

# A history of Damascus United Methodist Church

Part II: 1972-2022, by Sally Boyer Skogsberg Smith

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Damascus United Methodist Church 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History is dedicated to our young people, who today make tomorrow's history with God's guidance and support. We pray that we may provide them with the foundation for another 200 years of spiritual strength and service in the name of Christ and His Church.

In grateful acknowledgement of Janie Woodfield Payne's extremely thorough and informative 1972 history of our church.

Blessings and Grace,  
Sally Boyer Skogsberg Smith  
2022

**NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR AND EDITORS:** Our history as a church is always considered a work in progress. Any additions or clarifications for future publications may be submitted via email to [office@damascusumc.org](mailto:office@damascusumc.org). Thank you.

## IN APPRECIATION

To those in our DUMC congregation who have shared their memories, information, and assistance:

Rev. Dr. Kathryn Woodrow	Mary Lou Mullinix Leishear	Bob Newlin
Rev. Helen Ballew	Mary Emma Linthicum	Bob Gladhill
Lisa Marshall	Kenny Sue Robertson	Marilyn Kinsey
Steve Malley	Hilda Lemly	Bob Wilson
Marcia Hofman	Susan Hitchcock	Jane Webb
Ruby Pearce Bellison	Nancy Counts	Pennie Adams
Bob Bellison	Mary Werner Rose	Rob Adams
Gary Richard	Polly Edmonds Baldrige	Kathy Jones
Sherry Duvall Lloyd	Tom Baldrige	Stan Jones
Charles "Mac" Lloyd	Carol Yokum	Mary Taylor
Joy Green Schwab	Jan Mullinix	Hazel Strahorn
Warren Schwab	Joan Hartle	Kathy Leslie
Dorothy Warfield	Cora Horst	Cathy Heinbaugh
Bernardine Gladhill Beall	Gene Orndorff	Cindy Fulton
Sue Suddath		

And to those providing administrative support:

Rebecca Hallenbeck  
Kristen H. Skogsberg  
John Boyer Skogsberg

As with our 1972 History, it is with deep regret that the author is unable to list more of the "devoted and loyal individuals who have given of their time and abilities throughout the years." Therefore, great appreciation and thanks go out to the entire congregation of Damascus United Methodist Church.

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## I. CHURCH BUILDINGS

### *Our First Church (1822): Addendum to 1972 History*

The site of our first church was 26130 Mullinix Mill Road, at the first sharp bend to the right after leaving Route 108. The structure currently visible at the site was erected in approximately 1902 immediately adjacent to our original church building, which has since been demolished. The present building there once served as the second Mt. Lebanon school building but is now a private home. No longer owned by Millard Oland, it has had multiple owners in the last 50 years. The surrounding farmland and home of Benjamin Benton has also changed hands; it is no longer part of the Bud Clay Farm but is now operated by Morning Sun Stables at 26220 Mullinix Mill Road. The Benton residence and outbuildings appear to have been completely renovated or demolished since 1972, and another private owner lists this portion as Hunter's Creek Farm at 26100 Mullinix Mill Road.

Although the author's family is descended from Joshua Purdum, whom Janie Payne identified as having purchased Benjamin Benton's Bible, its whereabouts remain unknown.

### *Second Church (1869): Addendum to 1972 History*

Our second church was described by DUMC member Bradley Woodfield from memory to Janie Payne as the "Old Red Church" with a balcony (gallery) in it. He recalls others telling of oyster dinners there, and of a special oak tree standing just east of the "Old Red Church" and behind the third church (now Harwood House) until 1970 when it was cut down by C&P Telephone. Pieces of the much-loved tree, estimated at over 150 years old, were offered to the congregation in our church bulletin. "Mr. Bradley" related how McKendree Bowman (the author's great-grandfather) would drive his two-horse carriage to church meetings and "tie his horses to the limbs of the great oak tree." Grandmother Annie Bowman Boyer described this as well. One of the earliest memories recalled by Annie Boyer's husband, Dr. George Boyer (1872-1956), was of a church picnic held in the yard beside the "Old Red Church" in celebration of the U.S. Centennial, when he accidentally sat on a piece of cherry pie. Just a few feet away from this spot and many years later, Boyer Chapel was erected by Dr. Boyer's son in his honor.

This church was a wooden frame building painted barn red, likely from using inexpensive homemade paint containing flaxseed oil, buttermilk, and iron oxide (rust). Many buildings in the mid-1800s were painted similarly. Later, whitewash with lime became more popular and may have been used on our third church.

### *Third Church (1899): Addendum to 1972 History*

Our third church, which still stands, now houses Harwood House Thrift Shop. Many of our parishioners recall worship services, weddings, receptions, church suppers, Sunday School sessions, and various church and community meetings held in this building. Mary Lou Leishear recalls a story told to her by her grandfather, Mr. William M. Mullinix, whereby Mrs. Lola Day put an end to the longstanding Methodist practice of seating men and women separately at services. She decided to sit with her husband, Sterling Day! Perhaps that prompted the 1932 removal of separate doors in this church. Some parishioners, including Dorothy Warfield, remember attending worship services in the Druid Theater

during remodeling and painting of the sanctuary in the early 1950s. The walls were repainted in an aqua color and pews were re-stained darker. Others report receiving reminders from their mothers not to turn summersaults over the metal bars in the fence out in front after Sunday School; little girls attired in fancy dresses, crinolines, hats, white gloves, and shiny patent leather shoes should refrain because it was not “lady-like.” Sue Suddath fondly recalls serving with Joy Schwab as co-chairs of United Methodist Women, in charge of Turkey and Oyster Dinners here, as well as teaching Sunday School together during this era. Mrs. Hilda Lemly, our oldest current member at 102, and daughter Susan Hitchcock describe their favorite church memory of DUMC Mother-Daughter Banquets. As referenced in our 1972 History, the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) sponsored the Easter Sunrise Service for several years. The first in 1956, with Sue Poole as MYF leader, was held on the empty lot at the future site of our fourth church. The youth participants were seated atop a farm hay wagon while Jerry Cook’s band performed. An MYF breakfast was hosted afterward at the Lentz home.

Following our move to our fourth church in 1961, the hanging chandelier lights in the old sanctuary were reused elsewhere: three went to Howard Chapel UMC on Long Corner Road, and three were added to Boyer Chapel. The pews were sold to the First Baptist Church on Route 108, and the organ also went to Howard Chapel UMC.

As early as the 1950s, our Building Committee for the 1960-61 fourth church envisioned an Education Wing and plans included such a future addition. However, this was delayed when lightning struck the Educational Building, our third church, on August 9, 1967. That day made quite an impression on me personally; I had left with my family to go to my father’s medical office, which was across the street from the Educational Building, and I remember the tremendous thunder and lightning that accompanied the day’s fierce storm. Shortly afterward, we were shocked to see what appeared to be smoke rising from the roof of the Educational Building. My mother hurried to call the fire department, and many engines from multiple companies were soon battling the blaze. I recall feeling extremely sad that our beautiful church and Sunday School building was so badly damaged. Fortunately, through the hard work of many, it has seen many years of service since.

Subsequent to repairs made after the 1967 fire at our third church structure, the name changed from the Educational Building to the Educational Center. The building was ultimately renamed Harwood House in 1996.

#### *Fourth Church (1960-1961): Addendum to 1972 History*

One interesting bit of information was found concerning the site plan of our current sanctuary. The original plan proposed that the church be much closer to Woodfield Road and more in line with the houses there. By agreeing to an easement with Dr. and Mrs. M. McKendree Boyer for parts of New Church Street, the road could be altered to run in a much straighter path over irregular property lines and widened to accommodate more church parking near a revised site farther from Woodfield Road. Dorothy Warfield recalls that the foundation excavation had already commenced near the road, but Rev. Kesler wanted the church moved to a more prominent position up on the hill. The original easement has been located, and Ruby Bellison provided a pamphlet containing the original site plan.

