

VILLAGE CHAPEL IN THE 1970s

In the 1970s Village Chapel saw many new projects and activities come into being with great involvement of the congregation.

January 11, 1970. An Inquirer's Group was initiated by Rev. Crow for persons interested in exploring the meaning of the Christian Faith and church membership in today's world. Four sessions were held in which the changing task of the church, the place of the Bible, and the call to be Christian in the world was explored.

January 18. The Kanawha City churches observed two ecumenical services during the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." The first was held at St. Agnes Catholic Church with the Rev. Mr. Philip Weeks of the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church preaching the sermon. The second service was held January 21st at Morris Memorial Methodist Church with Father Edward Sadie celebrating Mass.

February 8. On this date, a "Race Relations Sunday" was held. The service was preceded with a carry-in supper in the Fellowship Hall. Following supper, a panel of women consisting of Mrs. Sally Richardson, Mrs. Carol Ferrell, Mrs. Ann Williams, Mrs. Joy Kleeman, and Mrs. Bette Hamilton (Moderator) discussed inter-racial relationships and prejudices as it affected them in their separate experiences as Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and Negro women.

February 22. A Sunday afternoon program was held with the Rev. James Somerville, Presbyterian minister to the poor working in Boone County, along with representatives of the WV Department of Welfare, social workers from Kanawha and Boone counties, and the Executive Director of the Kanawha County Community Council to explore Sharing of Common Attitudes About Welfare and Poverty, Information from Resource Leaders and Experiences of Poor People Active in Welfare Rights.

April 5, 1970. A team of five young men from the Union Seminary conducted the church service on this date and over the weekend, conducted multiple meetings with the young people of the Church to provide teaching and social sessions with them.

May 15-16. Thirteen representatives from Village Chapel joined members from South Ruffner, Ruffner Memorial, South Park, and Westminster Presbyterian Churches at a "Consultation on Parish Ministry" which was held at Cedar Lakes.

September. The Women's Circle Annual Report indicated that there are nine circles in the Church. During the past year circles purchased five dining room tables to add to those purchased earlier for the Fellowship Hall. The circles also purchased material for draperies for the library and members made the drapes. Representatives from the Women of Village Chapel attended a Study-Planning Retreat at Cedar Lakes in May to discuss the formation of the Southeast Parish Plan, the purpose of which was to build bridges of communication and

trust between the five participating churches: South Park, South Ruffner, Village Chapel, Westminster and Ruffner Memorial. This effort will hopefully develop a plan for cooperative efforts in becoming the servant church with greater opportunities for all members to receive the benefits of training, worship, fellowship, and congregational fulfillment.

November 1. Mr. Eric Roth was with us for his first service as our new Music Director. Mr. Roth lives in Parkersburg and will be in Charleston on Tuesdays and Sundays. He and his wife have recently returned from Munich, Germany where he studied on a Fulbright Scholarship. Village Chapel welcomes Mr. Roth to the Church staff and feels very fortunate to have his services.

December 24. The Christmas Eve service at 11:00 p.m. lifted the good news of Christ's birth in scripture, carol and song. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated around the table, setting the mood for the upcoming observance of Christmas.

December 27, 1970. Mr. Crow engaged in a dialogue sermon with Mary White and Joe Settle, college students of this congregation. In the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Crow invited the college-age young people to the manse for a carry-in dinner and get-together.

January 17, 1971. In celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Village Chapel joined with other area churches for a union service, held this year at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Young people from the various churches provided music for the service. Another unity service was held on the following Wednesday evening at St. George's Orthodox Church in downtown Charleston at Lee and Court Streets. The Rev. Father Shaheen conducted a vesper service and afterwards explained the ritual and liturgy of the Syrian Orthodox Church – a wonderful ecumenical experience.

May 7-9, 1971. A Church Retreat was held at Bluestone Conference Center with about 100 members of Village Chapel in attendance. Mr. Dan Wheeler, a member of the faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary and a friend of Mr. Crow, was the retreat leader. The theme for the event was "Touch and Go" – to be in touch with fellow believers and with God and to go out into the world as witnesses.

May 23, 1971. The four Parish Choirs performed under the direction of Village Chapel's choir director, Eric Roth, at Ruffner Memorial Church at 5:00 p.m. A sack lunch plus good fellowship followed.

