

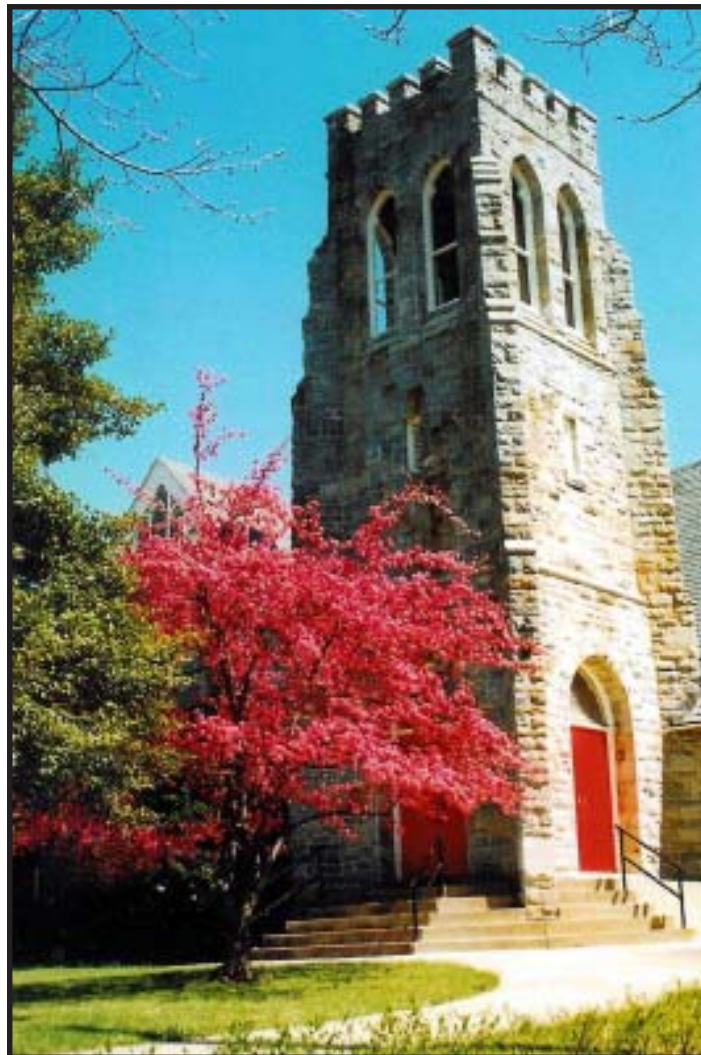
**THE CENTENNIAL LEGACY  
OF  
ROLAND PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

1901 - 2001

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The Future In The Past

*Our Thoughts Determine Our Destiny. Our Destiny Determines Our Legacy.*



Edited by William N. White



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## DEDICATION

This booklet is dedicated to the pastors, members of the congregation, and friends of this church, both past, present, and future, who have or will contribute to this church with their many good thoughts and deeds.

**Those faces, remembered or not, and those to come, form a mosaic picture yet to be completed. It is they that are the disciples of the Church of the Lord. Look more closely in our church and those gems of a continuing mosaic picture can be seen.**



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank our pastor, Rev. Dr. Wayne G. Boulton, for his outstanding and insightful paper herein. Also, I thank him for his support and patience. He gave me the freedom to struggle, contemplate many ideas, and then settle on the framework for this booklet. He said I was pushing a stone up hill. I was, but I took many a respite.

I thank our associate pastor, Rev. Teresa Jo Martin-Minnich, for a very thoughtful paper filled with a collection of fine memories. Such an account reflects also her leadership and dedication.

I thank Dr. Donald C. Kerr, our pastor emeritus, for his perceptive paper herein. He has presented a wonderful history and reflections as our past senior pastor. He has been with this church in both of the mentioned positions for over 56 years. He and his wife, Nora, recently moved to Florida. They are missed yet in many ways they are still here.

Thanks to Jean Waller Brune who met with Wayne, Betty Ann Schmick Howard, and I. I received the benefit of good advice and great ideas. In different ways, we all wanted to celebrate our first hundred years, and to capture our history.

Betty Ann is not a member of this church, but a friend nonetheless. She is from Roland Park and editor of the Roland Park Country School centennial book, *A Place In Our Hearts*, 2001. Jean is head of that school. Betty Ann not only helped me a great deal for which I am most thankful, but she offered encouragement to me at a time when I wasn't going to continue. I am not only most grateful to her, but indebted to her.

William N. White, Member of  
Roland Park Presbyterian Church  
March 28, 2005

## PREFACE

“Everything begins with a thought. What we think determines who we are. Who we are determines what we do. **Our thoughts determine our destiny. Our destiny determines our legacy.**”  
Thinking for a Change by John C. Maxwell.

My initial thought was to prepare a history of the Roland Park Presbyterian Church, but would the printed collections of chronological facts end up collecting dust on a number of shelves? Shouldn't we learn from our first hundred years? Shouldn't future pastors, congregations, and friends of the church benefit from the thoughts and actions of all those people who contributed to this church from its inception? Our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Wayne G. Boulton, and our Pastor Emeritus, Dr. Donald C. Kerr, herein express in their papers their thoughts, actions, goals, and dreams which in turn reflect the religious labors of love that so many, named and unnamed, have contributed to this great church to the Glory of God. Rev. Teresa Jo Martin-Minnich discusses in detail in her paper the activities of the church during her ministry. It reflects her calling with a number of pastors at this church, and her steadfastness has been a pillar to us. It is a benefit to us to have an associate pastor's perspective.

