

BETHESDA BUGLE

Consecration Sunday is coming!



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Pastor's Message

In high school, were you ever forced against your will to read a book? Of course you were! All students were and still are. That's what school's for. School forces one to consider things that, left to your own devices, you would have ignored, or perhaps even despised. And here's a second question: Have you, as the years have passed, thanked the teacher – if only in your mind – who forced you to consider something you thought at the time to be "useless information"?

I have, more than once, I have to confess. My most precious memory of a now-appreciated assignment that I, at the time, thought was sheer foolishness was when my 9th grade English teacher had us read O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*. Once dismissed by me as a waste of my time, I now cherish this work because in about a page and a half, it is loaded with so many layers of meaning.

The story line is as follows: A couple, named Jim and Ella, were just managing to get by, financially speaking, living in a dingy tenement in 19th century Manhattan. Christmas

was coming around the corner and because Ella's love for Jim was so deep, she wanted to buy him a fine present – something he would cherish and make him always think of her. But she only had \$1.87 to spare; not much money, even by 19th century standards.

Ah, but she was genetically blessed with gorgeous long, silky hair. The kind of hair that would turn a runway-walking model green with envy. So, she decided to sell her hair, not an uncommon practice back then. And she was richly rewarded with the grand sum of \$20, enough to buy Jim a beautiful gold chain for his first class heirloom pocket watch, his prized possession.

Meanwhile, Jim, always an admirer of Ella's long beautiful hair, purchased a set of mother-of-pearl combs. The purchase stretched him, money-wise, so much that he sold his heirloom watch to afford the combs. But he so loved Ella that he "bit the bullet" and the watch was sold and the purchase of the combs finalized.

Ella arrived back first at their flat that day. She laid the gold watch chain on a table by the door, so he'd notice it right away when he arrived. When he finally entered the flat, the chain was not what he first noticed. What he first noticed, with shock and surprise, was Ella's now short hair. Ella was also shocked and surprised to learn he'd sold his prize watch. But soon they realized that Ella's hair would grow back and he could save up over time to get a new watch.

At first glance, this does not appear to be a story of faith. In it, neither God nor Jesus are mentioned.

But wait. When you think about it, you can see in your mind's eye Jesus possibly telling this story of love so deep that the lovers were willing to sacrifice to give to the beloved.

How deep is your love for God? What gift are you willing to give the Beloved?

Bill Cruikshank

History and Archives Committee

I was struck yesterday by a few of the lines from the Old Testament lesson, Isaiah 58: 1-12. "The Lord will guide you continually," Isaiah tells us, "and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations..." Doesn't that sound like Bethesda's experience in the last year? We have taken the old and made something new; we have found new ways forward where none seemed to exist.

We can take stock of the last year with some precision now, because we have now had a year's worth of *Bugle* issues to mark the high points. That's right: next month, we will embark on a second volume, and a whole new year of change. If the last year has been about restoration, then I think it must have been Providence that caused us last March to decide to publish this little newsletter. Someday, others will want to learn how we watered our garden. Isn't it great that we have a record of it to show and tell them? I sure think so. It also must be Providence that

next month we will celebrate Consecration Sunday and a formal renewal of our faith. When Rev. Wolff named us the *Bugle* – a title she had wanted to use for years – I don't think even she realized what we would be heralding. I know I didn't.

As though to complete the long series of transformations in Bethesda's life since last March, one final change has taken place: we will soon have a new District Superintendent. Recently Rev. William Sterling announced he would be stepping down from that post, which he has occupied since 2006. Sterling will assume the pastorate of Community United Methodist Church in Ocean Pines, in the Salisbury District, on July 1, 2011. In an email to the district, Sterling said, "It has been my great pleasure and privilege to serve with you in ministry on the Easton District. Jackie and I ask for your prayers as we move into this new season of our lives. God bless all of you." Bishop Johnson has appointed Rev. Gary Moore, currently the senior minister at St. Mark's UMC, in Easton, as the new Easton District Superintendent, effective July 1, 2011. Since the district office has recently relocated to St. Mark's, Rev. Moore will literally move his

office across the hall! To Rev. Sterling the *Bugle* offers a goodbye fanfare, with thanks for his five years of hard work. To Rev. Moore we pull out the herald trumpets, and welcome him to his new job!

