

Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley

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Ministers of New England Congregational Church

(1859-2013)

The following are biographies of the ministers who have led New England Congregational Church in Aurora, Illinois. These profiles have been prepared by the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley for the purpose of historic preservation and as a permanent remembrance of those who have guided the church through its history of service to God and the people of the church.

Sharon Stredde (President and CEO of the Community Foundation and also a member of New England Church) and Judith Iverson (Research Associate for the Community Foundation) devoted hundreds of hours researching the lives of the ministers and their families. A portion of this research was included in the church's historic video that was produced by the Community Foundation in 2013.

Please note that a couple of the dates appear to conflict with old church records and with newspaper accounts of the day. The majority of the dates used in these profiles and in the video were taken from Reverend Gary McCann's book – Through These Doors. His book also provided the information regarding the accomplishments of the ministers while they served as pastors of New England Church.

The Community Foundation has been pleased to provide this service to the church in gratitude for the congregation's decision to create the New England Congregational Church Designated Endowment Fund within its organization.

Note: Pages can be enlarged by using your web browser tools. If you need assistance, please call the Community Foundation at (630) 896-7800.



(Photos on this page courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Please note: By clicking on the name of a minister listed below, you will be taken directly to his profile.

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First Minister
The Reverend George B. Hubbard
(Served from 1859 to 1865)



(Photo courtesy of Aurora Historical Society)

When George B. Hubbard was called to be the first minister of New England Congregational Church, members met on the second floor of the Phillips Brothers & Company Grocery Store on South River Street in downtown Aurora. In a July 14, 1859 Beacon-News article, it was announced that the church would meet at “10½ o’clock A.M.” and “1½ o’clock P.M.” over Phillips & Bro.’s Store with Sunday School following the morning service.

Reverend George B. Hubbard was a descendant of Englishman William Hubbard who immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630.

Hubbard was born in New Haven, Connecticut on February 16, 1822. He was the son of Ezra and Eliza (Church) Hubbard, both with a strong New England heritage.

Hubbard was an 1842 graduate of Yale College. He received a degree in theology at Yale four years later in 1846.

In 1847, he moved to Illinois where he served as the minister of the Congregational Church in Griggsville, Illinois. He was ordained in 1848.

On August 5, 1849, he married Jane Beardsley in Bristol, Illinois. She was born in Prattsburg, New York to Reverend and Mrs. William Beardsley.

Hubbard was called to be the first minister of New England Church on January 1, 1859 at an annual salary of \$600.00.

He and his family rented the Judd House, which stood on the corner of Walnut and Blackhawk Streets in Aurora.



(Photo courtesy of Aurora Historical Society)

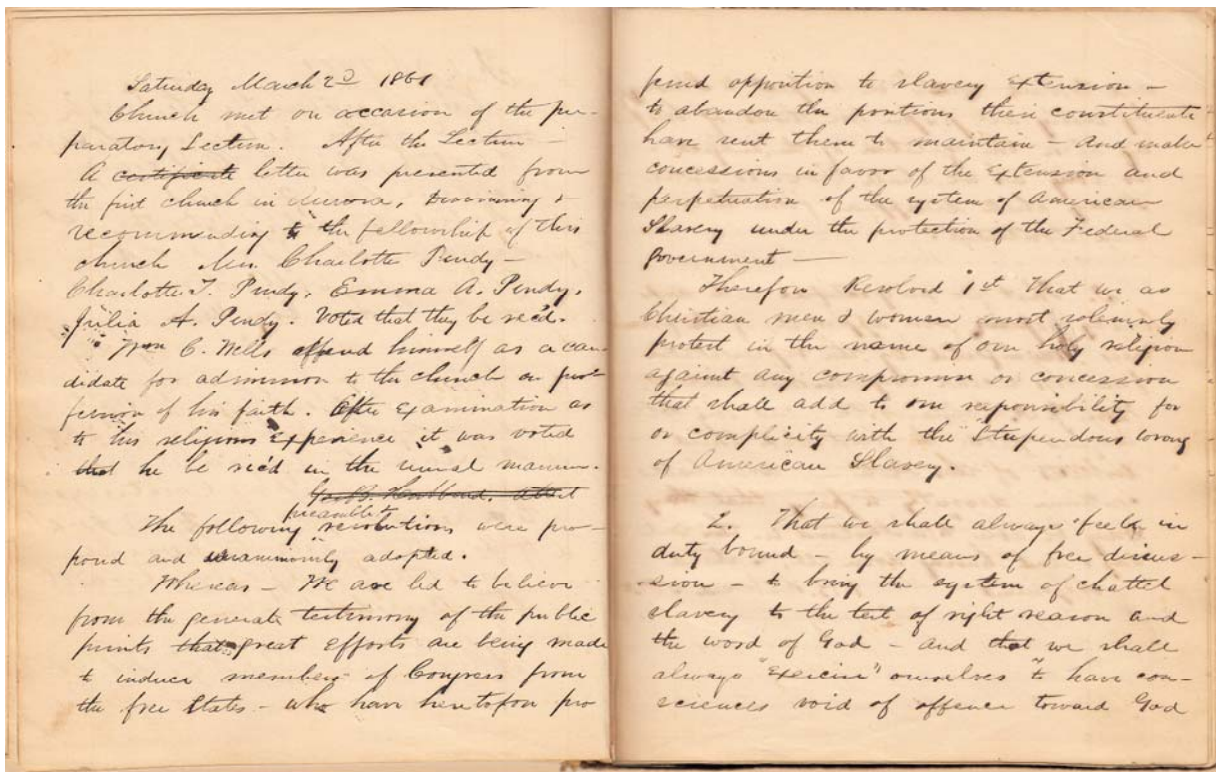
During his tenure, Reverend Hubbard guided the construction of the church’s first building. It was located at 19 South Locust Street in Aurora and cost \$1,264.44.

As the church was being built, this notice from the Beacon-News appeared on July 21, 1859. “The Congregationalists are putting up a

neat church on Locust Street. It is to be about 60 by 40 feet, and will have a quiet and beautiful location and a neat finish."

Through grants and the financial sacrifice of its members, the expense to build the church was fully paid. However, to help cover Hubbard's salary, a grant of \$200.00 was requested from the Illinois Home Missionary Society. In return for the gift, Reverend Hubbard had to spend one-third of his time ministering to neighboring churches in Big Woods and Sugar Grove. His sermons were read by laypeople at New England Church on those Sundays when he was in the other communities.

Two years before the Emancipation Proclamation, he helped the church draft a document in support of the Abolitionist Movement. The document was dated March 2, 1861.



March 2, 1861 Proclamation

He advanced the church's stance on the volatile issues of the day through his writings in the Aurora Beacon-News.

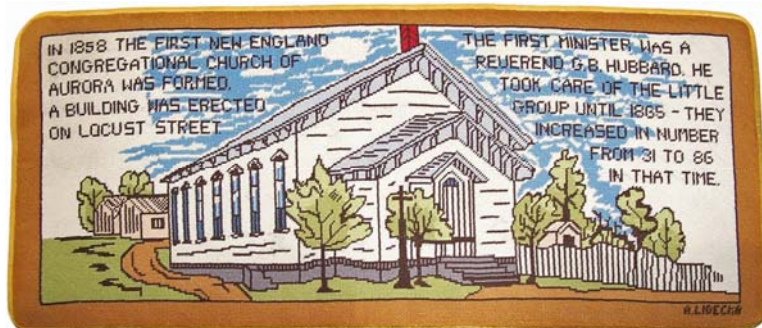
Under his leadership, the church increased its membership from thirty-one to eighty-six members.

In November 1864, he requested a leave of absence for two months to serve the Christian Commission which ministered to the troops during the Civil War.

As the Beacon-News reported, "Rev. G.B. Hubbard, of the N.E. Congregational Church of this city, is now absent, serving the Christian Commission in the vicinity of Memphis or Vicksburg."

Hubbard returned to the church for a year and then resigned in August 1865. He left the church on November 1, 1865.

This needlepoint cushion was designed and crafted by a member of New England Congregational Church in honor of Reverend Hubbard.



The church voted to disband after Hubbard resigned, but later was encouraged when a member of the First Congregational Church pledged his support after hearing a concert by the New England Church Sunday School choir.



(Courtesy of Aurora Historical Society)
First Congregational Church

In those days, the Sunday School was sponsored by the church, but was not an official part of it. The one hundred-fifty children who sang on that day represented many faiths. Thus, children from throughout Aurora had saved New England Church.

Reverend Hubbard was a minister in Illinois for thirty-eight years. In 1885, he moved to Mazomanie, Wisconsin.

In 1888, he became the minister of the First Congregational Church in Plymouth, Wisconsin where he served for ten years.

While in Plymouth, it was his custom to preach a sermon for the G.A.R. on Memorial Day. He fulfilled that duty for the last time on May 27, 1900, which was less than one month before his death in June of that year.

He retired from active work in May of 1898. That year, he observed the fiftieth year of his ordination. The following year, he and his wife celebrated fifty years of marriage.

The couple had six children. George died in infancy and Emily died at the age of two.

Their son William became a minister. Joseph became the city editor of The Daily News in Beloit. Mary was a teacher in the public schools in Huron, South Dakota and later principal of the high school in Norway, Michigan. Lillie was the wife of Henry J. Bamford of Plymouth, Wisconsin. From 1920 until her death in 1928, Lillie Bamford served as the clerk for the First Congregational Church in Plymouth where her father had been minister.

Reverend Hubbard died on June 17, 1900 in Wisconsin and was buried at Union Cemetery in Plymouth, Wisconsin.

The account of the funeral was as follows. "The remains, resting in a fine oak casket, were taken from the parsonage of the church at eleven o'clock and lay in state from then until 1:30 p.m. when the funeral service was held. There was a profusion of floral designs and the church was decorated with flowers and flags."

(Portions of the above profile are from "Sheboygan History – Portrait and Biographical Record of Sheboygan County, Wisconsin," the Plymouth Review, the Beacon-News and the Aurora Public Library.)

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Second Minister
The Reverend Edward J. Ebbs
(Served from 1866 to 1868)



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

First Congregational Church Choir in Aurora – late 1850s. Photo was taken ten years before the New England Church Choir was formed during Reverend Ebbs' ministry.

Reverend Edward J. Ebbs was born in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England on May 10, 1821. His parents and grandparents were staunch English nonconformists. Ebbs moved to Hamilton, Canada with his parents in 1836.

He gave himself to the Lord on May 10, 1840 through a public confession in the Congregational Church in Guelph. That same year, he entered the Theological Institute that was located in Toronto, Canada. He was remembered by classmates for his “invariable neatness, piety and affection.”

On July 16, 1843, Reverend Ebbs began his ministry in London, Canada and was ordained in August of that year.

He married Jane Elizabeth Wickson in London, Ontario, Canada.

A Beacon-News article of February 1, 1866 reported: “It is now deemed probable that Mr. Ebbs will receive a call to become pastor of the N.E. Church. In ability, he is one of the first men of the denomination in the State.”

On February 8, 1866, the Beacon-News reported: “We are requested to announce that there will be no service in the New England Congregational Church for the two coming Sabbaths, consequent upon repairs and alterations in the church building. The vestibule is to be taken from the inside of the church and a porch will be constructed outside; the speaker's desk will be raised; a platform constructed for singers; the seats and woodwork repainted and grained; the walls to be covered with designed paper and a general renovation take place, rendering the church more pleasant and commodious. A call has been extended to Rev. Mr. Ebbs to become pastor of the church, but no definite answer has as yet been received from him.”

By March of 1866, the Beacon-News was reporting events held at the church under the leadership of the new minister, Reverend Edward Ebbs. On March 15, 1866, an article in

the Beacon-News stated: "The New England Church (west side Congregational) has been strengthened by a colony from the 1st Congregational Church. Its neat little house of worship has been thoroughly refitted. Their new minister, Rev. Mr. Ebbs, has entered with zeal and ability, and with fair prospects of success upon his labors."

Church records indicate that Reverend Ebbs was hired to be the second minister of New England Church in February of 1867. This information is clearly not consistent with the newspaper articles of the day. Since there were so many news articles referencing Ebbs' ministry at New England in 1866, this profile will use 1866 as the first year of his ministry.

In May of 1866, the Beacon-News reported that "the entire household goods of the Rev. Ebbs, of this city, including a very choice library of more than 1850 volumes, were destroyed by fire at the Milwaukee Depot in Detroit...This loss will be very severely felt by the unfortunate owner – more especially that of the library, which must have had a peculiar value, and be irreplaceable by any collection he may hereafter make."

On June 14, 1866, the Beacon-News provided a follow-up article. "We are much pleased to hear that Rev. Mr. Ebbs has received from the Great Western (Canada) Railway Company, the sum of \$2,750 in gold in compensation for the loss of his household goods and library, while in their care, on the way from Mr. Ebbs' former residence to this city. The sum lacks much of the intrinsic value of the articles, nor can approach the associated value of the library alone, yet will go far toward replacing articles that will be essentially necessary to him in his present position. The Great Western have given their reputation a move forward in this community, by this prompt act of justice, the like of which too many corporations would sadly neglect."

In February 1867, the congregation celebrated Ebbs' one-year anniversary. On February 28, the Beacon-News reported that "the congregation took the home of the pastor by storm...pouring into it in an unbroken file until all available standing room was occupied. Without the slightest forewarning, Mr. Ebbs found himself overwhelmed and forced to surrender at discretion...After a most social time, W.H. Weston, Esq., in behalf of the friends, and in very grateful and affectionate terms, presented the pastor an enclosure containing a generous pecuniary offering, which he accepted in brief responsive words of tenderness and love. One of the ladies also presented Mrs. Ebbs a handsome shawl. A fervent prayer was offered by Sylvannus Town, Esq., after which the pastor followed in prayer. The whole company then spontaneously burst forth in that beautiful Doxology – Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

In March 1867, the congregation took steps to enlarge the church, as published in this Beacon-News report. "This movement is rendered necessary on account of the large congregations which attend upon Mr. Ebbs' ministrations. No pastorate of the city has ever been attended with greater success, in congregations and general interest, than that of Mr. Ebbs." By May, the church was enlarged to accommodate two hundred persons.

