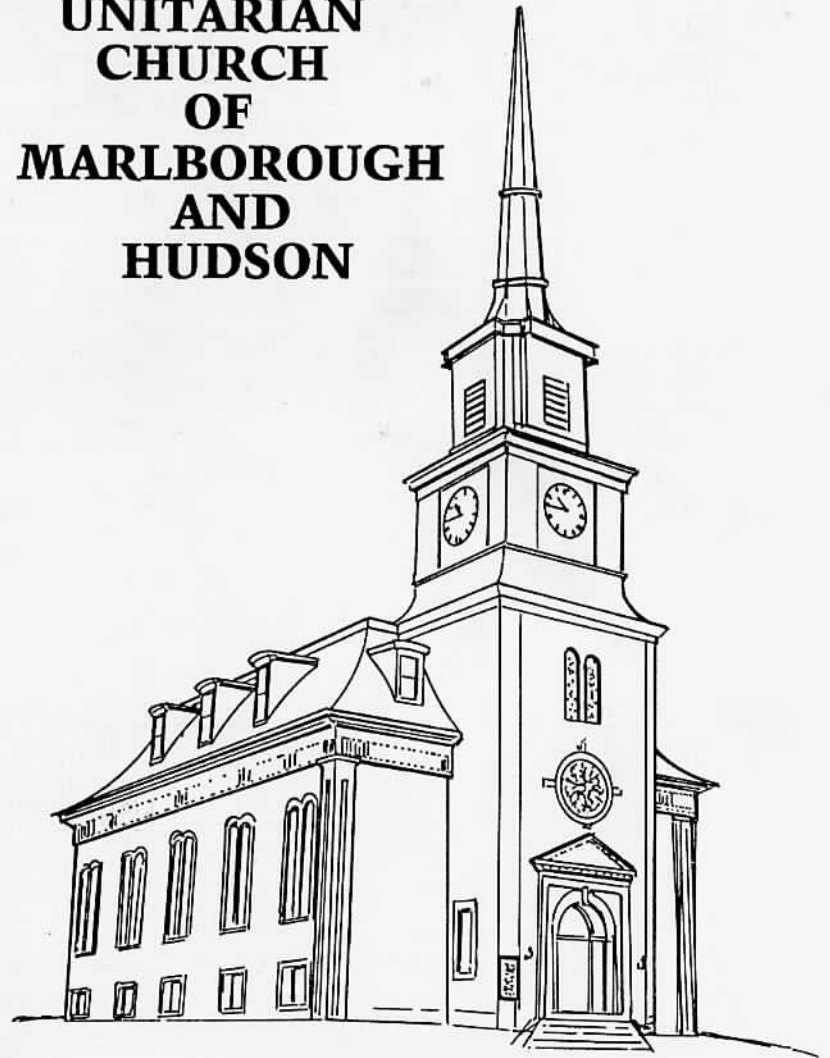


**UNITARIAN
CHURCH
OF
MARLBOROUGH
AND
HUDSON**



**150TH
ANNIVERSARY
NOVEMBER 30, 1997**

FOREWARD

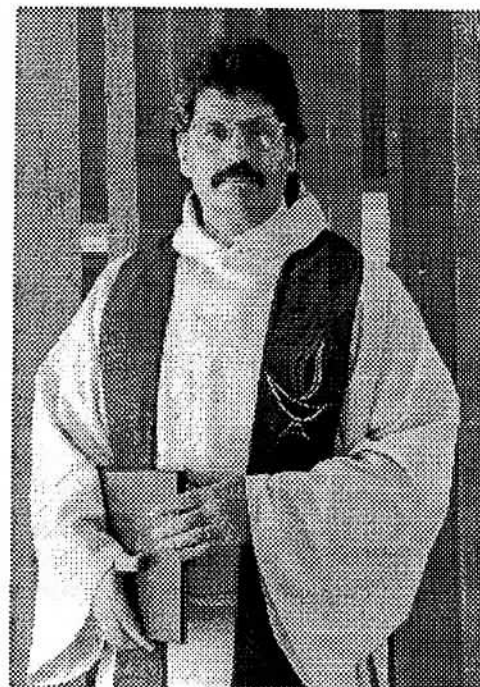
Any church is a complex institution which blends the most exalted quests of the human spirit with the most quotidian of institutional tasks. While we gather to worship the Holy and to mark the eternal passages of life and death, we must still ensure that the oil bills are paid. This church has done so successfully for 150 years and gives every indication that it will continue to do so. This small booklet is a celebration of that accomplishment and an act of faith in that future. In it, you will find facts

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Church history	6
Timeline	7
About our other half	21
For the ladies	23
Members look back	27
Our ministers	37
Fun facts	39

and stories of the lives of committed church members and the outlines of the institutional decisions which brought the church to its present incarnation. We proudly add this booklet to the two preceding it, which tell this church's story at half-century intervals, confident that a half-century hence, a new generation will add their telling to the tale. To them, and to all people of good will, we send our blessing.

The Rev. Stephen Cook
 The Parsonage
 Hudson, Massachusetts
 1997



INTRODUCTION

The booklet you are reading was put together in honor of the 150th anniversary of the Union Society of Hudson, Massachusetts, which was formed in 1847. The booklet, along with the special ceremony and reception we are planning for November 30, 1997, is the culmination of a year-long series of events.

Our goal with this booklet was to honor those who came before us, to celebrate all we are right now, and to connect with future generations of Unitarian Universalists who undertake any part of their spiritual journey in the Hudson church that so many of us have called our faith-home.

In this spirit, we have attempted to thank those far-seeing souls of the past and to remember all they did along the way to make our church so special. If we have neglected to mention any specific names, it was for a lack of space, or a lack of knowledge of a specific person's deeds. Please know it was not for lack of respect -- we are all too aware that but for the actions of a few forward-looking men and women, this church would not exist, or at least would not exist in its present form.

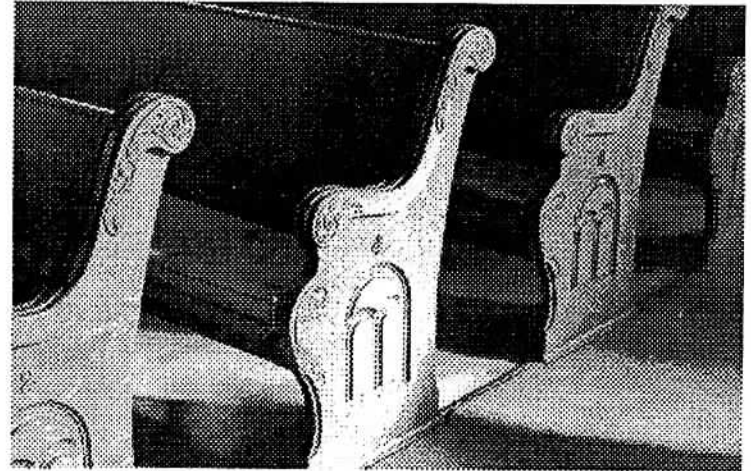
Like all such projects, this one was done thanks to the love, time and dedication of many people -- the members of the Sesquicentennial Committee (Doris Bickford, Robert Campbell and Peter Salmela), our minister, the Rev. Stephen Cook, and my husband, Ken LaPlante, whose patience with and knowledge about computers really made this booklet come together.

