

# *The Little Brown Church*

**A HISTORY**



by

**FERN JONES MINER**

**1960**

**HISTORY**  
of the  
**LITTLE BROWN CHURCH**

by  
**Fern Jones Miner**

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**REVEREND AND MRS. ARTHUR G. SCHAFER**

I wish to dedicate this  
little booklet to Reverend  
and Mrs. Arthur G. Schafer  
who have given, to the Little  
Brown Church, so much of  
themselves to further the  
cause of Christ.

*Fern Jones Miner*

## FORWARD

From the very inception of the Christian Church, our Lord indicated that the emphasis should be upon persons and their individual response to Him as Lord and Savior of their lives. Having launched the ship of faith in the lives of twelve very ordinary men, He believed that they would carry on His way of life no matter what might transpire.

It is true that they miserably failed Him at the beginning. After the Resurrection these same individuals became the core of that dynamic infant church. With a deep conviction that He was indeed Christus Victor, they went out to turn the world upside down to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Here and there they established the Church as the body of believing hearts. The torch of faith was handed down from one flaming heart to another until today we have the Berean Presbyterian Church here in our midst.

As one reads the long and varied history of this church so well written by the author, who has been such a vital part of it, he senses the depth of consecration and devotion of individual lives within this church. One senses also the basic devotion of the pastoral leadership through the years into the present time when the outer organization came into the Presbyterian fold.

Reading the following pages, one feels the hopes and fears; the good years and the bad; all of which reflect the church visible. However, the Lord of the Church and the Lord of History has breathed His inner life into this church invisible. So can we look forward to increasing growth, deeper dedication, and a keen sense of evangelism, until this church shall write a contemporary history of real effectiveness for the Kingdom of God in our time.

Harold E. Penhalurick,  
Field Administrator of  
National Missions,  
Synod of Washington

## I AM CALLING YOU

I am the best friend of mankind. To the man who prizes sanity, peacefulness, puremindedness, social standing and longevity, I am a necessity.

I am hung about with sweet memories--memories of mothers, memories of boys and girls, memories of the aged as they grope their way down the shadows.

I am decked with loving tears, crowned by loving hands and hearts.

In the minds of the greatest men on earth, I find a constant dwelling place.

I live in the lives of the young and in the dreams of the old.

I safeguard man, with a friendly hand to the man in fine linens and the man in homespun.

I am the essence of good fellowship, friendliness and love.

I give gifts that gold cannot buy, nor kings take away. They are given freely to all that ask.

I bring back the freshness of life, the eagerness, the spirit of youth, which feels that it has something to live for ahead.

I meet you with out-stretched arms and with songs of gladness.

Some time - some day - some hour - in the near future you will yearn for the touch of my friendly hand.

I am your comforter and best friend.

I am calling you!

I am the Church!

In the year of 1911 (my second year of teaching), our school had an attendance of from fifty to sixty pupils, ranging from the first through the eighth grades. We had two rooms, with a large entrance hall, facing north. The old street car ran east and west in front of the school. When the district in 1913 started the new schoolhouse, the old two-room building was moved a hundred feet or so to make room for the new building. We taught with the old building propped up on a temporary post foundation. The new building, built of brick, burned in the spring of 1916. The old building still stands at the corner of Alameda and Steilacoom Avenue. Later it was transferred, or bought by the people of the community for a community house.

Our district was large in area, but, as yet, small in numbers. The children walked to school, some a distance of three miles. I can still see Mrs. Gay's six girls, all beautifully clean and trim, trudging up the old street car track. Others walked from the edge of Steilacoom township, but those were the days we thought nothing of walking. It wasn't a hardship.

The only churches between South Tacoma and Nisqually were the Steilacoom Congregational Church, built in 1881, and the Lakeview Congregational Church, built in 1907, seventy-nine and fifty-three years old, respectively.

