

SECTION IV.

Your Stories

When we strive for excellence and follow God's plan
for our lives, we are always victorious.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who
gives liberally and without reproach, and it will be
given to him."

James 1:5 (NKJV)

MEMORIES

by Mrs. Sarah E. Wilson

I went to Republic a bride in March 1875. The only religious service was held in the school house on the shore of Mirror Lake, at the turn of the road that led up to "Swede-town" and down the other side to the miner's houses along the lake shore. I wonder if the school house is still there? It was the road the teams hauling glycerin took. I often stood amazed at the deadly power that was in one of those loads. Yet the driver was as unconcerned as though he was hauling a load of lumber. I was a city-raised girl, only twenty years old. Everything I saw was new and wonderful to me. I thought Republic was the end of the earth--the jumping-off place.

My house was off by itself. To get to church services, we waded knee-deep in snow. I shall never forget that first Sunday. The rough, uncomfortable schoolroom, the miners all in their best "blacks" worn only on special occasions. All that I remember about the sermon was that the minister was talking about a "white horse." When he became absorbed in describing that horse and its fine points, I lost interest in the sermon and began studying the congregation. I had come to live among those people. I wanted to know them. I studied their faces. They were nearly all Cornishmen. There were few women and they were back near the door. There was a little boy not far from where I sat. He had the most beautiful brown eyes I every saw. He kept them fixed on me. He looked down shyly when I smiled at him. I asked who he was and learned that he was Tho Gibson, one of Mat Gibson's children--one of the thirteen. One of the men I singled out that day as a Christian man and a leader was John Buddle. He was truly an English "heart of oak." Some of the men came to speak to us, but though I recall their faces, I have forgotten their names. I wanted to meet the women, but they got away before I could. One girl did speak to me--Eliza Gibson, afterward Mrs. Albert Heath.

The minister held services in the schoolhouse only once a month. He had other pastorates. Other Sunday services in Republic were conducted by the miners themselves. I recall the first funeral service. A miner had been killed in the mine; I forget names. The men carried the casket from the home to the schoolhouse. They had three white linen bands--kept for the purpose--put under and over the casket. Each pallbearer had an end of a band twisted around his hand. It was a long walk from the miner's home to the schoolhouse and from there to the cemetery. The people all walked. When the pallbearers were tired, other took their places.

Mr. Wilson was the first mine official, unmarried, to be married. Six other followed in quick succession. Dr. Hirschman was next, followed by J.O. St. Clair, Ed Weiser, chief clerk for Mitchell and St. Clair (who had bought the company store) was the only one who married a Republic girl. Anna was the first to die--when her baby was born (it died later) Anna's funeral service was held in the schoolhouse. She was taken from Gleason's Corner, Iron City, to the schoolhouse, then to the cemetery. That day I said to Mr. Wilson "We ought to have a church and a resident pastor." It was a problem because the English-speaking people wanted their service and the Scandinavians and Catholics each wanted theirs, and the company did not dare favor one more than another. So the years slipped by--four or five of them.

In the fall of 1878, Mr. Wilson sent the children and me to spend the winter in a warmer climate because of our first child's health. New people were coming to Republic. Houses were scarce. Mr. Wilson gave up the company house we were renting and built one of our own. It was the only house between the Cary Hotel--that later burned down--and the one street of Iron City. The rest was open Common. Ed Slattery--the liveryman--let his mules and cows run there. I arrived home to our new house in May or June, happy to see old friends again.

One day, Mr. Wilson told me he thought they could now build a church. The Company would donate a lot across the street on the corner from our house. The English and Scandinavians would unite--each holding their own service after the other. The Catholics preferred to build their own church, which they did later; far out at the end of Iron Street.

I was pleased to see the new lumber being piled up for the new church. We were becoming quite citified. Dr. Hirschman demanded that the Company build him a residence on our side of the road and lay a plank walk to it. F.H. Kearney built a two-story store building and Mr. Mitchell built and opened a meat market beside it, across from the church. The depot was right behind them. John Hood, railroad engineer and W.F. Tyler, dept. agent, built little houses just across from the doctor's residence.

I have only a very faint memory of the dedication of the church. But I remember the people attending service and how good it seemed to have the church and its evidence of civilization. I never got used to the church service in the schoolhouse. The first wedding in the new church was that of Ida Smith and Tom Gibson. It was the first church wedding in Republic and we made a big affair of it. We women "decorated" the church. It was the 18th day of May and flowers were scarce. However, Mr. C.N. Holmes, then in charge of the reopened Kloman mine across the

river, sent us a wagon load of trailing pine and other evergreens. The little boys--among them Charlie Sundberg, Jr.--sent to the marsh behind the Carey House and brought us armloads of what one woman called "Death Lilies" and objected to our using them. We did though, because they were what are listed as Bunch Berries and were lovely. But Charlie had also found a hen egg and put it in his trouser pocket. Somehow in the crush of delivering the flowers to the ladies in the church, the egg got crushed too. It was a very, very bad egg. The bad smelling liquid ran down inside Charlie's knee pants leg, down his stocking and shoes to the floor. The ladies began opening windows while Charlie ran to his home over the depot.

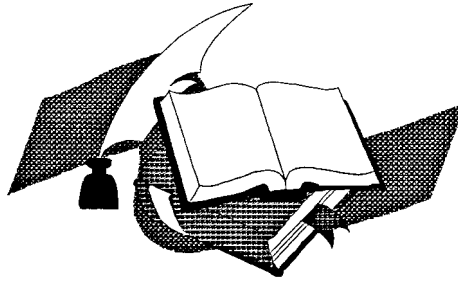
I had a large bay window full of blooming plants. I offered the use of them and the minister himself began carrying them to the church. I had a large white calla lily--four beautiful blooms--growing in a large wooden butter firkin, painted green. I had planted an ice plant at the foot of the lily and this plant had grown over the outside of the firkin almost concealing it. The firkin stood on a pedestal in the center of the bay window and was a very beautiful thing. The minister wanted it at the church, so the people could see it. I told him he could have it if he could get it there--just across the street. He studied the situation quite awhile, then said he would carry it in his arms and nobody but himself should touch it. At last, we had the church decorated to our satisfaction and the bride came to see it. She stood beside the calla lilies admiring them, and thanked us for making her wedding so lovely. The reception, bridal supper and dance were to be held after the ceremony, in the new Town Hall on Iron Street. Father Gibson's gift to the newlyweds was a little house across the street from the Town Hall. The parsonage was near it.

The next day, we women, the pastor and his wife, gathered to remove the decorations and leave the church in perfect order. We sent the bride the big horseshoe made of Arbutus blossoms. Tom hung it inside over the little parlor door. At last, all was done. The minister had carried all my house plants back and put them where he had taken them from in my bay window. His wife, he and myself and my calla lily were left in the church alone. Finally he said, "I'll carry this lily back. I kept my word. Nobody touched it by myself." He took it up in his arms and it fell upside down on the floor! A total wreck! His wife dropped down on a mourner's seat--speechless, eyes and mouth open--amazed at what had happened. The minister stood as if turned to stone. The look on his face made me laugh until the tears rolled down my cheeks. It was one of the funniest scenes I had ever witnessed. At length, we picked up the wreck and carried it home. The plants had so filled the firkin they were a solid mass--root bound--and did not fall out, so were not really disturbed.

