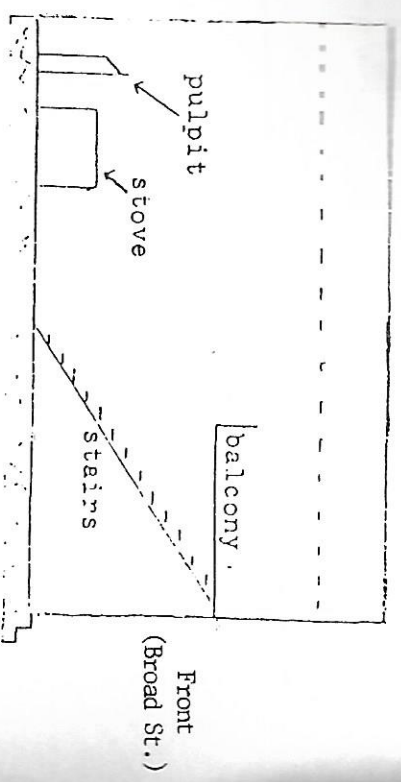




THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE

Sketch of appearance as built in 1805
by Edmund Luff



INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT IN 1805
(Seen from Washington Street side)

The story of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church would not be complete without brief reference to the beginnings of Universalism in Watertown and vicinity.

The Luff family had left England in 1800 because they were taxed to support the Church of England. After enduring many hardships, they finally reached the Sackets Harbor area. Here, Edmund Luff, the son of the family, built the first house of worship in the village. It still stands, now a private home, on the corner of Broad and Washington Streets. It is a frame building, traditionally painted a light yellow and surrounded by a beautiful garden. Originally there was one large room, with two square pews and a gallery around the sides. There was a high pulpit from which Luff preached Universalism until his death in 1822. This little house which he used as a church, he also threw open for use by other religious groups; and during the War of 1812 the house was used as a hospital and for other humanitarian services.

In 1818, a young man, John Fay, came to Watertown and secured a position as a teacher in the village school. Because he admitted his belief in the Universal Fatherhood of God he was dismissed and, as a result, many of his sympathizers gathered together. After having several itinerate preachers, they sent for a young man by the name of Pitt Morse, who had been preaching in Central and Western New York.

Mr. Pitt Morse arrived in Watertown in 1814 on a weekday and so eager were the people to hear him that they held a service that evening in a store owned by Mr. William Smith. Much interest was evident and attendance at meetings increased. Mr. Morse's activities were not limited to Watertown but extended throughout the surrounding area.

The first society in Watertown, or actual church group, was organized in the Court House on April 26, 1820. The officers of this

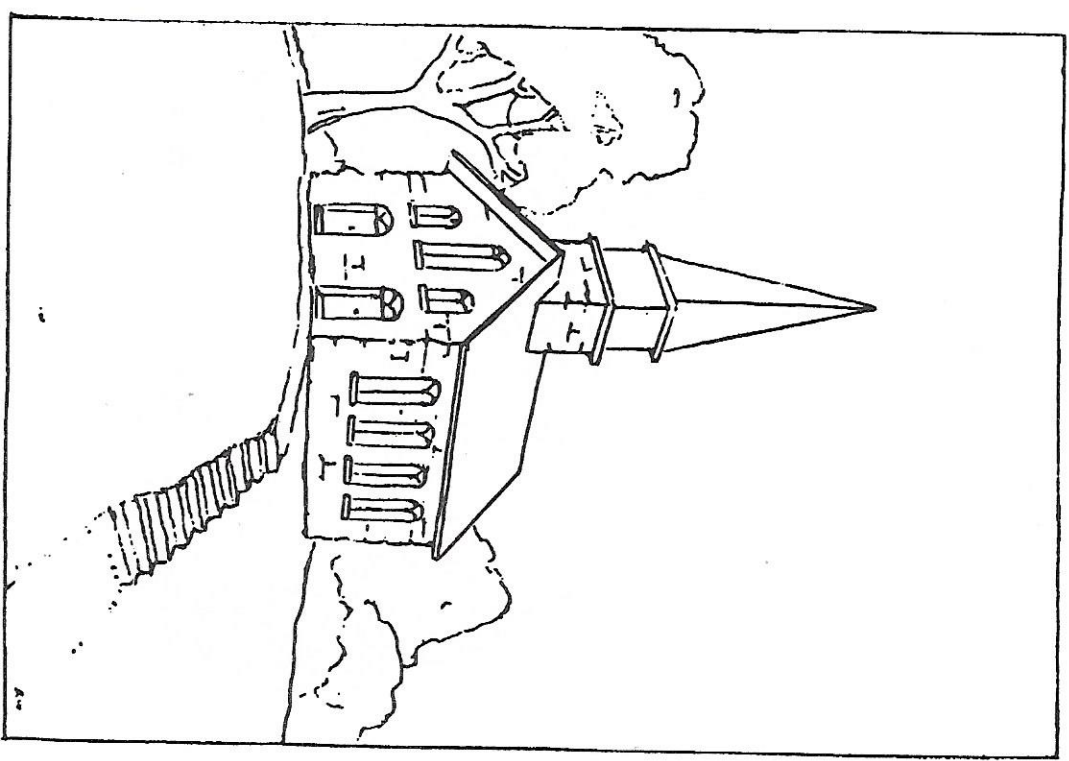
society were Levi Buttermere, Chauncy Calhoun, Henry Caswell, Simeon Skeels and Darius Doty--- all community leaders of that day.

The first ecclesiastical body was organized June 21, 1823. During the years from 1820 to 1823, the society had been making plans for the erection of a church building, and in this they were successful.

The site selected was that of the first village school house, located at the southeast corner of the Mall, now known as Public Square. This was the same school in which John Fay taught when he was dismissed because of his belief in the Universal Fatherhood of God.

The church building, a stone structure, the first Universalist Church in the Village of Watertown, was dedicated on Wednesday, November 10, 1824, and the dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Hosea Ballou. Although it had been planned to hold services in the church before the day of dedication, they were unable to do so because the paint was not dry, and on Sunday morning the Rev. Ballou preached in the court house which proved too small for the number which attended. The Methodists offered use of their church on Sunday afternoon.

