



A History  
of the  
Darnestown Presbyterian Church

This booklet on "The History of the Darnestown Presbyterian Church" is an expansion of the original booklet written by the Reverend John F. Wells, Jr., for the Centennial Celebration in 1955 by our church. It has been expanded, published and distributed for the purpose of: Giving our new members of the past ten years an insight of our past history; giving all of our members and friends an insight into what is expected to happen in future years, so that we may have your prayers and thoughts on the job we have to do today.

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## A HISTORY OF THE DARNESTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ORGANIZATION (Prior to 1855)

A church is born in the hearts of a faithful people long before there is any visible evidence. And so began The Darnestown Presbyterian Church long before it was formally organized in 1855. A people who are grateful to the provident God always seek to give expression to their feeling of love in a united, worshipful way with the very best of their resources. Yet, to compose the history of such a development, from the records they leave behind, is not always easy. We very often must read between the lines of their official action if we are to discover the warmth and sincerity of a people whose unifying purpose is to fellowship with God as He is made known through Jesus Christ. If we look, we find that human element of struggle to serve Christ's Church, and it warms our hearts, and binds us to those who have gone before and have challenged us to go forward into the future armed with those same resources of a living Lord.

For an indefinite period prior to 1855 there had been a worshipping group of Presbyterians in the Darnestown area. These were undoubtedly descendents of the Scots-Irish frontiersmen who had migrated to this country in the early eighteenth century. These were the rugged men who had fought the Revolutionary War under George Washington. They were the ones who had put down the "Whiskey Rebellion" in Pennsylvania. They had fought with General Braddock back in the French and Indian War.

Perhaps it was the tenacity and the industriousness of these Presbyterians, inherited from Calvinistic forefathers who had been used to eking out a living from the highlands of Scotland, which kept them on the land of Montgomery County through the days of the mass migration westward. It is difficult, now, to sense the poverty which marked Montgomery County one hundred years ago. The soil of this area, like much of that along the eastern seaboard, had been depleted. Despite the influx of immigrants, the population had declined during the first half of the nineteenth century. Imagine what fears must have struck the hearts of those who really loved this county when the news was received that gold had been discovered in California! Yet, between 1848 and 1855 there occurred a remarkable discovery other than gold which filled countians with a fresh optimism. Even the little group of Presbyterians, who had been worshipping in the Pleasant Hills log church, ventured to build their own church edifice at Darnestown.

It seems that one of the clipper ships, bound for California via the Cape of Magellan, foundered on the Guano Islands off the coast of Peru. These islands were noteworthy for just one thing: a deep accumulation of bird manure, the deposit of the Guano birds. Yet, one enterprising, imaginative adventurer saw this as his "discovery of gold" and never continued to California. Instead, he began taking advantage of the eastbound clipper ships that had no cargo, and shipped home sacks of his "gold". He built his enterprise into a fertilizer business that was to save the eastern farmer. The poverty of Montgomery County began to disappear as the fertility was restored to the soil. The population, which had been tempted to leave,



decided to stay. Even institutions like churches took on new life and made long range plans for the future.

A further help to the farmer near Darnestown was the ready access he had to markets, via either the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal or the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The community talked of a railroad spur to run from White's Ferry through Poolesville, Darnestown, Gaithersburg, and across to Baltimore, the nation's number three city. The future looked bright, indeed.

Perhaps it was due to the inconvenience of having to share services with the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Episcopalians in the Pleasant Hills Church, appropriately called "The Free or Union Church", that the Presbyterians decided to establish their own church. Perhaps it was due to the optimistic outlook on what the future held in store. Perhaps it was due to the evangelistic zeal of Daniel Motzer, the stated supply assigned to Neelsville Church in 1854. But whatever the cause, on May 12, 1855, The Reverend Daniel Motzer officiated at the organization of the Darnestown congregation as a "Missionary Point" to the Neelsville charge, and the first members were received.

Since 1824 the Presbytery of the District of Columbia had been separate from the Presbytery of Baltimore and by 1839 had grown from six churches to nine. But then an unfortunate split occurred which resulted in six churches supporting the "New School Assembly" and three choosing to be loyal to the "Old School". Both kept the name of the Presbytery of the District of Columbia until 1841 when the "Old School" churches returned to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Baltimore. Neelsville, in 1845, and Darnestown, in 1855, were both established by the Presbytery of Baltimore, which apparently was sympathetic with the "Old School". The "Old School" had been the conservative branch of the division which had held to a strict interpretation of the standards of the church in doctrine and policy. It opposed the "New School" liberalism which co-operated freely with the Congregationalists and allowed for easy crossing of denominational lines by the clergy. The "Old School" won the larger following in the beginning, but because it contained a majority of Southerners who would take no stand against slavery, it suffered a further split when the Civil War came along, and the elements that did not enter the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America soon reunited with "New School". Our history is inexplicably linked with that portion of The Presbytery of Baltimore which was formed into the new Presbytery of the Potomac in 1858, but which instead of siding with the Confederate Church in a further split of the Presbytery of the Potomac waited to be reunited in 1870 with the Presbytery of the District of Columbia under the new name, The Presbytery of Washington City.

