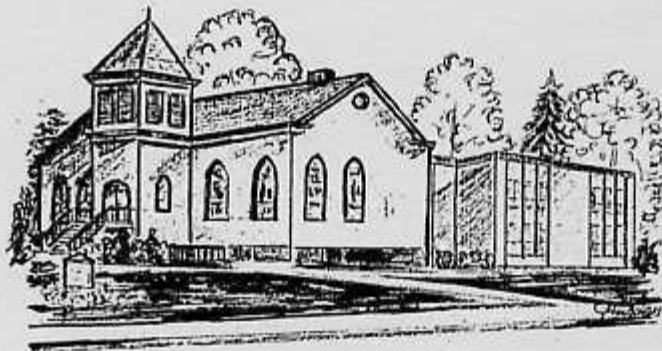




Middvale United Methodist Church

1867 - 1992



490 Ringwood Avenue, Manaque, New Jersey 07465

American Methodism

The story of the origin of the first Methodist Society in New York is familiar to most Methodists. In 1766, Mrs. Barbara Ruckle Heckbroke up a card game among this German-Irish group, and going to her carpenter cousin, Philip Embury, exhorted him to begin preaching "to save our souls."



Thus spurred, Embury began preaching the Wesleyan gospel of Free Grace in his own home, and organized his hearers into a Methodist Society.

Soon Embury's house wouldn't hold the hearers and a sail loft was rented. Here, in 1767, the group obtained a powerful helper in Captain Thomas Webb of the British army. Webb had been spiritually awakened in a Methodist Society in England three years before this time and Wesley had licensed him a local preacher.



In 1768, under the leadership of Webb and Embury, a Methodist Meeting-house was erected in New York and named Wesley chapel. Today it is situated amid the financial district of New York City at 44 John Street.

Captain Webb went to Philadelphia, in 1767, and organized a Methodist Society there. Its nucleus may have been an earlier Whitefieldian group. Then, in 1769, under Webb's leadership this building was purchased. It is the historic Saint George's Church which stands in the shadow of the Delaware River Bridge.



In response to the New York Methodist's appeal for a preacher, in 1769 Wesley sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to America. Then, in 1771, Wesley sent twenty-six year old Francis Asbury to America. In the providence of God he was destined to become the great organizer and leader of the emerging American Methodist Church.



In 1784, at the conclusion of the Revolution, John Wesley, now eighty-one years old, took the steps which resulted in the organizing of the Societies of his Movement in America into the Methodist Episcopal Church.



About sixty of the Methodist preachers assembled in the Lovely Lane Meetinghouse, which stood in what is now downtown Baltimore. Here, in the historic Christmas Conference, from December 24, 1784 to January 2, 1785, they organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. Francis Asbury was ordained Deacon and Elder on successive days, but refused to accept Wesley's appointment as General Superintendent (Bishop) unless he was so elected by the preachers.



This was done, and thereby the principle was established that the final authority in American Methodism was not John Wesley, but the Conference. Asbury was then consecrated General Superintendent or Bishop. By an Act of Congress the following tribute to Asbury is inscribed on the base of this Monument to him in Washington, D. C.: "His continuous journeying through cities, villages, and settlements from 1771 to 1816 greatly promoted patriotism, education, morality and religion in the American republic."



1867 Perspective

by John Havens

That was the year. Our nation was binding its wounds and rebuilding following the tragic Civil War. Many events were taking place. Some with lasting import and some with transient interest.

Andrew Johnson had succeeded to the Presidency of the United States following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The year 1867 saw the move to impeach him for attempting to remove his disloyal Secretary of War in defiance of the Tenure of Office Act. The action failed just one vote short of a two-thirds majority. He was acquitted the following year.

Our Secretary of State was William H. Seward, a native of Florida, N.Y, about 40 minutes from here. Remember 'Seward's Folly'? He purchased Alaska from the Russians for about two cents per acre in 1867.

Nebraska entered the Union as the 37th state and our per capita national debt was about seventy dollars.