The new church, built of stone, had two front doors, a gabled roof, a square battlement on the ridge with a short spire in the middle. The windows were provided with green blinds and a gallery extended clear around the inside of the church. The building stood upon the level of Franklin Street, formerly Woodruff Street. The east end of the mall was at least ten feet lower than the present surface and those who attended had to climb twenty-eight steps (some say forty-nine) which ran up from each side in a semi-circle and were said to be a challenge to anyone's



The first Universalist Church
in the Village of Watertown
The Stone Church

1824 - 1850

religious fervor. The lot had a frontage of 66 feet and cost \$150. The church cost \$7000 and was destroyed by fire, resulting from a flying ember from a fire on Beebe Island, on September 29, 1850. This happened during the ministry of Rev. John B. Stewart.

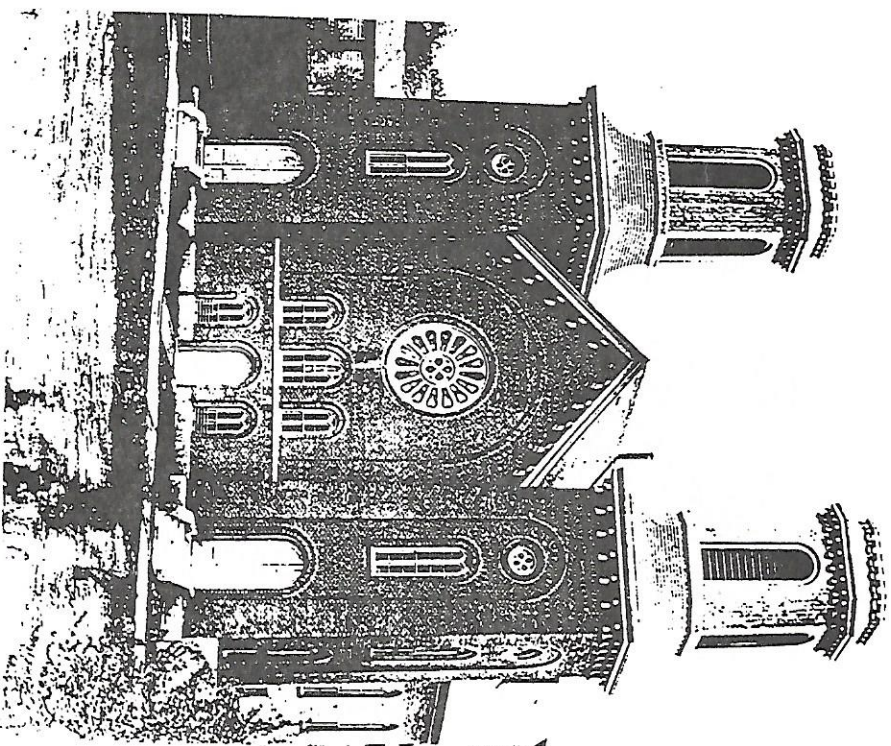
However, immediate steps were taken for the erection of a new church on the same site, only at the level of the Mall (Public Square). The plans for this second structure were prepared by O. L. Wheelock, who designed most of the public buildings in Watertown in that period. The cost of this brick structure was about \$10,000.

This building had two levels, with the Sunday School and Library at street level and the church auditorium above, one flight up. There were two truncated towers, one on each front corner of the building, with a main entrance in each and a ground level to the Sunday School in the center. In the rear were located the horse sheds.

This structure, called the First Universalist Church, was dedicated on November 2, 1852, with Rev. Adolphus Skinner giving the dedicatory sermon, and Rev. Pitt Morse the prayer.

The latter part of the 1890's this church was thoroughly renovated, a new roof was provided, and a new pipe organ was installed. When the renovation was completed, a service of rededication was held on the 5th of January, 1897. Rev. Charles Fluhrer of Albion preached the sermon.

Worship was continued in the edifice until 1905 when it was sold to a group for the construction of the Hotel LeRay, later known as the Electric Building. From that time until 1907, when the first All Souls was completed, services were conducted in the Odd Fellows Temple, located at the corner of Stone and Arcade Streets.



First Universalist Church
The Brick Church

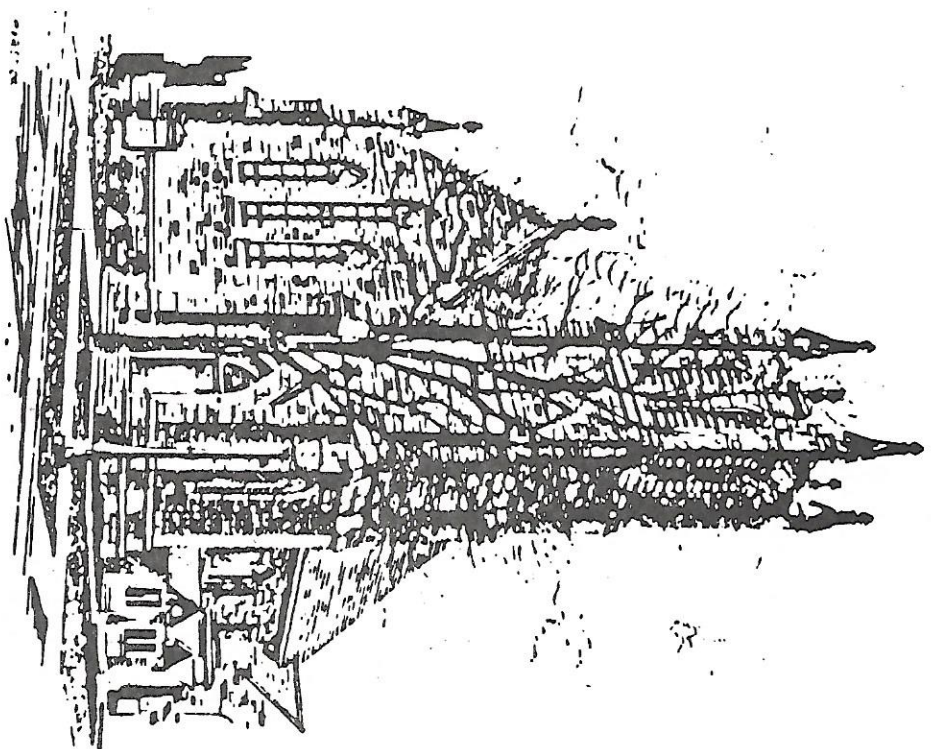
1852 - 1905

Immediately after the sale of the old church site at the easterly end of Public Square in 1905, the Martha Bennett property on Washington Street was purchased for \$1600. The house on the property, which was to be used as the Manse, was built by General Abner Baker in 1820. The wallpaper in the entrance hall depicted Napoleon I holding his son on his knee. The Board of Trustees, which included many stalwart citizens, investigated the designs of many churches and, in particular, the architects who designed them. After an exhaustive investigation, Hobart B. Upjohn, the grandson of the architect of Old Trinity in New York City, was selected to build this church which was to be named All Souls. The general style adopted was English Gothic. The entire exterior was to be finished in Hummelstown brownstone. The church consisted of a nave and a chancel, the combined length being 131 feet and the height 52 feet to the peak of the roof. The roof was to be supported by six large Hammerbeam trusses. The tower was to be 28 feet square at the base and 95 feet high.