Moreover, the mass of ice plant had saved the calla from being badly crushed. We trimmed off the bruised leaves, untangled the ice plant, cut off the broken parts, and gave the plants a good soaking with water. With a great sigh of relief the minister said, "It doesn't look so bad after all." "No," I said, "Not half as bad as you did." That made them both laugh with me. Happy days!

On August 19, we held funeral services in the little white church for Ida Gibson, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Heath's first baby, and, though I am not sure now, a little grandchild of Mr. & Mrs. James Dower. One service for three. I helped Tom close his little house. The cards were still in many of their wedding gifts. The last thing Tom did was to take down the withered, faded, but still fragrant horseshoe, and hand it to me. "It did not mean good luck to me," he said. "No," I answered, and we laid it on the fire where he had burned other things sacred to him because they were Ida's.

Republic and Iron City were developing rapidly. Many interesting things were taking place, not exactly connected with the church. Lumber companies were putting hundreds of men into camps, cutting the beautiful and valuable pine trees of the virgin forest--just as God had made it. Mr. Wilson and I loved that forest. We spent many happy hours in it and on its far singing waters. But there was a dark side, too. The saloons in Iron City were never really regulated. Laws were openly violated. Francis E. Willard spoke in Marquette. Women's Christian Temperance Unions sprang up all over Iron County. While I was out here in Minnesota, a strong W.C.T.U. was formed in Republic. When I returned home, dear white-haired Martha Dower, president of the W.C.T.U. and two or three other members came to me and said, "You must be our president." Then, they told me how they were hampered in their fight against the saloons by threats that their husbands would lose their jobs. "If you are president, no one can discharge Mr. Wilson and we will do what you say." I looked at those women. I was not a church member. I did not consider myself a "Christian" but I knew what they were up against. I took the job. No more loyal women no one has ever led. The way before us was clear. Right was right. Wrong was wrong. God was on the side of right.



The following contains excerpts from a letter dated Feb. 25, 1941 to Mrs. Arthur Bice (who was doing some historical research about our church).

It was written by Arthur W. Evans.

Read on...

"I have been combing my memory this evening with your inquiry before me, but about all I am able to contribute to your fund of information is a few haphazard recollections.

My father, the Rev. John Evans, became pastor of the church in Sept. 1885. It was his second charge in the United States, the first one being in Menominee, Michigan. He brought his family of a wife and five sons from England to this country in 1884. He had been in the ministry in various English cities; London, Luton, Wellingboro and St. Heliers, on the Island of Jersey.

The minister who preceded him at Republic was the Rec. Mr. Cook, I do not know his given name. From Republic our family, after three years, went to Ironwood, Michigan, where my father's health was impaired and after two years as pastor, he had to retire on account of illness. He later became City Treasurer of Ironwood and County Treasurer of Gogebic County and one of the influential citizens in the city. He later moved to lower Michigan, to South Haven and St. Joseph, and some twenty or so years ago went to California. He died in Oakland, California last November at the advanced age of 96, in full possession of his faculties and active up to a few weeks before his death.

My boyhood impressions of Republic were that it was a delightful place in which to live, with the woods fairly close around and the lovely river and lake. My father took pleasure in sportsmanship, and often he used to take his boys and several of the lads from other families and take long walks through the woods, often with a rifle to teach us marksmanship, and on the river where he taught them to row and swim.

Some of the families whose names I can recall among the churchfolk were the Bucketts, the Pascoes, the Millers, the Polkinghorns, the St. Clairs, the Sandbergs (the father was the

oldest conductor on the DSS&A), the Hoods (engineer on the run to Humboldt), the Verrans (furniture), the Taylors (station agent, I believe); the Beattys the Tefts (he was the doctor), the Northmores (Superintendent of Schools), the Gibsons (a family of girls, I think; some of whom taught in the school), the Taylors (photographer whose studio was next to the parsonage), the Kearneys (storekeepers). This does not exhaust the list, but these are name that come easiest to mind. In the church work, I recall the activities of my Father in organizing a Band of Hope. It met weekly in the evening. Most of the lads in the church families were enrolled, and we all used to have good times (I don't know how many of them kept the pledge when they grew older, but at any rate it was a good thing to bring the lads together. In these days, the Boy Scout movement had not yet started, but this Band of Hope Club was a sort of nucleus for stimulating good clean sportsmanship, love of the open air, and the tenets of manliness among the lads. Saturdays often found a bunch of them on the back lot of the church or the parsonage engaged in games, or on the river, and hiking through the woods. One of the French Canadians in the town taught us snowshoeing. The town was rally a Paradise for a youngster, although the schools were not so good. There was no high school.

I recall that in 1886 or thereabouts, my Father and other organized a large choir for the church. A traveling musician came to town to give singing lessons; the church took it up and for some weeks a large group of men, women and children attended practice in the old Townhall (still standing a few years ago when I drove through). The miners and their wives, many of the natural music lovers, almost lifted the roof off the church with their anthems for some time afterwards.

During our stay, the church interested itself in a crusade to clean up the saloons and to enforce Sunday closing. My father, a Welshman with red beard and black hair, was aggressive in seeking enforcement of Sunday closing. On Sunday mornings when the minister's family went to church, two adults and five boys, the procession had to pass four or five open saloons in the doors of which were loiterers, who sometimes were inclined to ribald remarks. My father asked the saloon-keepers to obey the law, and when they rebuffed him, he took it up with the County authorities. I don't recall how the crusade came out, but it afforded a rather hot time for awhile. When the spring drive was on, the town was filled with lumberjacks who raised a merry time, with plenty of brawls and street fighting.

During his pastorate, my father became interested in cheap lands then being opened in Minnesota and interested a few of the church families to buy quarter sections (\$12 an acre in those days for land which later went to \$200 and upwards). I don't believe many

of them settled out there after retiring from the mines. One family, the Bucketts, with several fine sons, went to the farm and later I believe, to Minneapolis. The land in which some of them invested was between Bird Island and Renville, Minnesota. I believe one of the mine superintendents, George Wilson, had interest in Renville, but am not sure. We never went there, but later, my father sold his farm for about what he paid for it-- before prices went up.

Another recollection that came to me is that of Mrs. Northmore, wife of the school superintendent. She was much interested in getting up entertainments given by the school children. One of them, a Mother Goose playlet, in which most of the little boys and girls appeared, with adults doing the heavy singing, etc. which was accounted good enough for the crowd to be taken to Iron Mountain later to give it there, in the Opera House. Christmas generally had celebrations at the Town Hall.

I don't know whether these random notes will serve your purpose in any way...it's quite a while back, and the inclination, I suppose is for memory to brighten things up, but for my part, the years we spent in Republic were well worth it."