Fairness dictates mentioning the sources for much of the material in this booklet: "Union Society and the Unitarians, 1847-1947," by Norman N. Hunter; "The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Lawrence Church, 1861-1961," by Ruth A. Walcott; a quite lengthy history of Unitarian Universalism written by Rev. Andrew Hill that exists on the Web site of the Unitarian Universalist Association; and the church's Historical Committee, which gathered literally hundreds of newspaper clippings, old orders of service and other pieces of paper that they patiently catalogued and passed along.

Special thanks for the time that several of our members -- Ruth Mears, Betty Dean and Lillian Brigham -- took to share their church memories and to make the chronicler feel welcome in their homes.

My heart-felt thanks to all of them -- and to those who came before us, and to those who shall come after. We are all connected in the circle of faith.

Johanna Ambrosio LaPlante
October 1997



CHURCH HISTORY

The advent of Unitarian Universalism

The first Unitarian presence in Europe came about within eight years of Martin Luther's beginning the Reformation in 1525. A group of liberal Christians in Italy was driven out because of persecution; one of the group settled among the Polish Brethren, a radical Reformation group in Cracow. They dispersed their ideas to others throughout Europe thanks to the new printing press. John Milton and Isaac Newton joined the ranks in England.

Mounting prosecution drove the Brethren from Poland in 1659 -- but their ideas took root in Transylvania (now part of Romania), where some of the earliest Unitarian churches began. In England, Unitarians were banned from public office until 1828, so the spread there was slower. In those days, particularly, this liberal faith was considered radical, even dangerous, because its focus on God's love for everyone clashed with what the majority believed about a vengeful God who punished all who disobeyed. The Unitarian belief in the inherent worth and dignity of everyone was not exactly a welcome message in class-conscious England.

Unitarianism came to the United States over two centuries ago. Many of the leaders of the American Revolution -- Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, among others -- were Unitarians. The faith took wing in the liberal wing of the Congregational Church.

During the first 25 years of the 19th century, liberal religion was a hot topic in New England. The intellectual schools in Boston and Concord gave a strong lift to the movement. The old beliefs were shaken by the preaching and writings of Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker and others. In 1840, Parker preached a sermon in South Boston where he said that Christ was not an absolute necessity to the Christian religion.

Meanwhile, there was a movement afoot that was somewhat more liberal than even the Unitarians, and they were the Universalists. Essentially, Unitarians believed that humans could, by their own efforts in following the example of Jesus, attain salvation. Universalists

believed that all souls would be brought into harmony with the divine -- that is, saved.

In the early years of the 19th century, Unitarians continued to be associated with the somewhat more established urban elite. Universalism made most of its gains among farmers, small holders and the less educated. Throughout the 19th century, both denominations -- marked as they were by a liberal outlook, an expansive approach to other world religions and disapproved of by the vast majority, began to find greater common interests.

This culminated in the formal merger of the two denominations in 1961. And even though the two groups got their beginnings in Judeo/Christian teachings, the Unitarian Universalist faith has come to embrace and learn from the traditions of many sources, including eastern religions, Humanist teachings and earth-centered traditions.

About our church

1847 - 1900: feisty beginnings

In 1847, Charles Brigham got together a body of citizens in Feltonville -- later to become Hudson -- into a loose organization of liberal Christians called the Union Society. There were many passionate issues of the

TIMELINE

- 1847 - Charles Brigham forms the Union Society
- 1857 - Sunday School organized
- 1861 - Lawrence Church (existing Hudson church) dedicated
- 1862 - name of vestry changed to Union Hall
- 1865 - Hand-blown pipe organ installed.
- 1867 - Church buys Church Street land for parsonage
- 1867 - Ladies'

day, including temperance and slavery, and there was a lot of up-rising against the "traditional" religions of the day. Political change was in the air.

Indeed, it was rumored that there were places in Feltonville where runaway slaves could find help and shelter on their way to Canada, and Charles Brigham was said to be part of this activity. Times were ripe for a liberal organization.

Brigham attended the Universalist Church in Marlborough. His friend, George Stacy, had been a Unitarian minister in Boylston but had been driven out because of his anti-slavery sermons. He ran a stationery store and print shop in Milford. Stacy agreed to come to Feltonville once a month for the price of his team -- three dollars each trip. Brigham took care of him and his team, and if the collection came up short, he paid it out of his own pocket.

Later the price was changed to five dollars, and the frequency changed to twice a month. Stacy was never formally inducted as a minister here, but came as a volunteer for 14 years.

The first meetings of the Union Society were held in Cox's Hall, which was the dining room of Cox's Tavern, on the north side of Main Street on the location of the Wood Building. Rent for the hall was \$1 per meeting; the meetings started out once monthly, then went to twice a month. These lasted from 1847 to 1855. The second meeting place was in a new school, located appropriately enough on School Street. The meetings took place in a basement the Union Society members dubbed Freedom Hall; the hall was hired by Charles Brigham for \$40/year, beginning in 1855. There the reformers of the day held forth on temperance, slavery, liberal religion and politics. They had a volunteer choir, and borrowed an organ from one of the neighbors for each meeting.

In 1855, preliminary steps were taken toward building a church.

On July 10, 1859, a formal vote took place that called for the new church; 120 shares at \$25 per share were subscribed for, each share carrying one vote with a limit of 5 votes per person. An organization meeting was called under warrant by George Rawson, Justice of the Peace, in Freedom Hall on June 29, 1860. There they voted to buy land and build a church.

The church was built in 1861 by Truman Walcott of Rockbottom, a section of Hudson. He built it for \$4,500 and donated the lumber. The lot cost \$2,300; the house that had been on the lot was moved to 18 Church Street. It was thought that a good location would be on the north side of Main Street, so the church would face south.

When first built, the church had a French roof and tower in the center for clock and bell. A center door opened into wide entrance steps, with two doors at the top that opened into the sanctuary. An outside door on either side of the center opened into enclosed spiral staircases that led to a third-floor hall. The heater was in the front end of the basement; the windows were of plain glass; the pews in the auditorium were arranged in two aisles. There was a gallery in front, for choir and organ.

While the church was being built, Stephen Rice presented the Union Society with a clock, and requested the building be called the Lawrence Church after his philanthropic friend Amos Lawrence of Newton. The clock cost \$300 at the time it was given. The bell was acquired by subscription at the time the church was built; it, too, cost \$300.

In the autumn of 1861, a meeting was called in the vestry of the new church (now called Union Hall) and a new clerk was elected. A Board of Assessors was also elected, to appraise and tax the pews. Buying pews gave one the

Society founded
 1879 - financial crisis
 hits full-force;
 minister resigns;
 church's bylaws and
 voting requirements
 changed
 1886 - church's debt
 paid; financial crisis
 ends
 1890 - Union Society
 becomes the First
 Unitarian Society of
 Hudson
 1891 - Major
 renovations - new
 furnaces, new
 lighting, new choir
 platform, new
 kitchens

right to vote -- whether you were already a shareholder in the Union Society or not. Others could become church members by paying \$3 per year, but these members were not allowed to vote on property issues. Only pew-owners could do that. The Society for many years had in its possession a deed to pew number 53, sold to Charles Brigham for \$110.

