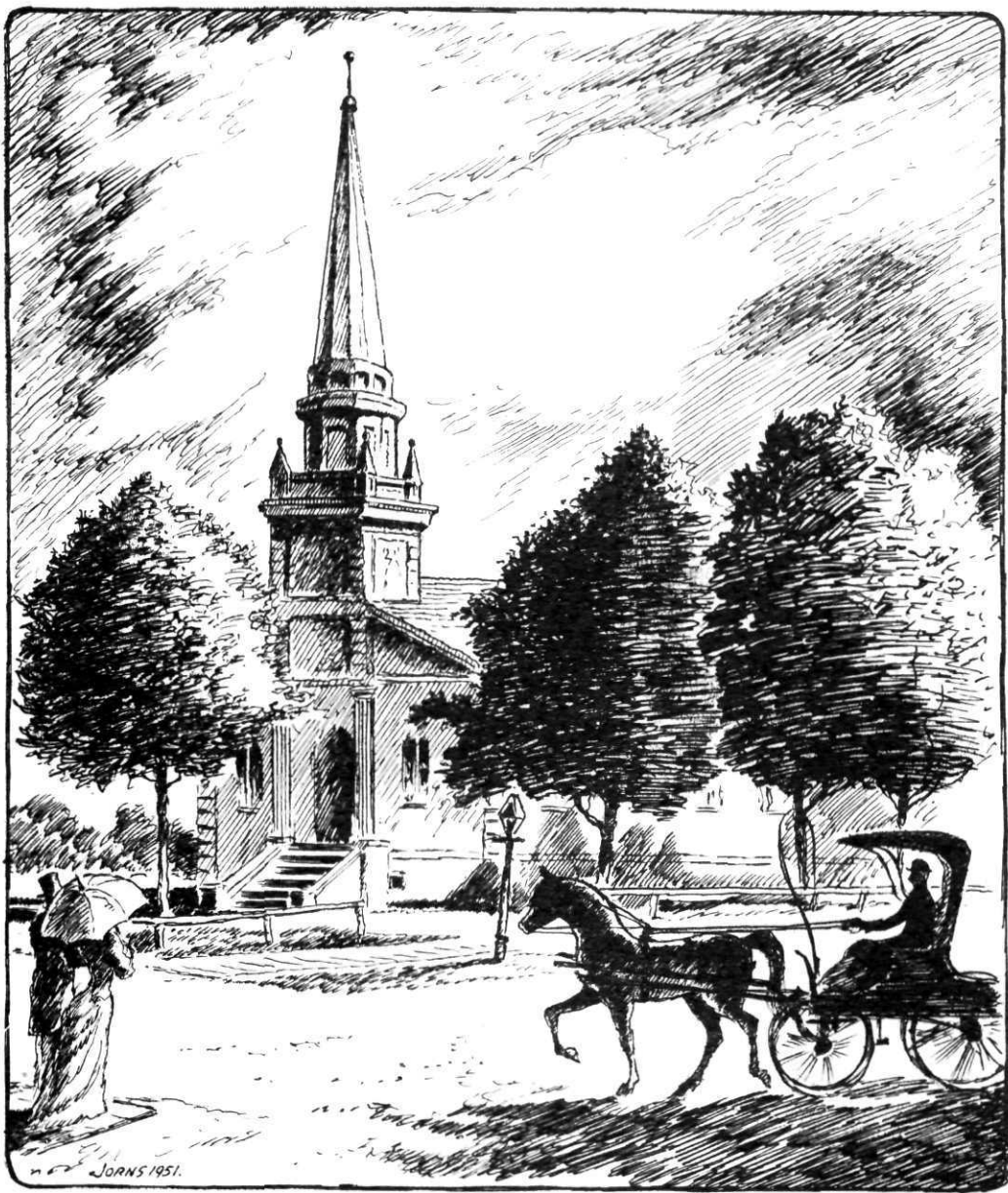


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A Century of Service

Christ Presbyterian Church

Madison, Wisconsin



1851

1951

Christ Presbyterian Church

Madison, Wisconsin

A brief history of her first century
of service 1851-1951

by
CHARLOTTE R. WOOD





Looking North on Wisconsin Avenue About 1865

The church spire is in the middle distance at the east side of the street. Immediately south of the church, and partially hiding it, is Lewis' Hall, where the organization meeting and first services of our church were held.

A Century of Service

BEGINNINGS

WISCONSIN PRESBYTERIANISM as a whole dates back to the days when the churches on the Eastern seaboard took upon themselves the responsibility for sharing the Gospel with the Indians—in the wild and woolly West—by sending the first Protestant missionary in Wisconsin to the Stockbridge tribe in 1827. (Some of the Stockbridge Indians were Christians when they came from the East.) Nine years later both the first Presbyterian church in Wisconsin, located in Green Bay, and the territorial government were established. The first legislative session was held July 4, 1836, in Belmont, a little place about fifty miles from Madison, now practically extinct. The 1837 session was held in Burlington, now in Iowa. The third session, like all later ones, was convened in Madison, the beautiful "City of the Four Lakes".

It is said that the advance guard of the clergy was a "Father" Inaw, "a clever old gentleman hailing from the British Provinces"—and a Presbyterian. But history actually records that Bishop Kemper, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, came to Madison July 25, 1839; and an Episcopal church was organized March 8, 1840. At that time there was *no other church within fifty miles* in any direction.

In June of the same year, 1840, meeting in the library and court room of the old Capitol, under the direction of the Rev. Elbert Slingerland, a missionary of the Reformed Dutch Church, twelve communicants partook of the sacrament and organized a "Dutch Reformed" church, with the expressed provision that the form and connection might, in true democratic fashion, be changed by vote of a majority of the members. In a report to his Home Mission Society on November 1, 1840, the Rev. Mr. Slingerland wrote: "Some professors from abroad, members of the Presbyterian church, commemorated with us the death of our common Lord."

Still in that same year, 1840, the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of the

territory formed "a plan of union", which seems to have died a-borning. At any rate, in accordance with the early agreement, by unanimous vote of all the members present on June 13, 1841, just one year after its founding, the "Dutch Reformed" church changed its name to "The Congregational Church in Madison."

Poor Mr. Slingerland seems to have been destined to be out voted not only by Congregationalists. In a report from Prairie du Sac he wrote: "Several of the inhabitants, being Presbyterians, are strongly prejudiced in favor of that sister denomination."

According to a history of "Early Presbyterianism in Wisconsin", a Presbytery of Wisconsin (unattached) was organized in 1839 in the Presbyterian and Congregational "Convention", later a part of the "New School", which merged with the "Old School" in 1870 in the Synod, by action of the General Assemblies in 1869.

Apparently there was some over-lapping in organization, for we learn from other sources that in 1846 the General Assembly thought best to constitute a regular Presbytery, to be called the Presbytery of Wisconsin and to be attached to the Synod of Illinois. The first meeting under this organization was held at Prairieville (now Waukesha) on the eighteenth of July, 1846—an important date for us because it was then that Prof. John W. Sterling, LL.D., was sent out of the East by the "Board of Domestic Missions," to help found a Presbyterian college. (Carroll College is still a "Presbyterian-related" college.)

In May, 1851, after Wisconsin had become a state, it was organized into a Synod and divided into three Presbyteries, one of which was the Presbytery of Dane. In the meantime Madison had become the capitol of Wisconsin, but was a village of only about 1500 persons, which boasted four Protestant churches. But they did not satisfy a small group, who, willing to prove the Biblical "where two or three are gathered together in My name,



J. W. Sterling, 1816-1885

An Ordained Presbyterian clergyman who helped to found Carroll College, the University of Wisconsin, and our own Christ Church.