On June 27, 1906, the cornerstone was laid. Rev. Moses Harris D.D., Pastor, being assisted by Rev. Andrew Brodie, D.D., of the First Presbyterian Church of Watertown; Rev. Fred Betts, D.D., of the Universalist Church of Syracuse, and Townsend Scudder, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York.

On October 4, 1907, All Souls Universalist Church was dedicated by the pastor, Rev. Moses H. Harris, assisted by Rev. Richmond Fisk, D.D. This was one of the great days for All Souls Universalist Church and for the City of Watertown.

An organ recital by S. Archer Gibson, organist at the Brick Church, Fifth Avenue, on October 3, 1907, was a part of the dedicatory proceedings. The pipe organ was a gift of the Ladies Aid and Mission Circle.



All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1907 - 1984

Notwithstanding the sacrifices of the members of All Souls Parish, when the church was dedicated there was a mortgage of \$24,000. This debt was cancelled by Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor and her mother, Mrs. Roswell P. Flower, in memory of Mrs. Flower's mother, Mrs. Rosanna Woodruff Strong, who was a leading member of the Universalist Church. A Thanksgiving Service and the unveiling of a tablet of appreciation was held on Sunday, October 11, 1908.

Three memorial windows were placed in All Souls Church. On Sunday, November 21, 1909, Dr. Moses Harris dedicated the beautiful window, "The Sower." This window, a copy of the painting "The Sower" by Tissot, was presented by Mrs. Alice Wooley in memory of her parents, the Honorable Lotus Ingalls and Marinda Murray Ingalls. Mr. Ingalls was a prominent newspaper man, having founded the Watertown Reformer, the Watertown Daily Times and the Watertown Post. "The Sower" which later was to be the only stained glass window to come through the fire of December 14, 1984, was placed in the new church on Gotham Street hill.

A second memorial window was one of the finest and most beautiful in the city. "The Ascension" was designed and made by Sawyer and Flintoft of New York at a cost of \$3000. It was placed over the chancel and was truly magnificent when the rays of the western sun shown through it. The window was given by Mr. and Mrs. Stephen R. Cleveland in memory of the late Dr. and Mrs. Moses H. Harris and was unveiled September 13, 1913.

The third window, "The Resurrection," was given in memory of Sumner Ryder Matteson who lost his life in World War I, by his parents Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Matteson.

Unfortunately, Dr. Harris lived only four years to enjoy the ministry of the new All

Souls Church which he had done so much to establish. He died suddenly on May 8, 1911.

His successor was Dr. Harry Westbrook Reed. In the letter which Mr. Field wrote inviting him to accept the pastorate of All Souls he said, "Our church building is of brownstone, decorated English Gothic architecture, a new building, dedicated in 1907 and the society is free of debt. It is a splendid opportunity for the right person to develop our church into a power here." Dr. Reed accepted the call and remained as minister from October, 1911, to January 1, 1940. Under his leadership All Souls became one of the foremost churches in the Universalist denomination in New York State. When Dr. Reed began his pastorate in 1911, the church had a membership of less than 200. In 30 years during his administration the membership nearly tripled.

In 1912 the "cellar" under the nave of All Souls was transformed into a Club Room equipped with bowling alleys and billiard tables. Each winter the church was represented by both men's and women's teams in bowling leagues.

During the years of Dr. Reed's service, the All Souls Men's Club and the Men's Bible Class were active. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops were formed. He formed a class in Applied Christianity which held its meetings at the close of church service and had an average attendance of 125.

Dr. Reed was extensively involved in community activities. He was one of the organizers of the Friday noon Lenten services, held for many years at the Avon Theater. He brought some of the outstanding pulpit figures of that period as speakers for the meetings.

Maude Harmon Reed, the wife of Dr. Reed, was interested in the theater. She assisted the young people of the church in their

theatricals and they produced many plays and musicals. Fortunately the new church was designed with a stage and dressing rooms in the auditorium.

Dr. Reed prepared a complete course of study for Sunday School Teacher Training which was successfully used by the General Sunday School Association of the Universalist Church. A writer with an interesting and persuasive style, he was the author of several magazine articles and pamphlets. "The Discipline of Pain and Suffering" and "Why I Am a Universalist" both received wide distribution.

In the late 1920's Dr. Reed passed through a long period of ill health. No man ever fought more valiantly than he. He continued his duties when it seemed that he could survive only a short time. When at last it appeared that death was near, insulin was discovered and restored him to nearly normal health again, giving him 25 years more of active and valuable service as a minister.

During the period of Dr. Reed's pastorate, Wilhelmina Woolworth Knapp, a graduate of Maryland College and School of Music was organist, choir director and director of music. She was one of the most active figures in Watertown musical circles. In an annual report she says of the choir, "During the past season they prepared and sang, beside the regular Sunday music of anthems and solos, all of Stainer's 'Daughter of Jairus' and Gaul's 'Ruth,' Gounod's 'Gallia' and with a joint Festival of Federated choirs they presented Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise.' Far from being an expense item in the budget, the choir organized themselves and earned money for music, robes, etc."

Dr. Reed was succeeded as pastor of All Souls by Rev. Dr. Harold Niles on March 1, 1940. Dr. Niles graduated from St. Lawrence University and was granted an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity at the Commencement in

June, 1940, at which time his two older sons, Albert and Nathan, received their college degrees.

Dr. Niles served on various committees of the denomination on both state and national levels. He was president of the Ferry Beach Park Association in 1939. He was on the committee which raised money, selected the site and established the Unironack Summer Institute at Beaver Lake.

Through his wide acquaintance with people in the St. Lawrence Theological School, he helped to secure for All Souls the service of Anna Dowty as Director of Religious Education. She was followed by Doris Smithers who also contributed much to the Religious Education program.

In 1943 the church received a bequest of \$27,938.44 from the Charles Dean estate. The money was used to redecorate the church, to improve the acoustics and to liquidate the mortgage of \$8,000.

