



“Preserving—Sharing—Caring”

Crossroads

Helping Each Other: Back to Basics

By Judy Levy

The role of HEO (short for “Helping Each Other”) is to take care of Trinity’s congregation. Its history goes back to the mid-1970s when **Rubie Butterworth** chaired a position on the United Methodist Women’s (UMW) Board at Trinity that focused on congregational care called “Supportive Community” (personal communication, Butterworth).

When Butterworth left the Board, **May Hamilton** (see article on Hamilton on [p. 3](#) of this issue) took charge of attending to these

needs. According to **Christine Puckett Moody** (1999), one crucial need of the congregation was assisting pastors who found it challenging to visit all of the homebound and sick older adults in the church’s community (p. 80).

A committee consisting of Hamilton as chairperson, along with members **Gail Hock, Georgiana Wollschlager, Dorothy Sauls** and **Elaine Green**, hosted a workshop on September 17, 1979, for the purpose of setting up a program of services for the home-

(cont. on p. 2)



Trinity Chefs prepare ready to heat up meals for those in need as part of the HEO ministry. L-R: Earline Atkinson, Patti Oakley, Oberley Brown, Judy Levy, Sandy Kappes, Mary Margaret Rogers, Nancy Waugh, Barbara Allen, and HEO Coordinator, Ruth Ann High. (March 2015, *Monthly Tidings*, p. 6.)



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Editor’s Note:

Historical Society members have been hard at work while practicing social distancing and primarily using digital tools and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to preserving and sharing historical information and offer our prayers to all those who suffer loss.

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bound. The committee offering services was named “HEO,” or “Help Each Other”¹ in 1980, with the United Methodist Women at Trinity providing funds for a part-time coordinator (Moody, 1999, pp. 80-81).

In the following years, members relied on HEO’s volunteers to “visit, assist, transport and provide regular contact to the church’s older members, including receptions following funerals” (Moody, p. 81).

May Hamilton enlisted help from FSU to design a survey for the congregation to determine needs and voluntary skills. With the results of the survey, HEO was created. The idea was to match needs with volunteers who could meet those needs (personal correspondence, Rubie Butter-

worth).

Funds to supply the material for HEO was supplied by volunteers and UMW’s annual contribution. To get the mission started on a strong foundation,

Madeline Rolland (a member of Trinity’s United Methodist Women) gave a generous gift of money

to use as a principle with annual interest as working funds (personal correspondence, Nancy Kerce and Linda Yates). It continues to be the case that often monetary memorial gifts are designated for HEO.

In the 1980s a church-wide bazaar was initiated to help fund HEO. It grew into an all-church event with craft classes during the year to supply the items for congregation (Moody, 1999, p. 87).

As HEO expanded to the local community, initiatives and services have been added. Today, the organization is responsible for funeral receptions, prayers and squares/shawls, visitation (including newborn family), greeting cards, and food for the ailing/needy home bound (temporary and permanent). HEO has also started “Handy Helpers”—a

team of trained disaster response volunteers who are able to do the heavy work/specialized work to cope with natural disasters.

HEO has had many dynamic women leaders who have served as HEO leaders, including **Mallie Slater, Christine Moody**

(now **Mills**), **Anne Miller, Rita May, Leah Wright Johnson, Kelly Raines, Hillary Ryan, Ruth Ann High** and **Erin Platt** (United Methodist Women minutes).

But it was becoming clear that as the needs became more demanding and numerous, a part-time person could no longer handle such a vast responsibility. It simply became too much for one person to manage.

To take on that challenge, today’s HEO (“Helping Each Other”) has taken a lesson from the HEO of the early days (Help Each Other). It is now headed by a pastoral staff member (**Rev. Wayne Curry**), who coordinates the volunteers who are responsible for different initiatives and ministries. HEO is designated for “congregational care,” while “community care” planning and activities are now covered by the committee on local missions.

Today’s HEO lesson from the past—shared leadership—has brought about a return to the basics.



Nancy Kerce assisted at a funeral reception, hosted by HEO members. (Published in *Monthly Tidings* in March 2014, p. 4.)



HEO logo. Name evolved over the years from “Help Each Other” to “Helping Each Other.” Published in *Monthly Tidings*, April 2012, p. 4.



HEO helpers assembled small bags of long-shelf-life snacks for hungry neighbors. These were made available for pick-up outside the Welcome Center during scheduled times. (Trinity media archives, September 2015)

Acknowledgement

Kudos to Rubie Butterworth (Trinity matron of lore for Trinity and Tallahassee), Earline Adkison, Beth Perry, Leslee Hancock, and Wayne Curry for their assistance in creating this article.

Note

The early name was *Help* not *Helping*. Today it is called “Helping Each Other.”

Reference

Moody, C. P. (1999). “Building in Challenging Times: 1962-1980.” In L. H. Yates (Ed.), *Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee’s First Church, 1824-1999* (pp. 70-82). Tallahassee, FL: Trinity United Methodist Church.



Members of the Betty Phifer Sunday School Class assembled care bags with toothpaste, washcloths, socks, shampoo, lotion, and other needed items for Trinity’s neighbors who needed them. L-R Hillary Ryan, HEO director, Bob Jones, Don Crosby, Jan Flake, Sarah Watters, Mike Watters (posing as Honest Abe), Blue Whitaker, Pam Crosby, Lisa Boyd, and Gloria Whitaker. (Trinity media archives, February 2013)

Taking Their Places and Making New Spaces: Women Leaders of Trinity’s Past—Focus on May Hamilton

By Pamela C. Crosby

In this issue, Crossroads editors introduce a series on past women leaders at Trinity.

May Hamilton was 64. She was still mourning the loss of her husband, and she was having medical issues and could not walk for a period of time. During these demanding days, few people knew about the challenges she faced; in fact, she hesitated to talk about her problems with anyone (Clifford, 1981, p. 5A).

When she was finally able to get around again, Hamilton turned to the task of finding ways to attend to others who were in need as she, herself, had been—identifying those who could benefit from special services and attention—and offering the kind of assistance that would have made her life much easier throughout her own days of hardship.

Help Each Other

With these ideas in mind and applying her prescient and organizing acuity, Hamilton set out to found an organization at Trinity where members could seek out those in need, and—with guidance and resources—they could “help each other.” This was the beginning of HEO (for a short history of HEO, see [Levy’s article](#) in this issue, p. 1).

In the early years of HEO, or Help Each Other, stories of May’s involvement with the church’s organization were often published in the local newspaper, the *Tallahassee Democrat*. In a 1981 article, she was featured as one of 15 finalists for the prestigious Volunteer of the Year Award of Tallahassee, where she was praised for her HEO service. She was noted, for example, for directing special workshops to train volunteers whose tasks focused on visiting those experiencing hardships associated with lonesomeness, health concerns, and/or household upkeep (Clifford, 1981, p. 5A).