John Yost Smith, 1807-1874
with Mrs. Smith and two children

Coming to Wisconsin before 1830, Smith first located at Green Bay. In 1839 he served as "commissioner" supervising the construction of the first capitol building at Madison. He later became editor of an influential paper published in Madison.

there am I in their midst", felt determined to found a Presbyterian church. Thus was planted one of the grains of mustard seed of Christian lore.

Some years ago Professor E. B. Skinner ran down in the library of the State Historical Society a sheet of paper "Soiled and worn and yellowed with age", on which can be read the following:

"Madison, Wisconsin, May 30, 1851.

We, the undersigned, severally promise to pay the sum opposite our respective names for the purpose of fitting up Mr. Lewis's Hall for public worship."

Here follow seventeen names with sums set opposite them, varying from fifty cents to five dollars. On the back of the page is a similar statement, dated June 2, 1851, containing seventeen additional subscriptions. Two of these are anonymous: one from "a lady", who promised to pay \$1.00, and the other a cash contribution of \$1.00. Mr. Skinner noted: "Though a carpenter-editor and a college professor could hardly be

expected to be plutocrats, the two \$5.00 donations were made by John Y. Smith and J. W. Sterling." The next most generous one, \$3.00, was given by Daniel S. Durrie, then the unpaid secretary of the struggling State Historical Society.

And Mr. Skinner added: "That this document refers to the real founding of the church that was to become the present Christ Presbyterian Church is proved by the fact that it contains the name of H. B. Gardiner, who, we know, was the first pastor of the church that was actually organized four months later, to worship in the second-story room fitted up in "Mr. Lewis's Hall."

The total amount promised was \$49.00. A note at the bottom of the second page indicates that only \$41.50 in actual cash was collected. But it was the nest-egg of a church—the church that is today the largest Presbyterian church in Wisconsin.

On Friday, October 3, of the same year, 1851, a petition was presented to the Presbytery of Dane, then in session at Fort Winnebago (now Portage), requesting that

a committee be sent to Madison, "to organize a Presbyterian church if the way be clear." On the following evening, Saturday, October 4, the committee met with a zealous handful, six laymen and two ordained ministers, in the upper room of Lewis' Hall, and "after divine service" a church was organized.

This Lewis' Hall was located on the southeast corner of East Johnson Street and Wisconsin Avenue, where the Evangelical United Brethren Church now (1951) stands.

The charter members were:

John Yost Smith, from the Reformed Dutch Church formerly existing in Madison, of which he was an elder and the only remaining resident member;

Daniel S. Durrie and Anna Holt Durrie, his wife, by letter from the Third Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, N. Y.;

Mary E. and Clara Gardiner, by letter from the South Presbyterian Church, Galena, Ill.;

Jane McFarland, by letter from the Presbyterian Church of Mansfield, Ohio.

Because Prof. Sterling was an ordained Minister he could not become a "member" of the church. But he and John Y. Smith were elected Ruling Elders, and Daniel S. Durrie was elected Deacon.

On the succeeding day, Sunday, October 5, after public worship in this same Lewis' Hall, those officers were installed. The Rev. H. B. Gardiner was engaged as stated supply of the pulpit. That same day four additional members were received:

James McBride and Mary Ann McBride, his wife, from The Associate Reformed Church of Milroy, Indiana; (their great-grand-daughter, Mrs. Harry L. Moseley nee Ada Sumner, now a member of Session, recalls having been told that a storm bogged down their "team" the evening before and prevented their arrival at the first meeting). This is the only family to have been continuously represented on the church membership roll throughout the century.

Mrs. Elizabeth Jane Fox, from the Presbyterian Church of Greenfield, Wis., and her son, William Fox, the first member "by examination" and on confession of faith. (He had another first to his credit, for he was the first member of this pioneer church to be hailed before a discipline committee because of his youthful independence and exuberance.)

All these members participated in the first communion service. The first sermon was preached by the Rev. John A. Savage, D.D., then President of Carroll College.

True to the traditions of Presbyterianism, which prides itself on the educational requirements it has set up for its ordained ministers, those first members of this church were outstanding in the educational as well as the spiritual life of the community.

Few individuals can be even named in this brief history, but surely the devoted, full-of-faith founders must be memorialized. There was John W. Sterling, a graduate with honors of Princeton University (then the College of New Jersey) and a few years later a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. In a day when preaching and teaching went hand in hand, it is not surprising to learn, as has been mentioned, that he came to the wilderness in 1846, sent by the "Board of Domestic Missions" of the Presbyterian Church, at the request of a group of business and professional men to found a college. There he taught mathematics and apparently supplemented his meager missionary salary by teaching also in the public high school. But soon he was called to the infant State University, where for six years he was "Acting Chancellor" with an enormous burden of teaching responsibility as well as of administrative duties, till, with the appointment of an official administrator, he became vice-president, which office he held until his death. He was held in great respect by the community and is generally referred to as the "Father of the University of Wisconsin". By the same token our church might well call him the "Father of Christ Church".

The second founder was likewise a distinguished personage, a gentleman and a scholar. Daniel Steele Durrie also left his native heath in New York, not to teach in Wisconsin but to start anew in a book business, because fire had wiped out the flourishing store which he had been managing. He soon became librarian of the Wisconsin Historical Society, an honorable post, no doubt, but because he received no money for his long hours of work, he was obliged to become the Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction. With the duties of both these positions on his hands, he still found time to publish many historical papers. Later the Society became able to give him a full-time salaried appointment. He continued as librarian until 1892 and wrote the definitive history of Madison and Dane County up to the year 1874, as well as the documented history of the church he helped to found, our own most valuable record.



Daniel S. Durrie, 1819-1892

An early librarian of the State Historical Society. In 1891 he laid the cornerstone of the present church.

The third member of the distinguished trio, John Yost Smith, also came from New York. He, however, came with a trade, not

an academic education. He followed his carpenter's trade in Green Bay, an older community than Madison, for about ten years, in which time he obviously proved his worth, for in 1839 he became "Commissioner" for the building of the first capitol of this state. Much of the work he did with his own hands, not merely "in a supervisory capacity". Next he became "State Superintendent of Public Property"; but he had other ambitions. In spite of his lack of schooling, he became an editor, influential and highly respected. His son, Professor Howard L. Smith, became an eminent member of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin.

No doubt it should be added for the record that John Yost Smith came to Wisconsin with a missionary to the Stockbridge Indians, that early focal point of Presbyterian interest. After an eight-day trip through the Erie Canal, thence four weeks by schooner, he landed in Green Bay with \$1.25 in his pocket. He built the second "framed" house and the first "flouring" mill in Wisconsin.

WE BUILD

The first minister to be called was the Rev. Mr. H. B. Gardiner, from the First Presbyterian Church of Galena, Illinois, "the coming metropolis of the Middle West". This man must have foreseen his problem when he came here. Obviously a church had to be built.

Church records are vague for this early period, but there are references to "two or three denominations" which took turns using the old capitol for services. Our group, however, continued to use that same upper room until it was able to move to the ground floor of a frame building that stood at the corner of West Mifflin and North Carroll Streets, known for years as "Kroncke's Corner", and now occupied by Rendall's store.

Then came the purchase of a site, and with the acquiring of property, a lot for two hundred dollars, it was necessary to incorporate under the laws of the state. In March, 1852, this pastor, two of the charter members mentioned above, Durrie and Smith, and a Julius J. Clark were elected trustees, with the pastor bravely accepting the presidency of the board. Within a year he had raised funds for a "church edifice". Much of the money, a total of \$1650.00, was raised by his personal

solicitation in the East. Nowhere is it recorded that Home Missionary funds were sent to this church. Mr. Gardiner must have had tremendous energy as well as vision and courage—and determination—for when the building was dedicated it was free of debt.