"Change and decay in all around I see," mourns the hymn "Abide with Me." Perhaps. But there are other reasons to abide – for here at Bethesda we are ready to raise up deeper foundations, and still more generations.

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Music Department

The Music Department is excited about the opportunities we have had in recent months to have instrumentalists perform with our choir and for the congregation. We look forward to having more instrumentalists come and help in the future. Also we look forward to having the Praise Band from Chesapeake Christian School come at a future time to lead us in some worship music.

A point of action that the Music Department is anticipating is the purchase of some stackable chairs to be placed in the choir loft. The choir is anxious to get back to the choir loft and these chairs will allow them to sing from the loft while also allowing the flexibility of having other instruments in the loft at other times.

In order to furnish these chairs, we are holding a "Seat-a-Singer" fundraiser. We will need approximately 15 chairs



at an approximate cost of \$50.00 per chair (including tax). Please consider "seating a singer" with a \$50.00 donation.

Another point of action that the Music Department is very excited about is the opportunity to purchase a set of used three-octave handbells. The cost to purchase the bells will be \$3000.00. In addition, other accessories needed will cost an additional \$500.00. The bulk of this money will be taken from the choir special fund (\$2600.00) and another \$400.00 will be taken from the general fund with the expectation of repayment. Therefore, the total amount still needed to be raised is between \$900-\$1000. Any donations the congregation would care to make towards the purchase of these bells and accessories would be greatly appreciated.

Kari Farnell

Inspiration

Sometimes divine inspiration comes from the humblest places. Take, for instance, this aphorism, discovered by a reader in his fortune cookie:

"He that gives should not remember; he that receives should never forget."

It is worth contemplating the magnitude of God's presence in our lives. Often it is very subtle, unassuming - and, even more often, easily missed.

Weekly Income

The following figures cover the eight weeks since the last issue of the *Bugle*. Our average weekly income is **\$883.08**; *per capita* weekly contributions stand at approximately **\$16.48**. Average attendance is **54**. Based on our average weekly requirement of **\$1,200**, our current overall deficit is **\$1901.50**.

Service Date	Attendance	Tithes and Offering
Jan. 23	67	\$777.00
Jan. 30	46	\$817.50
Feb. 6	?	\$718.00

News Briefs

- The church is seeking volunteers for acolytes, Sunday School teachers, and liturgists. Contact Kari Farnell.
- Adult Bible Study, led by Rev. Cruikshank. Sundays in the Chapel, 9:30-10:30.
- WINGS (Women IN God's Service) at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Preston are running their annual candy Easter Egg fundraiser. Eggs are \$4.00 each, and are available in peanut butter, coconut, butter cream and cherry nut flavors. Orders can be placed through the church office, 410-673-7107, Mon.-Fri. 9-noon. Orders should be in by April 1st and will be available for pickup beginning April 17th.
- Upper Room issues for March/April will soon be available in the rear of the Sanctuary. Donations to cover costs can be placed in the wooden box. Suggested donation: \$1.
- The Women of Bethesda will be hosting Bethesda's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, March 8 at 5pm. Please join us for this annual "Mardi Gras" event!

Trustees Report

Since the last meeting of the Church Council, in September, the trustees have overseen the following projects:

- Completion of the parking lot.
- Repair of the water leak in the parsonage.
- Installation of hand rails in the church stairwells leading to the sanctuary. Repair of cracks in the walls. Both of these projects were undertaken in the lead-up to the 225th Anniversary service.

In the coming months we will be hearing presentations from Brethren Mutual and Nationwide Insurance Companies regarding expanded coverage for the church.

Bethesda recently received a generous, anonymous donation in the amount of \$2500 towards the purchase of a new copy machine. We are hoping to match that amount in individual donations to provide for the total cost of the copier and a three-year maintenance contract. If you are interested in contributing, checks can be made payable to Bethesda UMC, with "copier" written in the memo space. Any questions should be directed to Donna Lane.