June 27, 1971. As Mr. Crow was on vacation, the service on this day was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Robert G. Newman of Morris Harvey College – his sermon titled, "God on the College Campus" – was a very appropriate topic as Village Chapel has a large number of its young people enrolled in college.

July 1971. The Session changed the time for worship service to 10:00 a.m. during the months of July and August with the intent that there would be time for dialogue following the

sermon. This meant that any questions or opinions from the congregation could be voiced, and time given to expanding any general ideas inherent in the sermon.

November 21, 1971. Following the worship service, a reception was held in the Fellowship Hall to honor Mr. and Mrs. Fred Cochran, charter members of this church who are moving to St. Petersburg, Florida. At the reception a scroll was presented to Fred and Elsie which read:

To our fellow Christians in St. Petersburg Beach, greetings! We introduce to you our dear friends, the Cochrans. Friend and Elsie have been leaders from the first days of our church until now. They found a director, brought her to practice and we had a choir, and they sang in the choir this morning. Their swimming pool was open to a Sunday School class and Deacon's meetings. From an extra leaf in Elsie's dining room table, Friend made a Communion Table. He was the first Clerk of the Session and Elsie has served in all phases of the work of the Women of the Church. They came into a diversified group and brought an informed Biblical faith and deep convictions. We have been blessed as they shared their faith and love and fun with us. They are happy people because they have the great certainties of Christ. Our love goes with them.

November 21, 1971. The installation for the Rev. Michael E. Williams as Parish Minister for the Charleston Southeast Parish was held at the South Park Presbyterian Church. Those participating represented all four churches of the Parish and included:

Rev. W.W. Branch, Jr., Pastor of the Falls View and Smithers Churches
Rev. Vernon McGehee, Regional Director of Christian Education, Synod of WV
Dr. Robert G. Newman, Department of Religion & Philosophy, Morris Harvey College
Mr. Frank Garred, Ruling Elder at Ruffner Memorial Presbyterian Church
Mr. John Aieker, Ruling Elder at South Park Presbyterian Church
Mr. Payne Brown, Ruling Elder at Village Chapel Presbyterian Church
Mr. Phil Bridwell, Ruling Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church

December 22, 1971. A group of carolers met at Dr. Bobby Caldwell's house on Noyes Avenue. This has become a tradition over the years and many of our shut-ins and other members of the congregation have welcomed the glad sounds of Christmas carols outside their door. The Caldwell family graciously invited the carolers to come by after the singing to enjoy refreshments.

Fall 1971. Sports (Basketball Teams) at Village Chapel:
Village Chapel sponsored two boys basketball teams-- the Senior Midgets (7th graders) and the Junior High Boys (8th and 9th graders). Their coaches are Tommy Mayne and Jack Schwarz. As Village Chapel had no gym, practices were held at Ruffner Memorial Church gym.

The Girls team (Senior High Girls) practiced at Horace Mann Junior High and were coached by Miss Pam Robertson, a student at Morris Harvey College.

A basketball carry-in dinner was held in the Fellowship Hall with Don Stover, basketball coach at Stonewall Jackson High School, as the guest speaker. On **December 4th** the members of the girls basketball team held a bake sale in the Fellowship Hall to raise the money necessary for rental of the Horace Mann gym for their practices.

January 9, 1972. Following worship, a congregational meeting was called on this date for the purpose of changing the terms of office for elders and deacons from six years to three years and to provide for the annual election of these officers. This change was approved and served as the acknowledged term from this time forward.

January 1972. A Children's Choir for kindergarten, first, and second graders was organized with Mrs. Douglas Curnutte as Director. The children met for practice once a week and participated in the Sunday morning worship service from time to time – a wonderful and enlightening addition to the music program at Village Chapel.

February 8, 1972. Dr. and Mrs. Alan G. Gordon, members of Village Chapel from 1969 to 1972, were commissioned as medical missionaries of the Presbyterian Church to work in Brazil, South America. Alan and his wife, Alma, had six children – all girls. During their membership at Village Chapel, Dr. Gordon was elected as an elder, Alma sang in the choir, and all of the family were active in the life of the Church. Dr. Gordon was a surgical resident at Charleson Memorial Hospital and Alma was a nurse who also worked as an In-service instructor at Memorial Hospital.