In the world of sports, Tom Morris, Sr. won the British Open; Tom Chandler was middleweight champion and "Ruthless" won the Belmont Stakes, winning a purse of \$1850. Cy Young, the baseball great, was born.

Among other notables born in that year were Marie Curie, the physical chemist, Arturo Toscanini, the conductor, and Wilbur Wright, inventor.

The first practical typewriter was invented and Joseph Lister introduced antiseptic to the practice of surgery. Drew University had been established the year before 1867 and Custer's last stand took place nine years later.

In Midvale, a stand was being taken for Jesus Christ. Our Church forefathers and mothers were moved by the Spirit in response to the preaching of the Gospel in the Wynockie School House. There was a gathering together of the faithful on February 18, 1867. A board of trustees was elected and the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wynockie came alive.

The year was 1867. A year of great impact on the world, the nation, and Wanaque.

A Brief History of the Church

Methodist preaching has been heard in Wanaque for more than a hundred years. It began in a humble and natural way with the settling of Daniel and Elizabeth Whritenour in this community in 1853. They were the first "Methodists" to reside here and they attended the M.E. Church of Bloomingdale. In 1858, a small company of people met in an old store room that was known as "the Wynockie Furnace Room." There they held Methodist class and prayer meetings. In 1859 the Rev. George W. Treat became the pastor of the Bloomingdale circuit. Upper Wanaque, now Midvale, became one of his regular preaching appointments. Once every four weeks on Sunday afternoons the congregation met in the school house for divine worship. This arrangement continued with several of the pastors who were appointed to the Bloomingdale circuit.

In 1866 the Rev. Samuel H. Switzer was appointed to the Bloomingdale circuit and in October of that year he announced that revival services would be held in the Wanaque school house. As a result of those services, the congregation was called together to consider the advisability of erecting a Methodist Episcopal Church. At that time, William T. Van Dine, John E. Cooper, Ezra E. Drew, James C. Vreeland, William H. Zeliff, Daniel Whritenour and George I. Shorter were elected trustees of the society. These men drew up the necessary forms for the incorporation of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wanaque on February 16, 1867. A building committee was formed and a date set for the beginning of the construction of a church building measuring thirty by forty feet. This church was erected on a parcel of land that was given by George I. Shorter. The church faced Conklintown Road and carriage

sheds were built along Ringwood Avenue. The life of the church was centered in this beautiful little church for nearly forty years.

When the church was built on Conklintown Road, it was hoped and expected that people would settle in the vicinity of the church. But the center of the village formed about a mile to the south. In fact, instead of one widely scattered community, then known as Wanaque, three compact villages known as Midvale, Wanaque, and Haskell sprang up south of the church. It became increasingly apparent that the church should move to the center of the village to better serve the people. In the fall of 1909, when Rev. D. H. Gridly was pastor, the trustees purchased a plot of land on the George Estate and about a year later the church building was moved to the new location. To the original building a new addition was erected and joined to it. The new church was then known as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Midvale, N.J., and was dedicated on March 5, 1911, when Rev. Thomas J. Clark was the pastor. By 1915 the church had twelve beautiful memorial windows and had, what was considered at that time, a very modern steam heating plant and a gas lighting system.

During the pastorate of Rev. Arthur K. Wilson, the church was completely remodeled. Instead of a sloping floor and semicircular pews, the floor was made level and the pews straight. After the remodeling, the congregation faced east rather than north. An addition was built on the east side of the church and it provided an open style chancel for the sanctuary. Also, a room for a pastor's study was built on the north side of the chancel and one on the south for an official board room. A fine Moeller pipe organ was installed through the efforts of the Epworth

League. The church basement was transformed into a parish hall with a new stage under the chancel of the sanctuary. Dedication services for the enlargement and improvements to the church took place on October 23, 1927.

The heavy mortgage incurred for the remodeling of the church was carried through the depression years. The Rev. William T. McGuire, who came to the parish in 1936, determined to free the congregation of its debt. In October 1941 he inaugurated a Vitalization Crusade and by October 1, 1944, during the pastorate of Rev. R. Wesley Smith, the mortgage was burned.