On March 16, 1948, Mrs. Clara Nott Owens presented All Souls Church with a set of carillon bells which could be used for inside or outside playing. When broadcast from the loudspeaker in the church tower they could be heard over a wide area. When played within the church their tones could be subdued and softened. The bells operated on a regular schedule, playing at 5 o'clock each night. It was said that mothers told their children to come home to supper when they heard the chimes play.

On December 4, 1957, Mrs. Clara Nott Owen left in her will to All Souls Church a trust fund of \$250,000 with Mrs. Clifford Frake as lifetime beneficiary. The Association of Universalist Women received a trust fund of \$20,000.

Dr. Niles was active in community and civic affairs, serving on numerous committees

and in various organizations. In 1957 Dr. Niles was awarded the Israel A. Shapiro award trophy by the Watertown Chamber of Commerce for "outstanding citizenship."

Frances Vorce (Mrs. Elliott Vorce) replaced Wilhelmina Knapp as church organist and choir director in 1940. She was a graduate of Skidmore College, majoring in music, and taught music in the Watertown Public Schools. During this period in the 1940's and 1950's, music was highly important throughout the church service, being made up of chants, choral responses, amens and laudations. Each service opened with a processional of the choir and closed with a recessional. The choir was made up of paid soloists and other gifted singers and enlarged by several eager and interested teenagers. At one time All Souls had a girls' choir which won in competition with other similar choirs.

The most important choir concert of the year was presented on Palm Sunday at five o'clock in the afternoon. The choir was considered to be one of the fine ones in the city and the church would be well filled. The afternoon sun shining through the Ascension Window, accompanied by the lovely music, transformed the sanctuary into a place of beauty.

Dr. Niles announced his retirement in December, 1957, and the next year, with Mrs. Niles, he moved to Canton where they planned to spend their retirement years. From 1961 to 1964 he served as interim chaplain at St. Lawrence University.

At a service in All Souls Church on June 19, 1960, he was designated as Minister Emeritus of the church which he had served for 18 years.

On January 23, 1960, a civic testimonial dinner at the Hotel Woodruff was given Dr. and Mrs. Niles by the citizens of Watertown

arranged by a committee representing the Council of Churches and the Rotary Club.

Rev. John E. Wood, D.D. was appointed to succeed Dr. Harold Niles as minister at All Souls Church. He, his wife and daughters, Audrey and Nancy, arrived in Watertown in September, 1958. Mrs. Wood took a position as a caseworker with the Family Counseling Service of Jefferson County and did some teaching at St. Lawrence University.

On September 22, 1960, more than 110 members of All Souls Church were present at a loyalty dinner as a part of a drive for \$75,000 to renovate and improve the church. Dr. Harold Niles was the keynote speaker. Horace Montgomery, the architect, described the plans, including the building of four classrooms, a kitchen, a dining room and a room for the young people. A handsome new entrance was to be built at the side. The building program was completed in 1961 and the new Sunday School rooms were filled with busy, eager youngsters. Mr. Warren McFerran was the Religious Education director. He was followed by Dorianne Parker who was Director 1966-1969.

The proposal for a merger of the Unitarians and the Universalists sent shock waves through the congregations of both churches. The plan was adopted; 95% of the Universalist Church of America agreed to merge. All Souls voted to become a part of the merger in 1961 and became All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church. The Association of Universalist Women became the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation in 1964.

Rev. John E. Wood, D.D. resigned as minister of All Souls effective October 15, 1964. Rev. Blaine Hartford served as interim minister and on August 15, 1965, he assumed the pastorate of All Souls Church. Rev. Harold Niles, D.D. led the service of ordination.

With the death of Mrs. Clifford Frake August 26, 1965, the bequest to All Souls Church made in 1957 by Mrs. Clara Nott Owens reverted to the church together with the responsibility of managing the trust fund. The current market value was \$500,000.

Miss Christine Devendorf, for many years the Historian of All Souls Church, died June 25, 1965, leaving \$1000 to the church.

Some innovations were made during Rev. Hartford's ministry. Mrs. Lena Stevenson presented the idea of starting a Memorial Fund so that people could contribute to it in lieu of flowers.....

The class of Junior High boys met twice a month with their fathers instead of a teacher to discuss various topics of interest to them.....

The Couples Club devoted some of their meetings to learning the new dances under the direction of an expert teacher.....

The Junior Choir was reactivated wearing handsome blue robes.....

Rev. Hartford gave the church a piece of statuary - a copy of Rodin's "Cathedral."

The Rev. Blaine Hartford resigned as minister of All Souls in 1969. He was succeeded by Rev. Weston Stevens, a native of Watertown, as was his wife, Barbara Carr Stevens. Rev. Stevens served this church from April 15, 1969 to August 31, 1974.

The Rev. Stewart E. Hild, who began his pastorate at All Souls in September, 1975 was installed as minister on September 26, 1976. Rev. Dr. Robert N. West, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, gave the sermon. Rev. Hild and Mrs. Hild, the former Alma Von Holt, with their two sons, Edward and Thomas, live at 274 Schley Drive.

The manse at 508 Washington Street had not been used as a home for the All Souls minister since 1969 when the Hartfords lived there. The building was later used for church offices Sunday School and meeting rooms until the church was remodeled to include new offices for the minister and the church secretary with a lounge between. The stage was originally in that area, the same stage which had seen minstrel shows and plays performed on it in earlier years. The U.U.W.F. gave funds for the installation of new rest room facilities. In August of 1977, the 157 year-old manse was demolished and the area became a parking lot.

Joan Pflugeber who was Religious Education Director from 1971 until 1975 originated a Day Care Center in All Souls Church. In October, 1979, the church assumed responsibility by sponsoring this first licensed Day Care Center in the City of Watertown. At that time there were two full-time teachers, four part-time teachers and a cook with an enrollment of 50 children. The center continued to improve and expand and later changed its name to The New Day Nursery. In the words of Rev. Stewart Hild "The Day Care program now sponsored by the church may have been the most significant single Social Action Project by All Souls Church in many years."