In a letter to the Church, Dr. Gordon shared a cherished event that occurred during his ministry at Village. During a Pentecost Sunday Celebration, Church members and friends were gathered outside where Alan began playing a hymn on his accordion. As he walked to the entrance, the crowd followed along and into the sanctuary, singing and praising God! The story of this event was written up in a Charleston newspaper, serving as another colorful event for our Church. Village Chapel's World Mission Offering on March 19th totaled \$4,000 and was used to transport the Gordons to their mission in South America. In addition, it was announced that Village would continue to support the Gordons through the World Missions in the amount of \$1,600 annually. Over the years, Village Chapel continued to support the Gordon's work as medical missionaries in Brazil.

On the first two Sundays in **March** a special offering was taken in addition to the regular offering. The monies collected were used to assist victims of the horrific Buffalo Creek flood in southwestern West Virginia-- another wonderful example of Village Chapel's outreach to those in need.

June 4, 1972. Rev. Crow preached the sermon at the Baccalaureate Service for the Charleston High School graduating class. This event was held at St. John's Episcopal Church

at 7:30 p.m. Sixteen members of the class were from Village Chapel and included: Debbie Adams, Jeff Anderson, Grant Archibald, Elizabeth Bone, Ann Campbell, Mike Carey, Terri Crow, Beth Griffith, Pat Jacobs, Greg Mason, Christine Milbourne, Kelvin Raines, Mary Ruth Richardson, Eric Schwarz, Donald Tabaretti, and Benny Webb.

On **February 11, 1973**, a congregational meeting resulted in the recommendation to have a unicameral form of government at Village Chapel. This was approved and on **February 25th** twelve members of the congregation were elected to the position of Ruling Elder.

March 4, 1973. Members of the Sessions of the four Parish churches met at South Park Church and following a Lenten breakfast, took a hard look at the degree of commitment and support which they and their congregation gave to the Parish. "The fact that the Southeast Parish receives half its support from Presbytery's Home Mission fund makes it necessary for the Parish to have a life beyond this year."

In **1973**, Village Chapel had seventeen High school graduates. The names of those graduating and the schools from which they graduated were:

George Washington: Tom Andreas

Charleston Catholic: Kathy Kruk

Charleston High: John Blair, Patti Campbell, Sue Campbell, Bonnie Chevalier, Rich Claymore, Bobbie Sue Coleman, Nelle Dodson, Barbara Harris, Anita Jackson, Jenny Joseph, Jeff Lippitt, Patty Litton, Lynn Priestley, Todd Schwarz, and George Singleton

On **August 5, 1973**, our guest speaker was Mary Lee Daughterty, a member of Village Chapel and the Chairperson of the Task Force on Women in the Church of Kanawha Presbytery. Mrs. Daughterty is an Instructor in Religion at Morris Harvey College. Martha Walker, who assisted Mary Lee in the service, is also a member of the Presbytery Committee on Women.

On **October 14, 1973**, Denny Dodson participated in the worship service. At the time, Denny was a senior at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Also, Denny was the first baby baptized at Village Chapel and grew up in the Church. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Dodson, charter members and leaders in the congregation.

October 25, 1973. Mary Lee Daughterty and Denny Dodson were examined by the Session and commended to the Committee on Candidates of Kanawha Presbytery as candidates for the gospel ministry.

November 4, 1973. The day of observation of Holy Communion was also a day for presentation of the Eagle Award to Explorer Scout, David Miller. A reception in the Fellowship Hall was hosted by David's friends in honor of the occasion.

On **November 25th** the Charter Members still residing in Charleston and attending worship in this congregation were recognized and the members present were asked to come to the Communion Table, and a “Litany for Bidding a Mortgage Goodbye” was read, and the mortgage was burned. Those Charter members present were:

Mrs. Mary Ann Archibald
Betty Lou Arthur Burton
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Arthur
Mrs. John C. Ballows
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas V. Beatty
Mrs. Harry Brawley
Mrs. Elton S. Brown
Mr. and Mrs. W. Payne Brown
Mrs. Joe F. Burdett
Mr. Richie Callard
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Carrington
Mrs. James B. Dilger
Mr. and Mrs. Elmer H. Dodson
Judge John A. Field, Jr.
Mrs. Ivan Gladwell
Mrs. Norman Gordon
Mrs. Mary Darnold Hague
Mr. Edward Joe Hague, Jr.
Mrs. Charlotte Hughes
Mr. Kenath Kettle
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Preston
Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. King