The church was dedicated on November 19, 1861. In 1862, the name of the vestry was changed to Union Hall. Hudson town meetings were held here for six years and the vote to build a new town meeting-house was also made here. All the discussion regarding Feltonville becoming a town was also held in the church hall.

Many people of note lectured in Union Hall. In the winter of 1864-65, Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke here. Dr. Edward Everett Hale was also a speaker. On December 21, 1869, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) lectured here.

In 1863, the Union Society asked to be received as a member of the Worcester Association of Liberal Christians and have the minister admitted to it. In 1865, the minister and two Union Society members were sent as delegates to the First National Conference of Unitarians, in New York. This is the first time the word "Unitarian" appears in Union Society records.

In 1867, the Society bought land on Church Street, with borrowed money, to build a parsonage. (This is NOT the existing parsonage; there have been at least four, total, during the life of the Hudson church.) At this time, there were around 25 voters at the church business meeting; women were not yet allowed to vote -- either in society at large or in the church.

During this time, the money to pay the minister, organist and janitor was raised by subscription, taxes on pews and memberships. From time to time there were discussions about the division between the correct division -- of rights and monies -- between the religious group and the real estate owners. There was one set of officers overseeing both, however, and they were supposed to keep the property-repair funds separate from the other monies.

Finally, in 1872, women were given the right to vote in church

matters. It was also a year where financial fissures started becoming evident. An audit was done, and it was determined that both the religious and property groups were in arrears. It was decided that the property owners would turn over all real estate rights to the Society, and that the debts would be assessed against the property of all.

But the darkest hour was still to come. In 1879, the church just about exploded with internal pressures. Hilary Bygrave, minister since 1875, resigned because, although he believed in the church and what it stood for, it was in a financial disaster zone. He was concerned over the stability of his salary -- and his family's security -- and he was worried about the long-term outlook for the church and for the Union Society as a whole.

After that event, other Society members resigned as well. The place was in an uproar; it was suggested that the church and parsonage be sold to pay the debts, and that services be stopped to save money. Both ideas were nixed.

Instead, the Society was reorganized. On April 21, 1879, around 30 pew-owners agreed to turn their pews back into the society for the good of the church. The rules of voting were also changed, so that a motion would carry with a vote of two-thirds of those present (instead of two-thirds of the entire voting list).

Later in 1879, a new bylaws code was adopted, and the qualifications to vote

1892 - New organ is installed

1892 - Church voted to take up a collection on Sunday

mornings and for the minister to wear a robe

1892 - Voted that Union Hall no longer be rented out

publicly

1894 - The Great Fire burned

everything around Wood Square, down

Main Street to Pope Street. The fire

didn't reach our church, luckily

became simpler and broader. Voters had to be 21 years old, of sound mind, they must sign the Book of Membership and agree to abide by the Bylaws and Declaration of Trust; and pay \$5 per year.

The Declaration of Trust read: "We hold the property in trust for the promotion of Liberal Christianity, substantially in accordance with the recognized doctrines of Unitarian Churches..."

But the financial troubles weren't completely over until 1886, when a church committee reported it had paid off the church debt. Most of it was a mortgage of \$4,800 plus some accrued interest. That year, the committee said the debt had been paid -- plus there was \$100 left over in the treasury.

In 1890, the name of the Union Society was changed to The First Unitarian Society of Hudson, Mass.

In 1892, a new pipe organ was donated, new parlors were built and ornamental windows put in.

1901 - 1971: Growth and Service

In 1901, extensive improvements were made in painting, lighting and furniture. Among the improvements: a new entrance in front; new outside doors; the closing of two small doors in front and two windows in the gallery; the church's approach "well-lighted with electric lights;" the vestibule made over by closing the old entrances to the auditorium; new maple floors; new stairs and entrances to the gallery; new arches and pillars in front; a memorial window in the rear dedicated to the memory of F. Ellen Brown; choir platform made over with brass railing and curtains; the pulpit platform was rebuilt; new oak pulpit put into place; new oak pews and new cushions; new stained glass windows, and many other improvements.

The original budget was \$1,500 - but when all was said and done, some \$6,070 was spent. A 40th anniversary service to mark the opening of the remodeled church was held on December 19, 1901.

In 1919, more plans were made for re-modelling: a new steam-heating plant, remodeling and renovating Union Hall, and re-doing the kitchen. The next year, a sum of \$11,000 was raised. The work was completed in 1924 -- with a remodeled stage.

On May 11, 1947, the 100th anniversary service in honor of the Hudson Union Society's beginnings featured a service by Rev. Robert C. Withington. The choir sang "Sanctus," and the organist played Bach's "Prelude and Fugue in D Minor." It capped a year-long celebration which included tributes to various church founders, a summer auction on July 26 that raised \$700, visits from former ministers including Rev. Dudley R. Child (minister from 1919-1927) and Rev. Harold L. Pickett (from 1915-1918); a memorial plaque was dedicated; a Christmas fair was held, and a fund was started to re-decorate the church that resulted in the Parish Hall and the hallways being painted.

As of Sept. 22, 1958, there were 122 voting members of the church. To be a voting member, one had to be 21 years old (as opposed to 18 now), sign the Book of Membership, and pay annually to the Collector toward the expenses of the Society.

On May 17, 1964, an open house was held as part of the "Protestant Churches of Hudson Open Houses" program. "An impressively comprehensive team of church people pulled to-

1898 - First trustees voted in, to take care of Marshall Wood bequest

1898 - Ladies' Alliance founded

1901 - Extensive building renovations

- painting, redecorating, refurnishing, relighting

1903 - Society took over the Sunday

School (before this, school was independent)

1919 - Plans put into place for steam heat; remodelling the

gether, on short notice, displays and presentations of significant value." Guests were given a guide sheet with a map and locations of interest in the church. Greeters added their own comments and helped to answer questions.

As of 1971, 13 people joined both the Marlborough and Hudson churches, according to a report by Rev. Gregg. This compared to 14 for both in 1967.

1972: The Merger

The joining together of the Marlborough and Hudson Unitarian Universalist churches started happening in 1969, but wasn't formalized until 1972.

It was an economic necessity. Although some of the older church members of that era could remember their childhoods with full churches on Sunday mornings of their youth, the number of Unitarian Universalists had gradually diminished. By the time of the merger in 1972, there were 130 members of the Hudson church and 150 in the Marlborough church. This compares with 600 Congregational members, 570 Episcopal members, and 35,100 Catholics attending churches in both communities. The simple truth was that, with those numbers, two Unitarian churches just could not survive.

And there was precedent. The nearby Stow and Acton Unitarian Universalist churches had already successfully merged. There had been previous ties between the Hudson and Marlborough churches -- the various ladies' clubs sometimes met jointly, and there were couples clubs that also got together on occasion.

So, for all these reasons, the two churches started ties back in 1969, when they called Rev. I. Gregg Carter to be their joint minister. The churches started holding a joint weekly worship service and held joint board and committee meetings as well. Rev. Carter would preach one week in Hudson and the next time in Marlborough. Joint services began on April 13, 1969. The April newsletter of that year was the first to go to parishioners of both churches.