Lenten and Easter Observances

- March 8, 5pm - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- March 24 - Lenten Study #1 (see next month's issue)
- March 31 - Lenten Study #2
- April 7 - Lenten Study #3
- April 14 - Lenten Study #4
- April 17 - Palm Sunday
- April 21 - Maundy Thursday Service
- April 22 - Good Friday
- April 24 - Easter



Bethesda History Notes

This month's trustee minutes continue to demonstrate the difficulty Bethesda faced in paying its bills. At the same time, they show how wide the church's support was in the community, with leading citizens from Preston and the surrounding towns committing significant funds to put the church back in the black. Until its debt was retired Bethesda was not allowed to dedicate its brand new building, even though it was already in use.

[Undated]¹

H.F. Willis Present. E. Todd & J.W. Noble absent.

Board [of] Trustees assumed bal. of debt. Unprovided for amt. supposed to be \$200.00.

Moved that Mr. Jewell² be instructed to invite J.M. McCarter³ on 23^[d] day of Sept. to dedicate church. Motion carried unanimous[ly].

Sexton subject called up by J.W. Harris. Reported all church bills for sextons⁴ &c. paid up to April 22nd, [illegible]⁵ excepted, leaving bal. due [of] \$18.00 to date & no Sexton.

Moved to adjourn to[...]⁶

◇◇◇

Sept. 10th 1877

Meeting of Board⁷

Trustees Present: J.E. Douglass, J.W. Harris, Wm. Billips, D.R. Wright, J.B. Fletcher. Rev. I.J. Jewell also present. Subscription list examined and found good to amount of \$600.00.

Notes on hand first column ⁸	50.00	⁹
J.P. Harrison ¹⁰	50.00	
Jesse Wright ¹¹	50.00	
L.P. Williams ¹²	50.00	
Willis Wright ¹³	50.00	
John R. Wright ¹⁴	50.00	
E. Todd	50.00	
Wm. Billips	50.00	
C.S. Carmine ¹⁵	50.00	
P.D. Taylor ¹⁶	50.00	
J.W. Harris	50.00	
J.E. Douglass	100.00	
J.B. Fletcher	100.00	
H.F. Willis	100.00	
W.W. Williamson	100.00	
J.H. Holmes ¹⁷	25.00	
[illegible] ¹⁸ Society	<u>50.00</u>	
Church Expenses	<u>200.00</u>	
	1775.00	
cash on hand	<u>20.00</u>	
	1795.00	
R. Patton ¹⁹	20.	120.00 ²⁰
Notes In Bank		1600.
I.L. Noble		120.
J.E. Douglass		145.
J.H. Douglass		30.
Owe on Bills		78.

1993.

Dedication of Bethesda, September 23, 1877

The following brief news article helpfully confirms many of the vague points in earlier trustee meeting minutes – not least of which is the reality that the Building Committee still needed to hold a collection to help pay off the church's debt after two years of wrangling over money! One can only imagine the relief of the community at the possibility finally of attending Sunday service and not having to worry about making a large donation!

Dedication.—The M.E. Church in Preston will be dedicated, D.V., on Sunday next the 23d inst., at 10 o'clock a.m. Sermon by the Rev. J.M. McCarter, of Chincoteague, Va. We are reliably informed that satisfactory arrangements are made and that not more than two hundred dollars will be asked for on the day of the dedication. Therefore, everybody can come, and all are invited.

(The Denton Journal, September 22, 1877, 3.)

¹ The following minutes derive from a meeting that took place sometime between April 22 and September 23 of 1877. It is my sense that they were written closer to the former date than the latter, but there is no proof in support of that conclusion, although as the following set of minutes refer to a meeting on September 21, it seems safe to conclude that this set be-

longs prior to those. These minutes were written on a loose page in the ledger, raising the possibility that, as with the minutes from February 1877 (see last issue), they are an alternate version – the "official" having been lost or never recorded at all.