Mrs. Alex W. Laing, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. L. Harold Litton
Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Maloney
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh A. Markey
Mr. and Mrs. James T. McNutt, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Miller
Mr. and Mrs. Phil J. Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Morgan
Mr. and Mrs. Cecil P. Murray
Mrs. Newman H. Newhouse
Mrs. Samuel G. Olver
Mrs. Leroy Osborn
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Pitzer
Mr. William C. Reichard
Mr. C. J. Ross
Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Snyder
Mr. and Mrs. Julian H. Sockman
Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Stock
Mr. and Mrs. John F. Suter
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Vaughan
Mr. and Mrs. Kermit West
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth F. Wrenn

On **December 2, 1973**, Village Chapel welcomed the Dr. Douglas Curnutte family as they shared in the Advent worship experience.

At the **December 1973** Luncheon and General Meeting of the Women of the Church, Sister Joyce was the speaker. She is a member of the new prayer community, Mount Taber, located in Spring Hill. As a cloistered nun, the sister regularly spent 10 to 14 hours a day in prayer and praise and has now moved out into the world to help make Jesus a reality in the lives of others. The Joy Gift was also scheduled for this occasion and as the ritual required, each person present attached her envelope to the Christmas Tree.

The Christmas Eve Service was held on **December 24** at 11:00 p.m. The service was a candlelight service during which the Sacrament of Communion was celebrated.

On Christian Student Sunday, **December 30th**, Village Chapel college students were recognized during worship and the following students participated in the service: Nelle

Dodson, Patty Dearien, Pat Jacobs, Eric Schwartz, and Roger Sockman. That evening, the students were invited to a carry-in dinner at 6:00 at the manse located at 4705 Noyes Avenue.

During **1973** a number of organizations used Village Chapel for meetings. Community groups using the church included: Explorer Scout Troop 98, Brownie Scout Troop 524, Jr. Girl Scout Troop 733, Greenmont Garden Club, Rivermeade Garden Club, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Greenbrier Pool Associates, Weight-Watchers, League of Women Voters, Junior League, and a number of high school and college sororities.

1973 was a busy year for Village Chapel's Explorer Post 98. With 24 members they met every other Tuesday. The troop was recognized on Boy Scout Sunday, February 11, during the Worship Service. The post went camping one weekend every month during the year. In the spring some of the members attended the Council Explorer Planning Conference at Pipestem Resort. In April they went on a canoeing trip in Ohio. Over Memorial Day weekend the troop manned a "Coffee Stop" on I-64 in Putnam County. Three members worked on the staff at the Buckskin Scout Reservation at Dilly's Mill all summer. They attended camp as a group the week of June 24-30 and one of the Village scouts was elected Chief of the Arrow, a real honor for the post. In September they worked with the Naval Reserve Engineers at the Buckskin Scout Reservation doing painting as their service project. On September 25th they held an Open House in the Fellowship Hall to welcome anyone interested in becoming a member of the Explorer Post. In November they attended the Council Explorer Planning Conference at Virgil Tate 4-H Camp. As noted previously, on November 4th David Miller, a member of the Post, received his Eagle Scout Award during the Worship Service.

On **June 2, 1974**, the Session voted to confer the title Elder-Emeritus on W. Payne Brown and Harry S. Ingram, the first two gentleman in the history of this congregation to be recognized in this way for their long and faithful service to the Church of Jesus Christ.

June 1974. The Church recognized Roger Sockman, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Sockman, as he graduated from Marshall University in June, where he received the Department of Speech Award for broadcasting as the new director for Station WMUL Radio. Roger also received the Department of Journalism Award as an outstanding broadcasting journalist.

Congratulations were also extended to Denny Dodson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Dodson, charter members of Village Chapel. In June, Denny graduated from Louisville Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky with the degree of Master of Divinity.

June 16, 1974. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." And what could be more beautiful than the Golden Wedding Anniversary celebrated by Mr. and Mrs. John T. Johnson on this date. Nella and John have been members of Village Chapel for 17 years and make their home in winter at 3709 Venable Avenue, moving to their summer home "on the farm" in Williamstown, WV (near Parkersburg). Nella wore her 50-year-old wedding gown to celebrate

the occasion. Many members of Village Chapel made the trip to be with them to share in the festivities. Mr. Johnson is a former West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture.

