

**100th Annual Reunion Service, Central Mine Methodist Church – July 30, 2006**

**Minister:** Rev. Dr. Daniel Rosemergy

**\*Introit**                      The Central Introit (Glenna Slatterly Irwin)

**Greetings & Announcements:** Dave Thomas

**A Moment of Remembrance and Thanksgiving:** Bruce Griffin Martin

**Hymn:**                         For All the Saints (2<sup>nd</sup> Tune)

**Invocation and Lord's Prayer**

**Time with Children/Youth**

**\*Anthem:**                    For the Beauty of the Earth (Rutter)

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 121

**Hymn:**                        All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Diadem)

**Scripture Readings:** Selected Passages on Feasts and Festivals

**Special Music:**            Come, We Who Love God's Name  
Pat Mitchell, Donna Koskiniemi, Valerie Koskiniemi, Pete Manderfield, Dan Rosemergy

Let the Words of My Mouth [Call to Prayer]

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Offering and \*Offertory Anthem:**        Shall We Gather at the River (Arr. John Carter)

**Doxology**

**Hymn:**                        We've Been Here One Hundred Years (Glenna Irwin)

**Sermon:**                    **The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Remember, Rejoice, and Revision** (Abridged)

The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Central Mine M.E. Church Reunions—held the last Sunday of July since 1907—Wow, that's something to celebrate! I love celebrations of all kinds, but this is truly special, as it was from the beginning. In *The Central Mine M.E. Church: A Short History*, on the occasion of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Charles Stetter wrote:

It was on July 21, 1907 that the first 'Homecoming' was held. The church was filled to its utmost capacity. After the morning worship hot water was provided for those who desired coffee or tea. In family groups on some little green spot about the old home they enjoyed their lunch. During the afternoon, men and women who had not seen each other for some time recalled the days gone by, and they strolled along the deserted streets reliving the memories of their past. In those days the town stood much as it had been when the mine closed and the community was depopulated . . . . [M]any of the homes and other buildings have long fallen into decay and disappeared. . . . Yet the tradition is carried on by the second, third and fourth generations because of present-day respect for the old-timers whose love of their church and community has

been passed on to their descendants and because of the simple, honest, and uncomplicated way of life represented by this church, which stands in our present day like a brightly illuminated window into the past.

In more recent years the meaning of the Central Reunion has broadened. It is still a 'homecoming' for a few of the old-timers and their descendants but it now embraces a new meaning—a TRIBUTE to the memories of those hardy pioneers who lived and worked here and in the other mines of the Keweenaw Peninsula—men [and women] of all faiths. (pp. 16-17)

**Remember.** While the Reunion Services began as a homecoming, they are now a tribute to the settlers; but *always at its heart has been and is remembering*. In remembering, we keep the past alive in our hearts and minds. We find ourselves—who we are, and where we fit into this ongoing story. We draw meaning and inspiration for our living—and *we should be constantly doing that*, not just on anniversaries and not just as a random thought.

There is a *Peanuts* cartoon that speaks to remembering. A contemplative Lucy says to Charlie Brown, "Each stage of life seems to have its own special meaning. You hear a lot of people talk about their 'Golden Years.' Do you think these are your Golden Years, Charlie Brown?" He replies, "No, I think they're more like Copper."

In *More Copper Country Tales*, Alfred Nichols remembers:

I ventured out upon some very familiar scenes and landmarks, and eventually reached No. 4 'bluff,' overlooking the entire community. I . . . was soon reclining upon Nature's carpet, feasting upon scenes of the 'Old Home.' How hallowed its memories! . . . As I sat musing over its past, a peculiar and unspeakable delight seemed to permeate my whole being. My heart was filled with rapture, my memory reveling in happy reminiscences. It is true the homes were modest and the home life simple, but they represented all that home stood for and brought to each heart all the sacredness and reverence embodied in that term. (pp. 16-17)

His *memories* embodied sacredness and reverence!

**Scripture.** The *Passover* Festival [Exodus 12; Joshua 5:10-12] continues to be celebrated each year. In the retelling, the faithful become a part of the story. They and we can experience the Exodus, being set free, God present. Liberation is a major theme. At first, Passover was held in people's homes, but by New Testament times, it was the main "pilgrim" festival celebrated in Jerusalem [Mark 14:1-2], which Jesus and many of his followers observed. The chief priests and scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus but "not during the Festival or there may be a riot among the people." In our story telling, in our remembering, we enter into the story, into the lives of Jesus and his disciples, into the lives of the settlers, and they enter again into our own lives and hearts.

**Contemporary Scene.** Remembering Central opens us to remembering *other* stories and people in our lives. "For All the Saints" was the theme of an *Alive Now* issue (S/O 1999). The lead article "Epitome of a Saint" recounts the memorial service for Laura McCray who epitomized the spirit of the congregation of Edgehill UMC in Nashville. Family and friends told of her witness, how she encouraged people in their lives of faith, how she inspired others to greater faithfulness. In the same issue is a conversation with Dayton Edwards, Native American storyteller, community developer, and United Methodist missionary: "Learning from the saints helps keep the story of faith alive. It is through story that we discover who we are and what we are, and whose we are . . . and we have a more solid vision of where we're going" (p. 19). Today we celebrate the saints of Central. Who are the saints in your life?

**Rejoice.** I have a colleague in Nashville who asked, “Why do you keep doing that Reunion Service. Aren’t you supposed to be on vacation?” The answer is easy. It is a time of reconnecting with my past, of finding meaning and being renewed. It is truly a time of *rejoicing*. As we rejoice, we give thanksgiving for our past, this place, for those who gave us life and those who inspire us. We celebrate life. We find meaning and renewal.

