

THE SPIRE

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 7

SEPTEMBER 2013



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In early August my daughter and I flew to California to meet the couple who adopted their daughter from China at the same time my youngest daughter, Lily, became ours. In fact Paul and Tricia met Lily before Cathy and I arrived at the meeting center located in the city of Changsha, the fireworks capital of China—appropriate in light of Hong Kong's ceding to the mainland during our visit—and a bustling city in Hunan Province. Lily greeted all the expectant parents as they met their Chinese children for the first time. My daughter waved and blew kisses, which may indeed portend a move into politics at some later date (let's hope not). Paul and Tricia photographed, and videoed Lily as well as some of the other children who were adopted, and also spent time gathering addresses so that, in the future, we could meet on occasion to celebrate our mutual joys in bringing our 'Hunan Shrimps' back to America.

On Sunday, August 11, six of the children who were adopted and their parents met in Paul's backyard for a barbecue. Apart from Paul I hadn't seen the other parents and their brood since '97.

Paul sponsored several reunions, but this was the first for Lily and myself. Most of our daughters were entering their Junior or Senior year in high school, and seemed excited to see one another again. Lily felt at home and hugs were extended at the end of a meaningful afternoon. Photos were taken of the daughters in the same order in which pictures were snapped on the day of their adoption. Time fleets.



Our week long adventure seemed for me a God-given meditation on community and the nature and meaning of family. Indeed it seemed at every turn I was reminded as Jesus once mentioned, that family extends far beyond biological connection. After

adopting Sophia in '97, Paul and Tricia became involved in working to improve hospitals and orphanages in China. Because Tricia's business takes her to that country she was able to connect with other Americans who were making a difference. Specifically she and Paul volunteered under the auspices of Half the Sky organization, a nonprofit founded by American Ginny Bowen. Half the Sky reaches out to improve the setting, and life of more than 50 orphanages in China. On one occasion Paul and Tricia were introduced to a little girl who had spina bifida. They wanted to adopt her, but couldn't for a variety of reasons. Ginny mentioned that there was another little girl who was disabled by a life threatening throat condition. Paul and Tricia wanted to meet Suji, although they wondered whether they could adopt another child—Paul and Tricia are my age! Would they have the energy required for a second daughter? Of course they did.

A whiz on the internet, Paul contacted the States to see if there were any physicians who were skilled in the girl's disease, and discovered that the leading specialist resided in Palo Alto, their

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backyard. They brought 6 year old Suji to the West Coast, and she was treated and healed. The only indication of a difficult medical past is that her voice is soft and has a raspy edge which both Lily and I find charming, especially in our stridently loud talk-talk society. In her six year orphanage experience Suji only said four words—again and again: “Where is My Mommy?” Emotional and spiritual healing began when Tricia answered, “Suji, I am your Mommy and Daddy and I love you dearly.” Tricia and Paul were not convinced that a second adoption was in store, but after they met this little one, there was no hesitation. Suji joined her older sister, Sophia, the beautiful Chinese contingent of the Hancock clan. When we first met, Suji gave both Lily and myself the warmest hugs.

During our week we came upon two more adoptive situations which caused me to do some theological thinking about the way God works. The first occurred when Suji and Lily visited Tricia’s dress shop in Los Gatos. They were accompanied Suji’s best friend Amanda. Lily’s eyes grew wide when Amanda announced that she, too, was an adoptee. The Hancock’s area is 60% Asian, and Amanda is Caucasian. I think Lily believed that only Chinese were adopted in that neck of the woods. Amanda and Lily hit it off because both are tall, and love to play volleyball. Amanda related that she had met her mother when she was six. Christine has spent what free time she has volunteering time and effort to relieve the suffering in places like Haiti. Because she travels her life is hectic, and, since she is single, she had no thought of ever having, or adopting a child. Her resolution disappeared, however, when six year old Amanda wrapped her arms around her, and pleaded, “Will you be my Mommy?” Her new role was cemented when Amanda added, “Nobody wants me.” Christine can



Mission of the Month

Our Mission Project

During September,
please use your mis-

sion envelope or one in the pew to support The Food Bank of the Hudson Valley. During 2012 the Food Bank was able to provide over 10 million pounds of food to more than 390 charitable organizations in the Hudson Valley who provide nutritious food to families in need.

The Food Bank of the Hudson Valley is a responsible steward of the funds that they receive and for every dollar donated the value of seven (7) meals are given to a hungry neighbor through various local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters.