#### BUILDING (1855-1864)

Throughout that first summer of 1855 the newly organized "Darnestown Mission" sought ways of materializing its hope of having its own building. Major George Peter offered them land for their proposed building, and intense debate ensued about whether or not to accept the land located on what is now Berryville Road. The location was not favored by the majority



of the congregation; and although they were in no position to be choosy, Major Peter's offer was turned down. It was a fortunate decision, for shortly thereafter, the church was offered three acres of land by John DuFief, part of the present site. With the acceptance of this gift, progress went forward rapidly in planning the church building.

It has been said that the future was bright for these few organizers of our church, but it must be remembered that their pocketbooks were still rather thin. That first year of our organization found the Neelsville-Darnestown Church with but ten communicant members, and these were likely the ones who had to plan for the new building. Their tastes in architecture were characteristic of their day, their admiration going out for such replicas of Greek temples as were being copied by the newest public buildings in Washington, and as perfectly executed in the Lee Mansion of Arlington. But for their own little church meeting house, they had to rely on classic style, proportion, and appearance, but built of standard stock lumber. Even the desirable "bell tower" had to be omitted for economy's sake, and the windows could be but ordinary double hung wooden sash without any stained glass.

The basement of the church had a separate entrance from the side of the building. Presbyterians have always been education conscious, even in days that had no other school than could be found in the homes which cherished the Bible and the McGuffey Speller. From the beginning, these Presbyterians used the basement of the church for a small parochial school and Sunday School.

The cornerstone was laid on September 14, 1856 in ceremonies observed, remembered, and told to some of our living members by their parents. It is even reported that papers, coins, and other mementos were sealed in the cornerstone in appropriate ceremonies "in the presence of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and a vast concourse of citizens". So far, neither the stone nor the mementos have been found. It is thought to be built into the northeast corner of the building but has apparently been covered with cement or been painted over. The building was completed in rather short time, and was dedicated in other memorable ceremonies held May 22, 1858. No mention is made of the cost of the building; but it can be assumed that it was erected almost entirely by volunteered labor. Under the strong leadership of Daniel Motzer, the Neelsville-Darnestown Church grew throughout the building program from a beginning of ten in 1855 to forty-four three years later, of whom twenty-seven were already affiliated with the young Darnestown Branch.

It is noteworthy that as early as March 1856 special offerings were being received for the work of our Presbyterian mission boards, and that our ladies had organized themselves into a missionary society by 1858. Even before the Civil War, our church had received colored members into full communicant standing, which may give a clue to why this church never united with the "Old School" churches that formed the Confederate Church. The Poolsville and Rockville Churches on both sides of us, which had been organized about the same time that Neelsville had begun, each chose to enter the "Southern Church" which later became the Presbyterian Church

in the United States, but somehow we remained in the "Northern Church" that was to become the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Despite the impact of the war being waged all around us, our records show none of its effects. There was a dip in membership from a high in 1864 of seventy members to a low of about sixty in 1870, but it cannot be established that this was due to the war. We know that Darnestown was briefly the headquarters of General Banks, and that a few soldiers may be buried in our cemetery; but our church officers followed strictly a policy of recording only official actions. The only mention of the Civil War comes in a notation that a member was received by transfer after the war, even though she had no letter of dismissal from her church in Virginia which had been discontinued because of the war. Our officers were apparently more concerned with such issues as whether an offering should be received once a month or at every worship service, than they were interested to record how the war affected our people. Their meetings dealt with such things as "the intemperate habits" of a member who finally had to be "excluded" from the communion of the church until he manifest true and genuine repentance for his Sin". Yet, even these insights into the past show something of the conviction of Presbyterians that they can not take lightly their vows to become disciples of Jesus Christ. The standards of our Church made the session truly a court which had spiritual oversight of the flock, and our session did not hesitate to exercise its judgment.

The first period of our church's history came to a close with the death of its founding minister, the Reverend Daniel Motzer, on November 1, 1864. For ten years and two months Mr. Motzer had labored in the Neelsville-Darnestown community. Although his salary was still partially supplied, at the end of that time, by our Board of Home Missions, there were already signs that the church was making progress toward being self-sustaining. After just those first few years Mr. Motzer was spending three fourths of his time in the Darnestown neighborhood, and the membership roles show that that proportion of his time was roughly matched by the number of members in each place.

#### EXPANSION (1865-1872)

The Reverend J. S. H. Henderson was appointed stated supply of the Neelsville-Darnestown Church following the death of Mr. Motzer, and stayed through six stormy years that involved financial problems and strained relations with the Neelsville Branch of the Church.

It was in December of 1865 that Elder F. A. Tschiffely of the New York Avenue Church, long a friend of Darnestown Church and often a corresponding member in its session meetings, brought the news to the congregation that his friend Andrew Small wished to grant to the church a sum of \$5,000. His stipulating conditions were: 1) that the principal was not to be used, 2) that the interest be directed to the part payment of the pastor's salary, and 3) that the congregation should determine the location of the parsonage lot by January 1, 1867 upon which would be erected a house for a pastor who would devote at least three fourths of his time to the work in the Darnestown neighborhood.