Sadly, in June of that year, Reverend and Mrs. Ebbs' son Samuel drowned while bathing in Ashley Creek in Pike County, Missouri. His age has been given as "almost twenty" and also as "twenty-one." Samuel evidently was a traveling salesman at the time. His body was returned to Aurora, where he was buried in the West Side Cemetery.

Reverend Ebbs was quoted as saying, "So far as I am personally affected, all is well. It could not be better. The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

During his brief time in Aurora, Ebbs oversaw the construction of twenty feet to the length of the church, addition of seventy-seven members, the purchase of a reed organ and the creation of a church choir.

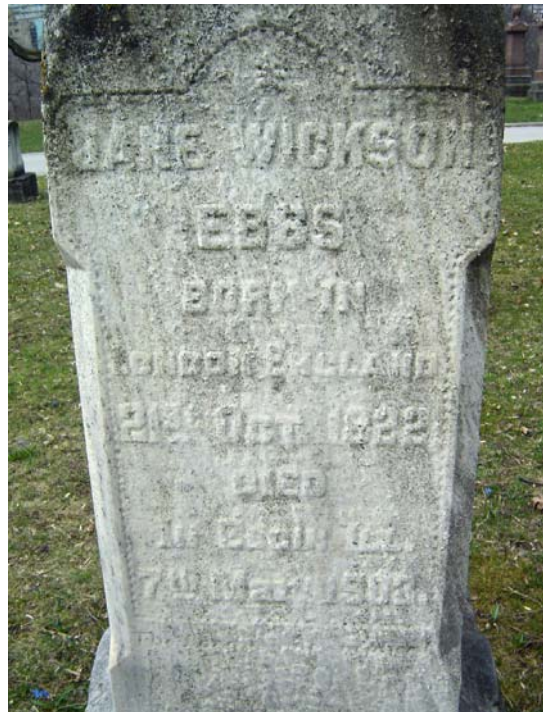
Ebbs resigned from the church on July 1, 1868 to take a position in Ottawa, Canada. His ministry included service in the towns of London, Hamilton and Paris, Canada. He also served parishes in the Illinois towns of Plainfield and Naperville (1879).

Records show that he was a minister in Naperville, Illinois in 1879 and lived on Downer Place in Aurora in 1880. From 1882 until his death, he lived in Toronto, Canada and was a member of the Zion Church.

It was reported that even though he was retired by that time, "his interest in the work never diminished, nor was his liberality withheld, and he intensely enjoyed such occasional work as he was able to do. Only a week previous to his death, he preached at the Central Prison."

He held fast to the principles of temperance and carried a pledge book in his pocket to convince others to join him.

Reverend Ebbs died on June 24, 1884 in York, Ontario, Canada. He was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Canada. His wife Jane lived in Elgin in 1903 and died in 1908. She also is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.



(Photos courtesy of Find-A-Grave)

The couple had five children – Sarah, Florence, Edward, George and Samuel, the boy who died in 1867 and is buried in the West Side Cemetery in Aurora.



(Photo courtesy of Find-A-Grave)

There are numerous references to both Reverend Ebbs and his wife Jane on the Internet. However, only a photo of Jane has been found.



(Photo courtesy of Ancestry.com)

Jane Wickson Ebbs

(Portions of the above profile are from the Aurora Public Library, the Beacon-News & Canadian Congregational Yearbook.)

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Third Minister
The Reverend Thomas N. Haskell
(Served from 1868 to 1871)



(Photo courtesy of Colorado College)

Reverend Thomas Nelson Haskell was born in Mina, Chautauqua County, New York on January 20, 1826.

He was the son of Captain George and Eliza Knapp Haskell. His family moved to Bloomfield, Ohio when Haskell was an infant.

He became an orphan at an early age. As a result, he was forced to use his ingenuity to finance his education.

Haskell attended Farmington Academy and taught in Warren, Ohio at the age of sixteen. He was a student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio from 1846 to 1847.

From 1847 to 1851, he studied at Oberlin College. He then returned to Miami University where he received his undergraduate degree in 1851.

Haskell attended Union Theological Seminary in New York, Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts and then returned to Union to graduate in 1854.

He was the principal of Wayne Academy in Ohio from 1849 to 1850. He also served as the principal at Sandusky High School in 1851. Haskell organized the first Teachers' Institutes in Ohio in 1851 and 1852.

On April 5, 1854, he was licensed to preach by the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn. On February 7, 1855 he was ordained by the Presbytery of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C. as the first pastor of the Western Presbyterian Church in that city.

Also in 1855, he married Ann Eliza Edwards, daughter of Justin Edwards, who was the president of Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts.

The couple had four daughters – Florence (who died in infancy), another Florence, Mary and Annie.

Haskell resigned from Western Presbyterian Church in 1858 over the secession policy of the state of Virginia. He then became the minister of the Maverick Congregational Church in East Boston until 1862 when he resigned because of failing health. The people of the church sent him on a tour to Europe, Palestine and Egypt.

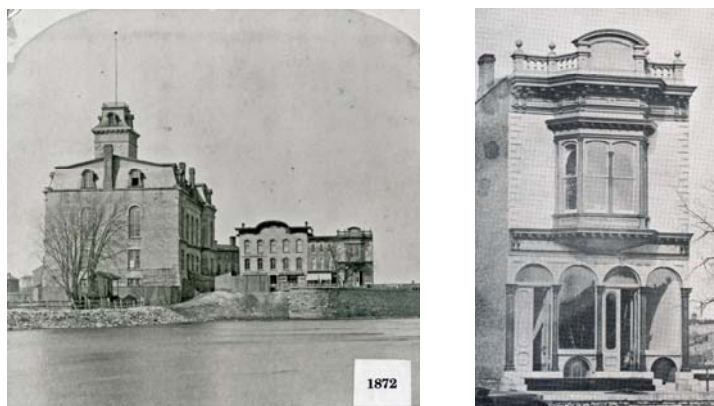
In 1862, an attempt was made to have Haskell serve as chaplain to a division of the Union Army, but he declined. However, in 1865 he was detailed by the United States Christian Commission to preach to the 17th Army Corps.

Haskell then became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in East Boston where he remained until 1867. Later that year, he accepted a professorship in rhetoric, literature, aesthetics and political economy at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and conductor of its female college.

Reverend Haskell received the call to be the minister of New England Church in November of 1868. He was hired at a salary of \$1,800.00 and was the first minister to be granted a paid vacation.

During his ministry, sixty-four members were added to the church rolls, a pipe organ was purchased and gas lamps replaced the kerosene chandeliers in the sanctuary.

In 1869, Reverend Haskell joined the committee that oversaw the construction of the first YMCA building in Illinois, which was built on Fox Street (now called Downer Place), across from the old City Hall in Aurora.



(Photos courtesy of the Aurora Historical Society)

First photo is Aurora YMCA (furthest building on right) located behind Old City Hall on Downer Place. Second photo is close-up of facility.

Haskell resigned from New England Church in 1871. The church had problems meeting its financial obligations to him, but records indicate that his salary was paid in full before he left. Church members agreed that the level of future compensation for ministers should not exceed the subscriptions received from pew rentals. The next minister's salary was lowered to \$1,400.00.

Haskell moved to Denver, Colorado in 1873 due to his second daughter Florence's health. She died later that year.

In 1874, he helped to found Colorado College. He became the college's first financial officer. He resigned the following year in protest of a proposal to sell college land in order to raise money for buildings and over a dispute with the college regarding monies he believed were owed to him. Nonetheless, Haskell House at the College was named in his honor.



(Photo courtesy of Colorado College)

Haskell House at Colorado College (1959 Photo)

By this time, his health prevented him from holding a full-time position with a church or school, so he concentrated on writing and public affairs. His attempts to secure a government appointment were met with rejection.

He eventually became the Colorado State Librarian for one term and chaplain for the Colorado Senate. He also received an honorary doctorate from Miami University in recognition of his prolific writings. A list of his writings can be found on the Colorado College website.

His biography stated that “his professional career followed the pattern of his college days with many changes in location and employment. He seemed to become more dissatisfied and frustrated by unfulfilled hopes and ambitions as time went on.”

Reverend Haskell died on August 9, 1906 in Denver, Colorado and is buried in that state.

(Portions of the above profile are from Colorado College and the Wisconsin Journal of Education, Volume 9.)

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**Fourth Minister
The Reverend Dexter D. Hill
(Served from 1872 to 1880)**



(Photo courtesy of Beloit College)

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Class of 1866.

Dexter D. Hill was drafted at Wauwatosa, Nov. 24, 1863; at his own request was assigned to Co. "M," 1st Wis. Cav.; joined the regiment at Cleveland, Tenn., March 24, 1864; was promoted to Corporal, Apr. 1, 1864; was detailed as clerk at Headquarters Department of the Cumberland, March 11, 1864, to May 1, 1865; was transferred as clerk at the office of the Medical Purveyor, Department of the Cumberland, May 5, 1865; was mustered out with his ^{regiment} company at Edgefield, Tenn., July 19, 1865, on account of close of the war; served in Ky., Tenn., and Ga.

Handwritten obituary that appeared in the Beloit College alumni magazine regarding Hill's service in the Civil War

Reverend Dexter D. Hill came to New England Church in 1872 where he remained as its leader for 8 years.

Reverend Hill was born on November 22, 1837 in Charlemont, Massachusetts. He was the son of Caleb Hill and Annis Avery Hill.

His mother was a descendent of Christopher Avery who came to America with John Winthrop, one of the leading figures in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. Avery's illegible signature has been preserved and is referred to by his descendants as "the first scratch of his pen."

Scratch for Average

Dexter Hill's family eventually moved to Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. In 1858, Hill became a student at the Beloit Preparatory Academy.

In 1860, he entered Beloit College in Wisconsin. Hill left his studies at Beloit to serve in the 1st Wisconsin Calvary in the Civil War from 1863 to 1865. He was in all of the battles of the Atlanta campaign under General William Tecumseh Sherman.

His war letters written to one of his professors – Professor Joseph Emerson – have been archived and can be read on the Beloit College website. These valuable accounts of the war covered the period of January 1864 to August 1865.

Professor Emerson was a professor of Greek and classical languages. He was a popular role model on campus to whom many students corresponded during the war.

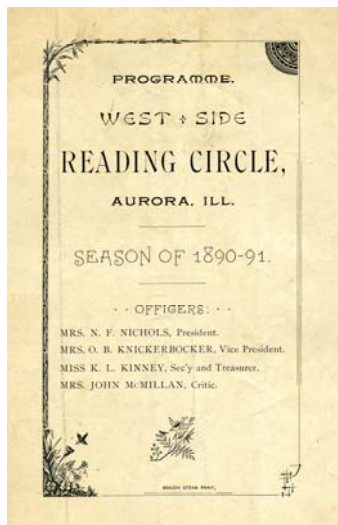
After the war, Hill returned to Beloit College where he received his degree in 1866. In 1869, he was graduated from the Chicago Theological Seminary.

He married Louise Rau on May 4, 1869 in Beloit, Wisconsin. The couple had three children – Charles, Roland (or Ronald according to some sources) and Edith.

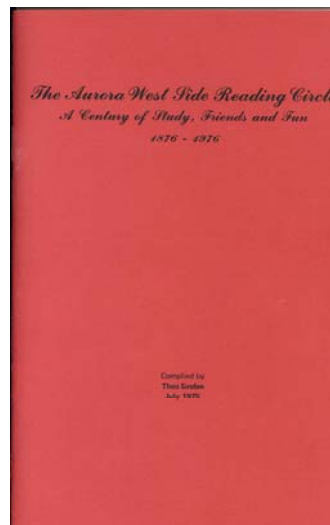
He served a parish in Dundee Illinois before accepting the call from Aurora in 1872.

During his tenure at Aurora, it was discovered that the church had no legal existence in Kane County. Under Reverend Hill's guidance, a constitution was written and the proper papers were filed. The church now was officially recognized in the eyes of the County.

In 1876, Hill's wife Louise and her friend, Hannah Delatour, launched the Women's West Side Reading Circle in Aurora. Delatour had just read Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad and remarked to Mrs. Hill that she needed someone with whom to share the book's humor. Thus began the formation of a literary club which exists in Aurora to this day.



(Courtesy of Aurora Historical Society)



(Courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

In 1880, Reverend Hill resigned as minister of New England Church to take a position at Beloit College.

He eventually moved to California where he established missions in several locations before retiring to his fruit farm at Downey, California.

He also started the Congregational Church in Pasadena where he was the pastor for thirty-six years.

Hill died in March of 1923. He is buried in Pomona, California.

(Portions of the above profile are from the history of Beloit College.)

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Fifth Minister
The Reverend William Windsor
(Served from 1881 to 1888)



(Photo from Ancestry.com)

Reverend William Windsor was born on September 17, 1830 in Petersfield, Hampshire, England. He was the son of Reverend John Wesley Windsor and Mary Hill.

At the age of fourteen, he departed from Liverpool, England on the ship Yorkshire and arrived in New York, New York on April 2, 1844.

He married Harriet Butler Holmes on June 18, 1858 in Belvedere, Illinois. Mrs. Windsor was the third child of Reverend Henry Bishop Holmes and Harriet Butler.

William and Harriet Windsor had four children – Henry, William, Charles and Herbert.

In the 1870 census, the family was living in Sycamore, Illinois.

Reverend Windsor accepted the call to New England Church in 1881. Under his direction, a furnace replaced the heating stoves in the church and new carpeting was installed. This eliminated the multi-colored carpets which each family brought for the floor of their own pews. One observer remarked that the previous colored carpets reminded him of Joseph's coat of many colors.