Of Mr. Clark we know that he was a lawyer, of the firm of Abbott and Clark, so we may infer that he managed the legal matters—probably without any pay.

On the site where the Masonic Temple now stands, only a block away from our present corner, this first church was built. It must have been wonderful in its day, for it is recorded "in half a dozen old books and documents", says Prof. Skinner in his "Notes on the Founding of Christ Presbyterian Church", that it was a white frame building 40 by 60 feet in size; that it carried a 110 foot spire which was conspicuous for miles around and served as a veritable landmark for citizens and visitors; and that the bell, which came a little later, weighed a thousand pounds. Indeed, for the purchase of this bell, to fit the beautiful spire, money was contributed by many proud townspeople who were not members of the church. It was the beginning of "church row" on Wisconsin Avenue.



Looking South on Wisconsin Avenue About 1865

The church with its tall slender spire is in the middle distance on the left. At the extreme right, and in the background, can be seen the spire of the Baptist church, and the belfry tower on the Episcopal church.

WE ROUND OUT A QUARTER CENTURY

As was to be expected, the designing and the constructing of the building were taken over by John Y. Smith, with no pay, of course. A simple Gothic design, it was generally considered the best architecture in the state west of Milwaukee. Space was used to good advantage too, for the Sunday School was in the basement, entered by a stairway at one side of the pulpit.

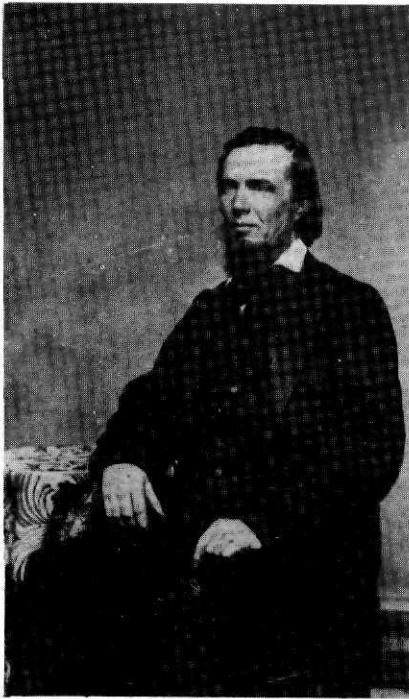
Not extraordinary to the people of that day, but certainly interesting to us, is the record that lumber purchased on the Wisconsin River, was brought across country by ox-team because, of course, there was no railroad in those days.

It was completed and dedicated on Christmas Day, 1853. And the first regular Sunday

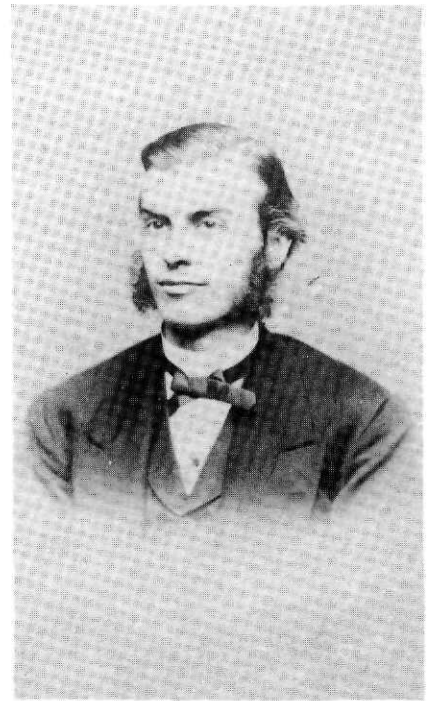
service was New Year's Day, 1854. (How many important dates in our local church history coincide with generally accepted Christian celebrations.)

The Rev. Mr. Gardiner resigned in October, 1855, when the church was just four years old. During this time Madison more than tripled its population. Almost a hundred thousand on this hundredth anniversary date, it had been less than two thousand in 1851 and did not become a city until five years later. All the records seem to show that this church had an important place in the community and that it more than held its own as the population increased.

The second minister was the Rev. W. L. Green, who came in 1856 and remained nine



William L. Green, 1856-1865*



Edward G. Read, 1865-1868

years, to 1865. Although ill health caused his resignation, to his great credit let it be recorded that he later founded and developed a Mission School for young people on a farm near Poynette, where his failing health allowed some continuation of his ministry.

Strangely enough, there is nowhere specific reference to what must have been hard days during the Civil War, which fell within this period. On the other hand, in 1862 the church was enlarged by the addition of twenty-five feet and further improved by the installation of "gas illumination". This renovation cost \$2550.00, only statistics to be sure, but some indication of the way this lusty infant was outgrowing its swaddling clothes; the remodeling cost more than the whole original building. This period was marked by constant, rapid growth.

The next pastor was "brought out of the East", Edward G. Read, of Princeton, New Jersey. Because he had not been ordained when he came to Madison, his ordination and installation took place together, October 11,

* Unfortunately we have no photographs of Hugh B. Gardner, 1851-1855; Loyal Y. Hayes, 1873-1877; John E. Wright, 1878-1882; and William A. McAttee, 1882-1892.

1865, "with impressive services". It may have been hard for him to understand the early Wisconsin. A story, no doubt somewhat apocryphal, has gone the rounds that because his wife's frivolous clothes, "with sweeping trains and hoop skirts" could not be tolerated by the church authorities, he was asked to resign. They left in 1868 with no record of noteworthy achievement.

The fourth ministry also lasted only three years, 1869-1872. The Rev. Richard V. Dodge came from Wheeling, West Virginia. Not even stories have lingered about him. He seems to have been a follower of Horace Greeley, going west from Virginia, then still farther west from Madison to San Francisco.

As soon as he had gone, perhaps in an effort to attract a new minister, the congregation spent \$8000.00 on improvements. An organ (costing \$3600.00, as the record shows) was bought in Milwaukee. It had two manuals, with 58 notes; and pedal, with 30 notes. It had a black walnut base, and pipes in two shades of blue with markings of red and gilt. Of course it was hand pumped—no electricity in 1873—from the rear, and the traditional tales of the pump boys' delinquencies are still repeated.



Richard V. Dodge, 1869–1872



James E. Moseley, 1830–1913

For this organ an arched recess was added at the rear of the pulpit. The original plain, square sashed windows with blinds were replaced by arched windows with "the principal part of each a large pane of ground glass, surrounded by a colored border in vine-work". New seats were added, which were said to be "excellent, mainly of ash in its natural color, but with a rail on top and heavy scroll and panel work at the end of walnut". The choir loft, like the base of the organ, was of black walnut, as was the pulpit, with ash panels. The wainscoting was appropriately of alternate strips of walnut and ash. The walls and ceiling were almost white, but "delicately tinted", and the windows and cornice "very tastefully frescoed". The new coat of white paint made the exterior look "very fresh and pure".

An elder and leader in the congregation whose influence did much to shape the policies of Christ church a half century ago. Mr. Moseley was the founder of the bookstore which still bears his name. A leader in the cultural affairs of the city, he was one of the sponsors of the Monona Assembly which for many years provided lectures and chautauqua programs at the Assembly Grounds, now Olin Park.

Into this activity came the Rev. L. Y. Hays, from Ottawa, Illinois. He must have been associated with the renovation for at least a month, but he was not actually installed until three days after the resumption of service in the improved church, June 12, 1873; yet on May 4, 1874, he was preaching his first anniversary sermon.