Another fascinating fact revealed itself during steeple renovation and repair by a steeplejack six years ago, when the name of Preston Holley, Rev. Depro's future son-in-law, was discovered written inside the very top of the tower many years ago noting that he "was here."

In 1976, during our country's bicentennial year, DUMC paid off our 1961 mortgage and on May 16 held a dedication of the "New Church" by Rev. Merrill Drennan, the District Superintendent. This was accomplished relatively quickly due to the many honorarium and memorial donations of windows, pews, and even the church steeple.

#### *Fourth Church (1960-1961) with Christian Fellowship Center Addition (1992-1994)*

As the Damascus community grew throughout the 1970s and 1980s, our need for larger facilities greatly increased. The rise in traffic on Route 124 brought increased county road construction, and limited parking made access to the Educational Center more hazardous for children attending Sunday School, despite designated DUMC crossing guards. Additionally, church suppers, community service, and outreach programs drew many more people and led to overcrowding. In 1983-1984, study and planning commenced and in 1988, the congregation approved a building project which included a large addition to the fourth church. A building fund campaign called "Growing God's Kingdom" was conducted, and \$300,000 had been pledged by 1990.

The landscape of Damascus was changing; Montgomery County extended Route 124 north of Route 108, demolishing four or five former homes of congregation members, including the Sterling Day house owned by William Mullinix, and the John Mount house across Route 108 from the Educational Center. The Claude and Sallie Boyer Burdette home, damaged by the 1899 hailstorm, had previously been demolished. During this Damascus revitalization project, the church and parsonage were connected to county water and sewer, and power lines were buried underground to accommodate the new addition.

The Christian Fellowship Center (CFC) addition of 16,000 sq. ft. included a fellowship hall seating 300, a stage with lighting, an elevator, a library, a choir room, a new vestibule at the narthex northwest porch entrance, a modern commercial kitchen, a dining hall seating 200, classrooms, a preschool area, a projection room, and a public address system. The CFC features flexible partitions and is handicapped accessible. As of 1990, the estimated cost was \$2 million. After a second building campaign in 1990, we financed \$975,000 in bond sales provided through Reliance Trust Company—which sold out in 24 hours! As in our 1960-1961 sanctuary, designated gifts also provided furnishings and site improvements. The project thus totaled closer to \$2.5 million.

The building committee included Co-Chairs Bill Freienmuth and Joy Schwab, with members Stella Allison, Nancy Beard, Donald Beard, Wayne Chamblee, Joe Warfield, Gary Richard, Reinette Springirth, Theodore Samakouris, Brian Hartle, Doris Hershey, Herbert Hyatt, Edward Jarrell, Kathleen Leslie, Mary Emma Linthicum, Robert Newlin, Graham Petrie, William Rines, Robert Slocomb, and Hubert Snapp. The architect was Thomas O'Reilly of Silver Spring, Maryland, and the contractor was Hubert E. Snapp Construction of Damascus, Maryland.

The groundbreaking ceremony occurred November 15, 1992. The cornerstone was laid May 23, 1993, with thirty-two items included within the "stone" as a time capsule: the Holy Bible, a United Methodist Hymnal presented by the United Methodist Women, DUMC History 1822-1972, a Sunday School

handbook, various Christmas and Lenten programs, a 1990 church directory and membership list, choir concert and handbell programs, newspaper clippings, and many photos of church activities and the construction process.

The consecration service was conducted by Bishop Joseph Yeakel of the Baltimore Washington United Methodist Conference on September 11, 1994. Dedications and activities to celebrate the new CFC addition were held every weekend that month and included choir, handbell, and organ concerts, as well as performances of "Godspell" and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" by our youth on our new stage along with an orchestra. Edna Searles painted a DUMC historical mural in the new CFC. Our debt of \$81,806 for the CFC was paid off in February 2003.

### *Boyer Chapel*

When Boyer Chapel was constructed in 1954, our third church, now Harwood House, held our sanctuary and was our only building. Over the years, Boyer Chapel has accommodated Bible study classes, Sunday School classes, and Vacation Bible School gatherings, as well as weddings, christenings, baptisms, and funerals. In recent years, it has been the site of Easter Sunrise Services.

In 2013, extensive foundation and porch stonework repairs were done, and interior wood panel replacement was completed at an approximate cost of \$25,000.00. Half was contributed by Helen Boyer and half was paid by the Boyer Memorial Chapel Fund, an endowment. In 2017, the interior carpet was replaced, a new HVAC system was installed, the south windows were replaced, and the building was painted. Funding for these initiatives was provided by the Chapel endowment.

Subsequent to the burial of Dr. George M. Boyer in 1956, other burials have occurred including those of Susan E. Boyer, Mary Jo Boyer Lambert, and J. William Lambert. In 1974, Annie M. (Bowman) Boyer, wife of "Dr. George," was laid to rest. In 1978, Dr. M. McKendree Boyer, who had initiated and funded the construction of the Chapel, was himself buried there, as was his wife Helen W. (Souder) Boyer in 2020.

### *Cemetery History*

Our first cemetery burial, Rhoda Ann (Etchison) Warthen, occurred following the construction of our second church in 1869. She was the first wife of Nathan Benton Warthen, a grandson of our founder, Benjamin Benton (1759-1833). Benjamin's wife was Susannah Willett Benton (1768-1833). Both Benjamin and Susannah were buried near our first church.

Dorothy Warfield and Mary Emma Linthicum recall that in the 1940s, our cemetery had a metal arch over a pathway from the parking lot, situated midway between the present cemetery driveway and Woodfield Road. This arch read "Damascus Methodist Cemetery" and was similar to the arch at Howard Chapel UMC.

Past cemetery superintendents include John T. Baker, and more recently, Bradley M. Woodfield, Olin Molesworth, Everett Jones, Bob Snapp, and Gary Richard.

### *Cemetery Addition and Restoration*

In 1996, Gary Richard negotiated the purchase of 5.2 acres of land from the Estate of Glenwood King, as well as a land donation from Deets Warfield, Jr. Having paid \$100,000.00 for the additional property, we then sold approximately 4.2 acres of that land to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for \$136,000.00. The resulting profit of \$36,000.00 was used for clearing the land, grading, seeding, and extending the cemetery driveway. This expanded the cemetery sufficiently to add 840 lots.

Under the supervision of Bernardine Beall, the existing cemetery grounds also underwent restoration more recently, and records were updated and eventually made available online.

Currently the cemetery trust and investment funds are held by various financial institutions.

### *Annex (formerly our New Church Street Parsonage)*

Our former parsonage on New Church Street immediately east of our current church was constructed in 1967 and was the home of Rev. and Mrs. Frank Depro, Rev. and Mrs. Marcus Earp, and Rev. and Mrs. James Archibald. During Rev. Archibald's tenure in the mid-1990s, the UMC Baltimore Washington conference altered the policy regarding housing and began recommending the use of monetary allowances for pastors rather than housing them in parsonages. This offered pastors more flexibility and reduced long-term expenses for congregations. In accordance with the new policy, Rev. and Mrs. Archibald eventually moved into a new home of their choosing and began to receive a housing allowance.

Our parsonage became the new church office building referred to as the "Annex." This expanded facility provided separate offices for pastors and staff as well as conference rooms, storage space, and a staff kitchen. The charitable organization Damascus HELP also houses its food pantry there.

### *Ridge Road Parsonage*

Our 1923 parsonage housed many pastors, as well as some associate pastors beginning with the assignment of Rev. and Mrs. Donald Stewart and family, until it was sold in 1981.