He also had flyers printed to announce services and meetings. Sunday School, called Sabbath School, was held at noon on Sundays and prayer meetings were held each Thursday evening. Everyone was invited to attend regularly, punctually and devoutly. In return, they would find a blessing.

The Sunday School was having financial trouble during this time. In response, George Hurd, a noted Zouave leader and member of New England, coached 17 young women from the church who decided to form a Broom Drill Club. Their goal was to march into the public with brooms and dustpans to sweep up needed coins. Their efforts met with success.

Several years later, Hurd organized the world famous Aurora Zouaves, whose precision in military drills took them throughout the world.



(Church Flyer & Aurora Zouaves photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

In 1887, church members began discussions regarding the construction of a new church building. The following year, Reverend Windsor resigned due to personal health issues.

He resided in Santa Clara, California by 1900. He died on September 8, 1908 in Los Gatos, California at the age of seventy-seven. His wife died in 1927.

(Portions of the above profile are from Ancestry.com)

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Sixth Minister
The Reverend John O. Haarvig
(Served from 1888 to 1892)



REV. JOHN O. HAARVIG.

(Photo from The Congregationalist – Volume 80)

Reverend John O. Haarvig was born in Bergen, Norway in May of either 1857 or 1858. Historical records disagree as to the year of his birth.

He immigrated to Chicago in 1866 and attended the public schools in Chicago. He graduated from high school there in 1877.

Haarvig then went to Europe for four months to study “harmony” due to his interest in music. Upon his return, he studied three years at Northwestern University.

He graduated from the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1883. During his college years, he served as an organist for a church in Chicago.

After another trip to Europe, he returned to Illinois where he served as the minister of a church in Lisbon for two years and later a church in Sandwich for two years.

He then returned to Europe for fourteen months to study philosophy in Berlin.

After his study in Berlin, Haarvig was called to New England Church in 1888, where he served for 4 years.

The young minister oversaw the raising of funds for the construction of the new church which opened in May 1890.

The new church was to be located on Chestnut Street and Galena Boulevard, which was one block away from the original church.

The original church was sold to the Advent Christian Church, which - a year or two later - sold the building to Holy Angels Catholic Church.

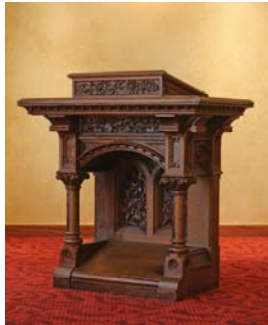


(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

New England Congregational Church built in 1890

On May 4, 1890, the 32-year-old congregation proudly held services for the first time in its new sanctuary. The curved pews and sloped floors provided good views of the chancel for all congregants. These pews are still used in the church today.

The intricately carved pulpit, lectern and communion table were stunning. The pulpit furniture has since been placed in the church's Johnson Chapel.



(Photos courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Original pulpit, lectern and communion table currently in Johnson Chapel

The sanctuary, which could seat 420 people, also housed a Hook and Hastings tracker organ. The organist faced the beautiful stenciled pipes and a curtain was placed between the musicians and the congregation.



(Photos courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Two stained glass windows were installed on the east and west walls of the sanctuary. The artist who designed the windows and the manufacturer are unknown.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

The east side of the building's exterior remains today as it did in 1890, except that the porch has been enclosed. There were two entrances at that time as evidenced by this 1930s photo.

The tower alcove entrance is still used today and, although there is room for a bell in the tower, records do not reveal that one has ever been installed there.

Total expense to build the church and provide furnishings was \$30,000.00

Haarvig resigned from New England Church in November 1892. He then continued his ministry in Allston, Lynn, and Boston, Massachusetts. He also served as minister in Concord, New Hampshire.

His wife's name was Charlotte Haarvig, but little is known about her. It appears that the couple had one son by the name of John.

Reverend Haarvig's date of death could not be verified. In researching the Boston City Directories, he was listed as being alive in 1929 but his wife was listed as a widow in 1931.

(Portions of the above profile are from *The Congregationalist* - Volume 80.)

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Seventh Minister
The Reverend Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr.
(Served from 1893 to 1897)



(Photo and article from the Aurora Beacon-News)

Reverend Sturtevant was born in Jacksonville, Illinois in 1834. His father, Julian M. Sturtevant, Sr., was the president of Illinois College in Jacksonville. Reverend Sturtevant was an 1854 graduate of the college and also taught there in later years.

He studied theology in Andover, Massachusetts, graduating in 1859. He was ordained in Hannibal, Missouri in 1860 where he served as a minister for over nine years.

From there he went to Ottawa, Illinois where he was pastor for almost four years and then to Denver, Colorado where he remained for three years.

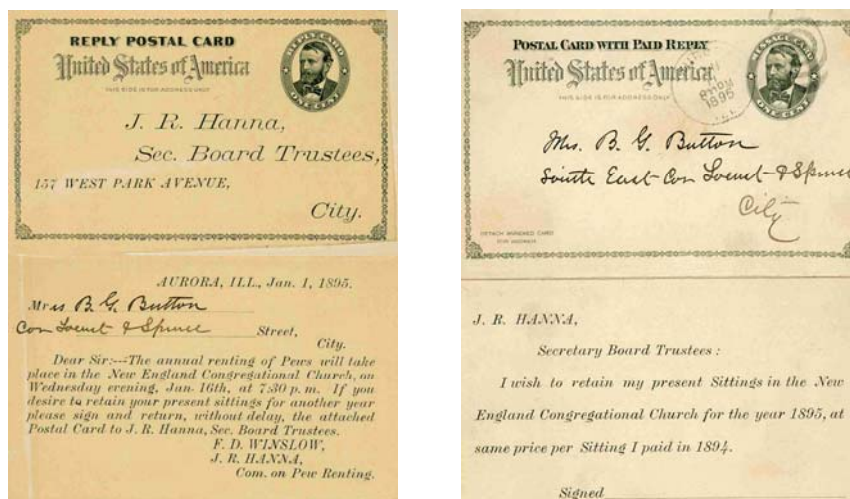
After Denver, he moved to Grinnell, Iowa and served as minister for eight years. He left Grinnell for the Pilgrim Church in Cleveland, Ohio where he worked for six years.

He then was at Galesburg, Illinois for three years before coming to New England Church in 1893.

The day before his arrival at New England, a July 1893 Aurora Beacon-News article described Sturtevant as a large man, physically and intellectually. "His giant figure, strong features and massive head, surmounted by a large slouch hat in which he always appears would be conspicuous in any crowd."

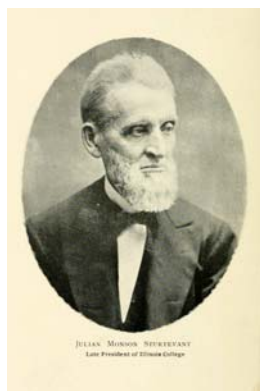
During Reverend Sturtevant's ministry at New England, the Sunday School became an official part of the church and was supervised by Mrs. A.V. Greenman, wife of the superintendent of the West Aurora Schools. Prior to this time, it was a separate entity sponsored by the church.

In addition, benevolence contributions were raised significantly to nearly \$3,000.00 per year. During those years, the rental of pews to the congregation helped to underwrite the budget. Two-sided postcards were mailed to the members who could then reserve their seats for the coming year.



(Postcards for renting of pews – Courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Sturtevant resigned from New England Church in 1897 after a serious illness. He died in Arlington, Massachusetts in 1921 and was buried in Jacksonville, Illinois. Reverend Sturtevant and his wife Catherine Hayward Sturtevant had two children – Anna and Hayward.

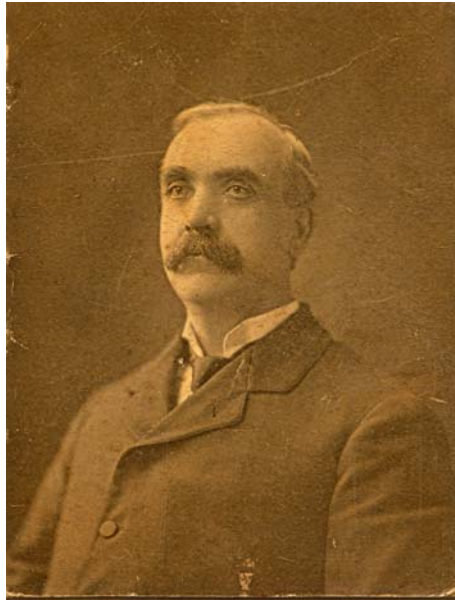


(Photos of President Sturtevant and Sturtevant Hall are courtesy of Illinois College)

Julian M. Sturtevant, Sr., the second president of Illinois College, was the father of Reverend Sturtevant. Sturtevant Hall was named in his honor.

(Portions of the above profile are from the Aurora Beacon-News and Ancestry.com.)

**Eighth Minister
The Reverend John T. Blanchard
(Served from 1897 to 1901)**



(Photos from Ancestry.com)

First photo is Reverend John T. Blanchard. Second photo is Reverend Blanchard with wife Carrie and two of their children, Howard and Bertha.

Reverend John T. Blanchard was born on November 14, 1852 in Michigan. He was the son of Thomas and Sarah Brown Blanchard.

John Blanchard was a student at Olivet College in Village of Olivet, Michigan.

He married Carrie Chapel on January 4, 1882 in St. Louis, Michigan. Several other sources have the marriage year as 1881.

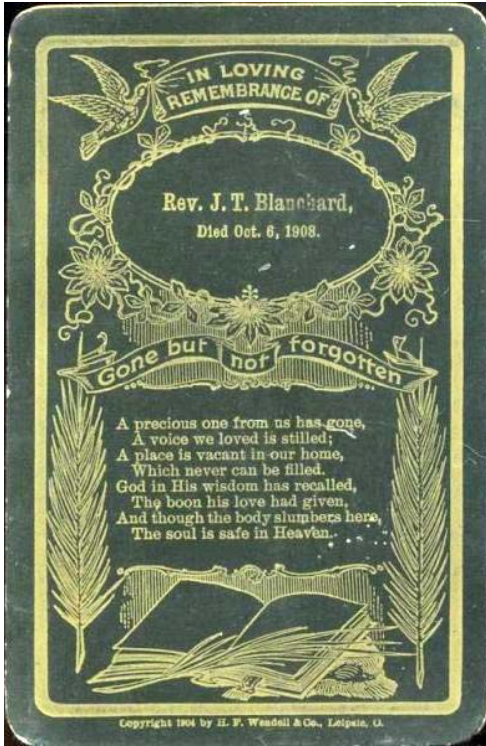
The couple had four children – Howard, Sarah, Bertha and John.

Blanchard was the minister of New England Church from 1897 to 1901. While in Aurora, they lived at 218 Walnut Street.

He brought many new members into the church through his “special meetings” in which he was accompanied by an evangelist and a singer.

He died on October 6, 1908 in Sloan, Iowa, where he was serving as minister of the First Congregational Church.

He and his wife (who died in 1922) are buried in Sloan, Iowa.



Blanchard Family Marker

(Funeral Card from Ancestry.com and Family Marker from Find A Grave)

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Ninth Minister
The Reverend William Henry Buss
(Served from 1901 to 1905)



(Photo from Find A Grave)

Reverend William H. Buss was born in Sussex County, England on February 6, 1852.

His parents, Reverend Henry and Charlotte Miles Buss, immigrated to the United States in 1853. His father served as a Congregational minister for forty years. Both parents died in Aurora, Illinois.

William Buss attended Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. He was graduated from Oberlin College in 1879. In his junior year, he was elected class poet and his commencement poem was "Ode to Oberlin."

Buss received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree from the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1882.

His ordination took place in Burlington, Iowa in 1882. He was the assistant minister of the First Congregational Church in Burlington for two years.

He then built a new church at West Burlington, Iowa and served as minister for that congregation until 1887.

He next served as pastor of the Deadwood Congregational Church until 1890.

In October 1890, he accepted a call to the First Congregational Church in Fremont, Nebraska where he served for eleven years.

Reverend Buss became the minister of New England Church in 1901. While at New England, he was successful in attracting younger members to the church. Of the 65 new members who joined during his tenure, the majority were under 25 years of age.

He resigned from the church in 1905 to return to Nebraska where he had been a pastor prior to coming to Aurora.

Reverend Buss married Annie Rachel Woepking on October 29, 1885 in Burlington, Iowa. They had three children – Edith, Ralph and William.

In addition to being a pastor, he was an accomplished poet and essayist. He composed many poems on World War I, which included prominent Americans and events of the time.

He won the contest to write a poem for Nebraska's Semi-Centennial Celebration. He entitled his work – Hymn to Nebraska.

In 1917, he suffered an affliction of his eyes. This prompted him to retire from the ministry after thirty-six years of service.

In return for his devotion to their church, the First Congregational Church in Fremont elected him pastor emeritus for life.

Reverend Buss died on April 12, 1926 and is buried in Fremont, Nebraska. His wife Annie Buss died in 1941.



(Photo courtesy of Find A Grave)

(Portions of the above profile are from the History of Dodge and Washington Counties, Nebraska.)

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Tenth Minister The Reverend Wallace W. Willard (Served from 1906 to 1911)



(Photos courtesy of the First Congregational Church in Beloit, Wisconsin and the Aurora Beacon-News)

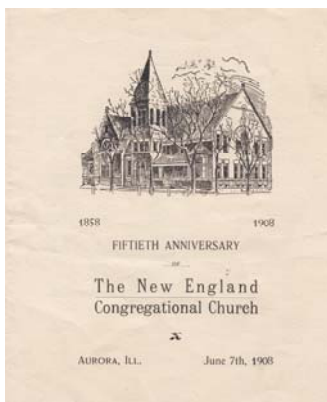
Reverend Wallace Willard was born on November 5, 1862 in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

His father John was a minister. His mother's name was Catherine.

