

Heritage of Heresy
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Buffalo, N.Y.
1832 - 1982



About the Cover:

The two churches are line drawings, to scale, done by Mr. John Y. Sloan, architect and member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo.

On the left: The first Unitarian Church, built in 1833 on the corner of Franklin and West Eagle streets. Now occupied by The Title Guarantee Company, the building is the oldest in downtown Buffalo and the only remaining structure of Rathbun, "the builder of Buffalo."

On the right: the first Universalist Church in Buffalo, dedicated in 1833. Located on Washington Street between Swan and South Division, it was "a frame structure with a steeple and spire pointing to regions where all its members expected to go." The building is no longer in existence.

Heritage of Heresy
A history of the first 150 years
of the Unitarian Universalist Church
in Buffalo.

by Charles P. Jamieson

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Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the companies and individuals who purchased space for advertising and personal messages in order to make this book possible.

Also to the many people who will not be individually named, but who helped with the research, typing, editing, layout, and all of the pre-publication tasks.

Preface

This history has been prepared as part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo. The pressures of time and space permit detailed description of only the early part of the history of the Church with the remainder of the history given as brief chronologies. Every effort has been made to maintain accuracy in the material presented.

I would like to express my appreciation to those who helped collect material and offered encouragement. Opinions and interpretations are my own and do not represent an official viewpoint of the church.

CHARLES P. JAMIESON

Dedication

"Ah! The Women. Without them this Church would not have lived these hundred years. All that this Church has ever done for them or has ever meant for them they have paid back good measure, heaped up, shaken together, pressed down, running over!"

- from centennial sermon

**REV. PALFREY PERKINS
Unitarian Church of Buffalo**

This history is dedicated to the women of the liberal churches of Buffalo, both present and past, organized in various societies and associations, who through the years have labored inconspicuously and efficiently to foster liberal religion in our area.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Jamieson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

CHARLES P. JAMIESON

A Message From The Sesquicentennial Committee Chairmen

On December 4, 1981, eight members of the congregation met to make plans for a gala Sesquicentennial Celebration of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Buffalo, to take place the weekend of April 30th through May 2nd, 1982.

A printed history of the first 150 years of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Buffalo was one of the goals. Mr. Charles Jamieson agreed to write the text. With input from Messrs. Robert Beyer and Howard Valyear, he researched, wrote, and edited the text that is presented in this book. He also contributed most of the photographs from his personal collection. The entire book, from conception to final printing, was accomplished in four and a half months.

Meanwhile a handful of people sold space for advertising and personal messages to cover the major portion of the printing costs. We urge our readers to patronize the business people who were so generous in contributing to this project.

In addition to the first section of the book which is the history, we have added a second section composed of photographs, profiles, personal messages, and other items of interest. HERITAGE OF HERESY, we believe, will soon become treasured additions to our libraries.

As we join together in celebrating our 150th birthday, we wish everyone in our church community a bright future built on our illustrious past.

Our work in bringing to fruition this book as part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration has been a labor of love.

The following quote from a recent newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Cleveland reflects our feelings:

A RELIGIOUS ENTERPRISE

"We are a religious enterprise. It doesn't matter how effective our fund raising techniques, how neat our structure, how large our endowments, how relevant our action . . . not even how good our coffee . . . unless we can give meaning and value to the lives of people."

Mary Anne Iggulden
MARY ANNE IGGULDEN
Co-Chair

Mary Ann Schutkeker
MARY ANN SCHUTKEKER
Co-Chair

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Three Definitions

Heresy:

1. Adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma.
2. Dissent from a dominant theory or opinion in any field.

Unitarian:

1. One who believes that deity exists only in one person.
2. A member of a Christian denomination that stresses individual freedom of belief, the free use of reason in religion, a united world community and liberal social action.

Universalism:

1. The principles and practices of a liberal Christian denomination founded in the 18th century to uphold belief in universal salvation.

***— from Webster's Seventh
New Collegiate Dictionary***

Early Universalist and Unitarian Activity in Western New York

The founding of the "First Church and Society of Universal Restorationists of the Town of Buffalo" was the result of fifteen years of preaching in western New York, the Universalist heresy of ultimate salvation for all. The founding in the same month of the "First Unitarian Society of the Village of Buffalo" was accomplished by a handful of men, recent arrivals from New England who wished to hear preaching more consistent with their non-orthodox unitarian views than the sermons of the orthodox revivalists then so popular in upstate New York.

Both the Universalist and the Unitarian heresies were conscious outgrowths of a more fundamental heresy: the religious quest must be pursued with an open mind. As Rev. George Washington Hosmer, an early Unitarian pastor of the Buffalo church remarked in a sermon, "And now, finally, this great matter of spiritual freedom, the right of every soul to read its own Father's will, to think for itself in religious as well as on all other subjects; each one to form his own opinions and hold his own faith; each one taking the earnest appeal of Jesus, 'Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right!' Not to be controlled by pope of Rome, or bishops or presbyteries at home; each soul not only at liberty to think and form opinions and hold faith, but solemnly bound to do so. Spiritual freedom - the young soul's birthright - thank God the world is coming to a knowledge and feeling of it! But what a struggle this has been - suffering of martyrs - a battle of centuries."

In 1816, Benjamin Caryl, who had been driven out of Buffalo by the British attack in 1813 and had re-established his mercantile business in Williamsville, invited a young minister, Rev. Stephen R. Smith, to Western New York to preach the doctrines of Universalism. Boarding with Mr. Caryl in the summer of 1816, Rev. Smith established a preaching circuit which he served through 1817. A sufficient congregation was developed in Williamsville that "The legal forms and preliminaries were accordingly observed and a society duly organized consistency of about twenty-five male members. This occurred probably in August 1816 and constituted the third society west of the Genesee River."

The first Universalist service in Buffalo is described by Smith in his *Historical Sketches*. "On the 24th of June of this year (1816) a Masonic celebration in the then Village of Buffalo furnished a convenient opportunity for the introduction of Universal Salvation into the place. The appointment was accordingly made; at 5 o'clock, P.M., the same building and the same seats were occupied for the service that had been fitted up for the festival. It was a new barn attached to one of the taverns - and though its accommodations would now be thought humble, they were the best which the place afforded, and were duly appreciated by the citizens. A respectable auditory attended and gave very patient and candid hearing to a discourse from the 6th verse of the 126th Psalm. . . . The village was then rising from its ashes - two years and a half having elapsed since it was entirely burned by a detachment of troops from Canada - except for the lowly dwelling of a widow, the jail and one other stone edifice which resisted all attempts at conflagration. Such was the place, and the circumstances in which the gospel of reconciliation was first preached in one of the most important of its locations."

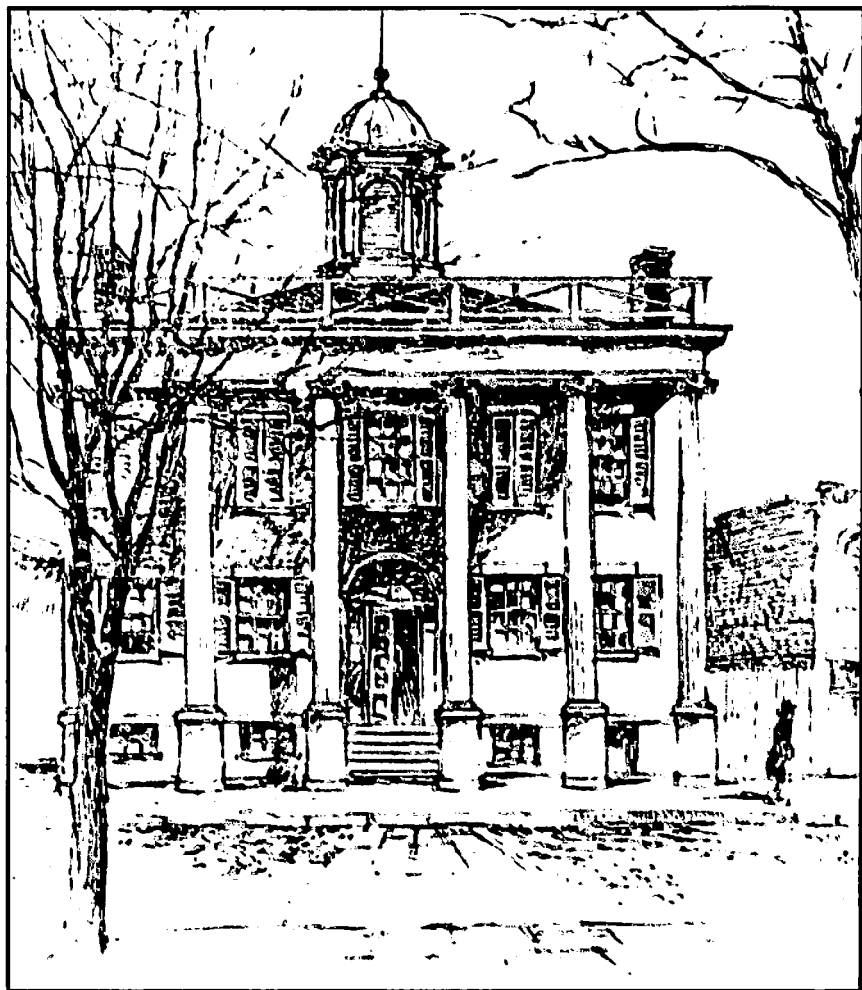
Smith's circuit eventually ranged from Chautauqua in the west to LeRoy in the east. Although he began a pastorate in New Hartford, N.Y. in 1818, he rode the circuit one more time, preaching thirty-two sermons and riding two hundred fifty miles on horseback during a one month period in January of 1819. Having sown the seeds of heresy, Rev. Smith departed, later to return to reap his harvest.

Because many of its dedicated members moved elsewhere, the Universalist Society in Williamsville did not survive. A society was formed in Buffalo in 1823, meeting first in the courthouse and then in a building which it shared with School No. 2. In June 1824, after attending a session of the Western Association of Universalists, Rev. Smith again visited western New York, preaching in Buffalo and Williamsville.

Although this early Universalist Society in Buffalo lasted only five years, it was served by three ministers: Revs. T. Gross, L.S. Everett and T. Fiske. In 1825, the Universalist minister then in Buffalo invited Rev. Mr. Pierce, a Unitarian of Trenton, N.Y. to Buffalo to deliver a sermon. A young merchant who had recently arrived in Buffalo from New Hampshire, Noah P. Sprague, listened to this sermon. Mr. Sprague later became one of the founders of the Unitarian Church.

An early Buffalo printer, H. A. Salisbury, published several Universalist books - one of them a review by Rev. Everett, of a Presbyterian clergyman's sermon on Universalism.

In 1821, Samuel Wilkeson's persistence and engineering ingenuity provided Buffalo with a good harbor and consequently Buffalo became the terminus of the Erie Canal which opened in 1825. The village grew rapidly with many of the new residents being from New England. Although the Universalist society in Buffalo expired in 1828, it is not surprising that another attempt would soon be made to establish a Unitarian Church.



ERIE COUNTY COURT HOUSE
OF THE 1830's,

On the ground now occupied by the "Buffalo Library."

Founding and Early History of the Churches

Few details are known about the founding of the lasting Universalist Church in Buffalo. Benjamin Caryl had returned to Buffalo from Williamsville and with Marvin Webster, Moses Baker, Ebenezer Day, James Durick and Augustus C. Moore constituted the first board of trustees which organized the congregation on December 6, 1831. First Rev. L. C. Marvin and then Rev. G. W. Montgomery arrived in 1831 and for a time preached for the new congregation on alternate Sundays.

Rev. Montgomery was the sole minister from 1832 to 1834. The cornerstone of the church building, the seventh in Buffalo, was laid May 17, 1832 and after completion the building was dedicated on June 5, 1833. Costing ten thousand dollars, it was described by *The Patriot*, a local newspaper, as "an elegant building which is an ornament to the city." Samuel Welch in his recollections wrote, "The first Universalist Church stood on Washington Street between Swan and South Division next to the Washington Street Baptist Church, thus anticipating the time when universal peace would reign: when the lion would lie down with the lamb. The church was a frame structure with a steeple and spire pointing to regions where all its members expected to go."

