

Clifton Presbyterian Church

Celebrating Fifteen (15) Decades of Service and Gratitude



Celebrating the 1970's

The Chaotic Seventies – A Decade of Avocado and Gold, Breakups, Break-ins, and Breakthroughs! Roe vs. Wade, the Oil Crisis – 55 mph speed limits! Major inflation and soaring interest rates! Polyester, leisure suits, bell bottoms, and platform shoes! Changes in family life – More women in the work force and the growth in popularity of the microwave and crockpot! “Bridge over Troubled Waters” is 1970’s Song of the Year. The Afro is the Hairstyle of the Decade.*

*21st Century Historians will describe the 1970’s as a “pivot of change.”
Tom Wolfe described the decade as The Me Decade.*

And yet, Clifton Presbyterian Church CELEBRATES . . . their 100th anniversary on Sunday, May 3, 1970 with a brief history written by Helen Quigg. It included an article on the Women’s Association written by Margaret Webb, and a list of members from 1870 to 1970 . . . and the Nation’s 200th Birthday with a Colonial worship service held on Sunday, July 4, 1976. Celebrants arrived in Colonial dress – some on horseback and some in carriages! After the service, a lawn picnic complete with homemade ice cream was attended by 90 persons! (Membership in 1971 was 116, so this was a great turnout!) Celebrated too, is the creativity of CPC’s members – authors John Cassidy for *A Station in the Delta* and Joan Harkleroad for her mystery, *Horsethief Trail*.

CPC CELEBRATES with gratitude . . . the many gifts presented, including new hymnals, donated by Ruth Petersen, organist, in memory of her mother, Mrs. Bishop; an oil painting of the church done by both Eilene Pearson and Margaret Webb – Don Stratton supplied the frame; money for new church cushions, donated by the Stoops family; a brass music stand from the Harkleroads; and a flower project to beautify the grounds from the Old Dominion Garden Club.

And CPC CELEBRATES with thanksgiving . . . the Women's Association for their continued donations to missions and aid . . . Mark Reimers for his work as Chairman of the Major Mission Fund Drive and dedicated leadership as Scout Master for troop 1104 that meets at the church . . . the members who provided homes and hosted a picnic for the Glasgow Phoenix Choir from Scotland . . . and most certainly General and Mrs. Webb for their many contributions to the church and the community. They helped organize the Clifton Arts and Crafts Association in 1965. Willard Webb was the newly formed Lions Club's Citizen of the Year in 1970 and Margaret Webb won the award in 1972. She was also the honorary chairperson of the first Clifton Community Woman's Club Homes Tour in the spring of that year. The Church was on that tour, featuring General Webb's carvings. Celebrated too, was their 50th wedding anniversary in February 1978. Sadly, General Webb died on April 19th of that year. Reverend Crick, pastor of CPC throughout this decade, in his eulogy described this good man with a word he knew General Webb would treasure . . . **Christian.**

In 1972 the Session approved a request to operate a 3-day Nursery School in the annex that continued throughout the decade. They approved the use of the annex for Wednesday art classes, and welcomed new members added during the decade, including Prita Short; Hope Kindel; Mark and Diane Reimers; Jim Petersen; and Doris, Randall, John, and Mitch Martin. Mitch, in sharing his story of the 70's, recalls some fond memories from his youth – including the importance of Abba Zaba and a well-placed mirror! The Reimers share from a different perspective and maybe give a hint to who was the player and who was the pray-er! Our "Members' Memories" do make CPC's history come alive!

As the decade closed, there were 9 members on Session; a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Sunday school; a Woman's Association and Men's Association; and a newly formed Christian Education Committee with Frances Cranston as the chair. One service was held at 11:00; the Youth group met every Sunday evening at 7 p.m.; a Family Night Dinner was held quarterly; and Communion was observed 4 times a year. This little church on the hill found many reasons to celebrate in this chaotic decade.

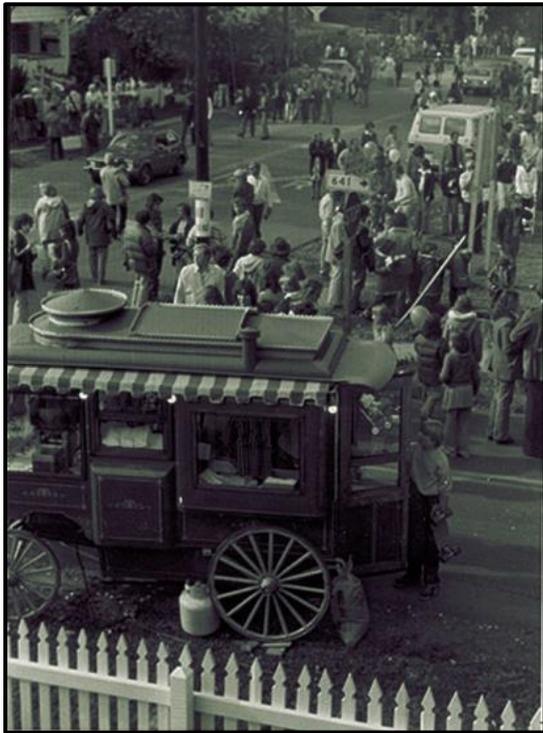


The town also CELEBRATES in the 70's the progress that is being made in renovating, rejuvenating, and reinventing its Victorian image – albeit very slow due in part to soaring interest rates that make borrowing money tight. Clifton is still remote. There is very little traffic, no new businesses, and the closest grocery is in Centreville, 7 miles away; yet, the town was attracting a few brave young families. Some efforts were being made to welcome the

newcomers and bring neighbors together – besides the weekly Saturday morning gathering at the "Trash Park-out."