### *Harwood House Thrift Shop (formerly our Third Church)*

An early forerunner of our thrift shop was "The Opportunity Shop," opened in 1968 and staffed by an interdenominational group of churches. DUMC United Methodist Women participated in this small off-site shop—located in the basement to the right of the original Tom and Ray's Restaurant on Main Street—that provided used clothing in good condition to those in the community. It was discontinued in 1988 due to lack of space. In 1992, Easter Freienmuth and Jane Snapp, who were familiar with the operations of Montgomery General Hospital's Thrift and Gift Shops, and their husbands Bill and Hubert, met with Rev. Archibald and along with Wayne Chamblee and Bill Harwood to begin work on "The Damascus Thrift Shop." Initially located in the basement of the Educational Center, it opened in 1993 under the leadership of Bill Harwood, who had formerly worked for Goodwill Industries. Membership of



the first Thrift Shop Committee included LaVerne Archibald, Jane Snapp, Mary Rose, Easter Freienmuth, Jan Barber, and Lois Purdum. According to Jane and Mary, Bill was the key to the shop's success. Subsequent to the opening of the CFC and the relocation of our Sunday School classes, church suppers, and many community activities previously held in the Educational Center, the renamed Harwood House Thrift Shop moved upstairs in 1996. Jane Snapp, Carolyn Snapp, and Mary Rose had realized that expansion was necessary; Mary was thus "elected" to present their request to the Administrative Board, which approved the proposal.

Harwood House Thrift Shop is now considered a DUMC outreach ministry to the community, and as an independent non-profit organization, determines its own administration, budget, paid staffing, and charitable disbursements. It contributes to DUMC building expenses as well as a variety of other endeavors. This list presently includes thirty-two charities: Asbury Foundation, Board of Childcare, Calmra, Inc., Caring Matters, Damascus Help, Damascus VFD, Faith Connections, Frederick Rescue Mission, Frederick Soup Kitchen, Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, Montgomery County Habitat for Humanity, Heartly House, Homes for our Troops, Frederick Health Hospice, Jill's House, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Montgomery County Law Enforcement Officers Relief Fund (MCLEORF), Mackenzie's Place, Interfaith Works Women's Center, Montgomery Hospice Foundation, Instruments of Healing, PET Project, Salvation Army Frederick County, Salvation Army Montgomery County, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Special Olympics Howard County, Special Olympics Montgomery County, Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Center, Rebuilding Together Montgomery County, Fisher House Foundation, and the Ulman Foundation.

As of 2022, the shop has approximately 90 volunteers from the Damascus area representing twenty different churches. The current Harwood House Board Chair is Debbie Stone, and members include Kevin Stone, Amanda Baughman, Elizabeth Bradley, Nancy Counts, Kathy Leslie, Steve Leslie, Carol Martin, John Schlee, Hazel Strahorn, and Arlene Vlastic. Barbara Abernethy serves as Manager, and the Assistant Manager is Kim Gottard.

#### *William M. Mullinix Pavilion*

This 40 x 110 ft. Pavilion was originally constructed behind the Annex in 1996 with Hubert Snapp as construction chair. Groundbreaking was July 21, 1996, with Rev. Edmonds and the Mullinix family. The Pavilion was built with donations in memory of Mr. "Billy" Mullinix, lifelong member of our church. In order to accommodate new parking spaces in our lower parking lot, the pavilion was moved by crane to its present location on May 3, 2011, and improved with additional storage. It has been used for a variety of church and community events, such as picnics, reunions, outdoor meetings, dinners, and fundraisers to include church mission plant sales.

#### *Youth Chapel (renamed Youth Center in 2022)*

In the late 1940's, 9600 Main Street had served as the church of the second religious denomination in Damascus, the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Their building was eventually sold to the Damascus Church of Christ.

By the turn of the millennium, our Sunday School classes were again overcrowded, forcing the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade to meet once more across the street at Harwood House. Other classes were meeting in cramped spaces on the stage in the Great Hall or in the Pastors' offices. Until DUMC could plan and construct an addition to the CFC, our congregation voted to purchase the 9600 Main Street building from the Damascus Church of Christ as an interim facility at a cost of \$1.1 million, plus an additional \$100,000 in other expenses. We financed \$928,000.00 through a combination of no-interest or low-interest loans from our congregation, and we borrowed \$272,000.00 from Damascus Community Bank.

On October 23, 2005, dedication services were held at the building that became known as the Youth Chapel, and a new chapel cross was dedicated in memory of Billy Wayne Chamblee. In the 2005 Charge Conference Report, special thanks were given to Jane Webb, Earl Patrick, Kathy and Stan Jones, Helen Boyer, Martin Carr, Bob Gruner, Ted Constantinides, Rick Celli, Mickey and Ann Cochran, and "many others."

In 2005, Youth Chapel tenants included Knowledge Points Learning Academy, which offered reduced rate tutoring, and a local Hispanic church congregation. It was also used for some DUMC Sunday School classes and DUMC youth programs such as Sunday youth brunches and Sunday youth dinners. String instrument classes for Maryland Talent Education Center were also held there, as was Stephen Ministry Training.

In 2015, the Youth Chapel underwent \$82,153.00 of interior work that included remodeling of the restrooms, replacement of two HVAC units, electrical system upgrades, pipe repairs, improvements to ceilings and walls, and painting. An additional \$3,924.00 was spent grading and waterproofing the exterior.

In 2022, the Youth Chapel became the "Youth Center." Our youth, under the leadership of Director of Christian Education Tina Kelly, remodeled some spaces to create a larger activities and game room, completing the project with fresh paint and new furniture.

### *Proposed CFC Addition*

In early 2005, a Building Committee was appointed by the Administrative Board with Bob Wilson and Mickey Cochran (later Dave Lingrell) as Co-Chairs. Committee members were Don Hecht, Joy Schwab, Rocky Benedict, Bob Gladhill, Martin Carr, Marcia Hofman, Cathy Heinbaugh, Mary Lou Leishear, and Clyde Curtis. November 2006 saw the beginning of the "Building on the Cross" capital campaign, and nearly \$1 million in donations had been collected by January 2008. As our nation sunk into recession, however, our Phase I plan was modified to include only that which could be implemented without significant impact to our ability to fund our operating expenses.

Phase I groundbreaking (with Dorothy Warfield's potato plow!) occurred in the courtyard on October 19, 2008. Components completed during this phase included a paved courtyard with a labyrinth, an entrance road from Mt. Vernon Avenue, relocation of the pavilion with additional storage to allow for a 90-space lower parking lot in its place, a retaining and support wall for foundation of future passageway over the west end of the courtyard, stormwater management facilities to accommodate Phases I and II, and excavation for the Phase II building addition. Dedication of the completed Phase I elements, which

featured a special concert, was held September 25, 2011 in the courtyard and was followed by a pork and chicken BBQ in the Pavilion.

A future Phase II was to include a building containing over a dozen classrooms, an expanded kitchen, and a large room to function as a meeting room and gymnasium, bringing the estimated total cost for both phases to approximately \$6 million.

### *The Labyrinth*

The Labyrinth in the DUMC Christian Fellowship Center courtyard was constructed in 2011 as part of Phase I of a planned addition to our CFC. It was designed for prayer and meditation during each stopping point on the circuitous path to the center and out again. Walking the Labyrinth helps open oneself to God's healing presence, and it was especially beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic when most of our church buildings were closed.

### *Labyrinth Garden*

After the completion of the Labyrinth, the 2014 Trustees approved a beautification project to soften and provide color to the large grey cinderblock wall at the end of the courtyard. New paint, a trellis supporting climbing plants, donated landscape rocks and other vegetation, and crosses created from recycled organ pipes by Gene Orndorff have transformed the Labyrinth Garden into a beautiful work of art.