**Central.** Here at Central there were many celebrations, e.g., the Christmas Party for the children, July 4<sup>th</sup>, weddings, parties. Even with the hard work, the struggles, the dangers inherent in mining, there were celebrations. In the chapter on “An Old Time Party,” Nichols writes these thoughts as the evening ended: “The time of departure was now at hand . . . Their joys were complete, unexcelling, which seem to verify the thought that supreme good, happiness, and contentment do not necessarily consist in possessing much, but by being content with what we have” (p. 103).

I feel that joy every summer as we worship, share stories, renew acquaintances and make new friends, sing the hymns (the Diadem!), hear the Choir. There’s a *Peanuts* cartoon on rejoicing. Snoopy is dancing and grumpy Lucy yells, “You’re not as happy as you think you are! NOBODY could be that happy!” Snoopy stops dancing to ponder that, thinking, “Perhaps she’s right . . .” But resumes dancing: “On the other hand, maybe I’ve set a new record!”

**Scripture.** In harvest festivals recounted in scripture, we are reminded of the gifts of the earth for our sustenance [Exodus 34:22; Judges 21:19-21; Nehemiah 8:14-16; Leviticus 23:39-43; John 7:37-38], just as Central miners took copper from the earth and raised their food in gardens. In Luke [7:37-38], we hear that “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.’ As the scripture has said: Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” In remembering and rejoicing, we receive the living waters of our faith, our memories, our hopes.

**Contemporary Scene.** Our rejoicing here at Central opens us to rejoicing about other people and events in our lives, all a part of the ongoing story of our lives. In “What We Need Most,” E. Glenn Henson asks whether, after Mother Teresa, there are any extraordinary or ordinary saints around. He thinks there are at least “saints aborning in God’s grace.” We all are “saints aborning” in the way that Douglas Steele described saints as “those whose lives have been irradiated in God’s grace, who seek not to be safe but to be faithful, who have learned how to get along in adversity, who are joyful and dream-filled.” The Central folks were “saints aborning” who learned to get along in adversity, who were joyful and dream-filled.”

**Re-Vision.** Remembering and rejoicing are important but more is needed. We need to be open to the hopes, the dreams of those we celebrate and to be open to finding new possibilities for our lives and world! In *Fashion Me a People*, Maria Harris captures it: “The Communion of Saints, doctrinally, constitutes us as a people. It makes us who we are at the same time that it binds us to our heritage. The Communion of Saints also binds us to the future. The prophetic impulse involves living fully in the present out of our responsibility to the future—to our children and our children’s children.”

We need a new vision. As we re-vision, we carry on memories and traditions for future generations. We continue to learn and shape who we want to be. We dream for things to be at least a bit different from the past. *Peanuts* captures it well. Snoopy is sitting on top of his doghouse, writing on his typewriter. “Things I’ve Learned After It Was Too Late. A whole stack of memories will never equal one little hope.” He stops to ponder what he’s written and then, with a big grin, thinks, “I kind of like that.” I like that, too, Snoopy.

*Central.* I have always marveled at the willingness of the Cornish to leave Cornwall. The Keweenaw became known as “Little Cornwall” or the “Duchy of Cornwall.” Nichols tells the story of Mary Ann and Billy Temby and his decision to come to America from Cornwall. After initial reluctance, she said, “Yes, go to America and promise me your faithfulness. Send for me when you mind to and my heart’s desire is we shall both enjoy the happy experience that God surely do move in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.” Hope for their future.

And then Nichols recounts another wonderful glimpse of willingness to look to new ways of understanding faith and the world. A group of miners were taking a rest break underground. Conversation turns to the “sarmon” given the previous night by the preacher and whether they liked 3- or 5-point sermons. One miner (a noted local preacher) finally said, “What is the use to talk ‘bout so much what people used to do. The candle I used last week served the purpose for that particular time, but today I need another candle; and so the blessings of a month, a year ago, or 20 years ago filled their mission then, but today I need another one. If we are to live ‘pon past experiences, pardner, we shan’t grow very much spiritually or mentally, shall us?” That’s the lesson we need today—to build on the past, to live fully in the present, and bring new ideas into the future.

*Scripture.* The Sabbath was Israel’s most distinctive festival, six days’ work followed by a day of rest to remember all that God had done. Luke recounts that as Jesus began his ministry, reading the scroll in the synagogue, he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:16-21). A vision for the future.

*Our Contemporary Scene.* Our re-visioning here at Central opens us to new visions for our lives and world today. It calls on us to pick up the mantle, to dream, to bring hope to our families, communities, congregations, and societies. Dayton Edwards writes about looking generations into the future:

One of life’s lessons is that we live with the consequences of the decisions that we make today. We also live with the consequences of the decisions that our elders made. When we look to the future, we realize that not only do we live with the consequences, but also the future generations bear the consequences of the decisions we make this day. Therefore, we have a great responsibility given to us by the Creator to make decisions with the next seven generations in mind.

We have the responsibility to continue the Reunion Services into the future, to carry on the memories, to live fully in the faith and hopes of our ancestors, and to find new ways to move into the future.

**Hymn:** Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

**Benediction, Response** (God Be with You Until We Meet Again), **Postlude**

**Organist:** Susan Rokicki

**Choir Director:** Glenna Slatterly Irwin

**\*Choir Members:** *Sopranos:* Carole Bard, Joanne Bollinger, Donna Koskiniemi, Valerie Koskiniemi, Pat Mitchell

*Altos:* Connie Martin, Deanna Martin, Marcia Mason, Carolyn Meyer, Lani Poynter

*Tenors:* Jim Irwin, Peter Manderfield, Stanley Martin, Ramsey Meyer, Larry Molloy

*Basses:* Gary Koskiniemi, Jay Martin, Graham Meyer, Jack Porritt, Tom Westlake

*Page Turner:* Debbie Manderfield

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