Apparently Neelsville and Darnestown were in conflict over the location of a manse; but this bequest was thankfully received and helped speed the decision that led to the building of our present manse. Earlier, Darnestown had acquired by either gift or purchase a tract of land containing nearly twelve acres adjoining the DuFief grant. It was on this tract of land that a manse was finally built. However, by the time it was finished and ready for occupancy in February 1870, Mr. Henderson was no longer desired at Darnestown Church. When it came to a vote, Neelsville desired to have him stay; Darnestown voted to have him leave. It required eight months to settle the dispute, the solution begging a recommendation of the Presbytery that each branch of the corporate body have its own minister and divide equally the earnings of the Andrew Small endowment fund.

The solution would seem like an amiable one, but the real complication involved a second bequest to the church in Andrew Small's will. This second gift received at Mr. Small's death in 1867 was for a sum of \$35,000 and was left simply to the Neelsville and Darnestown Presbyterian Church with no conditions but an understanding that a private academy building at Darnestown would be paid for from the principal. It seems likely that the gift designated for the support of the pastor's salary would have been gladly divided, but knowledge of Mr. Small's favoring the minister spending three fourths of his time in the Darnestown neighborhood probably contributed to Darnestown's reluctance to share this larger sum fifty-fifty with her mother church. Yet, Presbytery's decision was followed, and from 1870 on, each church had its own minister, the earnings of the endowment (now reduced to approximately \$27,000 after deducting the cost of the academy) were equally shared, and the corporate body remained intact as one church having two branches.

As if these financial and ecclesiastical problems were not enough, Mr. Henderson had the further problems involved in the expansion program itself. The trustees of the church sold ten acres of land from the parsonage lot to the trustees of the academy, but the building of both parsonage and academy at the same time resulted in further trouble. By October 1868 the parsonage was practically finished, but a Mr. Easterday, who had received the contract to build the academy with permission to live in the incomplete parsonage while doing so, refused to vacate! The minister needed the house so that his children could attend school at the academy, which had begun its operation in the basement of the church in 1867. Mr. Easterday did eventually vacate the manse, but, by the time the difficulties were all settled, and the academy had moved into its new building in 1869, and the community had tired of experimenting with a succession of teachers, Mr. Henderson was ready to leave, and financial condition of the new-born academy forced it to close during 1871. It had been a bumpy road that had brought an academy and manse and endowment to the community, but by 1872 the storms began to subside, and with expanded facilities Darnestown once again looked forward to brighter days. Even through this period of storm and stress we can read something of Presbyterian convictions that say religion and education ought to go hand in hand. It would not have been possible without the generosity of Andrew Small, the successful Scot businessman. As some indication of the boost he gave the community, consider that in 1869, when the community was doing all it could to raise funds for

the building of a parsonage, the work of missions, and its obligation to their pastor, their total contribution amounted to but \$275, with the ladies "fair" raising an additional \$223. The Darnestown share of the endowment earnings that year amounted to \$750. Truly it can be said that Andrew Small undergirded the work of church and school in Darnestown.

#### THE ACADEMY AGE (1872-1907)

Darnestown was now to begin a phase of its history that placed it ahead of many neighboring communities who were less fortunate in finding a sponsor like Andrew Small. Where others faced difficult days of post-war reconstruction, we began with a church and manse and the largest and finest academy in Montgomery County, a distinction we held for at least fifteen years from the time of its completion. Outside the cities, in those days, education at an academic level preparatory for college was rare. But where such private academies were to be found, were also to be found churches that had an interest in education.

Locally, the Andrew Small Academy quickly established a reputation as an accredited school. A few boarding students came here from beyond the immediate neighborhood, and local families went to considerable sacrifice to keep their children in the school. Work scholarships helped some, and scholastic achievement scholarships encouraged others. It was remarkable what range of subjects could be taught and what could be done on limited resources. The minister of the church was also the principal of the academy until 1892.

The crying need always seemed to be for "a capable assistant teacher", but such were always hard to find and short lived when found. Often teachers in the academy were themselves ordained ministers, and the school subjects offered reflected the strong religious purpose of the school. There was a high level of cultural achievement during this period as is attested by the frequent concerts, recitals, and activities of the literary societies. Some of our people remember with nostalgia these programs and would welcome the return of the day when church and school provided all the outside interest for all the families in the community.

The succession of pastors during this time was not carefully recorded in a way that points to their specific contributions and emphases but at least a sketch of events during their ministries can be made.

The third minister of the Darnestown Church was the Reverend Charles Beach (1870-1877), and from about his time on we are regarding this to be a history of only the Darnestown Branch of the church which still continues as one corporation made up of two parts. Mr. Beach had the distinction of being the first duly elected and installed full fledged pastor. The previous ministers had been assigned by the Presbytery to serve as "stated supplies". Mr. Beach successfully bound up the wounds of the conflict with Neelsville Church, and the charter revised in 1871 was due to stand the test of time until 1937 except for minor revisions. During Mr. Beach's ministry the Darnestown Church became fully self-supporting and no longer depended upon the assistance from the Board of Home Missions to pay part of



the minister's salary of \$600 per year. One of Mr. Beach's sons entered upon his studies to prepare for the ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary while Darnestown was his home.