1974. A very interesting and lovely art show took place at Village Chapel on Pentecost Sunday. Members of the church and our sister churches in the Southeast Parish were represented in the exhibits. A large crowd turned out to see and enjoy the display of original work done in many mediums. “The hand-made and hand-quilted bedspreads were a joy to behold. There were also flower arrangements, banners, original oil and watercolor paintings, wood carvings – you name it and we have it – even quilling! A truly lovely way to show off the different talents God has bestowed on each of us.”

An early historian describes the children’s participation in the Sunday service. “It is worth a visit to the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday at Village Chapel to see and hear the Children’s Sermon by Dr. Crow. When he invites the children to come to the chancel and be seated around him, they rush up from all sides. They seem to come up out of the floor and the walls. Twenty to thirty children arrive at the chancel steps each Sunday for their special surprise sermon. Sometimes the subject will be seashells, or building blocks, groceries, jig-saw puzzles—and during the Advent season, they light the candles in the Advent wreath and hear about each candle in turn. Each session offers a powerful lesson which the adults seem to enjoy as much as the children.”

November 1974. To celebrate Rev. Crow’s birthday, Sharon Curnutte wrote a Birthday Song in his honor entitled:

“When It’s Corn-Shucking Time in West Virginia, the Crows will Be Home to Roost”

Listen, ye people, while we tell you a story
It’s about a man who we all know
And his name is Conrad Crow.
It was on a day some years ago
That this future pastor was born
But little did his parents know
Of the life that lay before.

Engineering turned out not to be his thing
He was destined to be God’s man
And lead us to Christ’s love.
Varied are his activities.
He plants seeds in the sun
And harvest potatoes, beans and squash
‘Till gardening seasons done.

Hiking with his son, singing inspiringly too
And taking hayrides in the cold
With the temperature thirty-two.
He is always there when we need help,
He feeds our minds each week.
He wants us to be 'one in Christ'
And our fellowship complete.

So, we honor him tonight, and his family too
They care for us and work for us
We share with them and love them too.

December 1974. Dr. Douglas Curnutte, a member of the congregation at Village Chapel and a Ruling Elder, brought to church and administered to all who wished to receive it, flu vaccine. Those receiving the vaccine, in turn, made a special gift to the Alan Gordon Fund to continue to support his service as a medical missionary.

October 12, 1975. Never a dull moment at Village! On this day when Sunday morning worshipers entered the sanctuary, they found a tall, lovely bride in her wedding dress and veil, seated by her handsome bridegroom and their attendants. In a 9:45 service the couple had been married by the Rev. Drs. Conrad Crow and Albert C. Winn together with the Jesuit Priest, Fr. James Minkus. Organ selections were given by Mrs. David L. Shuman. The newlyweds will reside in Newton, Massachusetts.

Village Chapel, incorporated as a Church in 1950, celebrated its 25th Anniversary on **October 19, 1975.** The celebration began with a 9:45 a.m. Sunday School session featuring displays of photographs of historical moments in the life of the Church. The 11:00 service featured a sermon by Rev. Dr. Conrad Crow entitled, "A Chip Off the Old Century." The worship service was followed by a dinner in the Fellowship Hall. At 1:00, Harry Brawley, a long-time member, Sunday School teacher, and husband of Charter member, Betty Brawley, presided over a program devoted to recollections of the earlier history of the Church and forecasts for the future. Mr. Brawley was also honored for his service. Payne Brown served as Chairman of the Silver Anniversary observance. As a part of the celebration, letters from the three previous ministers, J. Moody McNair, Hugh F. Ash, and James R. Kennedy, were presented. Snippets from each:

McNair J. Moody. . . I thought that I had the best church one could have. It was a new church, and everyone a new member – You were so willing and eager to do anything you were asked to do. I remember you would say – "I have never done anything like that before – but I will try" – and try you did – and always it was a good job . . .

Hugh F. Ash . . . I remember only beautiful things about Village Chapel and the wonderful people we learned to know so well between 1954 and 1959. As I look back on those years, they were particularly important to me, for it was a time of growth and

development in my own ministry. The love and affection extended to me at that time were very important. Large adjustments were being made from the life of the military to the life of a private citizen, and pastor of the church. God opened the door for us to share together during that period of my life, and for this I am most grateful . . .