Members of the Universalist Church sometimes were socially ostracized. Welch wrote, "To my mind, grounded and early taught in the catechism of the orthodox Calvinistic Presbyterian faith, I believed that every one who was not born the second time, and who did not believe and comply with that doctrine, would be sent on his or her demise to scheol (hell). To hold to any heretical doctrine like that of the Universalists: that all were eventually to be saved, the propagators of such a doctrine, would all, indiscriminately, go forever to an ocean of burning fire. Therefore, we children were wont to look upon the Universalist Church with fear and horror, as the entrance to the gates and mouth of hell."

In 1834, the Buffalo pastorate of Rev. William I. Reese was cut short after only four months by the cholera epidemic which swept through the city. Three people were outstanding in their efforts in caring for the sick: Bridget, an Irish servant girl, presumably a Roman Catholic, died; Lydia Harper, a prostitute, who through those fearful days cared for the sick and dying with love and tenderness and Rev. Reese, who died.



Rev. William I. Reese

In a sermon much later, Rev. L. M. Powers, also a pastor in Buffalo, said, "Today these three live again - the heretic minister, the Irish servant girl and the woman of the street. They teach the eternal lesson. Not orthodox opinion, not high position in the world, not even a character with which the world most needs, but the life of love and sacrifice."

Sending his sermon to the Universalist Historical Society, Powers wrote, "Reese died a victim of cholera and to his sense of duty. One of our real martyrs. There is no reference to him in any library in Buffalo. So the world rewards its martyrs." Let this brief history repair the omission.

Rev. Russell Tomlinson was pastor of the Universalist Church from 1834 to 1837. The next pastor, Rev. David Pickering, stayed only a year because financial panic hit Buffalo in 1837 and the church could not afford a minister's salary. For five years the church was without a minister and for a short time the building was rented to the Trinity Episcopal Church. Rev. William Andrews was the minister for one year (1842-1843).

* * *

Wave after wave of revivalistic orthodoxy swept through upstate New York in the early part of the nineteenth century. Rev. J. H. Hotchkin, a Presbyterian, wrote, "But it was in the year 1831 that the most extraordinary displays of the power and grace of God, in reviving his work and converting souls, in western New York were exhibited. The synod of Genesee in their narrative for September, 1831, say, 'Last year only a few churches were reported as refreshed by the dews of divine grace; but this year but a few within our bounds are left without sharing more or less in the blessing of God. The Presbytery of Buffalo report nine hundred communicants added to

their churches during the year!" The prominent revivalists of the time were Rev. Charles Finney and Jedediah Burchard.

Noah Sprague later recalled: "During the early part of 1831, and for some years preceding, there was at times much religious excitement in Buffalo. Protracted meetings carried on with great enthusiasm were not unusual. While discussions on revivals were going on, the few Unitarians here became acquainted with each other and began to express their great desire to hear preaching more consistent with their feelings, and more consistent with their views of Christianity."

Buffalo then being a village, it is not surprising that Noah Sprague learned that Rev. John Pierpont of Boston, a Unitarian, had stopped at the Eagle Tavern on his way to Niagara Falls. Sprague went to Niagara Falls and, acquainting Rev. Pierpont with the situation in Buffalo, obtained a promise that an effort would be made to introduce Unitarian preaching into Buffalo. As a result of subsequent correspondence, Rev. Sullivan of Keene, N.H., preached three sermons in the Buffalo Court House in November, 1831. Sufficient interest resulted in a meeting being scheduled to organize a Unitarian congregation. "When the evening came, it proved to be very stormy and but three persons, Mr. John Beals, Mr. Samuel N. Callender and myself (Sprague) appeared. We had, however, religious services. One of Dr. Channing's sermons was read by Mr. Beals." Shortly thereafter, on December 2, 1831, three additional men, Ira A. Blossom, James McKay and Elijah Efner, met with the original three to meet the legal requirements of six members for a Board of Trustees for a church. "The First Unitarian Society of Buffalo" was organized.

Little was done for some time although there was correspondence with friends in Boston and preachers passing through Buffalo delivered several sermons in summer 1832. In fall of 1832, friends in Cambridge, Mass., said that "the services of Rev. William S. Brown, an English clergyman of learning and ability, could be obtained at a salary of \$1000 per annum; and that from a fund originally raised for missionary purposes in India, the sum of \$333.33 per annum, for three years, would be advanced and in the end probably given, or never called for. (One half of this sum was afterwards repaid.)" It would appear that creative financing is not a new invention.

"Mr. Brown arrived here on a stormy Friday evening in October 1832. A fire occurred in the building engaged (for services) the same night and burned it to the ground. The trustees then obtained a room for the Sunday following in the second story of a school house then situated on the corner of Pearl and Mohawk Streets, and used for public worship by the Universalist Society, where our first Sunday's

services were conducted. The day was rainy and cold, the room smoky and uncomfortable, and the audience slim. It was altogether a very discouraging beginning.

"The trustees then obtained from Mr. Rushmore Poole a room in the fourth story of a building on Main St., between Swan and Seneca. To get access to it we had to pass through a long passage from the street and ascend three pairs of dark, crooked stairs; and as cold weather came on, it was found impossible to keep the room comfortably warm. Yet at times we had fine audiences in the room, and Mr. Brown's able sermons attracted much attention."

Despite disappointing growth in the congregation and partly because of difficulties in renting meeting space, the Trustees resolved to erect a church building. For two thousand dollars a lot was purchased on Franklin St. at Eagle and construction of the building was contracted to Benjamin Rathbun for six thousand dollars.

In the subscription for raising money to build the church, the sale of pew stock obtained commitments from sixteen families and "nearly as many young men." Among the first purchasers were the original trustees and the law firm of Fillmore and Hall. The sale agreement said, "Immediately after completion of said church an auction will be held for the choice of said pews." Although the results were not recorded, the auction was one way to raise a bit more money!

The cornerstone was laid in summer, 1833, the church being dedicated in late fall with Rev. Pierpont preaching. Now occupied by The Title Guarantee Company and much changed in appearance, the building is the oldest in downtown Buffalo and the only remaining structure of Rathbun, "the builder of Buffalo." (The Coit House, now on Virginia St., is the only older building in Buffalo. The Buffalo Lighthouse was built in 1833.)

Rev. Brown, a student of the distinguished English Unitarian Thomas Belsham, had married the granddaughter of Joseph Priestly, eminent chemist as well as Unitarian clergyman. Rev. G. W. Hosmer, a later pastor, wrote, "They (Rev. and Mrs. Brown) were romantic persons - came to this country expecting to find a Garden of Eden, or better still, the New Jerusalem. They were sadly disappointed. In a few months Mrs. Brown's delicate health failed, and she went to relatives in the southwest, and died there. Mr. Brown, with their three children, went from here to her friends in Kentucky, and thence to Texas, among its first settlers, still seeking the land of promise. In Texas he and his little son died, and the two little girls, left orphans in the wild life of such a country, were adopted by a New Orleans gentleman."

Rev. Hosmer describes an incident in which Rev. Brown went to a revival meeting during which the revivalist Mr. Burchard consigned all Unitarians to the pit and spoke insultingly of "Old Tom Belsham," Brown's mentor. Rev. Brown rose to the full height of his commanding person in the midst of the great congregation and stopped the preacher, charging him with falsehood. Recovering his tranquility quickly, he turned to the people, begged their forbearance for his interruption, told them how hard it was to hear his old friend maligned, and gave notice that in his own church he would preach on the subject. Hosmer had seen "in manuscript, the masterly sermon, which Mr. Brown did preach, to a great audience."

Noah Sprague had a somewhat different view. "Mr. Brown remained with us until the spring of 1834. He was an able, learned man and preached acceptably; but he had many eccentricities, which prejudiced many against him; the climate did not agree with some of his family, and the salary which we paid him was inadequate to his support, and he sent in his resignation. The Society however had increased under his ministrations and immediately made efforts to obtain another minister."

The English school of Unitarians from which Rev. Brown came tended to emphasize that Jesus was only a man. Many New England Unitarians, without defining the relationship too precisely, did believe, however, that there was a unique relationship between Jesus and God. A minor difference in today's terms, but enough reason in those days, perhaps, to account for a feeling of "eccentricity." Heresy has its degrees!

Apparently Rev. Brown had devoted most of his efforts to preaching because it was under the next minister, Rev. Albert C. Patterson, a young man ordained in 1834, that much of the organizational apparatus of a functioning congregation was established. In Noah Sprague's words, "Mr. Patterson entered upon his duties with great zeal, and new life was infused into the congregation through his means. A Sunday School was for the first time attempted, when only eight scholars were to be found in the Parish of suitable age to attend. Yet with the small number, and a few poor children who were induced to attend, the school was regularly conducted thereafter without intermission. Baptism had been performed by Mr. Brown, but the Communion of the Lord's Supper had never been celebrated until after Mr. Patterson's ordination. Mr. John W. Beals and myself were chosen Deacons and fourteen persons attended the first Communion."

"Mr. Patterson preached for the Society until the spring of 1836, when ill health led him to send in his resignation, which was ac-

cepted. Mr. Patterson's preaching and his ministry were quite acceptable, and the Society increased considerably while he was with us; but I think he was disappointed and discouraged. He had not made, I think, that impression upon the public generally that he had expected, and the progress of the Society was so slow and the labor so severe, that he finally gave up."

Some time after his resignation, Rev. Patterson became an Episcopalian.

On May 15, 1834, the women of the Church met and adopted a constitution for the "Ladies Unitarian Association" whose objective was "to aid the Sunday School and to promote other charities connected with the First Unitarian Society in Buffalo." Minutes for one meeting read, "First Wednesday of June 1834. Association met at the house of Mrs. Sprague. The subject of establishing a Sunday School in the Unitarian Church and of raising a fund for the purchase of a suitable library having been submitted to consideration and discussed, it was proposed that each lady should subscribe a small sum independent of her annual subscription for the purchase of books, which was adopted.

"Then the ladies each in her turn read aloud from Ware on the formation of the Christian character. The evening spent in social conversation and music." (Ware was a Unitarian minister who became Professor of Divinity at Harvard.)

A choir was established with Noah Sprague serving as director until the end of Rev. Patterson's pastorate. An organ installed early in 1836 by Hook of Boston, Mass., was considered as remarkably fine toned by all performers. The first organist was Mrs. Smith who later married James McKay, one of the founders of the church.

The feverish land speculation in Buffalo resulted in payment of the Church's debt in 1836. Three members offered a tract of land for sale at twenty-eight thousand dollars, six thousand dollars down, to be paid to the Church and the remainder to be paid in notes. John W. Beals, Francis H. Macy and Noah Sprague bought the land on those terms and the Society's debt was discharged. Whether the investment proved sound for the purchasers has not been recorded.

The American Unitarian Association, started in Boston in 1825, was seeking to build a nationwide constituency. In 1835, the Association sent Rev. G. W. Hosmer of Northfield, Mass., on a missionary tour to the west: Buffalo, Louisville, New Orleans, Mobile and Richmond. In a letter dated November 28, 1835, he wrote, "I arrived in Buffalo on Sabbath morning; went to the Eagle Tavern, where I was poorly accommodated at the enormous price of two dollars a day. I

had but a single hour to spend at Niagara, and that in a snow storm. I returned to Tonawanda and took a line boat to Buffalo, arriving Tuesday. In the forenoon I went aboard the "Commodore Perry" for Erie; had a good run along the lake until evening; then came on a storm - snow, rain and darkness. It was fearful. Many of the passengers were sick, some were terror-stricken. I determined that, should the boat fail, I would tie two handkerchiefs I had in my pocket around my arm, and then to the biggest floating thing I could find. We at last made Erie light, and at twelve o'clock anchored in the harbor."

