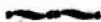




Ninetieth
Anniversary
Celebration



CENTER MORICHES M. E. CHURCH

Sunday, February 16, 1930

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REV. JOHN F. PROTHEROE
Present Pastor

WITNESSETH, that the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of One Hundred Dollars to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold, aliened, released and confirmed and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, alien, release and confirm unto the said parties of the second part to their successors in office forever

ALL that certain piece or lot of land together with the Methodist Episcopal Church thereon situated, lying and being in the village of Moriches and bounded as follows, viz: On the north by the Highway or Main Street, and on the west by the land of Henry Raynor and on the south by the land of Peter Linington and on the east by the land of Melinda Howell, containing by estimation about one-third of an Acre, be the same more or less.

AND FURTHER, that no sale or other disposition . . . the aforesaid premises shall be made by the . . . unless authorized by two-thirds of the male members belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Moriches the said premises to be and remain the property of the Meth. Episcopal Church in Moriches.

History has it that Methodism in this place was born in a house which then stood at the head of Senix avenue. At the home of James Edwards the little group met. As it was in the upper room that the disciples of Jesus tarried to be endued with power so it was in the upper room of that home that this little company tarried, communed, worshiped and prayed until they were inspired with faith, hope, courage and daring.

That God sometimes uses, what at the time seems to be a trial, to work for good to his children and his Kingdom is brought out also in this connection.

For a time they had worshiped in the Presbyterian church where they had services in the afternoon, and later in the school house at the west end of the village. But during the winter of 1838 and 39 they were compelled to meet elsewhere.

Not granted the use of the "union" church building in the place neither the then common privilege of holding service in the village school house they for a time met in the loft of the home of that whole-souled Methodist, James Edwards, and to him belongs much of the credit for the original church. It was here that a gracious revival occurred that winter. Under more favorable conditions they would no doubt have tarried longer ere they began to construct the house of God.

The period from 1829 to 1836 saw the work carried on as a mission, the territory being divided and subdivided into circuits. In 1834 the Suffolk District was divided and Rev. Edward Oldrin was in charge of the West Hampton Mission, which also included Speonk, Moriches, Manor, Fireplace (now Brookhaven), Bellport, Ketchebonneck (now West Hampton), Good Ground (now Hampton Bays), Red Creek, Flanders, Fourth Neck and Southport.

In 1839 there was cause for great rejoicing for it was in this year that the word mission was dropped. The change was made because the circuit became self supporting.

It was in 1839 and during the pastorate of John Nixon that the first Methodist Episcopal Church was built in Center Moriches.

In those days they had a "Raising", and the villagers and farmers for miles around, came to help in the church raising. After the raising was over the boys gathered in the field opposite the church near the spot where now stands Mr. Charles Chichester's barn and played a game of baseball. It was a great day in the little village when the Methodists had a church of their own.

As we search the records we find the names of the building committee to be Jonah Turner, George Terry and James Edwards while Sylvanus Jackson was the builder. To Oliver Smith, George Terry, James Edwards and Mahlon Chichester is given the credit for hewing the timbers to build the church. This structure was 28x28 feet and is what is now called the large Sunday School room. What a glorious time they must have had in worshiping in this first church home with Charles Thomas to pitch the music with the flute. Later Charles Vail, son of Lorenzo Vail, played the melodeon, and the clock, the gift of L. D. Vail, proclaimed the length of those early sermons.

For thirty-two years that little building with a low slanting roof, no steeple, and no hall way was the meeting place of the Moriches. It was one of the eight points on the West Hampton circuit until 1848.

At this point we would be pleased to be able to tell you a little more but human hand has left no record that we have found and so again we leave it to the care of Him who cares for thee and me, knowing that the work they wrought has been the priceless heritage of generations, past, present and of generations yet unborn. They laid the foundation others have and will build bigger and better thereupon.