In 1970 the Youth Citizens Group sponsored the showing of Disney Cartoons and Nature films every other Friday night at the firehouse. A teen center operated from 1971 to 1977 until asked to close. The CBA and other groups sponsored periodic dances at the firehouse, and the Lions Club started having annual pancake breakfasts in the community room. The Clifton Community Woman's Club was established in 1971 to foster friendships and support the local community.

And, the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) was formed by a local resident. Soccer, which was becoming extremely popular, and baseball were played on Buckley's 4 acre lot at the end of Chapel Street. When that lot was outgrown, all then moved to the Kincheloe Fields, and traffic through Clifton began to increase.



Celebrating Clifton Day also brought neighbors together and brought traffic, too. It grew to be a very large event by the end of the decade, with 15 to 20 thousand people cramming into the little town. There was a calliope playing near the Baptist Church, a few craft dealers, close to 100 antique dealers, and a large art show set up on Main Street. Gerald Hennesy, was one of the local artists who participated. He painted many scenes of the old buildings in Clifton during these early years of restoration. CPC is fortunate to have one of his paintings – a lovely portrait of the church in winter. In the early years of Clifton Day, thanks in part to newly elected Mayor, Julian Burke, hams were

purchased and smoked overnight with the help of the townsfolk, and served the next day to the delight of all who attended. They were very popular, but a lot of work, and before long, were replaced with chicken!

By the mid 70's many of the town's buildings were still in disrepair – Buckley's store was one of those. David Bean, the town attorney, undertook its renovation, planning to open an upscale French Restaurant. His plans didn't quite work out and the newly named "Buckley Inn" became a tavern with loud Bluegrass music and an unsavory clientele. Its closure in 1978 was certainly celebrated by Clifton residents!



Nationally, finding things to celebrate was more difficult. The early 70's were a continuation of the 60's with anti-war protests and riots over the invasion of Cambodia. Tragedy struck at Kent State University on May 4, 1970 when anti-war protests turned violent and 4 students were killed. Tragedy struck again in 1972 at the Summer Olympic Games in Munich when terrorists were responsible for the death of several Israeli athletes. After a memorial service was held for the slain athletes, the games continued, and America's Mark Spitz won seven gold medals – terrorism would not be

allowed to succeed! In 1973, as troops from Vietnam were coming home, the Watergate scandal persisted. Impeachment loomed. Nixon resigned in disgrace in 1974. President Ford granted him a pardon and later in the decade, President Carter pardoned those violating the Military Selective Service Act during the Vietnam War era. North Vietnam captured Saigon in 1975; the first test tube baby was born in the UK in July, 1978; the leaders of Egypt and Israel, Sadat and Begin, shook hands at the Camp David Accords in Sept. 1978; and in 1979 the Shah left Iran and the Ayatollah Khomeini established an Islamic state – and held Americans hostage. Saddam Hussein became President of Iraq and Margaret Thatcher became the first woman Prime Minister of Britain. The consequences of some of these world events would not be fully known for decades.

However, in the midst of this chaos, there were reasons to CELEBRATE. In 1971 Disney World opened and the 26th Amendment was added to the Constitution, lowering the voting Age to 18. Jaws and Star Wars packed the movie theaters.

And *All in the Family* with Archie Bunker, *Saturday Night Live*, *Happy Days* with “The Fonz,” *Garfield*, and DISCO brought smiles during troubled times!

Lord, we are so grateful for those who find opportunities to CELEBRATE in times of trial, and for those who see goodness where others do not. We are grateful for the optimists, for the generosity of the members of CPC, and for the many talents that those members have and willingly share with others. We are most grateful for your loving guidance and calming presence in the midst of chaos – truly our bridge over troubled waters!

*Breakups – The Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel split in 1970. Break-ins – DNC Headquarters were broken into in the Watergate Bldg., D.C. in 1972. And, Breakthroughs – Atari introduced Pong in 1972 and Arcade and video game popularity rose. The first **handheld** mobile (**cell**) phone was invented in 1973! Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded Microsoft in 1975, and Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak created Apple the following year.

Sources used: *Clifton: Brigadoon in Virginia*; *Clifton, Virginia As We Found It*, by David Smith; *Clifton*, by Lynne Garvey-Hodge, and CPC histories – 1970, 1982, 1995 and the History Channel.

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