² - That is, presumably, Rev. Isaac Jewell, although the name is difficult to discern conclusively. Jewell served as Bethesda's pastor from 1876 through 1878 (see below).

³ - Rev. James M. McCarter (1827-1900) was a prolific speaker around Preston in this period. He will be profiled in next month's issue.

The Rise of Methodism in the Lower Part of Caroline County, Maryland (Part 5 of 6)

By Capt. Charles W. Wright

Originally published in the *Denton Journal*, January 10, 1931, pg. 2

Note: the following is reprinted "as is," with few edits or annotations. Although they are indispensable sources, Wright's articles naturally do not reflect modern research, attitudes, or vocabulary.

Gabriel Friend

About the year of 1850 a ceremony of much interest to the White Methodists and of more to the colored took place in Bethesda M.E. Church of Snow Hill (now Preston), when Gabriel Friend a colored worthie [*sic*] of solid piety was ordained to preach the Gospel, the first Ecclesiastical honor of that kind conferred on a colored man in this section.

A large congregation was present. The colored aristocracy occupied the gallery, and gave respectful attention to Gabriel at the altar of Bethesda, receiving sacred orders with solemn dignity. To emphasize the word "aristocracy" will state there were present John and Harrison Webb, from the line of Ricksom. Their father, who, when in life, counted his broad acres by the thousand, and owned slaves of the best stock money could buy, occasionally journeyed in comparative state with carriage, pair, and footman, died Mar. 14, 1846. John and Harrison inherited most of his vast estate.

Another Webb present was "gentleman Jim," whose farm products brought the highest price on the Easton market.

Also noted for his culinarios ability to tickle the palate of the most exacting epicure, by his skill, and his extremely courteous manner won for him the appellation of "gentleman." "Cutbird" King accomplished the feat of designing and building a bay vessel, which he named for Col. A. J. Willis, a leading citizen of the county. And James Adams, the farmer and blacksmith, and Joshua Johns, the farmer and wine maker, and Adam, also Stephen Blay, in whose veins a tinge of the red-man's blood coursed. Exclusive were they indeed, but devout Methodists and opened their homes for a regular place for religious worship.

And Uncle Thom Wright, a hopeless cripple, but of great faith, looked to nature for signs when to plant and sow. His reaping and gathering from his farm was more bountiful than his neighbors. Passers on the highway by his house often heard his vociferous prayers of thanks to Almighty God for his mercy and kindness to him.

And there was Jerry West, Jim Truxon, Wright Hubbard, and many other free and prosperous land owners, and there has not since been in this section colored people more prominent than those contemporaneous [*sic*] with Gabriel Friend, the leader in colored Methodism hereabout for many years.

Gabriel Friend was rather tall and dark, high and somewhat receding forehead, straight nose, rather long face, and hair prematurely grey. A condition precedent to his becoming a Reverend was to preach one sermon each year to a white congregation.

His attire in the pulpit was a black suit, the coat of which was a square frock,

high collar and stock encircled his rather long neck. When reading used brass octagonal-rimmed spectacles, and of course, a red silk bandanna was essential to his make up.

I well remember hearing his last sermon, in September 1868. He then intimated it might be the last one to his white friends. He began his discourse calmly and deliberately, forming sentences with care. His gestures were quite appropriate, became more animated as he progressed, walking to and fro across the pulpit, addressing first to one side and then the other side of the congregation, and occasionally leaning well over the pulpit desk and with great earnestness addressing his remarks to the whole audience. In the latter part of his sermon delivered some sentences in a semi-chant. He quoted copiously from the scriptures, and was never at a loss for words to express his thoughts, holding the attention of his congregation to the end. Among his hearers was the intellect and intelligence of this section, and all agreed that it was a marvelous sermon.

Gabriel lived on his farm in Frazier's Neck, where he died June 19, 1869, aged 69 years. His funeral and burial at Marshy Creek was the largest I had ever seen in Caroline, and about equally divided in attendance between white and colored. Among the whites attending were some of the county's leading citizens, and all with bared and bowed heads joined with great solemnity in paying their last respects to all that was mortal of Gabriel Friend, the most respected, pious and gifted colored Methodist that ever resided in lower Caroline county.