Spanning the years from 1840 events recorded are as follows: In 1846 there were eight appointments on the circuit; 1848 found Patchogue dropped from the appointments and the name of the circuit changed to West Hampton, Moriches and Good Ground. The year 1850 was marked by a gracious revival which strengthened both Presbyterian and Methodist churches.

In 1856 Good Ground was dropped, and two years later preaching services were held in the church every afternoon and every other Sunday evening. West Hampton was separated from the circuit in 1870.

The spirit of the Good Samaritan was carried out in 1863 by William T. Norris. It was this year that Dr. John Kennedy was appointed Presiding Elder but died soon thereafter. Brother Norris filled out the year taking only his travelling expenses and giving the salary to Dr. Kennedy's widow.

In April of 1871 the noise of the hammer was again heard and an extension was added to the original building. At this time the building committee was made up of Jonah Turner, John Hawkins and John Bishop and the builder J. F. Penny. The church was cut in two and twelve feet added in the center.

Marching again across the years from 1871 to 1878 we find that the revival fires burned in the hearts of the people and 1874 found a number added to the church and preaching services began in East Moriches. In 1876 Rev. Robert Codling was appointed as the minister and the records show that the salary estimate was \$500. Four adults and four children were baptised during the year and six dollars raised for missions.

During the year 1878 a further building project was undertaken and this time a belfry was built, the bell itself being the gift of Mrs. John Bishop. Building committee Chauncey Chichester, John Thurston, and John Bishop. Elbert Chichester was the builder. They were now well situated for many years of worship with a bell to preach its message as it called the people to worship each Sunday along with the minister who could not be forth coming. We at this point pause to record one outstanding financial feat of a brother minister. Rev. Beale was the minister for Center Moriches and East Moriches from 1877 to 1879 and it is recorded that during his ministry the people generously voted him a two-months' leave of absence that he might visit Europe. The people of East Moriches held a strawberry festival and gave him the proceeds. The amount realized was \$32. These were the days of miracles for his salary was \$500 a year. With one accord we ask, "How did he do it?"

The record for the year 1880 reveals that considerable progress had been made. With a membership of 129, \$49 was raised for benevolent purposes.

Not being satisfied with the church structure as it was the ceiling and roof were raised in 1889 and a recess added. New pews, a new heater and a new chandelier were also secured. The chandelier was the gift of Mrs. Sarah Edwards. Two hundred dollars of the money necessary to make this alteration was secured from the Church Extension Society and a part through the efforts of Rev. B. M. Adams, who was then Presiding Elder. The amount he secured was \$55.85. Mr. Abner Reeves was the boss carpenter and E. B. Ruland, Herman Rogers, and Rev. W. H. Manship building committee.

"For eighteen years the repaired church stood without changes, and was the scene of many blessed revivals. It was a sacred place to those of a worshipful mind. But a growing community, a militant Methodism demands a more modern structure, a building in keeping with the size and beauty of the village. Like David of old, the Methodists said, 'We dwell in houses of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains'. Methodism never worships the past simply because it is old, but tried to be aggressive and move with the march of years. The New York East Conference, recognizing that this community did not have a church sufficiently modern to meet present day needs, sent here a man experienced in building churches, the Rev. Herbert A. Wood. Astonishing things have been accomplished, since his arrival, as the result of a loyal people joining hands with their pastor in an effort to secure for themselves as fine a property as is owned anywhere between Patchogue and Southampton."

At this point written records are almost entirely missing. It is a matter of common knowledge, however, that the present church was built in 1907. The old structure having proved inadequate it was now moved and turned half way around to its present position. (Previously it was located on the site now occupied by the parsonage.) The new building was constructed along the side of the old one and the two connected with sliding doors giving a seating capacity of about 450. This work was done by Spicer Davis, under the supervision of the building committee, Rev. H. A. Wood, William M. Rogers, Elbert Ruland, Arthur B. Hallock and I. W. Gardner. The cost of the new structure was \$8,000.