A Young Girl in Need

An especially poignant story demonstrated Hamilton’s compassionate nature and the wide-ranging outreach of Trinity’s HEO. It concerned a young girl from New Zealand who was a hospital patient in Tallahassee. She had been hitchhiking in Panama City when a man picked her up, took her to Tallahassee, and robbed, raped, and beat her (Brooks, Dec. 3, 1981, p. 1A).

With financial help from Trinity and other churches in the area (Brooks, Nov. 12, 1981, p.11A), the young lady’s mother was able to travel to Tallahassee to be with her daughter while she

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was in the hospital, suffering from her injuries and trauma. Members of HEO “under the direction” of Hamilton transported the mother to the hospital and other places around town, while offering both of them comfort and support during their stay (Brooks, Dec. 3, 1981, p. 1A).

Nutrition Expert



May Hamilton (seated) with co-author Ellie Whitney. *Tallahassee Democrat*, September 30, 1982, p. 1E. Published with permission from editors (Photo credit: Keith Hadley).

Hamilton’s personal and professional life was also notable news. She was a co-author with **Ellie Whitney** of best-selling books on nutrition. She had met Whitney when she was a graduate student at Florida State University. Earlier, Hamilton had earned an undergraduate degree in nutrition from the University of Kentucky and later attended grad school at FSU at the age of 56. She was among the first graduate students of Whitney, who was 33 at the time, and they became life-long friends and colleagues (Guttman, 1982, p. 14E).

Newest Technology

In 1981 when reporter **Kirk Spitzer** authored an article in the *Democrat* on a wonderful new invention, the “home computer,” Hamilton was featured as one of the first ones in the area to own one. In the article, she expressed her excitement with her new “\$6,000” “TRS_80 Model III,” which could do everything except “address envelopes” and

“lick stamps.” She explains to readers that

you can compose right on the screen. If you change your mind, it takes no time at all (to make corrections.) It's beautiful, just beautiful. (Spitzer, 1981, p.1)

Family and Legacy

Hamilton had three daughters. One daughter, **Gayle Hamilton**, was an expert and consultant on women’s alcoholism and presented a lecture at Trinity in 1981 entitled, “How can I Help a Friend, Relative or Co-Worker with a Drinking Problem?,” which was sponsored by the Help Each Other ministry (Guest Speakers. . .,” 1981, p. 4B).

Hamilton’s husband, **Marshall**, was dean of student services at FSU and president of North Florida Junior College in Madison, FL, which he had founded. He was an active member at Trinity, having served as chairman of Trinity’s administrative board (“FSU Dean. . .,” 1977, p. 16).

In this age of the coronavirus fear, economic hardship, racial tensions, political conflict, and pervasive natural disasters, it is a good time to reflect on the convictions that Hamilton and others had at Trinity that gave birth to HEO. As Levy writes in [her article](#), the idea of HEO was to “match needs with volunteers who could meet those needs” (p. 1). It was a simple idea that grew out of Hamilton’s own needs when she, herself, was hurting.

Hamilton died in 1992 at the age of 75. Her legacy at Trinity as helping to establish the Help Each Other ministry (now called “Helping Each Other” (see [Levy, this issue](#)), as well as the work of subsequent HEO directors and volunteers throughout HEO’s 40-year history in making a difference in the lives of church members and the wider community, persists today.

With every home visit, disaster relief effort, meal prepared, quilt made, card sent, and reception given, this ministry continues to inspire us to “help each other.”

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Making History: Quarterly News from Trinity's Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Committee

Stained Glass Repair Continues

Bob Jones, stained glass artisan, is now repairing a second stained glass window (from earlier days of the church) that will be displayed in the Yates Heritage Center.

State Historical Marker Expected this Fall

The order for the state historical marker has gone to the foundry, and we are expecting delivery around November.

Donations to help finance the cost of the marker can be sent to **Laurie Batten**, Trinity business administrator, with the check made out to TUMC and a note in the memo line for "state historical marker." It will be placed in the grassy area that runs between the chapel and Park Avenue. Trinity owes Bob Jones much gratitude for his work on this project.

Donated Items to Yates Center

Carrol and Mildred Dadisman have donated a pew from the 1993 church, while **Esther** and **Tommy Harrison** have donated two museum display stands for artifacts. These items will be transported to the Yates Heritage Center at some point. We are grateful to these generous members for their gifts and hope to be able to see them in their new home soon!

Foster Exhibit Planned

Plans are underway to design an exhibit of a collection of artifacts and documents of the **Rev. Dr. George Foster**, donated by his daughter **Julia Foster**, and his nephews **George Foster** and **Donald Crosby**.

Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee's First Church

We look forward to the updated publication of *Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee's First Church*. **Linda H. Yates** edited the 1824-1999 version, and Trinity member **Marti Chumbler** will oversee the 2000-2024 update with expected publication in time for the 200th anniversary in 2024. Anyone who has information about needed changes of the first edition or other suggestions, please send to **Pam Crosby** at pcrosby@tumct.org, and she will pass along to the editor.

Research Ongoing

The Leadership Team (of the Trinity Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Committee) has met monthly throughout the summer through Zoom. While homebound during the pandemic, researchers of Trinity's history are taking advantage of online archives and bound copies made available by Trinity historians **Lynn McLarty** and **Judy Levy**.

What's in a Name? Friendship

By Virginia Perkins

The original version of this article was published previously as a blog post at <https://tallahasseehistoricalsociety.org/2020/04/20/whats-in-a-name-friendship/> by the Tallahassee Historical Society, who gave us permission to include it here.

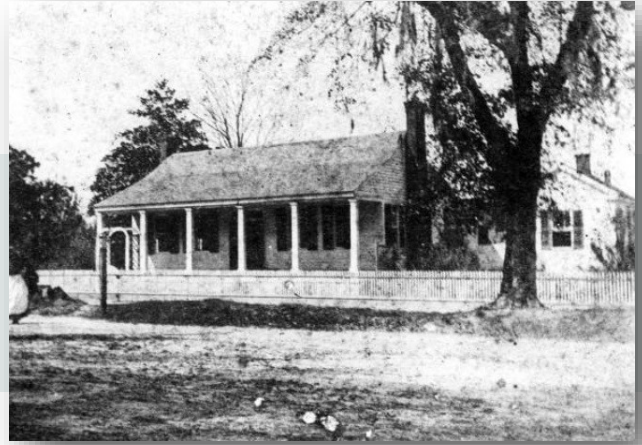
In 1837, Florida was still a territory, and it was the northern part of the state called “Tallahassee” that **Thomas James Perkins**, age 20, came to seek his fortune. His work with the railroad brought him from Queen Anne County, MD, and he continued to work for the railroad for the next 13 years.