Still further improvements were made in 1876, making a total expenditure on the building of \$15,000.00 for the twenty-three years between 1853 and 1876—a far cry from the less than fifty dollar fund that started it.

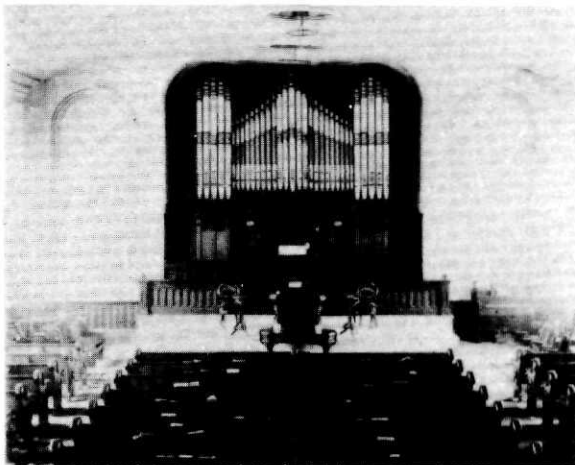
WE ENTERTAIN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Rev. John E. Wright came next and remained with the church five years, 1877-1882. He has the distinction of having brought to Madison the 1880 Meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, an event of great importance to Madison as well as to our church.

Mr. James E. Moseley, the layman who was most influential in promoting that meeting, must have been a tower of strength to this church. He may never have been called on to ring the bell, but he seems to have acted in almost every other capacity.

Imagine the pride of a church not quite thirty years old when its invitation was accepted. Over five hundred duly elected "commissioners" were to be expected, and they, augmented by wives and representatives of various church women's organizations, would bring the number to about one thousand. And it was no little three day affair. May 19 to June 1 were the dates, the better part of two weeks.

Hospitality as well as good management must have been strained to the breaking point—but neither one ever broke. If only half the praises sung by the speakers and printed in the daily newspapers were true, no more successful meeting of the General Assembly had ever been carried on. The whole community seems to have joined the Presbyterians in taking pride in the signal



This New Organ Was Installed in 1873

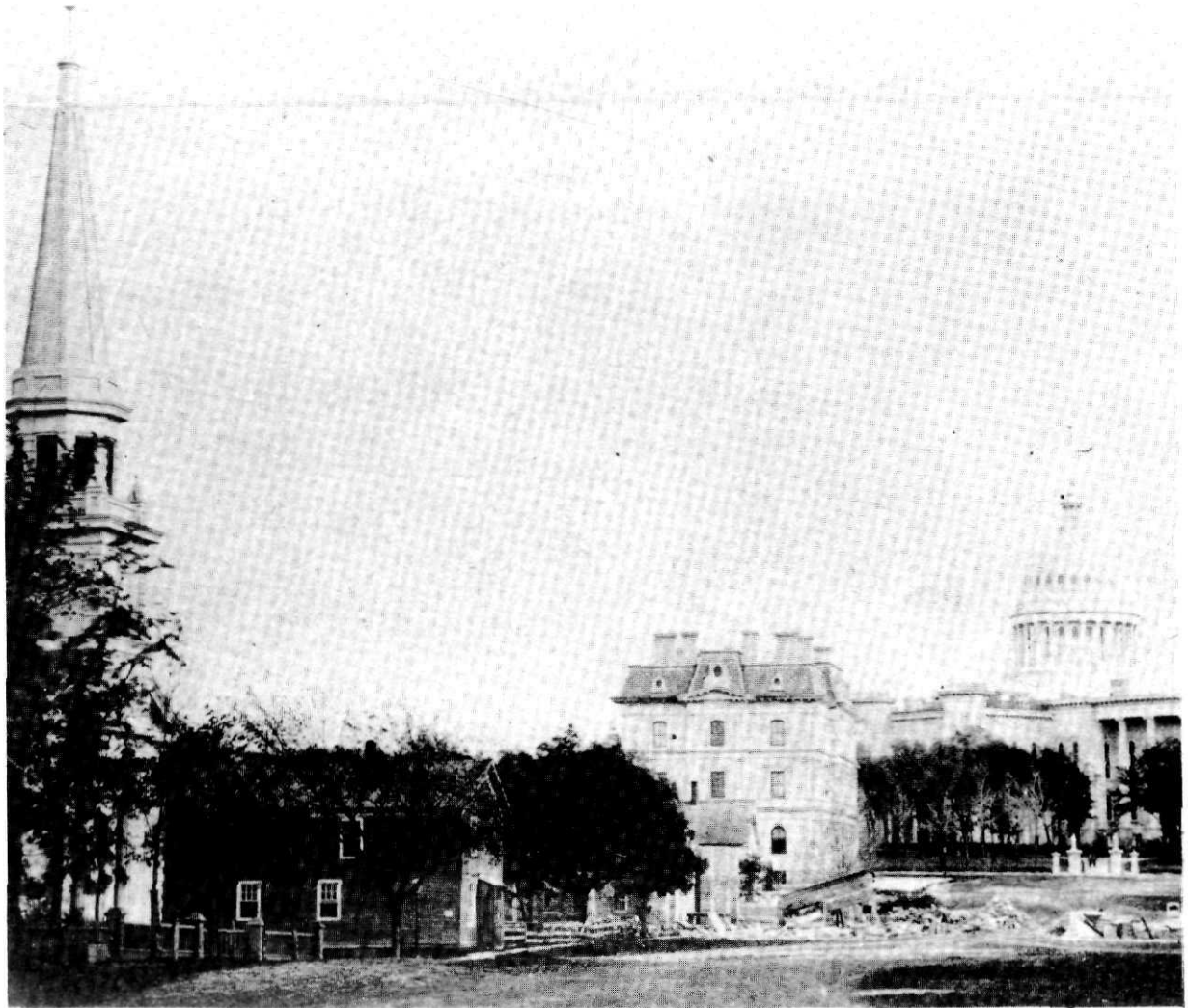
In this same year colored glass replaced the plain glass windows, new pews of black walnut and ash were provided, and the church edifice improved in other ways—including the installation of gas lights.

honor done this young church. Governor William E. Smith, the Mayor, L. E. Ingman, and the Associate Justice of the State Supreme Court, Harlow S. Orton, himself a Presbyterian, welcomed the visitors in most eloquent nineteenth century addresses. The two city daily papers, *The State Journal* and *The Democrat*, both published every word of the proceedings, including full length sermons more than an hour long by the Moderator and other distinguished Divines of the Church. Even the details of the business meetings, including a "discipline" case, were reported in their entirety.

Not only can this church look back with pride to that great honor, it can also find within the State Historical Society records vitamins for substantial nourishment in the knowledge of our church at large and in the substantial principles for which she stands.

Unfortunately this history of Christ Church would grow far too long if any attempt were made to include even the most important points of that Assembly. Time would fail us to tell of the intelligent and devout leaders, the branches of Christian work, even the rededication to the sound principles of Christian ethics, all of which can be read in those files. The cause of the Freedmen was presented with great ardor. (Delegates included some Negroes.) The 1880 version of isolationism, the obviously heated debates about Home versus Foreign Missions, seemed to end on the proper note,—not which was needed but how much could be done for both! A donation of \$6,000.00 was received from Scotland "to aid in Christian Missions for the Freedmen"—Scotch Foreign Missions, no doubt. "Ministerial Relief", our own long-time effort at "Social Security", was discussed at some length and with wisdom rather than sentimentality. The National Board of Ministerial Relief had been organized in 1849. In 1880 the Assembly was urging the larger churches to do what Christ Church later did when it provided its own "Social Security" for its own retiring pastor.