Reverend Wallace Willard was married to Mary E. Willard. They had one child, John E. Willard, who was a member of the chemistry department at the University of Wisconsin.

His ministry at New England Church began in 1906. During his tenure, a dining room and kitchen were built on the third floor of the church, where the current chapel and restrooms are located.

In addition, a system for collecting weekly offerings for operating expenses and mission benevolence replaced the old system of pew rental.



Also of interest was the tradition of holding the church's annual meetings on either New Year's Eve or New Year's Day while he was with the church. This practice was later discontinued due to low attendance.

Reverend Willard was minister during the church's 50th Anniversary celebration in 1908.

In that year, Miss Margaret Towne, who was a charter member of New England, recorded the first history of the church which remains in the church archives to this day.

(1)

As the New England Church was preparing to celebrate its fiftieth birthday; its Year of Jubilee, it seemed fitting that the record of those fifty years should be woven into history. To one, the only Charter member who is now with you, has been intrusted the responsibility of bringing to you the story of this half century of struggle and victory, of depression and spiritual uplift. With the years for my part, the work is done. It is from the Church Records, meager in many instances, missing

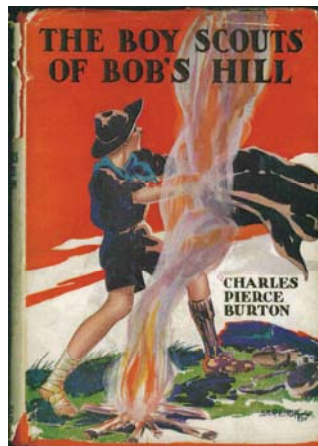
2

entirely at times, and from memories which in some instances, become intense with their awakening.

When our Mother, the First Congregational Church of Aurora was twenty years old, and had just moved from the old frame house into her new, modern stone home, which at that time seemed palatial, some of the children felt that it was time to colonize. A large number of them lived "over the river" on the West side and there was a large field which could well be homesteaded by the Congregationalists.

(Margaret Towne's First History of New England Church – 1908)

In 1910, church member and Sunday School teacher, Charles H. Norton, organized Boy Scout Troop #3 at the church. The troop, one of the oldest, continuously chartered Boy Scout troops in the nation, remains a vibrant organization which is sponsored by the church to this day.



(Above brochures and historical writings courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

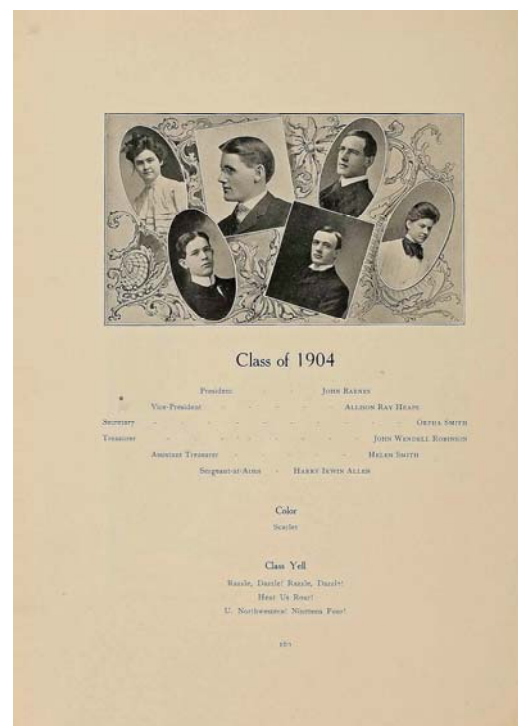
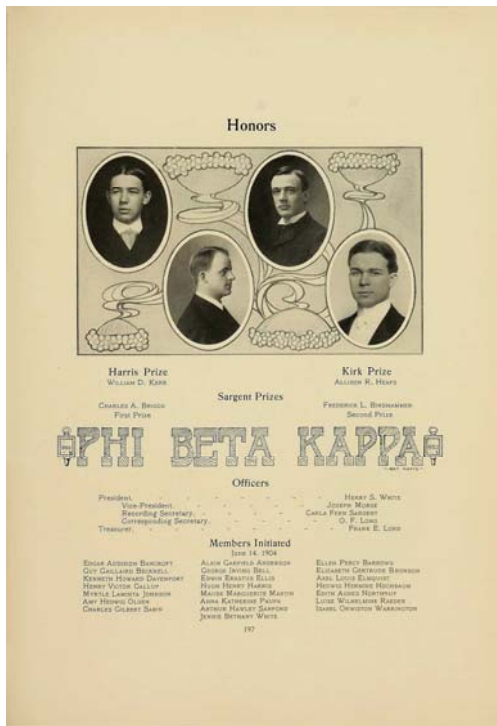
Reverend Willard resigned from the church in 1911. He then served as a minister in Moline, Illinois and in the States of California, Oregon and Ohio.

He was pastor of the First Congregational Church in Beloit, Wisconsin from 1920 to 1926.

Willard died on November 4, 1949 in Madison, Wisconsin.

(Portions of the above profile are from the Wisconsin State Journal.)

**Eleventh Minister
The Reverend Allison Ray Heaps
(Served from 1912 to 1918)**



(Photos courtesy of Northwestern University)

Reverend Heaps - upper right of photo

Reverend Heaps - lower right of photo

Reverend Allison Ray Heaps was born on August 23, 1879 in Kewanee, Illinois.

He was a 1904 graduate of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois where he was elected vice-president of his class and was a member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Society.

Heaps married Isabel Warrington on August 24, 1905 in Chicago. Isabel was born in Illinois in 1883. The couple had two children – Porter and Willard.

They later divorced and Isabel became a lecturer in Evanston, Illinois at the School of Speech. She died in 1965 in Evanston.

Reverend Heaps later married Viola Knott Heaps. The couple had one child, Roselle.

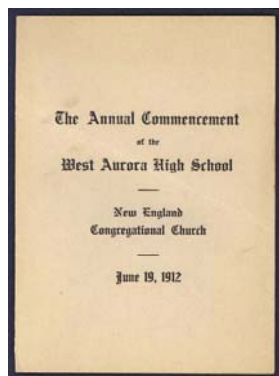
Viola Heaps was born in Canada on December 22, 1887 and became a United States citizen on November 11, 1954. She died on April 5, 1984 in Vernon, Connecticut.

In 1910, Reverend Heaps lived in Ashton, Iowa. In 1912, he received the call to be pastor of New England Church.

While at New England, he was successful in growing the membership. By 1915, there were 428 members. Eighty-seven new members were received in that year alone.

The church was continuing its outreach in new ways. Reverend Heaps helped the congregation send resolutions to Congress in support of National Prohibition.

Locally, the church hosted the West Aurora High School Commencement in June of 1915. The high school was located on Blackhawk Street, one block away from the church.



(Brochure and photo courtesy of West Aurora School District 129)

After leaving New England Church in 1918, Heaps worked in various churches in Massachusetts and Michigan.

In 1957, he came out of retirement to serve as the interim minister for The Church on Tolland Green in Tolland, Connecticut until 1959. He died on February 15, 1968 in Vernon, Connecticut.

Reverend Heaps' sons were successful in their careers. Willard was born in 1909.

He became a librarian with the United Nations. He also co-authored the book, The Singing Sixties, with his brother Porter. The book highlights the music of the Civil War.

Willard lived in Vernon, Connecticut at the time of his retirement. He died on April 19, 1987.

Porter was a professional organist, performing on Chicago radio and television stations in the 1940s and 1950s.

In his early career, he was the chapel organist for Northwestern University and he played daily vespers at Rockefeller Chapel in Chicago. He was an organist for churches and synagogues for nearly eighty years.

Porter also was associated with the Hammond Organ Company for almost forty years. He traveled the world demonstrating the instrument's features. Because of his efforts, Hammond sold tens of thousands of organs.

It was reported that his recitals were world events with thousands of people lined up at the Royal Albert Hall in London or other venues where he played.

Porter died in 1999, just three weeks shy of his ninety-third birthday.

(Portions of the above profile are from Ancestry.com and the San Francisco Chronicle.)

Willard Heaps is pictured below in a 1929 photo of the Northwestern University Glee Club. He is listed as appearing in the front row, tenth from the left.

SYLLABUS



FOOTE McCLAY HANLON DAUER HOFMANN ANDERSON MOKSNES MARTINSON VAN DEURSEN
 PENDLETON VENABLES TAYLOR VAN DOREN
 THOMAS EWERS LILLEBERG VANDAVEER GOLDSTEIN CREE SCHNEIDER MARTIN SCUDDER ERICKSON CREWS DIERS
 BIERBAUM KERNER PARKHILL FERRIS McLAUGHLIN MILNES REASON VIOHL YON RUFF SCHOEN SEVERANCE
 CLANCY KUEBLER KEETON LIMPUS MOORHEAD SCHROEDER SOLYOM OETTINGER BARKER CAMPBELL GRIGGS SPAYDE
 BACKUS CRIPPEN BAKER SORDEN CHERRY LEA FINEFIELD OLYNIEC DAWSON HEAPS GOLTZ PARKINSON

Glee Club

F. H. DIERS
 W. C. EWERS
 W. K. FINEFIELD
 H. H. HANLON
 I. H. HECHTMAN

First Tenors

J. F. HOFMANN
 G. F. KEETON
 W. C. KERNER
 R. P. LEA
 F. A. MOORHEAD
 A. A. NEU

H. S. REASON
 C. L. SCHROEDER
 S. B. SHAW
 M. T. SORDEN
 D. O. TAYLOR

G. H. BARKER
 J. H. CAMPBELL
 I. S. CHERRY
 W. H. CLANCY
 D. S. CREWS
 E. C. FOOTE

Second Tenors

H. GOLDSTEIN
 T. H. GRIGGS
 W. A. HEAPS
 L. MOKSNES
 W. A. OETTINGER
 R. E. PARKIN

B. H. PENDLETON
 E. T. RUFF
 R. W. SCHNEIDER
 R. E. SCUDDER
 M. L. SEVERANCE
 G. R. VAN DOREN

H. O. ANDERSON
 F. M. BAKER
 H. O. BIERBAUM
 R. A. DAWSON
 W. E. ERICKSON
 J. C. FERRIS

First Basses

C. G. KUEBLER
 E. G. LILLEBERG
 R. C. McLAUGHLIN
 J. MINNEMA
 S. OLYNIEC

B. S. PARKHILL
 A. T. PETERSON
 C. T. PETERSON
 V. E. SCHOEN
 V. B. SOLYOM
 S. H. SPAYDE

W. L. BACKUS
 E. A. DAUER
 R. L. LEWIS
 R. M. LIMPUS
 D. L. McTAGGART
 L. F. MARTIN

Second Basses

J. K. MILNES
 R. E. PARKINSON
 A. J. SAKELSON
 J. G. SHIKANY
 H. L. THOMAS
 R. L. VANDAVEER

Accompanists

H. A. VAN DEURSEN
 R. F. VENABLES
 R. W. VIOHL
 W. S. WHITE
 C. WESTERLUND
 J. P. YON

GEORGE E. McCLAY


J. C. FERRIS

Three Hundred Eighty-two


ORGANIZATIONS

Porter Heaps is pictured below in a 1925 Northwestern University photo. He is in the first row, fifth man from the left.

SYLLABUS



GAMMA BETA OF SIGMA NU



NEWLAND COLWELL COLVILLE R. R. SMITH DAHL HOWELL SETTLES YOBE ULLRICK SHAFER LANE
MATTHEWS BRUCE T. TURNER SCHNEIDER COOK MOHR SNYDER MOOS AMANN R. D. SMITH
MULCH STEVENS FOWLER WOLFE NICHOLS MCELWAIN WOODWARD FRY JOHNSON SOLHEIM
WHITE TALMAN GARNETT ROBERTS NORTON VISSERING BUSHNELL GOESSELE CARPENTER EGAN
NESMITH LUNDBERG F. TURNER WEAVER HEAPS ASHBAUGH SEAGER NESSELROD SPROUL

LIBERAL ARTS—FRATERNITIES

N

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Porter Heaps is pictured below in a 1928 Northwestern photo of the Organ Club. He is in the first row, third from the left.

Syllabus



POWELL REED VIBOND BECKHELM CORNHILL
 SQUIERS GLYNN CADY SIMS SWANOREN
 BAILEY PARKHILL RUMMLER LOCKWOOD MOERS
 LAMBUTH OLSON HEAPS VINEYARD WHEELWRIGHT

ORGAN CLUB

ALPHA SIGMA MU

OFFICERS

PORTER HEAPS	<i>President</i>
THEO OLSON	<i>Vice-President</i>
HELEN VINEYARD	<i>Secretary-Treasurer</i>
STANLEY MARTIN	<i>Faculty Advisor</i>

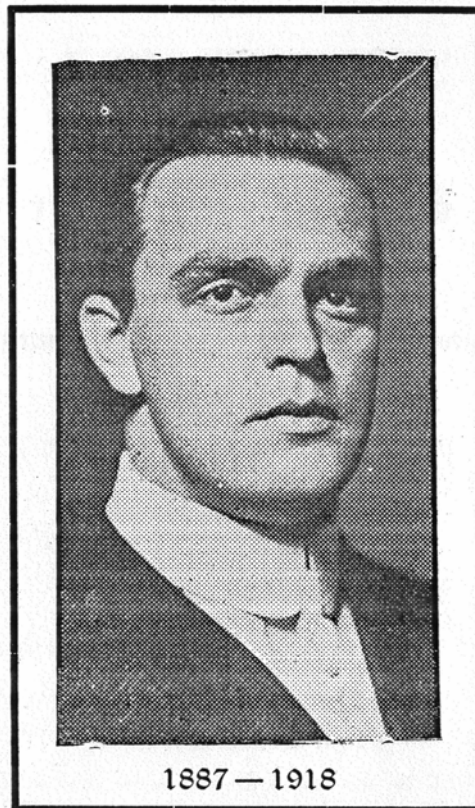
In the Fall of 1924, a group of organ students in the Music School conceived and instituted the Organists' Club which has since become known as Alpha Sigma Mu. The group meets to discuss organ-building and literature, to attend organ recitals in a body, and to give a recital every two weeks for the members. It is to Stanley Martin, professor of organ, Letha Brubaker, and Cyrus Danial, that the club owes its formation. Any one studying organ at Northwestern is eligible for membership.