After this introduction to Western New York and his return to the pleasant town of Northfield, Rev. Hosmer received invitations to become pastor from churches in Buffalo, Mobile and Richmond. The invitation from Buffalo was especially appealing because an influential group of citizens were starting a "University of Western New York," a venture in which Rev. Hosmer would participate. Rev. Hosmer accepted the Buffalo invitation, influenced by the strong urging of the American Unitarian Society which saw the potential for a large, influential church in Buffalo.

Ministries of Rev. George Washington Hosmer and Rev. Stephen Rensalaer Smith

The ministries of Rev. Hosmer in the Unitarian Church and of Rev. Smith in the Universalist Church established these two churches as vital, enduring organizations in the community of Buffalo.

Rev. Hosmer was installed as minister of the First Unitarian Society of Buffalo in the autumn of 1836 with Rev. Dr. Dewey preaching the installation sermon. In the summer of 1836, the speculative balloon in Buffalo had burst when it was discovered the Rathbun interests had cashed many checks which were forged. Benjamin Rathbun served time in jail for his part in the affair.

The financial storm which struck Buffalo was more severe than the storm Rev. Hosmer encountered on Lake Erie. He wrote on August 15, 1837, "The hard times affects the churches. One has failed and the other has executions on it of \$18,000." On March 24, 1940: "My society is almost overwhelmed with bankruptcy. They do not, and cannot, pay me all my salary. They owe me more than \$1,000, and meantime I am in debt \$500. I am beginning to feel the weight of pecuniary embarrassment - a new burden to me." May 9, 1842: "My parish is much the same that it has been. Universal ruin is the order of the day here. My society are many of them bankrupts, and many have left to seek employment elsewhere. So we starved, hoping for better times." It was fortunate that the building debt was paid.

In the summer of 1836, ten years before the founding of the University of Buffalo, subscriptions were solicited for the University of Western New York, the purpose being to endow six professorships at \$5,000 each and to secure twelve or fifteen thousand dollars for the general fund. A building lot was even presented by one of the city's wealthiest men, Judge Walden, and College Street was to mark the western boundary of the proposed campus, the other borders being North and Allen Streets and Delaware Avenue. Rev. Hosmer's opportunity to help in the establishment of a major university was swept away in the financial storm.

Certainly severely disappointed in the turn of events, the new Unitarian minister, nevertheless, entered vigorously into the life of

his church and his adopted city. Excerpts from Rev. Hosmer's letters tell the story. "October 23, 1836. Though I am fatigued with my first Sunday's services, and it is now near ten o'clock, I will write you a few lines. I have been installed and made a beginning, and I trust that all will be well here. We have a beautiful church and a fine organ; so far people are well disposed, and I hope not disappointed in me. August 15, 1837. No means are spared to drive away our people. Some of the pulpits hurl forth arguments and denunciations against us. Our people are not all as earnest as they should be. Some of the warm afternoons this summers, our pews have been quite naked. I think we have had as few as one hundred, two or three times; but usually in the morning our church is pretty well filled, often more than two hundred. I find my labors more exhausting here than in Northfield. On the whole, then, do you think I wish myself back in Northfield, with its safe fund, and quiet parsonage, and shady trees? No, I do not; I think I was needed here, and do not regret that I came. October 18, 1837. I have been here one year. The number of my audience has doubled in that time, though the real strength of my society has not increased in that proportion. My nerves get shattered a good deal on the Sabbath and I do not get up again until near the middle of the week. My stint is to write one sermon each week, and during the year I do not think I have missed more than three weeks."

Despite difficulties, the Society grew under Rev. Hosmer's leadership. In 1837, the choir was first formally organized with the election of George W. Houghton as president. For twenty-five years, Mr. C.F.S. Thomas rendered loyal service to the choir as conductor, singer and member of the Committee of Music. At the Quarter Centennial celebration it was noted that "our Church Music, at all times respectable, has often been justly ranked as the best of any in Buffalo."

In 1842, some reconstruction of the church building was done. In 1845, an addition to the lot was purchased and the church was lengthened. A sufficient number of the new pews were sold to defray the expense of the enlargement. Further building improvements were made in 1849. "With the steady perserverance which has always marked their proceedings," the Ladies Association acquired a parsonage. The property was purchased and fitted up and fully paid for under their careful direction.

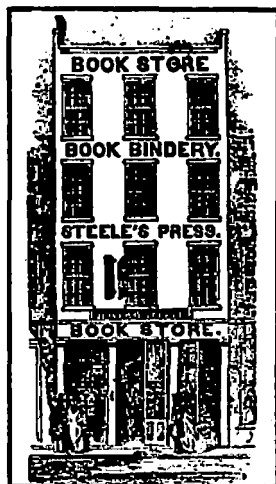
Education always being a prime interest to Rev. Hosmer, he investigated the status of public schools as soon as he was settled in his new home. Their status was disastrous: the schools were few and crowded, uncomfortable and unhealthy, being reserved for the children of the poor and still charging partial tuition. Most children

went to private schools, if their parents could afford it, or to no schools at all. In Hosmer's words, "This state of things could not be borne by people from New England."

In 1836, the need for a good public school system was not self evident to the citizens of Buffalo. Many objected to the expense. One city father remarked, as he saw a school being built with good (expensive) stone, that he was willing to pay for bread and meat for the poor, but he would not pay for pound cake. Another basis of objection was religion.

Rev. John Lord, eminent pastor of a large Presbyterian Church in Buffalo stated in a lecture as late as 1849 that, "It is high time that the truth was spoken on this subject, at whatever risk of odium or abuse from men who are engaged in perpetual jubinations over the free school system. We contend . . . that every religious denomination should establish and sustain schools of their own. From the necessity of the care, the State may provide for the education of the poor and destitute; but beyond this she passes her legitimate office." (In the standard histories of Buffalo, incidentally, there is not a hint of religious opposition to the establishment of public schools.)

We do not know Hosmer's exact role in establishing the public school system. We do know he was concerned about it and that in 1837 a law was passed to authorize the appointment of a City Superintendent of Schools. R. W. Haskin was appointed as superintendent but resigned when he found the position carried no power. Noah Sprague was offered the position "and he consulted with his minister (Rev. Hosmer), proposing to him to do the work and have the small salary, while he would nominally hold the office." Since ministers were then forbidden by law to hold office, this arrangement was judged not satisfactory and Sprague declined the office. Oliver Gray Steele, a printer and a Unitarian, accepted the position and is now justly considered the founder of the public school system because of his sustained efforts. He wrote, "The duty of preparing the law for the organization of the system devolved upon Judge Hall and myself, and I well remember going to his house by appointment, amidst a furious snow storm, which continued the whole day, and during which the original school law of our city was prepared." Nathan Hall was another prominent Unitarian.



In a letter dated March 24, 1840, Rev. Hosmer wrote, "We have been detected, we Unitarians, of doing more than any other denomination for free schools. Last week they turned out the superintendent of schools, a Unitarian, and Mr. B., a teacher, may be sent after him, though we hope not. I am honored with the accusation of being one of the founders of the free school system in this city. Our system has done well and it was feared the honor of educating the people would come to us. Therefore, at the late charter election, the Unitarians were all turned out (defeated), and the schools and all the city business put into the hands of Trinitarians. Such proscription will do us more good than hurt. It is something to be strong enough to be feared. Bigotry is growing rabid, with fear that the heretics will do mischief."

Steele was later returned as Superintendent on two separate occasions. With the establishment of a high school in 1853, the public school system was firmly established. (Not content with civilizing Buffalo through education, Steele went on to be the moving force in constructing sewers in Buffalo.)

In 1832, New York State law held that no person was qualified to be a witness in court unless he swore to a belief in God and the hereafter. A young politician from Buffalo, Millard Fillmore introduced in the State Legislature a bill to remove this religious requirement in the courts, the same year he became a charter member of the Unitarian Society of Buffalo. He served in Congress from 1839 to 1842.

In 1843, John Quincy Adams visited Buffalo. Fillmore delivered the official welcoming speech to which Adams replied, "I cannot forbear to express here my regret at (Fillmore's) retirement in the present emergency from the councils of his nation. There I hope he will soon return for no service will be rendered by a more able or a more faithful public servant. Adam's diary contains the entry, "October 29, 1843, Buffalo - Mr. Fillmore offered us seats in his pew at the Unitarian Church, which we accepted. The preacher was Mr. Hosmer, Matt. VI:31. An excellent and eminently practical sermon."

An able lawyer and a skillful politician, Fillmore was elected Vice-President of the United States in 1848 and became President in 1850 upon the death of Zachary Taylor. As part of the "Compromise of 1850," Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law which was signed by Millard Fillmore. Many in the north were outraged; Buffalo was one of the stations in the "underground railway," an illegal conspiracy among northerners to transport escaped slaves to Canada. The historian John T. Horton wrote, "As to why the North persisted (in evading the law), why the President's own state and city were among the worst offenders in this matter, the President had some

direct and painful intelligence from his own church in Buffalo, and from his own minister, the Unitarian divine, Dr. George W. Hosmer, who spoke out against the Fugitive Slave Law to the President's face. Some of Dr. Hosmer's parishioners would have liked him to do more, even to drive the President from the congregation; still others, rather than be contaminated by the President's occasional and sinful presence resigned their pews and departed."

In 1856, Fillmore ran for President as candidate of the American Party, the "Know - Nothing" fragment of the Whigs. Although the party was nominally hostile to foreigners, Fillmore hoped to use it as a vehicle for holding the Union together. In his campaign, Fillmore himself displayed no hostility to foreigners. Rev. Hosmer expressed plainly his disapproval of Fillmore's policies and voted against him. Fillmore was soundly defeated and hopes of a national party died.

One of Rev. Hosmer's children recalled that "In 1861, a noteworthy scene was beheld in the church at Buffalo. Mr. Fillmore stood in his usual place, serene clear-complexioned, with a courtly grace of bearing that had lately won admiration for him in the great courts of Europe, as it had before done in the White House. By his side, stood a man, gaunt, angular, sallow, who, with melancholy face, bent reverently at the sound of the prayer. The minister spoke with solemn words; then coming from his pulpit, looked for a moment into the serious eyes of the visitor, while he pressed his hand. It was Abraham Lincoln passing on to the fulfillment of his stormy destiny."

All three men in this scene were perceptive observers of the human scene, each eminently successful in pursuits requiring knowledge of people. It is likely that they had no illusions about what lay ahead. Fillmore realized that his dream of a peaceful, united nation was dead. Lincoln, a man of peace, was to preside over a nation engaged in the cruelties of the first modern war. Hosmer, with several sons, was to lose one of them in that war.

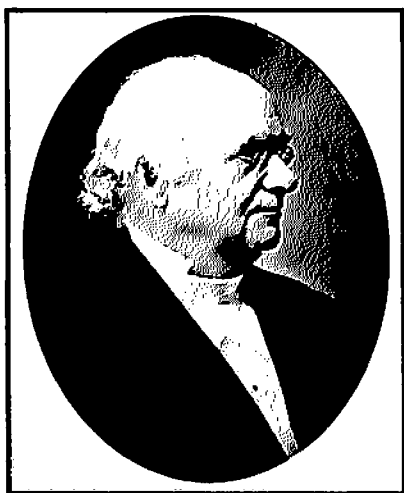
Lincoln had stayed in the American Hotel. He found time to play leap frog with his two sons and the hotel keeper's son. Many years later, Edward Michael, a distinguished lawyer, was to recall this incident on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday when he was presented with a testimonial as the oldest member of the Buffalo Unitarian Society.

Fillmore entertained Lincoln in his home. Neither man ever divulged anything about the conversations they held.

Since Millard Fillmore is the most eminent person in the history both of Buffalo and of the Unitarian Church, it is appropriate to note that not even hindsight provides a solution to the political dilemma he faced. Fillmore deplored slavery and he believed, correctly, that

signing the Fugitive Slave Law would destroy his political career, although he probably underestimated the bitterness which his personal character would be attacked. Both houses of Congress passed the law by large margins in an attempt to preserve the Union and in conformity with Constitutional protections for slavery. Hindsight suggests that industrial growth and the development of the west would have rendered slavery economically obsolete. Hindsight also must note that the great war which Fillmore sought to avoid was decided, despite equal bravery and, toward the end, equal skill on both sides by industry, wheat, railroads - and Abraham Lincoln. Had the Second Battle of Bull Run been fought in 1852 instead of 1862, it might have ended the war, to the benefit of neither the slaves nor the Union. Let him who is omniscient cast the first stone.

