to come also.

Dale and Janet Mallarnee taught the 5th-6th for many years and we did activities together. Since the church didn't have a youth Christmas program, I had our class do one and invite their parents. Sometimes in the fall we had Halloween parties and other times they were called Fall Parties. Either way, we had fun dressing up, carving pumpkins, playing games, taking hayrides and spooky train rides.

When our oldest child, Mike, was born, we never knew if someone was going to be in the nursery to care for him while we taught Sunday School. What a blessing it was when John and Phyllis Beck began staffing the nursery every Sunday for 2 hours during Sunday school and late church. They were always there and our

children enjoyed their nursery days. I praise God for their ministry. Mary Lou McClelland also helped in the nursery for many, many years.

After a few years, Lynn and I started a Jr. High youth group, which met not only to learn about Jesus but to help others and to do fun activities together. The youth from our church brought their friends and soon we had a big group to take to ball games, skating events, retreats, boating, and to visit our shut-ins. At least twice a year we would take our Sunday School class and the youth group to visit them. We met so many people that we wouldn't have otherwise met!

The Jr. High youth would raise money to help with various activities. Some of our most fun ways were to have "rock-a-thons" where someone would be rocking in chairs all night long. After attending church camp and meeting new friends, the Jr. Highers wanted to invite that youth group to an overnighter at the church. A great time was had by all! During Karolyn Mallarnee's time as student leader, the Jr. High kids began to sponsor a child from a third world country. The monthly fee was raised by the youth and sent regularly! Summer activities included going to Geauga Lake Park, boating, water skiing, swimming, and camping. Usually a progressive dinner was held where we traveled from house to house for our supper. Christmastime brought making cookies and practicing for a program at church.

After Cherub Choir and Jr. Choir were started, those took the place of the Sunday School/Youth Group Christmas programs. The amount of talent, work, and fun those programs represented can't be measured. Many families began attending our church because of our children's programming whether it be Sunday School, choirs, or youth group.

After One Way started, Lynn and I helped with it by going to Ichthus in Wilmore, Kentucky. We shared a bus with the Boy Scout troop from our church. That was interesting to say the least because you never knew for sure if the bus was going to make it wherever you were going. Many times Lynn drove the bus. When we took it to Ichthus one year, I think we had to stop every hour to add oil!!! It was a very long trip! I even remember using the bus to take our Jr. High youth group to the Christian radio station in Canton over spring break. It really was fun to travel altogether. Back to Ichthus . . . Dave Nelson asked us to go because a car had to follow the bus. We have so many memories of Ichthus: huge crowds sitting on the hillside listening to Christian singers and speakers, rows of porta-potties, rain, snow, cold showers, no showers, or walking to someone's house for a warm shower! 15,000 people taking communion together is something I'll never forget!

Beth Ury, wife of Rev. Bill Ury, painted the mural in the 3rd-4th grade Sunday School room. We have tried to preserve it and have only painted the other three walls over the years. When the Sunday school addition was added the first room on

the right was the 1st-2nd grade room. Mr. Clair Close built cupboards with shelves and drawers for the teacher. After seeing them, Lynn asked him if he would build the same for our classroom. That was before Lynn was a carpenter! Later, Lynn added onto our set so that I would have a place to store VBS and craft materials. Also, the janitors then had an upstairs cupboard.

Vacation Bible School has changed a lot over the 47 years I have been involved with it. Lasting only 1 week now instead of 2, it is a rotating time with 5 different stations. In the past, the children were taught in a single room with one teacher and helper for the entire time. Some years VBS was in the morning, but others it was held in the evening. There were some years no one wanted to be in charge to plan VBS so it wasn't held. After we began going to Jamaica to do VBS with a missions' organization, it became apparent that we needed to do that outreach in our local community. I felt the staff and especially the children, were happier in the morning, so we offered VBS from 9-11:30 the past 12 years very successfully. Our attendance is usually around 90 including helpers. I had a great staff who worked well together and we were able to reuse many units and decorations saving money and time. I hope this will continue.

About 10 years ago, Pastor Charles Naylor started our Wild Wednesday program with Connie Budinsky and Shelly Yoder. A meal was served first and then the children had music and lesson time. After a few years, there were enough children/youth to divide into classes by age groups. At first we had ages 4 - high school for Wild Wed. Then we added nursery for teaching parents and those parents who were involved in the adult Bible study. This past year (2015-2016) we have had ages 4 years - 8th grade. The entire church helps with Wild Wednesday by way of providing the suppers, being table parents, teaching, being helpers and providing monetary support. An opening upstairs with singing and skits was added between supper and class time. Sponsoring a mission project with a competition between the boys and girls added to the fun and seriousness of this project.