Individual Unitarian Universalists as well as groups have been active in the social betterment of the community. David Moore was President of the Urban Mission for two years. William Harris, alarmed at Jefferson County's high delinquency rate (higher than New York City), tried to interest the Board of Supervisors in establishing a Youth Bureau. Sylvia Heap was named Watertown's Citizen of the Year in 1975. Smoking education has been one of her concerns. She formed the Community Council for Bicycle Safety. She was chairman of the Public Television outreach project "The Chemical People" to prevent teenage drug and

alcohol abuse. She has been All Souls envoy to the United Nations and the Unitarian Universalist United Nations envoy for the St. Lawrence District, and has been the speaker on United Nations Sunday. Donna Macsuga was the first President of the SciTech Center which opened in 1983. Gordon Maccaulay acted as liaison between the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Protestant community to promote Project Children. They bring Irish children to this community for six weeks each summer, placing Catholic children with Protestant families and vice versa, to show them that they can live together in peace. The drive for funds begins with a service in mid-March at All Souls. Winifred Dushkind is the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Service representative. She gives a review each year of the organization's activities. She has been active in obtaining a zoning ordinance in her home township. The proper care of the zoo animals is another of her projects.

Stephen Hayes served as United Way chairman in 1983. In 1984 he was named chairman of the YMCA Capital Funds Campaign which raised more than \$1 million. In 1987, he raised money for "A Place to Play" in the Thompson Park. Rev. Stewart Hild has been an officer of Watertown Urban Mission, a member of the Board at the Women's Center, Family Counseling Service, Community Action Planning Council and Campus Ministry Committee at Jefferson Community College. He also serves as Chairperson of the Criminal Justice Committee of the Urban Mission, and is a member of the Community Advisory Board for the Watertown Correctional Facility (N.Y. State). Dan Stern is Chairman of the Watertown Correctional Facility Community Advisory Board, and has been President of the Family Counseling Service for Jefferson County.

Many organizations have used the facilities of All Souls Church for their meetings but none for such a long period of time as

the Morning Musicales. This group met at All Souls since 1920 with the exception of a brief time in the 1940's. On April 11, 1990 they celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the organization. This has been a congenial relationship and All Souls has been proud to be associated with an organization which not fosters good music but has also provided scholarship funds to scores of young people.

During the period of the '60s and the Board of Trustees felt that measures of strict economy were necessary. Sunday service during the cold weather were held in the Reed Room. President of the Board, William Harrierson personally installed plexiglas in the window of the Reed Room. He also wired the thermostat making four zones for heating, thus creating a great saving in heating bills.

Harriet McMillan was Religious Education Chairman from 1980 to 1982. Patti Stephenson held that position from 1982 to 1984. She was replaced by Christine Thompson who was followed by John Kinley in 1987. Tom Cutter and Susan Geller made valuable contributions as Youth Group Counselors.

History was made in May, 1984, when Gertrude Remorino was elected President of All Souls, the first woman ever to hold that position.

For a time Candlelight Dinners (a suggestion of Olive Brandt) were popular. Small groups met in the homes of church members covered dish dinners and discovered this to be a wonderful way to become better acquainted.

A Midsummer Luncheon for the ladies of All Souls and the Dexter Universalist Church has been a popular event for the past several years. It is usually held at Pine Tree Point.

The Unitarian Universalist Women's Organization no longer holds formal meetings. They get together socially once a month for a

sandwich luncheon. They still meet their pledge to the Board of \$1000, contribute to the Clara Barton Camp and raise money by holding rummage sales.

The night of December 13 and 14, 1984, marked a turning point in the church life of the congregation of All Souls. We were shocked and grieved to learn that our beloved church, where we had just finished hanging the Christmas wreaths and evergreen boughs, had been destroyed by fire. Some who heard the news early were standing by during the night - Bill Harris, Rev. Hild and others - feeling hopeful at 1:15 a.m. as Fire Chief Damon said, "I think we've got it under control;" feeling despair at 1:55 a.m. as the chief said, "It doesn't look good."

We learned the meaning of a word new to most of us - "pyrolysis." It happens in older buildings when the chemical composition of the old beams near heat pipes changes to a charcoal-like substance which eventually ignites.

There was an immediate outpouring of sympathy and concern from the community. A quote from an editorial in the Watertown Daily Times summed up the feeling of the community, "The loss of the imposing English Gothic structure is sad. While church members will not be able to replace the past, their mission has always seemed to be geared to the future, and hopefully they will be able to press ahead."

The sentiments expressed in a letter from the Kripalu Yoga Fellowship were echoed in many other messages: "Yes, the church was lovely, truly a landmark and not easy to relinquish; yet more beautiful is your spirit of openness, kindness and utter dedication to seeking the truth. We know that this will sustain all of you, and that you will come through stronger than before."

The Italian American Club sponsored a spaghetti dinner for the benefit of the All

Souls building fund. The First Universalist Church of Dexter contributed the proceeds of their annual May Breakfast to our church. The Canton Unitarian Universalist Church raised \$1000 to assist All Souls in rebuilding. The check was presented personally by a group from Canton including Shirley Boehem, the daughter of Dr. John Wood who was minister at All Souls from 1958 to 1964.

Other churches, organizations and individuals responded with gifts of money and offers of services. (See appendix for the complete list.)

Our most immediate needs were met when Stephen Hayes arranged office space in the Woolworth Building and Sunday meeting rooms in the W.W.N.Y./Key Bank building on Arcade Street. The New Day Nursery moved to Asbury Church.

In February of 1985, as a part of the cleaning-up process following the fire at All Souls, volunteers, including some of the inmates from the prison, worked at removing trash from the basement. An alert custodian, Russ Rutta noticed one pile of "trash" containing some pictures of the church. On further investigation the "trash" proved to be an autograph scrapbook which once belonged to a prominent Watertown businessman, Winslow Patridge. It was part of an estate willed to All Souls Church in 1916. The book was still encased in ice and it took time to thaw it out and carefully dry each page. It was then revealed that the historical volume contained letters from presidents and famous political and military figures dating from 1790 to 1845. A highlight of the collection is a letter in beautiful script from John Quincy Adams written to his aunt when he was 17 years old.

Of special interest locally are letters from General Joseph Brown and the Thousand Islands Pirate, Bill Johnson. Despite their age, most of the old documents are in very good condition. This is attributed to the fact that they were written in waterproof

ink on "rag" paper. It was soon evident that expert assistance was needed in the monumental task of sorting and deciphering the documents. We found this in the person of John Logan, who has expertise in the subject of historical books and paper memorabilia, and who was able to offer suggestions on what to do with the discovery. Under his guidance, 12 of the "presidential letters" were sold to B. Altman and Company for \$5,500. Most of the other letters of local interest were bought by the Watertown Foundation for \$3000. The Foundation then donated these letters to the Flower Memorial Library. Mr. Logan devoted many hours of his time over a period of almost a year to this project. We are very grateful for his help.

