

## 4. SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK

In the 154 years since Samantha Standardt's funeral in 1849, 52 Pastors have served this church.

### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PASTORS ELMA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1849-2003

#### With Lancaster Church

1849 George E. Havens  
1849 Chauncey S. Baker  
1850 Gustavus A. Hines  
1852 Nelson Reasoner  
1853 Schuyler Parker  
1855 A.B. Gordon  
1856 Alonzo Newton  
1858 Lucius A. Chapin  
1859 Sheldon H. Baker  
1861 James McClelland  
1862 W.H. Shaw  
1862 Francis W. Conable  
1863 J.R. Alexander  
1864 Hiram May  
1866 H.W. Ripley  
1867 W.H. Sparling  
1868 George W. McPherson

#### With Marilla Church

1874 P.P. Reese  
1875 George M. Harris  
1878 John B. Wright  
1880 W.H. Henderson  
1881 Chauncey S. Baker  
1883 J.F. Brown  
1884 R.I. Robinson  
1885 L.S. Wallace  
1886 Chauncey S. Baker  
1887 A.W. Staples  
1888 Fred Dark  
1889 Charles Robson  
1890 E.W. Shrigley

#### Elma Church-Full Time

1892 Lewis A. Wright  
1897 J.E. Armstrong  
1899 S.W. Wyman  
1900 J.E. Armstrong  
1904 E.S. Beacom  
1907 Ralph Pierce  
1908 W.D. Allen  
1914 Henry A. Reed  
1916 Walter Dynes  
1918 A.H. Reed  
1926 A.D. Stevens  
1926 H.J. Charles  
1930 J.E. Payley  
1932 W.H. Smith  
1935 Daniel W. Howell  
1937 E.J. Burton  
1941 H.E. Kenrick  
1943 W.H. Jessop  
1948 Percy H. Woodruff  
1952 Edward P. Gill  
1968 F. Victor Metivier, D.Min  
1977 Wayne M. West  
1983 Duane R. Miller, Ph.D  
1988 Peter LeValley, D.Min



Rev. and Mrs. Edward P. Gill

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Some of our pastors were appointed more than once, but mostly for year terms, and some even less. Until 1874, Elma was an out-appointment from the Lancaster church. From 1874 until 1892, Marilla shared preachers with Elma. Reverend George W. McPherson was here six years beginning in 1868, and was the first resident pastor. (Reverend McPherson became a full time physician in Elma later on in his career, raising his family in the house next to the access road we share with the Fire Hall.)

Since gaining a full time Pastor in 1892, service lengths have varied. In recent memory, Rev. Edward P. Gill held a long pastorate of sixteen years, then continued as Pastor Emeritus 12 years after retirement. Reverends' Metivier, West, and Miller are the current living former pastors. Reverends' Joanne Brocklehurst and Joan Zimmerman are two church members who became ordained ministers out of our congregation. Now retired Reverends' Metivier and Brocklehurst join us in weekly worship. Reverend Dr. Peter LeValley is serving in his 16th year, at this writing.

Early records give no information on salaries. Whatever was paid was collected on subscriptions for the pastor's salary and some operational expenses. The first record of a salary is in 1893 when Rev. Louis A. Wright reported that he had received \$500.00 for the previous year. There were times when the minister had to plead for any salary at all. The janitor was paid, also the bills for the lamp oil and firewood but not the preacher. Several times, all the money collected went to what was owed to the previous pastor.



Left to Right: Deacon Bonnie LeValley, Rev. Dr. Peter LeValley, Rev. Dr. Duane R. Miller, Sue West, Rev. Wayne West, Barb Metivier, Rev. Dr. F. Victor Metivier

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Without a doubt, there were some ministerial appointments that were unpopular with the parish. Once the Trustees wrote to the District Superintendent that they wanted a young man assigned. They received an older man and complained. However, the "old" man was so popular he remained for six years.