A planning commission prepared a lengthy and complete report about all aspects of the proposed merger. This fact-gathering group was named the Mayo Commission in honor of Howard Mayo of Bolton, who was a deceased member of the commission. The Commission, which heartily endorsed the churches' merging formally, urged members of both congregations not to delay "until the institutions are too weak to act or to be revived... We do not believe that there are enough [members, funds and financial support] to carry on two separate societies or programs separate from each other."

So, many folks seemed in agreement -- at least in theory. But the big debate centered over which church to use for the combined entity -- and here, emotions ran high. Members of both churches made impassioned pitches as to why the respective buildings should be kept. The Mayo Commission made a list of both churches' pluses and minuses: the Hudson meeting house had less land and a less attractive interior than the Marlborough church, which was "much more satisfactory in appearance" even though it had lost its steeple some years before. Its kitchen was more modern than the one in Hudson.

Still, the Commission went with a recommendation to use the Hudson facility for one major reason: "The church school building in Hudson is new, modern, attractive and adequate to our present and probable future needs. A good church school environ-

vestry, stage and the kitchen

1921 - Every-
Member Canvass
began

1924 - Remodeling
completed from 1919

1938 - Hurricane
did some damage to
the church that had
to be repaired

1942 - Ladies'
Evening Alliance
founded in
Marlborough church

1947 - the 100th
anniversary of the
founding of the
Union Society; as of
this time, the church

ment is vital to the total church program. This is a matter of such importance that it overrides other considerations."

Still, not everyone was happy with that idea. At one point, a compromise was talked about of having special holiday services in Marlborough and regular services in Hudson. This did not occur.

Indeed, the Commission had even recommended another long-term plan: to ultimately sell both churches and build anew. This turned out not to be financially viable in the long run.

But the Commission did not stop there. It suggested that some plans be made to think about bringing the combined church entity into the future, with a strong membership committee dedicated to growing the membership with new programs.

Both churches officially voted to merge on June 13, 1972 in a special congregational meeting held in the Marlborough church. The name of the church was changed to The Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson; the bylaws were also amended. All people who were members of either church were considered members in good standing of the new entity. The "definition of purpose" of the combined church was the following: "In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." The combined church served 80 to 100 families in Hudson and Marlborough.

Certificates of consolidation were sworn by Muriel Wadleigh and Esther Cox, and notarized by Betty Doane on August 8. Their receipt was acknowledged by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

That same year, the church celebrated the joining of its two halves with Unity Week from November 12 through 18. Events included an organ concert, a display of historic memorabilia, visiting speakers and a junior choir concert.

1973 - present day

In 1977, the Ladies Alliance reported that the holiday fair netted \$1,702.10. The following year brought in \$1,573.99.

1979 saw the roofs, chimney and steeple fixed, and the entire church painted on the outside. The trustees provided income from invested funds to make the improvements possible. Also that year, the church office was divided into two rooms -- one for the minister and one for the secretary. It's the same setup as exists today.

The goal for the church canvass that year was \$16,000 -- and it was exceeded. The Marlboro/Westboro Mental Health Clinic, which had used the church as a meeting place, moved to other quarters. The annual holiday fair that year made over \$2,000 for the church, and storm windows were put on to conserve fuel for \$2,057. People contributed to a separate fund to pay that bill.

The next year, the sanctuary was completely renovated. New lights, a new ceiling, new pews and plastering yielded a modernized sanctuary. A service or rededication was held on Nov. 9, 1980.

In 1980, Rev. Hubner spoke about the Vietnamese "boat people" at the Annual Meeting. The church voted to take responsibility for finding housing for any "boat family" that came to Hudson.

is the oldest building standing, and in use, in Hudson

1954-1960 -

Smorgabord fund raisers headed by Elvi Salmela

1964 - church voted

to use the Mabel K. Tripp fund to build the church Religious Education school wing

1968 - organ rebuilt

1969 - Thrift Shop founded

1970 - Rev. Robert

Withington named as Minister Emeritus

1972 - Hudson and Marlborough churches merge legally

In 1981, the Ladies Alliance reported \$2,022.02 in holiday-fair receipts.

On Feb. 14, 1984, the Alice Hart Room was dedicated with a ceremony during regular worship service and a gathering in the room during coffee hour. About a month later, a portrait of Alice Hart was ready and was hung in the room. The room has been used for many meetings, including those of the Women's Group, and for Religious Education purposes.

1975 - Marlborough church sold to the city of Marlborough for \$70,000

In 1985, the church voted to go with a July-June year to synchronize the finances with when the church actually operated. Prior to that time, the financial statements had been prepared on a calendar-year basis, which was confusing given when the church was actually in session. This vote, in turn, had ramifications on when the various yearly meetings would be held, when the budget would need to be prepared, and so on. Until this point, the Annual Meetings had been held in January -- these are now held in May, with a Budget Hearing in March.

1977 - World religion banners bought for the sanctuary walls

In 1987, at the Parish Meeting in January, the church voted to accept a gift from Gertrude Spinney of 2.5 acres of land, located on the east side of Washington Street in Hudson, "with our thanks." It was also voted to sell said land for not less than \$250,000.

1978 - Marlborough Evening Alliance disbanded

In May 1990, the church voted \$18,000 to repair the roof. These monies were to be taken from various

funds.

In 1991, at the Parish Meeting in March, it was discussed that the church was operating with a deficit of over \$10,000. Then, at the Annual Meeting in May, the church voted to borrow up to \$1,000 "in anticipation of revenue." Even so, the church voted \$7,600 to repair the church organ. An amount of \$8,000 was voted to paint the east and west faces of the church. These monies were to come out of various funds.

Feb. 23, 1992 marked the 100th anniversary of the giving of the church organ. Philip Beaudry, pipe organ specialist of Lowell, played a concert of Bach, Mozart, Franck and Handel during a one-hour program. Beaudry had rebuilt the organ in 1968 and in 1991 rebuilt the wind system. It was at this point the largest tracker organ in the county.

On May 19, 1997, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Union Society. During the service, we sang hymns from 1877 (Holy, Holy, Holy) and from 1914 (The Founders). Other events during this year-long celebration included former ministers coming back to preach and the publication of this booklet. The grand culmination of our celebration will be on November 30, 1997 with the preaching of the Rev. John Buehrens, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and a reception to follow in Union Hall.