The Reverend H. C. Brown (1878-1883) succeeded Mr. Beach, but as stated supply only. Mr. Brown is the first minister that any of our older members can still remember, but details are missing from childhood memories, just as from our church records. The reason for his having never been "called by the church" may be bound up in the fact that the academy principalship may have needed consideration ahead of the desires of the congregation.

Following Mr. Brown, the Reverend James M. Nourse (1883-1885) was appointed stated supply, and after two months was duly elected and installed as pastor. Mr. Nourse was a cousin of Dr. Charles Nourse, the physician who labored in the Darnestown area from 1883 to 1917, and when he left Darnestown after less than two years, he continued to serve other churches of Washington City Presbytery in Alexandria and Falls Church. His last year here found him elected to be moderator of the Presbytery.

The Reverend Davis S. Rathbun (1885-1890) was next called, and served church and academy in well remembered fashion. His cultural interest urged the academy to purchase a new piano in 1887 for \$175, \$48 of which was raised by the ladies of the church. In 1889, under his leadership mission enterprises were begun in the Black Rock Mill area and reactivated at Cabin John. It may be surmised that Mr. Rathbun was a man of spiritual strength, for while he was here, the first two men since Sylvester Beach began their studies for the Christian ministry, Thomas T. Brown and John T. Kelley. Mr. Kelley later gave up his studies for reason of health. Mr. Rathbun left for California from here, and no one has any record of his later career.

After the Reverend Benjamin F. Myers (1890-1896) was called, he found it impossible after two years to serve as both pastor and principal, and the academy called its first full time principal. This could well have indicated growth in both the school and church, for it was in this period of the "nineties" that improvements came to both. The old iron fence from the court house grounds in Rockville was purchased in 1861 and erected to enclose the cemetery and to beautify the academy and church grounds. In 1893 a new organ was purchased for the church and church repairs were made. Mr. Myers died and was buried in the church cemetery in 1896.

Following Mr. Myers' death, the Reverend I. C. Yaekel (1896-1898) was called, and he was apparently a happy choice of a man who could go ahead with the improvements to the property. In 1897 the church parlor and bell tower were added to the original structure at a cost of \$1277.

This addition was rapidly carried to completion and involved the church in no debt. It actually stimulated interest in more improvements which came after the Reverend Walter H. Stone 1899-1908 was called to be pastor. The beauty of stained glass windows in the new parlor inspired the replace-

ment of the windows in the sanctuary with stained glass memorial windows, the last of which was completed in 1905. The stone wall next to the road must have been built about this time, for the Mr. Lowe who did the work built similar walls about that time in several nearby localities. In 1903, while Dr. Stone was a commissioner to the General Assembly meeting in Los Angeles, a "church improvements fund" was utilized to build the porch on the manse, and to carry out other repairs, painting and the "piking of the roads to church and academy".

Under Dr. Stone, our church's only pastor who had earned the Ph.D. degree, a well conceived anniversary was carried out to celebrate the church's first fifty years of history. Dr. Stone's address at that occasion in 1905 gives us some of our keenest insight into the human side of our early years. It was during Dr. Stone's ministry that our Christian Endeavor Society was at its peak, with some twenty-seven people in the Senior Society and twelve in the Junior.

The "academy age" came to a close in 1907 when the Montgomery County "Board of Commissioners of the Public Schools" were granted permission to operate the academy building as a public high school. The trustees of the Andrew Small Academy continued to maintain the building and to pay from the endowment earnings a portion of the teachers' salaries; but the parochial and private school atmosphere was on the way out.

#### THROUGH TWO WARS (1908-1945)

This modern period of our history was marked by two wars and a depression; but as far as the local church was concerned, it showed a remarkable stable and uniform pattern. The church membership hovered between one hundred twenty and one hundred fifty for the period, fluctuating some with each new minister. The financial support of the church remained fairly stable between \$3,000 and \$4,000 annually. The only gauge that showed much increase was the Andrew Small Endowment. It has grown from a working principal of \$27,000 in 1872 to an estimated value of \$65,000 in 1908 and to \$80,000 in 1945. The earnings of the endowment had supported the academy, paid part of the pastor's salary, maintained the Sunday School, and provided a "widows and orphans fund". Even though divided equally with Neelsville Church, it had paid to Darnestown \$850 in 1872, \$1,300 in 1908, and \$1,450 in 1945, reaching a peak of over \$2,000 in four different years. It had served to hold the church together through some very difficult times, and we can credit much of this benefit to the wise investments and careful handling of the fund by Mr. James Windsor, Sr. treasurer of the church and elder for more than half a century. The only handicap brought by the endowment was noted in Dr. Stone's fiftieth anniversary address when he cautioned:

"you will allow me to correct an erroneous impression with reference to the use of the Small Fund in this church. Some have the idea that there is sufficient interest received from the Small Fund, with which to meet its obligations, the church would come far short of meeting them. Keep in mind that it is the policy of this church to do its utmost to meet its obliga-



tions by the voluntary contributions of its members and to resort to the Fund when the extreme limit has been reached".