The Unitarian Society continued to develop its Sunday School through Rev. Hosmer's ministry. Oliver Steele, not content with starting the public school system, was superintendent for twelve years. One boy recalled, "We boys used to like to get out and run around the flat top of the wall surrounding the old burying ground across the street where the City Hall (now old County Hall) now stands. My most vivid recollection of Mr. Steele is as doing police duty, capturing us on the wall and sending us back to our classes." At the end of Mr. Steele's tenure, James Hosmer, son of Rev. Hosmer, made his first public speech giving a silver medal on behalf of the Sunday School to Mr. Steele.



Rev. Geo. W. Hosmer

A later Superintendent, reminisced, "Dr. Hosmer was usually present at the school, and had a class; but upon the summer evenings he would have the young people come to his house, and as they were seated about the spacious parlors, or on the floor at his feet, would tell them stories from the Scriptures, or explain some sacred picture on the wall. The eager and expectant faces of the children showed how gladly they took in the lessons offered them in this simple style."

In 1859, a fire almost destroyed the church building. "It was May day; the ground was covered with snow; they met to worship in Kremlin Hall, and their hearts were heavy and sad. At this juncture the Niagara Street Methodist Society generously offered them the use

of their church. Dr. Hosmer was deeply touched by this act of Christian courtesy. He wrote: "Twice blessed we are for our calamity - blessed by the large charity from our Methodist neighbors, and blessed again by having a better church than before!" Many early records were lost in the fire.

On Wednesday evening, October 16, 1861, the First Unitarian Church of Buffalo celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rev. Hosmer's arrival as minister of the Church. Congratulatory speeches were given by Noah Sprague, Oliver Steele, George Hosmer, his son, and Millard Fillmore who presented Rev. Hosmer with a silver tea set on behalf of the congregation. Fillmore said, "As Pastor and flock we have dwelt together in peace, sympathizing with each other - rejoicing in prosperity, and mourning in adversity. Firm in your own religious opinions, and tolerant of those with whom you differ, you have been able to maintain and propagate your own views, without incurring sectarian hatred and jealousy. For this, let me congratulate you, and those who stand around you." It honors both men that, despite deep disagreements about matters of great importance, they never lost love and respect for each other.

The proceedings of the anniversary celebration along with materials relating to the early history of the Church were collected in a *Memorial* volume, copies of which are in the present Church.

The great war did come. Members of the church pitched in to support the Union cause. Dr. Hosmer, visiting Washington when the first call for assistance to the soldiers went out, wrote to the Women's Benevolent Society. Within twenty-four hours a well filled box of supplies for the soldiers was dispatched to Washington, the first to arrive there. As a result of a letter written by Rev. Hosmer, later published in papers throughout the country, the Sanitary Commission (forerunner of the Red Cross) was organized to send to soldiers and hospitals supplies the government could not furnish. During the war the Benevolent Society met once a week to sew all day to make the necessary supplies.

In September 1862, Rev. Hosmer's two sons, Edward and James enlisted in a regiment. On January 24, 1863, Edward died of "typhoid pneumonia" in Baton Rouge.

In 1866, Dr. Hosmer left Buffalo to become President of Antioch College, taking with him the love of his congregation and the respect of the community in which he had lived for thirty years. Samuel Welch, not a Unitarian, wrote, "After a long pastorate when he left us for other fields of usefulness, we all felt as if parting with a long tried personal friend."

* * *

Rev. Stephen R. Smith returned to begin his ministry in the Universalist Church on May 1, 1843. The city, recovering from the financial panic which started in 1837, was increasing rapidly in population, business and wealth, providing a rich stimulus to his powers. The Universalist denomination was growing: Rev. Smith in 1843 preached dedication sermons for new churches in Aurora, Lewiston and Lockport, a dramatic change from his circuit riding days. The Universalist Church in Buffalo was prosperous and Rev. Smith's eloquence and diligence quickly made the Church a powerful religious influence in the city.

Rev. Lord, aroused by the dangers of Universalism, as preached by this magnetic newcomer in Buffalo, seized the rather inappropriate occasion of a funeral "to wound the feelings of some Universalists who were present." Rev. Smith delivered a response in the form of a series of sermons setting forth the reasons for rejecting the doctrine of endless misery and examining other Universalist doctrines. "These, though in the midst of summer, called out good houses." This theological debate apparently made a strong impact in the city but details have not been recorded.

The Universalist Church had a large Sunday School which was financed in part by a summer excursion. In a letter to his daughter, dated August 15, 1843, Rev. Smith evokes an earlier era with such charm that the full text is given here.

"Maria: When your letter was received, we were preparing for our Sunday-school excursion; and as we sent the papers containing an account of it, and had nothing very special to write, I have delayed the answer to the present date.

"Of the excursion little more can be said, except about the manner in which it was got up, and the profits of it for the benefit of the school. We began by the appointment of a committee of fifty ladies and gentlemen, which appointed a subcommittee to obtain a boat, another for the cars, another for providing tables in the grove, another for providing refreshments on the boat, etc., etc. The proper committee then called on the families who would furnish provisions, and ascertained what each would provide. Immense heaps of boiled ham, quarters of lamb and veal, meat pies, chickens, bread, crackers, and cakes, were thus provided together with butter, cheese, and fruits, fresh and dried, lemons, lemonade, ice creams, tea, coffee, sugar, candy, - indeed everything, except liquors, that could be thought of. In this manner, good provision was made for all that we supposed to go, and luckily, there was sufficient for three times as many.

"The school and teachers were to go free; and there were of these somewhat over two hundred. Tickets for passage only, admitting a gentleman and two ladies, were sold for fifty cents; they were to pay for refreshments on the boat and in the grove.

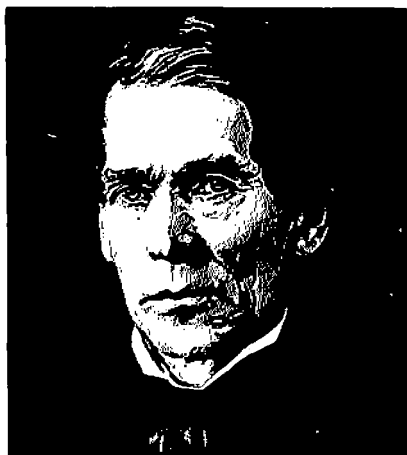
"To the surprise of everybody, between three and four hundred tickets were sold on Wednesday, the day before the excursion. More were procured, and nearly six hundred taken. The consequence was, that, after loading to suffocation two boats, hundreds returned home without going on board. Finding that the tickets and refreshments on the boats would more than cover all expenses, the table in the grove was made free to all. Some, however, chose to pay; but hundreds did not. Not the slightest accident occurred, and yet twelve hundred and thirty persons were counted, as they came ashore from the Columbus and about three hundred had previously arrived in her British majesty's steamer Kent. After paying all expenses, the profits of the excursion gave us about two hundred dollars for the purchase of books for the school. Such a turn-out was never seen here before, and it went off happily for all parties."

The Sunday-school excursion was a notable affair, accounts of it appearing in the Buffalo papers. After leaving the boats at Fort Schlosser, the happy picnickers took "cars" to Iris Island (Goat Island), the scene of the banquet. Five clergymen from three denominations, Universalists, Unitarians and Christians were present. Rev. Hosmer offered an appropriate prayer and Rev. Smith made an address to the assembly. The address was printed in the Commercial Advertiser.

Rev. Smith had suffered from poor health but the first few years of his ministry were a period of improved health and of contentment - but certainly not of ease. In another letter to his daughter, dated January 9, 1844, he wrote, "I have just reached another breathing time, after more than a month of as close and hard labor as I have ever performed. You can judge: I began the week of Thanksgiving with two sermons on Sunday, a temperance lecture on Tuesday evening, a Thanksgiving sermon on Thursday, and all the visits and calls of the week. The following Sunday, two sermons and a funeral. Monday another funeral. On Wednesday, I went to the Falls and Lockport. Thursday I preached the dedication sermon in the morning, and another discourse in the evening. On Friday, returned home, nearly worn out. The next Sunday, two sermons again. . . ."

In the same letter he describes a custom apparently characteristic of, at least, Universalists of the time. "On Wednesday, another temperance lecture; and on Thursday, a donation visit, with from twenty to one hundred persons, all day, from nine in the morning and more than two hundred, all the time, from six till ten o'clock in

the evening! Universalists, Episcopalians, Baptists and a few Presbyterians and Lutherans were here: all very pleasant, cheerful and friendly, and appeared very happy. They gave us seventy dollars in money, and clothing and provisions enough to make an aggregate of about three hundred dollars. Like our excursion, everything was done on a large scale, and all passed off happily."



Rev. Smith

Rev. E. Case recalled a sermon by Rev. Smith. "The first time we felt the irresistible power of this eloquence was at the dedication of the church in Cowlesville, N.Y., May, 1847. All nature was in bloom, and the very heavens and earth were glad with flowers and fragrance. Hundreds of people had come from all parts of Erie and Niagara Counties; and the church was crowded to its utmost capacity. The day was somewhat warm and the windows and doors were all open, and wagons were pushed

up against the side of the church, and crowded with the outsiders. Father Smith preached the dedication sermon from the text, "Our Father which art in heaven." There was one strain in it of most powerful and captivating eloquence which we will never forget, but which we shall remember when we die and go to that heaven to which the sainted preacher has gone. It was based, on this occasion, on the words "Our Father." It began with the idea of God's being our father in our natal hour, and it rose through all the stages of life's journey, step by step, degree by degree, height above every height and Alp upon Alp, till at last, after all God's watchful care and kindness, which have never forsaken us, He calls us home to our Father's house of many mansions. The preacher's mind never flagged nor faltered; the eagles wing never tired as he mounted heavenward; the sum of heaven in its unveiled splendor never dimmed his eye. On he went, till at last, summing up all his strength in some one word that had the power, the fullness and vigor of all the rest, he capped the climax and left the vast audience still as death, and filled with amazement."

A J.H.T. described in the *Christian Ambassador* a visit with Rev. Smith. "It was in the evening when I arrived in Buffalo, and after nine when I arrived at his house. I should have not disturbed him at so late an hour, if I had not felt that he was already a familiar friend. I knocked at the door, and in a few minutes heard footsteps in the hall;

and then a voice, "Who's there?" I answered who I was, and that if he pleased I had come to stop with him. "That's right," he replied, and with an emphasis that made me feel that it was right, and that I was welcome. The door opened and before me stood Stephen R. Smith: tall, slender, a little bent, and with a face like one in Peale's Court of Death. His hair was light and straight; his eyes - I cannot remember their color, but I shall never forget that they beamed with delightful earnestness, and that it was difficult to tell of which they partook the most, the head or the heart. His head was elevated upon a long skeleton neck, was narrow, and if measured outside remarkably small. His mouth was very large, and compressed at the corners; altogether his appearance impressed me, at once, with his greatness. He took me by the hand, and dropping from those lips, over which words never stumbled, the affectionate salutation of 'brother', I felt such a pressure as always comes from a deep, unselfish soul.

"The kindness and urbanity with which he welcomed me to the hospitalities of his house, the care and anxiety he expressed when I retired that I should sleep and rest well, I must say that I never felt more perfectly at home. His conversation as we sat together hour after hour in his study or perambulated the streets, was not only filled with immense knowledge and the richest thought, but was extremely agreeable and fascinating."

Although his spirit never flagged, the last few years of his life did not deal gently with Rev. Smith. Death took his mother, two daughters, a son and Mrs. Caryl, the wife of his old friend who had invited him to Williamsville many years earlier. In Dec. 1845, he was afflicted with a cough which grew worse until his death. The third Sunday of March 1849, found him feeble but he forced himself to preach in the morning - his last sermon. Soon thereafter he resigned as pastor. But Rev. Smith had established the Buffalo Universalist Church as a strong bastion of his faith.