In 1945 the Official Board was given the opportunity to buy the Peter Sloat home. The old parsonage at 445 Ringwood Avenue was sold and the present parsonage at 480 Ringwood Avenue purchased. On November 9, 1953, the mortgage on the parsonage was burned. This occurred during the pastorate of Rev. Fred Petersen who had the distinction of having served Midvale Methodist Church for ten years, being the longest for any pastor during its century's history.

For a number of years the congregation had been increasingly aware that larger and better accommodations were needed for the Sunday School and the work of the parish. During the pastorate of Rev. Clifford B. Munn, definite steps were taken to provide an education building. On March 3, 1964, a committee met with the Rev. Forest M. Fuess, District Superintendent. Following that meeting, actual plans to raise capital funds and procure suitable architectural plans ensued. During 1965 the Kirby Smith Associates visited the families of the congregation to secure subscriptions toward the cost of a new building. About \$40,000.00 was pledged to be paid during a three year period. Architectural plans were finalized by Gerald T. Heulitt of Pompton Lakes and

construction was started in 1966 and completed in 1967, during the appointed term of service of Rev. J. Clark Callender.

1967 was the centennial year of the organization of Midvale Methodist Church. The observance of this milestone included a Family Night Banquet with former pastors in attendance, recognition of founders of the church and the dedication and consecration of the completed Education Building. A photo directory of the members and families provided a useful anniversary souvenir of the Centennial Celebration.

In 1967, memorial gifts made possible the carpeting of the sanctuary and the narthex. The second century began with the acquisition of the Duffy House to extend the property of Midvale Methodist to include the full block between First and Second Streets. Also during this year, the unification of the Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist Churches created changes in the official terms and structure of the total church. The church name became Midvale United Methodist Church.

Ecumenical prayer services with the churches in the community included St. Francis Roman Catholic Church for the first time in 1969. The Protestant Churches had held united Thanksgiving, Lenten, Good Friday and Easter Sunrise Services for several years.

While Rev. Walter C. Jordan served the parish, during the years 1969 through 1973, reorganization and rebuilding in line with the structural change in Methodism were the main emphases. The squeeze of the economy was felt and caused a slowing down, but not a cessation, of accomplishments. Tape recordings of the Worship Services were distributed to the homes of shut-ins and Greeters were present at the Sunday morning worship hour. The Youth Program expanded

with the organization of a Junior High Fellowship.

In 1973, the Women's Society of Christian Service was reorganized and became United Methodist Women. The women contributed to the renovation of the Chapel by painting the walls after a new ceiling and new light fixtures were installed.

Many changes were instituted after Rev. J. Archie Parr became pastor of Midvale United Methodist. In 1974, the term "Mile of Pennies" was introduced by the U.M.Y.F. The money realized from this collection was utilized for furnishings for the chapel and for youth projects. This project continued for the ensuing years until, in 1980, the title was changed to "Bridge of Hope," and the purpose was earmarked for an access to the sanctuary for handicapped: HOPE - Help Our Parishioners Enter.

During 1975 and 1976, Worship Services for the residents at Bel Air Nursing Home in Haskell were scheduled for the first Sunday of every month. The music for worship was enhanced by a Baldwin piano, which was purchased for the sanctuary by the youth who had reorganized and adopted the name "Youthinc."

After much study and planning, a coordinated reorganization of the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries into a consolidated Council Board with guidelines for each office, committee and chairperson was approved and accepted by the February 20, 1977 Charge Conference.

The 110th Anniversary of Midvale United Methodist Church was celebrated throughout the year 1977. The improvement in the economy and the appointment of the Painters as our pastoral family were reflected in well-attended, inspiring worship services. The

monthly newsletter, *The Chimes*, with Rev. John D. Painter as editor, became a permanent means of communicating and publicizing our total church program. The financial stability of the church progressed to the point that we were able to meet the Disciplinary Obligation for the first time in many years, and to exceed the World Service commitment by 25%. Renewed and increased involvement in stewardship, mission and evangelism programs stimulated the total ministry of the Church as we completed the Anniversary year in celebration with Bishop and Mrs. C. Dale White in attendance.