Others made significant contributions to the parish and community. Reverend George M. Harris, 1875-79 was especially fond of young people, and wanted them to be involved in church activities. He had the altar area changed, with the help of his cabinetmaker father, so plays could be presented in the sanctuary. (His father also made the altar rails.) He organized the Elma Young People's Association, which was in existence from 1875 until the First World War. The regular monthly meetings were held on "moon nights" so the horses and drivers could see their way home. It was primarily for entertainment; socials and intellectual programs meeting in the old Fire Hall or in a room under the sanctuary. Their financial support to the church was substantial throughout the life of the Association. They paid for



**Church c.1900. Trees were set out by Warren Jackman in 1865 in memory of Abraham Lincoln.**

the vestibule in 1892, repainted the exterior several times, repaired the stained glass windows, cleaned the carpet and had dozens of other projects. Often their contributions to the church exceeded the church budget. It was a unifying force in the community and provided nearby involvement when transportation was difficult.

Ministers of the church are in fact all the persons who contribute their many talents to the church. Sunday School and Vacation Bible school workers, choir members, music makers, Bible study participants, those who contribute produce at Thanksgiving, and act in dramas over the year, festival workers, rummage sale helpers, meal makers, healthy life-style workers, trustees, nursery attendants, and everyone else who gives their "prayers, presence, gifts and service" all minister to and with each other.

The congregation is filled with fellowship in 2003 through Meet-N-Eat, Seniors with Spirit, Youth fellowship, potluck meals, and through many activities planned by and for the members. In 1976 we were included in the Elma Bi-Centennial tour of churches, and in the same year, won second prize in the town parade.



## Ministers of the Church



Vacation Bible School



Spring Play



Youth Mission Trip



At Chautauqua



In the Kitchen



Left to right are: Evelyn Carlson, Marge Heck, Cornelia (Hurd) Tyler, Marjorie Briggs, Dorrie Reuther, Jean Bender, and Eileen Bippert.



Our annual Live Nativity at Bipperts barn allows us to share with the community. Left to right: Amanda Green, Jennifer Wantuck, Christine Wantuck, Thomas LeValley.

## 5. PARSONAGE



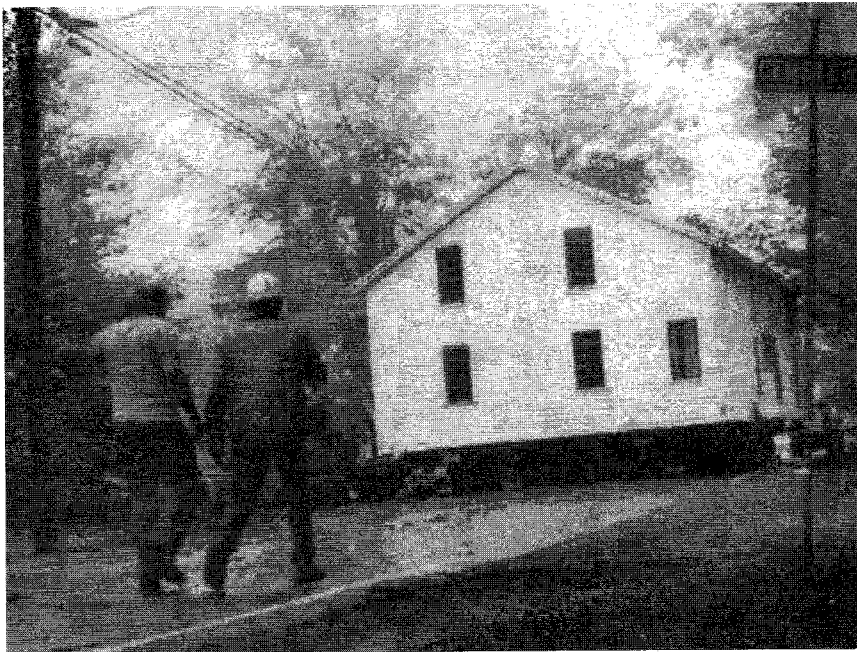
**The Hurd House, former parsonage, now  
The Elma Town Museum**

The first parsonage was across the street from the church; the Murlin home. The church purchased it for \$1500.00 in 1905 (This was fairly ambitious, because the church regularly borrowed money from the Elma Cemetery to make ends meet during these years.) In 1913, Harriet Hurd Rowley willed the property immediately to the north of the church for the purpose of erecting a new parsonage. Instead, the old Hurd house was moved to the site and updated. (Clark and Dulcena Hurd built this house in 1847 and raised 7 children there.) It was first used as a parsonage in 1925. The Murlin property was then sold. It was not until 1939 that the trustees made sure there was "an adequate water supply" for the new parsonage! A well was dug at that time.

