

ST. LAWRENCE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST DISTRICT

Memorandum

To: Ruth Gabe

From: Ernest W. Kuebler

Subject: Visit to Middleport, N.Y. February 6 and 7, 1965

I spent the evening of February 6 with Mr. and Mrs. LaVerne Miller, the chairman of the Middleport Church Board and his wife, discussing the immediate past of this church and the days ahead. The cobblestone church building and attached red brick parsonage are in excellent condition, both inside and out. The location is a corner one, facing a small city park, in the heart of the business district.

This church voted against merging the Unitarians and Universalists on the national level and has refused to join the St. Lawrence District. Some claim it is a pure Universalist congregation and wants nothing to do with Unitarians because of extremism in that body, especially humanism.

Rev. Charles Wood, a retired Presbyterian minister, came there 10 years ago and served them very satisfactorily until the fall of 1964, when he left of his own accord. On his leaving, Mr. Miller got in touch with me by phone and asked if the District could recommend any full time minister to them. The first date we could agree on was in February. Presently this church has the Sunday morning services of a very conservative lay Methodist preacher living in a nearby community, with whom the majority of the congregation seems satisfied. They use the old Pilgrim Hymnal, orthodox S.S. materials including D.C. Cook leaflets and have monthly communion.

I preached to them the morning of February 7, then had a talk-back dealing with the "liberal" sermon. Some 50 heard the sermon and about 30 stayed for the discussion. There were some 12 to 15 who claimed it was the first "Universalist" sermon they have heard in 12 years and they want to return to this way. The others want the "gospel truth" from the Bible. Most of the more conservative members joined under Mr. Wood and don't know what Universalism is, say the liberals. This church is badly split not only over theological issues, but between wanting to try a full time Universalist minister or staying the way they have been for 15 years. With no settled minister they are going to make a self-survey and have a budget drive and then ask me back to make recommendations. They hope to know where they stand by May, 1965. In the meantime I have urged that at least once and possibly twice a month until they call a minister, they have ordained Universalist and Unitarian ministers from nearby communities preach to them. Some opposed this because they get the present lay Methodist for \$12.50 per Sunday. They refused to reveal any financial facts to me, but promised I would have them when I return.

On a part time basis it is going to be almost impossible to find a Universalist minister for them. Should they be willing to pay \$6000 and parsonage, there may be one or two Universalist names to give them. The liberals and the Universalists want to work with me. Only the future will tell whether this can be done, but I feel there may be a chance.

February 24, 1965

**ST. LAWRENCE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST DISTRICT**

A. STANLEY CUMMING
President

REV. ERNEST W. KUEBLER, S.T.D.
Executive Secretary

1502 State Tower Building, 109 S. Warren Street, Syracuse, New York 13202, U. S. A. Telephone 315/422-6007

September 3, 1968

Miss Bernice Guild, Clerk
Universalist Church, Middleport, N.Y.
5 Washington Street
Middleport, N.Y.

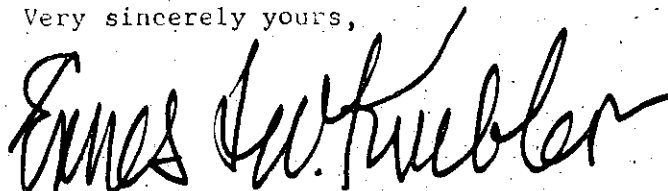
Dear Miss Guild:

I have received a copy of your July 24th letter sent to the Unitarian Universalist headquarters in Boston. Each of our Universalist or Unitarian Societies may decide not to be a member of the UUA.

Would you please let me know if your Society has withdrawn from the N.Y. State Universalist Convention. Our St. Lawrence UU District is set up to serve all Societies belonging to the Convention. If your Society does not wish to have mailings from this office please advise me.

Should you want our services please let me know the name and address of the minister who is now serving your Church.

Very sincerely yours,



Ernest W. Kuebler
Executive Secretary

e/k

December 4, 1968

New York State Convention of Universalists
Rev. Robert W. Sterling
P.O. Box 448
Southold, L.I. 11971

Dear Rev. Sterling,

We are a small church, and we have not joined the Universalist-Unitarian Association. We are the Universalist Church of Middleport, New York.