MUSIC

Five Hundred Eighty-one



**Twelfth Minister
The Reverend Harold E. Parr
(Served 1918)**



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

In 1918, a young minister of thirty-one, Reverend Harold E. Parr, became New England Church's twelfth minister.

Parr was born in Birmingham, England on February 8, 1887 to Harry and Alice Parr. His early education was with the public schools in Birmingham.

He came to America in 1908 and served as a substitute for his brother, the Reverend Leonard A. Parr, at the First Congregational Church in Edgerton, Wisconsin.

He agreed to this assignment only temporarily, as he wanted to pursue his studies at the University of Chicago.

Parr was a 1912 graduate of the Theological Seminary in Chicago.

He was ordained on May 7, 1912 in the Wellington Avenue Congregational Church in Chicago.

He then became the minister of the Hampshire Colony Congregational Church in Princeton, Illinois. He served the church from 1912 to 1915.



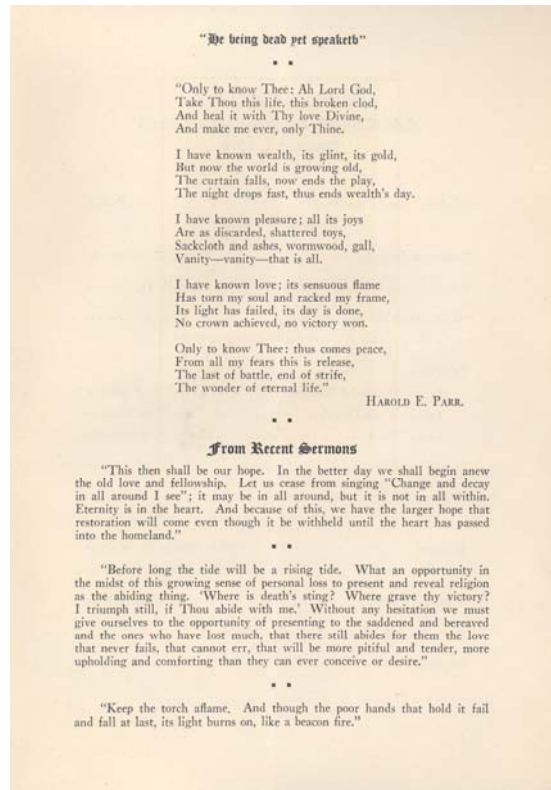
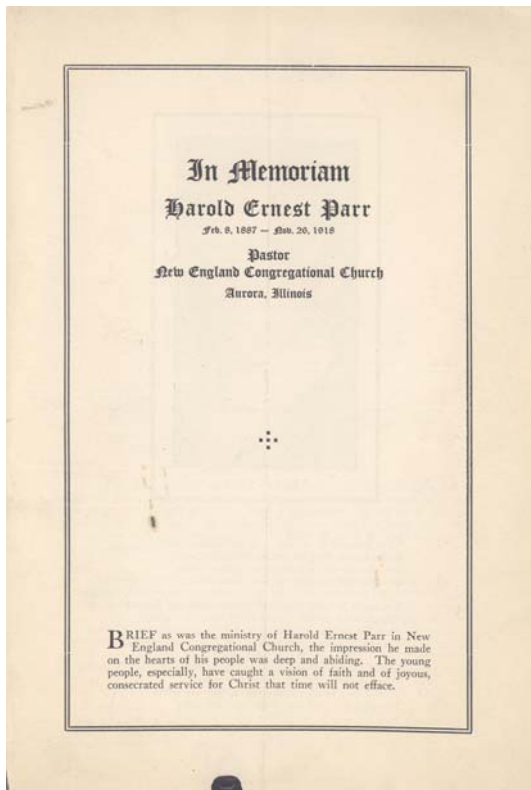
(Photo courtesy of the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley)
Hampshire Colony Congregational Church in Princeton

It was reported that he had a marvelous pulpit voice and delightful singing voice. He was especially popular with the youth.

In 1915, he accepted a call from the First Congregational Church in Waterloo, Iowa.

The next year he married Ruth Makutchan who lived in Princeton. Also in 1916, he became a citizen of the United States.

In February 1918, he accepted the call to be pastor of New England Church. However, his ministry lasted only a few short months. On November 25, 1918, he died of the war-time influenza that had killed so many throughout the world.



(Courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

He was survived by his widow and fifteen-month-old son, Harold E. Parr, Jr.

His brother Leonard was at his bedside when he died. His father, three sisters and three brothers resided in England. His mother's name was Alice, but she is not mentioned at the time of Parr's death. Perhaps she had predeceased him. Reverend Parr was buried in Oakland Cemetery, Princeton.

After his sad and untimely death, the grieving church approved a motion that pastors were not to be allowed to stand in the vestibule during cold weather, since the congregation had thought this was the reason for Parr's death.

Ruth Parr was pregnant with their second child when Reverend Parr died. She named the child Doris.

Ruth moved back to Princeton and lived with her parents, Howard and Josephine Makutchan, in the family home on Peru Street.

In 1922, she married Durbin Downey who was also from the Princeton area. They had one child whom they named Durbin Downey, Jr. They continued to live in the family home.

Ruth died in 1931, leaving three children – Harold Parr, Jr. (age twelve), Doris (age ten) and Durbin (age five). She is buried in Oakland Cemetery in Princeton.

Following are a church resolution read at Reverend Parr's funeral, letters to the church from his brother and father and an Aurora Beacon-News article published at the time of his death.

The following resolutions were presented at the Memorial Service for the Rev. Harold E. Parr by a Com. appointed by the New England Ch.

Our Heavenly Father has welcomed our beloved pastor, friend and brother, the Reverend Harold E. Parr, into the richer, fuller life, while our hearts are filled with sorrow, we, in all humility, submit to him who is all Wisdom, Power and Compassion. Yet it is hard to be reconciled to the taking of one so fully equipped intellectually and spiritually at a time when, of all times, such men as he are so greatly needed.

We for the moment feel our loss almost irreparable, fully realizing that in the few short months he spent amongst us, his genial, lovable presence exerted an influence not to be estimated.

A man so pure of mind and heart, of such ability and sterling character was a valuable asset, and his untimely death is a loss to the whole community.

To his family we extend our heartfelt sympathy in this their great hour of sorrow and entrust them to Him whom he so dearly loved, in whose footsteps he so closely walked.

To his father and others near and dear to him we can testify that the lives of all, both young and old, have been made sweeter and better by his gentle, gracious, helpful ministry, and we commend them to Him who alone can bring comfort in this hour of their bereavement.

In behalf of the New England Church and Congregation.

Committee on Resolutions.

*Aurora Bee
Dec. 1, 1918*

Church Resolution

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CORNER 2ND AVE. AND 1ST STREET
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

LEONARD A. PARR WROTE

December thirty first.

Dear Miss PIKE:

(I appreciate very much your letter with its kind wishes.) Will you please convey to the church my grateful appreciation for their finely expressed resolution. Harold had been very happy during his short stay in Aurora, and it is good to know now that both he and the church were so happy in each other.

I shall always remember gratefully, the many kindnesses (of yourself and family) to us in our time of trouble. (Wishing you all a Happy New Year, I am)

Sincerely yours,

Leonard Parr

Letter from Leonard Parr (brother of Harold)

January 10th. 1919.

TO THE DEACONS AND OFFICERS OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
AURORA, ILL., U.S.A.

As the Father of your late Pastor, The Rev. Harold Parr, B.D. I wish to convey to you my grateful thanks for the splendid co-operation, help and loyal support, you gave to my late son as Pastor of your Church. In his letters to me when writing home, he often spoke of the close union which existed between his Deacons and Officers of the Church. He was so proud to serve in his endeavours to extend the Kingdom of God and lead the people into the very presence of God, The Most High, whom he so loved to serve; and it was a great joy to me to know that he had the help and support of the people in his earnest endeavours as a man of God.

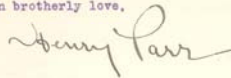
His ministry in your Church was short, but earnest and powerful, and the work he commenced amongst you will live on I am sure, and bear much fruit to the honour and glory of God!

I look back with pride and thankfulness that God gave to me a son who has left behind him such a glorious record of useful service.

The Church of Aurora will ever be to me a sacred memory as the last of my son's services was rendered there, and in silence I mourn his loss.

God prosper and enrich your Church and make it a power to save, is the sincere desire of

Yours, in brotherly love,



93, Floyer Road,
Small Heath,
BIRMINGHAM, England.

Letter from Harry Parr (father of Harold)

FELL FIGHTING AT HIS POST.

To a home in England, where lives a loving family, Aurora must send the sad news of a young man's death, as so many similar messages have come across the seas to American homes in the recent months.

The very best word that can come from the front with such a message is the citation of honor for duty well performed, on the field of action.

That very best last word Aurora speaks to the aching hearts in the far off English home and the same it speaks to the bereaved wife and brother, to the officers and members of the church which have lost a beloved pastor and to the many mourning friends here, as a message of the deepest sympathy in connection with the death of the Rev. Harold Ernest Parr.

He was an officer in the army of peace and good will. He had served with merit and distinction. He was able and likable, a combination none too often found in the positions of leadership. He fell fighting at his post.

We would have had it otherwise but the orders of the Commander of all life must be obeyed. Aurora cites with honor the loyal service and intelligent unselfish devotion of the Rev. Harold Ernest Parr in his pastorate of the New England Congregational church of this city.

His Life.

He was the son of Harry and Alice M. Parr of Birmingham, England. He was born in Birmingham, February 8, 1887, and would have been 32 years of age in February of next year. He was educated in English public schools and also took some college work there. Ten years ago, almost to a day, he arrived in this country and was at once invited to substitute for his brother, the Rev. Leonard A. Parr in the First Congregational church, Edgerton, Wisconsin, but consented to supply the pulpit only temporarily. He then went to Chicago university and later to Chicago Seminary, from which he was graduated with a splendid record in 1912. Just prior to graduation he had been honored with a call to the Congregational church of Princeton, Illinois. This was a most decided honor for so young a man and in the three years that followed, he rendered a notable ministry. He was then called to the First Congregational church of Waterloo, Iowa, one of the strongest churches in the state of Iowa, and he at once made his presence felt as one of the leading young men in the Congregational field.

He is survived by his widow and one son, Harold E. Parr Jr., 16 months old. His father is living in Birmingham, England, where three brothers and three sisters also reside. A fourth brother, the Rev. Leonard A. Parr, pastor of the First Congregational church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was present at the bedside when he passed away, having reached Aurora Sunday morning.

(Beacon-News Article)

Also reproduced is a letter from Reverend Allison Ray Heaps who preceded Reverend Parr as minister of New England Church. The outpouring of sympathy and genuine loss are obvious from all communications received at the time of Parr's death.

First Congregational Church
Norwood, Mass.
ALLISON RAY HEAPS, PASTOR

To The Members and Friends of the New England Church:

The disappointment brought about by the sad experience through which you have just passed as a church, leads me to send this personal word to you to say that I know your hearts and have a share in your feelings.

What a strange coincidence, if I am correct, that exactly one year to the day that I left you and turned eastward, Mr. Parr left you and stepped into the quiet of the funeral world.

From the very beginning it has been most gratifying to me to feel that the interests and responsibilities which I laid down were assumed by one of such capable and conscientious leadership. I have been impressed that God has liberally answered our prayers in sending such a man as Mr. Parr. How rapidly he won a place in your hearts! He prepared a program that matched a broad vision. You felt the away of his prophetic and earnest message. Though he, play was short with you, it will mark a bright spot in the history of the church.

That you responded to all he brought you, I have no doubt.

Perhaps you will find a little finer feeling and see brighter landscapes along the future's leading way because of the little work and talk in your hour had together. If so, those few brief months shall have their reward.

First Congregational Church
Norwood, Mass.
ALLISON RAY HEAPS, PASTOR

Lieutenant Maurice Malone leading his highlanders in a charge at the Battle of Gettysburg fell mortally wounded. Some turned back to help him and his last words were:
"Never mind me, carry on."

Then I am sure would be the words of your fellow leader, "never mind me, carry on."

The church is now facing a great opportunity. Here next few years she is to meet her supreme test. She must not fail, she cannot fail if she has the right leadership.

May the Holy Spirit richly bless you and guide you gently with unerring hand and raise up for you another leader worthy to accept the challenge of the hour and deserving of your loyalty.

All this from one who loves you all, and whose prayers mingle with yours and are always for you.

Allison Ray Heaps

Norwood, Mass.
Dec. 11, 1918

Letter from former minister Reverend Allison Ray Heaps



(Photos courtesy of the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley)

Reverend Parr and his wife Ruth are buried next to each other in Oakland Cemetery, Princeton.

Reverend Parr's wife – Ruth Makutchan – is featured below. This photo is from her Princeton High School Yearbook (Tattler).



INA BRADLEY

"A shadow of annoyance near her never came."

EULA LINNARD

"In truth, she is honest and gentle."

MAE SWARTZ

"Tee Hee!"
"A face with gladness over-spread."

RUTH MAKUTCHAN

"Her very smile was haughty, though so sweet."

Ruth Parr is pictured below in this 1916 Northwestern Yearbook. Ruth is in the third row from the bottom, seventh person from the left.