Following the fire of December 13, 1984, the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees appointed a Building Committee to address the needs of the congregation for a church structure. Matters regarding security and clean up having been attended to, the settlement of insurance claims, about \$700,000, and the options for a new church structure were considered. Jim Blankman was the first chairman. He found it necessary to resign during the summer of 1985, but not until an agreement was reached with the insurance company. Patricia Kinley took his place as Chairperson of the Building Committee.

Ashley Associates prepared a Study Report on Site Selection. Option I was the existing site with substantial rehabilitation of the existing structure. (A full restoration would cost \$2.5 million.) Option II was the new site on Gotham Street. A congregational meeting was called to vote on the question. We were urged to remember that we are building, not only for ourselves, but for generations to come.

The Board of Trustees, after a study of the options, voted for building on the Gotham

Street site at the March 6, 1986, meeting. The congregation voted by secret ballot. Option I (existing site) received 11 votes; Option II (Gotham Street) received 35 votes. It was moved to make the vote unanimous by acclamation. Passed.

The Gotham Street site of 5 acres is an attractive, spacious spot across from the park with a commanding view of the hills to the south. It was generously donated to All Souls by the owner, Mrs. Frederick H. Taylor, Jr.

Ashley Associates presented plans for a new \$500,000 building. It is 9,000 square feet, about half the size of the former church. Purcell Construction was the low bidder on the contract. Plans called for using "The Sower" a stained glass window from the old church, in addition to several of the smaller "tower windows." "The Sower" is believed to be a Tiffany window.

The ground breaking ceremony was held Sunday, September 28, 1986. President Gertrud Remorino, in her remarks opening the event, said, "Each new beginning brings memories which we cherish from the past, love and devotion in the present, and brightness and hope for the future."

In a sermon on January 4, 1987, Rev. Stewart Hild contrasted the new church with the old All Souls. "The old church was within walking distance of downtown. The new church is on the outskirts of the city, but still within the city limits. Instead of being surrounded by buildings we will be closer to nature with areas for picnicking and outdoor activity. The old church had beautiful stained glass windows. They provided great beauty and a sense of worship. The new church will provide wide natural light. Instead of stained glass windows we will look outward. We will see trees and shrubs and the rolling hills to the south. This will provide a different impetus, a different sense of worship. The emphasis will also be

on Religious Education. It is true we had an area for Religious Education on Washington Street but it was in the basement. Now they will be on the first floor with a view of their surroundings."

The old church on Washington Street was officially sold to Colonial Manor Associates on May 13, 1987.

An organ for the new church has been donated by Carolyn Mahana in memory of her husband, W. Leonard Mahana. President Gertrude Remorino expressed the feeling of the congregation when she said, referring to Leonard Mahana, "One of his loves was music, so now we are blessed with the means to perpetuate that love of his, by giving joy to all who listen. Our gratitude to Carolyn is heartfelt, and forever."

A beautiful grand piano has been given by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation in memory and honor of all the women of All Souls Church, who have served over all the years and who continue to serve.

Our last Sunday in WMNY/TV and the Key Bank on June 28, 1987, was memorable in more ways than one. It was Children's Sunday and we were privileged to have our children and young people with us, to speak to us and sing for us. John Kinley, the R.E. Director, arranged this service.

An open house and a church service in the new church just for members and friends was held on Sunday evening, July 26, 1987. The open house for the general public took place on September 13, 1987, with the young people acting as guides.

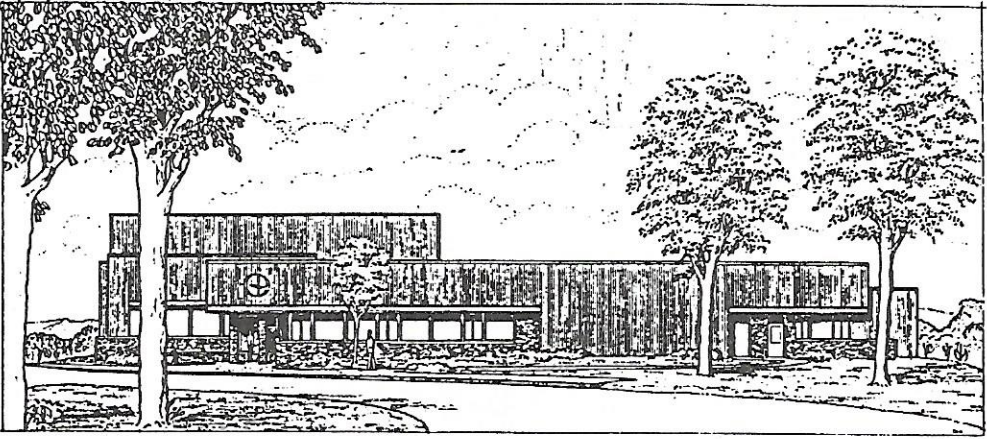
A new era began for All Souls Church, September 20th, 1987, at 4:30 p.m., when we celebrated the dedication of our new church building at 1330 Gotham Street. William Schultz, President of the national Unitarian Universalist Association, was keynote speaker.

He was joined in greeting the congregation and guests by Watertown Mayor, T. Urrling Walker, Gertrude Remorino, immediate Past President of the All Souls Board of Trustees and Patricia Kinley, Chairman of the Building Committee and new President of the Board.

The Vintage Brass Quintet opened the service; the Celebration Singers from Holy Family Church; and others representing several denominations created ecumenical, joyful sounds of music. All ages were represented the dedication, with children from our religious education department lighting the petal chalice donated by Ruth Planck Wallace, and the Rev. Mr. Thomas Carlisle, pastor-emeritus of Stone Presbyterian Church, (also destroyed by fire), presented a poem written especially for the occasion.

The service included introductions by Stewart Hild, Minister, Sylvia Stuber Heap, Chairman of the Dedication Service Committee and John Kinley, Director of Religious Education. Invited guests included: the New York State Unitarian Universalist Board Members, Mrs. Frederick H. Taylor, Jr., donor of the land on which the church is built, and Mr. Taylor, Past Ministers of All Souls, the architect, David Ashley and his family, Mark Purcell, and his wife, members of the Jefferson County Ministerium, the Watertown City Council the County Board of Supervisors, as well as many individuals and groups who donated to our rebuilding fund.