A witness of Rev. Smith's last hours wrote, "He had wished to die on Sunday, and his wish was gratified. When the bells rang for Church in the morning, he listened to them with deep interest, and finally selected the bell of the Universalist Church from among the rest, and appeared to listen to it with unusual pleasure. In the afternoon they rang again, but his senses had become more feeble, and he did not hear them. He waited until he thought they should have rung, and then asked for them - why they did not ring? The day was a very beautiful one, and closed with a beautiful sunset; and with its close, in accordance with his own wish closed his earthly career." Thus Rev. Smith died, February 17, 1850.

A Partial Chronology of Later Events

(T signifies Unitarian; V signifies Universalist)

- 1855 - 1858 (V)** Rev. E.W. Reynolds, Minister, delivered sermons "strong for the abolition of slavery, provoked discussion and dissension, and disturbed the peace of the Society."
- 1866 (V)** Church of the Messiah built on Main St. north of Huron.
- 1870 (V)** Church of the Messiah burns and is promptly rebuilt.
- 1871 (T)** Unity Club was established "to develop among our young people a warmer and more active interest in the church, to promote social and friendly intercourse, and mutual improvement among its members." The Club presented plays and held dances at least until 1927.
- 1878 (T)** February 4 after morning service, the "venerable Noah Sprague" chaired a congregational meeting to appoint a committee to raise funds for a new church.
- 1879 (T)** August 21. Noah Sprague died.
- 1879 (T)** October 15. Cornerstone laid for Church of Our Father, on west side of Delaware Ave. between Mohawk and Huron. Iron box emplaced containing a memorial history of the Society, a list of officers and members of the Church and Sunday School in 1833 and in 1879, photographs of Noah P. Sprague and John W. Beals, the *Courier Express* and *Commercial* and several documents containing a record of the church history.
- 1880 (T)** December 26. Rev. Hosmer stood in a pulpit for the last time to assist in the dedication of the Church of Our Father.
- 1880 (V)** December 11. Philomathean Society formed to pursue literary interests. Later chartered as the Literary Club of the Church of the Messiah.
- 1881 (T)** July 5. Rev. Hosmer died in Canton, Mass.
- 1881 (T)** Rev. Cutter delivers a series of lectures to young women to capacity crowds in the Church. One comment: "Very slowly women's natural rights are being recognized. That she has a right to think, to inquire, investigate, to express her thoughts in writing, and to speak and act according to the dictates of reason and conscience, is admitted by a very small portion of the civilized world."

- 1889 (V)** Grace Church, mission church of Church of the Messiah, organized with Rev. Thomas Payne called as Minister the next year.
- 1892 (V)** New building of Church of the Messiah located on North St. at Mariner was dedicated.
- 1892 (T)** Using the former residence of Mayor Scheu, Neighborhood House founded as a community center to serve densely populated area bounded by Main, High, Jefferson, Genesee and Chippewa.
- 1894 (T)** Parkside Alliance of Liberal Christian Women organized with assistance of Church of Our Father. Soon thereafter the Parkside Unitarian Society was organized and built a church on Amherst and Fairfield Streets.
- 1904 (T)** Church of Our Father sold to Buffalo Consistory. Construction of present building was begun on land donated by John J. Albright. The architect was Edward A. Kent. The congregation temporarily held services in the Universalist Church.
- 1904 (T)** Women's Benevolent Society celebrated seventy years of good work. A member said, "The hordes of immigrants who were sometimes left over in Buffalo owing to the frozen canals which stopped their progress westward, afforded a wide field for the work of the budding society in the 1830's and 1840's."
- 1906 (T)** Renamed First Unitarian Church of Buffalo held first service in new building on Elmwood Ave. at West Ferry St. The building is "a beautiful example of the English parish church."
- 1908 (T)** Col. Charles Clifton paid remaining twenty-five thousand dollars of the mortgage on the church building on the condition that the pews would be forever free. He did this to honor the memory of his mother, a lifelong member of the Church. A plaque honoring this gift is in the church sanctuary.
- 1911 (V)** Building erected for Grace Universalist Church on Lafayette Ave. at Hoyt St. After the Church ceased operation in 1927, the building was sold to the Studio Theater in 1930.
- 1912 (T)** Saturday, June 8. First Unitarian Sunday School held its sixty-first annual picnic, a trip by Steamer Dorothy to Buckhorn Island.
- 1912 (T)** Parkside Unitarian Society ceased operation because of improved transportation (the automobile) and the proximity of the First Unitarian Society with which the members

became united. (In 1925, the building was sold to the City to become a library.)

- 1922** (T) Dr. Samuel P. Capen, a Unitarian layman, began tenure as Chancellor of the University of Buffalo with the proviso that "complete academic freedom was to be preserved," achieving for a few years the dream cherished by Rev. Hosmer many years earlier.
- 1923** (T) Rev. Boynton delivered a series of six sermons on evolution, creating considerable excitement among area churches.
- 1924** (T) Dr. Samuel P. Capen elected to the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Church.
- 1925** (T) Parish house enlarged to provide present space for kitchen, Alliance Room and boiler. After removal of the kitchen and boiler from the basement, the basement was renovated to provide rooms for Boy Scouts and the Church School.
- 1927** (T) Church of Our Father demolished. Contents of metal box from under cornerstone were scarcely recognizable because moisture had ruined them.
- 1935** (T) Meadville District Unitarian Conference met in Buffalo and discussed resolution to work out a statement of moral affirmation which may serve as a program for social action. E.H. Letchworth, Board Chairman of the host church, stated that "the continual emphasis of ethical problems is driving members of our congregation away."
- 1937** (T) Arnold Cornelissen, former conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, begins thirteen year tenure as Organist and Choir Director.
- 1950** June 4, 1950. In his last bacclaureate address, Chancellor Capen defended academic freedom stating, "In the present state of public hysteria about the Communist conspiracy and Communist infiltration into all kinds of organizations, the universities are going to be the objects of more rather than less suspicion."
- 1950** (T) September 2. Rev. Herbert Hitchen presented a testimonial to the oldest member of the Church, Edward Michael, on his one-hundredth birthday. Mr. Michael played leap frog with Abraham Lincoln and his sons during Lincoln's 1861 visit to Buffalo.
- 1951** (T) Dr. Boynton, Professor at the University of Buffalo and former Minister of the Unitarian Church, again created turmoil among local churches by publishing *Beyond Mythology*. A conservative churchman referred to the book as "the

epitome of the blind and stupid humanism that so many are floundering in today'' in his Easter sermon.

- 1952** (T) The First Unitarian Church withdrew from the Council of Churches of Buffalo and Erie County because that organization adopted a resolution insisting on the deity of Jesus. The Church continued as a voluntary member without voting privileges.
- 1953** December. The Unitarian and Universalist Churches under the creative leadership of Dr. Hitchen and Rev. Cope joined together to form the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Buffalo. A new suburban church was planned.
- 1954** The building of the Calvary Episcopal Church at 96 Los Robles St. in Williamsville was acquired and redecorated just in time for the opening service of the new suburban organization on March 7, 1954.
- 1954 to 1956** The Buffalo and Williamsville Churches were served by a co-ministry. Dr. Hitchen, Unitarian, became responsible primarily for Buffalo; Rev. Cope, Universalist, for Williamsville. Both carried secondary responsibility for the total church. Merger required that each affiliate with the denomination of his opposite number, so that both became "Unitarian Universalist" ministers. The two churches functioned under a single Board of Trustees, on a single budget. The affairs of each were supervised by two elected Parish Councils responsible to the Board. Each unit conducted its own parish meetings in addition to those that involved both churches. They shared the services of Dorris Trafton, as Director of Religious Education.
- 1956** Chancellor Capen died and a memorial service was held in the Buffalo Church.
- 1957** A fire which destroyed the pulpit in the Buffalo church was severe enough to crack the solid granite slab underneath. Otherwise damage to the church was minor although some quick cleanup was required to make the church ready for Easter.
- 1957** Dr. Hitchen left for a new pastorate and Rev. Cope accepted a teaching position at St. Lawrence Theological School. In May, corporate autonomy was voted for Williamsville. Williamsville assumed the mortgages on its church and parsonage and inherited in perpetuity income from the Anthony Fund and a claim to the Grace Fund held by the New York State Universalist Convention. (This trust derived from the 1930 sale of the Universalist Grace Church to Buffalo's Studio

Theatre.) Williamsville was also assigned a declining subsidy for its first three years as a fledgling operation: \$4,500 for 1958; \$3,000 for 1959; and \$2,000 for 1960.

- 1958** In January 1958, Rev. Paul N. Carnes was called as minister to the Buffalo church. At that time the Church adopted the name Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo.
- 1962** Church purchased property at 699 Elmwood with legacy from Lucilla Dunbar.
- 1962** September. Barbara Wagner became Choir Director of the Church.
- 1964** The legacy of Edwin Edwards was used as a starter for a building fund; sixty thousand dollars was spent on church renovation and a new kitchen.
- 1965** Rev. Paul Carnes participated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Dr. Dana Greeley (UUA President) and many others in civil rights march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery.
- 1968** Church offers symbolic sanctuary to two young men resisting military service in the Viet Nam War.
- 1973** Celebration of twenty-fifth anniversary of Rev. Carnes' ordination. A memorial plaque was placed in the Church sanctuary.
- 1974** Buffalo Church celebrated sesquicentennial anniversary of the American Unitarian Association. A time capsule was placed in the sanctuary of the church.
- 1976** Elmwood-Ferry Senior Center started as a result of work by Social Concerns Committee. It is still functioning under the auspices of the Linwood-Oxford Association.
- 1975** Rev. Stephan Papa called to Buffalo Church as associate minister.
- 1976** The Church Choir under the direction of Barbara Wagner presented an opera, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, in recognition of the nation's bicentennial.
- 1977** Rev. Paul Carnes elected President of Unitarian Universalist Association.
- 1978** A survey of members to assist Ministerial Search Committee asked, "What theological positions do you hold?" with the following results from 241 replies:

Theist	14%	Atheist	3.2%
Humanist	41.7%	Not sure	14.4%
Agnostic	20.5%	Other	6.1%

- 1978** Rev. Stephan Papa accepted call as senior minister to the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.
- 1978** Rev. Glyn Pruce installed as Minister of the Church.
- 1979** Donald Reidell, member of the Buffalo Church, ordained as UU Minister.
- 1979** Rev. Paul Carnes died. A memorial service was held in the Buffalo Church.
- 1980** A Refugee Committee was formed to sponsor a Gmong family from Southeast Asia. After the family relocated to Oregon, the Committee assumed sponsorship of a Vietnamese family.
- 1981** Barbara Wagner honored by being designated Minister of Music.
- 1981,** The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo celebrates its
- 1982** Sesquicentennial.



Barbara Wagner

Epilogue

Thus was heresy established in two somewhat different forms in two different churches. This narrative has not dwelt on the details of the old theological debates: the heresies of the early days could be preached in most churches today without, probably, causing a ripple of excitement. The basic heresy that the religious quest must be pursued with spiritual freedom remains. This heresy is not, and never has been, the exclusive property of the Unitarians and the Universalists. If, however, the past is prologue to the future, the Unitarian Universalist Churches and Fellowships of Western New York will continue to bear true witness to the fundamental heresy which brought Rev. Stephen R. Smith to this frontier area so long ago.

About The Author

Charles Peter Jamieson was born in Buffalo. He earned an M.A. Degree in Physics at the University of Buffalo and works as a physicist at Airco Carbon in Niagara Falls.

He joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo in 1969. He served on many committees and was Chairman of the Board of Trustees for two years.

As a member of the 1982 Sesqui-centennial Committee he completed as a special project, the written history of the first 150 years of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Buffalo.

Mr. Jamieson is an outstanding photographer and has won many awards for his expertise in that field.

Chuck and his wife Carol, with their two children, Barbara and Edward, reside in Buffalo and enjoy a summer home in Maine.



Charles P. Jamieson

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The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo contains many historical records, some in the form of church records and some in the form of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings and other material.