1982 - telephone answering machine installed in the church

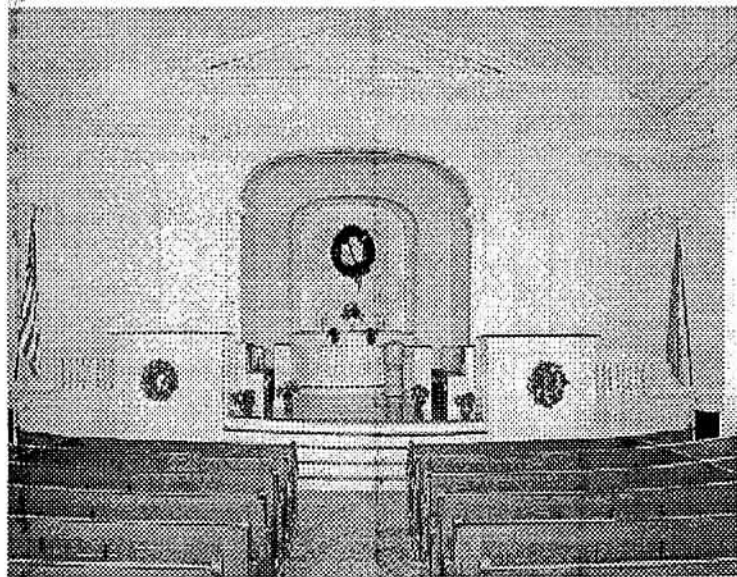
1984 - Dedication of Alice Hart room

1985 - Rising chair is installed on stairway from front vestibule to the sanctuary

1987 - first computer installed

1992 - Thrift Shop closes

Sanctuary of the Second Parish of Marlborough, Unitarian



The Second Parish in Marlborough was established in 1805, when the General Court decided to divide the town into two parishes to satisfy people who were disagreeing over basic dogmatic factors. One side was much more conservative, made up of strict Calvinists, and then there were those who became the Universalists.

But the Second Parish actually had its beginnings before that. In 1656, King Charles I of England granted a plantation on the current site of the Walker Building. By 1660, a thatched-roof interim church and meeting house was built on the original site. All townspeople were taxed to support the church.

Subsequent buildings and improvements came along until 1711, when the "permanent" central meeting house was built. This structure served the parish for 95 years.

The schisms between the Calvinists and the liberals became really marked in the 19th century, and the Calvinists built their new church on Spring Hill. This church, called the East Meeting House, is now the Congregational Church. The Unitarian Church was called the West Meeting House.

Despite the schism, Asa Packard -- the town's single minister at the end of the 18th Century -- became the first minister at Second Parish. He actually served as minister to both parishes after the division. Packard -- a colorful man with a knack for diplomacy -- was very popular and served to help smooth over the differences.

Two ministers later came Aaron Howes, who built a pipe organ for the church and started a Sunday School. Sadly, he lost his sanity while trying to keep the organ tuned.

The year 1837 brought wood stoves to the church to warm winter service-goers. Also that year, George Holbrook of Medway was commissioned to make a bell that weighed at least 1,000 pounds. After hanging the bell, parishioners had second thoughts -- the bell was reweighed and found to lack 150 pounds. A refund was hastily made. And, finally, 1937 also brought the formation of the

Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Charity and Mutual Improvement.

Another noted minister of the Second Parish was Horatio Alger, Senior -- father of the famous writer who, by the way, was also a Unitarian minister. Alger, Senior became minister in 1845 and was deeply committed to human rights and the condemnation of slavery.

The building was reconditioned in 1886. The roof was raised by eight feet and a 50-foot spire was added, and the church was turned from facing south to facing east. The organ was replaced with a smaller one.

In 1875, the Memorial Window in front was given, and the system of having free seats was begun. Before this, Society members had purchased their pews (much like in Hudson).

In 1879-1881, a new addition came; it included a new organ, a ladies' parlor, a kitchen, a choir loft and the minister's study. In 1890, lighting was installed and the library was catalogued at having 3,000 books.

In 1938, a hurricane toppled the bell, the steeple and its clocks. The upstairs was completely remodeled, and a rededication service held in 1942. New by-laws were established.

Sadly, however, there weren't enough Unitarian Universalists to continue to run the two churches in Marlborough and Hudson as two separate entities. In 1972, the Second Parish Church merged with the First Unitarian Society of Hudson to form the Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson.

In 1974, the Second Parish Church was closed, and the building was sold to the city in 1975. The building -- on Pleasant Street, between Lincoln and Chestnut -- now houses professional offices. But if you look closely, you can still see the grand old structure and hear the voices of the past.

FOR THE LADIES

Throughout our church's history, the women of the various times helped keep the church's finances afloat and performed many services for the community at large.

The first recorded women's club met at the home of Francis Brigham on December 3, 1867. There was a membership fee of 25 cents to join, and five cents per meeting attended. They had two meetings each month, with 111 members that first year -- including 37 men.

They had a work box and did sewing for poor people. The work meeting was in the afternoon, followed by a simple supper to which the men came. The evening was devoted to entertainment - - singing, instrumental music, recitations and readings, charades and conversation.

At first they met in the homes of some members, and later at Union Hall. The five-cents-per-meeting paid for the supper. In the early days, they even had a surplus from each meeting! It's probable that the surplus food was contributed, as it was later.

In 1868, they provided an evening of entertainment in Union Hall that netted \$100. They ran a fair, and the proceeds provided lights for the church. In 1870, they took much children's clothing to the Children's Mission in Boston.

Two years later, the group voted to work only for the poor in our own town. During 1872 they paid rent arrears for one woman and helped another. But in 1874, there was little work done and no meetings at all from June to December. In the following year they met about once a month -- but the meetings were mostly entertainment and conversation, with little work.

In October 1876, they decided to once again do work in the afternoons and have entertainment in the evenings. The meetings were now small, averaging 25 people. They had a fair in 1877 and gave to the church to help settle the church's debts.

The next year was flat -- they changed the entrance fee to 35 cents and annual dues to 50 cents. But, as was the case in the church in general, 1879 was a tough year for the Ladies' Circle. They continued to struggle along for a few years.

A few years later, though, things seemed to pick up. 1882 saw a parish supper in January, a fair in October, summer meetings in the afternoon. In 1890, they started a committee to call on shut-ins. They had a fair and a lawn party.

In the next year, the church was torn up for some major renovations. The Ladies' Circle paid for half the renovations done at the parsonage, and many members contributed equipment for the church's new kitchen. They did vote against card-playing in the new parlors. (These were upstairs where the Knight Room is now.)

In 1894, the ladies did much work to make quilts and other goods for the people burned out in the fire. When the fire was in progress, the Circle members kept the church open to feed the visiting firemen.

From 1884, the Circle became a regular contributor to the yearly expenses of the church, donating amounts that ranged from \$100 to \$500.

A few years later, in 1888, the Circle voted to become a branch of the National Alliance of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women. But the administrative burdens were more than they bargained for, and the next year they withdrew and became the Circle once again.

In 1900, the Circle voted to have no more dances on church property. They also paid for the new electric lights in the parlors. This year, the annual fair netted \$252. The next year, the Circle gave \$175 to the repair fund and \$250 for general church expenses.

In the years after World War I, the meetings opened with a devotional service and closed with a benediction. Shut-ins were regularly visited; they even donated small libraries to some towns in Kansas.

The 1940s war years showed the fairs netting about \$600 annually -- and the amount continued to grow. The Alliance sent half a ton of clothing to Europe in 1945-1946 and donated to the Red Cross, the Children's Mission in Boston, and to the church itself.

There were holiday fairs and card parties, and in the 1940s there were couples clubs in the 1940s. These allowed couples from both Marlborough and Hudson churches to mingle.