Outside the Red Doors: Who was Gabriel Friend?

Gabriel Friend's prominence and popularity in mid-19th century Preston speaks both to the importance and the spirit of Methodism in the Preston area from the time of the American Revolution through the Civil War. Our knowledge of Friend is limited, but what we know about him suggests a strong linkage between Methodism and the abolition movement of the 1850s.

Gabriel Friend seems to have been born in 1800, although we have no record of his birth date. It is uncertain who his parents were: the Caroline County enumerator appears to have done a poor

job of counting free African-Americans in 1800, and few appear in the census. Nonetheless, we know that even by the mid-nineteenth century the Friends had an august history in the Preston region. Despite their African-American heritage, the family was both free and owned property in Caroline County dating from about the time of the Revolutionary War. Moreover, Friends can be found in the census living near many of the major figures in antebellum Preston. An Isaac Friend, for instance, lived very near James Brannock, one of Bethesda's trustees at the time the church was incorporated in 1810. Ten years later, in the 1820, perhaps the

same Isaac Friend was living near Jacob Leverton, a white Quaker whose house (part of which still stands on Seaman Road) became a stop on the Underground Railroad. We will probably never know Gabriel Friend's own family line with any certainty, but it is clear that his was, in general, one of the more significant and influential free African-American families around Preston – itself a more racially mixed community, perhaps, than it later became.

What we can say with certainty of Gabriel Friend is that he was married on July 30, 1821 to Grace Chase. By 1830, he headed



Outside the Red Doors: Who was Gabriel Friend?

a household of eight, and was living near the former William Frazier property. That household included Gabriel and Grace's four sons and one daughter. An enumeration of free African-Americans mandated by law in 1832 provides a few of those children's names: Henry, age 10; Hester, age 7; William, age 5; and Elijah, age 3. By 1840 Gabriel Friend had nine people living in his household, and his near neighbor was Absolom Patchett, who became Secretary of Methodist Episcopal Church in that same decade, and owned most of the land between Preston and Bethlehem. Friend himself was listed sometimes as a farmer, but he must have been a tenant farmer or sharecropper, because his name does not appear on any known deed until February 1849. That deed conveyed half an acre of land and an old Quaker meetinghouse at Marsh Creek to a newly formed African American congregation spun off from Bethesda. "Marshy Creek Church" eventually became known as Mount Pleasant Church, and the congregation met at what is now Mount Pleasant Cemetery until the church there burnt down in the 1960s. In the 1970s the congregation joined with several others to form Mount Calvary. Listed as one of the new church's trustees in 1849, the deed reflects Friend's rising status in the black community, an ascent that would be consummated in his ordination at Bethesda in 1850. Fittingly, the Mount Pleasant cemetery was Friend's final resting place at his death nearly two decades later, although his grave has sadly been lost to time.

During the period from 1846 through 1857, Gabriel Friend was living – knowingly or not – at a nationally significant nexus in the Underground Railroad. In 1846 Dr. Anthony Thompson, a medical doctor and timber magnate, purchased 3,000 acres of Poplar Neck from the Goldsborough heirs, apparently to farm and timber the land. There were fast sailing ships docked at the wharf for shipping, and possibly a shipbuilding operation established. The 1850 census shows Gabriel Friend with new neighbors. Harriet Tubman's father, Benjamin Ross – who had been manumitted by the will of Dr. Thompson's father in 1840, but had continued to work for the Thompsons as

a timber estimator and overseer – had relocated to Poplar Neck with his bosses' timber and shipping operations. Thompson had sent his son, Edward, and a workforce to Poplar Neck, but himself remained in Cambridge, where Harriet Tubman was hired out to him. She left his home near Cambridge and escaped to the North in 1849.