The availability of the library of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society and the helpfulness of its staff are acknowledged with gratitude.





UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

695 Elmwood Avenue at West Ferry

Drawn by Lawrence McIntyre

Appeared in Buffalo Evening News

JULY 13, 1980 LANDMARK SERIES



photo credit: FREDERIC MARSCHALL

Rev. Paul Nathaniel Carnes

Paul Nathaniel Carnes

Paul Carnes was the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo from 1958 until 1977 when he left to assume his responsibilities as the third President of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston.

The following profile of Paul Carnes is taken from the Unitarian Universalist Association Directory:

Dr. Paul N. Carnes, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, died at the President's House in Boston on March 17, 1979 at the age of fifty-eight. He fought lymphoma for fifteen years with uncommon courage and selflessness. When the disease became

more virulent in the last eighteen months of his life, Paul continued to work with only slightly diminished energies. Less than two months before his death, he made an extensive tour of many Unitarian Universalist churches in the southwest and west.

Paul was born in Jeffersonville, Indiana, on February 1, 1921, the son of a Methodist minister. He was graduated with honors from Indiana University with an A.B. degree in 1942 and, following World War II, attended Harvard Divinity School where he was graduated with honors in 1948. In 1966 he was awarded an honorary D.D. degree by Meadville Theological School.

During the war, Paul served as an infantry officer in Tunisia and was captured by the Germans on Christmas Day, 1942. He spent the remainder of the war in prison camps where he acted as a Protestant chaplain.

He was ordained at the First Unitarian Church of Youngstown, Ohio, October 3, 1948, where he served as minister for seven years. From 1955 to 1958 he was minister in Memphis, Tennessee, and from 1958 to 1977 he served our church in Buffalo, New York. At the 1977 UUA General Assembly in Ithaca, New York, Paul was elected President of the Association.

He was the author of several books and publications, including *For Freedom and Belief* (1952), *Introduction to Unitarianism, Free Church in a Changing World* (Chapter 7), and *Longing of the Heart*, a book of meditations (1973).

He was present in Selma, Alabama, in 1963 for the civil rights march and had been active throughout his ministry in furthering racial justice and better human relations. In 1973 he helped to form the Inter-racial and Interdenominational Ministers' Association in Buffalo at a time of racial tension.

He was always a vigorous supporter of the denomination and active on many of its committees. He served on the UUMA Executive Committee 1961-63, was secretary of the Coordinating Council of Study Commissions 1960-63, member of the Committee on Goals 1965-67, Commission on Appraisal 1968-73, ministerial settlement representative in the St. Lawrence District 1970-77, and member of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee 1963-75.

Paul married Freda M. Wolfe in 1945. She survives him together with their son and daughter, Paul, Jr. ("Nat") and Dr. Molly Carnes.

A letter from Henry Ware Eliot to Dr. Frederick May Eliot in 1946 proved to be prophetic: "I heard at the First Church in Cambridge a week ago a young man named Carnes, whom I suppose to be not over 25. He is, I think, a born preacher, a young man with a future . . . I hope that he is 'going places.' "

Rev. Glyn Pruce

Glyn Pruce was born in London and educated in the British school system. Toward the end of World War II, he served with the British Merchant Marine, continuing after the end of the War and seeing service in Asia and elsewhere. He received his education and theological training at London, Oxford and Boston Universities. In 1960, Glyn married a United States Air Force nurse he had first met at Oxford and, in 1963, moved with her and their son, Timmy, to Boston. Since Glyn's wife and son are of African-American descent, they established, as he puts it,



Rev. Glyn Pruce

"an interracial household in a Boston suburb, a very interesting experience!" On Glyn's return to work in London in 1972, Edna decided to remain in Boston, and they have been divorced for some years.

Glyn is an experienced minister who has previously served four Unitarian churches on both sides of the Atlantic. He came out of an English Anglican tradition, by way of a liberal Christian route, to Unitarianism in Great Britain and, ultimately, Unitarian Universalism in America. From 1958, he was for five years minister of an English Unitarian church, moving then with his family to First Church (Unitarian Universalist) in Boston. While there, he was also involved as a teacher at Boston and Northeastern Universities. In 1972 Glyn returned to England for two years to reorganize the British Unitarians' National Department of Education and Youth. At the conclusion of his service in that position, he returned to America where he accepted the position of Interim Minister for one year at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Atlanta, Georgia. From 1975 until the spring of 1978 he served as minister of the Lakeshore Unitarian Church in a Montreal suburb.

The congregation in June 1978 voted to call Rev. Pruce to the position of Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo.

Rev. Donald J. Reidell

Don was ordained at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo in 1979 and received into the Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Fellowship the same year.

He serves the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church in Albion, New York and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Hamburg, New York. He is also a "circuit rider" to Unitarian Universalist Churches and Fellowships in the western New York and southern Ontario regions, serving congregations in Jamestown, East Aurora, Hamilton, and South Peel.



Rev. Donald J. Reidell

Don Reidell is an English teacher and Chairman of the English Department at Sweet Home Senior High School. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the State University College of Buffalo, a New York State Administrative Certificate from the University of Buffalo, a Master of English Education, a Master of Theology from Canisius College, a Clinical Pastoral Education Certificate, and a Ministerial Fellowship Certificate.

Rev. Reidell and his wife Marjorie, and their children Erick, Kimberley and Marcus, are members of the Buffalo Church. They reside in Clarence, New York, a suburb of Buffalo.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst

(1954 - Present)

MINISTERS

1954-1957	Robert L. Cope
1958-1964	John M. Kolbjornsen
1965-1967	Howard A. Waterhouse
1968-1969	Guest Speakers
1969-1971	Blaine F. Hartford
1972-1974	Paul Treat II
1975-1981	Felix O. Lion, D.D.
1982-	Carl F. Thitchener



photo credit: EDWARD J. BEARD

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst

Rev. Carl F. Thitchener

Rev. Carl F. Thitchener, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst in Williamsville, was born in Rochester, New York, and had been an active member of the First Unitarian Church in that city for over 20 years before attending the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkley, California. During that time he was involved in almost every area of church activity as a church school teacher, youth group advisor, finance drive chairperson, trustee, and lay preacher. He has served the Unitarian Universalist Association at the denominational level as chairperson of the Liberal Religious Youth Advisory Council and as Public Relations Consultant to the Department of Extension. Prior to becoming a student at Starr King School he served on that institution's board of trustees.



Rev. Carl F. Thitchener

Rev. Thitchener is a past president of the ACLU Chapter in Rochester and during his business career served as president of Specialized Business Services, Inc., SBS Industries, and IMC Services, Inc. — all companies in the field of communications and information technology. His wife, Maureen, is presently General Manager of ASK IV Micrographics Division of Rhone Poulenc Systems Company, which acquired their former business. They have been married for 28 years and have four adult children.

Ministers of The Churches

Unitarian Ministers

1832-1834 William Steill Brown	1908-1926 Richard Wilson Boynton
1834-1836 Albert Clarke Patterson	Jan. 1923-
1836-1866 George Washington Hosmer	June 1923 Gwylym Issac, Asst.
1867-1874 Frederick Frothingham	1924-1926 Vincent Brown Silliman, Asst.
1874-1876 Martin Kellogg Schermerhorn	1926-1933 Palfrey Perkins
1877-1887 George Webber Cutter	1934-1937 Harvey Swanson
1888-1889 Pitt Dillingham	1937-1942 Richard Wilson Boynton
1890-1897 Thomas Roberts Slicer	1939-1940 Robert W. Lawson, Asst.
1898-1901 Adelbert Lathrop Hudson	1942-1949 Harry Chamberlain Meserve
1902-1906 Frederic Curtis Brown	1950-1953 Herbert Hitchen, D.D.

Universalist Pioneer Preachers

1816 Stephen R. Smith	1823-1827 Thomas Gross
	L. S. Everett
	Thomas Fisk

Universalist Ministers

1831 G. W. Montgomery*	1879-1881 J. H. Hartzell
L. C. Marvin*	1881-1886 W. E. Gibbs
1831-1834 G. W. Montgomery	1886-1898 J. K. Mason
1834 William I. Reese	1898-1905 L. M. Powers
1834-1837 Russell Tomlinson	1905-1907 J. D. Corby
1837-1838 David Pickering	1907-1927 L. O. Williams
1838-1842 (no minister)	1927 Francis Bishop
1842-1843 William Andrews	1927-1939 Bruce Swift
1843-1849 Stephen R. Smith	1939-1944 Carleton Fisher
1849-1853 Alexander Laurie	1944-1947 A. L. Booth
1853-1854 Richard Eddy	1947 Ralph Boyd
1855-1858 E. W. Reynolds	1947-1950 Robert E. Davis
1858-1870 J. H. Hartzell	1950-1953 Robert L. Cope
1870-1879 L. J. Fletcher	<i>*preached alternately</i>

Grace Church Ministers (Universalist)

1890-1893 Thomas Payne	1914-1916 B. C. Ruggles
1893 Edward Hathaway	1916-1920 Clinton L. Scott
1893-1895 Howard S. Markley	1920-1924 John Sayles
1895-1897 A. U. Hutchins	1924-1927 Edward C. Downey
1897-1914 H. P. Morrell	

Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Buffalo (1953-1958)

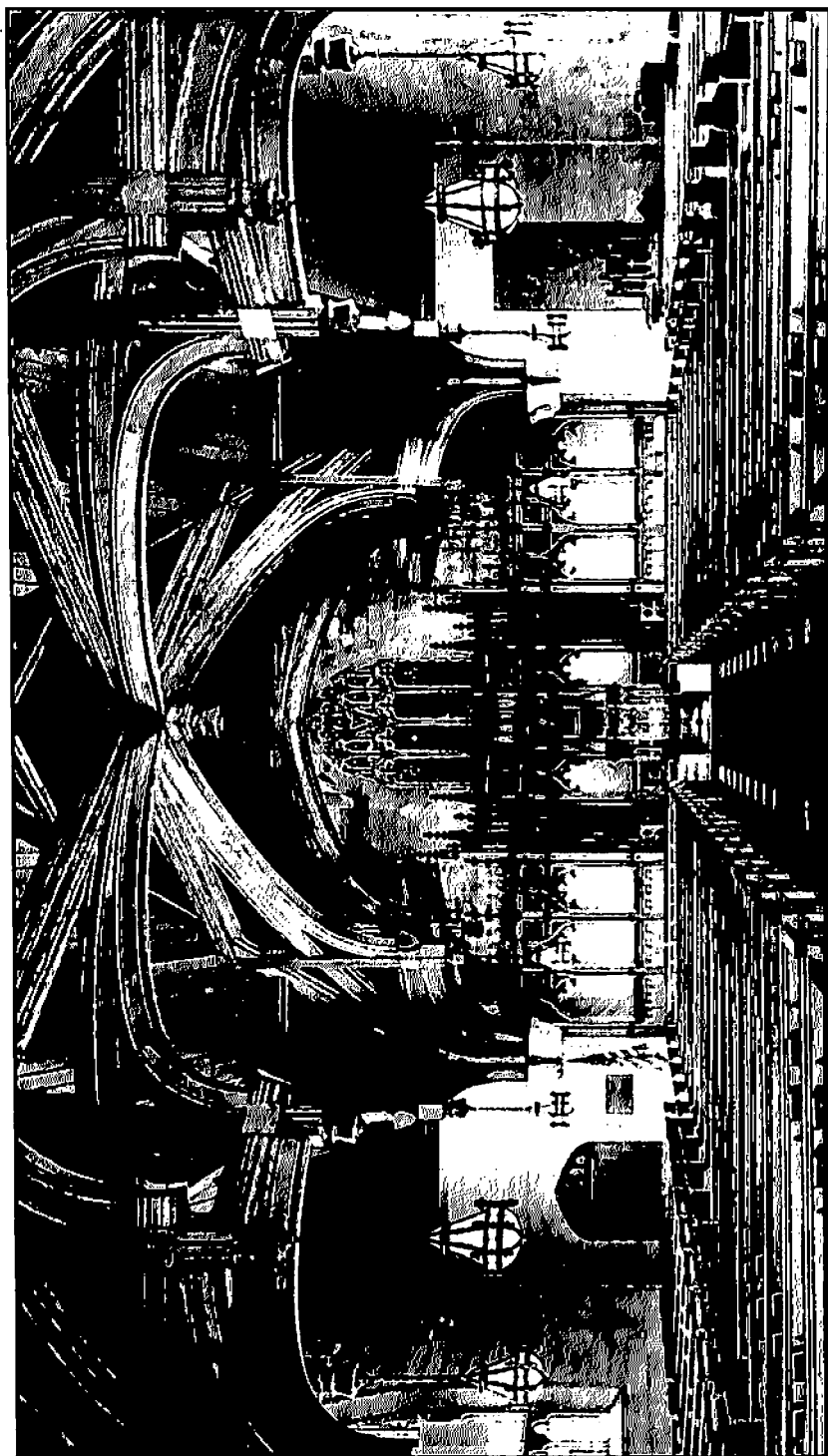
Ministers

1953-1957 Herbert Hitchen, D.D.	1953-1957 Robert L. Cope, Co-Minister
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Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo (1958-present)

Ministers

1958-1977 Paul N. Carnes, D.D.	1970-1971 Loring B. Prosser, Assoc.
1961-1963 George K. Beach, Asst.	1972-1973 James B. McKelvey, Asst.
1963-1966 Robert E. Wolf, Asst.	1975-1978 Stephan Papa, D. Min., Assoc.
1966-1968 Jerry D. Wright, Asst.	1977-1978 John K. Hammon, Interim
1968-1969 Frank W. Carpenter, Asst.	1978- Glyn Puce



Interior, Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo.