Interestingly enough, both the railroads ran special trains to bring the delegates from Chicago. And both offered a full day's excursion during their stay. The Milwaukee Road invited a visit to the Dells, which was prevented by the high water in the Wisconsin River; and the Northwestern Road provided



Looking South on Wisconsin Avenue About 1880

The church is at the extreme left, at the corner of Johnson Street and Wisconsin Avenue. Lewis' Hall is just across Johnson Street from the church. The dome on the capitol was erected about 1866.

a visit to Devil's Lake. A local boat company made free rides on the lake available to every visitor.

Mention must certainly be made of the fact that the Capitol was put at the complete disposal of the Assembly for all the meetings for which it was needed. Also, the Governor gave there an enormous reception accompanied by a band concert in Capitol Park, which had been "festively draped" with Chinese lanterns. The State Journal of May 24, 1880, called it "the most brilliant and successful reception ever given in the West".

But even more memorable are the comments about the quality of the delegates and the subjects of discussion. For example: "It is a common remark that they are a remarkably intelligent looking body of men". Again, "More intellect and more solid worth beam out from those countenances than we ever saw in any other gathering".

Several of the most distinguished visiting ministers were invited to address students in "Assembly Hall" on the campus, and reports were that the convocations were well attended.



An Early Day Choir

(about 1880)

Left to right: Mr. Roehr, tenor; Ella Lewis, soprano; Professor Fletcher A. Parker, organist and director; Sarah Turner Chapman, alto; Otto Scoville, bass.

Professor Parker was the first teacher of music at the University and founder of the School of Music. He was organist and director for Christ church until 1908.

Judge Orton appropriately called attention to the fact that the constitutional form of government of the Presbyterian Church not only is similar to our civil government but to a great extent served as its model, because both are essentially representative. He called the Presbyterian Church "one of the most powerful agencies in harmonizing, civilizing, and Christianizing the nations and in disseminating the principles of religious and civil liberty and of free government throughout the world".

In the academic Milieu of Madison we smile as we read: "The usual skirmish was had over the use of honorary titles of high and low degree—eliciting some amusement."

When the Assembly finally adjourned on Monday, May 31, *The State Journal* reported an interview in which the comment was made: "It is the verdict of all that the

present Assembly was in many respects the most hospitably entertained in every way within the memory of its oldest members".

Another noteworthy project of this period was undertaken by the Woman's Society; namely, the building of a manse. The site selected was at the head of Langdon Street with a beautiful outlook over Lake Mendota. We find no records of this project but tradition tells us of much diligent activity and sacrificial giving involved in its accomplishment. One story relates that a mother of nine children pledged a ten dollar contribution for each of them and that, we are reminded, was a period when it took many hours of work to earn a dollar. It was not quite completed on the arrival of a new pastor in 1882 but before the year was over it was ready. To their great delight the women discovered that this family had brought with them lovely rugs adequate to the spacious rooms.

WE CHANGE OUR NAME

In 1882 came the Rev. W. A. McAtee. He was considered the most learned as well as the most aristocratic of the church's ministers up to that time. His religion is said to have been the serious kind which inspires fear rather than zeal. Be that as it may, his efforts were effective in raising money to replace the little church, which, even with some seams let out, was outgrown and which in 1885 was struck by a cyclone that "blew its proud spire into the street". The steepleless building with its site was sold to the Masons, and our present site, still on Wisconsin Avenue but at the corner of West Dayton Street, was purchased for a completely new building.

At a church meeting July 2, 1891, just two days before the laying of the corner stone for this building "it was decided to drop the numerical designation by which the church has been known hitherto and reverting to the ancient and general Christian custom, to give to it a distinctive and significant name. Accordingly, the church will be known henceforth as Christ Presbyterian Church of Madison, Wisconsin." There must be a story here. Some of the fathers or the godfathers must have objected to the rechristening, but there is no documentary evidence of any such family trouble. (Significantly, perhaps, the corner stone bears no name at all.)

Not Christmas nor New Year's Day this time, but our National Independence Day, July 4, 1891, saw that memorable corner-stone laying. The *Wisconsin State Journal* of July 14, 1891, referred to the building that was to be as "one of the finest edifices in the West."

Completed at a cost of about \$43,000.00, the building was ready for services on February 7, 1892. (A mathematically inclined person might be interested to note that the original \$49.00, the proverbial mustard seed, bears nearly the same ratio to the \$1650.00 for the first little church as that \$1650.00 bears to the proud \$43,000.00 for the "big" church).

The change in type of building as well as the change in name must have opened the way for much wrangling, if there had been any such inclination. Even in 1891 there was beginning to be talk about functional architecture, and the "round house type", called "Modern Romanesque", and presumably quite "American", was urged as preferable to the "New England" style of modified Gothic. It was supposed to appear less austere, more

homelike, with a family circle effect. For this reason it was thought to be more appealing to young people. The auditorium was certainly more easily expanded by means of similar semi-circular wings, the movable partitions of which could easily make more room when over-size audiences required added space. Possibly the majority opinion was expressed in a sentence taken from a summary prepared for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Hunt's ministry, in 1929: "While some of the plain dignity of the old meeting-house of well regarded New England style was lost, God did seem more kindly and sociable in the new worshipping place."

Almost as soon as the new church was finished, in fact, on the day of the first service in the new auditorium, in August, 1892, Dr. McAtee resigned, whether bowed down by care or for some other reason, the record does not say. Perhaps it was felt that with a much larger building and a considerable debt a new voice was needed to build up membership. Ten years of his leadership had brought a net growth in membership of only 52.



The Old Manse

Located at 5 Langdon Street (the site of the present Kennedy Manor) this served as a residence of Christ church pastors from 1882 to 1920.

WE BRING IN YOUNG BLOOD

After Mr. McAtee's departure, the pulpit was supplied by a certain Joseph W. Cochran, a senior student in the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. His native ability and great personal charm so endeared him to the congregation that in spite of his youth he was called to the pastorate only two weeks after his graduation from the seminary. Like the Rev. Mr. Read he was ordained here. Both the ordination and the installation took place May 7, 1893.

Like a later pastor, the Rev. Mr. Cochran was accused of heresy and, also like his successor, stood up well under the ordeal.

Following a sermon on "The Progressive Revelation of the Bible" preached on February 28, 1896, the Rev. Charles G. Sterling, a son of one of the founders of this church, requested that the address be presented to the Presbytery for investigation "as to whether or not it represents Presbyterian doctrine". The basic problem centered in the interpretation of Mark 4:26-28: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast a seed into the ground: first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear".

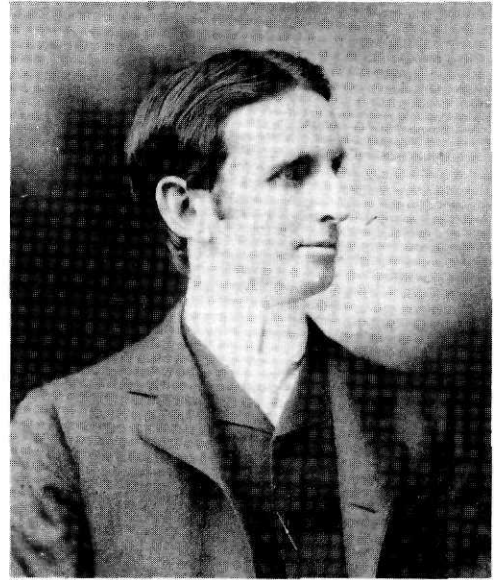
"My thought", said Mr. Cochran, "was that revelation exhibited a continuous and orderly development, the flower of revelation being Jesus Christ".

