

Clifton Presbyterian Church

Celebrating Fifteen (15) Decades of Service and Gratitude



The Turbulent Sixties! The Kennedys and Dr. King!

*Cold War heats up – Space Race does, too; Cuban Missile Crisis averted; Assassinations and Vietnam lead to riots and protests! New laws enacted – Civil Rights, Voting Rights, Medicare, Medicaid, and 3 new Constitutional Amendments; The Feminist Movement re-emerges; “Hippies” and Woodstock espouse peace and love; Walter Cronkite on July 20, 1969 is awed and speechless, “Oh, boy . . .” MAN ON THE MOON!
... And CPC remodels the vestibule . . . and acquires a larger Manse!*

Early in the decade, Clifton Presbyterian Church was again without a minister. Beloved Rev. Howland died unexpectedly just before his planned retirement in August, 1960. The grieving congregation remodeled and refurbished the vestibule as a memorial to him. The old slatted wooden doors were replaced with beautiful solid wood doors. The entrance was further enhanced later in the decade when the round window was installed above the doors. It was given by Mr. Calvin Millen (Chief of the Clifton Fire Department) in memory of his wife Grace who had been a faithful member since 1949! The window



was designed by Col. Soloman (Sal) Conn, an artist and fellow church member, and copied from a mosaic in the apse of a 6th Century Church in Ravenna Italy, the Basilica of St. Apollinare. The window was made by craftsmen in Pennsylvania in 1968. (Margaret Webb, History 1871-1982)



Reverend
A. Ray Howland

The search for a new pastor began with Rev. Howland's announcement of his retirement in Oct. of 1959. However, the small manse and the minimal salary made finding a new pastor difficult. The congregation was determined to raise the salary and find a more suitable manse. Finally, in April 1961, Rev. Elwood Scofield was called. He was to build his own house and receive a manse allowance, so the Kidwell house was sold, and in October, 1964 the Trustees of CPC assumed ownership of Lot number 4, the Wolford house, that "very pretty little bungalow" that Ruth Mathers Pyles Wolford Watkins had occupied since her mother's death in 1952. Reverend Scofield resigned in late summer, 1965 to preach and teach in Nova Scotia. Rev. Elwood H. Crick, was called in April of 1966, arrived on June 16, and moved into the newly refurbished manse. The communion table in the sanctuary today, dates from Rev. Crick's installation.



General Webb, Author of *Crucial Moments of the Civil War*, head of the Library of Congress Stacks Division, and prominent member of CPC since 1942 began his bas relief wood carvings depicting religious themes and passages from the Bible for the Sunday school rooms. Solomon Conn conceived some of the ideas for the carvings. The monthly meetings of the Women's Association continued to support mission work at home and abroad, Bible study, and Christian Education. The 1960's saw 103 new members added to CPC rolls, the largest number added in one decade thus far! Among them were additional members of the Petersen family; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Seippel – creators of the needlepoint pulpit chairs, kneeler, and communion cloth presently hanging in the rear of the Sanctuary; and Alice and Bob Bearinger who joined the congregation in 1967, about the time the town of Clifton was starting its revival.

Driving into Clifton in the 1960's, it was obvious this was a town in decline. Buildings were abandoned – the hotel, Buckley's store, many of the old houses . . . According to *Clifton Virginia As We Found It*, by David Smith, about ½ of the buildings in town were boarded up or not usable. Fairfax County, seeing the town's plight, built a sewer system within the town limits to serve the residents. This was essential for any revival because of the town's failing septic tanks and pit privies. While litigation was ongoing involving a treatment facility location in Clifton, the county installed a pumping station at the end of the sewer system and hauled the sewage to a near-by treatment plant. Existing residents could then hook up to the system which allowed restoration on **existing** structures to begin around 1967. The treatment plant was never built because environmental rules had tightened, especially for those in the Occoquan Watershed, so the land donated by Buckley became Clifton Park . . . and the pump and haul system remained.



The Clifton Betterment Association was formed in 1968 to celebrate and encourage the restoration and revival of this Victorian Town of Clifton. The CBA sponsored the first Clifton Day in October of that year. They purchased the flood plain north of town, and continue to contribute many of the town's improvements.

As Clifton struggled to survive, the nation also struggled with the turbulent events of the decade. One can imagine the prayers raised up from the pulpit at CPC asking for God's help and guidance, for peace and understanding. But in the midst of the cries for help, there must also have been prayers of joyful thanksgiving celebrating "the firsts" – the establishment of the Peace Corps, the first laser demonstrated, the first email message sent from UCLA to Stanford, the measles vaccine approved! The first Ford Mustang! The Beatles first appearance on Ed Sullivan (may not have made the joyful prayer list for some . . .) the first heart transplant! Louis Armstrong singing, *What a Wonderful World!* The debut of Star Trek and Sesame Street, the first Super Bowl, the first African American confirmed for the Supreme Court, the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Congress, and the first man on the moon! The nation, for a time united, and President Kennedy's challenge fulfilled, when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the moon! "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind! What a Wonderful World, indeed!

We are grateful for our visionaries, our astronauts, for CPC's new members, for the memories of longtime members, and for those who work to make a difference in the lives of others.