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF VESPERS

ANTHEMS COMPRISING THE VESPER & MATIN SERVICE

SUNDAY, MAY 2 - 5:00 PM

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH CHOIR
BARBARA WAGNER, DIRECTOR**

Soloists:

Elizabeth Holt Brown, Marlene Badger,
Henry Pendleton, Sam Herr,
Alta Mayer

Perform Works by:

Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev,
Tschaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff,
Shostakovich

Unitarian Universalist Church
Elmwood Ave.
at West Ferry St.
Donation \$3

TITLE SERVICE FROM

**110 FRANKLIN STREET
SINCE 1886**



**THE TITLE GUARANTEE COMPANY
854-2982**

The advertisement above is taken from a March 1982 issue of the Buffalo Law Journal.

The cornerstone on this building at 110 Franklin Street bears the following inscription:

This building was erected in 1833 by the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Buffalo which worshipped here until 1880.

Abraham Lincoln, in February 1861, attended church services here and sat in the pew of his host, Millard Fillmore.

1931

Recent History of Several Church Organizations

Several organizations in the Church have existed in some form almost since the beginning of the Unitarian and Universalist Societies in Buffalo. Each, as is evident from their activities, goals, and achievements, plays a unique role in sustaining and strengthening the vitality of the church.

The Buffalo Society of Unitarian Universalist Women

In 1953, when the Unitarian and Universalist churches of Buffalo united, the women of each church had long-established societies associated with the national organizations of their respective denominations. The former was known as the Alliance of Unitarian and Other Christian Women, the latter as the Association of Universalist Women. The Alliance, meeting for lunch, was referred to as the Day Group. The A.U.W., meeting for dinner, became the Evening Group. This set-up continued for about ten years. After the merger of the two denominations nationally, the women's organizations reorganized as the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation in May of 1963. In our church we dropped both previous names and became officially the Buffalo Society of Unitarian Universalist Women and more familiarly the Women's Society. We are a unit of the U.U.W.F. At present there is only one group which meets for lunch on the second Friday of the month. During the years there have been other groups known as the evening group, the new women's group, the junior group - all under the wing of the U.U.W.F.

The Women's Society works for the improvement of our local church and of the denomination. For many years through fairs and rummage sales the mortgage on the church property was reduced by \$1,000.00 each year until it was completely paid.

After that improvements were made in the building, especially the redecorating and refurnishing in 1974 of the room since known as the Women's Lounge. Contributions have been made to such projects as carpeting for the sanctuary, redecoration of the minister's study, and draperies for the Parish Hall.

Another successful fund raising project is the annual book sale which attracts avid bibliophiles from the community.

Scholarships are given each year to our summer camp at Uniron-dack. Two people have received scholarships to help them attend theological schools: some years ago Virginia Klein at Union Theological School and at present William Wagner at Starr King.

Receptions following memorial services are provided by the society if the families wish. The dignity of these receptions and of other formal occasions is enhanced by the antique silver coffee services which were gifts to the Society from the families of Olive Williams and John Sprague.

Our largest contribution each year to service outside the local church goes to the Clara Barton Camp for Girls with Diabetes which is located in North Oxford, Massachusetts. This camp is celebrating its 50th anniversary, having been established by the Association of Universalist Women and taken over by the U.U.W.F. in 1963.

The Society also contributes to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and has twice in recent years received their award for social action - social service achievement.



1973 - Helen Faxlanger serving on occasion of celebration of Rev. Paul Carnes' 25th year in ministry.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON



Annual Book Sale, enjoyed by all ages.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

The Choir

Since 1836 when Noah Sprague contributed \$400 for the purchase of an organ, music has been an important part of the Unitarian and Universalist churches in Buffalo. Mr. Sprague became the first organist and choir director.

* * *

In her 20 years as organist and choir director of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, Barbara Wagner has developed an inherited chorus of 10 to a peak membership of 60. Presently the choir consists of approximately 50 lay people and 4 paid soloists, and is occasionally augmented by members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra or other professional musicians. This is a tribute to the conducting skills, rehearsal techniques, and caring leadership of Mrs. Wagner.

The three goals she has always sought are to provide unquestionably good music, performances which are well prepared and transmit the essence of the music, and selections from the musical literature which stretch the listeners' horizons by the frequent inclusion of new or undeservedly neglected older works. These criteria apply both to music for Sunday services and the choir's concerts.

In building the choir up to its present level, Mrs. Wagner has sought music lovers first. If they turned out to have formal musical training, so much the better, but it was the spirit that really mattered.

A roll call of the choir members would turn up occupations like teacher, physician, lawyer, salesman, masseuse, researcher, secretary, writer, model, arts administrator, realtor, grant writer and country-western guitarist, and only a handful with any significant amount of musical training.

Each year the choir performs a concert or opera. These have included performances of Tippet's "A Child of Time," Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms," Elgar's "The Music Makers" and three Douglas Moore operas: "The Ballad of Baby Doe," "Carry Nation," and "The Devil and Daniel Webster."

The choir has cut several records, the latest being *Let The Rafters Ring*.

In 1981 the title of Minister of Music was bestowed upon Mrs. Wagner.



1976 — Bill and Barbara Wagner receiving applause after performance of "The Devil and Daniel Webster."

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

The Church School

William Ellery Channing once wrote:

"The great end in religious instruction, whether in church school or family, is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own;

"not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own;

"not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth;

"not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs;

"not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought;

"not to bind them by prejudices to our particular sect or peculiar notions, but to prepare them for impartial, conscientious judging of whatever subjects may, in the course of Providence, be offered to their decision;

"not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, which rest on no foundation but our own word and will, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly right and good. . ."

It is in accordance with these principles that Unitarian churches maintain schools for the religious instruction of children.

* * *

The Buffalo Unitarian Universalist Church School is flexible in its approach, changing its format from year to year under the guidance of the Religious Education Committee.

This year (1982), the children have been attending the adult service for about ten minutes before going to classes. In addition, informal worship services are held in the Alliance Room once a month.

Teachers often use or adapt curricula available through the Unitarian Universalist Association. However, the last five weeks of 1982 will be devoted to a local curriculum devised to help children become more at home with their Unitarian Universalist heritage and with the local church.

The Church School and the Religious Education Committee devote many hours to special programs which foster a feeling of community among the students. There is a traditional Halloween party, a Christmas service, and a pot luck dinner. In the spring of 1982 the Channing Circle hosted a St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District youth conference which was attended by more than one hundred youth.

A Church School library is also maintained.

The many individuals who work to achieve a successful Church School program are recognized in a special church service, "Marigold Sunday," at the end of the school year. Since 1976 there has been an annual Church School "Person of the Year" award. Recipients have been:

1976 - Joan Roddick
1977 - Elizabeth Swopes
1978 - Joseph Malkiewicz
1979 - Marjorie Reidell
1980 - Kathleen Ludwig
1981 - Dewayne Beery and
Molly Livingston

Their names are inscribed on a plaque in the Parish Hall.



Church school students welcome Rev. Glyn Pruce upon occasion of his installation Fall 1978.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON



photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

Tug-O-War, church school picnic.



Church School Halloween Party.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

The Laymen's League

The Laymen's League was established early in the national organization of the Unitarian Church and was for men only. Many Leagues were formed when Unitarian churches came into being, but today the only one still flourishing is in the Buffalo church.

Its original purpose according to the by-laws is "to contribute to the total church program."

For many years it published a magazine called "The Lantern" and also advertised extensively in newspapers throughout the country to promote Unitarianism.

The Laymen's League in the Buffalo church was organized about 1958 and in the early 1970's opened membership to include women.

Each Fall a picnic is held to coincide with the beginning of the new church year.

Social and educational dinner meetings are held monthly, and a special party is held at Christmas time with a large tree being provided by the League. The tree is trimmed by the guests to bring pleasure to the entire congregation throughout the holidays.

The Laymen's League generously contributes to many activities and projects within the church, including the purchase and planting of several ornamental trees on the church grounds. On a larger scale, in the Fall of 1978 the League conducted a three-day rummage sale which netted \$3,000, half of which was given to the general fund.



photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

Dorothy Washburn officiating in the kitchen.



Dec. 1981 — Children of our refugee Vietnamese family learning about Christmas in Buffalo.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

695 ELMWOOD AVENUE AT WEST FERRY STREET
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14222
(716) 885-2136

March 30, 1982

Re: UU Sesquicentennial Weekend Friday, April 30 - Sunday, May 2

Contacts: Mary Anne Iggulden, Co-Chair	837-6286
Mary Ann Schutkeker, Co-Chair	842-1424
Church Office	885-2136

The 150th Anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo is being celebrated this year with a number of special events, highlighted by Sesquicentennial Weekend, Friday, April 30 through Sunday, May 2, at the church, 695 Elmwood at West Ferry.

On Friday there will be an old fashioned Country Fair from 6:00-11:00 P.M. featuring the auction of a life-size, hand-made "Granny" Doll. Food and beverages will be available. There will be exhibits in the church school classrooms, crafts, baked goods, home preserved foods to admire and to buy, games of chance for adults and for children, and fun photos taken in a comic setting. There will be something for everyone. Bring the family for an evening of fun.

On Saturday evening, a special dinner is planned for church members and friends. There will be two guest speakers. The Rev. Doctor William Schulz, Executive Vice President, Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, will speak on "Pickles, Prickles and Pluralism." Margaret B. Nevin, Director of Adult Advisement Center, SUNYAB, and a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst will speak about UU women who have made their mark in our church history.

A strolling musician will play during cocktails and dinner.

An original skit will end the evening with a touch of humor.

On Sunday, May 2, the 11:00 A.M. service, led by the Rev. Glyn Pruce, minister, will include an historical dialogue which took place in the Buffalo Unitarian Church between Milliard Fillmore and his guest, Abraham Lincoln. Another scene will involve an early minister of the church speaking with a prominent Unitarian Universalist woman of western New York.

Guest speaker, Rev. Dr. William Schulz, Executive Vice President, UUA, Boston, will compare the present church with that of the early days, in his sermon "Memories of Tomorrow."

The choir, under the direction of Minister of Music, Barbara Wagner, will offer appropriate music.

A coffee hour will follow and tours of the church will be available from 12:30 until 1:30. Everyone is welcome.