Most of the children who attend are not from our church or possibly any church. This is really a mid-week Sunday school program and our own "family". Children come and go with all the school and athletic activities, but feel welcomed anytime they come. Over the years our attendance has climbed to as high as 120, and, as low as, 30. Planning meals is tricky, but we've always had a great kitchen crew that adjusts as needed. There is no way I would have met all the young moms and dads that I have without this program. Hi-lights of Wild Wed. include Operation Christmas Child packing parties, Christmas programs, end of the year indoor picnics, and singing "Happy Birthday" every week to whoever's birthday it is. I am so thankful to everyone for their support of this outreach program! For some of our "kids", this is the only time they hear about Jesus!

Christmastime was special when our children were young. Hanging of the Greens ushered in the advent season. We helped decorate the church, made an ornament and ate supper together. Lighting the Advent Candles was very special! Families used to almost fight for the right to light those candles. The family Christmas Eve service was always special, too, with the Jr. Choir and Cherub Choir combining for that evening.

Lynn and I have been involved in various different praise teams the past 20-25 years. I think hearing contemporary Christian music at Ichthus and other concerts we took the young people to, as well as Christian CDs, culminated in our forming teams to play these songs for worship. Instruments included oboe, sax, trombone, trumpet, clarinet, guitar, drums, flute, cello, keyboard and vocals. I'm thankful our congregation tolerated all of our various instruments and joined us in singing praises to our Lord and Savior. Eventually a youth praise team was also started mainly with just vocalists. What a blessing these young people are to us!

I do not know who began the tradition of giving a different figure in the nativity to children in the Sunday School classes, but how special it was until the figures could no longer be bought at Ben Franklin. I hope those who have a complete set still use them at their homes during Advent. Now we give a special ornament to our Sunday School children/youth from the church.

Lynn and I have been blessed to go on several mission trips. That is something I had always wanted to do, but it didn't happen until 1993 when Chris Stratton asked us to accompany the One Way Youth Mission Team to Jamaica when our son was in high school. We asked if our daughter who was in 8th grade could also go along because they were the two of our children still at home. We, four, went and those two weeks changed our lives! All of us went on more mission trips both in and out of the US. Our daughter, Mariellyn, went on to work with TWR in Bratislava, Slovakia, for 2 years and then become a US2 through the UM Church for 2 years in Pulaski, TN, leading her own mission teams, and finally to becoming a Church and Community Worker in the UM Church at the Charitable Pharmacy in Columbus, OH, and to work at the West Ohio Conference Office in Missions and Justice. Lynn and I have been numerous places, but as we grew older, felt called to local missions. Vacation Bible School and Wild Wed. are two of those local missions. Lynn has his own ministry helping people however they need help, even more so now that he's retired.

May 18, 2016

WHERE ARE THEY NOW...

After marriage, Mica Berg Bartels and her husband, Brett, settled in the Monroe Falls/Tallmadge area, where she started a dental practice and he became the youth pastor for Northampton United Methodist Church. They had decided early on that when their three children became old enough for the youth group, they would need a different leader. After fifteen years there, Brett accepted an opportunity to establish a mission type church in a church building which had closed, now called "Heart For The City". They now have a growing congregation which gathers for worship, Bible study, a food and clothing ministry with monthly dinners, and other outreach activities such as cross-fit sessions. Mica plays the violin for worship services, and the children help in other ways. The family hosts exchange students during the school year.

Kelsey Berg Lucardie and her husband, Nate, have moved with their three adopted international children a few houses away from Mica and Brett to become active members of the church. As a doctor of internal medicine, Nate is able to care for their latest child, who uses a wheelchair. He also volunteers for Faithful Servants, a fellowship of doctors, where he is scheduled on a rotation once a month to give free medical care. The Lucardies have also hosted exchange students for several years. They all enjoy living so near their cousins, where frequent visits are possible.

Contributed by Carol Saltsman

Note: Mica and Kelsey are the daughters of Kent and Marilou Berg who were members of Carrollton First while the girls were growing up. An accomplished musician, Marilou served as organist and accompanist for the choir for a number of years. Kent served in several important capacities, including the Finance Committee.