The Hurd house served 10 pastors until 1968, when a new parsonage was built on Rice Road on land given by the Sigman family. The church retained the old parsonage until 1984, when it was transferred by a sale of \$1.00 to the Elma

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Historical Society. Under the direction of it's President, Kenny Schaff, the house was moved north on Bowen Road to Jackman Park, and now serves as the Elma Town Museum. That site, it should be noted, is where the original Hurd and Briggs lumberyard stood, in the thick of the woods, all those years ago.



**Moving of the Hurd House 700 yards down Bowen Road. It was a cold and rainy day on May 6, 1985 when the house was moved. The move took 10 hours to complete by Walter Hartloff and Sons.**

## 6. DEBITS AND CREDITS

The church building was constructed with no actual money. Once the church was built, the first yearly budget was \$37.00; \$25.00 for the janitor, \$9.00 for wood and \$3.00 for oil. It was paid from the Sunday offerings referred to as "penny collections". At the end of that first year in the building, they still owed the janitor. Lean times continued for many years. In 1873, the Trustees voted to tax the pews, "except for the poor". There was no church treasurer until Myron H. Clark was appointed in 1887. He held the position over fifty years. His excellent records are in the archives, a source of much information on financial problems of the church. In the 20th century Carl Forsberg served a long term as financial secretary, and the position of treasurer changed many times until Peter Buechi took it on in 1978 and has held it mostly ever since, with few interruptions.

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Carrie Baker, daughter of Reverend Chauncey Baker, came to rescue the church many times. Reverend Baker had served the church twice, and also served in Lancaster and East Aurora. His brother Reverend Sheldon Baker also served in Elma. He married Julia Standardt Clark and lived in Elma the rest of his life. He had a strong affinity for the church and was anxious that it keep going.

Carrie married George Maxwell and moved west. He was wealthy and supported many philanthropic projects. There are many records of their generous gifts to the church. In 1929-30 the church was sadly in need of repair, with no money in sight for fix-up. Envelopes were handed out for the first time, as suggested by Fred Sigman, but things didn't improve. The Buffalo Superintendent, Dr. Guthrie, suggested the Methodist Church drop its affiliation and let the community take over the church. This was not a suggestion well received! The Trustees were considering closing it down when the following letter arrived.

*Dear Friends,*

*You know I have a great deal of interest in the little church in Elma... Father loved it and enjoyed his work there. I respect it, and love it for itself and for the people who support it and who were so kind to him. I am wondering if it needs repairing: the foundations, the steps, shingling, painting and something in the way of brushing up the inside. I should be glad to pay for all such expense.*

*Carrie Baker Maxwell*



Rev. Chauncey Baker

The trustees were not timid. The estimate sent to her was \$11,000.00. Everything was repaired and redecorated in the church as well as the parsonage. All debts were paid off. ( Mrs. Maxwell also gave substantially to our neighbors in East Aurora. This is the Baker family in "Baker Memorial Church".

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Likewise the Shaver Family in Elma has played an important role in the life of the church and community. Dr. Grace Shaver was the town and school physician for many years. Her sons, Dr.'s Carroll and R. Clark Shaver also served the area as physicians for Iroquois Central School. Both were musically inclined. Dr. R. Clark Shaver played the church organ as a fill - in when needed, and for enjoyment. (At the time of his passing, an organ from his home which had passed to the church ownership was sold to St. John's Lutheran Church in Elma.) In recent years the gift of Dr. R. Clark Shaver's estate helped to renovate, enlarge and enable the church building to be made fully handicapped accessible. This gift also allowed us to establish a number of endowment funds and give significant gifts to Primera Iglesia and Seneca UMC, the mission work at the Asbury Shalom Zone, and the new Boys & Girls Club building in Elma.

## 7. THE SUMMER PEOPLE

Many of the lovely old homes in Elma were built as summer retreats by people in Buffalo. As springtime arrived, the families would move out here. The men would commute to buffalo on "the Jerk", a passenger train that served the area until 1948.

