

My name is: **Allyn Shepard**

I have been a member a long time.

Here is my memory of First Church:

With the upcoming celebration of the church's 200th anniversary fond memories of my association with the church came to mind. Although in recent years because of my work I have not been active in the church, but when anybody would ask me about my church my answer would be First Church Baldwin United Methodist. My family's history with the First Church Baldwin United Methodist goes back to the time that my Great Grandfather, Robert Smith, was the town blacksmith in Baldwin. His shop was a block east of the church. My Great Grandmother, Grace Smith, was very active in the church and help organized the Methodist Women's group in the church. My Grandfather, Alan Smith, and Grandmother, Olive Smith were both very active in the church during their life's. During this time there were two services on Sunday. At the last service on every Sunday my Grandparents would occupy the same seat, the first two seats of the last row on the west side of the church. After my Grandfather passed away in 1969 my Grandmother donated money to the church and a small plaque was put on the end of that aisle. My Grandmother was in the choir for a number of years and I can remember her singing on Sundays. She was involved with the preparation of the bread for communion. I remember her cutting up the bread in small squares. I remember the brand of the bread being Arnold. Also after my Grandfather's death she purchased a new communion set for the church. My grandparents did not have much money, but they loved the church and gave as much of their time and money as they could... My Grandfather was an usher for most of his life. One of his jobs was to take attendance of both services. He used a hand held counter to do this. One of the greatest thrills for me was when he let me help him do this. He would do this from the balcony and he would let me count the people in the balcony. I was able to help him ring the bell on a few occasions. I remember going to summer church school. I recall that one some we built a model of the church. My grandparents, parents, sister and I all got married in the Church. When I look at my parents wedding picture taken in front of the altar rail, I see my wedding picture, only in black and white. Both my great-grandparents and grandparents had their funeral services in the church. My most cherished memory of First Church Baldwin United Methodist was on Easter of 1990. My grandmother, who was 90 years old, was in declining health for sometime and was not able to attend church for about two years. That Easter we got my Grandmother into a wheelchair and I push her to church. The trip was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and she enjoyed being outside. She was not sure where she was going. The look on her face when she saw we were going to church was worth a million dollars. Since she could not get into her old seat she stayed in the wheelchair at the back of the church. All of her old friends came over to greet her. This was the last time she got to go to church. She passed on later that year. This joy of that day will stay with me for the rest of my life. Every time I pass by the church a good feeling is present in my heart.