It was right at this time that Gabriel Friend and his fellow trustees established their own church, and that Gabriel Friend was ordained Minister and preached his first sermon at Bethesda Methodist. One cannot help but wonder: did Harriet Tubman's father attend Bethesda Methodist Church? Did the Thompsons attend? Dr. Anthony Thompson moved to Caroline County by 1851 and lived at Poplar Neck. A lay Methodist Minister, Thompson had been an active member and benefactor of Zion Methodist Episcopal Church in Cambridge. An 1859 deed to the farm northeast of the turn at the end of Poplar Neck Road refers to a church on that property. Did Thompson build a Methodist church for himself, his slaves, and his workers? If so, presumably Dr. Thompson himself would have served as preacher. But did it compete with the Bethesda congregation and spur the establishment of Marshy Creek Church in the former Quaker meetinghouse?

And how much, if anything, did Friend know about any Underground Railroad activities occurring due to the presence of Harriet Tubman's father and mother at Poplar Neck? That these people interacted we know for sure. Gabriel Friend and Benjamin Ross were certainly together on November 28, 1850 at an estate sale in Bethlehem, and their purchases are on the record very close to one another. At Christmas 1854, Harriet Tubman returned to Maryland to assist her brothers in their escape to freedom, and hid out in a corncrib with her brothers within site of their parents' cabin in Poplar Neck. Was Gabriel Friend aware of this and other rescues? In 1856, a slave named William Cornish escaped to Philadelphia after sneaking out of a Methodist Camp meeting described in letters from the Dorchester Circuit ministers as taking place around Marsh Creek. He had worked for Dr. Thompson and so presumably had connections in the community. Was Friend one of them?

Gabriel Friend would certainly have known Rev. Samuel Green, a highly regarded

Methodist Exhorter from East New Market. Both men served in the same circuit, and were of the same age and generation. In 1857 Green was convicted of owning a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and sentenced to ten years in the state penitentiary. Green was also implicated – along with Benjamin Ross – in assisting a group of enslaved Dorchester people to escape. Ross' involvement ultimately led to his and his wife's rescue by daughter Harriet in May 1857.

The Samuel Green case was decried nationally, leading to one of the most compelling coincidences in Preston's history of race relations. One of the most important Methodists who spoke out in favor of Samuel Green and against the injustice of his imprisonment was a man who now lies in Bethesda cemetery: Rev. James M. McCarter. McCarter wrote a pamphlet, *Border Methodism and Border Slavery*, revealing the debate about the issue of slavery at the Philadelphia Conference of 1856, and arguing that tolerance for slavery did not comport with Methodism or Christianity.

Trying to understand where the very gifted and popular preacher Gabriel Friend may have stood on the issue of abolition of slavery is partially answered by the discovery that Gabriel Friend was a delegate, along with Arthur J. Willis and possibly McCarter, from Caroline County to the Radical Republican state convention in 1867. Indeed, Friend was elected vice-president of the convention, and sat on the dais during the proceedings. The convention called for universal suffrage, and was fully integrated.

Just as the Underground Railroad was and remains mysterious, the activities and spirit, opinions, activities, and relationships of the Methodists in the Neck and in southern Caroline County such as Gabriel Friend, his family friends, neighbors, and congregants, white and black, remain an intriguing mystery. The attendance at his funeral of such large numbers, and his popularity among both whites and blacks suggests not only that he was one of the all-time gifted preachers, but also that our understanding of Preston's nineteenth-century race relations barely scratches the surface.

Margaret Iovino

Consecration Sunday is Coming!

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's finance committee has selected the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who

should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. New Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?" During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Administrative Board Chairperson,

Dennis Baker

Do You Know Your Church?

The following article by Dora Mitchell, who passed away in March 2004, was originally published in one of Bethesda's newsletters from the Fall of 1999. It is reprinted here as it originally appeared. The church archive contains very few examples of newsletters and correspondence. If you suspect you have any documents of this nature, please check with Eric Cheezum to see if the church archive could use a copy!

Do you know that Bethesda Church owns not just one, but two cemeteries?