It is indeed a rare and wonderful occasion to have such wisdom and experience presented to us in this manner. Dr. Kerr began in 1948 and retired in 1980. Rev. Martin-Minnich began in 1982, and the Rev. Dr. Boulton began in 1999. We are blessed with more than a half a century of primary sources of history.

It has been said that “Human history is in essence a history of ideas” (The Outline of History by Herbert George Wells). And that “history is philosophy learned from example” (On the Study and Use of History by Henry St. John).

It is through the grace of God and our faith and hope in Christ that we pursue progress. The concept that through human endeavor – an increase in knowledge and wisdom – we can make this world a better place.

William N. White

## **REV. DR. WAYNE G. BOULTON**

**Pastor**  
**Roland Park Presbyterian Church**  
**August 1999 - Present**

### **The Centennial and Beyond**

My first impression of Roland Park Presbyterian Church came to me in the usual way. As you may know, we Presbyterians have a “call system” for selecting pastors. That is to say, we do not depend on a bishop or a church manager to appoint pastors in our congregations. On the contrary, we give that job to the congregation itself. When Rev. Morgan left our church in the latter part of 1997, the elders appointed a “Pastor Nominating Committee” or PNC to get this critical job done. Most Presbyterian pastors get their first and often lasting impressions of a congregation exactly the way I did – from the people chosen to serve on the PNC.

Typically a PNC reflects many sides of a congregation, and this one did that as well. Laura George, not yet Laura Cochran, represented our young adults. The committee could not have included two more seasoned congregational leaders than Jean Brune and Austin George. In Sharon Halm, the PNC had probably the single busiest lay volunteer in the congregation, plus a person who knew (and still knows) everything there is to know about Roland Park’s first-rate music program. David Hutcheon brought to the committee his own inimitable brand of humor and wisdom. And with his long-standing commitment to the youth program, Bill Sailors was a fine addition to the group.

Then there was Nelson White, a pillar of Roland Park Presbyterian Church, and one of the most ebullient personalities you will ever meet. When I was introduced to Nelson, I thought to myself: “If this man is typical of the congregation, we will have no trouble with outreach into the community.” I discovered later that outreach into the community is one of the challenges at Roland Park Church, but this turns out to be no fault of Nelson’s!! During the “Strawberry Festival” that the Church puts on each spring, he is famous for standing in the middle of Roland Avenue, wearing a wig of green hair, and inviting one and all to come over to Upland Road where a grand event is taking place.

The person I got to know most quickly and best was the PNC Chair, Donna Triptow. It did not take me long to see why the congregation turned to her to lead it through the process of selecting a new pastor. Donna has a law degree and served as a federal prosecutor before raising her family in Roland Park. She combines organizational savvy with vibrant Christian faith. After I was hired, she became chair of the Personnel Committee, then served as clerk of session for three years, and in 2002 – with the able assistance of Barbara Patterson and a “blue ribbon” committee – drafted the Roland Park Presbyterian Church Strategic Plan that will guide this congregation well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Donna Triptow both embodies and points toward, if you will, the next level of organizational effectiveness at Roland Park Church. RPPC is not yet organized as well as it could be, but we are a “tighter ship” in Christ’s service than we were five years ago. Getting the right people in the right



Rev. Dr. Wayne G. Boulton

positions – and then supervising them well – is perhaps the key feature in any church’s organizational structure. Donna oversaw a number of critical staff upgrades in the church office and in our Director of Music position. (These changes continue now with our maintenance staff.)

While she was clerk, I instituted weekly staff meetings. The church now has a real Master Calendar and a “master calendaring process” in place. Toward the end of Donna’s time as clerk, the pastors began providing session every month with a written report on the frequency and extent of their pastoral visits.<sup>1</sup>

Another PNC member who continues to give critical service to Roland Park was Wayne Fritze. Wayne is a preacher’s kid who grew up to be an insurance executive in Baltimore. He heads up our Stewardship Committee, and has run masterful annual campaigns in the church for the last four years. Our giving has increased each year, even in bad economic times. One of the great challenges facing Wayne and Roland Park Church is transforming RPPC’s substantial endowment (4.2 mil or \$14K/member) into a positive force in our stewardship life. Wayne’s committee is now giving discrete attention to the role of planned giving in the church.

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I have had the good fortune to serve Roland Park Presbyterian Church during its centennial year as a congregation. One of my first jobs in the fall of 1999 was to get the centennial planning started. In the summer of that year, I had a profitable conversation – the first of many – with the pastor who was serving in an “interim” capacity at Roland Park, the Rev. Dr. J. Calvin K. Jackson. “Cal” strongly advised me that since 2001 would be the year that the centennial celebrations would start (the church was incorporated in 1901), a committee should be formed quickly, and the best person to head up the committee would be Jennie Lee Fowlkes.

Once again, looking back on this conversation and on what happened as a result of it, we can see that getting the right person in the right place at the right time is often the crucial matter in church leadership. With respect to the Roland Park’s centennial, Jennie Lee was that person. Now the chair of the Board of Trustees at Bryn Mawr School, Jennie Lee had been very active in the church’s life and has exquisite (close to indescribable, actually) leadership gifts.

We spread our celebration out over an entire year, beginning on Anniversary Sunday in May of 2001 with a sermon by our *pastor emeritus*, the Rev. Dr. Donald Craig Kerr. Don was senior pastor at RPPC for 32 years, 1948-1980, and is now living in the area. He and his wife, Nora, are the kind of treasures that Presbyterian churches too rarely have by their side in retirement for any length of time. Think of it. What an opportunity to have at the opening of your church centennial, 20 years after his retirement, a former pastor who has served your congregation with distinction for over 30 years! Another of our centennial plans involving Don and Nora was to invite the Presbytery of Baltimore to meet at Roland Park. We hosted the Presbytery after the centennial, in January of 2003, where we honored the Kerrs with a “Lifetime Achievement Award in Ministry” from the congregation.

Our centennial events really sparkled. Mayor Martin O’Malley packed our Assembly Hall, and the internationally renowned Morgan State University Choir performed in our sanctuary. The Centennial Lecture Series featured the President of St. Mary’s University, the Chaplain of Johns

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6 <sup>1</sup>You may be reminded here, as I am, of the old joke about leadership, which goes like this. There are only two rules that leaders must follow. First, keep your eye on the big picture; don’t sweat the small stuff. Second, there is nothing but small stuff.

Hopkins University, the former Head of Gilman School, and the Executive Director of the Institute of Christian and Jewish Studies.

But the most significant long-term result of our centennial is apparent to anyone approaching Roland Park Church today by car or on foot. The appearance of the place has changed, and changed dramatically. The Centennial Planning Committee studiously avoided calling the change we wanted a “face-lift,” but that is exactly what the church received.

Soon after I came to Roland Park, a landscape architect from Alabama named David Patterson began worshiping with us. He joined the church, and was so effective at putting his gardening skills to work on our church property that soon he was appointed a Trustee and then placed on the Centennial Planning Committee. With the encouragement of the Committee, Dave drafted a brilliant plan for upgrading our property, culminating in time for the centennial’s grand finale on Anniversary Sunday in May of 2002. He sold his plan to the congregation like a master salesman. Combined with the other large centennial project of replacing our old and clouded safety glass that had been blocking the beautiful stained glass windows of our sanctuary from being seen from the street, we came out of our centennial with a “new church” as far as visitors approaching our property are concerned.

A distinguished retired judge and long-time member of the congregation, The Honorable Edward O. Thomas, put his sculpting skills to work and produced a magnificent centennial sculpture of “Jesus on the Donkey” that can be appreciated now by any worshiper at Roland Park. It was dedicated on Palm Sunday of 2002. Member Julie Evans planned a festive and heart-warming Centennial Dinner to help bring our centennial year to a close.

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There is a lot of promise in Roland Park Presbyterian Church. Much of the promise revolves around, as the Bible suggests, “holding on to what is good.” As our Strategic Plan says on every page, the “actual congregation” at Roland Park Presbyterian Church – the members and friends who worship regularly here – needs to grow by about 50%. This is a goal around which the entire congregation is united, but it is also a goal that is not going to be easy to implement.

The church faces physical and cultural challenges. We are a typical church of our size, in that we do not naturally see our congregation through the lens of a visitor in our midst. We need to do that more. And we will need to change the inside of our physical plant to match the much-needed changes we have made to the outside. The internal changes are likely to be expensive, and thus will need to be linked to a capital campaign.

But is Roland Park Church up to these challenges? You bet we are!

## REV. TERESA JO MARTIN-MINNICH

**Associate Pastor,  
Roland Park Presbyterian Church  
February 1982 - Present**

### “Finding” an Edifying Ministry

On an evening in February, 1982, I turned off of Northern Parkway onto Roland Avenue and stopped to ask a person on the street, “Where is Roland Park Presbyterian Church?” He gestured and answered, “Just down the street on your left.” Since receiving those directions, I have been “finding” Roland Park Presbyterian Church for twenty-three years.

Among the first Roland Park Church people I met were Jean Waller and Jean Brune, both elders and both on the Christian Education Committee. I soon learned that they were mother and daughter, exceptional educators and among the first of many folks at Roland Park Church who became my “family,” The first youth I met was Carol Glover, a teenager in 1982, staffing the crib-room/ nursery that morning and most Sunday mornings.

I was ordained on the hottest Sunday in June of 1982 at Roland Park Church. Since I was expecting our first child at that time, I was teased about whether he would be “ordained” too. I remember it taking more than a few helpful arms of elders to get me back on my feet after kneeling for the ordination prayer.

Elder Don Carroll bought me my first “oysters on the half-shell” at Lexington Market before a Presbytery meeting downtown. Church treasurer Clifford Bruck greeted me every Monday morning before he began his weekly financial duties. Mr. Tasker, our sexton, wouldn’t allow me to lift a chair or table and was always there to prepare the church building for worship, education, and meetings. Mrs. Katherine “Kat” Fletcher was Church and Pastor’s secretary with a delightful personality and tireless spirit (this was before computers).



Terry Martin-Minnich & George Hyde  
selling tickets at the Annual Strawberry Festival  
circa 1990



Annual Mother-Daughter dinner: Margaret Beck, Barb Patterson, Eleanor Wagner, Martha Wilson, Ellen White, Ella Rowe

Every Sunday morning, Jean Stein distributed the service flowers with love and precision. Later Ella Rowe took over the task continuing to brighten up the day for many RPPC friends, members and shut-ins.

My office was located on the ground floor, so I had immediate access to the Sunday School

Classrooms and Assembly Hall. I inherited the office and the Christian education responsibilities from Mrs. Harriett Bishop, a talented and dedicated educator and crafts-person. I was adopted by members of the Women's Association (preceding the name-change to Presbyterian Women): Ellen White, Ella Rowe, Jean Waller, Jean Statler, Margaret Clark, Margaret Beck, Margaret West, Betty Lamdin, Trudy Peal, Elva Swayne, Kim Englar, Helen Hyde, Martha Wilson, Virginia



The "Brides", circa 1990

Andreae, Cecil Bruck, Peg Wunderlick, Joan Buttner, Adelaide Dannettel, Martha Wilson, Eleanor Wagner, Darlene George, Jean Glover, Paula Belt, Ruth Davies, and many others who brightened my days and taught me about service, caring, and Christian love.

Cecil Bruck and Martha Wilson were both culinary and financial artists who prepared a monthly "Tuesday lunch" for members, friends and all in the neighborhood charging \$2.00 a person. In addition to paying for the meal, Cecil and Martha were able to make a sizable contribution annually to the Mission budget. These women, supported by many others in the Women's Association, also provided meals for the "Saints" — that is the Saint Andrew's and George's Societies of Baltimore. Between my first and second decade, the mantle of dinner preparation went from Cecil and Martha to Jennie Lee Fowlkes and her creative crew. Roland Park Church continues to serve outstanding church dinners.

One of the highlights of the first decade of my ministry at Roland Park Church was the Annual Mother Daughter Dinner. Margaret Beck headed the "favors" each year. These "favors" were annual works of art created by Margaret and her committee and kept "secret," even from their Associate Pastor.

Darlene George and her committee always provided the most beautiful fresh flowers for the event, including outstanding roses from back-yard gardens. Eleanor Wagner and her committee provided the dinner which always included baked chicken breasts, jello salad, and was always delicious. The program always included thoughtful words from Merla Diuguid and a lovely drawing by Elaine Blount. "Men" — husbands, sons and friends, served the meal with panache. I was honored to provide a program for this event from "Wedding Dresses" to a "Paris, Texas Fashion Show," to special skits and musicals by RPPC children and youth.



Barrie Sigler, Richard Sigler and Ron Martin-Minnich in *The Odd Couple* in 1988



Edith Davis, Jeannie Walden, Beth Bishop, Ron Martin-Minnich and Ellen White in *Second Time Around* in 1998

In 1985, I invited members of the congregation to join in performing a version of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens for the Church's Christmas Dinner. The following fall, the cast and crew reunited to perform *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1986) as a dinner theatre and the RPPC Thesbyterian Players were born! The name was coined by Ron Mitchem. *The Odd Couple* followed in 1988, *Bone Chiller* in 1989, *Done to Death* (1990), *The Butler Did it Singing* (1991), *Deadly Earnest* (1992), *Godspell*

(1994), directed by Phillip Collister, *Here Come the Brides* (1997), *Second Time Around* (1998), *Love Letters* (February, 1999), *Blithe Spirit* (November, 1999), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (2000), *A Christmas Carol* (2001), *Love Is, a Valentine Variety Show* (2002) in conjunction with members of the Chancel Choir directed by Phillip Collister, *Web of Murder* (2003), *The Dining Room* (2004) and *The Mousetrap* (2005). Among those who have tread the boards at RPPC are Richard and Barrie Sigler, Richard G. Sigler, Clifford Bruck, Bruce Gilmore, Jean Brune, Kennedy Waller, Ellen White, Christine White, Barb Patterson, Dave Patron, Ben Renwick, Ron Martin-Minnich, Bill Wortham,



Robyn Glover, Michelle Danielczyk, Seth Gray, Ann Patron, Chris Flint, Brian Glover, Beth Bishop and Clay Langlotz in the 2001 production of *A Christmas Carol*

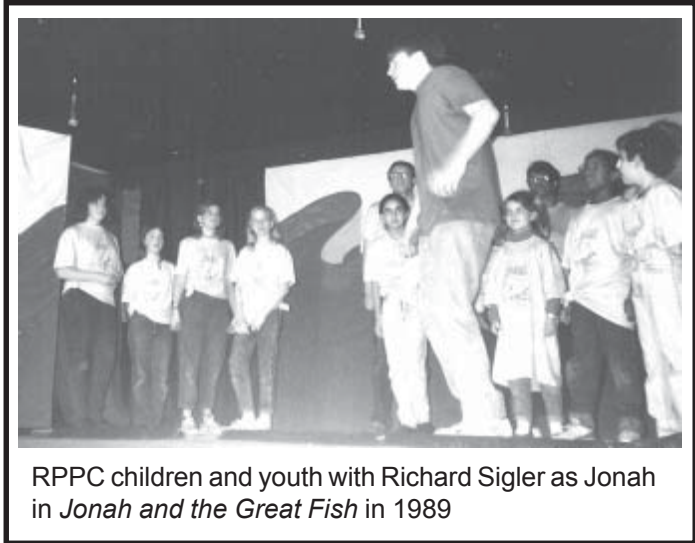


RPPC children and youth in *Shobi Shares a Miracle*, 1984

Peg Mullikin, Bill Sailors, Mary Glover, Linda Mitchem, John Cochran, Robbi Walls, Allen and Edith Davis, Alan and Jeannie Walden, Clay Langlotz, Miriam Hepe, Brent and Jody Trostle, Judy Avera-Flint, Beth Bishop, Misty Rossbottom, Martha Thomas and youth members: Tony Martin-Minnich, Daniel Martin-Minnich, Chris Flint, Anne Patron, Robyn Glover, Brian Glover, Michelle Danielczyk, Hannah Deegan, Sarah Deegan, Diane

Salsbury, Seth Gray, Alex DeWeese, and Mary Kelly. For twenty years, Roland Park Church has offered an opportunity for theatre through the Thesbyterian Players, but like the congregation itself, theatre at Roland Park Church goes back to 1901. In its century of ministry and service, the Church has featured men and women performing chancel drama's with elaborate lighting, light comedy and variety shows in the Assembly Hall.

In addition to the Thesbyterian Players, there were years of Intergenerational Musicals with children, youth and adults in Roland Park Church.



RPPC children and youth with Richard Sigler as Jonah in *Jonah and the Great Fish* in 1989



David Hutcheon, Dick Flint and Neil McCabe are the Three WiseGuys

Bible stories came alive with “100% Chance of Rain,” “Moses and the Freedom Fanatics,” “Jonah and the Great Fish,” “Peace in the Kingdom,” “Shobi Shares a Miracle,” and “David and the Giants.” And who can forget the year three Dads — Dick Flint, David Hutcheon and Neil McCabe — played the role of the three wisemen *with cue cards* and were forever deemed the “Three WiseGuys!” None of these nor the Thesbyterian Player performances would have been successful if it had not been for the tremendous sound system and expertise from Nelson White and the Nelson C. White Company.

In May of 1986, I worked with a great group of volunteers, including Ferd and Jeane Meyer, to revive the May Fest. I will always remember Norm Andreae finessing the permits from downtown; Nelson White in a green wig inviting one and all to come to the Festival; Alan Walden's voice over the P.A. system; set-up and take down with Dave Patron, John Cochran, David James, Richard Letocha, David Patterson, the Kennedy Wallers, the Martin-Minnichs and all the

others who have pitched in over the years. Helen Hyde and Andrea Hyde making booth decorations and more recently, staple gun and green plastic experts Misty Rossbottom and Janet Neer; Lew Beck taking photographs; Clifford Bruck and Don Carroll, Gary Glover, Allen Davis and Sharon and Chuck Halm counting out booth money and balancing all the financial data. We have all enjoyed the Tea Room with Martha Wilson, Cecil Bruck, Thursa Minnich Brackbill, and Jennie Lee Fowkes; Harriette Bishop and the crafts, including clever hand-made wooden toys by Norwood Funk and lovely hand-woven work by Lois Funk; Shirley Daily at the Baked Goods Table; Peg Mullikin selling “cotton candy”; Shirley Byers then Darlene George and daughters, Julie Evans and Laura



“Santas Helpers”: Robyn Glover, Daniel Martin-Minnich, Quincey Renwick, Ann Patron and Catherine McCabe

Cochran, selling flowers then passing the mantle to Courtney Sieck and daughters, Hope Sieck and Carter McDonough; John and Nancy Taylor, Clay Langlotz and Judy Avera-Flint selling books; Richard and Barrie Sigler organizing and selling White Elephants with John Cochran and Ron Martin-Minnich; JoAnn Davison and Janice Moore followed by Laura Cochran selling “Bobbles, Bangles and Beads”; Strawberries and Ice Cream with Bob and Barb Patterson and later with Bill and Chris White and Diane and Craig Slotke; Elaine Cochran, Virginia Andreae, Kim Englar, Ginnie Griffin, Julie Evans and their crew perfecting the Silent Auction; Jim Lyall, Doug Buttner, Neil McCabe, Wayne Fritze and all the other men at the barbecue grill with Susan Davis, Christine and Hannah Tennis at the counter; special gourmet foods by Sony Florendo and

son, Luis Florendo, and Swaran Dhawan and daughter, Neetu Dhawan-Gray. And I will always treasure George Hyde sitting beside me for many years selling tickets for children’s games; Kennedy Waller, Yvonne Abraham, Rene and Glinda Florendo, Neil McCabe, Bill Sailors and all our many youth delighting children with the games; Beth Bishop leading pony rides; the Gorman sisters — Ginger G. Patron and Beth G. Renwick, and their daughters staffing the Moonwalk; and everyone having a great time. The annual May Strawberry Festival continues to go on today with the next generation, chaired by the Session’s Church Life Committee.

During the decades of my ministry, Christmas Eve services have included a Nativity Pageant with many of our children and youth re-enacting the Christmas story. This past Christmas the youth group tried a “live nativity” outside in the churchyard with a live donkey, two sheep, a goat and a very large calf. Many of our youth took turns being the nativity characters — Chris Flint, Catherine McCabe, Will McCabe, Rip Friddell, Ann Friddell, Katy John, Hannah Deegan, Alex DeWeese, Beth Rice, Abby Rice, Daniel Martin-Minnich,



Strawberry Festival 2002: Daniel Martin-Minnich, Ken Waller, Alex Hutcheon and Will McCabe

and youth leaders Tony Martin-Minnich, Ron Martin-Minnich, and Bill Sailors. Eric and Heather von Marko provided “live” music; Richard and Barrie Sigler recorded the story from the Gospel. All went well for the first hour until the temperature dropped turning rain to snow and breeze to gusting wind bringing an end to this first venture. We will try again!

Laura Halm, daughter of Chuck and Sharon Halm, was my very first baptism on July 10, 1982. In the subsequent years I have been honored to baptize many of our children. I have also been fortunate to have helped confirm youth for whom I later performed weddings, baptized and confirmed their children. Our confirmation and youth classes have logged in many hours of community service at Our Daily Bread, the AIDS Residential Services, work with McKim Center children, and Habitat for Humanity. Youth Class members have participated in three National PCUSA Youth Trienniums and have raised awareness of homelessness by engaging in two “Box City” experiences. Confirmands have been paired with Elder-Sponsors resulting in close relationships among the congregation and active involvement of youth in their upper school/ senior high years.

Working in partnership, I have had the opportunity to serve the congregation of Roland Park Church with Albert “Skip” Bush, James Glasse, Brett Morgan, Cal Jackson, and Wayne Boulton.



Tony Martin-Minnich lends a hand at Strawberry Festival 2004



1988 Confirmation Class: Rob Gilmore, Jon Patton, Adrienne Mullikin, Tori Lyall, Katherine Williams, Courtney McClellan (Robin Hyde, Jennifer Manson not shown). Elder Sponsors: Terry Martin-Minnich, Darlene George, Jean Waller, Kim Englar, Charles Stein, Allan Kaylor

Yes, I “found” Roland Park Church; it has been and continues to be a most rewarding, loving, and outstanding experience fashioning me into ministry. And I say, “God bless each and every one of you and thank you.”

— Terry Martin-Minnich, Associate Pastor.

## **DR. DONALD CRAIG KERR**

**Pastor Emeritus  
Roland Park Presbyterian Church  
Pastor 1948 - 1980**

### **A Brief History from 1948 – 1980**

“The church is but a means to the production of saintly souls,” so wrote Baron von Hugel who was a German Catholic layman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In recalling some of the history and names of the past, one can easily believe the importance of that statement. It seems unfortunate that some events of the time and names of note are omitted, not because of neglect but by nature virtue of ignorance or lack of remembrance.

Roland Park Presbyterian Church began its history at the turn of the century in 1900 when a group of about a dozen men met at the home of Mr. John T. Hill on Roland Avenue to discuss the possibility of organizing a church. A place of meeting was later arranged to be on the second floor of what was then known as the Morgan & Millard drugstore in the Roland Park Shopping Center.

In 1901 a stone structure, costing about \$15,000 was built at the corner of Roland Avenue and Upland Road, with the consent of the Presbytery of Baltimore. The Rev. John W. Douglas was called to be the first minister and he continued with the church until his death in 1939. Mr. John T. Hill became the first superintendent of the Sunday school.

Succeeding The Rev. John Douglas was The Rev. John T. Galloway who was the minister from 1940 to 1948. During this time several significant improvements were made to the building, which had suffered damage because of a fire. The Woman’s Association or Ladies Guild contributed much to the enlargement of the church not only with money but also with time and advice.

That part of the history to which I am more closely associated lies between the years 1948-1980. So, let us begin with the fall of 1948, when a delegation from the church arrived at our doorstep in New Haven, Connecticut, where I had been the minister of the Benedict Memorial (later First) Presbyterian. The delegation consisted of the following: Albert W. D. Carlson, clerk of the session, Ferdinand Meyer, Raymond Dannettel, Mrs. Ruth Dawson, William Conrad. They were a part of the church’s Nominating Committee to select a new Pastor and had come to interview me and Nora.

The result of this visit was to invite me to come to Baltimore and visit Roland Park. Our two children were five and three so Nora stayed home with them, while I came to Baltimore and was given a room at the Baltimore Country Club. During my visit I was introduced to others of the church, including Mr. & Mrs. James F. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. A. Curtis Bogert, Albert Graham, Frank Roberts, Mr. & Mrs. George Shaw, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Gowdy, Mr. & Mrs. Vickers, Mr. & Mrs. James Bayless, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Beck.

In time, I was again asked to return and to preach a sermon at the Hamilton Presbyterian Church. It was a very warm June Sunday and, there being no air-conditioning, all the windows in



Dr. Donald Craig Kerr

the church were wide open. The result was that the street cars, rumbling along Bel Air Road, created a lot of noise so that the Committee who came to hear me preach heard very little. In any case, I was accepted and asked to come to be the Pastor of the church. The salary, after a little negotiation, was set at \$5,000 a year including the Manse at 106 Elmhurst Road, which once had been the home of Dr. & Mrs. Stuart Egerton.

In December 1948 we arrived. Nora and the two children, Don Jr. and Betsy, drove alone in the snow through the Holland Tunnel, while I had come by train with the moving van to follow. Our first meeting was in the church office, where Francis Fowlkes had brought a picnic basket. Later we were introduced to Mrs. Parker Dix, who was much involved in the Woman's Association, of which Mrs. Ruth Dawson was the President, and also Mrs. Margaret Beck, who had been the church secretary while her husband was away in the Aleutian Islands.

Soon, after being settled in our new home, the congregation honored us with a sumptuous evening reception. The men were dressed in formal attire, as were the women who wore white gloves. The old Sunday school room was decorated with silver candelabra and silver plates and cutlery together with large bouquets. A receiving line included members of the Committee and the Session.

At the beginning of my tenure there was no choir – only one or two soloists. The organ was situated in the center of double aisles and was behind the pulpit. Mrs. Milton (Miriam) Young was the choir director and acted as part-time secretary and children's program coordinator. The organist at the time was a Peabody Hopkins student. The one most instrumental in the youth program or The Westminster Fellowship (as it was called) was Nelson White, whose youth and enthusiasm and love of movies kept the young people busy and interested.

One of the longtime Treasurers was Mr. James Bayless, who later enriched the Endowment Fund with a substantial gift. He was followed by Mr. C. Norman Andreae, Sr., then Mr. James A. Emery, and after him Mr. Donald Garver, to be succeeded by Mr. Clifford Bruck.

When it came time to observe the Fiftieth Anniversary in 1950, a committee was organized to think about plans for the future. It was then that an Endowment Fund was established with Mr. Albert Carlson as chairman and including Ferdinand Meyer, Curtis Bogert, Hiram Griffin, Lewis Beck, Kennedy Vickers and Charles Emmons. The first gift of \$5,000 was received from the estate of Mrs. Ephraim Bacon. In January 1950 another gift came to the Kerrs with the birth of their third child, Hugh Douglas.

The Anniversary Committee expanded its plans to include a major renovation of the building that involved literally tearing the structure apart and rebuilding it with added spaces. Mr. Lewis Beck was chairman of the Building Committee and Mr. Prentiss Browne was chosen to be the architect. While construction was going on, the property at 2 Elmhurst Road was purchased, where the offices were moved and various functions took place, including the Elmhurst Nursery.

At this time Mrs. Guy (Jo) Howard became the director of youth and children's programs and Mrs. Davis Mulholland acted as secretary. Dr. Harry Robinson was chosen to be Superintendent of the Sunday school, following Mr. Gilbert Horn and later succeeded by Mr. Robert Davies. Following Mrs. Howard was Mrs. Bird (Harriett) Bishop together with Mrs. Margaret Tilghman. Mrs. Herman (Elizabeth) Hobelmann became church secretary and in later years Mrs. Parker (Nancy) Dix was the secretary.

After completion of the construction, which brought about a new divided chancel, a new organ, a new hand-carved wall-mounted design of "The Burning Bush," given by Miss Margery

Bowes, a new chapel, gift of Albert Graham, a new basement assembly room, a new communion table, gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson in memory of The Rev. John Douglas and new Sunday School rooms, a Fiftieth Anniversary reception was held in the church, where everyone was dressed in formal attire. Many additional gifts became a part of the church's enrichment. Mrs. Jean (Lillian) Hofmeister had designed symbols for the cushions in the chancel seats, each one representing an aspect of the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. George Little prepared the needlepoint for the cushions by the pulpit and lectern, while other women completed other pieces of needlepoint. Mrs. Worthington Pearre presented a "prie-dieu" and Mrs. Monte Edwards gave the baptismal font, inside of which is a silver bowl in memory of Mrs. Carleton Sharretts. Other plaques throughout the church point to names whose contributions were significant, including oriental carpets in the chancel, given by Mr. & Mrs. Ferdinand Meyer, and also the oriental carpets on the chancel steps, given by the Buttner family in Memory of Mrs. Bessie Buttner.

The total cost of construction was about \$250,000, most of which was subscribed by members and friends of the church. On May 1, 1960 a Service of Rededication was held, which included a Fiftieth Anniversary hymn with music by Mr. A. Russell Slagle and words by Donald Craig Kerr. In 1969 a new stained-glass window was installed given by Mr. A. Russell Slagle in memory of his parents, Charles W. and May Russell Slagle.

In the course of time other events took place. The Married Couples' Group became an important attraction for members and the community. For several years a Tuesday Neighborhood Lunch was held in the church in addition to the yearly Needlework Guild meeting. An important aspect of the church's work was the Boy and Girl Scouts and Cubs and Brownies. For many years Mr. Lewis Beck was the scoutmaster and was awarded the Beaver medallion. For a time the church was home to the Paint & Powder Club and also at its inception the Baltimore Opera Society. During the Lenten Season a School of Religion was held and at Holy Week many distinguished preachers of national renown were invited to preach.

In 1966 The Rev. Donald French was selected to be an assistant minister and 1968 The Rev. Frederick Wood became an assistant and after him was The Rev. Augustus Succop. It gave the congregation a sense of pride to know that two young men of the congregation became Presbyterian ministers – The Rev. J. William Hill, III in Edinburgh, Scotland and The Rev. Gilbert J. Horn (now deceased).

A very much needed person in the 1950's was David John Lowe who became the church organist. Under his direction many choral concerts were presented, supplemented by other musical talent. As many as 300 or 400 people would attend. David Lowe continued as organist until his death in 1978.

In 1965 the congregation provided us with a gift that allowed Nora and me to go to the Holy Land and make an extensive trip to the Middle East and again as a gift from the Woman's Association. A portrait of me by Henry Cooper was made and hung in the church. During my nearly 32 years I was privileged to be elected Moderator of the Presbytery and President of the Trustees of the Synod and to serve on the Executive Committee of the National Board of Pensions, a delegate to the General Assembly four times, a Trustee and Chaplain of Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Chaplain at McDonogh, a teacher at Gilman, Chaplain of the St. Andrew's Society and St. George's Society, Chaplain for a day at the U. S. Senate, 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Mason, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Flag House, and Board of Advisors of the Presbyterian Home where Nora served also on the Woman's Board.

It seemed a special privilege to have as members of the congregation, along with other notable persons, the Principal of Eastern High School, the Principal of Western High School, the Headmaster of McDonogh School and the Dean of Students, the Headmaster of Gilman School, the Head of Roland Park Country School, the Dean of the University of Maryland Medical School and, on occasion, the Headmaster of the Calvert School.

One ceremony of importance was the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Church, which was held with a reception at Towson University. Mrs. Oliver (Alma) Van den Berg and Mrs. Douglas (Nina) Wise were in charge. Mr. Robert Maslin played the banjo. It was a full-dress gala occasion. Speaking of Mr. Maslin, services at 11 A.M. in the church often were broadcast over WFBR radio.

In June 1980 a final reception was held, when after 32 years I retired. Mr. Allen Davis presided and Mr. Raymond Dannettel spoke on behalf of the congregation. It was a grand finale to a long, beautiful and wonderful journey, which, as of this date, still continues under the bestowed title of Pastor-Emeritus.

Amen!

Alleluia!

## **PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

(12/7/2003)

My father had a deep influence on my choice of profession. He was one of eight brothers and one sister, all of whom were in some kind of professional life. He had been minister of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa. for more than 32 years and in that time also was Moderator of the General Assembly, in addition to being awarded a half dozen honorary degrees and being on many institutional governing bodies. I was a junior at Princeton University when he asked me what I wanted to be and achieve. Knowing the pleasure my father enjoyed in what he did, I decided to follow his advice to study for the ministry.