In 1839 he married **Amelia Mather Keowin** of Charleston, SC. He became active in local affairs and in the Methodist Church, which was later named Trinity Methodist. He voted in the first election in 1845 and saw Florida become a state. Perkins left the railroad, served for a time as intendant mayor of Tallahassee, and later became a cotton broker and commission merchant.



Thomas James and Amelia Mather Keowin Perkins
Florida Memory (<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/155916>).

In 1850, **John George Anderson**, who was born in the West Indies where his family raised cotton, moved to Florida, first to the east coast area around Ormond Beach and later to Monticello and finally to Tallahassee. Yale educated Anderson was affiliated with the cotton brokerage firm, Smallwood and Anderson, of New York City with



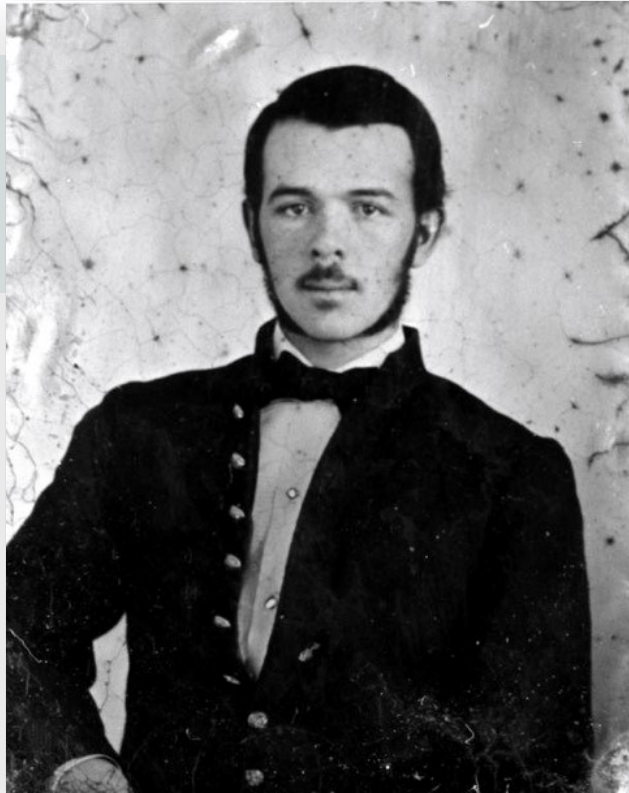
T.J. Perkins Home. West side of Monroe between Tennessee and Virginia. Florida Memory (<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/26025>).

offices in Tallahassee where Anderson made his home.

As Tallahassee was a small town, the Perkins and Anderson families no doubt saw a lot of each other as they were neighbors and both in the cotton commission business. Anderson had established himself as a prosperous cotton merchant and built what was described as “a mansion” on the corner of Monroe and Virginia Streets. Following the same floorplan as Goodwood, this home later became known to Tallahasseans as the Brown House.

Life spans were often short in those days, and Anderson’s was no exception. At the age of 40 he died of what was then called “bilious fever,” now known as a gall bladder attack. He died not unprepared as he had a will in which he left a loan of \$20,000 to his friend, **Thomas James Perkins**, to use if he desired, to buy into the cotton brokerage company of Smallwood, Anderson and Company. It appears that Perkins did just that, becoming part of Anderson’s partnership in New York, which by that time was headed by **John H. Earle**, a New Yorker. Thomas James handled the purchasing and shipping of cotton north, and Earle then exported the cotton to those who

purchased it. The company was later known as Earle and Perkins, and as T. J. Perkins noted in his list of “remarkable experiences,” he was in partnership with John Earle for 31 years without “an angry or harsh word spoken.” So close was that relationship that a grandson was named **John Earle Perkins**, and that name has now been carried through five generations.



Confederate soldier Lawrence "Laurie" M. Anderson. 1861. Florida Memory (<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/33994>).

The Andersons' youngest son, **Lawrence** or "**Laurie**," as he was called, was with the Bradford Light Artillery, Florida Battalion, Company A and fought at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee. On the second day of battle, in 1862, he was killed. He presumably was buried in an unmarked grave along with many other young men who gave their lives in that battle. A year after young Laurie's death, the Perkins' last son was born and was given the name **Lawrence Anderson Perkins** for the lost son of their friends, John George and Jane Anderson.

Lawrence Anderson Perkins grew to be a man, married, and had a family. In 1936, he recalled

the origin of his name, stating in a letter to Dr. **Henry E. Palmer**, senior warden of St. John's Episcopal Church, that his family lived directly across the street from the Andersons and were "warm personal friends." He went on to say,

I was born a short time after Lawrence's death and my parents, owing to the great friendship existing between the two families and their great admiration for Lawrence, gave me this name. My son and grandson both bear this name.

As Lawrence's namesake, he was left a beautiful silver fruit knife by his grandmother, **Sarah Petty Dunn Anderson**, who died in 1869 and is buried along with her son in the St. John's Cemetery. In the mid 1800s, the St. John's rector asked parishioners for old gold and silver for use in relining the communion service. Perkins gave the knife to the church for this purpose saying, "We thought this a most fitting place for this relic."

Sources

Perkins Family Papers
Stephen McLeod, "Lest We Forget," unpublished graduate American history paper



T. J. and Amelia Perkins are buried in the Old Cemetery in Tallahassee.

Full Laity Rights: The Struggle for Equality for Women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

By Pamela C. Crosby

This is the centennial year of the “women’s vote” in the United States and a fitting time to explore the role of women in 1920 in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS), which was the denomination to which Trinity belonged from 1845 to 1939 (see UMC timeline at <http://gcah.org/history/united-methodist-church-timeline>).

¶ 652. A WOMAN MAY BE SUPERINTENDENT OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL, BUT NOT A MEMBER OF A QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

A woman may be elected a superintendent of a Sunday school, but is not thereby a member of a Quarterly Conference. (1898.) [Canceled by legislation in 1918.]

Clipping from 1918 *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, F. M. Thomas and C. B. Haley (Eds.), ¶652, p. 266 (Public Domain).

Women Rights at Trinity from 1824-1918

Evidence of church leadership and administration at Trinity is well documented, going back to 1828. Thanks to the diligence of Trinity historians **Lynn McLarty** and **Judy Levy**, we have official reports in our online archives (<https://www.tumct.org/welcome/about/history/historical-resources/>) with copies also in the Yates Heritage Center. These reports are the *Quarterly Conference Minutes (QCM)*.

The Quarterly Conference (forerunner to the Charge Conference) was a meeting of the presiding elder (today’s district superintendent) with the leadership of a pastoral charge (one or more local churches with a bishop-appointed ordained or licensed minister). The presiding elder visited each pastoral charge four times a year, where he conducted official business of the charge (for glossary of terms, see <http://ee.umc.org/what-we-believe/glossary-quarterly-conference>).