Bethesda Cemetery lies just behind the church building on the north-east part of the church property. In 1856 the church trustees began selling burial lots from this area. A plot for five graves could be purchased for \$5 and the first lots were sold along the Denton Road. Some of the first buyers were Wm. H. Gootee, Alex Whiteley, William Perry, James E. Douglass, Elias Cox and Dr. Francis Phelps, although the last three and their families were buried elsewhere.

The only bricked up grave is that of Elizabeth Willis, who died in 1864. She was a daughter of Col. Peter Willis, who lived in the present home of Mr. & Mrs. Mason Cheezum on Payne Road. Willis was a captain (later colonel) of the Caroline County Militia during the War of 1812. He was also one of the trustees of Bethesda Church in 1810 when the church was incorporated and was also the church secretary.

There are stones for several Civil War veterans: Joseph Patton, Dr. Andrew L.

Stafford, Col. James Mc Carter, Edward T. Moore, Wm. H. Gootee, and S. P. Nichols for the Union Army and Charles Medford for the Confederacy.

When the second church was built about 1875 it was located on the highest part of the church property back amid the tombstones. In 1903 the building was moved forward 40-50 feet to by-pass the stones so that a Sunday School room (present chapel) could be added to the east side of the building.

Many years ago Theo. E. Fletcher, Sr., established a fund for the upkeep of this cemetery. Many others have since added to the fund and it generates enough interest to maintain the cemetery. The fund is now administered by Theo. E. Fletcher, Jr., who says that there are still a few grave sites for sale.

Bethesda also owns another cemetery--Fairmount Cemetery--which adjoins the south-east side of the Jr. Order Cemetery near Linchester.

This cemetery was started by Jesse Hubbard in 1877. At one time Mr. Hubbard owned nearly all of the land from Maple Avenue in Preston southeast to the middle of Linchester and he and his family lived in the now vacant, two-storied Gadow house in Linchester. A local newspaper stated that Jesse Hubbard held a formal opening for his new cemetery on Sunday afternoon, May 27, 1877. It was situated beside the road on ½ acre he had cleared, some trees had been white-washed, and a 30 X 16 shed was put up for burial services.

Jesse Hubbard died in 1879 and in 1890 his heirs deeded the cemetery to the Bethesda Methodist Church.

In 1883 the former Hubbard land between Back Landing Road and the cemetery was sold to Col. James McCarter, a Methodist clergyman and Civil War veteran, who was from New York State. After his retirement, the McCarters lived on Back Landing Road in the present Thomas home. Col. McCarter increased the size of Fairmount Cemetery by adding land to two sides, although he, his wife, and two of their children are buried in the Bethesda Cemetery. In 1929, their two grandsons, James and Ralph McCarter, deeded the addition to Bethesda Church. These two men and their wives are buried in one side of the addition.

The Harrison family of Preston is buried in the Fairmount Cemetery. When he died in 1949 Charles B. Harrison left money invested for the upkeep of this cemetery and the fund is now handled by his great-nephew, John Dennis of Texas.

Fairmount Cemetery contains a number of very ornate monuments but several were damaged or knocked over when the cemetery was vandalized 2-3 years ago. There are graves for several Civil War veterans, some graves marked by plain field stones, and a few unmarked graves. There is one stone carved entirely in German.

After these two cemeteries seemed to fall into disuse and before the Jr. Order Cemetery was started about 1920, many people in the Preston area were buried in the Hillcrest Cemetery in Federalsburg.



Outside the Red Doors

Many readers will probably be aware that the house of the late Forrest Deneau, on Havercamp Road, was destroyed by fire on January 8, 2011. The house carries significance for Preston, and for Bethesda specifically. Almost certainly it was the early dwelling of James E. Douglass when he and his family first arrived in Preston. Douglass, of course, became one of lower Caroline's

most important figures, and a prime mover in Bethesda's development in the 1870s (see *Bugle* #6, pp 4-5). In her history of the town, Dora Mitchell writes: "About 1854 James and Mary Catherine Douglass moved to the Preston area and lived on land now owned by Harlan Davis, Jr., along what is now Havercamp Road. In 1863 Douglass bought a large part of this land . . . and had a saw mill and vessel business south of the road on the

lot west of Marsh Creek and probably another mill on what is now Prchal Road. What is now Havercamp Road ran only to what is now Prchal Road at that time and they were one continuous road called Douglass' Saw Mill Road." Evidence suggests that almost certainly the Deneau house belonged to Douglass, although the latter probably renovated and reconfigured it, as he did with several later structures.