POETRY by Mrs. Winifred Johnson

Written in 1954 when the church was remodeled
"A tribute to our Pastor and the men who so willingly worked to
beautify God's Temple"

This Church of Yesterday

How well do I remember
This church of long ago,
When all the world was peaceful
And its tempo was quite slow.

How calm and holy
A Sabbath morning was,
Before the coming of the auto
With its hum and buzz,

No paved highways
Leading out of town,
We were "fenced" in
And glad to settle down.

To Sunday School and Service
At evening and at morn,
Never tiring of the story
Of a Savior born.

There were no empty pews
In this church of yesterday,
But all came reverently
To worship and to pray,

And within this sanctuary
They found a healing balm,
That soothed each heart
And soul with a heavenly calm.

At Sunday School the children
Overflowed each chair and pew,
But now Sunday School's old-fashioned,
So we only have a few.

From the choir-loft the "Amens"
Came softly from the soul,
As tho' each member really had
Heaven for his goal.

When silvery headed saints
Bowed in all humility,
Their prayer and supplications
Were made on bended knee.

Gone are the folk of long ago
But within each heart,
Is a cherished memory of the Church
Where once they had a part.

Some have gone to Hallowed glory
And lie in peaceful rest,
Sheltered by the Heavenly Father
And numbered with the blest.

A few remain to keep alive
This Church of long ago,
Tho the world is not so peaceful
Nor its tempo very slow.

This Church of Today

Those days are past, the clock of time
Moved on at rapid rate,
And when our little Church
Became sadly out of date.

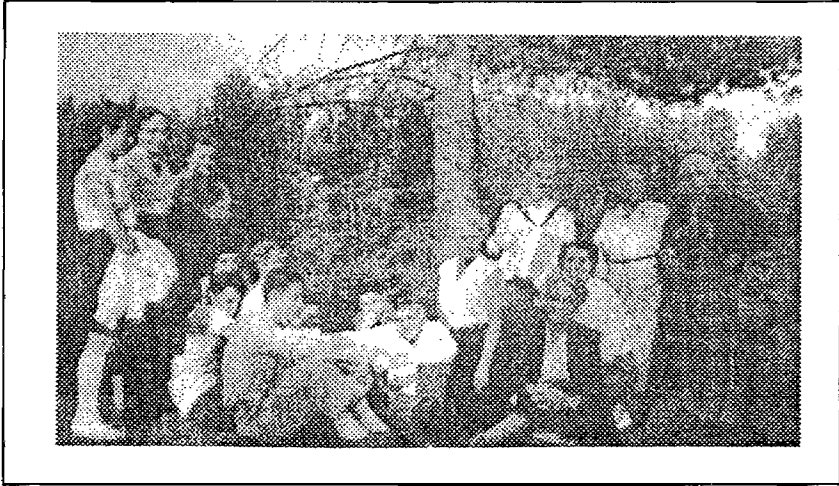
But you will notice here tonight
That time made changes in its' flight
The little Church once dark and drear
Now shines in Beauty bright and clear.

For our dear pastor made some plans
And prayerfully laid them in Gods' hands,
From top to bottom, the Church men worked;
Loyal and faithful, they never shirked.

The ladies too, right from the start
Held teas and sales with willing heart
And now the miracle, Behold!
A new Church risen from the old.

To the Great Builder,
We dedicate ourselves anew,
Knowing He stands by,
To guide us safely thru,

But we must lift high the torch
Our spirits must ne'er must falter,
Until we all shall meet and bow
Before God's Holy Altar.

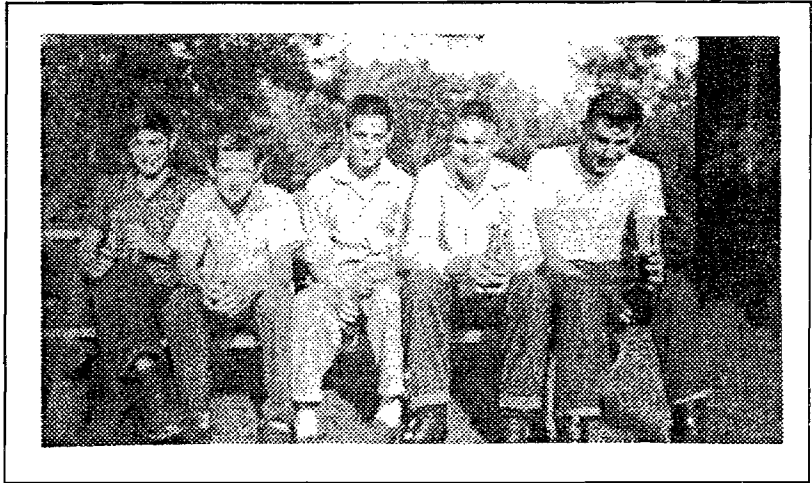


Picnic & Bible Study
at Leif Erickson Park,
1956

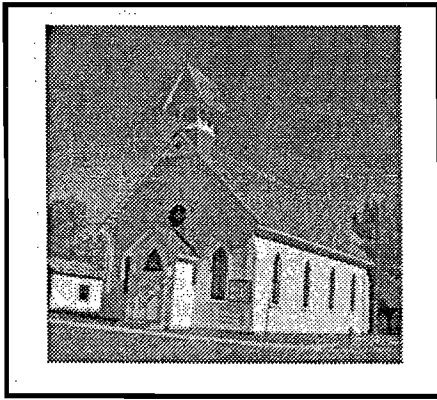
Standing left to right:
Merilee Campbell,
Olli Landin,
Edna Adams,
Cecil Lutey,
Tillie Landin,
Alice LaBold,
Seated left to right:
Marilyn Lyyski,
Margaret Adams,
Jack Jackola,
Bob Kirker,
Jim Voegtline,
Ben Kirker,
Roger Dirfee,
Fanny Tucker,
Anne Bice,
Elaine Niemi

Youth Group
At Leif Erickson Park 1956

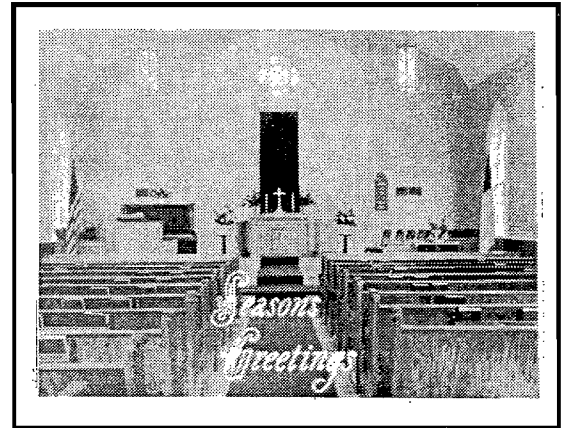
Left to right;
Ben Kirker
Jim Voegtline,
Bobby Kirker,
Roger Durfee,
Jack Jackola