Innovations and renovations continued in 1978. A Community Pantry, following several months of planning, was organized in the fall of 1978, with Wanaque Reformed, Midvale Gospel, St. Francis Roman Catholic and Midvale United Methodist Churches participating. A Thanksgiving project to give baskets of food to needy families was the initial endeavor. The response was so successful that The Community Pantry became a year round project insuring food to any needy family in Wanaque.

The generous response to a special request of funds provided the finances to complete much needed repairs to the sanctuary organ.

The Church programs were expanded in many ways. Lay Readers were invited to assist the minister in Sunday Morning Worship. The time of the morning service was changed from 11:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. with a fellowship coffee hour following the service. Advent workshops and a Family Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m. were held in addition to the traditional Christmas Eve Candle lighting Communion Service at 10:45 p.m.

1980 marked the beginning of new life in Midvale with the innovation of several new projects. A "Thrift Shop," later named

"Second Mile Shop," opened to receive consignments and donations for selling with the profits going to missions. In response to the International Year of the Child, we adopted a child, Hononio Ibanez of the Philippines, through World Vision International. In addition, we joined five other Lakeland area congregations to sponsor an Indo-Chinese refugee family for resettlement.

In February of 1980, the schedule of Worship Services was changed to two services on Sunday morning. The first, at 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., was planned as an informal family service including children until 9:30 when they were excused for Church School. The second service, beginning at 10:30 a.m., was a formal Worship Service.

In June 1980, Midvale United Methodist Church was designated a Strategic Congregation by the Annual Conference. Financial support from Conference provided pastoral support and funds to secure an assistant minister to aid in the accomplishment of long-range goals for growth and expansion of the parish.

In March, 1981, the Sok Van Sou family, a refugee family from Cambodia, arrived in Ringwood as a result of the efforts of Lakeland Area Refugee Concerns Committee. We shared in the plans and implementation of this project with three other area congregations. The impact of mission was reflected so wonderfully in the happiness of this beautiful family.

The installation of plexi-glass coverings on our twenty stained glass windows added beauty to the windows, provided protection from weathering and helped to reduce the consumption of fuel oil.

An expansion of the Strategic Church designation was the 1982 appointment of co-

pastors Rev. E. Robin Mitchell and Rev. Beth Whalley Mitchell to develop the potential of growth in worship, ministry and mission by careful planning, maintenance and stewardship. This appointment was unique and challenging in that it was the first husband-wife appointment to Midvale.

The Lakeland Alternative High School was housed in the Education Building in September 1982. This was a program extension of Lakeland Regional High School to provide school placement for special emotionally disturbed students and it followed the regular school schedule.

Another development in 1982 was the revitalizing of the Bridge of Hope by the receipt of a \$5,100 bequest and budget support of the Trustees. Preliminary study and research into cost estimates were begun.

In preparation for the celebration of the Bicentennial Year of American Methodism, we at Midvale United Methodist established programs of growth, renovation and innovation. In memory of Edward Doty, our faithful sexton of many years, new automatic Schulmerick Chimes were installed. In 1983, Bishop C. Dale White conducted the dedication of the chimes which were purchased with funds from gifts and memorials.

The Agape Prayer Wheel was organized as the Evangelism Work Area continued its ministry in the Church and the community through the distribution of Upper Room Devotionals, delivering Worship Service tapes to shut-ins and participating in the Bel Air Ministry.

Plans for renovations of all Church property resulted in the establishment of a Maintenance Priorities list.

The receipt of three substantial bequests from former members and friends of Midvale United Methodist Church inspired the Trustees and officials to begin serious planning to accomplish the most demanding renovations. By action of two Charge Conferences, the Trustees established plans for projects and investments. Contracts were awarded for a new floor in Fellowship Hall, new windows in the Education Building, repairs to the roofs of the sanctuary and parsonage, the Bridge of Hope stairway and ramp, the refurbishing of the organ and the stuccoing of the sanctuary.

During the busy year of 1984, the Bicentennial Year of American Methodism was celebrated continuously by special programs and participation in District and Conference activities. The highlights were the use of "Methodist Minutes" inserts in the weekly worship bulletins, a Community Celebration with all local churches, updating of our Church History and exhibits of local church artifacts.

Midvale United Methodist Church presented a completely "new look" by the end of 1985. Most of the projects of renovation and repair, including the stuccoing of the sanctuary, the Bridge of Hope ramp, the upgrading of the pipe organ, new heating systems in the parsonage and the Duffy House and the landscaping of the front entrance area were completed. A dedication service was held on May 26, 1985 for eighteen memorials, planned by the Memorial Committee and the Trustees. These memorials were made possible by donations from families and friends of loved ones and by bequests from Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Tresize, Alberta Englert, Rev. J.C. Callender and Margaret Welch.

Maintenance was only one part of the total Church program. Stewardship, spiritual growth and mission were emphasized and

manifested in Quiet Supper Groups, Retreats, support group S.T.A.F.F. (Sobriety through Acceptance, Faith and Fellowship), Evangelism programs, Church School and Youth Program.

The block of Methodist property became a center of beauty, Christian growth and activity for families of the Church and the community.

The years 1986 and 1987 will be remembered as a period during which maintenance and renovation of the Church property continued to be one of the main emphases. The termination of the rental contract with Lakeland Alternative School directed efforts to restore the Education Building to its original purpose - a facility to provide classrooms for the Christian Education Program of Midvale United Methodist Church.

This also was a transitional period. The final year of the unique co-pastor assignment of Robin and Beth Mitchell was highlighted by the strong growth of the Youth Program, a growth in Church membership to off-set the loss of members due to transferring to other areas, and recognition of Midvale United Methodist Church through the participation of the co-pastors in several Northern Conference programs.

In June we said farewell to the Reverends Robin and Beth Mitchell and their children Eric and Meredith, with sincere wishes for good health, much happiness and success in their new parishes.

Reverend and Mrs. (Donna) Grant Buttermore and daughters Nicole and Kristen were welcomed as the new pastoral family. Major renovations in the parsonage caused a delay in occupancy. However, thanks to the untiring efforts of Grant, members of the

Trustees, the U.M.W. and several volunteers, the parsonage was refurbished with new carpets, a new kitchen, and fresh paint.

We looked forward to a new era of ministry with dedicated service and cooperative planning as we "Considered the Possibilities."

The years 1988 and 1989 continued to be years of transition. The Education Building was restored to its original purpose - a facility to provide classrooms for the Christian Education Program. The Sanctuary was repaired and painted.

The Second Mile Shop approached a decade of providing resources to fulfill the mission commitments of the Church. Volunteers, under the direction of Alice Farrell, maintained a neatly organized shop that earned an excellent reputation in the area.

The new United Methodist Hymnals were purchased by members and friends of Midvale United Methodist Church as Memorial gifts, to honor special friends or as gifts.

A Peace Pole, donated by the Reverend James Rhinesmith in memory of his parents, William and Irene Rhinesmith was installed as part of the Memorial landscaping at the Church's entrance.

1990 was another year added to the period of renovation and maintenance of Church property. Due to the number of needed repairs, it was deemed necessary to relinquish the debt-free status of the Church by acquiring a fifteen year \$40,000 mortgage. These funds were used to finance the re-roofing of the Sanctuary and the Duffy House, the flooring in the Fellowship Hall, two exterior doors of the Education Building, insulation of the Duffy House and other repairs.

The refurbished Education Building was

utilized by an expanded group of Church School teachers and students, the Second Mile Shop and the Ringwood Cooperative Nursery School.

Other highlights to be recorded include the establishment of a Parenting Study Group, the reactivation and expansion of the Cherub Choir, with new robes purchased with funds from memorial gifts and contributions, the Second Mile Shop's celebration of a decade of service, a successful Daily Vacation Bible School program, dedication and placement of the New Revised Standard Version pew Bible, purchased with funds provided by memorials and gifts, and the appointment of a Task Force to plan for an appropriate celebration of the 125th Anniversary of Midvale United Methodist Church in 1992.

A totally new experience was presented to the congregation of Midvale United Methodist Church in January 1991. The pastor, Grant Buttermore and his family were transferred to Appalachia Outreach Program in the Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia area. The newly seated officials, admittedly inexperienced, were faced with a dynamic challenge of planning and executing the total program of ministry, mission and maintenance.

Many hurdles had to be crossed to overcome the lack of interest, poor attendance, financial deficit and low morale of the parishioners.

To be left with so many problems caused much concern and despair. How important was Midvale United Methodist Church if Conference could abruptly interrupt our program and leave us without complete, definite replacement plans? With feelings of remorse and abandonment, the parish faced the problems of reorganizing and rebuilding without a resident pastor.

The positive results of the experience were

threefold:

1) Three interim pastors helped to hold the congregation together by presenting positive, inspiring ministries. Rev. Frank Dennis and Rev. Norman Walz came out of retirement to fill the pulpit during January and February. Rev. Joseph E. Bush, Jr., interrupting his study leave, arrived in February to complete the assignment until the Annual Conference, when Rev. Henry S. Leono was appointed as full-time pastor. The first half of 1991 could have been a period of disaster had we not had the dedication and determination of the United Methodist Women and the officials with good counseling from the interim and part-time pastors.

2. Since much of the program was left in confusion, it was necessary for lay members to pull together. The second positive result was the renewed interest, dedication and cooperation as new leaders emerged. Slowly progress became evident.

3. The third positive result was evident in renewed interest in many church programs. There was an increase in Church School attendance and activities, a renewed emphasis on Evangelism, a Disciple Study Group and a reorganized Youth Program. The Second Mile Shop and the Vacation Bible School continued to have successful results.

Many problems have yet to be resolved. The lack of understanding of procedures and rules and the attempts to make decisions in closed sessions without recorded minutes caused surprise, shock and dismay among the parishioners. A total reorganization is needed. As Midvale United Methodist Church celebrates its 125th Anniversary, may we do so with great determination and dedication to rebuild and unite.

These are the many challenges for the

congregation as Rev. Leono leads us in overcoming the problems and establishing a total Christian community dedicated to spiritual growth.

"We build a new tomorrow
With plans we make today.
With God as guide and leader
He'll lead us all the way." [parody]

Midvale United Methodist Church
125th Anniversary

Pastors Who Served From

1867	1992
S.H. Switzer	1867
W.H. Dickerson	1868
M.C. Reed	1871
No record	1874
I.W. Cole	1876
J.H. Robertson	1879
James Pope	1882
J.L. Miller	1883
Thomas Hall	1884
J.H. Piper	1885
L. Van Campen	1888
Wm. H. White	1890
D.F. Unangst	1891
I.C. Starr	1893
D.D. Eaton	1898
G. Whitehead	1899
F.L. Rhodes	1904
D.H. Gridley	1907
Thomas Clark	1910
REBUILT	1912
George Okeson	1915
W.C. Brewer	1919
Samuel Jones	1924
A.K. Wilson	1925
REMODELED	1927
P.A. Cross	1929
Earl Hampton	1930
Harry P. King	1932
A.L. DeWire	1934
Wm. T. McGuire	1936
R.W. Smith	1942
E. McLaughlin	1947
Fred Petersen	1949
C.E. Kolb, Jr.	1959
C.B. Munn	1962
J.C. Callender	1966
NEW EDUCATION BUILDING	1967
Walter C. Jordan	1969
J. Archie Parr	1974
John D. Painter	1977
E. Robin Mitchell & Beth Whalley Mitchell	1981
Grant M. Buttermore Jr.	1987
Henry S. Leono	1991