

Our Jubilee Year “Ponderings From the Past” March 2007 *During our Jubilee Celebration year, Joan VanPatten, a member of the Communications Ministry team will dig into the archives to feature some piece of history every month in Focus.*

First Baptisms

The first service held in the new Shenendehowa Methodist Church was 48 years ago on March 15, 1959. The following Sunday, March 22, was Palm Sunday and five babies were baptized in the new sanctuary by Rev. Harry Mikels. They were Daniel Mikels, son of the minister, Rev. Harry Mikels and his wife, Elsie; John (Jack) Alessandrini, son of Frank and Janet Alessandrini; Cheryl DeVoe, daughter of Lawrence and Vaughn DeVoe; Lynn DeVoe, daughter of Jesse and Anna DeVoe; and Debra DeVoe, daughter of Barbara and Loren DeVoe.

The Alessandrinis had two firsts at our church: Their daughter Norma Jean was the first baby baptized in the newly formed Shenendehowa Parish on July 17, 1957. This was before the new building was built, and the four congregations met in the Grooms Church until the new building was ready. Norma Jean is now married and lives in Lees Summit, Missouri. She also has a son and manages an automobile dealership. Jack Alessandrini lives in Alaska and works for an oil company. He is married and has a step-daughter and two stepgrandchildren.

Cheryl DeVoe McGivern lives in Wilton with her husband and two boys. Her husband is a horse trainer and she helps out in his business. Debra DeVoe Henrickson resides in Selkirk, is married and the mother of two children. Lynn DeVoe Turner is the mother of two children and is a brand-new grandmother. She currently resides in Clifton Park. Although three DeVoe girls were baptized that day they were from different DeVoe families! No information about Daniel Mikels was found.

The Little White Church

Also found in the church archives in an old FOCUS issue was the following article about the little white church that used to be on the property. The article was adapted from one written by Larry Hart, *The Daily Gazette*, Dec. 4, 1994.

“Once upon a time – within the memory of some members of Shenendehowa – a colorful little white church, a replica of a typical country church, stood at Christmas time on the grounds of the former WGY Studio building at the point of Washington Avenue and Erie Boulevard in Schenectady. The church was spotlighted with colored lights, and its spire gleamed next to decorated trees. It was a customary GE observance of the holidays, along with the lights of the GE monogram being changed from white to red and green. The studio building had to go when work began on the I-890 overpass in 1960. GE first offered the little church to Burnt Hills Methodist Church, but they had no use for it; it was given to Charlton School.

Finally, it was offered to Shenendehowa while Winston Saunders was pastor. The structure was accepted as an ornament for the grounds and for storage – and there it lived happily after.”

However, as we know, it did not live there happily after. It fell into disrepair a few years ago and members of the church decided that it should be removed. So along came John Dahoda with a flatbed truck and he dismantled the little church and removed it from the property. According to his wife Pat, the little white church is now in their backyard and John tries to work on it when he gets an opportunity. He is hoping to restore it, but Pat says that it needs a lot work. The wood around the windows has rotted and part of the tower is missing plus there is a lot of other damage. Presently it is used for storage, and their grandson Zachary likes to store his play trucks in it.

Thanks to *Norma Morris, Frank Alessandrini, Doris Thayer, Vaughn DeVoe, Pat Perry* and especially *Pat Dahoda* for the information they supplied.