From my Seminary training, I felt dedicated to learning and academic pursuits. I wanted to bring to my congregations a level of appreciation for theological and philosophical inquiry. To encourage that I had Bible courses, courses in religion, reading and discussion forums and a School of Religion every year.

During every summer vacation I prepared a list of sermon topics for every Sunday in the year. I used a threefold pattern so that one year my preaching would center around the person of Jesus Christ, another year would be on the Church, another year would concentrate on social and moral issues. Always, room was left for special occasions. I would give the outline to the organist who would in turn pattern his music accordingly. Always I had a children's sermon on Sunday and every so often a Children's Day Sunday. On several occasions we would have a retreat for youth and adults at Camp Catocin, Md.

In regard to assistant ministers, I believe they should be independent in thought and performance. At the same time they need to be guided by the minister and the will of the congregation. The Session in all circumstances should regulate the customs and duties of the assistant, in so far as the Session abides by the jurisdiction of the Presbytery. The assistant should have a congenial relationship with the minister and congregation.

My philosophy about being a minister is that such a person should be in his normal life no different from any other person in his congregation so far as character and demeanor are concerned. He should practice spiritual wholeness and not try to be wholly other. I think it vitally important to engage in as many community interests as possible; thereby, attracting people to the church. Also, one should engage in the leadership of the church beyond the congregation – to be a part of the local and national scene. To be associated with academic and civic pursuits is one of the best advertisements a minister can offer in calling attention to the church where he presides.

Together with that it is highly important to appoint well-chosen persons to conduct the affairs of the church, persons in whom others have confidence. In a certain sense I believe in allowing the church to run itself and not to take too seriously any critical issue. Let people chose to do as seems best for the most. Pay attention to the least and give encouragement to all who are doing their best.

When I came to the church, I was young and the congregation, it seemed to me, was old. There was a certain amount of divisiveness within and the spirit of the people seemed very provincial and “set in their ways.” For example, there had been no Christmas Eve Service and never any Lenten Services. The communion table was a desk from someone’s home – very symbolic! There was no choir and people sat in pews for which they paid rent and the whole atmosphere was quite stodgy.

I wanted to expand the horizon of peoples’ thinking and to make the church as inclusive as possible and “to spread its wares” (so to speak) into the community. In time the congregation consisted of Unitarians, Catholics, Orthodox, and other denominations -- even some from Dr. Moon. I wanted to introduce a sense of ecumenicity and therefore encourage participation in various religious endeavors and for the first time the church united with the Episcopal and Methodist churches for a combined Thanksgiving Service. Also, we launched a Tuesday Noon Lunch and often various fraternal societies would come to Sunday services and often there was some inter-action between the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen and our church.

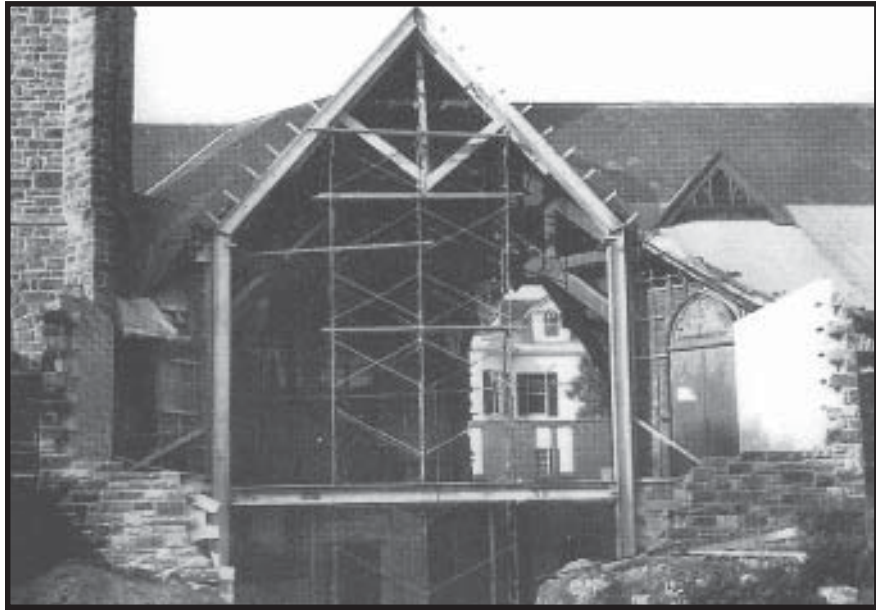
I think a bond of sociability is most helpful between the minister and the congregation. It is essential and gratifying for the people and the clergy to understand each other beyond church limits. To find one or two or three within the congregation whom a minister can consult privately and confidentially is important. Often that can be done over a lunchtime.

Of course, one of the major concerns to confront us was the reconstruction of the church building, which took almost 1 ½ years to complete. People were anxious and nerves were unsettled and people were restless. At the same time there was need for additional clerical and educational assistance and funds were scarce. A tense situation developed when our neighbor beside us objected strenuously to what we were doing and refused to have anything to do with us. After a good deal of personal attention, in time the relationship remained very amicable.

Several significant national affairs took place that required thought, patience and perseverance. There was the Korean War. There was the Civil Rights Demonstrations in which some of our youth took part. There were riots in Baltimore that made it necessary to guard the Church overnight. There was the assassination of President Kennedy. There was the Vietnam War and demonstrations. There was the Unification Church that attracted some of our young people. All of these events created a turbulent time through which we held ourselves together with determination, common sense and, not unimportantly, prayer. A vital asset in a minister’s life is a wife who allows her husband to be free for the sake of the congregation.

***“ . . . all will be made alive in Christ.”***  
I Corinthians 15: 22









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