And so has gone for every year since. The ladies' group, at various times called the Marlborough Evening Alliance or Hudson Afternoon Alliance, has most generously given of the members' time to community charities and to the running of the church. The Alliance gradually became more and more business-like, spreading the wealth as it went. This generosity continues to the present day; the half-dozen or so existing members of the Marlborough Ladies Charitable Society and Hudson Afternoon Alliances continue to meet and donate the group's funds to various charities.

Christmas concert by Religious Education students, 1960
Ruth Mears at piano



A PERSONAL LOOK BACK

Members' memories

From *Kay Withington*, a longtime member of the Hudson Church and wife of Rev. Robert C. Withington, our minister from 1936 to 1942 and our Minister Emeritus.

To think about the days when I attended the Hudson Unitarian Church Sunday School is pushing my memory back to about 1912, and that's a very long time ago.

The primary department met in the double parlors, now the Knight Room and church office, where small chairs were arranged in rows facing the piano that was in the corner. Miss Lucie Welsh was the superintendent of the primary department. When we were seated, she started the program by teaching us a song. My favorite was "Twas a Bluebird Told the Story."

Then she gave out Bible verses, which we took home and memorized by the next Sunday. Then someone was chosen to carry the banner (blue and gold) and we marched downstairs into the vestry, where Caleb Brigham was playing very spirited marches where we went single-file around the vestry, proudly looking at the older classes that were seated around the room.

In our fifth and sixth classes was a group under the leadership of Mrs. Addie Knight (Gladys Parker's mother). We were good friends and called ourselves "The Bluebird Class." I'll try to name a few: Lillian Brigham, Esther Harlow, Polly Dawes, Margaret Allen and Catherine Wilcox (me). I don't recall the lessons, but there was a lending library in a glass book case in the vestry where we could borrow one book a week -- for example, *The Airplane Boys* or *The Bobbsey Twins*, etc.

One activity that we enjoyed was being waitresses or waiters for the church calendar suppers. There were 12 tables, one for each month, and one lady was responsible for one table and its decora-

tions, etc. As we could buy tissue and crepe paper at Fairbanks Paper Store, each lady worked hard to make her table extra attractive and asked each waitress to dress in costume. Dinner was served and it was a great success.

Probably you know that the Tripp Wing to the Sunday School building was added much later. It was given by Miss Mabel Tripp in memory of her brother Charles. He worked for DuPont in Delaware, and invented the hand grenade used in World War I. He also invented the Butter-Kist popcorn machine.

The Young People's Religious Union were the teenagers who met Sunday evenings at the church or at the church parsonage where Rev. and Mrs. Dudley Childs lived. Sometimes we brought refreshments and cocoa. When possible, we went to conferences in Dorchester and other towns. We were interested in going to Star Island for the YPRU week.

I recall one Christmas pageant, and I was chosen to be Mary. The creche was a covered orange crate. I had to sit behind it, looking serious, and was supposed to turn on the flashlight by the creche where the baby lay. I was so excited I forgot to turn on the light. Luckily, Esther Hanlon was playing an angel and said, "Turn on the light to make the baby holy!" So I did.

Easter Service was always special, with beautiful music, lovely flowers and many people. Among our young people was an actress who came to Boston to be a stand-in for the leading lady and sang, "Life is just a bowl of cherries." Her name was Hilda Knight, and she attended our Easter Service -- looking very theatrical and beautiful. When she entered the church, and of course sat in the front, all the congregation turned their heads to admire her -- even the minister.

On Feb. 22nd one year, the Alliance held a card party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Chamberlain (next to the Apsleys). For entertainment, they asked four girls and four boys to come in colonial costume and dance the minuet. We were all Sunday School members and had a good time performing. We were given a generous piece of Washington (cherry) pie for our pay.

The Sunday School and church became very important to us as we

grew up. Sometimes there would be three generations of one family who would be active members.

As time has passed, the minister has changed as well as the congregation -- and, by the continued loyalty, you are to celebrate its 150th anniversary. How many lives this church has meant to this town. I congratulate you, Reverend Cook and the present congregation. Many new people are all helping to continue and keep the spirit and loyalty alive and well.

From *Ruth A. Walcott*, who in 1961 wrote a booklet celebrating the 100th anniversary of the building of the church. These memories are excerpted from that booklet.

I recall well the Sunday School sessions of the 1890s when we had opening exercises before lessons began. I can picture Caleb Brigham at the piano, which he played so capably, also Mrs. Horace Stowe tapping with her baton on the music rack to remind us that we should speed up and sing louder because we were not observing crescendo.

Also I remember the various and unique suppers -- bean suppers for ten cents and mystery suppers when the names of articles of food were disguised so that "Newton's Eye Opener" was found to be an apple. The vestry was also a meeting place for the Lend-A-Hand Society and the King's Daughters in the old days.

In 1892, a new organ -- the present one -- was donated. It was blown by means of a water motor. This was noisy and hard to keep in repair; in fact, it cost more to keep it in repair than it had cost for the blow boy. In 1913, the blower was electrified.

Well, I do recall an amusing incident concerning this organ. It happened at the wedding, December 27, 1904, of Gertrude Tower and Ernest Persons. Rev. John Baltzly stood at the altar ready to receive the bridal couple. The wedding march was about to begin, but the strains of Lohengrin refused to budge. Finally, after vain attempts on the part of the organist to extricate any kind of harmony, Mr. Baltzly said, "The organ refuses to work, so you'll

have to come in without music." So, the happy pair walked up the aisle, the ceremony was duly performed, and the newlyweds left the church, still unaccompanied by musical notes.

Lillian Brigham

My first memories in Sunday School are from around 1914. When I first went, the first pew on the left-hand side -- number one -- was ours. I sat there with my grandmother. As a young child of five or six, I used to imagine things in the church... it sure helped the time go by! You know the little arches in the front of the pulpit, the carving, well I enjoyed those. Because those were little doors, and you could go inside the pulpit and hide. (I didn't, of course, but I've always had a vivid imagination.) And I could see the choir loft and the organ, and in the back of it they had what looked like a piece of carpeting that hung down like doors. When the organist was using the pedals, that would move. In there, there was a machine that would grind you up if you weren't good.

Back then, we had the red carpeting... and in Mr. Apsley's pew, they had a red hassock to match, for their feet. That impressed a kid.

After the service, we went downstairs. Everybody went down, the older people, too -- and the wooden settees that are against the wall, they used to be in the middle. There was a big congregation then, and the church would be full. And Mr. Caleb Brigham was superintendent of Sunday School.

We sang hymns, and then marched all around singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" as we went upstairs for our classes. It was real exciting for kids.

When I was in the kindergarten upstairs in the Knight Room, there was another partition there. In other words, there were two rooms with double doors. There was a piano in the corner by the door, and Lucie Welsh played the piano most of the time. And we sang songs. There were little chairs in the front for the really young children, and bigger ones in back.

After our opening service there, I sat in the corner of the other room near where the fireplace is. And Addie Knight -- Arline Parker's mother -- taught us.

We learned things from the Bible, the psalms and beatitudes and all. We'd have an assignment and we'd learn them to say the next Sunday. For different things, attendance and how well we did, we had gold stars and blue stars and red stars.

Way back in the corner of the Knight Room there was a dumb-waiter.. it went down to the kitchen. And some of us got in it and had a ride up and down. And some of us used to like to go up into the belfry to see the inside of the clock. Most kids, at one time or another, did.

