



Afterword

The work of the church is never done; in the same way, the stories of our community are never finished.

The Tribal Scribes formed in September 2000 in order to collect, consolidate, and archivally preserve oral and written stories, historical materials and photos about Wallingford UMC. As a result, the church now has archival storage boxes that contain original photos, articles and other memorabilia dating from the earliest years. There are also beautiful, archival-quality notebooks that chronicle many important events in church history. A separate, larger timeline, which is useful for viewing by larger groups, traces details of our church history from 1912 - 2002.

This book combines multiple approaches to documentation. The primary sources for the ninety-year history drew upon a number of church documents, many of which were unearthed during a thorough and dusty combing of the church attic. The primary sources for the section about becoming a reconciling church were in-person and telephone interviews, and articles from *The Well-Wisher*. The individual reflections were submitted to Tribal Scribes in response to an open invitation to the entire church to share their experiences. The theological documents were collected from church and member archives. The liturgies, also stored in the church computer archives, are still being used today. And finally, the Epistles are letters to Wallingford UMC written in response to a formal request from Tribal Scribes soliciting reflections from former church pastors, music directors, bishops and district superintendents.

As the initial members of Tribal Scribes complete this project in Summer 2003, new members are being recruited to carry the mission forward for our 100th

anniversary edition. Much has been accomplished, and yet there is more work to be done. Questions of permanent storage, visibility and access need to be sorted out.

- We need a *secure, reliable* storage space where good print copies are stored, so they can be reprinted whenever desirable.
- Archival storage boxes that contain original photos, articles and other memorabilia dating from the early years still need to find permanent, safe shelving and the contents organized. The archival - quality notebooks that contain many events in church history have yet to find a permanent location which is accessible to church members and friends who wish to enjoy them.
- The dream of a church photo gallery has yet to be realized.
- A timeline of church history from 1912 - 2002, big enough for viewing by larger groups, is also available for use, but will need updating in the future.

And, for all of us, the history continues! The church requires a contact person for those who inquire about historical records. The centenary of Wallingford UMC is eight years away. If oral histories are to be collected, time is necessary for planning. New stories and events will also emerge in the life of the church and they will need to be documented. New friends and members of WUMC will want access to church stories and histories to orient themselves to the church. Long time members may want to revisit old images and times. As always, a shared appreciation of the past will help us discern who we are as God's people, and how to envision our future as community.

If your interest is sparked by historical preservation, story-telling, organizing memorabilia, or anything else about this project, please don't hesitate to let the pastor know.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project, and particularly those who were willing to share their reflections with us.

Signed, Chuck Richards, Elsa Steele, and Laura Thorne

The following interviewing guides are available to those who might wish to continue to project:

Underground Storytellers/Tribal Scribes - Interview Guide

Preserving our formative church experiences can be done in small steps, and one of them is a partner interview. This is where you make an appointment with a church friend for coffee or tea and set aside time to take turns interviewing one another. These stories and histories will be assembled as a resource for all of us - those old and new to the church - to glimpse more fully who we were, who we are, and who we might become together.

The following is a guide that you can use to get started:

- Decide in advance if you are more comfortable meeting in a home or a restaurant.
- Discuss whether you would like to interview each other in the same meeting, or if you'd prefer to meet twice and switch roles.
- Decide in advance whether or not to tape the interview.
- During the interview, do not force questions; if the person becomes uncomfortable ask a different question.
- Pay attention to the kinds of questions the interviewee is most excited about or responsive to and follow his/her lead. Their answers may lead you to new questions you want to ask.
- Interviewers: Come to the interview without a preconception of what shape you want the story or history to take.
- Interviewees: Be open to seeing yourself through another person's eyes and ears.

Tips for writing up the interview:

- Write up the interview as soon as possible to preserve freshness, accuracy and detail.
- Keep it verbatim as much as possible. If you used a tape recorder this will be easier, if you take notes, do the best you can to write what is dictated to you.
- Avoid summarizing or generalizing.
- Keep the tone of your writing objective - let the answers or stories speak for themselves.
- After you have written up the interview, ask the other person to review what you wrote so that corrections can be made before you submit it.

Submitting it to the Church:

Send electronic histories/stories to officemgr@wallingfordumc.org. Hard copies may be left in the office manager's slot outside the office, but be sure to label them "Tribal Scribes." These will be filed in the office in the standing file cabinet in the History section. Further publication should be discussed with active members of the Scribes committee, or with the pastor.

Possible Interview Questions for Getting Started:

Spirit Journey

- Do you remember your first days at Wallingford?
- Do you remember what helped you decide to stay at WUMC for awhile?
- What happened when you began to feel comfortable enough to share yourself with new friends and with people around you asking the same questions that you were?
- As you continued to stay, how did/does your experience with the church shape how you see God now?
- Who is the Holy One for you? Where do you see the "face of God" in your life? What does that face look like?

Oral History

- When did you come to the church? Do you remember how you first heard about it?
- Are there specific sermons or services that stand out in your mind?
- What committee or task force did you first join? Do you remember who else was on that committee?
- Who was the pastor?
- What event(s) in the community have made an impression on you, or stand out now? What happened?
- What do you feel is the most important work or effect that the church had when you first came?
- What do you feel is the most important work or effect the church has now?
- What have you learned about being a United Methodist through being in this church community?
- What is your vision for this church?