James R. Kennedy . . . Other situations that stand out in my mind include the large number of young people who attended college. I believe one year we had 79 young people furthering their education in college and university. Along this same line, our midnight Christmas Eve communion services remain vivid. The picture still is fresh in my mind – scores of young couples, as well as others approaching the church at 11 p.m. in the falling snow as they made their way across the lawn . . . As we look back upon our nine years at Village Chapel, it seems that this was the most satisfying of all my pastorates. We, therefore, are eternally indebted to the people of that fine congregation . . .

In an article published in the Charleston newspaper, Dr. Crow brought forth the activity of the newly formed coalition of four Presbyterian Churches – Village Chapel, Westminster, South Park and Ruffner Memorial. “The first visible effect of cooperation was the calling of a parish minister. The Rev. Mike Williams, who served as stated supply minister at South Park and as assistant minister at Village Chapel . . . One significant result, according to Dr. Crow, has been the building of trust between fellow Presbyterians who before were virtual strangers to one another. Eventually the idea of cooperation will be extended to other denominations to a greater degree, including sharing in union services such as on Thanksgiving and pulpit exchanges . . . Some of these hopes include service to nursing homes in the community, preparing a “rite of passage” for the adolescents as they join the church so that they may become a real force in the formative years, and establishing a memorial burial society for persons who wish to have a simple religious service and burial without pomp and great expense.”

The Village Chapel Staff at some point in Rev. Crow’s ministry included these individuals:

Rev. Conrad G. Crow, Minister
Rev. Michael E. Williams, Assistant Minister
Mrs. Jane King, Church Secretary
Steve Ramsey, Choir Director and Organist
Mrs. George Struthers, Assistant in Christian Education
Mrs. Madeline Pleasant, Custodian
James Burnette, Custodian

August 28, 1976. The four Parish churches (Village Chapel, Westminster, South Park and Ruffner Memorial) held their annual picnic in Kanawha State Forest. These picnics were just one of several joint services among the Presbyterian churches.

November 1976. To celebrate the death of Alfred B. Carrington, a member of the Session at the time of his death, an outdoor bulletin board was erected. Many members of the Church and friends of the Carrington family contributed toward the cost of this project which helped to make Village Chapel more “visible” in the Kanawha City community.

Undated events, 1976. It was learned from the Office of Greenbrier Presbytery in 1976, that this agency would be vacating space (in the house next door to the Church) it had rented from Village Chapel for several years to “move to more commodious quarters”. Village Chapel will miss the opportunity to serve the larger church by hosting the many meetings of Presbytery task groups and getting to know the members of other churches.

The Task Group for Assistance to Widows and Widowers met regularly during the year, ascertained needs among older members of the community and quietly met them wherever they could. No fanfare was exhibited by this group as many of the situations with which they dealt did not require knowledge by anyone except themselves and so they carried out their mission as Christ suggested – without drawing attention to themselves and giving God the glory.

The Long-Range Planning Group looked at future uses for the Fellowship House (next door to the church) since the Presbytery Office moved out. They made recommendations about parking around the church and conducted a survey to determine how many cars are parked in the vicinity of the church on Sunday. As a result, the Church voted to spend \$10,000 on various renovations to the Fellowship House and asked the Buildings and Grounds Committee to have angle parking lines painted in the off-street parking areas, hoping to make more advantageous use of what space is available.

August 1977. The four Southeast Parish churches joined forces for a Vacation Bible School held over the dates of August 2-6, using the Shalom material. There was an average enrollment for the week of 62 children.

December 28, 1977. As a tribute to Robert M. Eberbaugh, following his death in 1976, members of the Church dedicated a sculpture in his honor done by Dr. Cubert Smith, Chairman of the Department of Art at West Virginia State College. Dr. Smith was a personal friend of Mr. Eberbaugh and because he was a widely known and highly accomplished artist in many mediums, he was commissioned by the Church to sculpt the memorial.

At the dedication of this sculpture, Elmer Dodson, former mayor of Charleston and a ruling elder at Village Chapel, spoke of Bob Eberbaugh, the Man. Dr. Smith spoke of his friend, Bob Eberbaugh, the Artist.