Beta of Alpha Phi



CATHCART HOSTETTER CLARK WEESE CASSELL WATT FARMER WINTER
HOLGATE THWING R. LINDSEY HATFIELD COOK SCHEIDENHELM MAKUTCHAN H. LINDSEY NORTON
LEES FREEMAN HARRISON HERBERT MURPHY BANNISTER HOWE DEAN JACKSON
GORE KINGSLEY FURNESS R. MOULDING NOGGLE MARRINER AMBUHL BARTHOFF



(Northern Illinois University Photo)

Ruth and Harold Parr’s daughter, Doris Parr Leonard, became an author and historian. She was born May 30, 1919, six months after her father’s death. She died on October 21, 2002.

Doris was a graduate of Princeton High School and worked for the Bureau County Credit Bureau for twenty years. She taught history at the junior college level and wrote several history books – Big Bureau and Bright Prairies and A Pioneer Tour of Bureau County are still considered seminal histories of the area.

Doris also was the first woman president of the Illinois State Historical Society. She served from 1961 to 1962 and was justifiably proud of that achievement.

Although her father died before she was born and her mother died when she was only ten, Doris was raised in a loving home with strong values. She continued to live in the family home on Peru Street with her grandparents. Even after her marriage to Clifford Leonard, she and her husband lived in the home.

Dan Holt, who became the director of the Eisenhower Presidential Library, worked with Doris on a daily basis while he was director of the Field Services for the Illinois State Historical Society.

He characterized her as one of a kind. “Doris and her husband (Clifford) were truly what volunteerism means in the best sense of the word,” Holt commented.

Doris and Cliff Leonard had no children. They are buried in Oakland Cemetery, the same cemetery where her parents were laid to rest.



Family Home on Peru Street



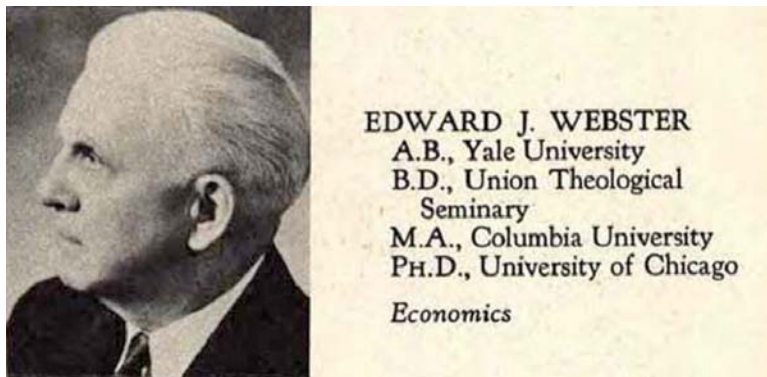
Doris is buried in Oakland Cemetery

(Photos courtesy of the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley)

(Portions of the above profile are from the Bureau County Genealogical Society, Bureau County Historical Society, Laborers in the Vineyard and Northern Illinois University.)

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Thirteenth Minister
The Reverend Edward Jerome Webster
(Served from 1919 to 1922)



(Photo courtesy of American International College – 1948 photo)

Reverend Edward J. Webster was born January 11, 1881 in Hardwick, Vermont.

He was a graduate of Yale, Union Theological Seminar, Columbia University and the University of Chicago.

He traveled to Europe while a student at Yale. Six years later, he traveled to Panama.

His 1918 World War I draft card indicated that he was married to Elsie Brooks. The couple had one son Edward J. Webster.

He accepted the call to New England Church in 1919. During his tenure, the congregation purchased the Garrey House, which stood directly to the west of the church. It became known as the Church House and was used for the expanding Sunday School. The Boy Scout troop flourished as well.



Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church

Garrey House to right of church

However, Webster resigned in 1922 due to a conflict with church members. He eventually entered the field of teaching.

In 1930, Webster was living in Chicago with his wife and nine-year-old son Edward. The census reported that he was a teacher at a university in 1930, but no further details were available.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he taught at the American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Reverend Webster died in July of 1971. He was a resident of Sarasota, Florida at the time of his death.

(Portions of the above profile are from Ancestry.com.)

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Fourteenth Minister
The Reverend Bertram B. Hanscom
(Served from 1923 to 1928)



(Photo courtesy of Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont – Cleveland, Ohio)

This photo of Reverend Hanscom was taken in the late 1950s when he served as minister of Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont (Cleveland, Ohio). Hanscom is in the center of the second row (behind the two children on the right in the front row).

Reverend Bertram Byron Hanscom was born on March 14, 1893 in Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

He married Sophronia Merriam on December 8, 1913 in Thomaston, Maine. The couple had two children, Margaret and Phillip.

Hanscom received the call from New England Church in 1923. During his tenure, he oversaw significant remodeling projects for the church.

The basement was excavated for a new room for the Boy Scouts and a safer electrical wiring system was installed throughout the building.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Hanscom served the church until 1928. In appreciation for his willingness to guide them through such difficult times, the congregation presented him with a new Dodge Sedan.

Reverend Hanscom also served as a minister in Iowa, Minnesota, New York and Ohio. In 1934, he served as pastor for Park Avenue Church in Minneapolis.

After his retirement, he accepted a call to be pastor at Zion United Church of Christ in Tremont, which is located in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1971, he resigned due to ill health. The church honored him by bestowing the title of Pastor Emeritus on him.


Reverend Hanscom died on August 10, 1973 in Mayfield Heights, Ohio. His wife had predeceased him.

(Portions of the above profile are from Ancestry.com.)

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Fifteenth Minister
The Reverend Charles MacMillan Houser
(Served from 1928 to 1930)

Rev. Charles MacMillan Houser



Rev. Charles MacMillan Houser comes to us from Huntley, Illinois, where he has served as pastor during his three years of work in Chicago Theological Seminary.

Rev. Houser obeyed the dictates of modern philosophy and chose his ancestors well, coming into the world with a background of Christian love and ministry. Following his High School years in Pennsylvania, he did Y. M. C. A. work in New York and was supply preacher at the Prince Bay Union Church on Staten Island before entering the U. S. army in 1918. After the war, while studying at Harvard for three years, he was student-assistant for one year in the First Congregational Church of Cambridge, coming thence to LaGrange where for three years he was Director of Young People's Work in the First Congregational Church. A summer in Europe preceded the completion of his college work at the University of Chicago after which he entered Chicago Theological Seminary from which he has recently received his degree of B. D.

We have received congratulations from many prominent ministers of our Illinois Conference, upon our choice of this pastor, who comes to us with youthful enthusiasm and hope, with high ideals and a definite purpose. Let us see to it that our pastor does not become disillusioned while with us—that we do not sit back smugly complacent and self-satisfied, expecting him, alone, to prove how wisely we have chosen. Let us prove to him that we realize and assume our share of responsibility in making this church a growing power for good in this community—that we are not merely willing but eager to follow whithersoever he may lead in making this church even more a diffused force to kindle the flame of human love and godly reverence—a center not a circumference of Christian activity. In order that his ministry may lead us still further in the direction of the ultimate goal toward which this church has been striving for seventy years, let us all, singly and collectively, determine anew to be fellow-workers with our pastor in expanding and enriching and making practical a gospel of service, love and human brotherhood.

(Courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend Charles Houser was born in Pennsylvania on January 19, 1898. He and his wife Doris had three children – Sylvia, Susan and Mona.

Following his high school years in Pennsylvania, he worked for the YMCA in New York and was a supply preacher at the Prince Bay Union Church on Staten Island.

He entered the United States Army in 1918. After the war, he studied at Harvard for three years. During this time, he was an assistant for one year at the First Congregational Church in Cambridge.

He then worked for three years as director of the Young People's Work in the First Congregational Church in LaGrange.

After spending a summer in Europe, he completed his college education at the University of Chicago. He then entered the Chicago Theological Seminary where he received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree.

Reverend Houser came to New England Church in 1928 from Huntley, Illinois where he served as a minister during his three years of study at the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Under his leadership at New England, the church began placing advertisements in the Aurora Beacon-News. New England Church was the first church in Aurora to undertake this public relations effort.

In addition, the church's first newsletter – Tidings - was published in 1929 and mailed to church members each Friday for an annual subscription of 25 cents. The Tidings continues to this day. However, it now is free and emailed to many church members.

Also, Reverend Houser established the Sunday Evening Club which provided outstanding musical and lecture programs. This new initiative demonstrated the church's sincere desire to provide its members and the community-at-large with spiritual, educational and cultural opportunities.

Advertisement in Beacon-News

“THE MASQUERADE BALL”

a sermon by Charles MacMillen Houser

Sunday Morning at Eleven

New England Congregational
Church

Galena Boulevard at Chestnut Street

The Cory Corner, in charge of competent volunteers,
interests restless young children whose parents would
worship undisturbed.

First Tidings Newsletter

New England Church Tidings

Published weekly by the New England Congregational
Church, Aurora, Ill., on Friday.

Fourty weeks per year. Price 25c per year.

Application for entry as second class matter is pending.

.. Introduction ..

This constitutes the first issue, Volume 1, Number 1, of New England Church Tidings, which will be mailed on Fridays to our subscription list and will be available on Sundays at the services, as it includes the program of the morning services. Copy for this publication will go to the printer on Thursday morning so that it is absolutely necessary that all notices shall be in the hands of the minister or the Publicity Chairman not later than Wednesday evening.

ORDER OF MORNING WORSHIP

Sunday, January 27, 1929—11:00 A. M.

Order of Service is followed without Announcement

Prelude—"Communion"..... Faulkes
Hymn No. 607
Invocation and Lord's Prayer
Responsive Reading No. 53
Gloria Patri
Junior Sermon—"The Necklace of Truth"
Anthem—"Comes at Times a Stillness"..... Woodward
Scripture Reading
Offertory—"Idyll"..... Michell
Solo—"Tarry with Me, O My Savior"..... Park
Robert Balsley
Prayer—Response
Hymn No. 283
Sermon—"Stolen Goods"
Hymn No. 273
Benediction—Response
Postlude—"Carol"..... Guilmant

Sunday Evening Club

“Religion In Simple Terms”

Tells of the
Long Struggle of Man to Find a Satisfying
RELIGION

Hear MR. McCORMACK Next Sunday at Eleven

New England Church Tidings

Published weekly by the
New England Congregational Church
of Aurora, Illinois,
on Fridays, except those which precede
Sundays of July and August.

Price 25 cents per year.

Entered as second class matter, June 28, 1929,
at the Post Office at Aurora, Illinois,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Volume V Jan 26, 1933 Number 22

Mr. James E. Fernley and Family

647 Downer Pl.,

Aurora, Ill.

AURORA SUNDAY EVENING CLUB

4.00 P. M. IN THE NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

RE-OPENING WITH

The Aurora Symphony Orchestra

Presented By

The Columbia Conservatory

Featuring

LOUIS ZANDER, Conductor and Violinist ARCH CANNON, Tenor
GENEVA JOHNSON, Pianist-Composer THE TROUBADETTE TRIO
FRANCES SHERWOOD, Accompanist

Reverend Houser resigned from the church in 1930 and served as minister for other congregations, including Park Church in Greeley, Colorado.

He died in Los Angeles on October 14, 1975.

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Sixteenth Minister
The Reverend William E. McCormack
(Served from 1931 to 1940)



New England Church Tidings

Published weekly by the New England Congregational Church of Aurora, Ill., on Fridays, except those which precede the Sundays of July and August. Price 25c per year.
 Entered as second class matter, June 28, 1929, at the Post Office at Aurora, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Volume III January 16, 1931 Number 20

Presenting

**Rev. WILLIAM ELBERT
 McCORMACK**

(Elected pastor Friday, January 9th, 1931
 at the annual meeting)

Who comes to us from the immediate work of the Pilgrim Foundation, a corporation sponsored by the State Conference of Congregational Churches and supported by members of Congregational Churches throughout the state, for the purpose of providing religious and social interests for Congregational students at the University of Illinois.

With seven hundred such students now in attendance, Mr. McCormack has, indeed, been busy for the past year and a half, conducting the classes in religion and social problems, planning and directing social events, and doing all kinds of personal guidance work.

Though particularly qualified for such tasks by graduate work completed with honors in the field of sociology at Northwestern University, Mr. McCormack had previously been equally successful and happy in pastoral work in Newton, Massachusetts and in Wilmette, Illinois.

Having chosen his ancestors well, he accepted his fine heritage of a well-balanced evaluation of the whole process of life and living, and was admitted to the St. Louis Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the age of eighteen, entering into the Congregational fellowship two years later.

Born in Farmington, Missouri on February 29, 1904, his academic schooling was received in Kansas City and Springfield, Missouri, and his A. B. degree in the Southwest Missouri Teachers' College. Thence he went to Garrett Biblical Institute at Evanston for his B. D. degree, to Northwestern for graduate work, later, and to Europe and the Holy Land for further knowledge and inspiration and a more general cultural background for ministerial service.

It was upon his return to America that he became associate minister of the First Congregational Church of Wilmette, being made executive head of that church when the pastor moved to Pontiac, Michigan. Mr. McCormack remained there long enough to discover that the daughter of one of Wilmette's "first families" was indispensable to the attainment of those essential ideals of pastoral service which he had inherited and adopted as his own. Accordingly, he was married in July, 1930, to Miss Faith Burge, in Wilmette.

Though Mr. McCormack's outstanding success thus far has been in his leadership of young people, the pastors with whom he has been associated most closely speak of him as "peculiarly adaptable to the needs of old and young alike" and their unanimous opinion both of his personality and his ability would seem extravagant had not the New England Church already become acquainted with him in their pulpit and in his work with their young people at Tower Hill.

The New England Church recognizes its good fortune in being able so quickly to find a pastor and a pastor's wife who will bring back to the community a definite and even double measure of that same gracious friendliness and spiritual uplift possessed by Mr. Houser.