In the available *Minutes* from 1828-1918, no

woman is listed as attending the Quarterly Conferences at Trinity. We can assume that was the case before 1828, going back to the establishment of the church in 1824. The honorifics in the *Minutes* relating to females, e.g., “Mrs.” or “Miss”—with “Mrs.” always preceding the name of the *husband*—appeared from time to time in the *Minutes*. These rare appearances were usually confined to items relating to children, youth, and Sunday School and missionary reports and membership changes, but women were not mentioned as conducting or participating in church-wide leadership relating to policy matters.

Women’s Rights in MECS in Early 1900s

This evidence of the lack of women’s rights to full church participation reflected the wider polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) at this time:

Although men of the MECS could make polity decisions about women, women had “neither voice nor vote in the great lawmaking body that determined what they might do and the method of doing it.” (MacDonell, 1928, p. 231)

But outlooks on women equality were rapidly changing in the United States in the years leading up to the historic ratification of women’s voting rights on the national civic front in 1920.¹ A seismic shift was taking place in the status of women in the MECS as well, propelled by activists for women’s equality in all spheres of societies.

The 1918 *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* provides a glimpse of the evolution of the status of women from 1898 to 1918: “A woman may be elected a superintendent of a Sunday school, but is not thereby a member of a Quarterly Conference,” approved in 1898, and, “It is not in harmony with the spirit of our law that women be members of a District conference,” approved in 1910 (Thomas & Haley, 1918, pp. 266, 249). Both restrictions were changed in 1918—as we shall see.

In this article, I provide a summary of the

campaign for full laity rights for women that reached its peak in the MECS in the early decades of the 20th century. This summary will provide an explanation for the fundamental change that took place in Southern Methodism, including at Trinity, in the second decade of the 20th century.

Belle Harris Bennett

The focus of this story of women's laity rights in the MECS is **Belle Harris Bennett**, who was hailed as leader in the movement. A Georgia native, Bennett was founder of Scarritt Bible and Training School in Kansas City, MO (1889); president of the Woman's Board of Home Missions (1896-1910); and president of the Woman's Missionary Council (1910-1922) (MacDonell, 1928, p. 4).

Her zealous activism was grounded in her faith:

The so-called world-wide movement for the liberation and uplift of woman is distinctly and insistent-ly the result of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men. From the time when its divine Founder rebuked in scathing terms the teachings of the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites of Judaism, the dominant note of Christianity, even in its lowest forms, has been a note of liberty. A Christian civilization which does not generate and develop a spirit of individual, civil, and religious liberty is impossible. (MacDonell, 1928, p. 247)

1906 General Conference

Bennett and other leaders spearheaded three General Conference campaigns for women's laity rights from 1910 to 1918 (MacDonell, p. 247). Events at the 1906 General Conference in Birmingham, AL galvanized the movement (Shadron, 1981, p. 266). Without conferring with the societies' leaders, the General Board of Missions announced plans for unifying the women's home and foreign mission societies (Shadron, p. 263; Bennett, 2009, pp. 96-97).

Leaders of the societies agreed that there were too many organizations but opposed the unification as proposed because they had not been consulted at any time during the planning stage and

because they would have very limited voice in decision-making that directly affected policies and operations—areas in which *women* were the experts—*not men* (MacDonell, 1928, p. 233). Yet the women had little negotiating power as noted by **Tochie MacDonell** in Bennett's biography:

There was no way to reason with the General Conference, as none but the delegated members (men only at that time) had the privilege of speaking on the floor, except in extreme cases by special vote of the body. Even the Committee on Missions, where the recommendation of the Bishops was considered, was not open to women. (MacDonell, 1928, p. 233)



Formal portrait taken from frontispiece of MacDonell, Mrs. R.W. (1928). *Belle Harris Bennett: Her Life Work*. (Public Domain)

When the Woman's Home Mission Society sent a memorial suggesting that a General Council be set up with equal representation of men and women, the bill's announcement at General Conference met with a "ripple of laughter . . ." MacDonell, 1928, p. 235).

1910 General Conference

Although the decision for equal representation was postponed at the 1906 Conference, the measure was taken up again at the 1910 General Conference in Asheville, NC, when

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church missionary activities and interests were unified under one Board of Missions with women having only one-third representation and women's activities being directed by a unified Woman's Missionary Council (Shadron, 1981, p. 263).

Bennett and fellow leaders proposed an even bolder move toward women equality that came up for vote at the 1910 General Conference: the securing "for the women of the Church the full rights and privileges of the laity" (MacDonell, 1928, p. 239). Taking to the floor after a special vote passed to let her speak, Bennett argued for the measure, an occasion that marked the first time a woman had ever addressed the body of the MECS General Conference (MacDonell, 1928, p. 242). She maintained that women had served courageously and admirably in the local churches in many ways throughout its history (Bennett, 2009, p. 114).

She also emphasized that women were already engaged in mission organizations and activities and were often consulted for their expertise. Their empathy was needed to extend the church's responsibility to aid those in poverty—noting that women leaders in the church were especially compassionate toward their fellow women in society who were forced to work in harsh conditions in order to feed their families. Bennett explained that after working long hours, these working class women went back each day to "their wretched homes, where they were huddled in three, five, yes fifteen, in rooms only fifteen feet squared" ("Seventh Day," quoted in Bennett, 2009, p. 114).

Men spoke both for and against women's rights at the Conference. On the opposing side, one man argued against the measure explaining that women's responsibilities to the church and society could not be the same as men. Seeking positions designated only for men was destructive to the home, to which women were bound:

Women who seek high positions in society want to be free to attend all social functions, and go as they will and do what they please, and they refuse to become mothers of homes. Political ambition is rising all over this country in the minds of our women. And this is another step leading toward it. And the first thing you know, our women will have ambition



Belle Harris Bennett, hand-dated on back "June 3, 1878." 2011av006: "Belle Bennett, 1878," Box 2, Item 82, Helm and Todd family photographs and papers, 1850-1951, University of Kentucky Special Collections and Research Center, Lexington KY. (Non-commercial Creative Commons Licensing at <https://networks.h-net.org>)

for all these things, and will destroy the fidelity and strength of our homes. Then ecclesiastical ambition is along the same line. ("Fourteenth Day," quoted in Bennett, 2009, p. 117)

The speeches against the measure also emphasized that relatively few women had come out to voice their support; in fact, it was very likely that a majority of Southern Methodist women were not in favor of the measure in 1910. Therefore, it seemed that the time was not yet right, and the measure was defeated, resulting in the vote of 188 against and 74 for (Bennett, 2009, p. 118).

1914 General Conference

Reacting to what she saw as a temporary setback, Bennett and co-leaders immediately set out

to organize a campaign to bring full laity rights up again at the 1914 General Conference in Oklahoma City, OK, making use of “splendid leaflets and bulletins” to promote the message of equality in the church (MacDonell, 1928, p. 247).