“As the draped white cloth fell from the memorial under Mrs. Eberbaugh’s hands, there was a deep and reverential silence. Then, just as at a new exhibition of paintings or sculpture at an art gallery, a low murmur breathed from the church, a murmur of approbation and awe, wonder and admiration. The sculpted form – an abstract human form, radiating

power and strength and beauty just as Bob Eberbaugh radiated the warmth of mankind in his earthly life—invited his friends to touch and feel and caress it as though they were clasping hands with the ruling elder in a moment of fellowship.” (Charleston Daily Mail).

March 1979. “Who can forget the winter of ’79 with its bitter cold and fuel shortages!?!” Village Chapel did its part by not heating the sanctuary and having services in the Fellowship Hall from January 30th till March 6th. All thermostats were set at 65 degrees, even when the Day Nursery and offices were in use.

1979 brought a number of important additions to the Church. A ramp was installed at the side entrance. A dusk to dawn light was installed at the front corner of the Education Building and the roof over the parlor and kitchen was replaced for the sum of \$3,775. Lora Ingram, in gratitude to the congregation for their care during her illness, presented the Church with the wall clock in the Fellowship Hall.

On another note, the organ was said to be “operating at only 50% capacity and continues to be of great concern and anxiety.” Carolyn Perrine is the Organist and Sharon Curnutte the Choir Director.

In early **1979**, Rev. Crow received an invitation to attend Merrill Fellowship Meetings for the spring term at the Harvard University Divinity School. This opportunity (Fellowship) is granted each semester to four persons from any denomination who have completed more than five years of service in the ministry. Those selected take up residence in Cambridge, Massachusetts for one academic term. The Session voted to give Dr. Crow sabbatical leave to accept the Fellowship and as a result, Dr. Crow was away from the pulpit from January 29th to March 24th. During his absence, members of the congregation took over the pulpit and congregational visitation.

Following Rev. Crow’s sabbatical, he wrote a response to the question, “What have you learned after five weeks on sabbatical?” and his response was:

It’s a fair question for anyone who is presumably using time and space wisely in order to become more effective in ministry. There are a few facts and historical truths I could share with you. For example, the Reformers in the 16th century pruned away much of the ceremonial from worship, reducing baptism to a water ritual, the Eucharist to communion and ordination to the laying on of hands. (A far cry from the high Episcopal church I attended Sunday where the incense censer was swung not only over the altar but over the Bible before reading of the gospel.)

But what I have learned has less to do with facts and more to do with revelation and discovery. I had not realized that when one leads worship in a particular church Sunday after Sunday for 24 years, what is happening in worship elsewhere goes unnoticed. The riches of other traditions, which might instruct our own, are not known. That, plus the simple rush of Sunday following Sunday, and the sign of relief

which accompanies the completion of another sermon, leaves little room for anything else. Because people have always been worshippers, and because showing worth to God has a direct bearing on self-estimation, intention and action, I hope to bring back and share the zest for the worship of God in Jesus Christ. Not to say, “This is the way to worship”, but to invite some of you to explore and create ways to celebrate more fully the sacraments, and to acknowledge in a spiritual way the significant events in the cycle of life.

All in all, the experience is cumulative, the benefits multiply, relationships deepen. If I am not able to tell you in so many words what I have learned, I trust it will be evident in my life that I have learned and have grown a bit more into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

The Lord’s Peace
Conrad

July 22, 1979. Pew Bibles were used for the first time, and the congregation was invited to purchase and designate 100 of them as memorials or to honor family or friends by ordering them through the church office at a cost of \$2.50 each. An additional 100 Bibles were given by the Men of the Church to honor Payne and Sally Brown and Virginia and Harold Miller, long-time members of our Church.

August. 1979. The Session called George Losko to be he Director of Christian Education. He immediately began his work in this role and quickly became a busy addition to the staff. His wife, Barbara, and their one-year-old daughter, Melissa, resided in the house next to the church. On August 26th there was an Installation Service for George, and a reception in the Fellowship Hall followed the service.

Information regarding George indicated that he was born in Pennsylvania, attended Pikeville College in Kentucky and received the Master of Divinity degree from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in 1976, with a specialization in Christian Education. He worked for 2 ½ years in the First Presbyterian Church of Harrison, Arkansas. George has a wealth of information which will help any teachers, youth leaders, or persons looking for assistance with books, film strips, etc. His official job description notes that he is “to create a nurturing environment by creating and maintaining effective educational programs for all members of Village Chapel.

September 10, 1979. Village Chapel was entertained by a group from Lynchburg, Virginia, THE AGELESS WONDERS, consisting of men and women with average ages from 72 years and UP! These traveling performers proved that adulthood can be truly wonderful. The enthusiasm and joy they demonstrated in presenting their songs, dances, jokes and musical instruments of every description was wonderful and proved them worthy of the national acclaim they enjoy.

Another major event in **1979** as noted in the following statement from the Organ Committee is recorded as:

After three years of intensive work and extensive research this Committee presented its report and recommendations – first to the Session, then to the Congregational Meeting in September. The motion made and passed by the congregation at that meeting was as follows:

“That a Capital Fund Drive in the amount of \$125,000 for the purchase of a pipe organ, musical instruments and renovation of the chancel area be approved.”

The generous response of the congregation, pledging some \$95,000, enabled the Session to sign a contract with the Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, Kansas, for a 21-rank pipe organ, with delivery and installation scheduled for the late summer of 1981.

It was the culmination of a dream that wind through pipes might replace the undependable sounds of our ailing, and aged, electronic organ. Joe Hudson was the Chairman of this hard-working committee, while William A Coffey kept the Finance Committee at its task until the Capital Fund Drive was successful.

Other members of the Organ Committee were Sharon Curnutte, Mary Ross, Don Pitzer, Katheryn McCrary, Terry Perrine, and Carolyn Perrine, organist. Conrad Crow pastor, and Lawton Posey, consultant, served as ex officio members.

The year **1979** ended with the demise of the large gas-fired heating unit for the sanctuary. An urgent letter was sent to the congregation (likely from Conrad Crow):

“When our sanctuary was built in 1963, a wonderful heating machine was installed. It had pumps and pipes, motors and magnets, valves by the dozens, and a gas flame that went . . . ROAR! It served us well through hundreds of Sundays, cooled the fevered brows of bridegrooms and warmed our toes on Christmas Eve. But, alas, time takes its toll of mice and men and furnaces. The ROAR is no more.”

There followed an urgent appeal for funds to replace the heating unit, in answer to which the congregation pledged nearly \$8,000. Volunteers from the Building and Grounds Committee assisted in tearing out the old unit and installing the new. Two weeks after the old unit died, the new, simpler and more economical unit was in place and operating.

In addition to these additions, under the very capable leadership of Col. Gordon Jung, U.S. A. ret., this committee helped install the air conditioning unit for the sanctuary, spent many Saturdays trimming the shrubbery, painting, cleaning gutters, and generally keeping the facilities in tip-top shape! The year, **1979**, proved to be a busy and expensive year for the Village family!!

In **1979**, a memorial gift was given by the family and friends of Mr. O.H. Rhodes -- a beautiful white brocade funeral pall with the symbol of the cross on it.

The **1980** Committee Reports to the Congregation included a "Statement from the Session" which represents a significant charge to the Church:

The Village Chapel Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) which has some 4,000 churches located in 60 presbyteries, with about 880,000 members. We are members of the Presbytery of Greenbrier which has 125 churches within its borders in West Virginia; and of the Synod of the Virginias, which includes most of West Virginia within its boundaries.

The Session of our congregation is composed of 18 Ruling Elders in three Classes with a Class elected each year by the congregation. Several years ago (**February 25, 1973**) the congregation voted to go to the unicameral form of government, hence we do not have a Board of Deacons.

The Session recently did a serious study of the Scriptures to present guidelines to the congregation and those seeking to unite with our congregation. In order to be a Christian, a member of Christ's Body, growing in spiritual maturity, the Session would set forth these guidelines from the Scriptures:

1. The regular praise and worship of God, particularly on the Lord's Day.
2. A growing faith through the study and interpretation of Scripture, particularly through the Sunday Church School.
3. The good and generous stewardship of time, talents, and possessions.
4. A practicing life of prayer.
5. An attitude of servanthood in ministry to the sick, bereaved, and those with special needs.
6. A personal witness and outreach to share Christ with others.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are charged to love one another, to weep and rejoice together, to pray for each other and equip ourselves for the work of ministry. To that end, may the Lord richly bless, keep and use all those who are members of Village Chapel.