Left to right:
Fanny LaBold Tucker,
Elaine Niemi,
Anne Bice,
Cecil Lutey,
Alice LaBold,
Edna Adams,
Olli Landin,
Tillie Landin



Republic United Methodist Church
1962
(The Post Office is the small white building)



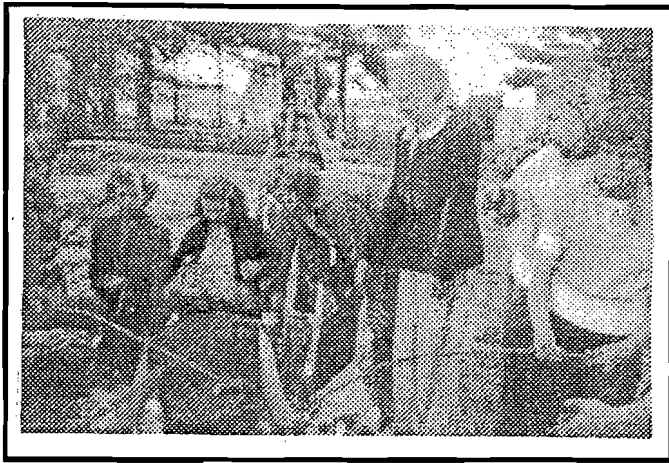
The Sanctuary
1950



Church Group
Front row: Evelyn Helwig, Bill Johnson, Margaret Adams, Helen Janofski, James Janofski, Mabel Johnson, Mabel Janofski,
Center: (left to right) Edna Adams, Ellen Francis, Laila Perry, Minnie Janofski, Cecil Lutey,
Back: (left to right) John Hanofski, Edward Francis, Arnold Janofski, Dorothy Hodge, Doris Janofski, Susie Hodge

Sunday School Float
Ethnic Day Parade
1993





Left to right: Ben Kirker, Margaret Adams, Carol Helwig, Janet Jackola, Grace Kwetkoski, Fanny LaBold, Arlene Kwetkoski, Marlene Alatalo



Republic Youth Fellowship Tobaggan Party at Cecil Luty's Home 1952
Top Left: Marily Lyyski, Glenn Brown, Lee Campbell, Jack Jackola, Margaret Adams, Janet Jackola, Albert Kwetkoski, Center: Arlene Kwetkoski, Ruth Evans, Charles Laurila, Bottom: Dolores Kwetkoski, Ben Kirker, Beverly Lyyski, Dona Cook, Bob Kirker, Cecil Luty



Republic Youth Fellowship Picnic 1953
Leif Erickson Park
Left to right: Beverly Lyyski, Arlene Kwetkoski, Dona Cook, Dolores Kwetkoski



Republic Youth Fellowship Costume Party at Michigamme, 1953
Left to right: Dolores Kwetkoski, Elaine Warlin, Janet Jackola, Margaret Adams, Marilyn Lyyski, Sharon Kangas, Robert Schenk, Ben Kirker, Jack Jackola, Charles Laurila, Charles Antilla, Bob Kirker



Mrs. Jean Helwig



Mr. & Mrs. John Johnson
50th Wedding Anniversary, June 6,
1967



John & Vera Johnson & Family
Top row, left to right: Edward Johnson,
Elaine Johnson, Elaine Jackola, Janet
Vadnais. Second row: Andrew Jackola, Doug
Johnson, Alice Mae Arola, Connie Arola.
Third row: Cheryl Johnson, Mark Johnson,
Vera Johnson, John Johnson, Kelly Koski, &
Wanda Arola



Sunday School Picnic
Champion Beach, Van Riper Park

Back row left to right: Annie Cox, Cecilea Perry, Fanny LaBold, Jean Johnson, Dorthea Campbell,
Edith Brown, Edna Adams, Florence LaForais, Winifred Johnson, Alice Kenney, Mrs. Luty, Pearl
Cook, Mrs. Pudas, Hattie Wilson, Vera Johnson, Allie LaBold. Front row left to right: (child) Ann
Johnson, Albert Kwetroski, Chet Brown, Cecil Luty.

Browns found careers in rural schools

By JENNY LANCOUR
Journal Staff Writer

The Way We Were

REPUBLIC — Chester and Edith Brown, at the respective ages of 79 and 84, have learned much during their lives, but they also have done their share of teaching.

Until several years ago, Chester — better known as Chet — and Edith were teachers in the central and western Upper Peninsula areas. Chet also served as a principal and superintendent during his 34-year career in education.

Chet met the former Edith Nancarrow 60 years ago at the Michigamme Institute during a one-week Bible program for adults. Chet had just finished a year of college at Northern State Teachers College, now known as Northern Michigan University. In 1930, he graduated from Northern with a teaching degree.

Before they met in 1927, Edith had already begun her teaching career at the age of 18. She had only recently graduated from Diorite School herself, one of just two seniors in the school that year.

Edith received her teaching degree after attending a six-week program at Northern Normal School, before it was changed to Northern State Teachers College. During her career, she taught for 11 years at various one-room schools, including North Greenwood, Diorite and Ironwood.

"You were the janitor, you were everything," Edith said in recalling the days of the one-room schoolhouses where all grades were taught.

In 1930, Chet began teaching in the Big Bay school district. Two years later, he married Edith at the Ishpeming parsonage on Aug. 10. The couple will be celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary this month.

Chet taught for six years at Big Bay, including three years when he was a full-time teacher and had the extra duties of principal. He earned \$110 each month as a teacher and \$2.50 more a month when he became principal of the school of about 250 students.

"They didn't dare issue you a

contract because the financial situation was so uncertain," he said.

While living in Big Bay, the Brunswick Lumber Co. closed, Edith and Chet remembered. The town had to rely on kerosene lamps for light because the mill had furnished the electricity for the area. Chet also remembered seeing Henry Ford on two occasions while in Big Bay.

In November of 1936, the Browns moved to Republic, where Chet took a mathematics post.

"The job was better and there was a doctor here, too," said Chet. A doctor was a welcome sight for Edith and Chet who were the parents of two children.

When the family arrived in Republic, a once-booming mining town, the mines had been closed during the Depression and most of the local men were working on Work Progress Administration programs.

In addition to the school in Republic, there were two barber shops, four grocery stores, a gas station, a garage, a shoemaker, a bowling alley, a clothing store and some churches and bars, the couple remembered.

North and South Republic now consist of the Republic-Michigamme School, an IGA store, a party store, some bars, four churches, a bank, two hardware stores, a coin laundry, a gas station, a printing office, and a county road commission shop, they said.

"There've been a lot of changes since we were married," Edith said. "We didn't have a telephone, we didn't have a radio, we didn't have electricity, and no television for sure."

"We burned wood," Chet said. "I bought the first bicycle I ever had when I was 75."

When he was a kid growing up in National Mine, Chet said there was no spending money and kids never received an allowance, let alone had a car to drive to school.

"When you earned some money,

you gave it to your parents," he said. "The economics of the situation are so different. Sometimes I think we were better off with less."