An elegant reception was held following the ceremony, and, as they departed, everyone was encouraged to plant a flowering Spring bulb in pre-planned places to complete the celebration with a personal commitment to helping make the future of All Souls Church beautiful.



All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church

1987

A description of
ALL SOULS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
Gotham Street, Watertown, New York

By: David C. Ashley
ASHLEY ASSOCIATES, A.I.A.
Architects

The Gotham Street church site selection represented a very basic change in the philosophy of a series of All Souls churches in Watertown. The most basic of these changes was the decision to design a new church which as completely as possible, would represent the actual and anticipated future physical and spiritual needs, goals and aspirations of the congregation itself rather than the previous approach of trying to mold these needs into the shell of a traditional church design.

This new-found freedom in approach, symbolic of the basic liberal philosophy of the Unitarian Universalist Church, allowed the selection of a very beautiful site of 5 acres on top of the hill on Gotham Street, opposite the main Thompson Park entrance. The site provided ample space for parking and a natural setting, in addition to a spectacular view of the hills to the south. There is even a space in the rear of the site for a natural pond and nature trails, in addition to open play areas for the children. This site was donated to the church by the owner, Mrs. Frederick H. Taylor, Jr.

The orientation of the site was particularly fortunate in that it allowed maximum development of the second major change in the All Souls Church building philosophy, that of an outward looking rather than an inward looking church. This allowed an innerpenetration of interior and exterior spaces to enhance the beauty and wonder of nature and promoted the maximum use of the sun's solar energy and natural lighting. This freedom and desire to relate the building to its natural environment became a major element in the design program.

The design style of the church including the interior spaces, cannot be categorized according to a definite style because it is more an expression and outgrowth of the needs and aspirations of your church as represented by your building committee and the design background of the architect who used basic design principles which were influenced by such major twentieth century architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Pietro Belluschi and Corbusier. In this way, the design can be said to have a timeless, personal quality rather than a dated style.

Although the size of the church and materials used were dictated largely by the budget available from fire insurance money from the old church, the committee's program allowed for growth of more than double the current congregation and Sunday School. Thus, in an unseen way, the monetary value of the old church was transferred to the new church.

The main sanctuary and chancel area was designed as a fairly simple lofty space with the emphasis on attractive views of nature and on the people themselves with the seating wrapping around the chancel area. Special consideration was given to good musical acoustics and flexible lighting for many types of uses. The fine electronic organ was donated by Carolyn P. Mahana.

Most of the major rooms of the church face directly south. This orientation not only maximized the solar heating benefit but also provided the best view of the distant hills and the natural areas of the site. The front side of the church facing Gotham Street and Thompson Park was designed as the public side but with carefully placed high windows to concentrate the views on the beautiful trees of Thompson Park.

The selection of the materials for the

exterior of the church was also a response to the environment and the neighborhood. The use of basic, natural materials of wood, glass and stone was the result. The stone pylons in Thompson Park were mirrored in our selection of a natural stone base for the front of the church. Although the original source of the round edge Thompson Park stone could not be located, a similar stone was located by the contractor, Mark Purcell, at a local farmer's stone pit.

Another factor which became a major influence in the design program was the concern of planning for future needs. The building should anticipate the needs for the next century as well as current needs. Consequently, a major interior goal was to connect the sanctuary and multi-purpose room with a folding partition to allow maximum flexibility for present and future uses and the growth in the congregation. The social and community needs and uses of these spaces were a major design factor.

A related design goal, based on the recognition that we are expending our basic fossil fuels, was to minimize their use and maximize the use of the natural renewable energy sources of nature - the sun and natural light. Consequently, the building is heavily insulated with the major glass areas facing south for solar heating. Borrowing from lessons of the past before we had electricity and all buildings were primary naturally lit, the building was designed for all natural lighting. Every room, even toilets and storage areas, was designed with a combination of carefully placed windows and/or skylights to provide complete natural lighting, even on overcast days. For a building of its size, this is quite a unique feature for a late twentieth century building. In addition, this provides a very pleasant, natural feeling to the interior spaces.

There was also a strong desire by the building committee to integrate some elements of the church's past into the new church. Consequently, some of the stained glass windows from the fire-damaged Washington Street church were carefully removed, renovated and integrated into the present building. The beautiful Sower Window in the present sanctuary had been located on the south side of the old chancel area and the small stained glass windows in the entry and lounge areas had been located in the tower of the old church. In addition, some important pieces of furniture were saved and used in some areas.

Since the previous church had burned, fire safety was a principal concern. Although the building was constructed of a wood frame for budget reasons, all the surfaces were covered with fire resistant gypsum board inside and the latest technology in fire detection and alarm systems installed.

The selection of a young local contractor, Mark Purcell of Purcell Construction Company, by the committee was a wise choice. His firm worked carefully with the committee and the architect and his people, especially his woodshop craftsman, Mark Sears, contributed greatly to the quality of the building and the building process, as did Brad Cosman and Arnie Swiernik, his project manager and foreman, respectively.

As the Architect for your church (I am also a U.U.; a member of the May Memorial Church in Syracuse), I would like to commend the wonderful exhaustive work your building committee did in creating this remarkable building for you. It was my job to translate their goals and aspirations into reality, but the real credit should go to you, yourselves, as represented in your building committee, Patricia (Trish) Kinley, Chairman, Jim Harter, Vice Chairman, Tom Cutter, Secretary, Gertrude Remorino, Chris and Don Thompson, Joanne

Harter, Harold Cobb, Minister Stewart E. Hild Jan Summerville and other committee members. The people in my office who contributed most to your building design were David Martin, architect, and Laureen Griffin, interior designer.

David C. Ashley, Architect

The ministers who have served in the Universalist Church and the Unitarian Universalist Church in Watertown are as follows:

The Stone Church

The Rev. Pitt Morse	1823-1822
The Rev. Case and The Rev. Robert Bartlett	1825-1822
The Rev. Pitt Morse	1826-183
The Rev. William Waggoner	1837-184
The Rev. H. Boughton	1841-184
The Rev. John Stewart	1846-185

The Brick Church

The Rev. John Stewart	1846-185
The Rev. A. A. Thayer, D.D.	1854-185
The Rev. E. W. Reynolds	1859-186
The Rev. I. M. Atwood, D.D.	1865-186
The Rev. D. C. Tomlinson	1865-186
The Rev. Harvey Hersey	1870-187
The Rev. G. F. Babbitt	1876-187
The Rev. G. J. Porter	1878-188
The Rev. Richmond Fisk, D.D.	1884-189
The Rev. D. L. R. Libby	1892-189
The Rev. B. B. Gibbs	1898-190
The Rev. M. R. Harris, D.D.	1902-191

The Brownstone Church

The Rev. M. R. Harris, D.D.	1902-191
The Rev. Harry Westbrook Reed, D.D.	1911-194
The Rev. Harold H. Niles, D.D.	1940-195
The Rev. John E. Wood, D.D.	1958-196
The Rev. Blaine Hartford	1965-196
The Rev. Weston Stevens	1969-197
The Rev. Stewart E. Hild	1975-

A search committee was organized and began to work in mid-October, 1996.