This time, women spoke not only for, but also against the measure. Bennett took to the floor again, explaining that laity rights had been put to the test already in Methodism without causing disharmony and disruption in the church. On the other side, a **Mrs. T. B. King** warned of the harm a “suffragette” incursion would be on the men of the church; instead, she was representing the “motherhood of the church” (*The Daily Christian Advocate*, May 21, 1914, quoted in Shadron, 1981, p. 271). The measure lost—again—but it was closer: 171 for and 105 against (Bennett, 2009, p. 123).

1918 General Conference

With Bennett and her fellow activists garnering more support among the voters, they were encouraged to keep fighting on with their eyes on the 1918 General Conference. This time men took part in the labors of organizing (Bennett, 2009, p. 123).

By the time Methodists from all across the South were preparing to go to Atlanta to attend

the 1918 General Conference, the atmosphere was much different, and prospects for success were looking good for Bennett and her fellow women’s rights advocates. It was obvious that those energetic forces of the women’s movement calling for national enfranchisement were gaining such intensity in all areas of the country that the church leaders felt increasing pressure to give in. Some of the arguments included women’s “achievement in the World War” with the recognition that females had the ability “to grip and handle public interests” (MacDonell, 1928, p. 248).

And so the overwhelming momentum of support for women’s rights that had stirred the nation’s conscience made its impact on the Southern Methodist delegates, so much so that a large majority voted in favor to pass the measure. The results of the roll call vote on May 14, 1918, were 265 in favor and only 57 opposing (p. 248).

That was not the end of the story for full laity rights for women, however. The battle had not been won. *Yet.*

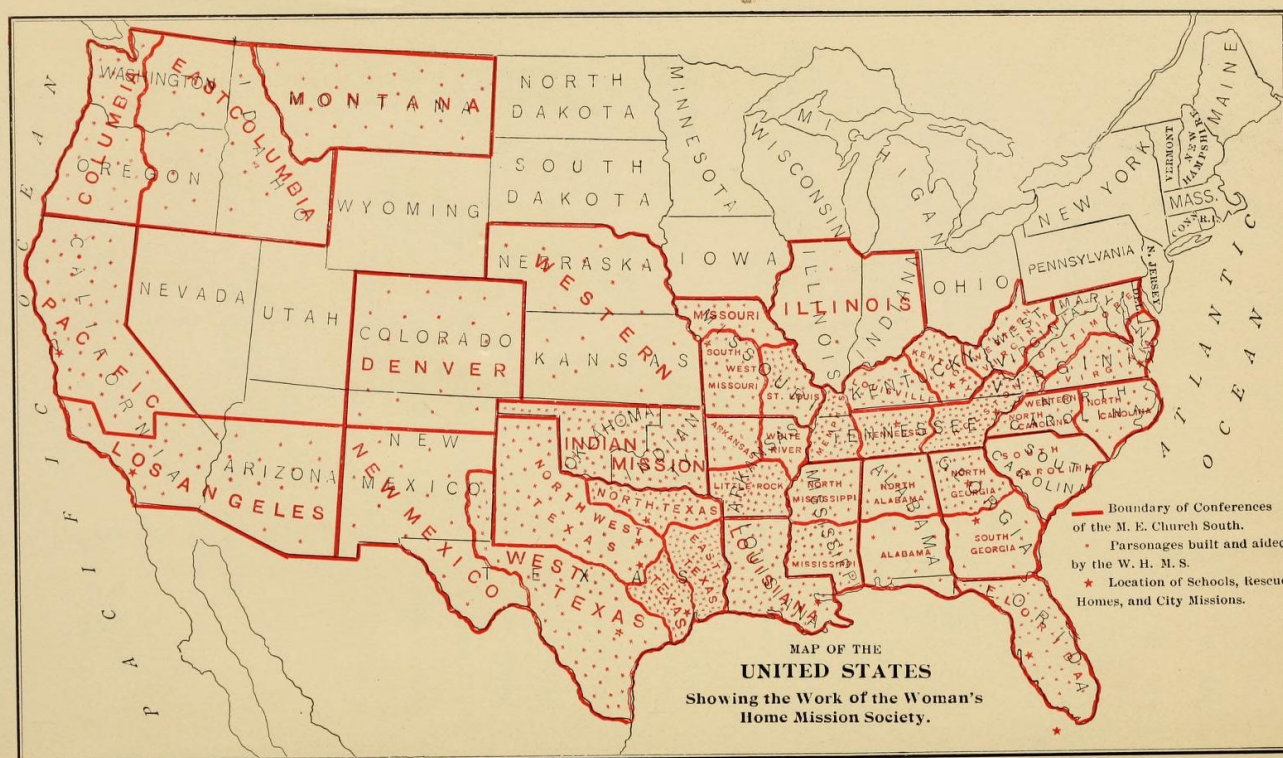
Annual Conferences: The Final Hurdle

When the results of the victory were announced at the Conference, Bennett was much more cautious than her friends about the future



Homelands, childhood home of Belle Harris Bennett, near Richmond, KY. MacDonell, Mrs. R.W. (1928). *Belle Harris Bennett: Her Life Work*, p. 33. (Public Domain)

(cont. on p. 12)



This map shows the extensive area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South Conference in 1901. The heavy red line marks the boundary; the red stars show the locations of schools, rescue homes, and city missions; and the red dots indicate parsonages built and supported by the Woman's Home Mission Society. *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Woman's Home Mission Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, including Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting of the Woman's Board of Home Missions, Held in St. Louis, Mo., May 3-10, 1901.* (Public Domain)

of laity rights, and warned them not to think that it was a *fait accompli*. Insisting that this was not the time to celebrate, she pleaded,

Don't, Women! Don't! We are not so foolish as to count the battle won. This matter must be remanded to the Conferences, where the greater struggle must begin! (MacDonell, 248)

Before she left Atlanta following the adjournment of the General Conference, she sent a call to action to her Southern Methodist audience by means of the *Atlanta Constitution*, May 22, 1918. She explained to readers the bishops' response to the vote. In her "message," she describes the enthusiastic reactions of the men at the conference when the chair announced the adoption of the measure; in fact, she writes that the men "rose from their seats, and, turning to the women in the galleries, waved hands and handkerchiefs, cheering with hearty, sympathetic approval (Bennett, 1918, p. 6).

While a "large majority" was "in favor of granting laity rights to the women of the Church," to no surprise to Bennett, there was a "sharp opposition with regard to the form of the memorial." She explains to her readers that in the morning after the historic vote, the College of Bishops argued that

the admittance of women to the councils of the Church was a constitutional question and could not be decided even by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference. The body immediately reaffirmed the action of the previous day, thereby "over-ruling the bishop veto," thus sending the matter down to the Annual Conferences for final decision. (Bennett, 1918, p. 6)

As a result, a resolution was brought forth to request the bishops to "present the matter to all the Annual Conferences of Southern Methodism within the next twelve months." She further explains that constitutional questions that are "referred to the Annual Conferences requires a two

-thirds vote of all the members of all the Conferences to legalize the change” (Bennett, 1918, p. 6).