At a meeting of the session the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved that the session of Christ Presbyterian Church deplore the unwise method adopted to protest against the sermon * * *. They deeply regret that unwarranted reflections have been thereby cast upon the pastor's views regarding the inspiration of the Bible, * * * not the slightest reason to doubt that the pastor's views are in entire accord with the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church upon inspiration * * *."

The resolution was signed by the full session, including James E. Moseley, long a pillar of the church, and E. B. Skinner, a member of the University faculty, long active in Christ Church and some time after this episode a member of the Judiciary Committee of the General Assembly.

Not without reason did this young, thoughtful, fearless man appeal to the students at the University and encourage their attendance at Christ Church. During his ministry the first assistant to the pastor was



Joseph W. Cochran, 1893-1898

hired to give special attention to students. Another grain of mustard seed to grow immeasurably.

Far too soon the Rev. Mr. Cochran was called to a larger ministry and continued an eminent progress not only in this country but in Europe. Now retired from active service he came back to Christ Church to deliver the address at the centennial dinner. (He is, as all of us know, the brother of our Mrs. James B. Ramsay.)

It is interesting to note that between the pastorate of Dr. Cochran and that of his successor an "interim supply" was the Rev. Ernest McCartney, a brother of the more famous Dr. Albert Joseph McCartney and Dr. Clarence E. Macartney, both of whom united with Christ Church during their student days at the University.

Following so popular a man as Dr. Cochran, the Rev. Barton B. Bigler must have come into a difficult position. He was the minister between 1898 and 1902. The high light of his era seems to have been an elaborate half-century celebration of the founding of this church. The *Madison Democrat* for Wednesday, October 23, 1901, quotes him as having summoned his people in true Churchillian phraseology to "trials, hardships, and difficulties, which should spur members to earnestness and industry in this church". The anniversary sermon was preached by the Rev. Robert E. Spear.



Barton B. Bigler, 1898-1903

WE GROW AND EXPAND

In 1904 came the colorful, dynamic, and dedicated George E. Hunt. It has been reported that he himself said he found the church "somewhat inclined to be an exclusive family club and overly aristocratic". His own ministerial credo was: "Though I represent a conservative church, it is alert to all the social obligations of Christianity."

With that foundation his thirty year pastorate, the longest so far in this church, probably one of the longest in any church, proved to be most effective to individuals, to Christ Church as an institution within a community, and to the community as a whole. He came to Madison from the home of another great state university in Urbana, Illinois. No Victorian he; every fiber of his being cried out against complacent acceptance of the status quo and pressed forward toward intelligent religion and social reforms suited to the times.

During his first two years here he became particularly restive under the obligation to carry on Sunday evening services which were not being attended. Neither he nor the church as a whole thought they should be abandoned. The question was how to promote attendance. Mr. Albert E. Smith, for many years the owner of a music store and also for many years the Chairman of the Music Committee (which Dr. Hunt frequently alluded to as the War Department, an allusion by no means unique within Christ Church), has related in a letter the dramatic story of the promotion.

The Victrola was just becoming popular and many excellent recordings were being made available. But not a great many homes possessed the machines. After hearing a number of superior records, including some sacred music by Schumann-Heink, Dr. Hunt inserted an announcement in the local newspapers: "Madame Schumann-Heink will sing at Christ Presbyterian Church next Sunday night". The place was crowded. And for some time, until many families had their own machines and the novelty had worn off, the Sunday evening services at Christ Church had enough attendants to make the preparation of a good short sermon well worth while.

There was some opposition, of course, to his "Show", but Dr. Hunt thrived on opposition as well as on innovation.

He even persuaded the session "after repeated requests" to buy the ancestor of a movie or a television set, a stereopticon machine, which permitted the projection of glass slides on a screen hung at the front of the church. The slides were of religious subjects, such as scenes from the Holy Land or copies of classical religious paintings. It is recorded that crowds flocked into the church on Sunday evenings to see these pictures. Dr. Hunt got those crowds to singing hymns and, of course, availed himself of the opportunity to give them brief, pungent talks on ethical problems with religious aspects. Many persons who joined the church admitted, years later, that their first interest was aroused when they attended those "picture shows". (Those same "picture shows" were a bone of contention among some of the members of the church, who objected to "providing the idle and the curious with Sunday evening recreation".)

During these same years Dr. Hunt inaugurated another "first". In 1907 he was respon-



George E. Hunt, 1904–1934

sible for bringing to Madison the Rev. Matthew G. Allison to become the first student pastor at our State University. He was also the first such pastor to receive support from the treasury of General Assembly.

But life was not to be all milk and honey. On Friday, April 24, 1914, lightning followed by fire caused a loss of about \$30,000.00 on the church. The dynamic little minister, then in the tenth year of his pastorate, had been urging without much success the assumption of a debt for badly needed enlargement and repairs. Lightning did it. At a cost of \$75,000.00 in addition to \$10,000.00 for a new organ, the church was rebuilt with more adequate office space, the addition of three hundred seats, and improvements in the church school rooms as well as in the men's and women's lounges. All this was appropriately celebrated with the Resurrection Service in 1915, exactly eleven years after Dr. Hunt's arrival for Easter Sunday.

Among the improvements was a large dining room, especially for church family nights. The adjoining kitchen was the last word in modern design and equipment. (In 1950 the kitchen was "modernized" with an electric dishwasher.)

Then came the tragedy of World War I. Dr. Hunt's courage and devotion to conviction were tried by fire—and not found wanting. He was asked to sign a circular letter that would have branded as unpatriotic and "unAmerican" those persons who showed sympathy for the numerous unhappy German-born residents of Wisconsin even though the sympathizers and the sufferers might not have said or done anything disloyal. Of course he refused, and because of this refusal he was publicly charged with being "pro-German", and the congregation was urged to dismiss him. He continued not to be overcome by the hysteria of the agitators and declared publicly as well as privately that German birth or ancestry was no rational ground for suspicion as to a person's fundamental loyalty to this country.

But having weathered the storms of accusations about secular Sabbath observance and about consorting with the enemy, he found himself, like a distinguished predecessor, obliged to defend himself against some of those of his own household in regard to a charge of heresy. It had been over twenty-five years, almost a generation since Dr. Cochran, in 1897, was acquitted of that charge. Dr. Hunt was also acquitted.

Instead of feeling humiliated by these two trials, we should probably look upon them as growing pains of the Presbyterian Church as a whole and certainly as indications of the thought-provoking ministers Christ Church has encouraged.

It was in the autumn of 1924, when Dr. Hunt had increased the membership of Christ Church from about five hundred to fifteen hundred with over twenty-five hundred "in the fellowship of the church", that he was accused of "heretical beliefs". He had published an open letter denouncing the forces which had caused the resignation of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick from the pulpit of First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Three ministers claimed that in this open letter he had violated his ordination vows through statements relating to the Westminster Confession of Faith. A resolution of complete confidence was promptly passed by the elders and trustees of Christ Church. At least three ministers who were asked to moderate for the trial declined. But eventually the Presbytery completed arrangements for a thirteen-man jury, "a commission of fellow members of the cloth". After one day's reviewing of testimony in



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executive session, a ballot was taken on each of five counts, and the final vote stood 21 to 4 for complete vindication.

The decision of the Presbytery was appealed to the Wisconsin Synod, and a judicial commission "sustained the findings of the Presbytery and deplored the fact that proceedings had been instituted without full and sufficient evidence".