People were just beginning to come out to the Lakes District as summer residents, going back in the late fall. This gave the school a boost in attendance spring and fall. As the years progressed, these summer cottages were converted into permanent homes and the bread earners commuted to and from Tacoma by street car. The school grew, making it imperative to build the new building which was finished and dedicated April 14, 1914. Judge Fremont Campbell gave the opening address and Mr. L. L. Benlow, County School Superintendent, gave the address of acceptance.

## NEED FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1912, Reverend Jeremiah Dick, Sunday School missionary of the Congregational Church for the state of Washington, saw the need for a Sunday School at Lake City. He gained permission from the school board to hold classes in the schoolhouse Sunday afternoons, so the old building was doing double duty as school and Sunday School in the community.

Miss Pearl Stoltenberg (Mrs. John Kulsey) now living in Tacoma, was asked to conduct the classes and, with the aid of several others, had a very successful Sunday School. The work grew in numbers and in interest.

In a short time people began to feel the need for church services and occasionally church services were held in the old building Sunday evenings. Supply pastors were invited in and an expectant congregation gathered to hear the message each Sunday. However, there were times this same audience was disappointed, for--due to transportation and perhaps other causes--the supply failed to appear.

Mr. W. E. Morris, a resident at the time, conducted the choir and laughs as he tells that he didn't know a note of the scale. But in spite of the fact, the choir was a real success--perhaps due to their enthusiasm and their love of singing praises to the Lord.

Mr. Charles Gaffney, now of Arlington, Washington, was sometimes asked to fill the pulpit. Mr. Gaffney, an enthusiastic, energetic young man with a deep love for the Master, was acting as supply pastor for both the Lakeview and Steilacoom churches but still found time to work with the people of Lake City, endearing himself to the people of the three communities.

### BRANCHING OUT - HEBREWS 10:25

After a short time, people began to feel the need for an organized church. Mr. David Walker and Mr. Andrew Lowe, both of Scotch origin, called upon Mr. W. E. Morris to discuss the possibility of organizing a church in the district. After much prayer, discussion and necessary ground work, a meeting of the residents of the community was called early

in the fall of 1912. Among those present were Andrew Lowe, David Walker, W. E. Morris, W. E. Coates, Mary Muir, Cecile Boganrife, Bella Andrews, Louis Ziegler, Herbert Algoe, Robert Davis, Henry Unbedacht and Mr. Charles Gaffney.

Mr. Gaffney was called upon to preside over the meeting. Finding that the proposed church was going to need both spiritual and financial assistance, it was purposed that the several churches of Tacoma be invited to meet with the group to expound the views of his or her denomination, that these people might know which church might best benefit a group springing from many denominational backgrounds. Practically every denomination accepted the challenge, but strange as it may seem there was no Baptist representative present.

#### SEEKING ASSISTANCE - JAMES 1:5

After the views of each representative had been presented and discussed, and much consideration and prayer had been given to the situation, the group concluded that the Congregational Church would best fulfill their needs.

Mr. Andrew Lowe moved that the prospective church petition the Congregational Church to assume the responsibility of the new church with the proviso that Mr. Charles Gaffney be retained as the minister of the new church.

Mr. Gaffney was young, his education inadequate to be ordained by the Congregational Church and Mr. Scudder advised against having an unordained man to fill the pulpit of a new church. The congregation was firm in their desire to retain Mr. Gaffney. After much controversy, it was decided that the church might affiliate with the Congregational Church with the proviso that Mr. Gaffney work under the direction of the Educational Committee of the Congregational Church and that he might be ordained with the privilege of performing the sacraments of the Lord's Supper, baptism and funerals, but not perform the marriage ceremony. Mr. Gaffney was ordained in the Plymouth Congregational Church of Tacoma September 12, 1913.