These summer people were not the usual vacationers. They considered Elma as a true residence and became involved in local and church affairs. They accepted offices and responsibilities in the church and contributed to its needs. Receipts of the "penny collection" always increased during the summer. In the winter, the collections were under \$5.00. From May to September, they would be well over \$10.00. Of equal importance and cosmopolitan growth of the town and church, widening the horizons of the farm and mill residents.

One such family were the Lees, Mr. Lee was a personal accountant to Henry Ford in Detroit. He also worked for the Dodge Brothers. His home was a mansion on Bullis Road, just east of the Bowen Road intersection. When the last of his descendants died in the late 1940's the property was sold to Sprucelands Camp, and later to the Jewish Community Centers in Buffalo, who maintain Camp Centerland there today.

## 8. WOMAN POWER

Researching the church history one detects definite evidence of the woman's touch.



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- It was a woman's death that motivated the start of the church.
- Of the five people who joined the early class, three were woman.
- From several sources we learn that the donation of the land for the schoolhouse and church was Mrs. Briggs' idea.

The first sexton (janitor) was hired to build fires, light the lamps and clean the church. After a few years he rebelled at the sweeping and dusting. The cleaning was turned over to the woman to do for nothing, but woman were being paid as early as 1901.

Originally there was no kitchen in the church. How the woman served dinners or refreshments is not known. In 1887, the Trustees discussed painting the room called "the kitchen". But the next day they decided to shingle the roof instead. In 1892, a secondhand stove and cupboard was purchased for \$17.00. Even with these conveniences, it must have been a challenge to work with no gas, electricity or water.

It was also in 1887 that four women first attended the Trustees meeting. The preamble to all early Trustees minutes states that the meetings are open to all MALE members of the congregation.

By 1893, the word "male" was omitted.. The ladies could not vote, but they seemed to influence some decisions. That fall the "meeting room" was redecorated (probably the room under the sanctuary, now the library. By 1921 women were elected as Trustees, and served on the annual meeting board. Now it is required that at least one-third of the trustees in any United Methodist Church be women.

About 1900, a Board of Assistant Stewards was elected to inaugurate money-raising projects. This stimulated a flurry of activity among the women. There was a Lawn Fete, Clam Chowder Supper, Strawberry Social and a fancy Goods Show. The proceeds paid for needed improvements.

The Women's Guild was a result of this effort. The name of the group changed several times, but the organization always continued. In scattered entries of our archives, contributions of \$6,886.00 were made over forty years. Clark W. Hurd, in 1921, contracted with the Elma women to serve an annual dinner to the Buffalo Lumbermen's Association. This project continued for ten years. In eight of those years, they cleared \$2,823.00.

Today the United Methodist Women carry on the tradition of service. Our Ruth

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Circle and Open Door Circle keep women active and in service. Every woman attending the church is a member of UMW, pledged to carry out the "Community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

## 9. MUSIC

When the church was built, a melodeon was part of the furnishings. Mrs. Henry Wilbor played it originally, while Alonzo C. Bancroft became choir director in 1859, a job he held for 45 years. Miss Clella Briggs followed him. In the 20th century persons who played the organ have included, Alice Jackman, Carrie Baker Maxwell, Helen Briggs, Stella Baker, R. Clark Shaver, Jeanette Gerhardt, Eleanor Brocklehurst, Pat Simpson, Joyce Zimmerman and William Champion.

Eleanor Brocklehurst was formerly the organist at Baker Memorial Church in East Aurora. Around 1968 she was asked to fill in temporarily at Elma, when the previous organist left abruptly before a major holiday. The church was satisfied with her efforts, and didn't look further for a music director until 1988. Our current musical team is headed by Mr. Champion, with Joyce Zimmerman as Associate Director, Laura Buechi leading the Bell Choir and Shawn Strausbaugh with the Children's Choir.

Under Mr. Champion's direction the choir numbers between 20-30 singers. They recorded a CD/cassette in 1999, and participate in concerts with other United Methodist churches, as well as perform in local venues.



The handbells have been played since 1970. Mrs. Brocklehurst led the bell choir for many years, followed by Char Piscitelli, Deacon Bonnie LeValley, and our current leader, Laura Buechi.

We have had hymnals since the start of the church. The current main hymnal dates from 1989, and The Faith We Sing from 2002.