During the summer when he was not teaching, Chet held temporary jobs in area mines and at a Big Bay lumber yard.

"Everyone was in the same fix, so we weren't any different," Edith said.

Chet taught in the Republic School District from 1936 to 1964. During World War II, in addition to teaching eight classes a day, he also coached basketball.

From 1948-51, Chet was principal at Republic for three years. For five years, from 1951-56, he was the superintendent of the K-12 district.

During his first two years as superintendent, Chet had no clerk and was responsible for ordering supplies for the district, writing up transportation reports and the payroll, and performing several other office duties. Occasionally he would have to call a student in to his office to help with the typing, he said.

"When I think of what I accomplished while I was superintendent — I started a band program there ... I put a kindergarten back in again ... I got contract buses ... and I started a yearbook," he recalled.

In the fall of 1956, Chet decided to devote his time to teaching.

"I gave up the superintendency because I had ulcers," Chet said. "It was different then. I had a full teaching load. That was common, particularly in small schools."

"I enjoyed the last eight years when I was teaching," he added.

Over the years, Chet has also been involved in community activities, including Boy Scouts, the Republic Fire Department, and the Republic Lions Club, which he organized in the early 1950s.

After serving 28 years in Republic and teaching for a total of 34 years, Chet retired in 1964.

"I love to teach," he said. "I have

no regrets. I don't know if I would have done anything different."

Since his retirement 23 years ago, Chet, an avid sportsman, has enjoyed fishing, trapping and hunting. During his 60 years of deer hunting, he has bagged about 37 bucks, many of them shot while hunting at the log camp he built on

the Michigamme River.

Chet and Edith have made a trip to Hawaii since they've retired. Recently they've been spending their winters in Sun City, Ariz., where their two children, Carolina and Glenn, live. The Browns also have two grandchildren and a great-grandson.



Chester "Chet" Brown married the former Edith Nancarrow on Aug. 10, 1932, in Ishpeming. The two are pictured below on their wedding day and, above, 50 years later on their golden wedding anniversary. The longtime Republic couple will celebrate their 55th anniversary this month.



For more than half a century, Chet and Edith Brown have lived in Republic where Chet was a teacher, principal and superintendent of the local school district. Prior to Republic, Chet was a teacher and principal at the Big Bay school. He

retired in 1964 after serving 34 years in the field of education. Edith taught in various one-room schools for 11 years prior to their marriage. (Journal photo by Jenny Lancour)



Your Stories

The tales told in this section are yours. As part of the research for this booklet, the Nurture Committee passed out and mailed questionnaires, asking things we felt would be of interest to most people. Those questions were 1. What is your earliest or fondest memory of Republic United Methodist Church? 2. What can you tell us about the physical changes that have occurred over the years? 3. What do you feel are our greatest strengths and weaknesses as a congregation, past or present? 4. How has the service changed over the years; times attendance, etc.? 5. What activities did/do you participate in? 6. Please share with us a funny or moving story or anecdote.

We also personally interviewed some of you, and asked for your special stories about our church. Whenever possible, your words are used verbatim, or when necessary, conservatively edited. Stories are arranged in alphabetical order only, and certainly not in order of importance.

Dorothea Hooper Campbell recalls her earliest memory of the church as her mother and father, Annie & Charles Hooper, telling of lighting the furnace and kerosene lamps for Sunday Service. Her father was the Superintendent of the Sunday School for 25 years. He also played Santa Claus, complete with costume and sack full of toys! In answer to the question about the physical changes that have occurred to the church, she responds "There was a balcony and glass door room in the back where the choir met and walked up in a processional. Mrs. Hocking and Alice Kenney played the old pump organ. I sang my first solo in church at 4 years old accompanied by Mrs. Florence Laforais." She recalls that "in the past, Sunday services were at 7 p.m. The Christmas program was held on Christmas night. Families were larger and entire families attended." As for activities, she "sang in the choir; solos for each major holiday and for many weddings and funerals. I belonged to the MYF, UMW and taught Sunday School". Her funny story is as follows: "We had a very good choir, practiced diligently at Alice Kenny's house every Wednesday evening. Listened to (choir) member Fred Rydholm, till midnight and beyond! Oh, the stories he could tell! After our anthem, we would sit in the front pews. One evening, Fred Rydholm fell asleep on my shoulder, while Cecil Lutey preached. Oh, how we giggled!"

From Debbie Gransinger we hear "I have really enjoyed my term as Sunday School Superintendent. I've seen the children in our community grow up learning to be respectable, responsible Christians, with a strong love for God, each other and their community. Teaching Sunday School is such a learning experience

for me. I've enjoyed working with all the age groups, and I'm sure I'll continue to be involved for many years to come."

Jean Helwig tells of an early and fond memory for her. "My grandmother always gave Carol and I a quarter for our Sunday School collection." She remembers when classes for the older Sunday School children were held in the balcony, and when the church service was at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday night. The choir sat on chairs where the piano is now. Jean's mother, Evelyn Helwig, taught Sunday School, sang alto in the choir, played for church, directed the choir. Choir practices were held Thursday nights in their home. Evelyn Helwig attended Michigamme Institute several years, as a teen and adult. Jean's sister Carol was active in Sunday School and MYF, She sang soprano in the choir, often duets and solos. Carol also attended the Michigamme Institute. Jean tells us that she was the only one in her class in Sunday School. (they kicked out two others!) There was no MYF at that time.

Dolores Mattson recalls some physical changes to the church over the years. The "balcony was taken down, sanctuary remodeled, new siding, all new blond wood on altar, new front entrance with brick on outside, brick outdoor bulletin board, new basement in the 50's and the interior was remodeled in approximately 1990." She remembers that "When we first move to Republic, the Sunday service was at 7 p.m. with Prayer Meeting on Wednesday nights. The United Methodist Women used to meet in homes at night at 7 p.m. The church was better attended than now, but a lot more people lived in Republic then. The Methodist Youth Fellowship was very active. Rev. Cecil Lutey brought supplies from the Greenhouse and our Dad's got cedar boughs from the woods and the youth made beautiful wreaths to sell at Christmas. I remember going out into a swamp near Francis' farm on 601 to cut cedar with my Dad and the youth." She remembers that "on the first day of Vacation Bible School one year, when the children and teachers arrived at the church, there were obscene words spray painted on the street side of the outside of the church. We had just had the new white siding put on and the paint wouldn't wash off so church people came; they just flocked to the church and painted over the words that were so shocking to see on a church wall. There was some worry that the paint over wouldn't stay on or would chip and look terrible, but it seems to have held up for quite some time now."