We now have a very good minister (of another Protestant faith) with whom we are happy. If at sometime in the future he should decide to leave us, is there any place we could obtain a Universalist Minister? We do not want to go through the Universalist-Unitarian Association.

At the present time our Treasury is in fairly good shape; but if at sometime in the future we should require financial assistance, is there still a Universalist Association from which we could obtain money?

Is there any place where we can obtain Universalist Sunday School supplies?

These are a few of our many questions. If you can supply us with answers, this would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and patience.

Yours truly,

Ed Heselton

Ed Heselton
Chairman of Trustees
Universalist Church
28 Kelly Ave.
Middleport, New York 14105

December 18, 1968

Mr. Edward Haselton, Chairman
Board of Trustees
The Universalist Church of Middleport
28 Kelly Avenue
Middleport, New York 14105

Dear Mr. Haselton:

I find it difficult to give you a truly responsive answer to the questions posed in your letter of December 4, 1968. This is because there is no Universalist Association or denomination apart from the Unitarian Universalist Association. The New York State Convention of Universalists, an intermediate body affiliated with the U.U.A. does not perform services such as ministerial settlement or religious education. We give aid to the Association and the Districts which serve New York State societies.

I would suggest two possible methods should you wish to secure the services of a "Universalist" minister. One would be to contact the Division of Ministry of the U.U.A. and explain your desire. It is possible, though I cannot of course say, that the Division might have knowledge of a minister wishing to serve a church with your requirements. I would think the Division would at least offer some advice in this matter. The other method would be somewhat in the order of a word-of-mouth inquiry. I do not know how this would work. Perhaps you might put an ad in the denominational journal or you might inquire of various ministers concerning possible candidates.

I do not know of any Universalist body that would be able to help you with a subsidy should you need one. The same answer has to be given concerning Sunday School supplies. The Department of Education and Beacon Press are the main suppliers for our denomination and I know of no solely Universalist source.

I am sorry I cannot offer you more helpful answers but please feel free to write me at any time.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Sterling
Secretary

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



1841 - 1991

150 YEAR CELEBRATION

Sunday, September 29, 1991

THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Order of Morning Worship at 10:00 A.M.

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September 29, 1991

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Organ Prelude

Choral Call to Worship

Opening Hymn # 260 The Church's One Foundation

Responsive Reading Declaration of Faith and A
Pledge of Faith in back of hymnal

Pastoral Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer in
unison

Chimes

Young Peoples Message and song

Singing of Hymn # 269 I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

Announcements, Fellowship and Offering

Doxology

Morning Scripture - Matthew 16:13-18 and
John 6:51-52, 60, 66-69

Anniversary Message - Rev. Howard Gabriel

Closing Hymn # 335 What a Friend We Have in
Jesus

Benediction and Choral Response

Organ Postlude

* * * * *

Morning Bible Scripture

Better is a little with righteousness than
great revenues without right.

Proverbs 16:8

A Silent Prayer:

Endue thy Church, O God, with the spirit of wisdom and power of Jesus, that where others question, thy Church may affirm, where others flee, thy Church may advance, and where others fall, thy Church may stand, through the same Jesus our Lord. Amen. (125th anniversary bulletin)

Thank you to all who have helped to make this a memorable 150th anniversary celebration.