## 10. FESTIVAL

On July 4, 1853, a group of 50 or more gathered to have a picnic on land near the dam of the creek. It might be considered our first festival!

In 1935, there was of income of \$305.00 from the "Spring Festival". This was an event held on the property of Claire and Ralph Paine, on Bowen Road.. This title carried over the first "Feast & Festival" held on August 24, 1946, devised to help raise money to build on additional church space. The first event included dinner and booths such as white elephant, baked goods, fishpond, peanut guess and fortune telling. Small prizes were awarded to winners of games. Also very popular was square dancing on the lawn of the adjacent parsonage. However, the dancing so damaged the lawn that the square dancing was moved to the paved parking lot of the Briggs Dairy milk shed across the street from the church the next year.



Spring Festival June 6, 1936

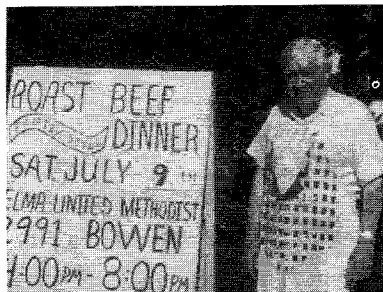
The menu from the first dinner was: roast beef, boiled potatoes and gravy, corn on the cob, beets and string beans (all fresh from local gardens) tomato, cucumber and green pepper salad, ice cream and cookies. Tickets were \$1.50 for dinner and about 142 people were served. The net profit was \$365.00.

A crowd of 500 had been expected, so much food was left over. The extra meat and salad vegetables were sold, and a "tubful and boiler full" of potatoes were sent to the Wende Home (now the Erie County Home & Infirmary) in Alden. To advertise, 17 posters were made; 11 of these were distributed on the Briggs Dairy route. Also, members of the congregation sent postcards to friends

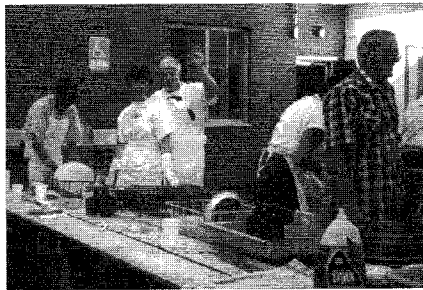
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and relatives in Elma as well as neighboring towns and cities, inviting them to attend. In later years, church members sent out letters of invitation with follow-up cards sent to the same addresses by the advertising committee. As postage rates increased, these letters and cards were discontinued. Word of mouth and newspaper advertising are used today. We even list our event on cable TV to help out the advertising.

Fred Sigman chaired Festival for many years, holding planning and follow-up parties at his home on Rice Road (the house just west of the current parsonage). In early years cleanup was done the day following the dinner. Workers wore old clothes to Sunday worship, which was followed by a work session and a lunch



Carl Forsberg



Cleanup Crew: Sue & Bob Coatsworth, Bob Smith.

of leftovers from the night before. In recent times, dishes were completely washed and dried via Bob Smith's Sterilizing contraption set up on the "other side" of the dinner service. The automatic dishwasher aids in this task today.

**There's always been a rehash of the event, with suggestions of all kinds. Some recorded in our administrative board notes:**

- Arrange for the accordion player earlier in the season.
- Don't let Mr. Franz stand out in the road all day.
- Start the fortune telling sooner.
- Get a special mop for Mary Clark if she makes the coffee.
- Have Mr. Moessenger roast all the meat, his was the best.
- Let people use the bathrooms.
- Have a motorcycle or a horse.
- And from 2003, "Need more blue coolers".

Over the years the arrangements have been whittled down to an exact science; today a chairperson needs merely to follow a wealth of written directions! Kristen Sweeney chaired the event when she was a high school student, proving this point.

In 1947 the event was held in July, so late summer produce was not available. It seems to have run on the traditional "second Saturday in July after the 4th" for quite a while. The homemade pies were also added in 1947.

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The event has always been planned for serving on the lawn, except for 1957 when the Educational Wing construction was going on. That year they planned and had it inside in September, in the newly built Fellowship hall. Our Ad Board notes, it seems there was no interest in a festival in 1961. Was it held?