April 13, 1913, at 7:30 p.m., those of the community desiring to organize the new church met in the schoolhouse for this purpose. Reverend Jeremiah Dick called the meeting to order. Mr. Dick was elected chairman of the meeting;



Mr. W. E. Morris, scribe. The following were present: Mr. W. E. Coates, Mrs. S. S. Coates, Miss Kathleen Coates, Miss Florence Coates, Bella Andrews, Andrew Lowe, Mrs. Sara Lowe, Pearl Stoltenberg, Mrs. Mary Muir, David Walker, Jessie Lowe, Henry Unbedacht, Anita Unbedacht, Olga Unbedacht, Ivan Unbedacht, James Russel, Margaret Russel, Cecile Boganrife, Kathleen Saxton, W. E. Morris, Mrs. W. E. Morris, Emmett Sisco and Edna Sears (now Mrs. Herman Gaul).

The articles of incorporation were accepted. Mr. W. E. Morris was voted clerk of the session; Mr. Charles Gaffney was called to the pulpit and unanimously accepted.

The following is a copy from the articles of incorporation of the First Congregational Church of American Lake, State of Washington, County of Pierce:

"I, W. E. Morris, do hereby certify, that on this 19th day of May, 1913, personally appeared before me, W. E. Coates, David Walker, Andrew Lowe and Mary Muir, to me known to be the individuals described in and who executed the within articles of incorporation of the First Congregational Church of American Lake, and do acknowledge that they severally signed and sealed the same as their free and voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

"Given under my hand and seal, this 14th day of May, 1913.

Signed, W. E. Morris  
Notary Public in and for the  
State of Washington."

"June 25, 1913, a council of Congregational Churches, met in the Lake City schoolhouse. Eight Congregational Churches were represented by their pastor or delegate. Mr. Hendley from the Plymouth Congregational Church presided over the meeting. The council unanimously voted to receive and recognize the church." (Copy from records)

So a new church was born to be a community church for community people. The next few years were fruitful and colorful. Many joys, blessings, problems and disappointments were shared by all. But these people shared and

worked together for the privilege of serving the Lord in their beloved church.

#### BUILDING THE CHURCH - NEHEMIAH 4:6

One of the first problems to be met was the building of a sanctuary. There was very little money in sight and, seemingly, people had reached deep within their own resources. They made an appeal to the Congregational Conference for some financial aid, but no funds were available. A new building was imperative. They must sacrifice a little more and, trusting it was in the Lord's will, they started their building. Donations were made and enough money was gathered together to make quite a showing toward completion.

Mr. James R. Thompson of Holly Lane donated the land upon which the church stands. He also hired an architect to design the building. Mr. William (Daddy) Ponton was the builder, using volunteer labor from the congregation as help. The money was acquired as the work progressed. It meant real sacrifice to many, in those days. But their love was real and they were determined to complete their building.

They had reached the shingling stage. The new shingles were neatly stacked, ready for use. Mr. Gaffney, to speed the work, was cleaning up the refuse around the building and burning as he cleaned. The fire got away from him and burned up the shingles. He tells that he sat down and cried. The congregation smiled, took up a collection and bought new shingles.

In the spring of 1914, a bazaar and food sale was held in the old schoolhouse to raise money to help finish the building. About Seventy-five Dollars was realized from this sale, but it was not enough. The church borrowed Two Hundred Dollars from W. E. Morris, but they were never able to pay off this loan.

Mr. Gaffney was still serving the Steilacoom and Lakeview Churches and was having a great deal of difficulty in keeping his appointments. Many times he and his wife walked from one church to another. They lived in Steilacoom, but the distance was a real drawback. Finally, the young people of the community took up a collection and bought him a motorcycle. Even then, he was pushed for time. One day, as he was making the trip from Steilacoom to Lake City in his

usual hurry, a speed cop spied him and gave chase. Mr. Gaffney slipped off into the woods on his motor bike and the cop sped by. When all was clear, Mr. Gaffney resumed his trip.

#### MILITARY SERVICE - EPHESIANS 6:10, 11

When Mr. Gaffney left his three churches in the late summer of 1916 to join the armed services, he left many heavy but prayerful hearts behind him. When he was released from the service, he ministered up in the suburbs of Mt. Vernon, Washington, and now has retired from the ministry and lives in Arlington, Washington.