After this late start, the Search Committee prepared a survey of the congregation, and packets describing the church, community, and congregation, to send to prospective candidates.

Another time delay was experienced in receiving a list of ministerial candidates who matched our requirements. The short list was contacted immediately.

Due to a series of unfortunate circumstances, the Search Committee's work was rejected by the congregation, and the search process was extended for another year.

A new Search Committee was formed, incorporating some from the previous committee, and adding five dedicated new members.

All Souls continues to provide home for religious liberals in the community. New members come in, and some "vintage" members "depart". With the new members come the children, adding to the joys of the Children's time during the service each Sunday.

Frances Mercer is very capably carrying out her new role as Board President. Her husband, Doug Venable, continues as Director of Religious Education.

Ten Years Later!

With the new church, new vistas opened. A revitalized congregation began to use the church in the many ways they had dreamed of. The very first weekend, we were host to St. Lawrence District LRYers, who slept on the floor of the Fellowship Hall, and challenged committee member adults from the congregation to stay awake in shifts through the night.

Trick or Treat for UNICEF originated at various churches and then all came up to All Souls for the "gathering in" party.

Summer brunches and informal services were held out of doors on the patio whenever possible. The children especially appreciated the large expanse of lawn for kite flying, and other activities.

The formal garden of All Souls Memorial Garden was designed and donated by former member Arnold Shipiro in memory of his wife, Helen.

In 1989, after 14 years of ministry to All Souls, Rev. Stewart Hild submitted his resignation and retirement, although he planned to continue living in Watertown. The congregation decided to call an interim minister, and the Rev. Richard Woodman was selected.

Rev. Woodman devoted himself to helping the church get itself in order. A weekend retreat helped us focus on our goals and how we hoped to achieve them, as well as what we expected the role of a minister would be in helping us work toward our goals.

In 1990, the Search Committee presented to the congregation its choice for minister, 27 year old Axel Gehrman, from Germany. Axel was a graduate of Starr King Divinity School, as was his new bride, Elaine.

Axel and Elaine brought a fresh feeling of energy to the church, initiating discussion and adult study groups. With Barbara Hamrahan, Board President, and members of the Board, they developed Friday Family Coffee Houses, an orientation series for new members, more church suppers and potlucks, encouraged fund raisers, and creativity.

Both Axel and Elaine were ordained and installed in our church. Each service was created as a joint venture of congregation, committee, Board, and minister. Each reflected the personal wishes and style of the young minister involved.

The resignation of the church secretary led them to take on more roles in the church. With a growing family, they proposed becoming Co-Ministers, balancing ministry

and parenting, and incorporating the roles of secretary and Director of Religious Education.

In April, 1996, Axel and Elaine sent out a letter to all of the membership stating that they had decided to candidate at the Urbana-Champagne, Illinois church. With its University of Illinois campus, large library, larger church, the opportunity seemed undeniable.

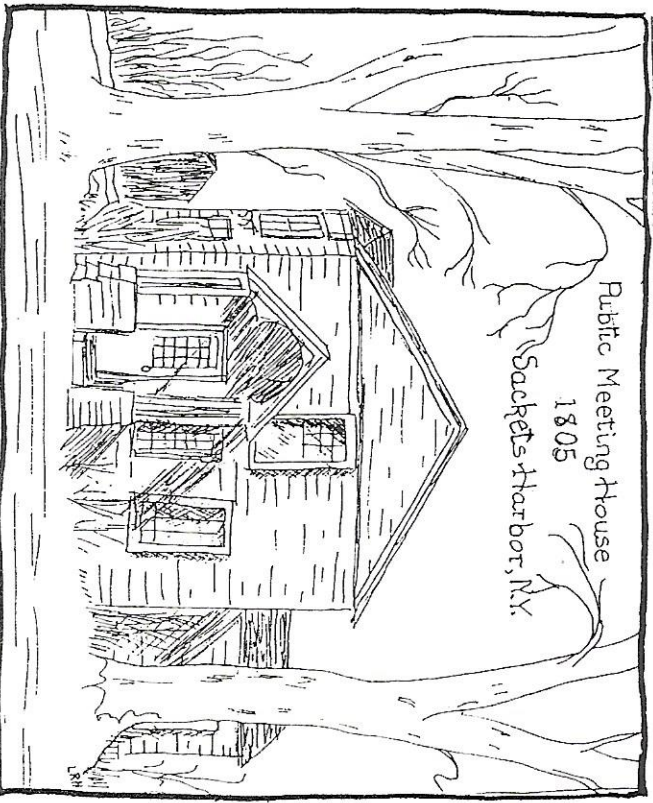
In their words: "the decision to accept the invitation to Urbana-Champagne was not an easy one. All Souls has been the first church we have served as co-ministers, and we have learned a lot. You have been truly caring and supporting, and taught us so many things about ministry, and about ourselves. You have welcomed our children into the world, and we will always remember our years here with gladness and gratitude."

Under the leadership of Sarah O'Connell, new Board President, church members began to take the necessary steps to plan for the future.

By congregational vote, the members decided not to hire an interim, but, instead, to have a part-time church administrator working with the secretary, custodian, and Director of Religious Education.

The worship committee, chaired by Frances Mercer and Katie Hardwick, rallied to prepare for a year without a minister.

Our minister emeritus Rev. Stewart Hild has agreed to recycling, providing continuity and a sermon a month. Rev. Max Coots also has agreed to be a regular for the Worship Committee's calendar, helping to keep the church vibrant, and looking toward the day when the Search will be complete.



The first Universalist House of Worship
in Sackets Harbor
1805 - 1822

THE STORY OF
THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
and
THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
in
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

Compiled by
William T. Field
for the years
1820 - 1907
Lovina R. Hayes
for the years
1907 - 1987