With little hesitation, she and fellow activists focused on the ensuing stage of the process: They set out to wage an intensive campaign to convince the 40 or so state conferences of the MECS to approve the measure (MacDonell, 1928, p. 248).

As the time approached for the Annual Conferences to vote on the measure, Bennett gave the matter her full attention. In a letter to a friend, she exhorts

Please, please dear have some one [sic] wire me as soon as the “Laity Rights” vote is taken. Mention the number voting on the affirmative and the number on the negative. I am, figuratively speaking, standing with mouth and eyes open night and day, waiting for these messages, always with a prayer in my heart. . . . (pp. 250-251)

The prayers must have worked! **John S. Chadwick**, writer for *The Christian Advocate*, certainly seemed impressed when describing the Annual Conference vote in the January 2, 1919, issue. In his opening remarks, he writes that not even those who were the most “ardent supporters” had earlier thought the measure would achieve the three-fourths vote of Annual Conferences for passage (p. 18).

¶ 589. A WOMAN MAY NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

It is not in harmony with the spirit of our law that women be members of a District Conference. (1910.) [Canceled by legislation in 1918.]

Clipping from 1918 *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, F. M. Thomas and C. B. Haley (Eds.), ¶589, p. 249. (Public Domain)

It was generally expected that the Conferences in the “far West,” who would be the first to meet, would support it, but there was a big question regarding the “more conservative Conferences such as Tennessee, Holston and others...,” and those “strongholds of conservatism . . . in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, North and South Carolina” The vote was not expected to pass in those Conferences. But when they began to “announce their votes it was seen that the whole Church was ready

for ‘votes for women’” (Chadwick, 1919, p. 18).

The final result was remarkable. Twenty-three conferences cast more than a three-fourths majority in favor of laity rights for women; only four (Kentucky, Mississippi, North Mississippi, and South Georgia) failed to confirm the measure (Tatum, 1960, p. 40). Chadwick of *The Christian Advocate* reflects on the climate of the day with these words:

And whatever may be the reasons advanced we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the Church is coming to accept the world demand for real democracy as the demand of justice and right. (1919, p. 18)

1922 General Conference

Now that laity rights for women had been won, women Methodists would need to be ardent activists in their mission work and devotion to the church, Bennett declared. Her address to the Women’s Missionary Council in 1919 predicts that the past year

will long be memorable in the history of Southern Methodism as the time in which the Conferences of the Church, at home and abroad, by an overwhelming vote, gave women full membership in the Church. (MacDonell, p. 251)

It had been a long and challenging 75 years that women

had served as its handmaidens, supported its institutions, and worshiped at its altars as minors. They had no voice in its councils and no lawful place in its Conferences. (pp. 251-252)

The “appeal for justice and release from this bondage” had only received “a negative answer.” Yet, she says, gratefully, that Methodist women

sit together to-day in this Council for the first time with all the privileges and rights of laymen by reason of this legal membership in the Church whose name we have so long borne. Are we ready for these new opportunities and privileges? (p. 252)

In the coming months she looked forward to attending the 1922 General Conference at Hot Springs, AK, as a lay delegate with full standing; however, she worried about the number of female lay delegates who would be chosen to attend. She sent letters cautioning church leaders to actively

(cont. on p. 14)

seek women to represent their local churches and districts. It was another challenge she eagerly faced (MacDonell, 1928, p. 252).

¶ 640. WOMEN INELIGIBLE TO OFFICE OF STEWARD.

It is not lawful to elect a woman as steward.
(1906.) [Canceled by legislation in 1918.]

Clipping from 1918 *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, F. M. Thomas and C. B. Haley (Eds.), ¶640, p. 262. (Public Domain)

However, six weeks before the General Conference of 1922, she was stricken with a serious illness that threatened her participation. The thought of her possible absence was a great disappointment to her and to all who knew how much attending and exercising her full laity rights for the very first time at a General Conference meant to her.

W. F. Tillett, dean of the Vanderbilt School of Theology wrote her to express his regret:

On reaching the promised land, Moses was 120 years of age and had served his day by the will of the Lord, and had to bow to nature's law; but you (our woman-Moses) are young enough for us to hope and pray with confidence that if you should not be able to attend this session of the Conference at all, you will have the vigor of body, mind, and heart to represent the women and your Annual Conference in the General Conference that will meet four years hence. May it be so! (MacDonell, 1928, p. 254)

But this “woman-Moses” having now fought for the granting of full laity rights would not be able to fully exercise them. She was still too sick by Conference time to attend.

The number of women was not as large as some may have hoped. In 1922, 18 of the 191 lay delegates and 25 of the 103 alternates were women. In 1926, women made up only 11 of the 201 lay delegates, and 24 were named as alternates (Tatum, 1960, pp. 40-41).

By 1930, however, even the men were becoming considerably impressed with women's involvement in the General Conference. A minister from South Carolina in his address to the

historical societies of South Carolina in 1930 expressed his reaction to women attending the early General Conferences. He says that although women had won the right to be delegates, their numbers had not increased; yet there was a notable “change in the attitude of the delegation and in participation of the women members” because they “seemed not only more at home but they took a larger part on the floor than at previous conferences” (Fairy, 1930, p. 8).

He observes that their increasing involvement was due to both men becoming “more accustomed to the presence of women in all walks of life,” while women were becoming “less conscious of their new and strange environment” (p. 8).

As a matter of fact, he reports that addresses by women were “outstanding” while “a prominent member of the Conference said that THE outstanding address of the Conference was made by a woman.” In his talk, he praises the great strides made by women and their implications for the church:

And what is true of women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so, the United States is correspondingly true of women holding elective and appointive positions in foreign countries. (p. 8)

Despite these immense strides by women noted by observers at the Conferences, Belle Harris Bennett *never* attended even *one* General Conference as a full member in standing; at no time did she hear those “outstanding” addresses on the floor in the subsequent Conferences held after the granting of rights for which she fought. Sadly, just a few weeks after the 1922 General Conference, she died—never having recovered from the illness that had prevented her from attending the historic meeting that year.