### *Rental House (26015 Woodfield Road)*

In anticipation of an addition to our Christian Fellowship Center, we wished to acquire property which could provide us access directly onto Woodfield Road (Route 124), closer to our proposed building site. In March 2004, our Church Conference approved purchase of this property. After our plans for the addition were postponed, DUMC maintained this house as a rental house managed by Realty Group Property Management. It was eventually sold and netted \$340,552.00. The note holders in our congregation were repaid \$309,942.00, and the proceeds went into the DUMC capital account.

## **II. MAJOR BUILDING RENOVATION & REPAIR PROJECT**

### *"Preserving the Future": Capital Campaign 2014*

Under the guidance of Rev. David Cooney, in 2014 the Trustees (Steve Naugle, Bruce Knipe, Brent McCoy, Karen Herbert, Paul Lewis, Bill Walcott, Stan Jones, Vanessa Leiby, and President Sally Boyer Smith) created our first "Five Year Capital Project Plan" to prioritize renovation and repair projects of our existing buildings. As a result of our 2014 "Preserving the Future" capital campaign, we had raised \$186,540.82 after a year and had a carryover balance of \$91,607.22 that had been reallocated from the Building Fund. We undertook major replacements and improvements to our numerous buildings, including excavating and reconstructing the foundation walls of Harwood House Thrift Shop (with half of

the \$21,450.00 cost paid by Harwood House), chimney and electrical work at the rental house, the previously described work at the Youth Chapel, and replacement of twenty-eight windows and addition of an ADA ramp with railings at the Annex. The most obvious repair of 2016 was to our steeple, a focal point of our church and guiding light in the Damascus community designed to lift one's eyes upward toward Heaven. With the aid of a steeplejack and a crane, \$44,800.00 in much-needed repairs were made to this beautiful beacon that serves to draw people to Jesus. Gary Richard recalls climbing up in the dark tower to replace light bulbs on more than one December 24<sup>th</sup> immediately prior to crowded Christmas Eve services to keep our steeple beacon shining.

Later, in 2017, we were able to "refresh" the sanctuary and narthex areas with new tile flooring, re-stained and repaired pews, new carpeting, repainted walls, and improvements to the sound and projection system. During this time, we worshipped in the Great Hall of the CFC for several months until the pews were returned to the sanctuary and work was completed.

As of 2022, the Trustees are working on plans for replacement of our early 1960's-era sanctuary HVAC system.

### **III. CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS**

#### *Christian Education*

This ministry includes Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Classes, and our Youth Group.

Over the last 50 years, enrollment in these programs steadily increased until recently. Nearly all of our building expansion has been spurred by this growth. As our Music Ministry grew in the early millennium, greater participation of community children and youth led to stronger connections to DUMC and even greater enrollment in our traditionally strong Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs.

DUMC provided a nursery, established by Mary Waters Richards and Joy Schwab, for babies and young children during worship services, as well as Junior Church for those slightly older children who were not quite ready for our regular worship. Many of our congregation taught for years, experiencing the joys of childhood innocence in their pupils. Sherry Duvall Lloyd recalls that during her tenure as a Vacation Bible School teacher, one child believed she was "Mrs. Lord" and that their prayers referred to her.

Notable past Sunday School and Vacation Bible School Superintendents have included Janice Green, Margaret Lentz, Esther Rice, and Joy Schwab. Just a few of our dedicated teachers were Sue Suddath, Bob Newlin, Bill Freienmuth, Hal Crawford, Mary Richards, Mary Lou Leishear, Sherry Lloyd, Jean Ehlman, Sue Pietrie, Cliff Bergstressor, Bonnie Custer, Peggy Edmonds and Joan Hartle.

In the early 1990's, the Puppet Ministry evolved from some Sunday School programs, introduction into early worship services by Jill Maisch, and later United Methodist workshops attended by Cindy Fulton. Cindy recruited many other adults and children, and the program eventually took off, growing quickly and later splitting into a children's group called "The Colorful Hands of Jesus" and a youth group called "Puppets In Christ." They participated monthly in our Sunday worship as well as in the popular early Christmas Eve service each year. They also held workshops for other churches and performed for additional congregations until about 2010. Some of the leaders were Cindy Cole Fulton, Marcia Hofman,

Jill Maisch, Gayle Conard, Mary Gene Martin, Ali Gaylord, Cindi Abernethy, Cathy Scarbrough, Gloria Maready, Amanda Jones, Nancy Lacy, and Joan Hartle.

The Living Nativity was another popular program that grew from our Christian Education efforts. It was begun by Rev. Walt Edmonds in the late 1990s and involved children and youth, beautifully costumed, acting out the Nativity in the courtyard with *live* animals in the manger including donkeys, goats, sheep, and even a camel from Catoctin Mountain Zoo! Susan James supported the Living Nativity for years, handling the casting. Val Willis sewed all of the costumes, and her family assisted with the animals. Kenny Sue Robertson provided hot chocolate afterward for all of the participants, their families, and the audience. Tom and Polly Edmonds Baldrige continued this Christmas program from 2013 until 2019.

Over the years, DUMC confirmation classes have also evolved. Classes in the 1960s lasted just six weeks and were taught by Rev. Depro in his study, with others such as Sue Suddath and her daughter Terry teaching the confirmands at times. By the 1990s, these classes had expanded to last through two school years and were usually taught by our Associate Pastors such as Rev. Edmonds and Rev. Motter as well as some lay leaders. Under Rev. McMurtrey, confirmation classes became nine months and are currently taught by our Director of Christian Education, Tina Kelly.

Our Youth Group has replaced the former Methodist Youth Fellowship. They have participated in service projects at DUMC and in the community, hosted dinners as fundraisers, and been active in mission trips, retreats, and recreational activities. Under ministerial guidance, the youth of the church have led worship services and presented homilies at special worship services for many years. They are now involved in transforming the “Youth Chapel” into a “Youth Center” as elsewhere described.

In the early 1990s, our DUMC staff expanded to include the Director of Christian Education as a paid position, with Cindy Fulton serving as the first Director. From about 2000, she also developed and wrote much of the Bible School curriculum, as well as those of the Puppet Ministry and Junior Worship (formerly Junior Church), while her husband Scott Fulton wrote the original music until 2010.

A few of the other Directors of Christian Education (also called Ministers of Education) were Janet Cornelius, Jean Ehlman, Tom Baldrige, Cora Horst, and Nick Works.

### *United Methodist Women*

The United Methodist Women (UMW), formerly known as the Women’s Society of Christian Service, has had a long history at our church. This umbrella group included various circles that participated in their own church activities and set their own meeting times, in addition to the monthly UMW meetings and coordinated activities. In 1988, four circles were in existence: Mabel Wagner, Esther, Jesus Others Yourself (J.O.Y.), and Susanna Wesley, the last of which was a day circle established by Stella Werner. By 1992, the Esther and J.O.Y. circles had been combined. In about 1998, the WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) circle was formed by Jan Mullinix and Vanessa Leiby as a night circle for younger working women, with Jan as its first leader. These circles often alternated in support of United Methodist Women’s functions, such as United Methodist Men’s Dinners and local ecumenical groups such as Widening Horizons and later Damascus Senior Citizens. The entire United Methodist Women organization would host our spring and fall Turkey and Oyster Dinners, sometimes serving turkey and ham if oysters were not available. Some of these dinners saw over 1,000 meals served in our CFC Dining Hall! These events

required weeks of planning, preparation, and clean-up by many tireless workers. For example, it was reported that we needed seventeen people to peel 400 lbs. of potatoes for each Spring or Fall dinner. UMW also hosted bake sales, Mother's Day banquets, wedding receptions, Easter egg hunts with lunch, and Living Christmas Tree receptions. Additionally, the group would assist with many Damascus Lions Club dinners and breakfasts, as well as numerous other DUMC celebration meals. In the 1990s, Winona Patrick began the "Super Choices" community outreach program aimed at teaching nutritious cooking on a budget.