As Dr. Cochran had believed in a developing, progressive revelation, culminating in Christ, Dr. Hunt believed that "none of the old creeds, however venerable, embody all the truth, and man's growing knowledge requires constant change of front".

The Sunday following the announcement from the Synod, Christ Church was crowded not only with numbers of his supporting congregation but also with representatives of other churches in the city, eminent and venerable Christians, among them Dr. Birge, the President of the University, who thus expressed their confidence in their fellow citizen and fellow Christian.

Showing no vindictiveness, Dr. Hunt, in the manner of his chosen Guide, excused his detractors as men who knew not what they did. And he dismissed the whole affair with the simple—"I am sorry that the peace of the church has been disturbed and that we have taken the time of a number of men whose services are needed in other places".

Another innovation of this period was the hiring of a trained religious director. Miss Vera Jurz, with a degree in Religious Education, was the first such full-time person. With the departure of most of the church young people to the student "Pres House", Miss Jurz devoted much of her talent to developing the next younger group in a Sunday evening "Christian Comrade Club", still active and better known as "Tri-C".

The departure of the student group caused the complete loss of an active organization, the Y. P. S. C. E. (probably one of the first American alphabetical agencies.) The Christian Endeavor Society in Christ Church was organized during the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Cochran. It was composed of young people of the church and Presbyterian students in attendance at the University. In fact, they did not have to be Presbyterians; all young people were welcome. Meetings were held in the church on Sunday evenings and were led by members of the group, except on special occasions, when outside speakers were brought in.

Dr. Cochran gave excellent leadership, as did his successor, the Rev. Barton B. Bigler. When Dr. Hunt came, he contributed much time and attention to this work, attending the meetings, helping with programs, and giving counsel and guidance. He often spoke of this group as "his strong right arm".



Fire Greatly Damages the Church on April 24, 1914

The building was struck by lightning, and had to be virtually rebuilt.

In 1907, when the Rev. Matthew G. Allison came to be the leader of the Presbyterian students on the campus, the work was still centered in Christ Church. Under Mr. Allison's enthusiastic leadership the Christian Endeavor group grew in numbers and strength, with a normal attendance at meetings of between one hundred fifty and two hundred. These young people were frequently called upon to assist in serving church dinners and some even gave service as janitors.

The group was always much interested in the missionary work of the church, and several volunteered for the foreign field: Alice Ellinwood to Siam; Helen Grove (Mrs. Jessup) and Emma Lou Campbell (Mrs. Burt Gifford) to Persia; Verne E. Coapman to India; Lester E. Wright to the Near East, where he was killed during World War I while leading out a group of refugee children. At least five young men went into the ministry, including the two missionaries just mentioned and the Rev. Leslie A. Bechtel, D.D., Ward A. Boyd, D.D., and Arthur R. Oates. Charles E. Boyd became a Y.M.C.A. worker. There may have been others of whose names we do not now find record.

World War I broke heavily into the ranks, but the work of the Christian Endeavor Society continued to be a vital part of Christ Church until the opening of the Presbyterian Student Center on the campus, in 1920, when Mr. Allison centered his interests there. Without his leadership and without the students the group disbanded. As a matter of fact, it was about that time that the Y.P.S.C.E. as an organization was discontinued in most of the Presbyterian Churches of the country.

Obviously closely related to the innovation of the trained religious director mentioned above was another enterprise which captured the enthusiastic support of Dr. Hunt and consequently the active cooperation of Christ Church, the Madison Religious Day School. This inter Church School, organized in 1911 with the support of eight churches representing five denominations, consisted of courses in Bible, church history, Christian missions and church music. Professional teachers who were paid for their services conducted classes each week-day morning for two weeks. Starting with a single school for the eight grades in one down-town church, it ultimately attained the support of fifteen churches offering classes at seven



Paul S. Johnson, 1927-1930

Associate Pastor

locations scattered across the city with an enrollment of 700 pupils and a staff of twenty-eight. During virtually its entire history the down-town school was housed in Christ Church. The demise of this splendid enterprise was a casualty of the great depression.

In 1927, beginning to feel the weight of his years and faced with a continually growing membership, Dr. Hunt conceived what seemed to be the happy idea of becoming a senior pastor with an associate pastor at his side. In accordance with this plan the Rev. Paul S. Johnson, himself the son of a Presbyterian minister, was brought in.

But when, early in 1930, Dr. Johnson received a call to a pastorate of his own in La Grange, Illinois, he was bidden Godspeed. His distinctive contribution to Christ Church was the reorganization of the Sunday School into a more modern "Church School" of seven departments under an impressive "Board of Education".

During this period the Rev. Milo Beran was brought in as "Minister of Education", the only such ordained minister in any Madison church. He had a remarkable gift with young people and contributed immeasurably

to bridging with them the difficult period when young people are likely to find the world too much with them and little or no place for church affiliation. He went from here to assume the pastorate of a church in his own right.

With the departure of the Rev. Mr. Beran, another professionally trained "Director of Religious Education" (a term gradually being changed to "Director of Christian Education"), Miss Louise Benckenstein (now Mrs. Warren Griffiths) came to Christ

Church and carried on successfully the work so well begun. On her marriage the church could do no less than release her with its blessing.

As April was about to begin again, the last day of March, to be exact, in 1934, Dr. Hunt rounded out a full thirty years of ministry to Christ Church. He was then allowed to resign with the title "Pastor Emeritus".

In addition to the tremendous growth in membership in the church, one of Dr. Hunt's greatest achievements, he felt, was the



Adult Bible Class, 1932

- Bottom row (left to right): H. S. Walker, S. J. Gilbert, L. M. Sasman, R. C. Botts, Glenn Thistlewaite, G. W. Moore, Milo Beran, A. B. Easterling, J. C. Gray.
- Second row: Mrs. J. C. Gray, Mrs. V. C. Tiffany, Minnie Hastings, Mrs. H. S. Walker, Miss Palmer, Edith Hess, Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Lloyd Wilcox, Mrs. L. B. Cockrell, Mrs. M. E. Dunlap, Mrs. F. G. Blum.
- Third row: L. Wilcox, Mrs. F. S. Nordeen, Mrs. R. L. Blodgett, Mrs. P. E. Hoppe, Mrs. Glenn Koehler, Mrs. M. W. Shumann.
- Fourth row: Mrs. Claude Moss, Mrs. Glenn Thistlewaite, Mrs. C. A. Andree, Mrs. R. C. Botts.
- Fifth row: Mrs. L. M. Sasman, Mrs. W. S. Grant, Mrs. C. H. Rosen, Mrs. Sadie Powers, J. P. Heironimus, Mrs. J. P. Heironimus, Mrs. L. R. Gay.
- Sixth row: Dr. Geo. Hunt, W. S. Grant, Paul E. Stark, M. E. Dunlap, Mrs. Edna E. Chynoweth.

change in the ratio within the budget. When the church had about 500 members, they made annual contributions of about \$4200.00 for current expenses and less than one quarter of that, \$900.00, for benevolences. When the membership grew to 1600, they were contributing annually more than \$32,000.00 with one third going regularly to causes outside the immediate parish.

A city which is the seat of a great university, as Madison is, attracts many families into temporary residence for the period when their young folk are attending college. Add another such group whose residence may be more or less extended in conformity with political fortunes, and it is understandable that there will also be a shifting church membership. Dr. Hunt used to say that he sometimes felt like one preaching to a procession. A bit of corroborative evidence for such a statement is the statistical fact that during his pastorate 3600 people were admitted into membership while the total membership increased by only 1200.