The Reverend Oscar A. Gillingham (1909-1921) succeeded Dr. Stone and was successful in almost immediately doubling the level of financial support of the church. This was partially due to the fact, however, that under Dr. Stone the church membership had gone so far beyond its operating budget to improve and beautify the property. Now, that additional support was directed into regular church giving. This is not to say that improvements were not continued, for in 1910 a new "carriage house" was built on the manse property, and in 1911, extensive improvements were made in the cemetery.

Mr. Gillingham was present through the days of World War I. It cannot be said that our neighborhood was hit hard by the war: agricultural workers were needed at home. The real hardships came in the post war period of the twenties, when agriculture generally suffered an economic depression ahead of the rest of the country, and which continued into the thirties.

Upon leaving Darnestown Church, Mr. Gillingham was called to serve Neelsville Church.

The Reverend John W. Lowden (1921-1936) came to Darnestown next, coming from Nova Scotia via ministries in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. Dr. Lowden has the distinction of serving this church longer than any other man, fifteen years of strenuous times for the church because of the strain pressing upon the farmers of the neighborhood. Only hard work and long hours kept the farms from falling into other hands.

In 1927 the academy building, a public high school for twenty years, was sold outright to the County Board of Education, together with four acres of land. The county soon converted the building to a one story, two classroom building, for the dormitory space on the second and third floors was no longer needed and was expensive to maintain.

The following year Dr. J. Thomas Kelley, Jr. gave \$1,000 to the church for enlarging the cemetery, which permitted the purchase of two acres of land and completed the land acquisition of the church to the present time.

The church and manse were wired for electricity in 1928 and painted in 1930, and it would appear that these were the last major improvements for eighteen years to come. Perhaps the sale of the academy permitted this expenditure that might not otherwise have been possible. Dr. Lowden's picture comes from the center of the picture of the "pine tree planting" Arbor Day Ceremony of 1932, and is the last picture we have of him, for he died in 1936 and was buried in our cemetery.

The Reverend William I. Campbell (1936-42) came next and was successful in rallying our young people to fresh enthusiasm. A tennis court was built on the manse grounds in 1937, and an electronic organ was purchased in 1939. The charter of incorporation was revised in 1937 for

the first time since 1872. Then just as plans were being made for extensive improvements to the church, World War II involved the United States, our young men began to leave to serve their country, and Mr. Campbell died in 1942. All of the plans had to postponed indefinitely.

The Reverend William L. Everhart (1942-1945) was called as pastor immediately following his graduation from Princeton Seminary and had the difficult task of leading the church through the days of the war. Twenty-five young men from the church and community are listed on our "service roll", and in 1944 the church sent Christmas packages to some forty-four men in service. Mr. Everhart was called to serve as chaplain in the United States Navy in 1945, and the church was to remain without a pastor for over a year.

The war and the changes following the war marked the end of an era in our church's life. The city of Washington had grown relatively unheeded by Darnestown until the forties, but the improved roads, increased mobility of the people learned during the war, and the greater attraction of the country as a place to live, Darnestown was due to face some rather severe changes following the war.

#### TRANSITION (1946-1955)

The post-war period began with our church family looking forward to the improvements to the church building which had been long postponed because of financial limitations. As early as 1934 Elder Dr. Upton D. Nourse had said the church needed additional facilities for the Sunday School. A significant change in policy occurred in 1945 under the leadership of Mr. J. Sterling Bowman, newly elected chairman of the finance committee. It was decided to divert all the earnings of the Andrew Small Endowment Fund received by this church into a fund "for permanent improvements only", instead of allowing it to support the church's operating budget. It was encouraging to see that the church budget was immediately underwritten by voluntary pledges and contributions, and it has never since fallen to the level it was when it depended upon the endowment for support. What might have happened if Dr. Stone's warning in 1905 had resulted in as radical a step forward as that?

The Reverend Benjamin F. Ferguson (1946-1949) was called next, and under his leadership the church membership increased from 150 to 200. During Mr. Ferguson's stay the church and manse received some major repairs and improvements, and an architect was engaged to plan the long awaited church expansion and renovation; but the carrying through to completion of the building program was to wait until Mr. Wells' ministry which began in 1951.

And so we come to the present time. The Reverend John F. Wells, Jr. has been here through the time of most visible changes in the community and church. The church building was expanded to about double its former floor area, and the older part of the building was completely renovated. The stained glass windows, frames, and floors are about all that remain of the original church. That which is new is planned to carry out



the lines of the original Greek architecture, and it is planned sometime to restore the front of the church with a Greek portico and center entrance. The improvements of 1952 and 1953 cost over \$50,000, and the indebtedness has now been reduced to about \$22,000. We end our first hundred years with a membership of 213, an operating budget of \$7,000, a benevolence budget of \$2,000, and an additional sum of \$8,000 anticipated in special receipts to be applied on our building and improvement indebtedness, the new Hammond Organ and our non-budgeted benevolence causes. This will mark the fourth year that giving through our church has gone over \$16,000 annually!