Thanks for helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

~Linda Dux, Missions Chair

laugh about the situation, and say, “What choice did I have? Amanda was meant to be mine.”

Several days before Lily and I left, we were invited, along with the Hancocks, to meet a young couple who had just adopted a boy from Ethiopia. Abel is a year old and possesses a shock of curly hair and a new toothy smile accompanied by the requisite drool. His mother, Daniela, noted that being his mother creates joy beyond she and her husband’s imagining. They continue to return to Ethiopia not simply because it is their son’s place of birth, but because, through his wide, reflective infant eyes, they have come to love the people there. They feel as much a part of Ethiopian society as they do on the West Coast of America.

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eSpire: In order to save money and reduce our impact on the environment, you may receive *The Spire* by Email. Please request electronic distribution by sending your request to TheSpire@HurleyReformedChurch.org. If you no longer wish to receive the Spire please let us know at the same email address and we will remove you from our mailing list.

STICKLEY GARDENS

*"The grass withers
and the flowers fade,
but the Word of
The Lord endures."*

The colors of the spring and summer flowers begin to fade and the splendor of Fall bursts upon the scene in Stickley Gardens. We thank those of the committee who have tenderly cared for all of them in past weeks and now await the bright hues of another season. Seasons may change – the flowers may change – but the constant and abiding love is here in the peaceful surroundings of the gardens.

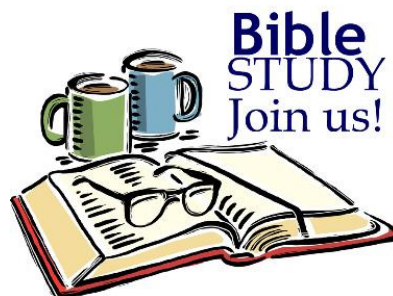
Sit and relax a bit and know –
*He Always Abides
and Never Changes.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION –
CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON
JIM PIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER
ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)
SANDIE GREGORY (338-7626)
DIANA CLINE (338-7276) CONSISTORY LIAISON
REV STICKLEY, SECRETARY

A SACRED PLACE OF
BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION.
(LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)

Fellowship continues
each week after our
worship service in
Schadewald Hall. We
have enjoyed an array
of goodies provided by
our members. Please
consider sponsoring
our Coffee Hour one
Sunday by providing
refreshments. Why not ask someone to do it with
you? See Terry Gaffken for more information or call
the office. Sign up sheet is above the coffee pot.



"Magnificent E's" Bible
Study will begin on
Tuesday, Sept. 10 at
7:00pm and Wed., Sept.
11 at 7:30am. We will
study the ministries of
Elijah and Elisha as pre-
sented in 1 and 2
Kings. We will pay at-

tention to their contexts as well as their proclamation,
and how their understanding of prophetic vocation is
similar and dissimilar to later prophets like Isaiah and
Jeremiah. We will also discuss how their stance toward
corruption in government and religion informs contem-
porary understanding of our roles in society. We will
then study the Book of Jeremiah paying attention to his
psychological underpinnings as well as the context of
his message.

Dr. Bob has provided a written introduction to this
study which is available in the church office. The ex-
cerpts are from Abraham Heschel's book, "The Proph-
ets."

Prayer Chain: We did not meet
for the months of July and August
but this is September and we will
be meeting on the 8th after ser-
vice. Although not meeting, we
were still busy doing God's work as
we continued to pray for all we were and are duty
bound to pray for. Hope all of you had a safe and won-
derful summer!



~Deb Zuill

THE CLEMENTE COURSE IN THE HUMANITIES

It's enrollment time for the 2013-2014 Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities. Enrollment forms online or can be picked up at Kingston Library. All free and age does not matter. College level courses are held every Tues. and Thurs. night 6-8 at Kingston Library during the academic year. Exercise your intellect with a very diverse student body and the most amazing, talented, and non-judgmental PhD level instructors you'll ever meet. They will do everything possible to help you succeed. Six Bard credits await you on completion.

Subject matter....philosophy, literature, writing, art history, and American history. Need more details? Google "Bard Clemente Course" or talk to or email Gene Groelle at gro226@aol.com.



I would like to thank my "Crew" for another great performance in our re-enacting of Sojourner Truth's Interview with "Brian Newsworthy" (Hal Hauck) and her famous speech, with "Mrs. Gage" (Shirley Ruth), "the Minister" (Rev. Gram), "the Announcer," Elizabeth Askue, and standing in for Pat Baker, Lee Gable, who was a member of the Women's Confer-

ence in Ohio. Thanks to the audience who were great in their participation! Great fun was had by all!! We have 3 future engagements!