Yet, it is inspiring to recognize that throughout her life she refused to give up hope for a better world, evoking the vision of a new era for the “new woman” and its religious and personal implications:

In this world-wide movement of women, for women, by women, the significant part is the new woman—new because schoolroom and college doors have been thrown wide open to her; . . . new,

MINUTES

The Fourth Quarterly Conference for the current year 1920
Tallahassee Charge, Tallahassee District,
Fla Conference, was held at Trinity Church
11/24 1920, A. E. Haushalter, P. E., in the chair. After
 religious services, conducted by P. Elder, C. C. Smith was
 elected Secretary. The roll was called, and the following members were present:

<u>H. W. Lawler</u>	<u>O. C. Ten Brant</u>
<u>B. H. Briggs</u>	<u>M. H. Callens</u>
<u>F. J. Block</u>	<u>C. C. Smith</u>
<u>B. M. Cates</u>	<u>Mrs. P. T. Mickler</u>
<u>M. W. Carter</u>	<u>J. F. DeMilly</u>
<u>E. J. Cates</u>	<u>A. B. Bird</u>
<u>G. I. Doss</u>	
<u>R. A. Gray</u>	
<u>W. J. Moon</u>	
<u>P. T. Mickler</u>	
<u>O. O. Mickler</u>	
<u>A. J. Phillips</u>	

Question 1. (a) Is there a written report from the preacher in charge on the general state of the Church? yes (a)
 (See Supplement.) (b) From superintendent of the Sunday school? yes (B) (See Supplement.) (c) From charge lay
 leader? No (See Supplement.)

The arrow above denotes the name, "Mrs. P. T. Mickler" (Adah Celeste Russell Mickler), in the November 24, 1920, *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, as one of the church leaders attending. From available records in the Trinity United Methodist archives (the *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, with the year 1919 missing), Mickler appears to be the first woman to attend a Quarterly Conference at Trinity, reflecting the adoption of the change in status of women that Bennett and other women activists brought about at the 1918 General Conference and which is indicated in the 1918 *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, F. M. Thomas & C. B. Haley (Eds.), ¶652, p. 266.

because the world has been opened to her; new, because, above all, a trained mind and the open Word of God have made the will of God a real and personal thing to her. (quoted in MacDonell, 1928, p. 250)

Influence on Women Leaders at Trinity

While Bennett's story of her individual fight ended, the long-term effects of her work reminds us that it is important to know, and that our children know, the history of our church—its struggles regionally, nationally, as well as locally, to propel us to take on new struggles in our own day.

Although no women from Florida are listed in the names of the delegates in the 1922 General Conference (Strong, 1986, p. 31), the names of women members at Trinity began to appear in the *Minutes* as among those attending the Quarterly Conference. As I mentioned earlier in the introduction to this article, no names of women attending were listed in the extant *Quarterly Conference Minute* volumes from 1828-1918.

However, listed in the November 24, 1920, *Quarterly Conference Minutes* (the first available QCM after 1918), there is a surprising addition—not just in the reports on different

(cont. on p. 16)

aspects of the church—but there alongside the names of male church leaders are the words “Mrs. P. T. Mickler” (my emphasis).

We must conclude that **Adah Celeste Russell Mickler** (Mrs. P. T.) was one of the first women—or maybe *the* first woman—ever to attend the Quarterly Conference at Trinity (we cannot be sure because the 1919 *Quarterly Conference Minutes* is missing). But nevertheless, her name is the first one in the chronology of available *Minutes*. What was her role at Trinity? How had she earned her place at the Quarterly Conference?

Her story and those of others at Trinity will serve as topics in upcoming articles on women’s leadership roles in the early decades following the historic granting of women’s laity rights in the MECS. It is hoped that others will step up to write articles about women leaders at Trinity (see the following page).

Bennett’s life, like many other women in the early decades of the 20th century, is a tale of triumph. In her momentous call to action published in the *Atlanta Constitution* after the historic 1918 General Conference vote, the words of Belle Harris Bennett express hope and confidence to all women who endeavor to serve their church in the fullest way possible, using their gifts, experiences, and knowledge. Those words still inspire Methodist women today:

My appeal to the Church now is for constant and united prayer that the Holy Spirit may guide and direct in all this work, and that through the long effort that has been made and the final result that will inevitably come, the spiritual life of the Church may be quickened and the name of Jesus, the Saviour and liberator of women, may be glorified until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. (Bennett, 1918, p.6)

Note

¹Black women did not gain voting rights in 1920.

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Celebrating the Legacy of Women at Trinity: A Call for Names of, Information on, and/or Submissions of Articles on Past Women Leaders for a Special 200th Anniversary Collection in 2024

Purpose

To help celebrate the 200th anniversary of Trinity's history and to highlight the lives of those who contributed to its ministry in various ways, the editors of *Crossroads* will publish a special collection of articles from *Crossroads* issues from its beginning in 2017, leading up to 2024, on the roles of women leaders in the church.

Women have played a significant role in the life of the church; yet most of the published history of the church has been about men. The purpose of this collection is to help bring into balance the work and leadership of women so that readers, researchers, and young people growing up in the church, and others can appreciate the significant impact that women have made in the history of Trinity United Methodist Church.

Selection of Women Leaders

The subject of the historical accounts can be women leaders whose stories are drawn from their roles as laity, staff members, elders, and associate pastors who have served long ago or in the recent past.

Names of Women Leaders

We appreciate *suggestions* for articles about women leaders so that we can identify resources in order to conduct research about these individuals.

Sketches

We welcome sketches or summaries of information—not necessarily in narrative and/or final form—from which we can expand. One need not be an experienced author to submit information.

Articles

We also welcome submissions of articles penned by authors who have a special interest relating to this topic and who are especially motivated to write about particular women members who have devoted efforts, skills, expertise, etc., to the flourishing of the church and community. These submissions can be short pieces that recount experiences or longer more detailed research on their lives and roles.

Photos

If you have photos that you would like to share, you are welcome to take photo copies of those to send to us or we can make those copies ourselves.

More information?

Please send an email to Pam Crosby, editor, at pcrosby@tumct.org to let us know your interest in providing information, articles, or names. We will take it from there with the next step.

Quick Submission for Suggestions of Women Leaders

Name of Leader _____

Leadership Role or Activities _____

Your Name/Contact Info _____

Send info to Pam Crosby, editor,
by email at
pcrosby@tumct.org
or by mail at
1120 Old Fort Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

The History of United Methodist Women's Pecan Sales

By Judy Levy

Trinity's United Methodist Women unit has raised money by selling fresh pecans for 25+ years. The first phase comprised of buying pecans wholesale and then selling them for a profit that was used for local and statewide philanthropy. According to UMW minutes, pecan sales was first mentioned in 1995. As reported in December 5, 1995,

Delores Jackson has asked all members to help sell pecans. Circle leaders are provided order sheets. Pecan sales benefit our portion of the HEO budget. 1993 (\$1747.14) and 1992 netted \$1600, 1994 only \$600.

As with all projects, it starts with a leading lady. From 1995-2005, leaders included **Delores Jackson; Mary Ann Helton; Bill** (a "leading man") and **Germain Fritchman, Libby Huggins/Blackburn; Alice Grow; Barb Cherry; and Ann Doonan**. Libby Blackburn took the helm in 1998. When she was ready to pass the torch in 2008, I was just retiring from my career job and agreed to take it over. Although **Esther Harrison** took over after me, I am still known at Trinity as the "nut lady"!

When I came aboard, I was looking for a less stressful way to make money off the pecans. Libby was still trying to sell left-over pecans in February, after starting in October. The new plan was to take orders in September and place an order with Schermer Pecans for delivery in early November. I ordered extra bags to fill the carton and a box more to sell to those who hadn't ordered in September. The first year we implemented the new process, I hoped we would be near the previous year's profits of \$1200. Lo and behold, we made \$1500 and were done by early December.

You may think it just happened, but here's a little insight into the process. In mid-August, the committee starts planning the dates of the sale for mid-September and early October as soon as we receive the cost estimate from the supplier. If we can get our order to the supplier by October 6, we can receive our order by early November. The pecans

come in boxes of 24 bags; each box containing mammoth halves, medium pieces, cinnamon glazed, milk chocolate halves, dark chocolate halves, or caramel/chocolate candies (individually wrapped) pecans.

Pecans for sale

Judy Levy



It's that time again to place your orders for delicious pecans from your favorite UMW member. We will be selling mammoth halves, medium pieces, milk chocolate, dark chocolate, cinnamon, and clusters.

Check out the posters after September 15 for prices. We will be taking orders September 19 - October 14 on Sunday mornings after each service in the Welcome Center and on Wed. evenings at Lay Academy in Moor Hall.

Be sure to check your supply from last year (if you have any left) to calculate your order for this year. They freeze well. We will have a few bags to sell when the order comes in—it will be first come, first served and when they are gone, they are gone.

We expect delivery to be November 7. For more information, contact Judy Levy at judithtlevy@embarqmail.com.

Published in *Monthly Tidings*, September 2012, p. 3

Publicity begins in early September with posters plastered all over the church—announcing, "The pecans are coming!" In mid-September when we have the cost established, a poster with all the information—cost, when to order, where to order, and how to pay—is posted. All orders are pre-paid.

Kudos to Sarah Childers in the office for creating all our paperwork and advertising when she was employed at Trinity.

Trinity United Methodist Church
UMW Pecan Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ E-mail _____

.....

_____ Mammoth Halves @ \$10 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Medium Pieces @ \$10 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Chocolate Halves @ \$8 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Cinnamon Halves @ \$8 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Dark Chocolate Halves @ \$8 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Chocolate Pecan Clusters @ \$8 per bag	\$ _____
_____ Total bags	Total Cost \$ _____

For each 6 bags purchased, you get 1 recipe booklet # _____

Payment **must** accompany your order.

Please make your check payable to "UMW" & Indicate "pecan sale" in the memo field.

Send your check & this form to:
Esther Harrison
Treasurer TUMW
2107 Rankin Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32310

Orders are due by September 28, 2011

.....

For more information, please contact:
 Judy Levy
 (850) 877-5442 or judithlevy@embarqmail.com

.....

Help the UMW extend our global & local mission outreach.
 (see back of form for partial list of programs)

Order form from 2011. (Trinity media archives)

Volunteers gather in the Welcome Center to collect the orders after all church services on Sunday and Wednesday night at Lay Academy during the sales campaign. After the sales are completed, I enter all sales into an excel worksheet, making it easy to get the grand total ready for ordering. The order is faxed to the supplier and the delivery date is established.

Now comes the fun part—delivery of pecans and bagging. Someone (**Lora Chapman** did it several years in a row) checks in the boxes, checking them off our

tally to be sure we received what we ordered. Then a group of volunteers gather in Moor Hall or the conference room to bag the orders. Pecans of each type are on a table by themselves, hopefully in the same order as the order form. The volunteer takes a plastic bag, fills the order, and hands it to the checker. The checker makes sure the order is correct and staples the order form to the bag. Then it is placed in alphabetical order on the chairs until we box them for pickup. There were some years we had over 1000 bags of pecans! Esther Harrison and **Patti Oakley** were two of the most faithful for double-checking the orders.

Once orders are bagged and boxed, pickup is available after all Sunday services and at Lay Academy. Another round of volunteers is needed. With many hands, the load becomes easier. There are always a few that need several reminders that their pecans have arrived and are waiting for pickup.

The extra bags ordered as fill-ins for boxes and extras orders are available for purchase. Again, Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings are the time to buy the extras. Hopefully, all is finished by end of November.

Those eager to purchase pecans will need to wait until 2021 because this year's (2020) campaign has been canceled due to the pandemic.

Thanks to the many volunteers who make this look so easy and thanks to the congregation for their purchases. It's a win-win situation.

Sales money-cost=profit!!!!

It's time to order
PECANS!
 Click this graphic
 and order your pecans
 for the holidays!



Graphic design by Rex Adams, communication director, for Trinity's website slider to promote pecan sales in 2012. (Trinity media archives)

Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Leadership Committee

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Church Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Senior Pastor

The Rev. Neal Avirett, Associate Pastor

Dr. Nick Quinton, Director of Discipleship & Adult Ministries

The purpose of Crossroads is to provide descriptions of historical events and to publish news related to the Trinity United Methodist Church Historical Society. Its intent is not to endorse or criticize theological or ethical positions related to issues that these descriptive accounts might raise. While we strive to be as accurate as possible, we make mistakes sometimes. Please send your comments, corrections, and requests for printed copies as well as inquiries about submissions to Pamela Crosby, chief editor, at pcrosby@tumct.org.

Submission Guidelines

If you would like to be a published author in an upcoming issue, see guidelines below:

Call for Stories and Articles

- **“I Remember When” snapshots:** These are short descriptions that recount church life memories. They are usually **25–100 words long**. See below for general guidelines.
 - **Oral interviews:** Interviews may be audio or video taped. Trinity historians write up the interviews in narrative form with approval from the persons interviewed before publication. Videos or audios of the interviews may be posted on Trinity’s website with permission from persons interviewed.
 - **Firsthand stories:** Individuals may submit stories based on their firsthand experience at Trinity. The stories are generally **500 words, but can be longer**. See “General Guidelines.”
 - **Research articles:** These articles are more formal in nature.
- o Criteria for formal articles include **relevance** to the purpose of the newsletter, which is to publish articles that pertain to the history of Trinity in a substantial way; **quality of writ-**

ing; historical accuracy; clarity; conciseness; coherence; and readability.

o Articles should be **original** works and not excerpts.

o The word limit for articles **is usually around 500 words, but can be longer.**

A list of resources used for historical research may be requested. **Original** sources (instead of information from history books, newspapers, or newsletters) are preferred when possible.

General Guidelines

- Writing should be free of disrespectful language.
- Photos and information should not violate privacy, copyright, or other established laws.
- All accepted works are subject to editing in compliance with all *Crossroads* guidelines, including style guide standards, and **must pass editorial approval** before publication.
- Submit Word document to **Pamela Crosby**, editor, at pcrosby@tumct.org.

Editor’s note: A special thanks to Mary Margaret Rogers, Rubie Butterworth, Dot Binger, Linda Yates, and Sally Huggins for their assistance in the proofing of this issue.