(Photo and brochure courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend William Elbert McCormack was born in Farmington, Missouri on February 29, 1904.

He was the son of Reverend William R. and Viola McCormack. His father was the pastor of a Methodist Church in Farmington and later became president of Carleton College in that city.

By the age of six, Reverend William E. McCormack lived in Jefferson, Missouri. He received his high school and college education in Kansas City and Springfield, Missouri.

He received an undergraduate degree from Southwest Missouri State College.

In 1924, he entered the School of Theology at Boston University. He was a student assistant minister at the Eliot Church in Newton, Massachusetts.

After traveling to Europe and the Holy Land, he accepted the call to become associate pastor of the First Congregational Church in Wilmette, Illinois. He continued his education at Garrett Biblical Institute where he received his bachelor of divinity degree. He also studied at the graduate level at Northwestern University.

While in Wilmette, he met his wife Faith Burge, who was the daughter of one of Wilmette's "first families." They were married in July 1930. The couple eventually had three children.

He then worked for the Pilgrim Foundation, a corporation sponsored by the State Conference of Congregational Churches and supported by members of the Congregational Churches throughout the state for the purpose of providing religious and social interests for Congregational students at the University of Illinois.

In 1931, Reverend McCormack became the sixteenth minister of New England Church at the age of twenty-seven. While at New England, he guided a major renovation of the church in 1934.



(Photos courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

The chancel was renovated in the Gothic architectural style and a Tiffany Rose Window was added over the altar. The choir was seated in a formal, English cathedral style with pews facing one another.

The carvings on the altar, pulpit, lectern and panels were done by the celebrated artist, Alois Lang from Oberammergau, Germany.

The total cost of the renovation was \$25,000.00. It truly was a miracle that the church was successful in accomplishing these renovations during such difficult times.

Reverend McCormack resigned in 1940 and became the minister of the First Congregational Church (Old First Church), a three-hundred-year-old church in Springfield, Massachusetts.

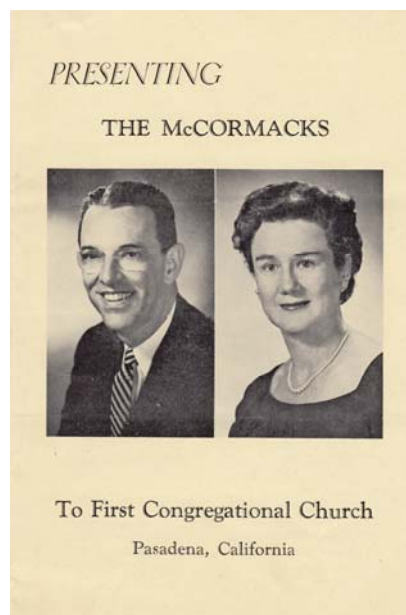
In 1949, he moved to California to become the minister of the First Congregational Church in San Francisco. In preparation for his coming, the congregation purchased a spacious parsonage for McCormack and his family. He served as pastor of the church until 1959.

He also served as a minister in Pasadena and Modesto, California before retiring in 1969. In 1993, he was still a resident of Modesto.

He returned to New England Church in 1958 to help celebrate the church's centennial. In accepting the invitation, his response was: "Since we first came to Aurora as bride and groom we shall always feel more deeply about it than anyplace else upon earth."



Faith McCormack (on right)



William and Faith McCormack

(Photo and brochure courtesy of New England Congregational Church)



Dr. McCormack

Dr. and Mrs. William E. McCormack came to New England Church in 1931. Dr. McCormack received his B.A. degree from Southwest Missouri State College in 1925; a B.D. degree from Garrett Biblical Institute 1927; did graduate work in the department of sociology at Northwestern University and received the honorary degree, Doctor of Divinity from Defiance College. During his ministry here the Sanctuary was re-built and the beautiful Chancel installed. In 1940 a call was accepted to the Old First Church (founded in 1637) in Springfield, Mass., and resigned his work there at the end of 1949 to accept the Pastorate at First Congregational Church of San Francisco.

Dr. McCormack has served his denomination on numerous boards and committees, notably as Chairman of the Pilgrim Press; as President of the Board of Home Missions and vice-moderator of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches. The McCormacks have travelled widely in Europe and the Holy Land. Recently they completed a trip around the world. We are happy to welcome them back to our church for the final Centennial service. Dr. McCormack writes: "Since we first came to Aurora as bride and groom we shall always feel more deeply about it than anywhere else upon earth."

HOMECOMING RECEPTION

You are cordially invited to attend the Informal Reception in Friendship Auditorium this afternoon at three o'clock.

(Brochure courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend McCormack died on April 6, 1997 in Modesto at the age of ninety-three. His wife Faith died one month earlier on March 4, 1997.

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**Seventeenth Minister
The Reverend G. Paul Stowell
(Served from 1940 to 1955)**



(Oberlin College Photo)



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

The seventeenth minister to accept the call to serve New England Church was Reverend Gerald Paul Stowell.

Stowell was born on May 23, 1896 in Sioux City, Iowa. His parents were Frederick and Zilpah McCreary Stowell.

Reverend Stowell was educated at Oberlin College. He left the college to become an ambulance driver during World War I.

After experiencing the horrors of war, he returned to Oberlin to finish his degree. He eventually received his degree in theology from the Chicago Theological Seminary.

On June 19, 1923, he married Lydia Harriet Jones. The couple had three children – Edward, Barbara and Phyllis. At the time of Edward's death, the only remaining living member of the family pictured here was Phyllis.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Stowell served as the minister of Bethlehem Church in Cleveland in 1924.

At the age of thirty-four, he became the youngest minister ever hired by the La Crosse Congregational Church. The church trustees referred to him as a high-class manager as his administrative skills matched his pastoral skills.

He then was called to New England Church in 1940. His World War II draft card indicated that he lived at 421 Iowa Avenue in 1942. This appears to have been a parsonage.

During these years, the youth ministries were growing to the point that an assistant minister for religious education was needed.

In 1947, a building campaign was launched to construct an addition for new church offices, Sunday School rooms and a fellowship hall. The addition to the church covered up the west side of the original church building. The \$220,000.00 cost of the construction project was fully paid by 1951.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend Stowell also oversaw the 1948 formation of the New England Nursery School, which continues to serve the Aurora community to this day.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

During the ensuing years, the youth attendance increased dramatically and the music programs expanded. Eventually there were 3 youth choirs – a junior choir, junior high choir and high school choir.



The chancel choir, well-known for its professional quality, was comprised of many business and civic leaders in the Aurora community.



In 1953, the organ was replaced with a Casavant organ for \$28,750.00. Sixty-one donors underwrote the purchase.



(Photos on this page courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Two years later, Reverend Stowell resigned for personal health reasons.

During Stowell's tenure, the tradition of holding Christmas Eve services in the late evening hours replaced the Christmas Day services.

He then served a congregation in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

In 1957, he accepted the call to be minister of the Batavia Congregational Church where he helped to build an educational wing for the facility.

He remained at the church until 1962 when he transferred his membership to the St. Charles Congregational Church.

Stowell died in January 1964. He is buried in the East Side Cemetery in Batavia, Illinois.

(Portions of the above profile are from the First Congregational Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin and from Ancestry.com.)

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**Eighteenth Minister
The Reverend Dr. William A. Jacobs
(Served from 1955 to 1971)**



(Photo courtesy of the Jacobs' Family)

Reverend William A. Jacobs was born in Missouri on March 7, 1904. He was one of seven children born to Allen and Ella Jacobs.

He was a graduate of Culver-Stockton College in 1929 and the Chicago Theological Seminary, with honors, in 1935.

On August 26, 1930, he married Mabel Waltrip. Mabel was born in 1908 and became an elementary school teacher. The couple had a daughter Ellen and son Michael.

Reverend Jacobs became the eighteenth minister of New England Church. Shortly after arriving in Aurora, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from his alma mater, Culver-Stockton College.

At New England Church, he presided over a membership of 1,200 people. When the City of Aurora banned parking on Galena Boulevard, the church hired a policeman to direct the flow of cars.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

There was a time when parking was permitted on Galena Boulevard

In the late 1950s, the church addressed the issue by acquiring properties to the west of the building for a parking lot.

The church's centennial year in 1958 celebrated new records in membership. 900 children and 80 teachers were involved in the Sunday School Program.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Mabel Jacobs (minister's wife) teaching Sunday School

This growth prompted the church to undergo another construction project. An education wing was added in 1963.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)



In 1961, the church voted to join the United Church of Christ. This new denomination was created in 1957 to merge the Congregational Christian Churches – of which New England was a part – and the Evangelical Reformed Church.

Reverend Jacobs resigned in 1971 and died in July of 1984. Mrs. Jacobs died in Grinnell, Iowa in 2007 at the age of ninety-nine.

(Portions of the above profile are from the Jacobs' Family and Ancestry.com.)

The Life of William A. Jacobs
(Photos Courtesy of the Jacobs' Family)



William Jacobs is in the back row, second from left.



William Jacobs was a 1925 graduate of the high school located in Canton, Missouri. He only attended the high school in Lewiston, Missouri for his freshman year.



William Jacobs entered Culver-Stockton College in September 1925. He is pictured here seated in the first row, last man on right.



In October 1925, he began preaching in Peaksville Christian Church in Revere, Missouri. He carried out those duties for four years while a student in college.

REV. WILL A. JACOBS, of Canton, Missouri.

Rev. Will A. Jacobs, recently employed as Pastor of the First Christian Church at Malden, will arrive in the City, Saturday to take up his work with the Church and will preach his first sermon as Pastor of the church Sunday morning, August 11th.

Mr. Jacobs is a young man twenty five years of age and single, and comes to the Malden church with the highest recommendations of President Wood of Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Mo., the home of Mr. Jacobs, and where he received his A. B. degree in Bible Philosophy, in May, 1929.

The Malden church is seemingly fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr. Jacobs as President Wood selected him from all the material available for the Malden church as being the most promising young minister of his school and recommended him as giving every promise of a brilliant future in the ministerial field.

Mr. Jacobs, during his entire college course in Culver-Stockton College has been an outstanding student as is evidenced by his many honors at the hands of the student body, having been for two years President of the Ministerial Association of the College, a member of Psi Beta Epsilon Fraternity, President of the Ancient Language Club, and for four consecutive years Student Pastor of the Christian Church at Revere, Mo.

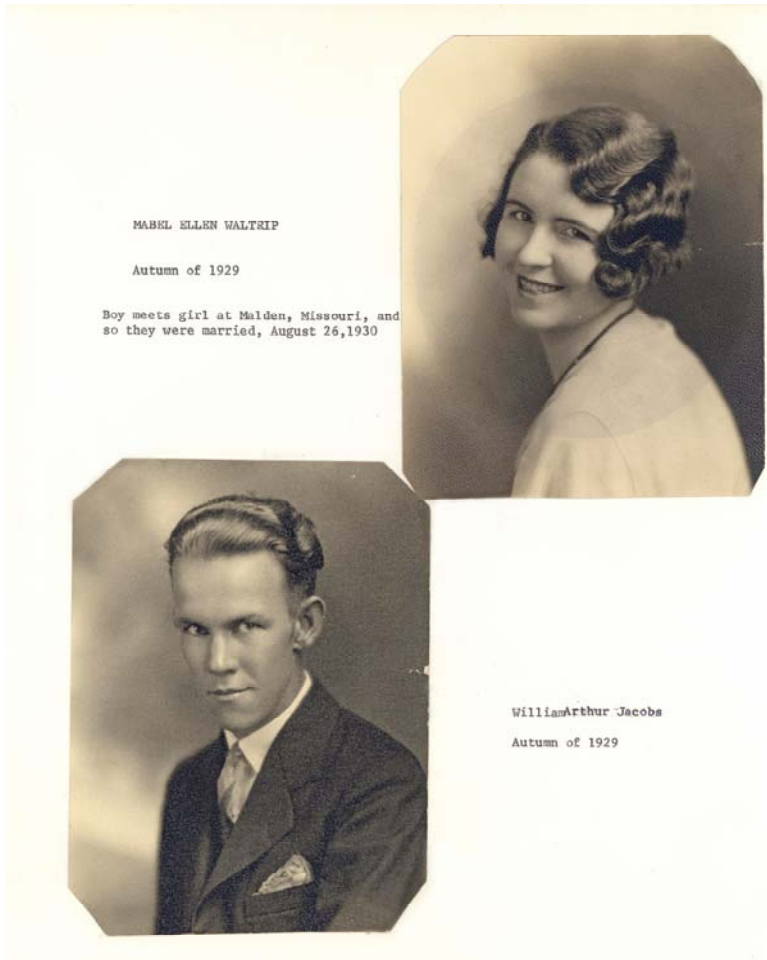
This young man has always been active in Young Peoples work and in this field he has found much pleasure and success and should prove a valuable asset to Malden in Young peoples organizations and work which should prove a very profitable field.

Malden, we are sure, will gladly welcome this young man into its Ministerial family and we are hoping that his stay among us may prove most pleasant and profitable to himself and our community.

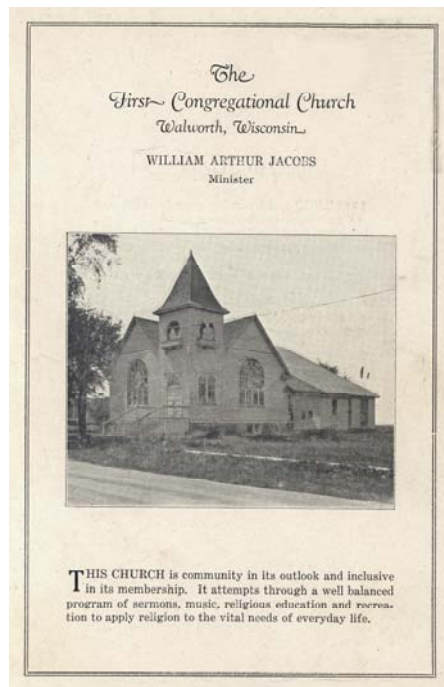
Mr. Jacobs comes from a family of ministers and his older brother has just recently been employed to succeed John Paul Pack, as Pastor of the Christian Church at Kennett, and the two brothers will enjoy the distinction of simultaneously beginning their Pastoral work in Dunklin County, which should make it all the more pleasant for them in their new field of labor.