They had sheds out back. Back then, there weren't too many autos, and in the wintertime we had a sleigh. There must have been four sheds for the horses. They probably left them hitched so the horses wouldn't go away. We had two buffalo robes and they were nice big furry things with a bright red lining.

I remember the Christmas parties we had... Howard Safford, Virginia Safford's father, was Santa Claus. We had a great big tree.. everybody went, parents and kids, on a Saturday night for Santa's visit. I can remember being 9 or 10 -- I was getting too big to sit on Santa's knee because I knew who he was. I was kind of fooling.

We had plays -- Mrs. Dawes and Mrs. Gladys Robinson put them on. I was supposed to sing, but I was a shy, self-conscious sort of person and I wouldn't sing.

Later on, in the 50s, Mr. and Mrs. Salmela arranged smorgas-bords -- they were quite popular; people came from all around. I helped work on that; did dishes and helped make some of those wonderful special dishes Elvi Salmela knew about.

Betty Dean

My first recollection of church per se was going to Sunday

School. Ada Dawes was the teacher, but I can't think what the lessons were.

Birthdays were celebrated in Sunday School with appropriate songs and the birthday child standing in front of the class holding a small globe of glass. The top and bottom were silver with a metal rod holding it together. A slot at the top received the pennies that another child would come forward with -- the correct number for the birthday child's age. The class would count out loud as the pennies dropped. Perhaps these pennies were saved to contribute to the gold cross that hung at the back of the pulpit in the sanctuary.

I remember the pins for perfect attendance in Sunday School. A bar for each year was added to the back of the pin as earned. My brother had several added to his.

We learned passages from the Bible, and eventually -- at about the sixth grade -- we were each given a Bible with our name embossed in gold leaf. I still have mine, quite worn as I used it for many years and taught Sunday School classes with it.

Remembering these Sunday School years, I think of all the plays we were in under Ada Dawes' leadership. This part of church life taught us poise and elocution, and the art of being "someone else" in different situations. At times we even went to other towns to perform.

In my high school years, a Sunday School teacher suggested we make nosegays for each person in the church. Members of the church who had gardens would bring in buckets of flowers and greens on Saturday, and I made 100 nosegays of flowers and greens, tied them with string and put them into baskets. The littlest children would carry them to each pew and distribute them.

Then there were years of choir and teaching Sunday School. I chose the oldest group. We met in the ladies' parlor -- now the Knight Room. I had nine or 10 in the class; by this time the class had earned their Bibles and I taught them to familiarize themselves with its history and geography and how to find familiar verses and stories they had learned in earlier classes. We called ourselves the "Knights of the Round Table" and they each took a

knight's name; we had our own Camelot.

I just realized the coincidence -- all these years later, the room is the Knight Room! We also put on many plays in the Parish Hall. When we did a musical, my friend Valerie Gibbs played the piano and helped backstage with makeup, keeping order and giving cues when necessary. Such a beautiful stage and various settings, footlights and dimmer lights, created a beautiful production.

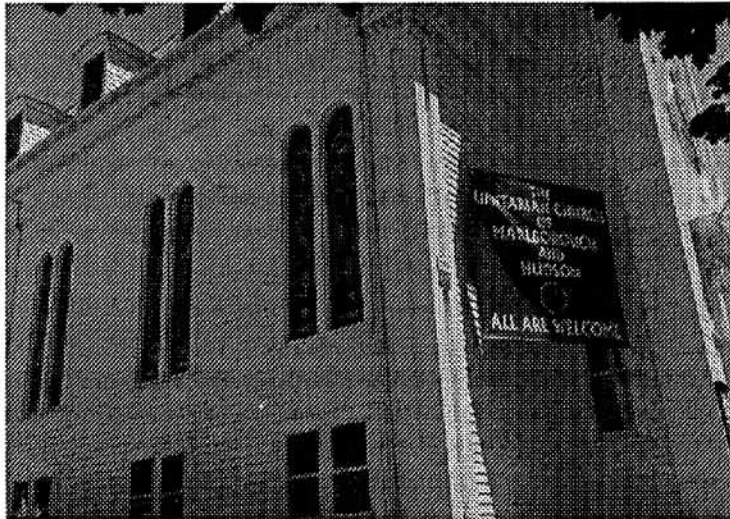
There have been six generations of our family who have attended services, been married or were christened in this church between the years of 1895 and 1997. When my grandmother and grandfather came to Hudson from Boston in 1895, it was to live in the house they had built for them here. They joined the church with their two children, who joined the Sunday School. My mother and aunt told me of going to church in the morning, going home to dinner and then walking back to church in the afternoon for social gatherings.

Eventually my mother and aunt met my father and uncle, good friends who were active in the church and members of the choir. The two couples were married in a double ceremony there. Mr. Baltzly was the minister, and the attendants were all members of the church.

As time went on, there were new members. My brother Bob, my sister Ruth and I were all christened in the church by Rev. Dudley Child. In turn, I was married here to my husband Howard by Rev. Withington, who also christened our two children. He married our daughter Cindy to Bob Campbell; their two children, Lizabeth and Lori, were both christened by Rev. Withington as well. The Rev. Withington came all the way down from Friendship, Maine, to marry our son Tom to his wife Linda. Their daughter, Angela, was also christened in the church.

Eventually, Bob and Cindy's daughter Lizabeth was married by Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide; she christened their two children, Kayla and Joshua. Bob and Cindy's other daughter, Lori, was recently married by Rev. Stephen Cook.

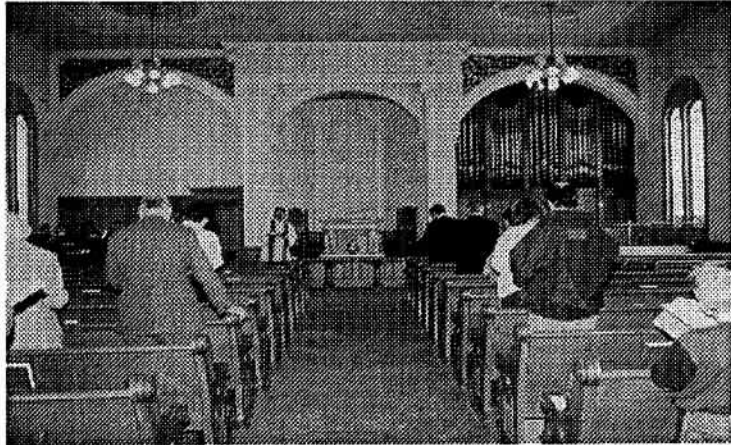
Exterior of the Hudson church



OUR MINISTERS

George W. Stacy	1847-1862	Robert C. Withington (interim)	1946-1947
Samuel McDaniel	1862-1864	J Harold Hadley	1947-1948
Henry C. Dugan	1864-1867	Jesse Roy Dom	1948-1950
William S. Heywood	1867-1874	Gordon A. Crook	1951-1955
Hilary Bygrave	1875-1879	W. Alexander McEachern	1956-1964
Edward P. Gibbs	1880-1883	Edward A. Frost	1966-1968
Clarence W. Fowler	1884-1890	Robert C. Withington (interim)	1968-1969
John Mills Wilson	1891-1897	I. Gregg Carter (Merger)	1969 -1974
John Baltzly	1898-1914	David E. Hubner	1974-1980
Harold L. Pickett	1915-1918	Robert C Withington (interim)	1980-1981
Dudley R. Child	1919-1927	Dorothy Kimball	1981-1986
Robert S. Steven	1928-1936	Dorothy Boroush (interim)	1986-1987
Robert C. Withington	1937-1942	Elizabeth H. Alcaide	1987-1994
Louis C. Dethlefs (during Mr. Withington's leave of absence to serve in the armed forces in World War II)	1942-1946	Dr. David Phreaner (interim)	1994-1996
		Stephen Cook	1996- present

Interior of the Hudson church



Sure, you knew that many of the early members of our church were highly respected citizens in the community -- bank executives, shoe- and lumber-manufacturing moguls, Postmasters, Senators, school superintendents and other people of distinction. But did you also know these facts about our church and our early members?