As documented in our previous 1972 History, the United Methodist Women have contributed to local, conference, and global charities, as well as contributing to DUMC operating expenses and building construction and maintenance over the years. A few of the many notable UMW leaders include Janice Green, Joy Schwab, Ruby Hyatt, Sue Suddath, Esther Samakouris, and Pennie Adams.

As of 2022, the Baltimore Washington Conference changed the name "United Methodist Women" to "United Women in Faith."

#### *Wesleyan Service Guild*

This group, formerly called the Guild in Christian Service, was primarily intended for working women and met in the evenings. The group had previously been active in hosting the Fall and Holiday Bazaar held in conjunction with the United Methodist Women's Turkey and Oyster Dinners. The sale of homemade Christmas ornaments, crafts, dried flowers, and other items contributed funding to various charities. In the 1970s, their dried flowers alone earned \$1,000.00 at the Fall Bazaar. Some of these members were Ruby Hyatt, Jessie Spangenburg, Judy Shook, Helen Schram, Becky Lipford, Dorothy Burdette, Mary Rose, Cheryl Putro, Pat Tregoning, Anne Tolley, Bernardine Beall, and Kitty McNaughton. However, when the United Methodist Women's circles began to also hold evening meetings as more women were employed, the Wesleyan Service Guild was gradually absorbed into the others.

#### *United Methodist Men*

United Methodist Men have been informally active since the 1950s, organizing in a more structured group in 1979. They have participated in many fundraising activities with the United Methodist Women, including hosting Turkey and Oyster Dinners, receptions, and banquets, as well as supporting Damascus Lions Club breakfasts held in our CFC. They have also assisted with church construction and landscaping projects and held various retreats, trips, and "Men's Night Out" dinners. Members have included Bob Newlin, Emerson Slacum, Cameron Grimes, Gary Richard, Jim Kelly, Ted Constantinides, Bob Gladhill, Tom Baldrige, Ted Ross, Brad Turner-Little, Don Hecht, and Nick Works.

#### *Table Ministry*

Involving members of our congregation too numerous to mention, our tradition of sharing meals with fellowship has been ongoing throughout our 200 years. Our various dinners, breakfasts, wedding and funeral receptions, and brunches have been prepared by many hands over the years. Subsequent to our

move to the new commercial kitchen in the CFC and expanded dining facilities, our Kitchen Committee coordinated the preparation and service of as many as 1000 Turkey and Oyster Dinners, raising as much as \$10,000 from our fall dinner and \$6,000 each spring. Just a few of those hardworking members were Mary Emma and Meil Linthicum, Kenny Sue and Charles Robertson, Ann and Mickey Cochran, Delores Neal, and Rosie Bowman.

Over the years, our talented cooks published cookbooks as fundraisers in 1972, 1980, and 1994. The 1972 book was produced by the Women's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild. The 1980 edition was dedicated to Bernice Depro, and the 1994 book was dedicated to "all those women throughout the past who worked towards improving their church by cooking and raising funds for additions and furnishings," with special recognition to Joy Schwab and Sue Suddath. More recently, Wonderful Wednesday Dinners led by Kenny Sue Robertson and her assistants were prepared and open to all in the community as an outreach program. Food Truck Wednesdays, initiated by Adult Sunday School teacher Jackie Perry and her class, have become popular during the last two years. These events bring both church members and other participants from the surrounding community to the church front lawn for games and socializing.

### *Choirs*

Our music program has blossomed, especially over the last 34 years, and DUMC has had four choirs: the Chancel Choir for adults, the Charles Wesley Singers for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, the Choristers for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades, and the Cherubs for K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Traditionally, the Chancel Choir sang at the 11 AM service and the younger groups such as the Charles Wesley Singers sang at the earlier 8:15 AM service. Post-pandemic, there is now one Sunday service at 9 AM with a combined choir of adults and youth. The Choristers and Cherubs drew an audience that filled our sanctuary whenever they would sing at our services or in special Christmas, Easter, or Children's Sabbath program.

Our Chancel Choir and Charles Wesley Singers, with the additional voices of community members and a full orchestra, performed the annual Living Christmas Tree concerts—a congregation favorite and Damascus tradition—from 1988-2018 under the initial leadership of Rev. Walt Edmonds and later under Polly Edmonds Baldrige. For many years, holiday dinners provided by UMW and the Kitchen Committee preceded these Christmas season concerts, and Wassail receptions followed. Over the years the combined choirs have also performed the "Messiah" and many other major choral works, including singing at the Washington National Cathedral several times.

After he joined DUMC in 1988, Rev. Edmonds began leading the Charles Wesley Singers on national and international tours. The group has visited England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, and most states in the U.S. during the past 33 years, enjoying fellowship, laughter, and spreading the word of God along the way. While on the bus during one tour, Kenny Sue Robertson reports that one of our youths asked if her husband Charles was Charles Wesley and if our choir was thus named after him.

Rev. Edmonds served as the Choir Director until late 2004, when his daughter Polly Edmonds Baldrige began to transition to that role. Rev. Edmonds continued direction of the larger works, the Charles Wesley Singers, the Boy Choristers, and the overall Music Ministry of the church. Katherine Williams

directed the Cherubs and the Girl Choristers. Upon the retirement of Rev. Edmonds in 2013, Polly Baldrige became Choir Director and was charged with leadership of the Music Ministry.

Our Choir Directors have included Basil Day (during our time at the third church), Mrs. James Lovett, Donald Murphy, Rev. Walt Edmonds, Polly Edmonds Baldrige, Tom Baldrige, Katherine Williams, Steve Kalnoske, and Amy Vanek.

### *Our Organ*

Our treasured 1931 Skinner organ, purchased for \$15,000.00 and original to our fourth church, has long been a focal point of the entire music program at DUMC. Ernest Skinner built organs for the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, the Washington National Cathedral, Constitution Hall, and Walter Reed Chapel. According to our organist Stephen Kalnoske, a Skinner is considered “the Rolls Royce of organs.”

Some repairs to this 2,000-pipe organ had occurred during Donald Murphy’s tenure as organist, but a major refurbishment was undertaken in 2013 by the Lawless Pipe Organ Company from Hagerstown. The existing console was removed and renovated, magnets were replaced, and other maintenance was completed. During this refurbishment, we completed necessary electrical and flooring upgrades to the sanctuary. A piano was used during worship until our organ returned a few months later, resuming service with a combined choir and instrumental concert featuring the organ. A “Sounds of Glory” capital campaign had been undertaken to fund this project; the estimate to completely rebuild the organ was \$1.1 million, so the Trustees voted to complete only the top priority repairs as mentioned above for somewhat less expense.

The Organ Refurbishment Committee consisted of Jane Clarke, Rev. Walt Edmonds, Polly Edmonds Baldrige, Joe Briglia, Pete Clarke, Bob Gladhill, Stephen Kalnoske, Jim Kelly, Julie Sain, Wilbur Hurst, and Liz Vanderham.

Our organists have included Dorothy Warfield (at the third church), Hazel Jones, Donald Murphy, Sharon Warfield, Don Miller, Joche Wilmot, Kitty Yang, Richard Hacker, and Stephen Kalnoske.

### *Handbells*

The DUMC Memorial Handbells were given in 1979 in memory of congregation members Anna Depro, Dr. M. McKendree Boyer, Ethel Johnson, Dwight Monnier, and Sam Gladhill. There was initially one Adult Handbells group, but the handbell program was later divided into the “Ring of Joy” adult group, the “Youth Handbells” for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, and the “Inspiration Ringers” for those in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades.

Directors have included Linda Olsen, Janice Jones, Polly Edmonds Baldrige, Tom Baldrige, Melissa Flowers, Steve Kalnoske, and Amy Vanek.

### *Academy of St. Cecilia Youth Orchestra*

The Academy of St. Cecilia Youth Orchestra was established in September of 2001 by Rev. Walt Edmonds as a part of our Music Ministry. Youth in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades comprise this orchestra that often travels on



tour with the Charles Wesley Singers. They also performed at church concerts, services, and community events. In 2013, they continued under the direction of Rev. Edmonds and became an independent nonprofit organization. As a DUMC outreach ministry to the community, they continue to hold rehearsals in our church and tour with the Charles Wesley singers, while also maintaining their own independent concert schedule. Charles Doherty became Director in 2020.

### *DUMC Missions*

DUMC continues an active tradition of extensive mission work, presently coordinated by Carol Yokum. Current projects in 2022 include:

#### *Between Cultures – La Danta, Nicaragua*

*Established by Amanda Jones-Dominguez and Memo Dominguez, building on the efforts of Kathy and Stan Jones, Rev. Edmonds, and others at DUMC; maintains a rich relationship with the La Danta community and assists with various projects*

#### *Board of Global Ministries*

*Worldwide mission, relief, and development agency of the UMC; Dr. Belinda Forbes currently serving as dentist in Nicaragua under this program*

#### *CROP Walk / UNICEF*

*Community Annual CROP Walk, usually at Damascus High School; 75% of proceeds go to UNICEF and 25% go to Damascus HELP*

#### *Damascus HELP*

*Currently coordinated by Laura Hanlon, the group distributes food and helps with utility bills and furniture for those in need; DUMC houses their food pantry*

#### *Earth Stewards*

*Established by Jeff Heinbaugh in 2006 as part of Montgomery County Adopt-A-Road program on Route 124*

#### *Faith Connections*

*Formerly Damascus Ecumenical Layman's Association; includes various community efforts such as distribution of school supplies and holiday baskets containing food and gifts for families in need*

#### *Habitat for Humanity*

*Participate in construction of homes, most recently in Garrett County*

#### *Harwood House Thrift Shop*

*Sales benefit DUMC and a variety of other community charitable endeavors; elsewhere described*

#### *Meals on Wheels*

*Currently coordinated by Pam Rust to provide meals for homebound community members*

#### *Neema Kenya Mission*

*Established by the Otieno family; provides medical and preschool assistance through local fundraisers such as the Fall 2022 yard sale*

#### *Pleasant Plains Preschool*

*DUMC's preschool program; elsewhere described*

Prayer Shawl Ministry

*Knits prayer shawls to support healing; elsewhere described*

Refugee Resettlement

*New ministry as of 2022; currently assisting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees with housing*

Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Project

*Provides food for those in need, particularly school-aged children around the world*

Safe Haven

*Coordinated by Doug Marshall, with spring and fall workdays to assist this shelter for unhoused individuals*

Stephen Ministry

*Trains lay ministers and assists with pastoral visitation; elsewhere described*

Summer Choir Tours / Charles Wesley Singers

*Assists in funding choir tours; elsewhere described*

United Methodist Committee on Relief

*Encompasses Volunteers in Mission programs; providing food for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, as well as victims of natural disasters*

United Methodist Missionaries Abroad

*Currently in Mexico and Nicaragua*

Volunteers in Mission

*Currently in Arizona (Hopi Reservation) and North Carolina*

### *Quilters*

The long history of quilting in society and in our church reaches back to our beginnings, and in 1915 a church quilt was made and auctioned as a church fundraiser. Later, an informal group evolved from several members of the United Methodist Women's circles who sewed another quilt in 1977 as a fundraiser. This group included Virginia Kesler, Bernice Depro, Marjorie Burdette, Winifred Doolan, Louise Duvall, Kattie Watkins, Helen Fugman, Lauretta Hurley, Gertrude Stanley, Grace King, Jane Snapp, Becky Lipford, Martha Slacum, and Becky Snapp. A third church quilt project led by Sharon Walton, with calligraphy by Kitty McNaughton, is now underway in honor of this year's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### *Stephen Ministry and Prayer Shawl Ministry*

The Stephen Ministry was established by Pam Colborn and Jan Mullinix in 2005 to train lay ministers in healing within a network of churches, and to assist with pastoral visitation. Currently, prayer shawls and "prayer squares" contributed by the Prayer Shawl Ministry that was begun by Penny Weeda and Cathy Heinbaugh are distributed by Stephen Ministers and by our pastors.

### *Young at Heart*

This group has its roots in the 2x2 Social Club for young couples begun by Bob Fulton in 1962. Later, as the group aged, the name became "Young at Heart" and has been led by Bob Newlin for many years.

Participants have enjoyed a variety of interesting trips, including visits to the World War II Memorial, the Dulles Air and Space Museum, the Newseum, Baltimore Oriole and Frederick Keys baseball games, Monticello, Mt. Vernon, Gettysburg, Baltimore's Inner Harbor, numerous dinner theatres, and Christmas shows. Many of these events required several buses to transport all of the participants. They have also hosted annual DUMC Christmas luncheons and many special service project fundraisers for the church.

### *Love One Another Ministry*

The Love One Another (LOA) group was begun in 2019 by Charlotte Kibak and Rev. Sherwyn Benjamin to promote inclusiveness in response to controversial issues dividing our Methodist Church worldwide. It arose from participation by a group of DUMC members in the "United to Love" rally in Washington, D.C., hosted by the Baltimore-Washington Conference. This ministry became a Reconciling Community through the Reconciling Ministries Network, which exists to advocate for all of God's children. They have conducted voter registration drives, community healing services, and movie and book discussion forums. LOA has engaged in other outreach efforts as well, sponsoring a "Welcome to Damascus" pizza party to Woodfield Commons and distributing "Welcome" goodie bags to residents of Victory Haven Senior Housing (the community now adjacent to our church) during the pandemic.

### *Community Outreach*

In addition to the various community outreach efforts conducted through its missions and ministries, DUMC is always seeking new ways to serve our community. For example, outreach began in 2017 to Damascus Gardens and other residential communities to provide services such as transportation for children to Vacation Bible School and childcare. Support had also been planned for Victory Haven Senior Housing prior to the pandemic and may come to fruition in the future.

### *Pleasant Plains Preschool*

Named for the first land tract in the area, "Pleasant Plains of Damascus," this preschool was initially run by the YWCA in the early 1990s in our Educational Center. The current version of the program began in 1995 under the direction of Debbie Earl at DUMC in the additional space provided by our new CFC. The preschool saw tremendous growth during the next few years, especially prior to the establishment of similar public school programs. We now have a new generation of former pupils bringing their own children. Licensed as both a preschool and a childcare provider, this program is directed by Cora Horst and currently employs eight teachers for classes two, three, or five days per week.

Joan Hartle, a longtime teacher at the preschool, tells how one child described his day to his parents after she had substituted for Rev. Edmonds during the "Chapel Time" prayer due to his absence that day. "God wasn't there," referring to Rev. Edmonds, so "Mrs. Hartle pretended to be God."

### *Audio/Visual and Technology Support*

In 1997, DUMC went “online,” and a Computer Committee was formed to support the tremendous workload of the staff. The efforts of individuals like Jim Kelley have helped bring our church into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ron Adams has served as our first “AV Tech” since the 1990s, when sound, lighting, and projection systems grew much more important. These are critical in our worship services as well as during concerts, performances, and other DUMC programs. Mike Springirth has provided our celebration videos, as well as those posted online of our services each week.