In this new building one of the handsome memorial windows, a central one, is dedicated to the little band of nine. The Epworth League also contributed one of the central windows. One is given by Mrs. Fannie Edwards in memory

of her husband Alanson Edwards. One by Emma Thurston in memory of her husband, John C. Thurston. One by Perry Williamson in memory of his son, Fred. One by William H. Edwards in memory of his wife, Mrs. Sarah Edwards. One by Mrs. D. L. Brown in memory of her father, George Lambert. One by Mr. D. L. Brown in memory of his mother, Mary A. Brown. One by Mary Jane Wilcox in memory of her husband, Stephen B. Wilcox. One by Mrs. Caroline Bishop in memory of her husband, John Bishop. One by William C. Edwards in memory of his mother, Frances Edwards.

On Sunday, February 10, 1907, amid great rejoicing the church was dedicated. The original plan had been to carry out the service of consecration in the afternoon. But desiring to dedicate it free of incumbrance and with this end in view Rev. Dr. John Krantz of New York explained that of the total cost about \$2,500 remained unprovided for, and appealed to the people to raise that amount, and in the evening the building was dedicated free of debt. Within a year the old parsonage was sold and a new one built beside the church.

The following interesting program was carried out at the dedication of the new church on Sunday, Feb. 10, 1907:

MORNING SERVICE

Voluntary

Hymn 662

The Apostles Creed

Prayer

Rev. John Krantz, D. D.

Trio, "Hear Our Prayer,"

Mrs. R. T. Dayton, Misses Anna L. Munson and Marguerite Gardner

Responsive Reading for the Sixth Sunday

The Gloria Patri

Scripture Lesson

Rev. Gilbert Thurston

Announcements

Hymn 210, "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"

Sermon

Rev. James S. Chadwick, D. D.

Offering

Hymn 208, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"

Benediction

Dr. Wing

AFTERNOON SERVICE

Organ Voluntary

Quartet, "Holy Father, Send Thy Blessing," Hughes,

Mrs. Dayton, Miss Marguerite Gardner, Messrs. Williamson, Rogers

Service of Dedication

Opening Sentences	Rev. Herbert A. Wood
Hymn 666	
Prayer	Rev. C. Geddes, D. D.
Solo, "Oh, May My Walk Be Close with God," Johnson,	Miss Anna L. Munson
Scripture Lessons	Rev. George W. Osmun
Hymn 661	
Dedication Sermon	Dr. Krantz
Report of Building Committee	
Offering	
Psalm 122	Rev. J. A. Shirer
Presentation of the Building by the Trustees	
Declaration and Prayer	Dr. Wing
Double Quartet, "Sun of My Soul," Martin,	
Mrs. Dayton, Mrs. Rogers, Misses Munson and Gardner,	
Messrs. Havens, Williamson, Terry and Rogers	
Doxology	
Benediction	

EVENING SERVICE

Hymn 106, "Oh, Worship the King, All-glorious Above"	
Prayer	Rev. Herbert A. Wood
Quartet, "Love Divine," Cranmer,	
Mrs. Dayton, Miss Marguerite Gardner, J. L. Havens,	
W. M. Rogers	
Scripture Lessons	
Solo, "The Good Shepherd," Vandewater,	Miss Anna L. Munson
Sermon	Dr. Wing
Hymn 415, "Faith of Our Fathers! Living Still"	
Announcements and Offering	
Quartet, "I Was a Wandering Sheep," Rollison,	
Mrs. Dayton, Miss Marguerite Gardner, J. L. Havens,	
W. M. Rogers	
Fraternal Message	Rev. C. Geddes, D. D.
Hymn 556, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds"	
Benediction	

Now that we have set our hand to writing, a closing must also be made. From the early beginnings to the present day powers seen and unseen have been at work. Men, women and children known and unknown to the present generation have labored. We have entered into the fruits of their labors. As in massive sky-scraper the small pebble has a place, as well as the chief cornerstone, so has it been true of all who served here. All have been a part of each and each of all. None can

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