

church took place in June of 1968. This provided space for a church parlor, minister's study, secretary's office, and several classrooms. A service of dedication was held in September of 1969. Through the years, the church has moved forward. There has been a steady growth in both church and Sunday School membership.

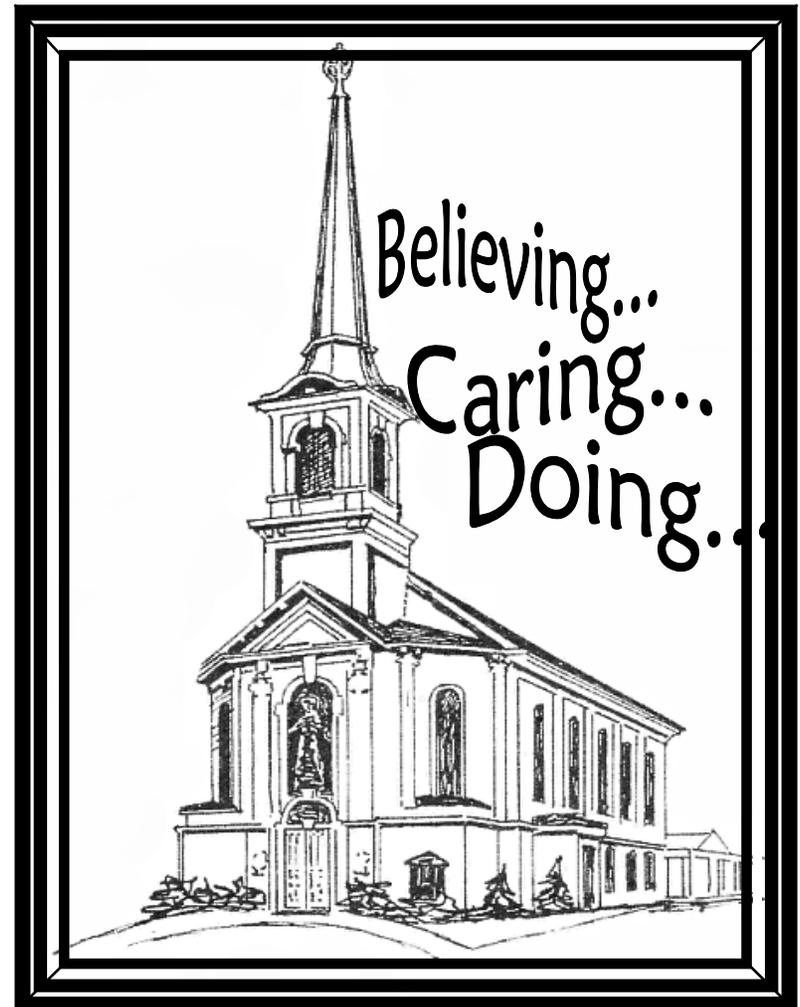
The 150th Anniversary of the church was celebrated throughout 1988, with musical programs, a gathering of former ministers, a strawberry festival on the South Common and an old fashioned Christmas program. In anticipation of this important year, the vestry was completely renovated.

~ An After Word in 2005 ~

Today we are a dedicated church family of the 21st century building on a firm foundation as we strive ever to be and become the hands and heart of Christ in our world today.

The adventure we share in a changing culture calls for:

- A deep sense of personal and shared faith that reveals a hope in the Living God who calls us to joyful mission and ministry in the name of Christ...
- A life based on the principles of discipleship where God's grace, mercy and love are daily lived...
- A desire to reach out and share the Good News of our Christian journey as we link with a wider community largely under-exposed to the life empowering Christian message...
- A willingness to equip one and all to use their particular gifts as an integral part of the ministry team...
- A determination to probe the dimensions of extravagant hospitality grounded in Christ's love so as to provide warmth and safety for all who walk among us...
- A heartfelt belief that we are called to engage in interfaith dialogue with the intent being to build bridges between faith traditions, overcome fear, foster understanding and work cooperatively for the common good of our community and world.



A Brief History of Church Life

by Dorothy York

The Orthodox Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ

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Mansfield, MA 02048-0322

Snapshots In Time

In 1838 a small group of Mansfield people left the established church to form an Orthodox Society. Their first meetings were held in the old brick school house which stood near the site of the present parsonage. The church at this time numbered 37 members: 13 men and 24 women.

It was voted to erect a meetinghouse and the land on which the church now stands was purchased for the sum of \$171.34. Soon completed, the structure cost between \$3,000 and \$3,500. It was one story high, 40 x 54 feet, and heated by stoves. A short flight of stairs ran the whole width of the building, with two front doors. There was a belfry but no bell.

The first settled pastor was Reverend Mortimer Blake of Franklin whose salary was \$500 per year. Under his ministerial leadership, which lasted for 16 years, the church flourished and increased in membership.

In 1853, the church building was enlarged by adding 10 feet to the rear. Soon thereafter, the Reverend Blake accepted a call to Taunton in 1855.

Reverend Jacob Ide was the next pastor. He served the church for 42 years. During his pastorate, many changes were made to the church building. It was completely remodeled at a cost of \$18,000 and was raised to its present height. The present belfry and steeple replaced the old ones. New furnaces, pew cushions, windows, hymn books, and an organ were the gifts of John Rogers, who was Reverend Ide's father-in-law.

The church building was very different from what it had been. The upstairs vestibule became the location of the organ and the choir. While singing, the congregation turned their backs to the minister to face the choir. This was changed in 1891 when the

organ and the choir were moved to the front of the auditorium, the platform being moved forward to make room for the choir loft.

Throughout the changes and improvements, the ladies of the church were very active. The Sewing Society donated time and money for the painting and repairing of the premises. In time, this group became the Women's Fellowship of today.

The ensuing years found the church being served by dedicated men of the cloth, each of whom brought change and improvements.

During the Flu Epidemic of 1918, the church was used as a hospital for five weeks. Tents were set up in the yard to care for pneumonia patients. One hundred and forty-five patients were treated. Fifteen deaths occurred.

In 1928, the great window at the front of the church was dedicated to the memory of Reverend Jacob Ide. The 100th Anniversary of the church was celebrated in 1938. A

history of the church was written by Jennie Copeland, noted author and historian. Through the year, many centennial observances were held, culminating in a rededication service in September. It was during the pastorate of Reverend A. Russell Ayre (1952-1956) that the Copeland Memorial organ was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Copeland. The church at this time voted to build the proposed parish house.

The 125th Anniversary of the church was celebrated in 1963, at which time a historical exhibit was held in the parish house. After a supper that was served in the vestry, a historical pageant was presented in the sanctuary. On May 19, 1963, at the conclusion of the morning worship service, the congregation adjourned to the parsonage lawn where a brief ceremony and wreath-laying took place to commemorate the first service of worship in the old brick schoolhouse on May 20, 1838.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the new addition to the