Technological elements are also now an important component of the restoration and update by Ron Adams and Kevin Stone of our beautiful steeple chime carillon system, which was installed during initial construction in 1960-1961. Before and after Sunday worship services and at 7PM daily, these wonderful chimes could be heard throughout Damascus for many years. We pray they can continue for many more in the future.

### *DUMC Staff*

By 1973, after adding a full-time Associate Pastor to our Senior Pastor position, our first official paid Staff Secretary was Betty Chamblee. The church office was in the back portion of the Pastor’s Study in the Parlor area. Later in the 1990s, the Annex became our office and the staff expanded to include a second Secretary, Dawn Wynings, and then an Office Manager, Jane Webb; an Administrative Assistant, Linda Stastney; a Bookkeeper, Ginger Belsinger (later Debbie Benson); and a Property Manager, Lisa Marshall. We have also had various paid custodians over the years.

Our hardworking staff have been responsible for managing and coordinating all facets of church operations, supporting the pastors and congregation over the years. Additionally, they have produced multiple directories of our congregation members including photographs, issuing these in 1972, 1990, 2007, 2012, and 2019. They have also published our monthly DUMC newsletter *The Beacon* (known as *The Courier* until 1978), as well as our weekly newsletter called *This Week at DUMC* (formerly known as the *Beaconette*) and the weekly church bulletin at worship services.

At present, we have a full-time Senior Pastor, Rev. Kathryn Woodrow, and a part-time Deacon, Rev. Helen Ballew, whom we share with Grace UMC in Gaithersburg. We also have Property Manager, Lisa Marshall; Bookkeeper, Steve Malley; Director of Pleasant Plains Preschool, Cora Horst; Director of Music and Organist, Stephen Kalnoske; Associate Director of Music, Amy Vanek; Director of Christian Education, Tina Kelly; Communications Specialist, Sydney Fennington; and Custodian, Brittany Tarpley.

## **IV. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES WITHIN DUMC**

### *Temperance*

Our 1972 history reported that the Damascus voting district continued to ban all alcohol sales following the end of Prohibition. After three referendums to continue this ban, the last being in 1996, the district voted in 2012 to allow restaurants to serve beer and wine. Liquor cannot be served, and retail alcohol

sale continues to be prohibited. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (formed in 1875 in Maryland) remained opposed. Damascus was the last dry town in the state.

### *Women in the Church*

As society changed, our church became more sensitive to gender equality. Our first female Associate Pastor was Rev. Jacquelyn Schroeder in 1972, and five others have followed her: Rev. Carol Francis in the 1980s, Rev. Gayle Watson in the 1990s, Rev. Frances Stewart in the 1990s and 2000s, Rev. Linda Motter in 2011, and Rev. Amanda McMurtrey in 2014. Stephanie Renuart was a female Trustees Chair in the 1990s, and in 2014, the author had the honor of serving as the first female Trustees President. We presently have a female Administrative Board / Church Council Chair, Jane Clarke. And, of course, our first and current female Senior Pastor is Rev. Kathryn Woodrow and first Deacon is Rev. Helen Ballew. Our District Superintendent is Dawn Hand, and in 2017, Rev. LaTrelle Easterling became our first female Bishop in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

### *Inclusivity*

Racial inclusivity was the goal of our yoke ministry with Friendship UMC, which lasted from 1969-2006. Rev. Frances Stewart, who participated in this program, served as our first African American Associate Pastor beginning in 1998. Rev. Sherwyn Benjamin joined our congregation in 2018 as our first African American Associate Pastor exclusively devoted to service at DUMC.

In 2019, issues related to LGBTQ+ inclusion were addressed at a special United Methodist Church General Conference but remained unresolved. Our 2020 regular UMC General Conference was postponed due to the pandemic and is unlikely to be scheduled again until 2024. As of this writing, a more conservative Global Methodist Church is beginning to form, but as reported by our District Superintendent, only one church in our district is possibly leaving the United Methodist Church. Our own DUMC membership remains steady at 1380.

## **V. COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In March of 2020, our church was closed along with all churches, schools, and most businesses by county and state emergency orders. The global COVID-19 pandemic had begun. This coronavirus eventually sickened and killed millions worldwide, and it continues to affect our health and economy over two years later.

Most church buildings were completely closed through the remainder of 2020, but within a few months we were able to resume worship services and church committee meetings online.

The Damascus Reopening Taskforce (DRT) was created in May 2020, with our lay leader Brad Turner-Little as Chair, and the team consisted of Pastors Kathryn Woodrow and Sherwyn Benjamin (Pastoral Staff), Lisa Marshall (Church Staff), Robert Wilson (Trustees), Jim Kelly (Technology Committee), Nick Works and Sam Johnson (Children and Youth Ministries), and Cora Horst (Pleasant Plains Preschool). Sheila Roark and Liz Elliott, DUMC members within the healthcare industry, also served on the taskforce.

Meeting weekly for over two years through the summer of 2022, their goal was to “do no harm” as Charles Wesley and Hippocrates directed. They ensured that DUMC was adhering to state and county regulations and recommendations.

Pleasant Plains Preschool was able to continue after several months on a limited basis because of its childcare license. In-person worship was held outside in 2021 at Easter and Pentecost. After the purchase of air purifiers and the institution of mask requirements and physical distancing measures, such as our “Save-a-Seat” program, indoor worship in our sanctuary resumed in June 2021—without singing, due to transmission concerns. It was several months before we were able to return to our traditional worship with choirs and hymns. We have continued to offer services online for those of our congregation with health considerations.

## **VI. FAITH IN OUR FUTURE**

COVID has adversely affected our church in many ways, but as in challenging times of our past 200 years, we have survived and then thrived. Events such as the Civil War, World Wars, the influenza pandemic, and the Great Depression have tested our faith in God, yet we have emerged even stronger. The destruction of our second church in a hailstorm and of our third in a fire were obstacles over which our Damascus United Methodist Church “Body of Christ” triumphed. We pray that we can continue to make the commitments and sacrifices made by our forebears of the past two centuries to strengthen the foundation of faith in God and His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **VII. CELEBRATIONS**

DUMC has celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup>, 175<sup>th</sup>, 180<sup>th</sup>, 185<sup>th</sup>, and 190<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of our founding, with the largest celebrations being held at 150 and 175 years. Past celebration committee members include Rev. Frank Depro, Janie Payne, Janice Green, Emerson Slacum, Vincent and Gladys Day, Gertrude Stanley, Becky Snapp, Ruby Bellison, Joy Schwab, Rev. Walter Edmonds, Polly Edmonds Baldridge, Bonnie Custer, Gary Richard, Jane Webb, Bernardine Beall, Sue Constantinides, Nancy Nickerson, Gabrielle Hulcher, Hazel Strahorn, and Jean Ehlman.

We have planned special events spanning most of 2022, our 200<sup>th</sup> year, including a May birthday party with speakers, a slideshow and video, a light brunch, and cake and ice cream. July’s Celebrate Damascus parade featured a miniature replica of our steeple on DUMC’s 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary float, as well as pony rides, a moon bounce, kids’ games, food trucks, and a yard sale. We are excited to have our Bishop preach at DUMC in October during a celebratory event that will also include a luncheon banquet, special recognition of members of fifty years or more, exhibits of historical artifacts and pictures, and display of our 1915, 1977, and 2022 quilts.

Current 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee members include Marcia Hofman, Sally Boyer Smith, Gary Richard, Bernardine Beall, Barry Bratburd, Sherry Lloyd, Mary Lou Leishear, Sharon Walton, Kenny Sue Robertson, Yasuko Walcott, Arlene Vlastic, Kitty McNaughton, Liz Vanderham, Liz Elliott, Lynn Gruner, and Kelly Shifflet.

