

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Local Universalist Church Observes Completion of 100 Years
CLOSES WITH BANQUET TO BE HELD TO-NIGHT
Interesting Services and Addresses on Saturday Evening and Sunday

Tonight with a banquet, at which several clergymen will be speakers, the anniversary of the centennial of the First Universalist Church of this city—which started Saturday evening—will come to a close. The banquet this evening will begin at 7 o'clock, and the Rev. V. [DeWitt] C. Tomlinson, Rev. A. A. Blair, Rev. T. L. Drury and others will be heard.

A feature of the programs has been the music. On Saturday evening "The End of a Perfect Day" was splendidly given by Miss Gladys Murch and Fred Hermance. Another excellent number was the anthem, "Onward Christian Soldiers," by Fred W. Spencer and choir, and another number was the anniversary hymn written by Mrs. Luella Smith, superintendent of the Sunday school, which was sung by the congregation.

The pastor, the Rev. Charles H. Murch, said the church was celebrating its centennial on St. Patrick's Day—in the evening. He went on to say that he had extended invitations to all the clergy of the city, and one big-minded man had responded, and was present, the Rev. Cole, of Christ church. He also read a letter from the Rev. Mr. Shimer in which the writer said he exceedingly regretted his inability to be at the service. Mr. Murch briefly reviewed the history of the church, saying it had early attained a leading position and numbered many influential citizens in its congregation. Of course, there had been dry seasons, but he hoped to see again the time of which he had heard, when every pew was filled and whole families were present at services. Many of the faithful had died, and some had gone to other churches, and perhaps, said the speaker, Brother Cole "might let us have some back that have gone into his denomination." The pastor also alluded to the \$100 bonds which had been issued for this centennial, and said that over thirty of these had already been taken.

State Superintendent Speaks

He then introduced the Rev. G. Delbert Walker, whose first charge was in Hudson church after he was ordained. Mr. Walker is now State Superintendent of the Universalist churches. He said he brought greetings from the 130 Universalist churches in the State, and he was pleased to see that under the present pastorate the church was again assuming its own. He did not deem it was essential to overshadow all others, but he wanted to see the church strong in spirit, influential to make men and women love one another.

Rev. Walker referred to the time of the founders, when there were no airoplanes [sic], telephones or telegraph, and then referred to the growing materialism which had come since that time. He felt the people were waking up and sensing the materialism which had been about to engulf them. Men [sic] will never get to the point when they do not need the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood in Christ. A week ago if one had predicted that in less than a week the Czar [of Russia] would be dethroned he would have been laughed at. The age he felt was fast coming to itself, and realizing that the spiritual had its place as well as the material. He referred to what he had heard as to centennial invitations being refused, and referred to how Christ could forget the woman taken in sin,

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

and in fact all but the Pharisees. But after all, said the speaker, all families have their differences, but these would all be smoothed out in the eventide of life.

Episcopal Rector on Church Unity.

The Rev. Thomas L. Cole, of Christ Episcopal church, was next introduced. He said he was very glad to be present. While he did not formally represent his church, he felt confident that if he had placed [the] invitation before the church body it would have been accepted with the same spirit as it had been by him. He was glad to rejoice with them; it was good to rejoice, and often he felt the churches stressed the sad side too much.

While such occasions had their usefulness, in reminding of the sense of indebtedness of those gone before, anniversaries did not appeal to him much, for his viewpoint was to look forward; we must set our faces to the front.

Rev. Cole then dwelt upon church unity, and asked are we working together for one church. If he was to take a text he said he would take the lines found in centennial hymn written by the church's poet, "Till colors blend in perfect day and all God's children dwell in peace." He referred to the types of faiths, mystical, intellectual, practical. It was folly to expect all to worship in one way, but it was not folly to think all could be convined [sic] in one common Christian family. The great mission of the churches to-day was to moralize society, and how was this to be done without joining forces. He was not one who believed one church was as good as another, but there must be something beside the know-it-all spirit to bring about the greater unity. There must be brotherly love, and as we grew richer in individual love the church will grow stronger.

The Rev. Mr. Walker preached at the Sunday morning service and at the services Sunday evening the Rev. T. L. Drury, of the First Universalist church of Troy, gave an impressive sermon on the subject "The Church That Lives to Thrive." He took for his text Revelations 114: Yet I have this against you, that you no longer love me as you did at first.

Troy Pastor's Sermon.

Mr. Drury said that "the beginning of any institution is marked with its enthusiasm and zeal. Its activities are marked with unselfish interest. This was the case with the church at Ephesus, which had lost its first love, but formalism that crept in was the first sign of decay. It lost interest in the object of its being. "The church that lives to thrive is one whose adherence emphasizes the devotional side of Christ's life. Thus Jesus and his disciples exemplified and enjoined on others. It was the chief characteristic of all the great reformers of the world. The source of religious power is in communion with God. The secret of this relationship is based upon three things: Love of God the Father, to Christ, and for one another.

"The church that lives to thrive is one who adherents realize the importance of the message they have for the world and then devote their efforts to its promotion.

"The church is like a city set on a hill—like a lamp set upon a stand that giveth light throughout the house and it is its living service that counts.

"The church that lives to thrive is one that believes in a consecrated service. Its mission is to give the world the gospel of Jesus Christ, to imitate Jesus Christ in doing

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

good. This is the work of every religious institution. We offer the world a reasonable religion: salvation by character; God's interest in man's work.

"The church that lives to thrive is the one whose adherence gives the church the church the first place in their hearth; to them it should be a storehouse of divine goodness, the kingdom of enduring life; a promoter of righteousness among men and an eternal comfort to the soul."

History of Church

The local Universalist church was organized March 17, 1817 with 79 persons. The membership was composed of many of the most influential persons of this city, some who became well known or makers of history of this vicinity. There was Capt. John Hathaway, grandfather of Payton F. Miller, of Allen street, one of the founders of the Presbyterian church, who donated land upon which the first church was erected. Hezekiah Dayton, Isaac Dayton, John Kempes, John Jackson, Henry Clark, Daniel Coffin, Wm. Macy, Paul Dakin, Fletcher M. Beckman, Robert Alsof, Richard Barker, Alpheus Adams, Joseph Strong, Jonas Underwood, Peter Taylor, John FV. Denell, David Plumb, Jacob E. Bogardus, Myron Ally, John Heath, Chas. S. Pinkham, William Bates, Frederick Huntington, Gardner Jenkins, William Reynolds, Ezra Hawley, Henry Minor, Robert A. Barnard.

A building costing \$3,000 was erected and the first funeral service in the church was that of the donor of the plot on which it stood. Rev. Abner Kneeland preached before its erection in services at the court house. Rev. Joshua Flagg was the first pastor. Rev. Richard Carrique was one of the early preachers. He was a Master, High Priest and Commander of the Masonic bodies of Hudson and the son of the editor of the Weekly Gazette. Rev. Thomas F. King, son [should say father] of the distinguished Thomas Starr King, served the church before and after the pastorate of Rev. Carrique. Another ex-pastor returned after him, Rev. Mr. Flagg. Rev. Gamiel Collins, who served as pastor for six years, retired to take a Philadelphia charge, and in the Civil war and later was a chaplain in the United States Navy. Altogether in its century the church has had 27 pastors.

The edifice now occupied by [the] congregation on Warren street, was dedicated in 1867. Its cost was about \$40,000. Among the legacies left to [the] church was one by Hon. Robert McKinstry of \$20,000.

Evening Register, Hudson NY, Mon. 19 Mar 1917

Transcribed on 2 Nov 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY