



THE PULSE

First Presbyterian Church
of Logan
100th Anniversary Special Edition
March 2025

Centennial Celebration for FPC Building

by Pastor Derek Forbes

Just over one hundred years ago, the cornerstone on the northeast corner of this building was laid, the date inscribed was 1924. The church had already been here in Logan for 46 years, but the people of the church must have decided it was time for a more permanent and lasting structure than the wood-framed one that had stood for about 40 years. And we are celebrating a century of ministry within these walls, and beyond.

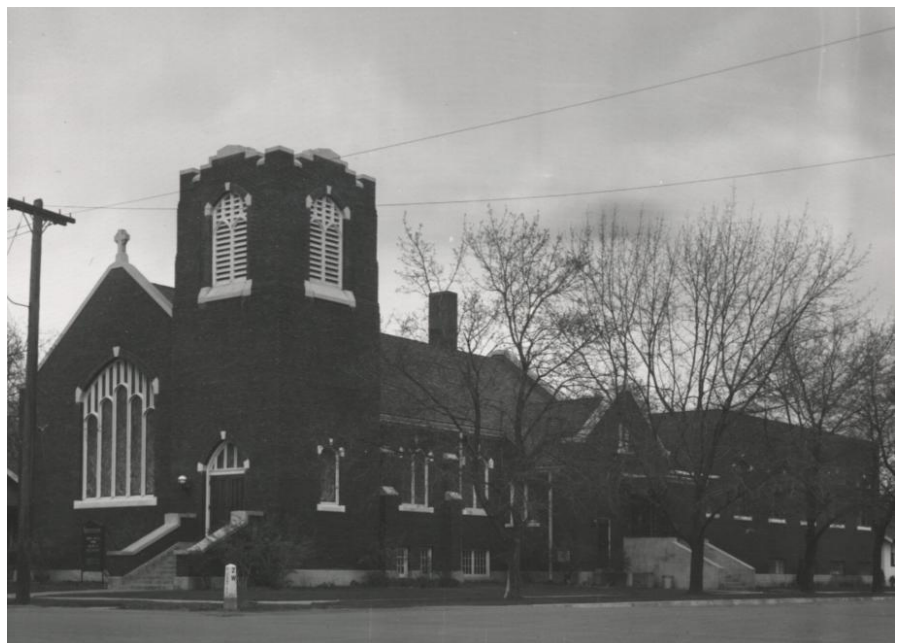
I have had the privilege of being a pastor here for the last twelve years. The following pages and photos in this Centennial edition of the Pulse are provided by a longtime church member and part-time unofficial church historian Dorothy Jones. Among other things in her faith life Dorothy was once the director of the Westminster Bell Choir. On the following pages, she will share some stories with us about the last century of ministry here. She also helped us put together a few dozen pictures of this place over the decades.

In 1924 when this building was constructed the pastor was a man named Reverend Harris Pillsbury, the pastor here from 1917 to 1926. There was a wood-frame sanctuary that stood for about 40 years, but they needed something bigger and more lasting. The basement was dug to create a fellowship hall, the walls began to go up, the beautiful brick

facade was laid, the stained-glass windows installed, and Reverend Pillsbury was the first one to lead and preach at the first worship service in this building on March 15, 1925.

The walls around us provided sanctuary, that is a safe space, for people seeking connection with God for one hundred years now. There have been some changes, but many things remain the same, including the stained-glass windows!

A century later we are still gathering in this building, worshipping God and lifting prayers up to heaven and baptizing little ones and older ones alike, celebrating communion, attending weddings or celebrations of life.



Presbyterian Church, Logan, Utah 1880-1924

The beginning of the Presbyterian Ministry in Cache Valley

The Cache Valley story began with Rev. Sheldon Jackson, Superintendent of Missions for the Rocky Mountain Territories. Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad, he traveled the area, identifying communities for possible Presbyterian missions and schools. On a recruiting trip to the east coast, he found Calvin Parks, his wife and daughter teaching very large Bible classes in Washington, D.C. He convinced them to establish a mission and school in Cache Valley. At the time, Mr. Parks was a patent lawyer. Parks was then licensed to preach by the presbytery in Washington. With support from the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, the family arrived in Logan on July 17, 1878.

After a diligent search Mr. Parks found a building to rent for the Presbyterian work. It was the main floor of Lindquist's "furniture wareroom" on 100 North, on the east side of Church Street, across the street from the Logan Tabernacle. Mr. Parks' letters to Sheldon Jackson describe the successes and opposition they experienced as they established Sunday School, worship and prayer meetings. In missions begun in the Utah Territory (and throughout the world) schools were an important priority. The first classes of the school, called the Cache Valley Seminary, were held on September 2, 1878.

In a letter to Sheldon Jackson dated September 2, 1878, Mr. Parks asked for more funds from the Board of Home Missions, describing the expenses of setting up the building for the mission, school, and residence. He wrote, "Mr. Story [sic] has left, and I am alone in the ministry here."

Rev. William Stoy had come to Logan in 1873 to establish the St. John's Episcopal Church and

school, but by 1878 there was no resident minister for that mission.

By December 4, 1878, the organization of the Presbyterian Church in Logan was completed. Eleven members were received including Susan, Margaret and Mary Parks from the Metropolitan Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C. Rev. Parks was ordained at a Presbytery meeting in March 1879.

In Rev. Parks' letter to Rev. Jackson on February 6, 1879, he begged for funds from the Board of Home Missions to build a chapel. Citing "hostilities" from the Mormons' Quarterly conference, Rev. Parks wrote that the landlord had taken his children out of the school and was asking for "an immediate settlement of our affairs. My lease will hold, I think. Yet if there was a different place, I believe I would take it for the room overhead is a shop...and he has six workmen now and the noise is almost intolerable...unendurable for any comfort

Pastors of First Presbyterian Church of Logan

First worship service: August 20, 1878

1878-1886	Calvin M. Parks
1887-1893	Elijah W. Greene
1893	H.H. Gage
1893-1895	Frank L. Hayden
1895-1909	Newton E. Clemenson
1909-1913	William H. Crothers
1913-1917	Arthur F. Wittenberger
1917-1926	Harris Pillsbury **
1926-1930	William F. Ehmann
1930-1935	T. Ross Paden, Jr.
1935-1943	William F. Koenig
1943-1986	Miner E. Bruner
1979-1985	James Tweedie (Associate Pastor)
1984-1985	Douglas Allington (Exchange Pastor)
1978-1992	David P. Weamer (Parish Associate)
1986-1988	Paul McNiel
1988-2000	Barbara & John McGarey
2001-2002	Frank Johnke
2002-2003	John Cushman
2004-2006	David C. Hedgepeth
2007-2015	Paul Heins
2012-present	Derek M. Forbes
2018-2022	Meg Vail (Associate Pastor)

**pastor during the new sanctuary construction

especially for a school... Send us encouraging word about the chapel, I am ready to pull off my coat and go to work building.”

Meanwhile, Rev. Parks was opening schools and missions in Franklin, Idaho, and Smithfield, Millville, Hyrum and Wellsville, Utah, finishing in the fall of 1883 with Richmond and Mendon.

Funds for a church building finally came, including some from the Parks family’s former church in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Parks wrote in a letter of Feb. 22, 1893, “At the end of two years of diligently trying, Mr. Parks secured the ground for a chapel and immediately made plans for building a chapel and parsonage... This was completed nearly enough August 1880 for us to move in and have the August meeting of Presbytery in the new chapel. It was a very joyful occasion.”

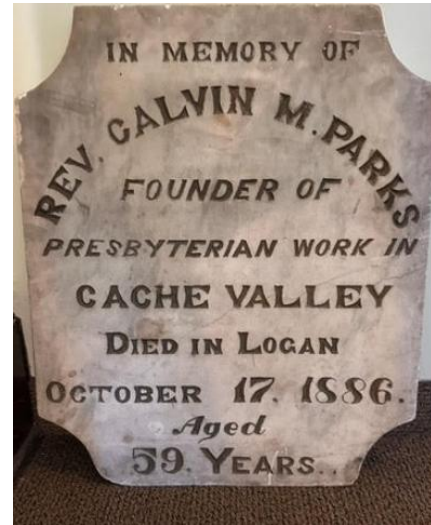


Original Presbyterian Church Building in Logan

The new building was a wood structure and had space for church and Sunday School activities as well as providing two rooms for the seminary and rooms for the Parks family to live in.

Rev. Calvin M. Parks died October 17, 1886, having faithfully served for eight years with his wife and daughter, establishing missions and schools throughout Cache Valley. In her 1893 letter Mrs. Parks listed the schools and missions

and continued, “Chapels were completed or places secured for preaching and teaching in all these places, and successful mission work established. Mr. Parks’ great desire was to have the building at Mendon completed, but he was called home before this could be done.” Susan V. N. Parks and her daughter Margaret (Parks) Shirley stayed to continue their work with the school.



Replica made by Kim Brandt of Reverend Parks’ headstone in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Salt Lake City

In 1890 the Cache Valley Seminary was able to move from the wooden church building to a new three-story brick building at 55 North 200 West, thanks to a gift of \$11,000 from the Women’s Synodical Society of New Jersey. The school which began in 1878 with six students in a rented part of a furniture factory now had more than a hundred students with room for expansion. In appreciation, the school was renamed the New Jersey Academy.

In 1890 the Utah Territorial Assembly passed an act requiring schools to admit students between 6 and 18 years of age without charge and requiring parents to send their children to school for at least 16 weeks per year. It was a step toward tax-supported public education, although it didn’t help the problem of a limited supply of well-educated, qualified teachers.

In spite of the steps in 1890 toward a public school system, and the Mormon Church giving

up polygamy to be accepted as a state in 1896, the Academy continued to grow. In 1907 the women of the Synodical of New Jersey again sent funds for a building. A dormitory was constructed, completely furnished, and named Honeyman Hall for Mrs. W. E. Honeyman, synodical president.

The Academy brought in well-educated teachers, with bachelor's or master's degrees from eastern and midwestern universities. Students included those aspiring to attend major universities and those from ranches of surrounding states where local schools were few and far between.

In addition to being a minority church and culture in the Utah Territory and then the State of Utah, the thing that seems most challenging in this congregation's history is the huge fluctuation in numbers of Protestants in Logan. Harold Loo wrote in his History of the New Jersey-Logan Academy that the membership of the Logan Presbyterian Church reached a high of 58 members in 1914. Rev. Wittenberger, who served as pastor from 1913 – 1916, wrote, "The congregation in Logan was made up largely of New Jersey Academy pupils and teachers. The teachers served too as S. S. teachers. Despite the fact that only about 5% of Logan's residents were non-Mormons (Episcopal, two rectors, Methodist, resident pastor, Seventh Day Adventist without a regular minister) we were accorded considerable recognition by civic and college leaders."



Easter Sunday, 1921



Reverend Harris Pillsbury

Then World War I brought military training programs to the college and large numbers of young men were added to Logan's population. Rev. Harris Pillsbury, pastor from 1917 – 1926, was reported to be dynamic and energetic with a genial personality. Rev. Miner Bruner later noted that Rev. Pillsbury "did fantastic work with the military stationed at the college" during the 1918 flu epidemic and gained increased popular support.

This was a period of expansion. Interdenominational alliances brought cooperative agreements among several Protestant groups in Utah. Methodists would be centered in Tremonton and Presbyterians would cover Brigham City, Logan and Cache Valley, including Preston, Idaho. One result was the 1921 closing of the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Logan, merging many of its members into the Presbyterian Church and some into the Episcopal Church.

Times had changed on Center Street in Logan since the wood chapel had been built in 1880. The row of simple log cabins had been replaced with elegant brick mansions. An electric streetcar system ran past the church from the train station to the college. Horse-drawn carriages were being replaced with automobiles. The wood building had served for worship services, Sunday School, baptisms, weddings, funerals, meetings and home for the pastors and their families for 40 years. It was time for it to be replaced.

The new brick church building was begun in September 1924 and the cornerstone was laid on October 11, 1924. On March 15, 1925, construction of the north section of the church building was complete and a dedication worship service was held. The celebration marked the beginning of a new era in the life of the Presbyterian Church in Cache Valley.

First a manse was built for the pastor and his family. With more than \$800 gleaned from the closing of the satellite churches at Smithfield, Richmond and Mendon, the cost of the manse, \$5,432, was funded without grants or loans from the Mission Board. This was a healthy sign that the church was growing toward independence.



Manse

The new brick church building was begun in September 1924 and the cornerstone was laid on October 11, 1924. During the construction period, Presbyterians met in the assembly room of the Academy or in the Methodist Church building where those two congregations used to meet together occasionally. More than \$32,500 was expended for the church building and furnishings, over \$8,000 of which was raised by the local church. **The new church building was dedicated on March 15, 1925, with three jubilant services.**

While the pastors provided powerful leadership to move the church forward, they were supported by laymen who helped to put the plans into action. Decisions about the local church are made by ruling elders who are elected by the church members. When they meet, they are called the session. The clerk of the session is the one who writes the minutes of



Cornerstone



Congregation in front of new church building (1930s)

each meeting and those minutes since 1878 have been preserved. Three members who served as clerk of session can serve as examples.

Irving Brangham was ordained as a ruling elder in 1899, being re-elected for three-year terms with an occasional year off, until 1930, and signing as clerk for many meetings from May 17, 1905, through January 10, 1930. He was also elected as the volunteer church treasurer on April 28, 1912, serving until his death on December 31, 1933. His obituary in the Salt Lake Tribune described him as a secretary of the Utah Mortgage and Loan Corporation, educated at the Logan Academy and the Utah State Agricultural College. His meticulous financial records help us track the gradual closing of the chapels and schools that Rev. Parks had set up to serve the smaller towns of the valley.



Early Christmas Pageant in sanctuary

Another early leader was Mrs. Wilbur Skidmore, who was ordained as a ruling elder on March 19, 1931, just months after ordination of women was approved by the Presbyterian Church USA. She served as clerk from January 1934 through November 1940, when J. Duncan Brite took over.

Duncan came to Logan as a professor of history at the Utah Agricultural College in 1933 and soon became the volunteer church historian, sifting through all the saved items now preserved in the Special Collections and

Archives at the USU Library. He and his vivacious wife Luna graciously befriended newcomers to this small congregation. Duncan was ordained as a ruling elder in 1937, serving as clerk from 1941 for many terms through 1976.



Duncan and Luna Brite

The Academy, which was founded as Cache Valley Seminary in 1878, renamed the New Jersey Academy in 1890, and finally named the Logan Academy in 1926, continued to grow and evolve to meet changing education needs.

During the Great Depression funding support from the Board of Missions began to dwindle. In 1934, after 55 years of operation, the Logan Academy was merged with Wasatch Academy, the Presbyterian School for boys in Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

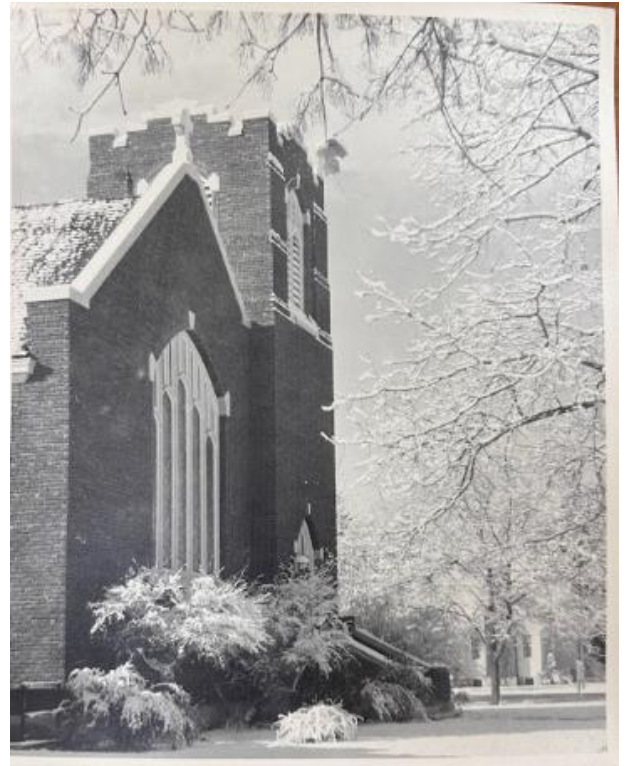
Thus, the mission school in Logan, which had provided the best college preparation for students of all faiths, lives on. Today Wasatch Academy in Mt. Pleasant continues as an independent, liberal arts, college preparatory boarding and day school.

But in 1934 the move from Logan was a huge loss for this congregation. The academy faculty and students had made up a large part of the Sunday School staff, the choir, youth activities and congregation. This was a low point for the Logan church.

But then came World War II. Rev. William Koenig was already serving in the valley as a missionary pastor, providing worship services at

the CCC camp in Blacksmith Fork Canyon and helping with services at the Brigham City and Preston, Idaho, churches, as well as working with Protestant students at the college. He became pastor of the Logan church from 1935 to 1943. As the country moved from the 1930s depression to preparation for war, another big surge of people arrived for the church to serve.

In 1940 there were 154 Protestant students at the college. In 1942 some 1,000 radio men were expected, along with 300 Marines and 700 mechanic students. Later came the Army Engineers. Rev. Koenig served the church, helped with the USO on East Center Street and, as his son later told us, counseled many young men interested in becoming conscientious objectors.



Winter of 1940



Children's Program in Westminster Hall



Christmas, 1940



Eagle Scout presentation
in Westminster Hall



College Group in Westminster Hall circa 1942



Dinner in Westminster Hall for Some Military Trainees

The Bruner Ministry (1943-1986)

In June of 1943 the Koenigs moved on to Salt Lake to continue ministry there. Miner and Helen Bruner arrived to begin a pastorate that would extend 43 years.

Soon after Miner's arrival, a decision was made to cut the ties of support from the national Board of Home Missions. This achievement was accomplished in October 1943, only after several hours of debate during a congregational meeting in Westminster Hall. **The Logan church would now be self-supporting for the first time since its founding in 1878.**



With so many young men at the college, there was a great flurry of weddings to perform, and Helen saved the newspaper clippings of these happy events in a scrapbook. The first wedding Miner performed was on June 4, 1943, just four days after their arrival. The Herald Journal reported about varying numbers of family members arriving from states all over the



country and described in detail the attire of everyone participating. Often the grooms wore their military uniforms. Ceremonies ranged from simple to extravagant.



Most were held in the sanctuary, a few in the manse living room and at least one on the expansive lawn south of the church. On one Saturday three weddings were held on the same day. One clipping has Helen's note that "some 49 white candles made the church look beautiful!" The newspaper report of a March 1946 wedding says, "The bride's comely silk gown of bouffant design was made from a Japanese silk parachute, captured by the bridegroom during the invasion of Saipan." He "has just received his discharge from the marine corps reserve after serving twenty-one months overseas as non-commissioned officer in charge of radar communications on Saipan and Okinawa."



Early Church Service



December 1953 75th FPC Anniversary: Rev. Miner Bruner, Dr. William G. Ross (Clerk of Presbytery), Rev. Harris Pillsbury, Rev. A. F. Wittenberger



1965 Worship Service

The 1920s brick building included the sanctuary, office, and gathering space for the choir on the main floor, with space upstairs that was used at times for office, Sunday School with a pump organ, or library. The lower level had Westminster Hall with a stage with heavy, maroon velvet curtain, storage room, small kitchen, coat room, furnace room, a classroom and nursery space.



1950s Chancel Choir under the direction of Margaret Sigler

Westminster Hall became the site of Sunday School classes, Vacation Bible School, community theater productions, activities of Troop 1 of the Boy Scouts of America, meetings, dinners and celebrations.

The Koenig children, who grew up in the manse from 1935 – 1943, remembered parties in Westminster Hall, planned primarily for college students but attended by all. Their mother usually dressed up as a witch for Halloween. One year the entrance for the party was through a downstairs window. A slide was placed from the window to the downstairs floor where a huge pile of autumn leaves had been arranged for a soft landing.

From the beginning the Presbyterian mission for Cache Valley placed a high value on educating young people. When Rev. Miner Bruner arrived, he stepped into that plan with enthusiasm. The groundwork had already been set up in April 1943 with a plan approved by session with Rev. Koenig presiding. A 1944 newspaper account said, Rev. Bruner was to be the instructor of high

school week-day seminary classes for Protestants in a new program outlined and planned by Rev. Bruner to help educate Protestant boys and girls in Bible study classes while Mormon boys and girls were taking seminary work with their instructors.



Sunday School Class, teachers Beth Martinez (right) and Betsy Franchina (left).

In addition to the 1944 New Testament course giving Logan High School credit, a college credit course was initiated at Utah State in 1947. Two years later courses in Old Testament, New Testament and Church History were all receiving credit at the college. Over 500 college students were on the church mailing list.

A Herald Journal report at the 25th anniversary of Rev. Bruner's ministry in Logan, said the thing he seemed most proud of was that "some 30 young men from the local church have become ministers in various Protestant denominations with more than 40 going into full-time Christian education service during the past quarter of a century."

Following World War II, the G I Bill encouraged veterans to get college degrees so by 1953 the Logan congregation had swelled to 424 communicants, not counting children and friends from the community.

The 1920s brick building was overflowing so a plan was made to add an education wing to the south end of the building with a recreation hall / gymnasium on the main floor and 13 Sunday

School rooms downstairs. The cost of \$60,000 was covered in part by a \$15,000 loan from the National Missions Board and \$2240 from the Elks Lodge, sponsor of Boy Scout Troop 1, in exchange for permanent rights to use the scout room especially designed for their activities.

Fundraising projects moved into high gear. Among several projects proposed, a bid was made to provide food and drinks at a concession stand at the Cache County Fair. The church kitchen was given a grade A rating by City Sanitarian, E. L. Filmore, and the bid was accepted. Owen Bair chaired construction to make the cinder block building functional. Everyone volunteered.

The first year, Elsie Pedersen provided 7 bushels of apples, sugar and shortening for Helen Bruner to chair two sessions of pie-making. One hundred and ten apple pies and 130 cherry pies were made and were cut into servings for sale at the fair. Miss Emma Laub was chairman of making barbeque filling for the sandwiches in the church kitchen...sandwiches which became famous in the years to come.

The effort was a success and was repeated every year...long after the new wing was added to the building. Art and Irene Mendini oversaw the whole project for many years. Jim Jarvis secured the popcorn machine and supplies. The youth sold popcorn and snow cones outside the booth. A 1993 report said that nearly one thousand hours of volunteer effort had raised \$4,500 that year.

The only identification on the fair building was the giant letters, "HOME COOKING" painted on the east side years earlier. Occasionally, a customer, seeing Rev. Bruner on the walkway in front, calling out, "Get your barbeque sandwiches right here!", would ask, "What group is running this?" The project ended in 2007 when the fair board had the building demolished and commercial food trucks took over.

In the 70s, Twelve Below was a program Miner developed that was popular with Logan High School students. Traditionally in Utah, high school students were allowed to receive credit for classes taken during a "release time" hour at the LDS Seminary located next to the high school campus. Miner was able to take advantage of the FPC's location just a block north of the high school and offered classes (and lunch) for credit during a noon release time in Westminster Hall, which is downstairs (below) at the church address at the time (12 South 200 West). On Wednesdays at noon, church women, especially mothers of Logan High



Twelve Below in May 1975

students, brought in casseroles and other food they knew their kids liked, while Miner arranged for speakers from the community, discussing topics of interest. Many students, who would not otherwise have had a reason to explore the Presbyterian Church, were served.

When the Utah State Supreme Court eventually determined that high school credit during release time was unconstitutional, students stopped signing up, and the Twelve Below program died in the early eighties.

The church history includes many times when one person or a small group recognized a need in the community and stepped up to build a solution. Westminster Hall and the adjoining little church kitchen were central to the many church fundraising projects that helped support the church budget and provide contributions to worthy causes, local and world-wide.

One major project in Westminster Hall and the little church kitchen began in 1973. The man pictured in the apron and baker's hat, making



Izar Martinez

sopapillas, is Izar Martinez. Izar had received his elementary and secondary education at Presbyterian boarding schools and was working as president of a residential school in New Mexico sponsored by the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church. He came from Albuquerque to Logan, with his wife Carol and their four children, to continue working toward a doctoral degree in School Administration which eventually led to his becoming Dean of the College of Education at USU. The whole family was very active in the congregation.

Izar told us that Carol went to a church women's meeting one evening and was asked to help with the annual fundraiser, a spaghetti dinner. She said she would gladly help but had no experience with spaghetti dinners, adding, "Where I come from, we always serve Mexican food." She came home "and informed me that we were going to sponsor a Mexican dinner at the church". It became a big hit with the whole

community and continued every March until 1995.

Carol was just one example of church members seeing a need in the community and working to implement a solution. She was a nurse and had become aware of the movement of hospice care for dying patients. There was no hospice program in Logan at the time so she and our Associate Pastor James Tweedie and his wife, Jeanine, who was a nurse at the Logan Hospital, worked together to bring hospice to Logan, a perfect use for some of the proceeds of the Mexican dinners.



Carol Martinez



Reverend Bruner preaching on an Easter morning

The Organ



Coburn Williams at the Organ in the 1970s



Sanctuary in early 1970s



Brandon Clayton at the new organ in 2016

Dedication of new organ in April 2016

The original organ at the Logan church was a small pump organ that Calvin Parks brought with him. His daughter, Maggie (Parks) Shirley was the first organist for 13 years. Years later, this organ was still used at outdoor services at Guinavah. In 1911, another organ was donated to the Logan church from the Women's Missionary Society. An old pump organ was also kept in the upstairs Sunday School room. In 1948, the Mariners bought a Baldwin organ that was used in the sanctuary. After a fund-raising effort, a new pipe organ was dedicated on October 12, 1969, and is visible in the above photo from the early 1970s. Many Memorial gifts have expanded the range of musical effects available to the organists since then. The latest upgrade and new console were installed in April 2016.



Scenes from the 1970s



Rev. Bruner in front of church during 1970s



Early 1970 Installation Board of Deacons



1978 – Centennial Celebration of the Presbyterian Ministry in Logan

In the 100 years of this building, there have been many situations when an individual or group went out into the community and, seeing a need, worked to meet that need, to correct that wrong, to encourage a good program. We thank God for the vision, faith and courage of those who provided this place and those who have maintained it as a place in which, and from which, the work of the church can go forward.

One hundred years is a significant milestone, well worth celebrating, but it's not the end of the story. The challenges of widely fluctuating numbers of people coming to this church will continue. Now we are in a period of recovery from the Covid epidemic. Adapting to quarantines and face masks, our worship and meetings were carried on, aided by Zoom technology. And the work of God's people goes on. Thanks be to God.

Submitted by Dorothy Jones
Edited by Marge Mascher

Note: Special Collections and Archives, Merrill Cazier Library, Utah State University, is the source of most of the documents, letters and photographs presented.