The entire public is invited out to hear Rev. Jacobs Sunday morning.

William Jacobs was a 1929 graduate of Culver-Stockton College. He then was called to full-time work at First Christian Church in Malden, Missouri.



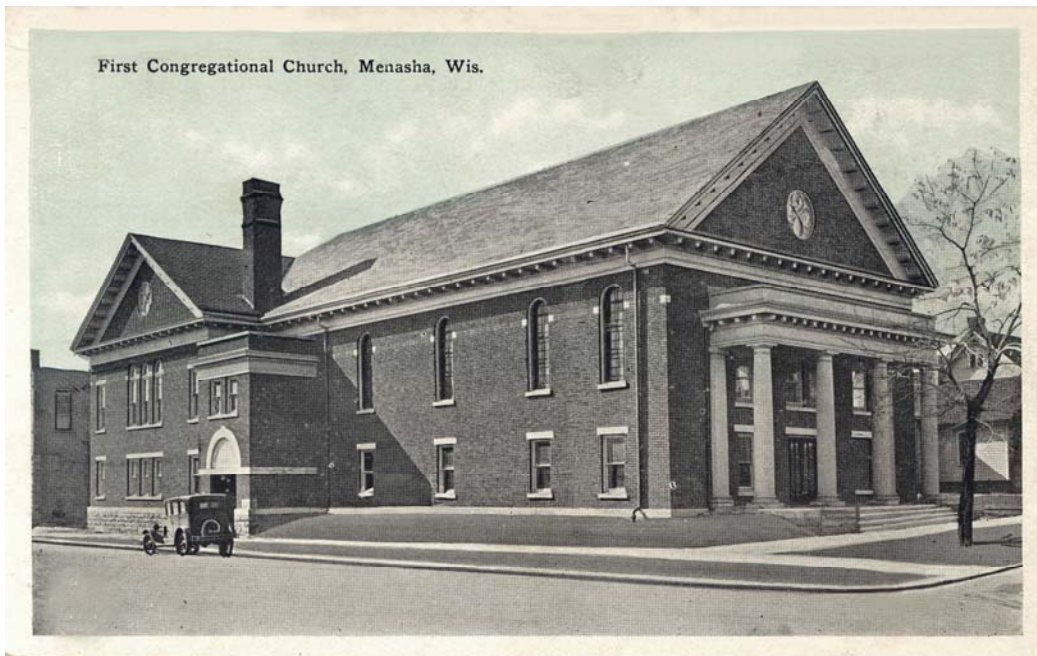
William and Mabel Waltrip were married on August 26, 1930.



Reverend and Mrs. Jacobs moved to Walworth, Wisconsin in the autumn of 1931 where they served the First Congregational Church for the next four years.



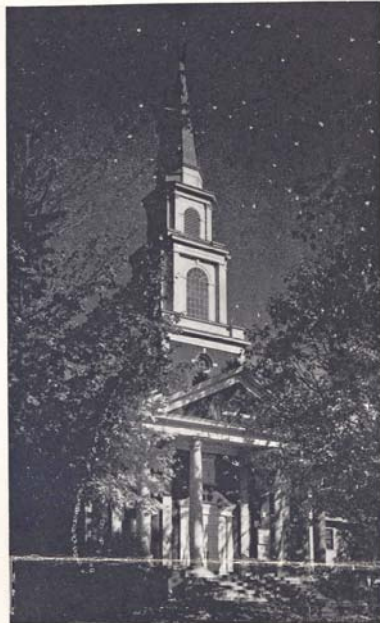
William Jacobs entered the Chicago Theological Seminary in the spring of 1932. He was graduated from the seminary in 1935. He is pictured here in the front row, second from left.



In 1936, Reverend Jacobs became the minister at the First Congregational Church in Menasha, Wisconsin. He served the church for over three years.



Jacobs posed on the steps of a museum in Washington, D.C. in 1938.



First Congregational Church
Washington Avenue at Seventeenth Street S. E.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

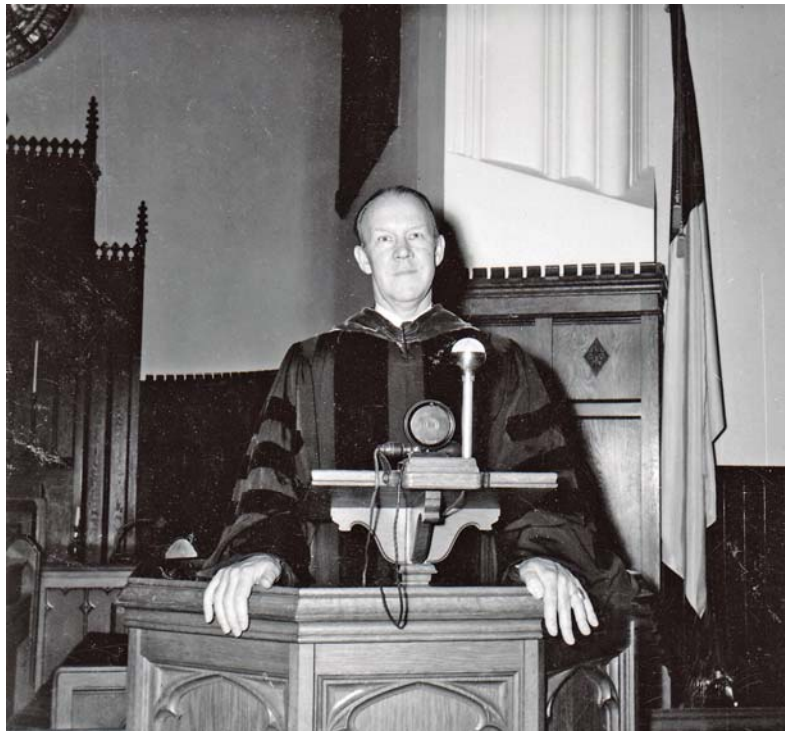


The Church House
361 Seventeenth Street S. E.
Office and Activities Building

Reverend and Mrs. Jacobs then served the First Congregational Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa from 1939 to 1945. The parsonage was a beautiful mansion that now is an educational center.



After six years in Cedar Rapids, the Jacobs accepted the call to serve the Pilgrim Congregational Church in Oak Park, Illinois. They remained at the church for ten years.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend Jacobs then became the minister of New England Congregational Church in Aurora, Illinois. He served the church from 1955 to 1971.



After leaving New England Congregational Church in 1971, Reverend Jacobs served the Congregational Church in Lehigh Acres, Florida. In 1979, he retired and lived his remaining days in Grinnell, Iowa. He died in 1984.



Mabel died in 2007 in Grinnell, Iowa. A memorial service was held for her at New England Congregational Church.



The Jacobs had two children, Ellen and Michael.



Reverend Jacobs (third from left) posed with his mother Ella Covey Jacobs and his brothers Lee, Jesse and Charles, who also were ministers.

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**Nineteenth Minister
The Reverend Edward L. Kohlmann
(Served from 1972 to 1974)**



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend Edward L. Kohlmann was born on October 8, 1925. He was a member of the United States Army Air Corps in World War II.

In 1972, he became the nineteenth minister of New England Church.

During his term of service, attendance declined, as the religious landscape changed and people sought other interests on weekends. He was minister of the church for only two years.

Reverend Kohlmann started his ministry in Illinois, first in Bellwood and later Quincy. He then joined New England Church.

After his time at New England, he was hired by Bensenville Home, now called Lifelink Corp/Bensenville Home Society. From there he went to St. John's United Church of Christ in Evansville, Indiana.

Eventually, he became the minister at Fort Myers Congregational United Church of Christ in Florida. He served that congregation for ten years.

Kohlmann died on May 12, 1997 and is buried in Lerna, Illinois.

(Portions of the above profile are from Ancestry.com.)

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**Twentieth Minister
The Reverend L. Alexander Harper
(Served 1975 to 1987)**



(Photos courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Reverend L. Alexander Harper was born on August 21, 1925 in New Bern, North Carolina. He was educated at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale University Divinity School.

Harper served in United States Navy before his ordination by the Methodist Church in 1950. During the Korean War, he was the navy chaplain for Destroyer Squadron 14. After leaving the Navy, he became pastor of the First Church of Christ in East Haddam and the Congregational Church of Trumbull.

He then joined the Council for Christian Social Action in 1961. During his ten years with the organization, he marched in Selma with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and assisted in the voter registration drive in Greenville, Mississippi.

Harper came to Aurora in 1975. By this time, church membership had dropped to 660. He challenged the church to confront the social issues of the day. He also led the church in hosting programs for the wider community.

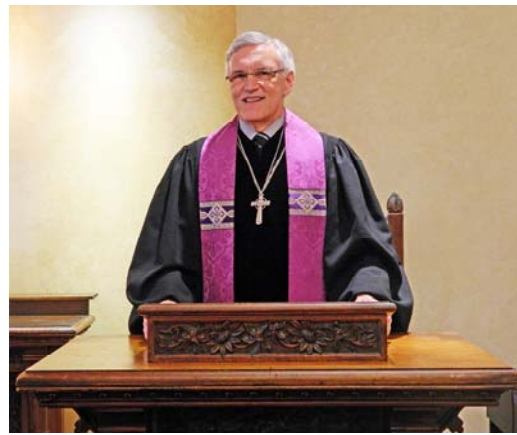
The church's current motto was adopted during Reverend Harper's tenure. "A Caring Church for Thinking People" captures the spirit of a welcoming congregation that embraces the intellect in its journey of faith. He resigned from the church in 1987.

Reverend Harper also served as minister of the First Congregational Church of Old Greenwich and First Church of Christ in New Britain. In his retirement years in Norwalk, he was known for his "feisty letters to newspapers." Twenty of his letters appeared in the New York Times.

Harper was a classical musician and was accomplished on the viola, violin and harpsichord. He died in Connecticut on November 13, 2007.

(Portions of the above profile are from Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ.)

**Twenty-First Minister
The Reverend Gary L. McCann
(Served 1988 to Present)**



(Photos courtesy of the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley)

Reverend Gary L. McCann was born in Coldwater, Michigan in 1948.

He received his undergraduate degree in English Literature from Bethel University in 1970 and his Master of Divinity degree in 1973.

Ordained in the American Baptist Church in 1973, McCann served as a minister of First Baptist Church of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and later as the senior minister at the First Baptist Church in Aurora from 1980 to 1986.

He accepted the call to be the associate minister at New England Congregational Church in 1986. In 1988, he was appointed senior minister of the church.

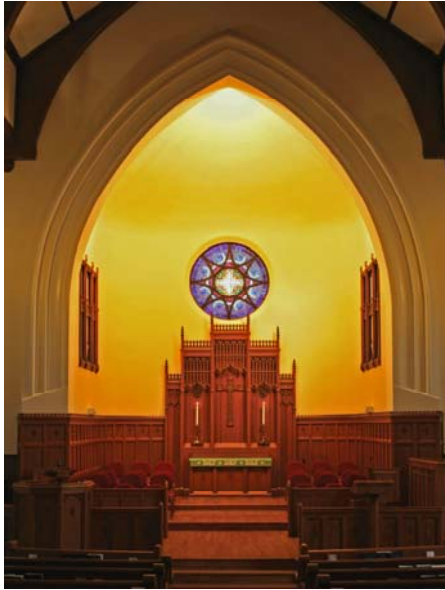
McCann's passion for addressing serious social issues and his encouragement of a solid music program brought a fresh perspective to the church.

Under his leadership, membership began to increase and the financial condition of the church improved.



(Photo courtesy of the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley)

In 1990 and 1991, church members embarked on two large building projects – the chancel area was enlarged and major renovations to the sanctuary walls and ceiling were completed.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

In 1994, air conditioning was added to the sanctuary.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

Then in 2002, the church launched another building project. The Galena Boulevard entrance was updated to create a more inviting entranceway.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

The narthex was enlarged to facilitate fellowship, a small kitchen was added and bathrooms were renovated to provide accessibility for everyone. An elevator was added that allows complete accessibility to all parts of the building.



Johnson Chapel, which had been located behind the narthex for many years, was relocated to the third floor adjacent to the balcony.



The total cost of the project was \$1.8 million. The mortgage on the debt was burned during the church's Sesquicentennial year of 2008.



Fifteen years earlier, the congregation had purchased the house immediately adjacent to the church at 19 South Chestnut Street.

It was given the name - Chestnut House - and has served as a gathering place for junior and senior high youth as well as for their education and outreach ministry.

The number "19" has played an interesting role in the church's history. The first meeting place for the church was 19 South River Street. The first church was built at 19 South Locust Street. And, the Chestnut House is located at 19 South Chestnut Street. There is nothing magical about the number "19." It merely lends an interesting footnote to a church history filled with tradition.

A memorial garden was constructed on the east lawn between the church and Chestnut House. It is a beautiful, peaceful setting where church members can choose to have their remains buried.



(Photo courtesy of New England Congregational Church)

And, in 2011, the church embarked upon a comprehensive landscape and garden project that unified the church campus with enclosed walkways from Downer Place to Chestnut Street to Galena Boulevard.

As of 2013, Reverend McCann continues as pastor of New England Church. He is the longest serving minister of the church.

McCann is married to Judy McCann. The couple has three children (Jenny, Aaron and Ryan) and four grandsons (Luke, Liam, Declan and Ellis).

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