~Deb Zuill aka Sojourner Truth



Senior Choir

Rehearsal Thursdays at 7:30 starting Sept. 12. New voices are always welcome.

Handicapped Accessibility Project Update

Lift/Bathroom Updates

Dave Giles, Coordinator

As you enter Schadewald Hall you can clearly see that much progress has been made. The glass enclosure for the lift is almost complete and the lift should be operational within 1 to 2 weeks. The new restroom for those needing assistance because of disabilities has been completed. Both projects are impressive to see but more importantly will serve the disabled members and citizens of our Community.



The original boy's restroom has been renovated and should be completed within 1 to 2 weeks. New walls were erected to cover the old tiles and a new tile floor was also installed. All of this work was required because of the construction of the new ADA restroom. The girl's restroom is also in sad shape. Hopefully, there will be funding for a similar renovation in the old girl's restroom.

The Men's Prayer and Fellowship

Group will resume their weekly meetings on Wed. Sept. 4th at 7:00 p.m. in the Dutch Room. All men are invited.



Did You Know ? ? ?

In May 14 cell phones and accessories from our box in Schadewald Hall were donated to

Cell Phones for Soldiers. In June the recycling program yielded \$95.00 for Mental Health Association in Ulster County for the first six months in 2013.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Bailey Jordan	3, '01
Halie Brennan	6, '96
Elizabeth Mergl	10, '08
Daniella Helsley	14, '01
Madeline Fox	15, '12
Colin Rowdycz	18, '09
Tessa Hauck	19, '97
Marissa Rell	20, '06

Rachel Gardner	1
Lindsay Woodard	2
Cody Harder	2
Cindy Sumerano	3
Russ Glass	4
Melinda Herzog	6
Bradley Horvers	6
Wayzeta Stickley-Strouse	9
Fred Horvers	10
Phil Greer	17
Ron Every	19

Kellen Hauck
Jim Craven
Bradley Hill
Anna Goetchius
Helen Sgroi
Jim Mayfield
Alice Presti
Charles Woodard
Wendy Stickley-Ocker
Darrell Nicholas
Christina Longto
Debbie Decker
Sheila Craven

**ANNIVERSARIES**

20	Mark & Beth Woodard	2
22	Bill & Karen Hogg	4
23	Dennis & Mimi Croswell	11
24	Bill & Jane Merrill	13
24	John & Debbie Tucker	14
24	Jay & Kim Burgess	17
24	Lori & John Decker	22
26	Dennis & Donna Horvers	23
27	Dean & Bernadette Baker	23
28	Jean & Henry Dussol	24
29		
30	Kyle Davenport	Oct. 2, '01
	Sandra Gregory	1
	Lucas Hopper	2
	Amy Ryan	2
	Christa Conlin	3
	Leigh Hill	4
	Alissa Sumerano	5
	Robin & Pat Brennan	10/3

**Church Directory**

Lifetouch is scheduled to take our Church's Photos for the upcoming new Directory – hope you will come –Sept. 12, 13, 17, 18 from 2 to 9 PM, Sept. 14 from 10 to 5. All families will receive a free 8 x 10" portrait and a printed Directory. You can sign-up on-line at HurleyReformedChurch.org or sign-up at the table in Schadewald Hall after Sunday Service.

Directory photographs of committees and groups that make up the life of the Hurley Church will be taken after worship Sept. 8th. Sunday School classes will be photographed during the last half hour of worship on the 8th and the consistory photo will be taken at the Sept. 9th meeting. Any questions, call Debbie Tucker at 336-8191.

Sunday School begins Sept. 8th. Classes for everyone, from Pre K through Senior High. Invite your friends and neighbors to come along.