Do you remember Millie Lund serving tomato juice out of the cart? Handing vegetables out of the country kitchen windows? Sifting through red and green marked silverware-the Fire Halls and ours? Ethel Schuetz's train? The Iroquois band playing on the front lawn? Stacking the chairs and tables to go back to the Fire hall? Pie making with Helen Skinner on Friday morning? Bob Coatsworth deep in dishwashing? Don Bundy and Dr. Jim Mohn cutting meat? Buffalo Swing playing at the 50th anniversary event? Fresh Rhubarb pie a la mode? Sweating in the takeout section of the garage? And in 2003, the wind and rain causing a controlled madness of serving?

### *And of course, the potatoes...*

Tom Wantuck says there is no big secret. We all know otherwise. There is no way to duplicate festival potatoes.

The potatoes progressed from boiled in 1946, to mashed in 1947 to oven roasted. In 1952 a near catastrophe forced a change in the menu. Hundreds of fresh potatoes had been peeled and greased the day before the dinner and readied for oven roasting. An exceptionally hot night spoiled them all. On Saturday a new source of potatoes had been found quickly. Some fresh ones were hastily found and peeled, but not enough!

So the committee resorted to canned small potatoes, again, prepared in the oven. These prove to be so delicious, so safe, so popular and so easy, that they have been used ever since!

People from throughout the community pitched in to help the Methodists with their early dinners. This cooperative effort accounted for the church's ability to offer a true "Festival" for many years. In later years games and dancing were dropped for lack of manpower. The Girl Scouts and 4-H 'ers have helped as wait-staff and bussers, and folks come out for the festival that are away much of the year.

In 2002, the church donated half of the proceeds to the Western New York Food Bank and matched it with money from the Shaver mission fund. Most folks feel that the coming together feeling of working at the festival is what keeps this event going.



## 11. MARCH TO THE CEMETERY



**Annual march to the Elma Cemetery in 1920. The group is standing around George Townsend's headstone.**

The march to the cemetery began in the early 20th century. The whole Elma Village community attended, with recent veterans in uniform, and many children carrying flowers and flags. Dr. Albert Briggs, (a son of Joseph and Altha Briggs,) who was a renowned physician in Elma and Buffalo, started the custom. Dr. Briggs served in the Spanish-American War as an army major.

Today our Sunday School still goes to the cemetery on Memorial Day Sunday. Our history minded members have kept this tradition alive, notably Marge Briggs, Evelyn Carlson, Bette Houghton, Phyllis Cooper and Deacon Bonnie LeValley. Much is known about early Elma folk, and we are able to tell stories about people from 150 years ago as well as church members that we fondly remember ourselves. Through the years different people have been highlight. In 1997 the stone for Allen J. Hurd, who fell at Gettysburg, was refurbished, with special ceremony. Recently stone rubbing has become a popular activity.



**The Briggs Children holding their flowers continue the tradition to the cemetery in 1954. From left to right are: Allegra, Anne, Peggy, Lucia, and Lee.**

## 12. OUTSIDE USE OF THE CHURCH

Since the beginning, outside groups have met in the church building. The Young People's Association in the late 1800's, the Grange in 1913, the Boy Scouts, the cemetery board, the square dancers, card players and socializers have all used the church for events and meetings.

As mentioned above, Iroquois Central School used our Educational Wing in the 1950's and 1960's. The rent they paid helped us pay off the mortgage reasonably quickly.



**Elon Clark (center) helps burn the mortgage in 1963**

In 2003, the church buildings are used by the Home Bureau, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, playgroups, book discussions groups, exercisers, the men's breakfast group, cooking services, the Red Cross for blood drives and health and safety classes, and almost any person or group with a need. The Elma United Methodist Church Cooperative (Nursery) Pre-School founded in 1970 uses the Educational Wing rooms daily during the week.

## THE FUTURE

As we celebrate this 150th anniversary of the congregation founding, we can look back and see the strong foundation the original members set for us. Our motto in 2003 is "150 Years and Still Growing". We continue to take in new members, serve the community and stretch our hands outward and upward.

**The celebration  
doesn't end here, but invites you to  
continue to hope and dream and share a fuller life with Christ  
Jesus here at your church and in your own circles of  
opportunity**