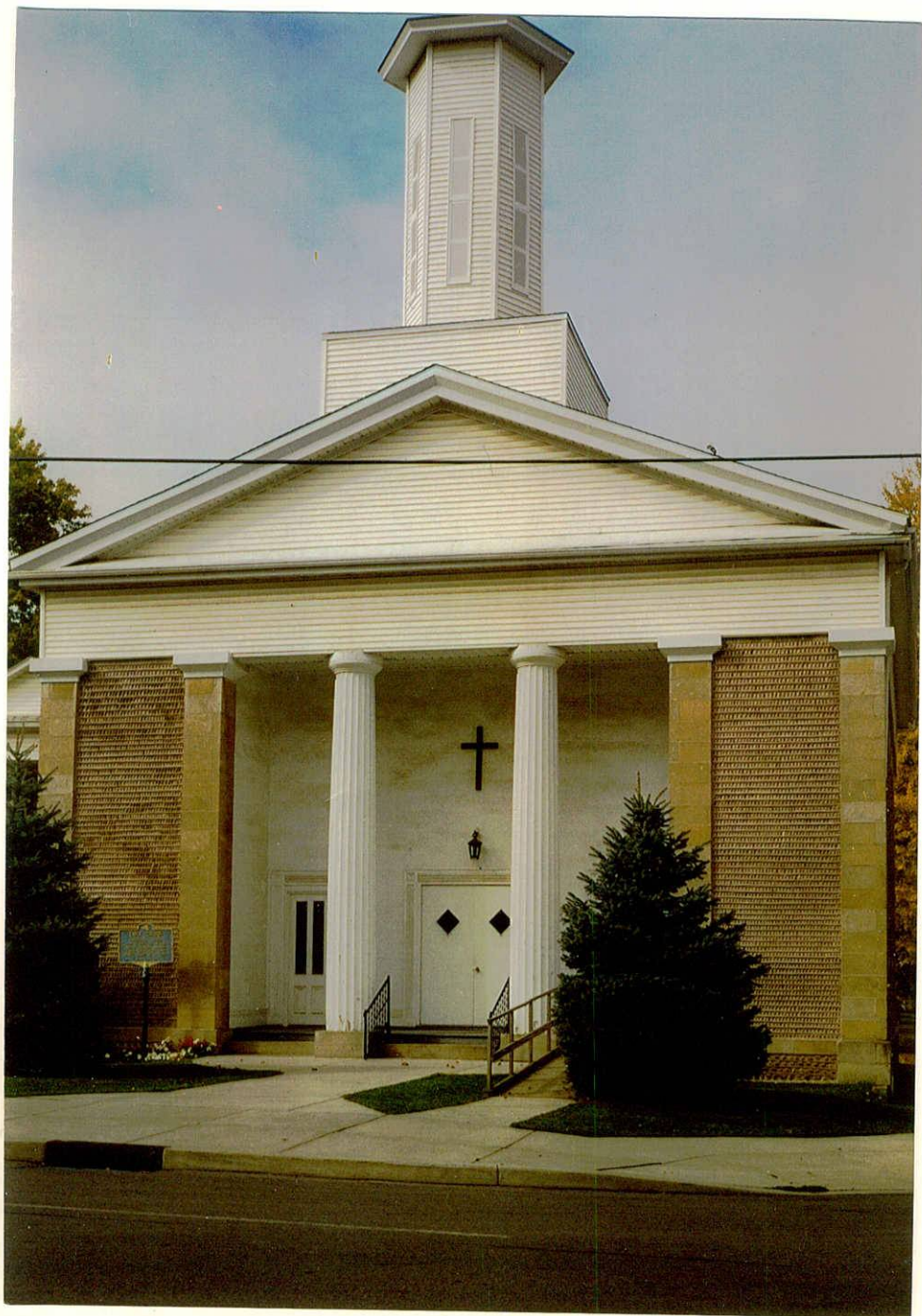
Following the service a luncheon will be served in the Parish Hall, then at 1:00P.M. we will have the tea reception for all our members and friends.

For 150 years, this Church has been an impressive reminder of the Love and Power of God. A love and power that we cannot see, yet that something which still holds things together and keeps them in their rightful place. The very presence of a Church in any Society is enough to prevent Humanity from forgetting God entirely, but its real mission is to spread the good news of the Gospel as revealed in Jesus our Saviour, Teacher and Lord. We rejoice in our glorious Heritage, but we also want to share some humble part in passing on to those who will follow, an Inspiration and Faith of which they too, will be proud.

Organist
Soloist
Pastor
Trustee assisting Pastor

Mrs. Susan Ripper
Mrs. Marge McCauley
Rev. Howard Gabriel
Mr. Clifford Grant





FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
MIDDLEPORT, NIAGARA COUNTY, NY
(FORMERLY IN NYSCU)