At 5:00 P.M. the choir will present its annual spring concert in the church. The all-Russian program will feature Rachmaninoff's vigil service music ("Vespers"), and works by Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Shostakovich, and Tschaikovsky. Soloists are Elizabeth Holt Brown, soprano; Marlene Badger, alto; Henry Pendleton, tenor; Sam Herr, baritone; and Alta Mayer, cello.

Donation \$3.00 at the door, or in advance from the church office.

A reception will follow the concert, concluding a weekend of special events celebrating the sesquicentennial of the church.

For further information, call the church office at 885-2136.

Speakers



Rev. William F. Schulz



Margaret Nevin

Come and Help Celebrate Our 150th Birthday!

1832 - Sesquicentennial - 1982

CELEBRATION DINNER

Saturday, May 1, 1982

Wine 6:30 pm

Alliance Room

Dinner by Maurice 7:30 pm

Parish Hall

*Maurice is the founder and past president of the
Professional Chefs Association of Western New York*

MENU

Fresh Salmon Mayonnaise — Salade Maurice

Boeuf Roti - Bordelaise Sauce — Rissolle Potatoes

Minted Peas Au Beurre — Honeyed Belgium Carrots

Rolls - Butter

Wine

Black Forest Torte

Tea - Coffee

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Rev. Dr. William Schulz, Executive Vice President

Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston

Margaret B. Nevin, Founder and Director

Adult Advisement Center, SUNYAB

Instructor at Millard Fillmore College

Entertainment

Please mail your dinner reservations and check by

April 16, 1982 to:

Sesquicentennial Dinner Committee

Unitarian Universalist Church

695 Elmwood Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14222

*Tickets will also be available at coffee hour in the Parish Hall
on a first come basis.*

TICKETS \$15.00 Per Person

Please send me _____ dinner tickets at \$15.00 each. I am enclosing
a check payable to **Unitarian Universalist Sesqui Dinner** in the
amount of \$ _____ .

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____



1973 — Left to right: Charles P. Jamieson, President of the Board of Trustees; Rev. James McKelvey, Assistant Minister; Edward Page, Sexton; and Rev. Paul Carnes, Minister. Rev. McKelvey was called as minister to a church in Ohio and Mr. Page was retiring.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON



1975 — Rev. Paul Carnes, Rev. Jack Mendelsohn, and Rev. Stephan Papa relax the evening before Stephan's ordination.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON



1974 - Rev. Paul Carnes and church school children celebrating the American Unitarian Association Sesquicentennial.

photo credit: CHARLES P. JAMIESON

In Memorium

1970 - 1981

1/3/70	Helen Ruegnitz	1/19/75	Beulah Wightman
2/24/70	Mrs. Richard Mitchell	6/22/75	Robin N. L. Sciolino
2/28/70	Herbert G. Vogt	8/26/75	Leone Zenner
3/13/70	Isabel K. Pratt	9/29/75	Lucile Harlow
3/22/70	Carol Graham	10/21/75	Fannie Shinn
4/9/70	Dr. John Baker	2/8/76	Welles V. Moot
4/14/70	Beatrice Manchester	6/76	Henry K. Schroeder
5/4/70	June Nash	9/4/76	Eric Forssell
6/3/70	Gladys Moran	9/13/76	David W. Sprague
8/9/70	Mrs. Frederick Wing	12/20/76	Harry Elihu Ess
11/3/70	Dorothy Walter	1/22/77	Franklin W. Fowler
12/8/70	Robert W. Cook	3/15/77	Joan M. DiStephano
12/19/70	Paul C. Hickok	3/18/77	Jack J. Kolberg, Sr.
2/20/71	Clara M. Herbert	3/19/77	Patricia L. Wuest
2/25/71	Thomas Danforth	12/23/77	Alice Williams
6/7/71	Caroline Nassal	1/30/78	Mitchell Cohan
7/31/71	Robert F. Perry	3/25/78	Zaidee Rodgers
8/7/71	Amos Gregory Rogerson	6/13/78	Marjorie Stinson Adams
8/12/71	Bessie G. Sumner	7/24/78	Charlotte Adema
8/12/71	James Westland	10/4/78	Isabel Van Deusen
8/26/71	Olive Williams	10/7/78	Sonia Swanson
8/26/71	Frida Leth	11/3/78	Jeanette Michael
11/27/71	Bernard J. Yelin	1/19/79	Edwine Michael
12/14/71	Frederick S. Manthai	2/5/79	Deborah Joan Thomas
1/21/72	Margaret S. Greene	3/22/79	John Munson
1/28/72	Martha Reinacher	3/22/79	John A. McCann
9/28/72	Dr. Cathryn M. Jones	3/17/79	Paul N. Carnes
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1/24/73	Dorothy Hartman	6/15/79	Alexander B. Thomson
3/1/73	Ethel Schaefer	9/14/79	Norah Elmore
3/19/73	Kathryn Westland	9/25/79	Mary Gulick
4/8/73	Janet C. Potter	10/3/79	Janet Buckley
5/19/73	Adam E. Hauck	12/18/79	Howard Nash
6/26/73	Clara Madison	2/12/80	Ruth Reiman
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1/9/74	Ellen Hirsch	10/2/80	Walter F. Faxlanger
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4/30/74	Pauline E. Stoddard	12/26/80	Elva Vallee
5/4/74	Lorenz Garnjost	12/27/80	Edwine Noye Mitchell
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8/9/74	Amy Hennig	9/26/81	Karl Kunkel
11/23/74	Thomas Richert	10/4/81	Julia Davis
12/8/74	Joseph Hoffman	10/19/81	Inez Shearer
		12/28/81	Helen Faxlanger

You are not alone. This Sunday, 61 million other adult Americans^{*} also chose not to go to church.

Does this sound like you?

You feel you are essentially out-of-step with conventional religious ideas. You have difficulty accepting those "absolute truths" and rigid dogmas you were told you had to believe. And, you're probably a little tired of being made to feel guilty because you have honest questions.

If these sentiments express where you're coming from, relax. You are not alone. A large percentage of those 61 million non church-going Americans feel the way you do.



Is there a church for people like you?

Yes. We're the Unitarian Universalists. We've been around for a long time, and we've attracted some of the most significant and independent thinkers in history: Thomas Jefferson, Charles Darwin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Susan B. Anthony, Dorothea Dix, Henry Thoreau, Clara Barton, Isaac Newton, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Adlai Stevenson, Dr. Linus Pauling, Elliot Richardson... and many others.

Our religious approach is based on independent, free exploration. We don't feel that any person, any book or any institution should tell you what you must think. You and you alone are responsible for your religious well-being.

What goes on in a Unitarian Universalist service?

Frankly, that will vary from church to church, depending on the minister and the congregation. In fact, some of our organizations aren't called churches at all. Some call themselves societies; some are fellowships and are run by the lay people themselves.

Essentially, though, you'll find a congenial and supportive climate that is intellectually free and spiritually exciting, where you are encouraged to reach out and grow, not curl up and accept. We have no doctrines and dogma that you must accept. We believe that "truth" is ever-evolving, so we remain open to new scientific revelations and philosophical insights.

We are more concerned with the essential goodness of people, not some inherent sinfulness. We are more concerned with the here-and-now, rather than a hereafter. Does this sound like the kind of church you've been looking for?

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* Gallup study on The Unchurched American, 1978

The above display ad appeared in the Buffalo Courier-Express on Wednesday morning January 20, January 27, and February 3, 1982. The Publicity Committees of the Buffalo and Amherst churches applied for, and were awarded, a 2 for 1 matching grant from the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston. Total cost of the ad was \$1,915.20.

Best wishes for another
successful
150 Years.

Dr. P. Allen and Vivian
Smudski

April 1st, 1982

Sorry I can't be there this
year — Have a happy birthday!

Eddie Page

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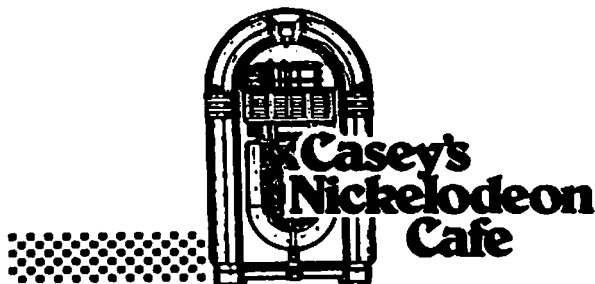
<p>Peace Love Joy John & Grace Myhre</p>	<p><i>Being a part of this great Church means a great deal to us.</i></p> <p>Veronica, Brian, Jill and Lisa Hogle</p>
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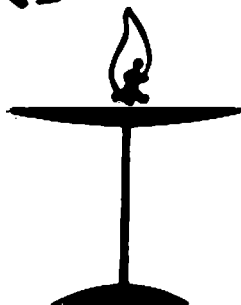
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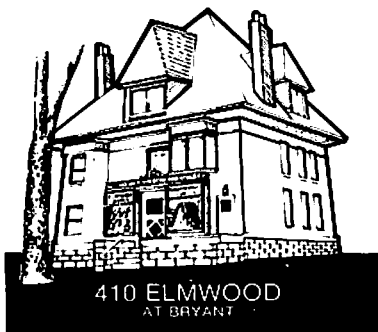
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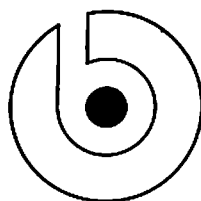
This is intellectual schizophrenia.

Richard McLellan

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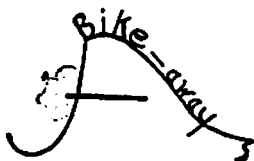
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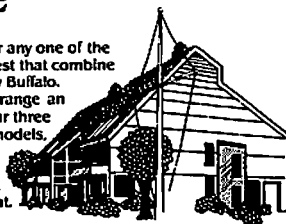
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Oh no. Who is rattling the door knob?
By gosh it's Grandma with glitter in her eyes.
like stars.
As she waltzed in, babbling over and over again
Get married, going to get married again.
My son and grandchildren were startled, for
this was
Not the usual me.
But no, coming up the steps, not too far
from her
Is her handsome, blue eyed prize, with
old fashioned
Values and rushing her to the altar.
Life does not end at 65. It is just the
beginning for
Most of us.
Our choice ... Our selection and our
right to live,
Live out our life
Come and rejoice with us.
You might catch the bouquet,
and who knows, the
Fancy old fashioned garter,
with pink ribbons on it.
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Lucy Battaglia Chidsey

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A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth". The signature is slanted upwards from left to right.

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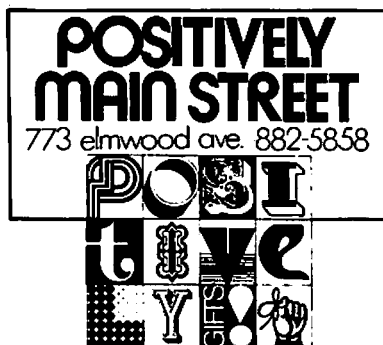
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"PRESSED DOWN,
SHAKEN TOGETHER,
AND RUNNING OVER!"

Luke 6, verse 38

Glyn Pruce
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April 16, 1982

Rev. Glyn Pruce
Unitarian-Universalist Church
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To The Parishioners of Unitarian-Universalist Church:

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On behalf of the 17 member congregations and parishes, the Board and staff at Concerned Ecumenical Ministry (CEM), wish to express their warm regard and appreciation to Unitarian-Universalist Church on this occasion of their 150th Birthday Celebration!

This recognition is in appreciation of 150 years of dedicated ministry to members of their congregation, as well as The Upper West Side community. In addition, we are appreciative of the commitment and support over the last 15 years to the co-ministry of Upper West Side churches called Concerned Ecumenical Ministry (CEM).

We ask that God continue to bless the ministry as your congregation embarks on its second 150th years of service to The Upper West Side community.

Sincerely,

Ted R. Wetzel
Executive Director, CEM

jan

Supported by the seventeen member churches: denominations (American Baptist, Episcopal, Disciples-United Church of Christ, Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian, United Methodist); City of Buffalo Department of Human Resources & Division for Youth, United Way, Erie County Department of Senior Services, Businesses, and Individuals.