In 1869, the town constructed a retaining wall on Main Street in front of the church, and built sidewalks in front of the church. The Union Society paid the bill.

Truman Walcott, the builder of our church, had two sets of twins -- a boy and a girl in each case. Because he and his wife were at a loss for middle names, they decided to use the names of states admitted to the Union at that time: Lorenzo Oregon and Louisa Texas; Henry Kansas and Henrietta Nebraska.

Our church is five years older than the town of Hudson, which voted to incorporate in our Union Hall.

Lewis D. Apsley served two terms in Congress and was vice-chairman of the Republican National Committee during the William McKinley election. It is for him the Apsley Fund is named.

In 1862, the minister -- S.W. McDaniel -- made a yearly salary of \$800, payable biannually. Two years later, his salary was raised to \$1,000 -- probably due to post-Civil War inflation. A year later, the salary was again raised by \$200 -- but this time it was because of a new minister moving in.

George Houghton, a Unitarian in the shoe trade during the 1850s and 1860s, believed in spreading the wealth. He gave a lot on Main Street in Hudson to the Methodists for a church building, and he gave the Catholics the use of Houghton Hall as a place of worship during the building of the first Catholic church.

The ladies parlor has been used as a church school, a chapel and a thrift shop. It is now called the Knight Room, and is being used as a parlor again! It was used as a church school until 1964, and one of the two rooms was used as the church office beginning in 1975. That's when a wall was built to divide the minister's study from the church secretary's office. (The minister's desk has been in there all this time; the wall was built around it.)

Florence and Lillian Brigham live on the same farm that has been in the possession of the Brigham family since 1754. The first Brigham came to America in 1635.

In 1820, the village of Feltonville -- what Hudson was called before it incorporated -- had 13 or 14 dwellings, about 100 people in all, a couple of mills, a blacksmith and a few mechanics. It started out as part of Marlborough and for a while included a piece of Bolton, too. The Fitchburg Railroad came to Feltonville in 1849. By the 1860s, when the Union Society was forming, the town had grown to 140 homes, 1,800 people, 17 shoe shops, eight stores, one post office and two churches.

Frederick S. Dawes started the Hudson Electric Light Co. around 1880 to provide electricity for the shoe factories in town. It was taken over by the town of Hudson in 1896.

The third floor of the church -- where the spiral staircases lead from the gallery at the back of the sanctuary -- was originally a hall that was used by local organizations, including the Odd Fellows.

The Tower Brothers machine shop, at which John N. Tower worked, was said to be the first company in Hudson to adopt the weekly payroll system. It was also the first in town to have a telephone.

F. Ellen Brown, member of the Woman's Club and the Ladies' Circle, was well-known for doing numerous good works. One story goes that during the Great Fire of 1894 in Hudson, a friend saw Miss Brown climbing into the church through a back window on a ladder. Miss Brown told the friend, "the visiting firemen have to be fed -- you go up and down Church Street and collect some food, and I'll get the coffee a-going."

In 1873, the hour of church business meetings was changed from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Edgar P. Larkin -- founder of Larkin Lumber in Hudson -- gave Riverside Park to the town for the "perpetual use of the young people, and forbade the use of his name in connection with it."

James N. Clare served as door-keeper of the State House of Representatives from 1921 until his death in 1926. He also tried to enlist in the Armed Forces to serve in World War I -- but at the age of 72, was considered a bit too old.

Our church organ -- the oldest of any church in Hudson -- was donated in 1892 by Joseph Bradley, Edmund Stowe & Russell B. Lewis. Thomas Taylor Jr. was the last official "organ-boy" to blow the organ by hand. Boys from the community earned pocket money by pumping up the organ each Sunday morning or whenever music was wanted. The organ, built by George H. Ryder & Co., was originally built for a church in Reading in the 1850s and cost \$1,050 when new. It was completely rebuilt for the Hudson church, and Ryder himself played the dedication concert. The organ measures 11 feet, 6 inches wide and 18 feet, 6 inches high. The great organ has 11 stops with 728 pipes, the swell organ has 8 stops with 448 pipes, and the pedal organ has two stops and 54 pipes -- for a total of 1,230 pipes.

The house that was on the lot where our church was built was sold to Steadman Nourse, moved, and became 18 Church Street.

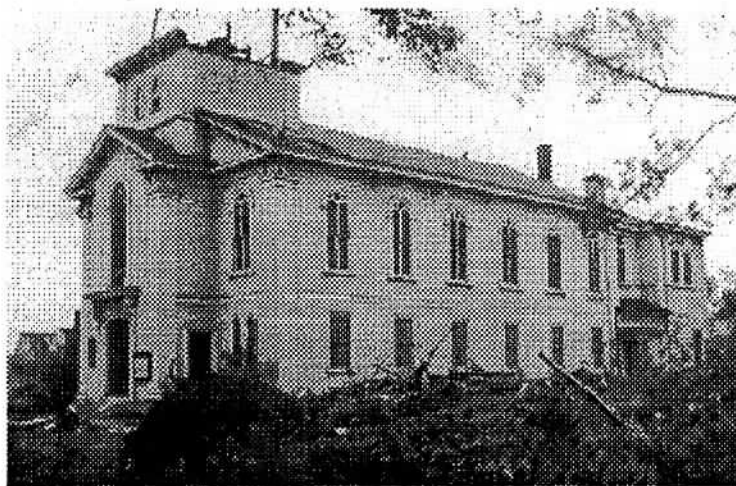
Charles H. Robinson was active in the movement to have the town of Marlborough incorporated, and built the Hudson Town Hall in 1872.

Annie M. Houghton was a charter member of the Hudson Woman's Club and supervised the making of surgical dressings for the Red Cross in World War I.

The bronze church bell - which cost \$300 when it was bought in 1890s -- was appraised in 1946 for insurance purposes for \$1,671.

In 1892, when the church voted to take up collections on Sunday,

**Second Parish, Marlborough,
after the hurricane**



The present Executive Committee



Back row, left-right: Jeff Kinz, Tony Lapetina, Robert Campbell,
Dick Lawrence

Front row, left-right: Johanna LaPlante, Liz deVillafranca,
Michael Frary