**VIII. 1972 LIST OF MEMBERS OF 50 YEARS OR MORE (not included in the 1972 History)**

*Listed in order of longevity of membership, from 77 years to 51 years:*

Effie King Burdette	Rosa Boyer Stanley
Bessie Warthen Hurley	Jessie Hilton Poole
Annie Bowman Boyer	Maxwell E. Burdette
Sterling E. Day	Elsie Brandenburg Gue
Blanche Unglesbee Fetzer	Willard L. Souder, Jr.
Frances Mullinix Scott	Ethel Burdette Hurley
Ethel P. Warfield	Rena Sheckles Carter
Dora B. Duvall	Irvin L. Gue
Ruth Sheckles Pearce	Clyta M. Woodfield
Bradley M. Woodfield	Paul W. Watkins
Marie Leach Warthen	Edna W. Brandenburg
Ola Bidwell Burdette	Nellie Moxley Mullinix
Vincent H. Day	Ruth Souder Gue
Rose Mullinix Watkins	McKendree B. Bowman
William M. Mullinix	Garner Duvall
Claude F. Brandenburg	George Wesley Boyer
Susan E. Boyer	Tilghman Brandenburg
M. McKendree Boyer M.D.	Ethel Scott Gladhill
Elizabeth B. Browning	

**IX. 2022 LIST OF MEMBERS OF 50 YEARS OR MORE**

*Listed in order of longevity of membership, from 83 years to 50 years:*

Phyllis Stanley Walker	Susan Rice Poole
Margaret Jane Souder Snapp	Joy Green Schwab
Ruby Mae Pearce Bellison	Claude Michael Burdette
Barbara Mullinix Grigg	Margaret Koontz
Mary Emma Johnson Linthicum	Jerry B. Duvall
Hazel Johnson Mackenzie	Shirley Nichols Herndon
Robert Ray Snapp	Norman Daniel Ifert
William Uriah Waters, Jr.	Delores Bell Neal
Grace Burdette Snapp	Tammy Taylor Newman
Dorothy Warfield	Sarah Rice
Raymond L. Warfield	June Lynn Watkins Woodall
Barbara McDaniel Johnson	Robert E. Bellison
Robert G. McDaniel	Herbert Duvall
Rosalyn Bell Bowman	D. Ann Mullican
Louise Floyd	Susan Carol Petrie

Audrienne Runkles  
Lester R. Runkles, Jr.  
Terrence Warfield  
Mary Lou Mullinix Leishear  
Sherry Marie Duvall Lloyd  
Carole Jean Burdette McAlister  
Dina Elaine Burdette Mullinix  
Rebecca Anne Stacy Smith  
Betty Griest Chamblee  
Lois Moxley Purdum  
Philip Green  
William Arthur Hurley  
Hilda Lemly  
Warren J. Schwab  
Rispha Burdette Arnett  
Margaret Susan Suddath  
E. Jean Ehlman  
Audrey McDaniel  
J. Larry Mullinix  
Robert Newlin  
Patricia Tregoning  
Sharon Lee Smith Warfield  
Diane Marie Watkins Gillis  
Norma Burdette Brown  
Susan M. Lemly Hitchcock  
David Stanley Jones  
Gary Richard  
Cathy Samakouris Roberts  
George William Root  
Theodore Samakouris

David Speck  
Linda Richard Videtto  
Mary Adcock Ingram  
Charles Richard McAlister  
Sally Ann Boyer Skogsberg Smith  
Marilyn Susan Shaw Browning  
Larry Wayne Mullinix  
Joseph A. Rice  
George M. Boyer II, M.D.  
Keith A. Norwood  
Ernest N. Screen, Jr.  
Karen Elizabeth Rice Berenson  
Deborah Kay Tolley Earl  
Sandra Kay Gladhill May  
Ronald S. Newlin  
Sallie Plummer  
Mary Werner Rose  
Paul Hubert Rose, Sr.  
Earl Patrick  
David Brian Root  
John Souder Snapp  
Dorothy Fender Stull  
John O. Stull, Jr.  
Kristina Anne McNaughton-Ayers  
Peter Lyndon Beard  
Tammie Sue Newlin Bourdeau  
Lea Ann Hough  
Patty L. Yates Long  
Robert Ernest Stull  
Carolyn Jane Ray Warfield

#### **X. BENTON DESCENDANTS**

We currently have a number of Benjamin Benton's descendants who have joined our church. They include Roland Green Jr., Lori Green Badra, Joy Green Schwab, Joy Lynn Malcolm, Kyle Malcolm, Ashley Malcolm, Jay Schwab, Roy Green, Kimberly Green Matney, Laura Green Hanlon, Patrick Joseph Hanlon, Rebecca Sue Green, Phillip Green, Jane Souder Snapp, Carol Snapp Richards Harris, James H. Snapp, John S. Snapp, Sally Boyer Skogsberg Smith, George Boyer II M.D., McKendree W. Boyer, Daniel C. King, Roger William Burdette, Jr., Carolyn Jane Ray Warfield, Sylvia Pope, Douglas Pope, Arthur Hurley, and Ron Hurley Sr.



There may be other descendants not traced, and some of the above may have moved away or are currently inactive.

**APPENDIX:** *List of Pastors (Ministers) and Associate Pastors (Assistant Ministers) 1972-2022*

1972	Frank S. Depro Jacquelyn Schroeder
1973-75	Frank S. Depro Reginald "Dick" Cecil
1976-79	Frank S. Depro Lyle Wilson
1980-84	Marcus A. Earp III Glen Dameron
1985-87	Marcus A. Earp III Carol Francis
1987	James Archibald Carol Francis
1988-96	James Archibald Walter G. Edmonds
1996-98	Walter G. Edmonds Gayle Watson
1998	Walter G. Edmonds Frances Stewart
1998-2003	Walter G. Edmonds Frances Stewart, Harry Cole
2004-05	Walter G. Edmonds Frances Stewart, Stephen Ricketts
2006-08	Walter G. Edmonds Stephen Ricketts, Allen Rudnick
2009	Walter G. Edmonds Stephen Ricketts
2010	Walter G. Edmonds Frances Stewart
2011-12	Walter G. Edmonds Linda Motter
2013	David Cooney Linda Motter
2014-17	David Cooney Amanda McMurtrey
2018-21	Kathryn T. Woodrow Sherwyn Benjamin
2022	Kathryn T. Woodrow Helen Ballew

*Please note:*

The “yoke ministry” begun in 1969 with Friendship UMC through which we shared ministers was officially discontinued in 2006 by our conference.

Rev. Stewart assisted Rev. Edmonds temporarily in 2010.

Retired pastors Rev. A. Dean Kesler, Rev. Tom Kaylor, Rev. Bob Braden, and Rev. Harry Cole also provided ministerial services on a voluntary basis from time to time.

Rev. Helen Ballew is a Deacon, not an Associate Pastor.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Payne, Janie W., *History of the Damascus United Methodist Church 1822-1972*

Montgomery County land records

Miscellaneous newspapers, including the *Community Reporter*, the *Montgomery County Sentinel*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Damascus Courier*

DUMC Charge Conference Minutes and Baltimore Washington (UMC) Conference minutes and reports

DUMC correspondence

DUMC Trustees minutes

DUMC Administrative Board / Administrative Council minutes

United Methodist Women minutes and Women's Way newsletter

Ruby Bellison's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Notebook and articles from subsequent years

Written historical notes from Dorothy Warfield

Mary Lou Leishear's Charge Conference summary

Written statement from Sue Suddath

Articles from the DUMC Beacon newsletter and inserts from the weekly church bulletin

Harwood House written history from Nancy Counts and Jane Snapp

Numerous conversations with DUMC members