The community saw the final removal of the remnant of the Andrew Small Academy in 1955, following the completion in 1954 of a new \$200,000 elementary school building on the ground that had been sold to the Board of Education in 1927. At this writing, the manse is being improved and repaired to the extent of about \$3,000, which should take care of all anticipated needs for several years.

The transition that has been mentioned is really just beginning. An increasingly large portion of the community are those who work in Washington and live here. Several farms have recently been sold at prices that rule out farming as their intended use. Taxes have increased with increased land values to such an extent that the farming nature of the community may be on the way out, unless zoning regulations preserve certain areas exclusively for farming.

Road improvements have made it possible to drive to downtown Washington in about forty minutes, whereas in the first days of this church's history the fastest means of travel to Washington was by way of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal barges. The decentralization of Washington offices and industries portend continued growth of the community, and ribbons of dual lane highways are planned to link our little community to the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area.

As we come to the end of this glance over our shoulder at our heritage, the conclusion is bound to come that we have much for which to be grateful to our heavenly Father. The contributions of many of our forebearers have added to our present desire to face the future confident of our partnership with God. As author, I must take the blame for improper reading between the lines of our records. What has been left for us to read has often dealt at too great length with materialistic matters to the neglect of the spiritual life of Christ's Church that seems always to be taken for granted. Yet we can confidently know that our little church, the only church in our community for a century, has contributed much of spiritual strength to countless people who have come under its influence. It turned its attention to the needs of people for Christ from the very beginning, and it offered its support throughout the years to widows and blind and flood victims and families in trouble, disease, or want. These concerns of the Church are measureless in value, but we can be sure they were present in our history.

We do not take for granted our spiritual purpose but are challenged to make that central feature of our church's life evident to all who read the

record of our Church on paper or on our faces. We are first of all the fellowship of Christ's disciples who have a message of gladness to share with our community. That "good news" is that God has redeemed mankind through His very son, Jesus of Nazareth, whom we call The Christ, The Messiah, The Savior of the world. Through the ministries of Christ's life and death and resurrection and living intercession, we believe that God healed the breach that had separated His children from His love. Faith in this supreme fact has liberated us from our fears and established us as a people who have been implemented with the resources of God's own love. Confident that this must be recognized and acted upon, we go into our next hundred years proclaiming Christ and seeking human decision to follow Him and His way of life.

#### ONE HUNDRED YEARS PLUS TEN 1955 - 1965

To attempt to pick up and carry on the excellent research and writing project performed by the Reverend John F. Wells, Jr. in the preceding "History Of The Darnestown Presbyterian Church" for our Centennial Celebration in 1955 is an accomplishment which is difficult to match. However, as several historical, and some not so historical, but interesting events have occurred in the past ten years, the facts as gleaned from church record books and from memory are being set-forth for the record. Many new members have joined our church during this period and, as of this writing, March 1965, our membership totals 305. The history and growth of our church from 1955 to the present should be of interest.

Our Centennial Celebration week-end of 24 and 25 September 1955 was a memorable affair which included a Homecoming Service in the evening followed by a Homecoming Reception in our social hall on Saturday and a Special Anniversary Worship Service on Sunday afternoon. On both occasions we were honored with a visit and solos by the Reverend William L. Everhart, our minister from 1942 to 1945, and remarks from our minister, Reverend Wells.

At our annual Corporation Meeting on January 25, 1957 Mr. Thomas C. Kelley, our church Treasurer, moved that we adopt the following resolution: "That it be the sense of the meeting that the congregation of the Darnestown Presbyterian Church desires to be a corporation separate from the Neelsville Presbyterian Church; and that a committee be appointed by the moderator to contact the officers of the Neelsville-Darnestown Presbyterian Corporation and take steps to institute such separation; and further that the same committee be empowered to draft a set of by-laws for submission to the congregation." This resolution was adopted by the congregation. The progress toward carrying out this resolution proved to be a complicated and tedious process. A great amount of work in the form of searching court records and the unraveling of legal entanglements, etc., was performed by Mr. Kelley, and many meetings and discussions were held between the corporate trustees of the Neelsville-Darnestown churches. It was not until June 1963 that further mention is made of this matter in our record books and at this time it was reported by our minister that progress was being made in securing new charters for the Neelsville-Darnestown churches. At a joint meeting of the trustees of the Darnestown and Neelsville Presbyterian churches on 2 October 1964 our attorney advised



that the separation of our two churches and the establishing of separate charters is progressing very well and all of the legal implications should be completed within a short time. Representatives of the respective churches were appointed to represent each church in the division of the jointly-owned stock and bonds which were the result of the original Andrew Small Endowment. At this meeting it was formally decided that the new corporation names of each church would be: "Board of Trustees of the Darnestown Presbyterian Church of Montgomery County, Maryland" and "Trustees of the Neelsville Presbyterian Church, Inc." As of this writing it can be reported that our church now possesses its separate charter and by-laws. The investment assets from the Andrew Small Endowment Fund are being equally divided between our two churches and it is expected that our share will be in excess of \$100,000. These assets, in the form of stocks and bonds, are being handled by an Investment Committee specifically appointed for the purpose of handling these matters and looking out for our interests.