It might readily be expected that in the thick of a procession a minister would become somewhat remote and impersonal. Exactly the opposite condition prevailed. Among the many achievements of Dr. Hunt's

extraordinary pastorate was a remarkable spirit of personal devotion between the minister and the members of the church and congregation. Many of the letters from former members which came into the church office for the centennial celebration were full of expressions of appreciation for what Christ Church had meant to them individually and in family groups, but the tender personal tributes to Dr. Hunt himself were so sincere and deep felt that they cannot be passed over without comment. The ideal intimate pastoral relationship which shares family joys and sorrows as well as the continually inspiring and challenging sermons received equally enthusiastic mention. The archives of Christ Church will be greatly enriched by these letters.

Fifteen years after Dr. Hunt's resignation, at the time of his death at the age of eighty-three, countless tributes of appreciation were paid him. Perhaps the one most appropriate to the church history is that of the current minister, Dr. Zimmer, when he said: "From the beginning of my association with Christ Church, I noticed that the abiding influence of Dr. Hunt's ministry, though he had been retired from the active pastorate for more than ten years, was everywhere perceptible".

THESE LATER YEARS

An interregnum in a church is often as disastrous as an academic or a political one. So it was with great satisfaction that "The King is dead: long live the King" was the order of the day in 1934. On April 21, only three weeks after Dr. Hunt's resignation, the Rev. Edwin O. Kennedy was in the pulpit. His charming wife was of Presbyterian missionary ancestry.

Credit for this accomplishment is largely due to the effective leadership of Elder Ernest B. Skinner, chairman of the committee charged with the responsibility of securing a new pastor. It should be said in passing that he acted in the same capacity thirty years earlier when Dr. Hunt was brought to us.

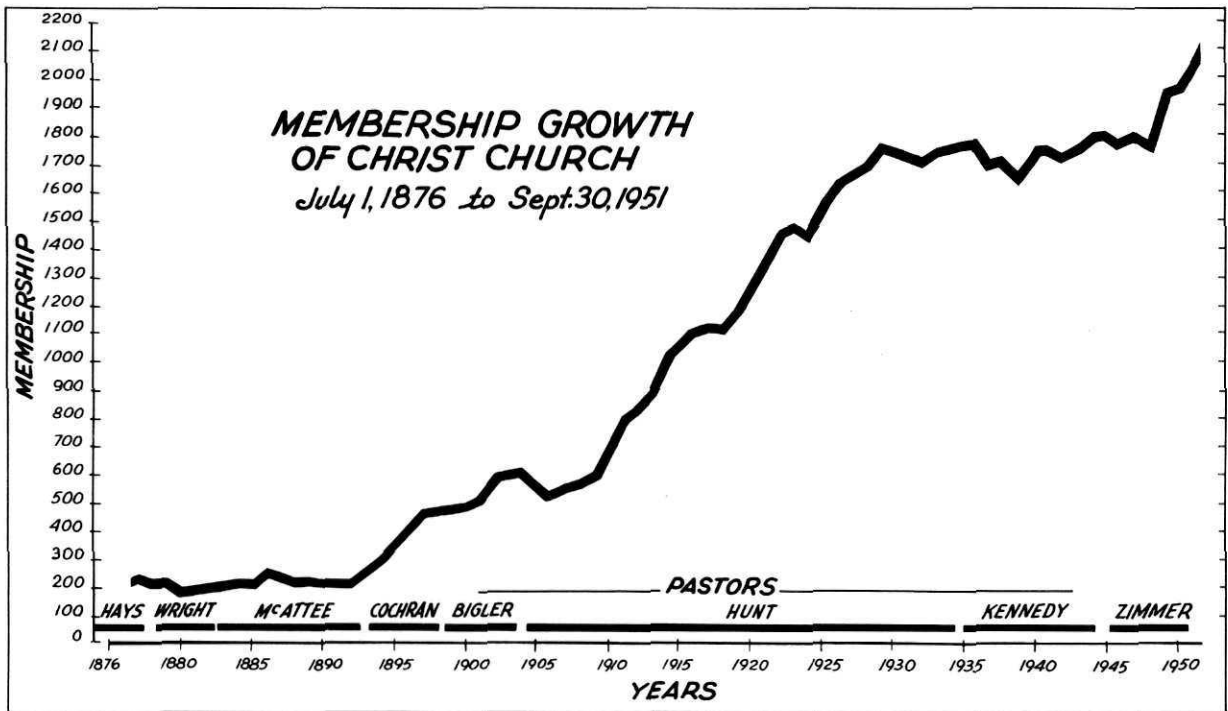
To link the members of this large and ever growing church together in a strong, well-informed fellowship, Dr. Kennedy published a pastoral letter, "Notes from the Minister's Study" and a brochure "Christ Church News".

One of the early aesthetic results of Dr. Kennedy's ministry was the improvement of the sanctuary. The Byzantine auditorium

was serviceable but not very appealing to the eye. "To give greater depth to the chancel and to bind the entire room together", a choir screen of solid oak was erected, designed by Edward Tough, the architect who had planned the church renewal after the big fire, and constructed by John H. Findorff and Son, all members of Christ Church. The expense (\$250.00) was assumed by the Woman's Society.

Three years later two other material improvements were made. A second story was built over the church offices, providing some additional space (but not enough—100 crowd it) for children in a new department of the Church School. It contains an hospitable fireplace and is well suited for young people's meetings and other group activities.

At the same time the East lecture room was transformed into a devotional chapel. It seats about fifty persons and is suitable for quiet hours, private funerals, small weddings, and baptisms. Its continual use is ample proof of its value. With one accord it was dedicated as the "George E. Hunt Memorial Chapel", in honor of his life of



In addition to these daughters, grown up and established, Christ Church has a thriving affiliate, of which it is also fond and proud.

At least as far back as Dr. Cochran, the minister of Christ Church recognized a peculiar field ready for the harvest in Madison. This vision developed into vigorous reality when Dr. Hunt found and brought in the Rev. Matthew G. Allison. He had the unusual power with young people which seems to have been repeated to a remarkable degree in his successor, Dr. Cecil W. Lower. University students have been prevented from falling by the wayside and have been drawn as by a magnet into church services where their minds and their souls have received satisfaction.

If Parkside and Westminster can be called grown-up daughters, the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation, an independent church, still seems the perpetual adolescent, not because it is defective, with stunted growth, but because its nature is like that of some mythological character, that remains forever in its happy, boisterous, blessed teens. Christ Church conceived it, gave it birth, nourished its infancy, (spent good energy and money on that nourishment),—encouraged it to stretch its own legs in its own dwelling, from which dwelling, to change the figures, its light could go and has

gone, to far distant corners of the world, as youth has come and gone on the University campus.

As has been mentioned, Dr. Cochran brought in a young man whose business it was to work in religious activities with students. John H. Rice was his name, but we have no record of the results of his spade work.

Dr. Cochran's successor, the Rev. Barton B. Bigler, joined a number of other pastors in the state in making a study which revealed that three hundred Presbyterian young people were at that time in residence at the State University. To meet the obvious need of some spiritual culture, a "Presbyterian Student Union" was organized.

Then came Dr. Hunt from Urbana, where he had seen a similar need, and at an early Synod meeting he urged with success the hiring of a qualified minister for Presbyterian students.

When attending the meeting of the General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, he made searching inquiries and thus uncovered a Rev. Matthew G. Allison, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomington, Indiana, who at the door of the State University there was doing yeoman service with students. The Synod was able to lure him to what seemed a larger field of usefulness, and in September, 1907, he began a pioneer serv-