Photos courtesy of (l-r): Margaret Iovino, the Star-Democrat, and Eric Cheezum



Circle of Concern



Gloria Trice 21850 Water St Preston, MD 21655 410-673-7339	Tharon Harrington 500 S. Dupont Blvd Milford, DE 19963
Betty Hinnershitz 2701 Choptank Main St. Preston, MD 21655 410-673-7383	



The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.
2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Bethesda History Notes, Contd.

4 - Sexton seems to be plural here, implying – significantly – that there had been, by that point, several people employed in that position. The trustees seem to have had some difficulty keeping the job filled.
5 - This word looks like “has,” but that word does not fit the syntax of the sentence, assuming the latter has been properly transcribed.
6 - This sentence is unfinished in the original.
7 - “Building Committee” is crossed out and replaced with “Board.”
8 - “Hand first column” is an approximation. The original is illegible.
9 - The strikethrough is in the original, suggesting the author made an error while drawing up the list.
10 - Joseph P. Harrison (May 23, 1830 – February 5, 1901) was the father of several children, including Charles, the town lawyer and newspaper editor from 1906 to 1912, and Ella, from whose estate Bethesda purchased the parsonage in the early 1960s.
11 - Probably Jesse Alfred Wright, who almost personally developed Choptank into the town we know today. He was the nephew of

D.R. Wright and Willis Wright, and the son of John R. Wright.
12 - Not much is known of Levin P. Williams, although his and his wife’s names are etched into one of the stained-glass windows in the rear of the Sanctuary.
13 - Willis Wright was a brother of Daniel R. Wright, a trustee at Bethesda, and the uncle of Jesse Wright. He built the original Friendship Church in 1857. He lived briefly at Grove, then at Poplar Neck, before moving to Choptank. He lived in and probably built the Lloyd Price house there. He was also the father of Charles W. Wright, the author of much invaluable local history, including the “Rise of Methodism” articles we have been republishing in the *Bugle* (PH: 209, 211).
14 - I have chosen “John” here, due to context, but the original is illegible. If correct, it is probably John Riley Wright, who lived with his family on the back of the Krueger farm on Hunting Creek Road.
15 - Probably Charles S. Carmine, although little is known of him.
16 - Perrigrine “Perry” Derochbrune Taylor (March 25, 1819 – December 12, 1896) was a

large landowner in the region of Friendship. It is believed he contributed half the land upon which Friendship church now stands. Taylor and his wife moved to Preston in 1886 after buying the Eva Fuchs house directly across from Bethesda (PH: 71).
17 - Probably James H. Holmes (b. 1816), who was a major landowner in the region and lived in Bethlehem (PH: 205).
18 - This is a short word, but completely illegible.
19 - The name is unclear, but is almost certainly Robert Patton (November 8, 1833 – January 26, 1910). According to Dora, Patton was a farmer and carpenter. He was the great grandson of Philip Barratt of Frederica, Delaware, who gave land for the construction of what we now call Barratt’s chapel. Patton and his family lived at American Corner. After his second wife, Sallie, died, Patton lived in Preston, also in the Eva Fuchs house. He married Susie Sisk, sister of Col. A.W. Sisk, in 1903 (PH: 82).
20 - The strikethrough is in the original. As above, this suggests the author made a mistake in compiling the list. The number seems to have been hastily inserted next to “R. Patton,” again suggesting that the figure was simply put in the wrong place at first.

Church Calendar

February 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 President's Day	22	23	24	25	26
27 Consecration Sunday Leadership Dinner 5 p.m.	28					

March 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Consecration Sunday	7	8 Pancake Supper 5 p.m.	9 Ash Wednesday	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Lenten Study #1 7 p.m.	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 Lenten Study #2 7 p.m.		

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