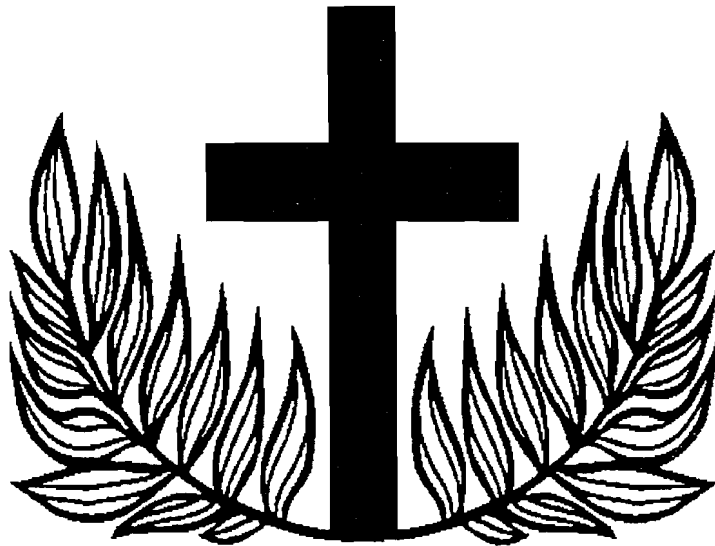
Elaine Niemi remembers an early memory: "When I was a child, I remember the Methodist Pastor being friendly on the street and tipping his hat to those he met. My parents started attending in the 50's and I visited church when home on vacation." She feels that our greatest strengths are "people who are dedicated, committed and talented who work together," while are weaknesses include "those who are not committed...Lord is not first." She recalls that the "time of service changed from evening to morning

when we became a 2 point charge instead of 3." Elaine is active in worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, U.M.W. and tries to be supportive of the total church program. She shares the following story: " The church has been a large part of my life since 1970 when I returned to Republic. Our Wedding Day was a wonderful day--the church was full--my mother had Alzheimer's and was failing at that time. She was in the basement waiting to be ushered in and was so afraid she would be forgotten there. Some of the church women were kind to her. I have had great times with the boys and girls in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School."

Marty & Janet O'Dell remember attending services in the 50's and 60's when they spent the summers in Republic. They too recall the service held on Sunday evenings. They have been and are active in U.M.W., U.M.M. and most other church activities, provided they're in town. The anecdote they share is that "Years ago, when our boys were "kids", we loved to swim in the afternoon, have supper and go to church. After church, we always stopped at Chuck & Smith's service station for a big bowl of ice cream."

Cora Pietila fondly remembers that the "feeling in the church was so warm, loving and friendly", reminiscent of the church she grew up in.

Grace Porter's earliest memory of Republic United Methodist Church is going to Sunday School. Her teacher was Dr. Loveland's wife, who lived on the island on the way to the mine observation platform. Grace remembers walking across the suspension bridge to the Loveland home. Benton and Grace recall the balcony being taken down and the full basement being put in. They were active as a family when their girls were growing up, with Reverend Cecil Lutey and Mrs. Glenn Tucker (Fanny Labold) holding meeting and hay rides in their home for the young people.





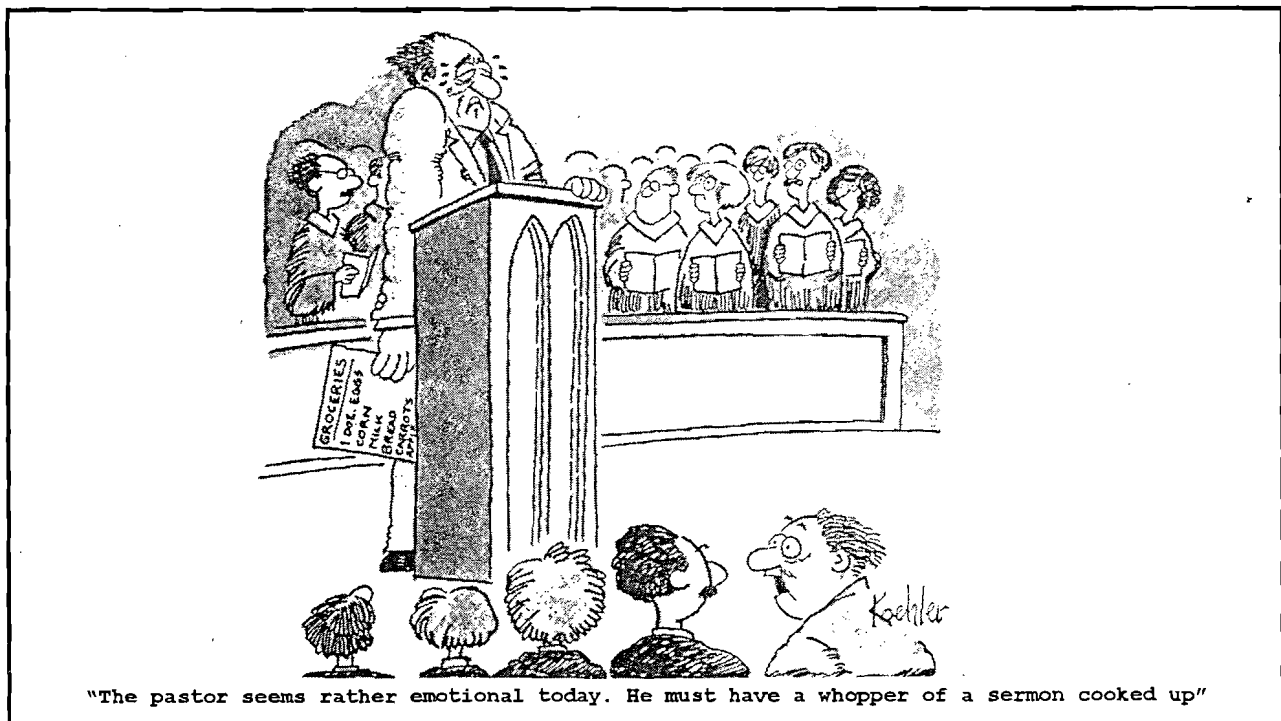
In May of 1993, we got our first look at the church I would pastor in Republic. How well I remembered Republic from my boyhood days on Black River. But the Republic United Methodist Church--I remembered it, but then again, I didn't. Such a pretty, well-kept church--those beautiful windows. After being here two years, I'm still impressed by their quiet beauty. The congregation has obviously taken pride in this church, full of history. I can't help but think of the hands that have cared for the church and Republic's people over the years--and the work continues through the Body of Christ.

We felt the warmth of the people when we arrived. A wonderful welcome from yet another part of Christ's body that we have been sent to serve in. Wherever and whenever God's children seek to do His will, the church will prosper, a testimony to the faithful.

Many of you have shared stories about people for the church's past. Oh, how I wish I could have been here to know these people who practiced their faith so seriously. We have a legacy to live up to as we strive toward perfection. Our local church's saints, John Wesley, and the Lord Himself, pointing the way.

I'm not blind to the struggles our church has had. Growing in the faith is seldom easy. But when we put ourselves aside and keep our eyes on Christ, we can not fail. Republic United Methodist Church has touched and helped to shape many lives. God willing, it will continue to do the same.