#### GROWING PAINS - II TIMOTHY 2:15

It was hard to get ministers during the first World War. So many were called into the armed services. The church was forced to depend upon supplies, so carried on with many changes in the pulpit.

In spite of the new problems, the church was growing; the need for a recreation room was very great. Again they appealed to the Congregational Conference for help, but no help was forthcoming. Once more, the congregation, through donations and volunteer labor, undertook the building of the fireside room. The fireplace was designed, built and donated by Captain Simpson, who at that time was in charge of the Lake City Water Works. By trade, Captain Simpson was a mason. The children and youth of the community helped to gather the stones which face the fireplace. At Captain Simpson's death, the small brass placque on the face of the fireplace was made and placed there in his memory. For nearly half a century, the youth of the community have enjoyed the christian fellowship about the fire in the recreation room.

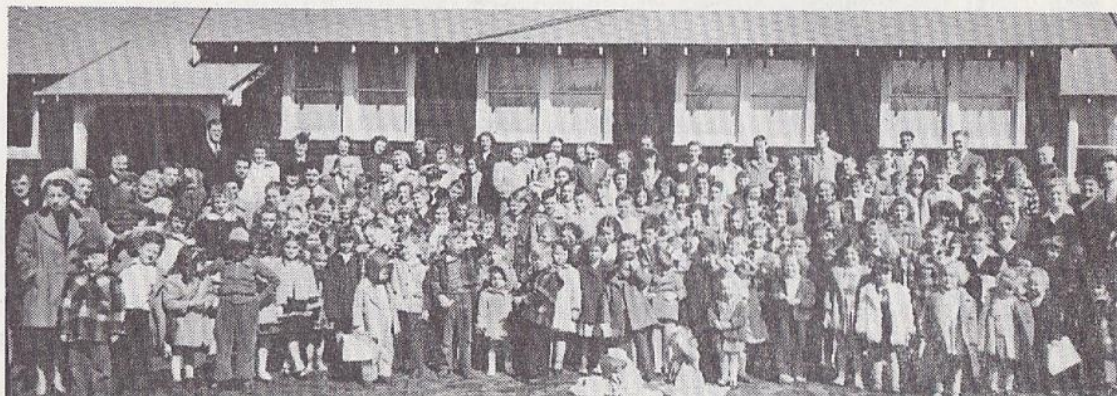
The bell was a gift from Mr. W. E. Morris who ordered it from San Francisco, and in 1916 had it hung in the belfry of the church. Here it has tolled out the message of love and salvation to all who would listen and, through the years, many have heeded the call. Many have been brought closer to their Maker; many lives have been changed.

#### A PERMANENT PASTOR

At last the war was over. The church had grown. Many of the people from what is now called the Lakewood Center were



SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF AMERICAN LAKE, ABOUT 1915



SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH  
ABOUT 1948



REVEREND ARTHUR G. SCHAFER (left) and REVEREND  
EDWIN HURD ARE SHOWN ABOVE TAKING A "BREATH" AT  
THE RECENT "WOODCUTTING BEE" OF THE LITTLE BROWN  
CHURCH OF AMERICAN LAKE. THE BOY IS RICHARD MINER,  
A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL. 1936

in attendance. Reverend Arthur G. Schafer had been called from his post at the Plymouth Congregational Church to take over the work here. Mr. and Mrs. Schafer, with three small children, moved into the old house at 11701 Interlaaken Drive. It was a cold winter and it took most of his salary to keep the house warm. However, they were looking forward to the spring and its warmth and loved the beautiful old house. But, alas, in the spring the house was sold, and the family was without a home. Vacant homes were few and hard to find at that time. The Schafers moved into the recreation room and later enlarged it enough to make sleeping quarters for themselves.

#### DIVISION - I CORINTHIANS 10:11, 13

About this time, the ugly head of dissension reared itself among the members of the church over the mode of baptism. And in spite of the fact that it was a community church for community people, the dissension would not be quelled. The church finally split and many left, gathering themselves in other quarters. But through it all, the Schafers carried on faithfully and patiently, though Mr. Schafer felt his work in the community was finished. How wrong he proved to be.