Reverend Wells left our church on May 1, 1957 to accept a call from the Board of National Missions to start a new church in the New Castle, Delaware community.

From February 1957 through January 1958 we were without a regular minister and our Sunday services were presided over, for the most part, with supply ministers from the nearby metropolitan area. It was during this period that memorial chimes were installed in the chancel. In December 1957 the Rev. Daniel C. Manson, pastor of the New Salem Presbyterian Church, New Salem, Pa. accepted a call to become Pastor of our church. He and his wife, Constance, and their daughters, Phyllis and Adah, moved into the manse on January 31, 1958. Because of severe weather and deep snow drifts Rev. Manson's installation was delayed until 2 March 1958.

In this ten year period some significant repairs or additions to our church property were made as follows: Minor repairs were made to the manse prior to the arrival of the Mansons. Repairs were in the form of painting, finishing floors and installing shades. In October 1958 our cemetery was paved. In 1959 new memorial hymnals were donated for our sanctuary and in May the overflow room at the rear of our church sanctuary was opened up and renovated to become our present enlarged sanctuary. Additional pews to match the ones in the fore part of the sanctuary were purchased at this time. In August of 1959 new carpeting was donated for the entire sanctuary. Outside lights at the driveway entrance and on the front of the church were donated and installed in February 1960. In September 1960 a resolution was presented and approved by the congregation that the trustees to approve a bid to construct a new manse for the total cost of \$26,000. This action was preceded by many months of planning, hard work and bid-letting by a Manse Building Committee appointed for this purpose. Money for this financing was obtained thorough a promissory note to Mr. A. R. Selby, Germantown, Md. Many additional hours and provoking thought were spent by the Manse Building Committee in the decision-making and selection of the sundry items that make a house a home—kitchen equipment, book cabinets, light fixtures, window shades, linoleum, paint, driveway, plumbing fixtures, etc. The new manse was completed and occupancy began in 1961. In the same year our church was painted on the exterior and our memorial carillon bells were ordered in



June 1961. A new memorial outdoor church sign was purchased and installed in February 1962. In this same period a new hymn board was donated and placed in the sanctuary. Also given to the church was a bequest of \$5,000 for cemetery improvement. A memorial communion chalice was likewise donated at this time. Our sanctuary and Sunday school rooms were painted and our church property was fenced in 1963. Two new air conditioning units were donated and installed in our sanctuary in the summer of 1964. In the same year memorial pulpit scarfs were donated. Many of these improvements and repairs would not have been possible without the hard work of individual members and without the generous donations from church members and friends through memorials, specified gifts or remembrances in wills. In our research we have attempted to cover all such items and it is hoped you will forgive us for any we may have overlooked.

The Montgomery County Board of Education in September 1959 inquired as to whether we would sell that portion of church land lying adjacent to the school property at its southern end, between the cemetery and Turkey Foot Road. It was explained that this land was needed for expansion of the school facilities. Upon receiving this offer we decided to investigate the possibility of acquiring the land to the south of the cemetery and to the east of it before entertaining the school board's proposal. It was also decided that in the event we did consider selling some of our church land to the school board we should reserve a roadway from the southern edge of the cemetery to Turkey Foot Road. Again in October 1959 the school board approached the church relative to selling three acres, more or less, between the present school grounds and the former Marion Beall farm. Our attempts to purchase other adjoining land had been unsuccessful. A written record as to what happened in these negotiations is not reflected until October 1961 when a letter was received from the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education of Montgomery County, Md. offering the church \$4,000 per acre for 2.5423 acres which had been surveyed. In this letter it was stated that appraisals of acreage secured in 1959 were brought up-to-date in September 1961. In December 1961 a reply was sent to the school board advising that we could not entertain their offer at this time as the property in question is worth considerably more to the church as future cemetery expansion. In February 1962 the school board informed the church that they could not match the value which we placed on this property as future cemetery expansion. However, they advised they were attempting to acquire additional land at the end of our cemetery in the hopes of exchanging it for 3.5423 acres on Turkey Foot Road. In September 1962 our trustees met with members of the Board of Education concerning this land. However, no decisions or conclusions were reached. In June 1964 the school board again requested a meeting with the Board of Trustees to further discuss this land matter and on July 13, 1964 the requested meeting was held at which time the school board's representatives stated that they are desperately in need of the entire described parcel or any portion thereof which can be made available. They agreed to have a re-assessment made of the land in question. In November 1964 the Superintendent of Schools communicated with the church making another offer for the purchase of this land. After further discussions a tentative figure was reached which appeared to be acceptable to the Board of Trustees. At the annual Congregational/