Submitted by Reverend Frederick and Katherine LaMere



**A "little" of what we learned from
(Alice) Fanny Tucker**

Fanny Labold Tucker's mother came from Cornwall, England. Her father originally came from the Detroit area. Mr. Labold had a cousin in the Republic area (one of the first doctors) who encouraged him to settle here. Mr. & Mrs. Labold owned the general store, which was located across the street from the church. Her parents were married in our church, and Fanny was baptized there.

Some of her earliest memories include attending Sunday School. The Sunday School class was quite large, with around 100 students in attendance. Two Sunday School classes were held in the balcony of the church. She tells of the annual May Day Celebration program that the students hosted for the entire community. Please see the photo on page for a glimpse of the May Day festivities.

She describes the physical appearance of the church. At one time, there was a wrought iron fence around the entire church yard. The church was painted dark reddish-brown, with white trim. (The color combination was due to the proximity of the church to the mine.) There was a balcony above the entrance. There was no bell in the steeple for many years, although she does recall that there was a larger bell at one time, which was either removed or damaged when lightning struck the steeple probably in the 40's. (The bell we now enjoy was donated in 1992 by Paul Kopecki. It was originally used on the Kopecki farm to call the family and workers in for their meals.)

There were 2 church services on Sunday, with Sunday School held at 2:00 p.m. There were about 50-75 people typically present at the church services. Eventually, there was need for only one service, which was held at 7:00 p.m. Fanny reminds us that at that time, (early 1900's), children weren't expected or allowed to have other "fun" except for their involvement in church activities. As a girl, Fanny played the piano for 3 or 4 years for the morning service.

She remembers that the UMW was once known as the Ladies Aid, then the Ruth Esther Circle, and that meetings were held in members' homes when she was a child. Fanny was very active in the Epworth League, which was the group for older Sunday School students, comparable to the UMY today. She recalls the Epworth League having many "parties", with Fanny making and serving untold numbers of sloppy joes and cocoa!

The turkey dinner tradition began around the late 20's, with the Ladies Aid in charge of the preparations. As the church had no facilities to prepare or serve a meal then, the dinners were held at Laxstrom's store (now the Blackrail Bar). The Ladies Aid members had to bring everything necessary for preparing and serving the meal, right down to the use of their own plates and silverware.

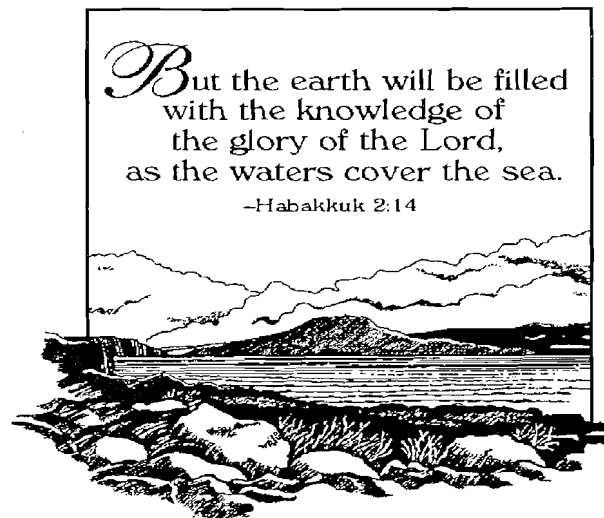
Fanny went to college at Northern Michigan University, graduating with a teaching degree in 1922. Her first teaching job was in Bessemer, although she eventually accepted a position at the Republic School.

She remembers helping one pastor with his English so that he could properly pronounce the words he needed to convey his message on Sundays. She speaks lovingly of Cecil Lutey, who was the pastor that served our area for 14 years (which happens to be the longest term for our local pastorate thus far).

She tells us about the church basement being built in 1955, by the Fayas & Sons Company from Iron Mountain. At the same time, Fanny had a basement put under her home, which was right next door to the church. The Tuckers eventually sold their home to the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, and moved to South Republic in 1970.

Fanny married Glen Tucker at the young age of 65. They were married in the church, with Pastor Wayne Rhodes officiating.

Thank you, Fanny, for your many many years of dedicated service for our church and the area's residents. You're truly a "legend in Republic's time." God bless you!



The Confirmation Class

Dedicated to the Republic United Methodist
Confirmation Class of 1992

Although it has been thirty-five years since I went to confirmation, I remember all too well the Saturday morning classes. I was not happy about giving up my Saturday sleep-ins. But it was not a choice! Or at least I never remember being asked. It was just one of things that was understood by everyone; when you were twelve you went to Confirmation. That was back in the olden days when Confirmation was for most of us a right-of-passage. Confirmation took us from childhood to adulthood in three years.

I learned things I was sure I would never remember and never use in my life time. It was STUPID, a waste of my time, and certainly not worth giving up sleeping late on Saturday mornings. But I went...and I took my attitude with me.

To say I was a prize student would not be an accurate statement. To say I was a difficult student would have been closer to the truth, but even that was a stretch. I was not appreciated by the other students because of my constant questions and those questions always seem to put us late in getting out. I am now sure that the Pastor would have preferred I had stayed home with my attitude.

At the time I went through Confirmation, it was what I called then an indoctrination. The Pastor had an agenda and it did not leave time for questions. The class was taught by force feeding, much like a mother bird feeds her young; she forces the food down the young birds' throat; they do not ask if it's good, they just accept it and grow. That was the philosophy of our Pastors. They force feed us and it was our job to swallow it. To question was considered sacrilegious. I seemed to have developed sacrilegious into fine art.

The Pastors did not always answer my questions, but through the years I have found my answers. And all those things I thought I would never use or remember have indeed become a part of what I am now. I have been very grateful these 20 years for the things I was forced to learn and memorize in Confirmation. How many times have I found myself in deep despair or fear and heard myself saying the 23rd Psalm "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"...or the 121st Psalm "I lift up my eyes to the hill from whence come my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth"...

I have often thought about the Pastors and the Sunday school teachers who tried hard not to be shocked by my questions and who most certainly prayed for me. Wouldn't they be surprised to hear of God's wonderful sense of humor and His Divine justice.

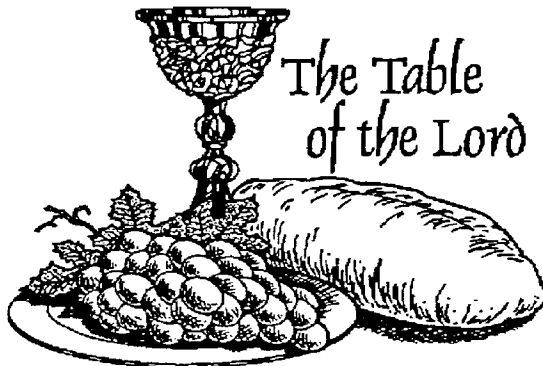
In 1992, here at Republic United Methodist Church, I taught a confirmation class. And in that class, I had a student just like me. God does have a sense of humor. For me, it was a time of great joy and tremendous sorrow.

Sorrow as I realized, like me, some of them did not want to be there and were only there because their parents made them come. And, like me, they brought their attitudes. Sorrow when I realized, like me, they did not always know the importance of what they were doing or what they were learning.