He wished to be released, but there were many influential men who had given generously and were much concerned over the young people of the church. Mr. Chester Thorne, especially, was adamant in his desire to retain Mr. Schafer. Many of the employees on his beautiful estate at Thornewood had children, whom he loved dearly. It was a painful situation but for the sake of these faithful friends and his concern over the division, Mr. Schafer remained, doing all he could to hold the church together.

#### EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH - ROMANS 8:28

In 1923, a young man from the Evangelical Lutheran Church accepted a call to the pulpit. He was to come out from Minneapolis with his young bride. The date of his arrival was set and all were looking forward joyfully to a new pattern. But another disappointment awaited the congregation, and the Schafers. The young man failed to arrive. His young bride refused to come to the "Wild West." Mr. Schafer carried on though he had moved to town where he would be nearer the many new interests he had developed.

The Congregational Conference had never been able to help the struggling little church in any way and those in charge of the work felt it best to dissolve the relationship and affiliate with the Evangelical Lutheran Conference. Mr. Robert Davis, prominent lawyer of Tacoma and a strong Congregationalist, acted as legal advisor. The sixth day of October, 1923, at 9:04 a.m., the church legally became the Community Evangelical Lutheran Church of American Lake. The papers were signed and sealed the eighteenth day of December, 1923.

#### MR SCHAFFER'S NEW WORK - MARK 10:14

Mr. and Mrs. Schafer had a deep-seated yearning for the children of the underprivileged families of Tacoma and outside vicinities where there was no teaching of spiritual lessons and where the only reference they ever heard of Christ was uttered in oaths. They started Sunday Schools in old abandoned churches such as the East Side Methodist Church, the old Episcopal Church of Old Town which was tumbling down, Park Avenue Church; they met in old tug boats on the Tide Flats and gathered these little waifs wherever they found them. They also started and built Ponder Chapel; Dash Point was one of their churches and many others. Star Chapel in the east side of town was organized and built under his leadership.

One of the great secrets of Mr. and Mrs. Schafer was that they made all of us work, both young and old. Everyone loved them, their enthusiasm was catching and they never tired. They still carry on the burden of Star Chapel in Old Tacoma though they have retired and are now living in the Toby Jones Home.

In spite of all these new interests, the Schafers carried on the burden of the Little Brown Church. While the Evangelical Lutheran Church had accepted the responsibility of the church and it was legally in their name, nothing was ever done to assume any responsibility. It was about this time when the people of the community and of Tacoma began to designate the church as the Little Brown Church. Perhaps the reason was partially due to the fact that the youth were very active in Christian Endeavor and, too, none had ever had any reason to feel that they were a part of the Lutheran Conference. Things had moved on, under the direction of Mr. Schafer, with few changes along the way.

In 1924, additional lots were given the church by Mrs. Sara Perkins. These lots adjoined the church property to the south of the building and the plan for them was a new parsonage for the young pastor who did not come.

#### NORTHWEST BIBLE SCHOOLS - ACTS 11:23

Mr. Schafer's work was creating a great interest in Tacoma and the Lakes District. Prominent businessmen saw the great value to the community and to the lives that were being touched, for the first time, with the gospel teaching. Several influential men formed a corporation to help Mr. Schafer in his truly great work. Robert Davis, prominent lawyer of Tacoma, was the president of the corporation; Mr. Schafer, the Pastor, in charge; George Long of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company was treasurer; James R. Thompson, an insurance man; Miss Mina Andrews was secretary. Harold Woodworth, the contractor; Roy Sharp of Mt. Tacoma Lumber Company; Howard Stein and David C. Weyerhaeuser, all strong business executives, put their shoulders to the wheel and worked on this board. Many others joined with this group as the years progressed and were happy to be of service. They named their corporation The Northwest Bible Schools.