Corporation meeting in January 1965 the developments leading up to the final offer of the Board of Education to purchase school expansion land from the church at \$8,000 per acre was presented. Mention was further made of the possibility that we could obtain a small amount of acreage from the owner of the land directly behind our present cemetery for expansion purposes. A motion was made and carried that the church accept the School Board's offer of \$8,000 per acre for the 3.5423 acres desired by them with a stipulation that we obtain an easement right-of-way at the rear of this property for a cemetery exit to Turkey Foot Road. It was further moved that in connection with this transaction we exchange with the school board a twenty foot strip of land between the new manse and the school building for an equal strip at the far end of the property in question so that we will have the possibility of extending our present church building, if desired, without running against a restriction of building too close to the present chain-link fence separating our properties. The trustees were further authorized to take immediate steps to acquire additional acreage from the owner of the land at the rear of the present cemetery. At the present time both the sale of our land to the Board of Education and the purchase of approximately 1.244 acres from the owner of the land to the south of the cemetery are in the final stages of negotiation. In these transactions we were able to obtain the twenty foot strip of land through an exchange with the Board of Education and we are retaining a thirty foot strip at the southern extremity to serve as a cemetery exit to Turkey Foot Road.

In December 1964, following a recommendation of our attorney, a new set of church finance books were organized for use by the treasurer starting in 1965. A detailed system of accounting policies and procedures was adopted at this time.

During this ten year period our minister's salary has increased from less than \$4,000 to \$6,400 and his car allowance has increased from \$420 to \$800. As in 1955 his service pension is being paid by the church and we are making an allowance of \$650 for manse utilities.

We currently have an operating budget in excess of \$12,000 and a benevolence budget in excess of \$4,000. Our total operating budget (general expenses and benevolences) last year was approximately \$15,900 and it is anticipated to be in excess of \$17,500 this year.

Other than debts owed to ourselves (money we borrowed from the Cemetery Fund) we are in excellent financial shape. A final payment has recently been made to liquidate our previous church expansion and manse construction debt. Possibly we should turn our thoughts to a discussion held in a trustees meeting in June of 1961 when it was determined that the value of the jointly-owned Andrew Small Fund was approximately \$141,000. The discussion dealt with whether it wouldn't be better to liquidate some of the church debts instead of having such a large reserve. We currently don't have a large debt. However, it is anticipated that we will be considering a rather extensive building program in the very near future.

## A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Darnestown has always been a quiet peaceful community. The estate areas from Potomac have gradually been inching northwestward until they have reached Darnestown. With the development of Deacons Range and Springfield Drive on the west side and the building of approximately ninety homes in Ancient Oak on the east side by September 1965, this should surely arouse us to the fact that we are no longer a quiet country community. So, the Darnestown Presbyterian Church must begin to plan for the new era that is sure to come.

In the January 1965 Session meeting it was decided that our church needed additional facilities to take care of our present and future requirements. Also the Session decided that we should have a committee to draw up a master plan to meet the requirements in an orderly manner. The following resolution was then adopted: "It is recommended that a planning committee, consisting of seven members, be formed for the purpose of studying the physical needs of the church, the adequacy of the present facilities, and possible future requirements. The Committee membership is to be comprised of one member selected by each of the Boards of the church, and four members to be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting on January 20, 1965."

At the annual congregational meeting the resolution was adopted. A committee was chosen consisting of the following people: John W. Kitterman, Howard G. Cissel, Mrs. Harwood V. Pointer, Edward B. Byrd, Maurice C. Ward, Joseph E. Turner and Dr. James R. DeVoe.

The committee has had several meetings and is working on a master plan so we can decide where to locate any new facility that may fit into our long range plans. Also, the committee has been working with a lot of population facts and figures so that we may estimate what our church membership may be by 1970, 1980 and the year 2000. The World Almanac for 1965 reflects that only one in two Americans are church members. Approximately two percent Americans are Presbyterians. There are approximately 4.2 million Presbyterians in America today. But, because we are one of few churches in the area at the present time, we find that approximately 7.5 percent of the people in the Darnestown 6th Election District are members of our church. We feel we can expect this ratio to continue until new churches move into our area.

The committee has studied a number of booklets and papers on Montgomery County's population growth and has decided that the most likely figures come from the booklet entitled, "Wedges and Corridors," put out by The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Our church membership is now 305 and our church school enrollment is 140. Projecting figures from "Wedges and Corridors" (Darnestown 6th Election District population figures—1960, 4,100; 1980, 6,335 and 2000, 15,838) our church membership should be 471 by 1980; 1178 by the year 2000; and our church school enrollment should be 222 by 1980 and 554 by the year 2000.

It is true that these figures will not tell the complete future, but it is necessary to have some guide to go by to make future plans. You can be



assured that our plans will be flexible enough to speed up our expansion as necessary or to proceed at a slower pace when required.

What do our future plans call for in the way of facilities? An adequate paved parking area is planned for this year. By spring 1966 we would hope to be ready to build an educational wing. A site will be chosen for a new sanctuary now, but to be constructed when the need arises. Plans for landscaping must be made now for a good many of our present trees undoubtedly will have to be removed and new landscaping should blend with our future building plans.

The Church Planning Committee is just beginning its work. We are looking for ideas and suggestions to help guide us in our planning. If any member has any questions or definite ideas, please contact any member of the Church Planning Committee.