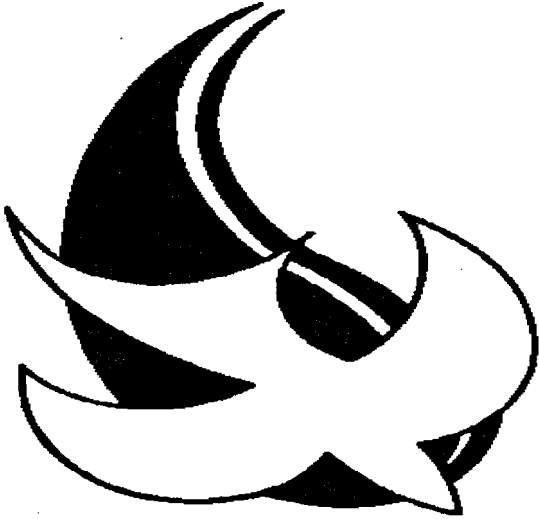
Joy as I watched these young people realize a truth, or as I heard them share their faith. Joy as they received Communion on Confirmation Day, knowing they understood what this Communion was all about. Joy because I know, also like me, these were lessons they would not soon forget and someday, God will call each of them as He has called me. And they too will hear the call and respond.

May God Bless the Confirmation Class of 1992.

by Barbara A. Collette 1995



I Remember...



I remember the bridal show put on by the women's group probably in 1950. Quite a few teenage girls modeled wedding gowns belonging to women of the church; I modeled one, but I can't remember whose it was, but it was a lot of fun to see the old gowns and try to imagine how that particular wedding must have looked.

Also around that time, there was a Mother/Daughter banquet and my mother "loaned" me out to a woman who didn't have any daughters at home; I think it was Annie Cox. She was the community mid-wife for many years in Republic. I remember the women's group; there were so many of them, they formed two separate groups for awhile. I remember how active they were with projects in progress constantly. I remember going to the Bice sisters home on Republic Avenue. (Fire Street because the fire hall was on this street for many years) for a summer meeting when they were back in Republic for the summer vacation from their teacher jobs in the Detroit area. They had beautiful antiques and lots of Hummels in an antique china cabinet.

I remember the Sunday School and sitting in the balcony above the back of the church. There was a door and steps going up on each side of the front entrance of the church so this balcony made two classrooms, one on each side. There were no crafts, games or play, just Bible study and lessons.

I remember the dedicated choir who sang each Sunday and practiced so faithfully; they actually had choir robes and sat on the big wooden chairs up in front near the piano. We didn't have an organ at that time in the 1950's. Mrs. Kenney played the piano for church services and later when we did get an organ, I remember Edith Brown played it for years.

Cecil Lutey was such a blessing to our church for approximately 14 years. We were all aware he had a day job working in a florist shop in Ishpeming, but the churches in Republic, Champion and Michigamme were his life. He was a very loving person. As a teenager, I felt the people here in this church made me feel like an important part of the church, not just a kid to be tolerated or ignored.

by Dolores Mattson

The Motorcycle Minister

Our story is a relatively new one, compared to others who have had a long relationship with the Republic United Methodist Church. Our memories here only go back about 3 years, to the fall of 1992, when we relocated to "camp" at Witch Lake.

That fall, we often took rides as a way to relax from our many and ongoing projects, and to explore the new area we just recently inhabited. Our first impression of the church was the view from the bridge over the Michigamme River, just north of the town's north intersection. It was picturesque indeed, with the pristine white building contrasting sharply with the blue blue sky and the autumn reds and golds of the foliage. We recognized immediately that it was probably a church (due to the steeple) and drove up for a closer look. It was then that we realized with certainty that it was a church still in operation, which was a pleasant surprise for us, since most of the area businesses had long since closed or moved. We talked then of the neatness of the building and grounds, and commented on the unusual steeple proportions and roof pitch, in relation to the rest of the building. Little did we know then that the very building we were admiring and wondering about would soon become our new church home. Although we were professing Christians, we hadn't found a new local church yet.

During the following spring (probably May of 93), we were out on one of our first bike rides of the season. Now, anyone who has ridden an old Harley knows that it is essential that you stop frequently to make sure nothing has vibrated off the bike, and to give your body a rest also. We stopped at the local bistro at the junction of highways 95/141 for a respite. While enjoying our break, another Harley pulled in, maneuvered by a fellow leather clad biker. After exchanging a few words about the wonderful weather and Harleys, our new friend casually mentioned that he happened to be the Methodist minister for Republic. He invited us to the church and to a bike "blessing" to be held the following weekend at the lower harbor in Marquette. Now Scott and I had "blessed" our Hawg many times, but not necessarily what you'd consider a godly blessing...we tried to imagine what that might be like, but couldn't quite conceive it. With curiosity piqued, we went to the bike blessing with our new friend Nick and his wife Jean, officiating. The ceremony was simple, but moving. It closed with everyone present choosing to "lay hands" on another person's bike and praying for the safety of bike and rider for this season. That was really the beginning of our relationship with the Republic United Methodist Church. We started attending Sunday morning service whenever possible; always amazed at what the biker-preacher had to say, or sometimes, at what was left unsaid. I remember being

amazed that this man could ride a Harley and preach like a Baptist minister. I know that those are both "gifts" of sorts, but we had never ever imagined one person having both talents. Just as we were becoming familiar and comfortable with the church and its' people, Nick gave us the bad news (for us) that he'd be leaving the area in July. We attended his farewell party in late June, held at Woodland and had pretty much made up our minds to keep looking for a church to call home.

We expressed our concerns to Nick; we didn't know anybody, really (although many of you were very gracious); we had no good reason to continue to attend R.U.M.C. At that time, we got what was to become one of many impromptu personalized lecture/sermons from Pastor Nick. The gist of it was that the church is made up of the attendees, not necessarily the Pastor. Going to a particular church is a decision not to be taken lightly, but that decision is not and never should be dependent upon the Pastor. The people are the church. And so, begrudgingly, we decided to take his message to heart and keep attending R.U.M.C. Not suprisingly, Pastor Nick was right. We've made many good friends through the church, who will remain friends throughout any pastoral changes.

Pastor Fred and Katherine LaMere nurtured us further, by explaining in detail what it means to become a Methodist. We joined the church as members in December of 1993 and have been as active as our time and talents allow ever since.

In hindsight, as I reflect upon our "history" with the church, I have to give all credit to the Lord. It was only God's perfect timing that would have steered Pastor Nick to the exact location we were at. Only God knew that we could be reached through sheer curiosity by the biker-preacher; a modern-day circuit rider of sorts. In closing, I can only marvel at God's timing and perfect plan for each of us. May all glory and honor and praise be His, today, for the next 125 years, and always.

by Katherine Hart Lofstrom & Scott Lofstrom

Rev. Nicholas Scroggins presides over the annual Blessing of the Bikes. The event is conducted at the beginning of the motorcycle season and is a ceremony asking for safety for all bikers.