We too, who were practically orphans, came under their protection. What wonderful things were done for us and for our children. These were blessed years indeed. We had the first Vacation Bible School that was known to Tacoma, where children for miles around came and learned for two weeks each summer what the Bible and Jesus Christ meant to their lives. We had wonderful parties in the fireside room after which these same young people gathered about the fireplace, and in a dimly lighted room worshipped their Lord and testified to his goodness to them. Nearly all of these young people are living consecrated Christian lives and some have gone into full time service. Such effort can never die.

#### A WEDDING - PSALM 100

In 1932, Bernice and Louise Schafer entered Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. The years sped by and in 1934, Bernice married a fellow-student, Edwin Q. Hurd. They were married in the Little Brown Church, Mr. Schafer officiating.

At this time, Mr. Hurd was called to take over the work of the Little Brown Church, under the direction of the Northwest Bible Schools. The church and Sunday School grew until

we were bursting at the seams. We were happy to have those young people in charge of the work.

Our chapel was heated with a great old iron wood stove which never kept us warm in winter but ate wood by the cord, nevertheless. Dupont Powder Works donated fallen timber to the church, provided we take the wood off the ground immediately. About twenty-five men and boys, armed with saws, axes, wedges, muscle and enthusiasm sawed and split and hauled enough wood to feed the old stove and fireplace for a long period of time. Mr. Hurd and Mr. Schafer proved to be with the top woodsmen of the day.

#### TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY - PSALM 97:1

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the little church had rolled around. All available pioneers of the earlier church were contacted and invited to a banquet and evening of reminiscence. There were perhaps seventy-five present besides our newer congregation. Mr. Gaffney was the speaker of the evening. All had a wonderful time renewing old friendships and almost getting acquainted again after so many years.

#### MULTNOMAH SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE - MATTHEW 7:20

After Mr. Hurd left us to become pastor of the Oakland Presbyterian Church, we were supplied with young men attending Multnomah School of the Bible, Portland, Oregon, where some of our young people were continuing their education. These young men were inexperienced, of course, but their zeal and enthusiasm brought much to the services. They built up a large young peoples group who were very active in Christian Endeavor work.

We have seen many of these young people go forward and give their hearts and lives to the Lord. With few exceptions, these same young people are leading strong Christian lives. Some are in the ministry and some on the mission fields.

A year or so later, one of the graduates of Multnomah School of the Bible, Raymond Ledyard, became our pastor. We were hard pressed for money in those days and it was Mr. Ledyard's first church. He worked faithfully and sacrificially. But we were unable to support him. He left us to be married, and in a short time was called to be pastor of



the Fern Hill Baptist Church where, for many years, he and his wife served in the Lord's work.

Later, Carlisle Schafer (son of Mr. and Mrs. Schafer), accepted the work in the little church. Carlisle had grown up in the church. He had recently graduated from the Multnomah School of the Bible and had for some time been working with his father in his many young churches. He had married a fellow-student from Multnomah and the two young people were anxious to serve in a church of their own. They were working under peculiar and difficult circumstances with an inadequate salary, but they struggled along with us until Carlisle decided to continue his education at Presbyterian Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, where he went to school and served as pastor in Bloomington, Wisconsin. He is now pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Toledo, Washington.

#### MANSE PROPERTY - I CORINTHIANS 15:58

The property we term as the manse property was a gift to Mr. and Mrs. Hurd, given by Mrs. Nehammer who was selling the rest of her property and her beautiful home on Lake City Boulevard. Mr. Hurd built the first unit of the manse, namely the dining area and the one bedroom and a lean-to kitchen. When he left us, the Northwest Bible Schools bought the property and planned to hold it until such time that the Little Brown Church could add it to the present church property upon which the church stands. When Carlisle became the pastor, it was given to him as part of his salary from the Northwest Bible Schools.

Carlisle added the large fireplace room, a small study and the bathroom. Later, when the church became stronger, they bought the property from Carlisle Schafer. The property was fixed up at various times, more additions made, and our pastors have occupied the house as their home.

