

2009

Beverly Lister Webb - Memories

It was about 1930 when my family started going to the Methodist Episcopal Church (now known as First Church Baldwin, United Methodist). The Rev. William Stewart was the presiding minister then. I believe I had Mrs. Baldwin in the Primary Department. We were in the far corner near the sliding doors and could see the stained glass windows to the east. There was a platform just behind the sanctuary and Rev. Stewart's office was a small room which he could get into from the Parsonage next door. There was also a door to the Sanctuary. On the other side, facing the old Baldwin Theater to the west, was a room for choir robes, which were black with removable collars – worn in mourning on Good Friday each year. There was a choir loft behind the altar and the organist, Gene Pasquet (*not sure of the spelling*) was down in the pit. Organ pipes were over the door. After Mr. Pasquet, the organist was H, Leslie Goss.

We had worship services before church in the Primary Department. Our first grade class liked Mrs. Baldwin so much we begged to have her another year. I believe the head of the Primary Department at that time was Mrs. Neiman.

In 1940 the church purchased a house on Prospect Street adjacent to church property for the church sexton, Mr. Sobie, to live in. Several years later, when the sexton moved out, the home was used to accommodate Sunday School classes for the little children. As the enrollment increased, more classes were held in the home. When I was in Mrs. George Transom's class, I moved over to the house; it was quite nice. A few years later, I got a Promotion Certificate and went into the Intermediate Department – we even had a fireplace. Mrs. Miner was the Superintendent at that time. It was so exciting when I was asked to go up to the platform to open some closed curtains to reveal a picture of Jesus.

The other treat in both departments was when they would ask “Are there any birthdays?” You were called up front to put pennies in a jar according to age. So you had lots of attention as you put pennies in the jar. My teacher was Mrs. Redmayne. We would sit in a circle and discuss the lesson. We had Mrs. Redmayne for seven/several years.

When I got older, we left the house and went to the church basement. At the bottom of the stairs was the “Victors” (a high school boy's class). A short distance away was a dark room with no windows – that was to be our class room. I was glad that I had my Aunt (Mae Jaeger) as our teacher. She made it so interesting that the class grew and grew to about 20 girls. We had a red team and a blue team, and there was a contest to see who had the best attendance. The loser

had to organize a picnic and games at the end (which were a lot of fun). Since our Sunday School Class met at a different time than Church service, our Worship Service was upstairs in the sanctuary. There was no other room at that time.

My mother, Mrs. James Lister, was the Superintendent of Sunday School and ran the Worship Service with boys and girls together. Mrs. Powers, then an old lady, would check each person to make sure every head was bowed and every eye closed. Then we'd sing hymns and my mother would ask for favorites. One was "Follow the Gleam," and another was "Banners Unfurled." My mother's favorite was "Are Ye Able Said the Master to be Crucified With Me."

Anyone who was anyone in Baldwin was a Methodist: Mr. Collister was the Principal of the High School; Arthur E. Newton was Superintendent of Schools; and lots of members were teachers in the school system, such as: Mr. Leonard, Mr. Reed, Mr. & Mrs. Thayer, Miss Rope – retired.

Sometimes we would go to church as a family. I think we had Rev. Finch, who died, and then the Shrigleys (Eugene, Priscilla and Dorothy). When we sat as a family, it was **boring** to me. I don't know where my brother, Bruce, was – maybe in the choir by then. Since it was so boring, we sat in the very last row and I can remember swinging my feet back and forth and this hand "of God" (my mother's) would press down on my legs. My father would draw stick figures on the bulletins to amuse me. I always wanted him to be an usher like Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Stritmatter.

I shall never forget Easter Sunday and the extra chairs set everywhere. It took me a long time to figure out the meanings of the "hangings" from the pulpit and lectern.

By the time I was a senior in high school, Mrs. Bouton (the minister's wife) had the senior girls to the parsonage. We really thought we had arrived.

I was in the choir with my brother, Bruce (a bass), my cousins, Lois and Mary Jaeger (sopranos), and I was (and still am) an alto. Mr. Applegate, who was so short that he had to stand on a box, was behind me in the choir loft.

I was married on June 17, 1950, at First Church to Gregory Webb. Since his Uncle Carl was an Episcopal Minister, he was permitted to assist our minister, Rev. Henry Whyman in the service. Since my father had died in 1941, my brother, Bruce, gave me away. I remember when Rev. Whyman filled out the marriage certificate in his study and accidently left an inky fingerprint on it.