We got along with supplies for some time after Carlisle left us. In 1945 Mr. Lingren, a retired Baptist minister, supplied our pulpit for a time. He was finally asked to become our pastor, but he felt his health would not permit a fulltime pastorate. He consented to serve us for Sunday morning services as long as he was able, but as his health was poor he stayed only a short time.

## AN INVITATION - MAY 8, 1945

A report and invitation was received from the Lake City Community Church asking our consideration for the unity of the two churches. We were two small struggling little churches, with the same aims and principles, each presumably community churches, but with one outstanding difference. Our church was dedicated as a community church for community people. Our church had embraced all protestant faiths-- Episcopal, Presbyterian, some Baptists, Congregational and Lutheran--in fact, all who were seeking spiritual advancement. When the matter of baptism again arose, with insistence upon the one mode of baptism, we could not come to agreement. So the matter had to be cancelled, and we struggled on, praying that it was the Lord's will that we remain separated.

## THE LORD PROVIDES - HEBREWS 12:2

We were fortunate to have a fine consecrated chaplain of the armed services, with a ministerial background, come to us as a supply pastor. He was expecting to be released from the army and was considering our church for his ministry. Our church was growing both spiritually and financially. It was at this time we were able to buy the manse property, though even then it was a real sacrifice on the part of the members. In May, 1946, under Chaplain Young's leadership, plans were made for a permanent church organization. The Northwest Bible Schools authorized such a move. A constitution was drawn up and accepted. Chaplain Young was expecting to be our pastor and we, as well as he, were looking forward to his retirement from the armed services. But alas! Another disappointment awaited us. Chaplain Young called a special meeting of the board. He had been called back into the service for a special assignment overseas, and his enlistment was extended.

## A BRIGHTER DAY - EPHESIANS 5:19, 20

On August 14, 1946, the executive officers of the church met to discuss plans for the manse and for the supply of the pulpit. We were more or less independent now, and felt that we should assume our own responsibilities. Jack Miner suggested that we contact Stewart Kimball and offer him \$125 per month and the manse, in the way of salary, if he would accept the pastorate of the Little Brown Church.

Mr. Kimball was well known to our young people, and to some of us older people who had worked with the youth. He had been very active in Christian Endeavor for some time during his high school and college years. He was a very personable young man with "Fire and Go!" He accepted our call, though he was still taking work at Seattle Pacific College. His mother lived with him in the manse and worked beside him all the way. He was especially gifted musically and we soon had a strong choir. Perhaps the members were not all singers, but Mr. Kimball drew out the best that was in them. And how they did love to sing! Both young and old loved Mr. Kimball. And the children were delighted when he was near.

We grew rapidly under his ministry. It wasn't long until the church was too small for both the Sunday School and the church services. The manse housed as many as fifty people with two or three classes each Sunday morning. We were using the little old club house, built some years previously by the Junior Boy's Class; we also used the little study Mr. Hurd had built on the manse property. Every available spot, including the built-on woodshed, was being used. The poor secretary walked practically blocks to take attendance Sunday mornings. There seemed to be only one answer,

#### WE MUST BUILD - PROVERBS 3:5, 6

In December, 1946, Mr. David Weyerhaeuser brought us a message from the Northwest Bible Schools, who had been watching our growth. After a thorough investigation, they had concluded we were ready to assume our responsibilities as a church congregation. They recommended that we organize as such, though they would ever be ready to assist in any way they were able. Before we could become an organized independent church, it was necessary to take steps to dissolve our existing legal relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Mr. Edwin Johnson, lawyer, took care of the situation and we were as of February, 1947, registered in Olympia as the Little Brown Church of American Lake.

The Little Brown Church had a great task before them. Trusting it to be the Lord's will, the membership voted to proceed with plans to build a construction adjoining the old building. Plans were drawn which would ultimately allow for a new and larger sanctuary in the future. It was a

wearing task to be assumed by each individual of the church, from the oldest to the youngest member. I fear we became somewhat money-minded for a period of time, though the efforts of the more spiritual work of the church were carried on faithfully. But each group assumed its responsibility even to the children, who sold cement blocks to their parents and friends, and the Junior Girls, who made cookies and sold them in the neighborhood.

#### BLESSINGS - PROVERBS 10:22

But we did take time out to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Little Brown Church, inviting all who were interested. Mr. Charles Gaffney was with us again, and many more of the old friends.

In 1948, the Northwest Bible Schools presented us with a picture, "The Good Shepherd," which hangs in the sanctuary. This picture was bought and hung there in loving memory of Mrs. Ida Baily, who was so interested in the work of the church, and of the Northwest Bible Schools, and the many children who were being reached with the gospel.

Also, during these years, our youth had a full program, both in our own church and with the State Christian Endeavor. They held conferences at Delano Beach, another project of Mr. Schafer's. Our younger children, too, were taken out to the beach for two weeks at a time, hearing the word and endeavoring to live the word in their own lives.

#### MR. KIMBALL ORDAINED

Mr. Kimball was ordained in May, 1950, in the First Congregational Church of Tacoma. When he left us after six years of service, he was called to that church as assistant pastor.

The ground breaking of the new unit of the church occurred June 18, 1950. The building was designed by Buford Bombardier of Steilacoom City; the construction was done by Clarence Hoekstra.

By the time the building was finished, it was completely paid for, thanks to the donations of many friends and the hard and faithful work of many of the members.

After Mr. Kimball left us, a young evangelist, Leo DeSmet, accepted our pastorate for a brief period of time but was shortly called into evangelistic work in the remote areas of the state.

On August 20, 1953, Dr. and Mrs. Henry G. Dietz accepted our call as an interim minister. Dr. Dietz was a retired United Presbyterian minister from the First United Presbyterian Church, now called the Trinity Presbyterian Church.

After Mr. Kimball left us, many members left our church and through the following year we were decreased alarmingly in numbers. New churches were springing up about us and as people came into the community, they affiliated with the denomination of which they had been a part. We found it increasingly hard to keep up our attendance. At the beginning of Dr. Dietz's ministry, there was talk among the members of uniting with a denomination. However, things picked up remarkably and our program had gotten back to normal, as well as our finances. Many things were accomplished about the church and manse properties, such as a new lawn, proper lighting of grounds, improvements in the parsonage, a new organ in the church, and many others--as well as a good spiritual program.

Dr. and Mrs. Dietz carried on with us until January 7, 1956, when he asked to be relieved of his pastoral duties. At the time, we were considering union with the Presbytery of Olympia. There was much discussion. A petition by the members of the church was made to ask Dr. Dietz to remain with us until such a time as our plan of union with the Presbyterian Church be accepted or rejected. Dr. Dietz graciously agreed to remain with us, to help us in this new organization.

A special meeting of the congregation was called March 7, 1956. Mrs. Slining moved that we petition the Olympia Presbytery to receive us into the fellowship of the Presbyterian Church.

We are no longer the Little Brown Church. The rest of our history belongs to the future. And I, who have written that which I have experienced and that which I have gleaned from the records, pray that those reading this recording may be understanding in their judgment of those who have participated in this work, from the first to the last. And may the great efforts put forth, for the love of Christ, be fruitful to His honor and glory.

## Little Brown Church

There's a little brown church mid the fir trees,  
And often my heart takes me there  
To kneel in blessed communion  
As I speak with my Saviour in prayer.

Cho. Oh, joy, joy, joy, joy—  
There in its peace and its quiet  
My Lord and I often meet,  
And the joy that I find in His presence  
Floods my soul with a rapture complete.

2. It was there that I first met my Saviour,  
There He spoke words of pardon to me;  
And the little brown church mid the fir trees  
Became like heaven to me.

Chorus.

3. There the ties of true friendship are stronger  
As we meet in the name of our Lord,  
And the Friend who is closer than brother  
Binds our hearts in Christian accord.

Chorus.

Dedicated to those who have found Christ as their Saviour  
or have deepened their experience with Him at the  
Little Brown Church.

MRS. ARTHUR G. SCHAFER.

Tacoma, Wash., September, 1944.