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I returned to Hurley, the Promised Land!, with a renewed appreciation of how many good, compassionate, and loving people there are in our country. The media too often skews the balance by reporting events which make us despair of our fellow citizens. Yet my time in California confirmed the love which God imprints in the heart, and which provides the impetus for parents to bond with children who do not have a parental, or filial connection with anyone. I am also reminded of Jesus' radical extension of family, which moves beyond the limitations of blood and genes. Early in his ministry Gospel writer Mark describes Jesus teaching and healing ministries in a small home. The place is crowded, so much so, that his mother and brothers can't get in. A messenger tells Jesus that his family would like a word from him. Instead of going out to meet them he engages his immediate audience and states: "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

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My trip also afforded greater comprehension of what comprises good religion. Churches often place obstacles--needlessly I contend--on the path to Christian self-identification. Thus we may be advised that one can be a follower of Jesus only if we believe in the Virgin Birth, say, (see the above text which counters that idea!), the Trinity as it is propounded in Orthodox circles; every word in Scripture as inerrant rather than divinely inspired textually (the latter is the Reformed position), and other markers of Christian which breeds exclusivity rather than its opposite. I love those simple Scriptural statements which define what a Christian is in broader terms. One of my favorite biblical creeds comes from the book of James: "Religion which is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world"(1:27). Here are two succinct statements of faith which I love.

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"God has told you, o Mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" Micah 6:8

I saw several examples of deep caring for orphans which, I believe, gives glory to God as well as hope and redemption to our fractured world.

In Christ's Service,

Doc Bob

(Dr. Bob published an article in the Church Herald (1998) about how Lily's adoption came about, and the broader faith experience of visiting China. Copies are available in Debbie's office.)



Our next Wine & Cheese gathering is Friday, Sept. 27 at 5:30 in the parsonage. "Lost Cities and Our Ancient Faith" slide show will show Christianity's development in Turkey. We will explore cities often off the tourist track and ancient religions which competed with Christianity in that part of the world. We will conclude with discussion on the early monastic movement in Turkey and the great theologians who thrived in desert regions. Sign up after worship in Schadewald Hall or call the office, 331-4121.

Women's Guild

Kids are going back to school, leaves are starting to change color & the Guild is back in full swing.

Thank you to everyone for supporting our quilt sale, bake sale & Grandma's Garret during Stone House Day. We truly appreciate the support. Congratulations to Marilyn Cox's daughter Delaney Cox who won the quilt this year. We already know what quilt pattern we will be working on for next year. Thank you to the ladies that work so very hard in creating these beautiful quilts year after year.

Just a reminder to bring a mum to church on 9/15. The mums will adorn the altar & then they will be planted around the church & parsonage. Any color. Any size. We appreciate all donations.



Did someone mention Christmas? Yes, that is correct we are already planning for the holidays which are right around the corner. We will sponsor Operation Christmas Child again this year, chaired by Sandie Gregory. See information on p. 8.

We have a meeting coming up on September 30 to plan our events & activities for the upcoming year. Hope you will be able to attend & don't forget your calendars.

9/15/13 Bring mums to church
9/29/13 Meeting
10/20/13 Meeting
11/3/13 Sponsor Coffee Hour

We welcome & invite all women of the church to be a part of the Women's Guild. You don't have to be a member of the church to be a part of the Women's Guild. We meet right after church in the Dutch Room. Come & see what we are all about!

Sandy Emrich
President

*It is with joy that the Consistory and
Congregation of the Hurley Reformed Church
invite you to celebrate the 40th Anniversary
of the ordination of our pastor*

*The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW
As minister of the Word and Sacrament I
in the Reformed Church of America*

October 19, 2013

*Wiltwyck Country Club
Stewart Drive, Kingston, New York
Cocktails start at 6:00 P.M., cash bar
Dinner is at 7:00 P.M.*

*The cost is \$50.00 per person
Music performed by Bob's favorite band*

"The Stillwell Project"

*The favor of your reply requested by September 15th, 2013
You are encouraged to send a note or picture for a memory album*

*Please make check payable to The Hurley Reformed Church
Reservations will be taken after worship.*



Since 1993, more than 100 million boys and girls in over 130 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple

shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child. Samaritan's Purse works with local churches and ministry partners to deliver the gifts and share the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ.

We'll have a lot more information for you in the coming weeks and lots of shoeboxes to fill. Our shoeboxes have been donated and will be available for pickup after Sunday services starting in September. You can choose to designate your box for a boy or a girl from ages 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14.

With back to school sales, this is the perfect time to pick up school supplies such as pens, pencils and a sharpener, crayons or markers, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring & picture books. Other gift ideas are: hygiene items such as a toothbrush, comb, washcloth; toys such as small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, cards or a jump rope. Or perhaps you could knit a hat, socks or mittens. If you would prefer someone else do the shopping for you, just contact Sandie Gregory at 338-7626 or 389-1490 (we have a group of elves ready to go).

Our shoeboxes will be placed on the Altar, November 10th. If you would like to place a shoebox in memory or in honor of a special child in your life or in honor of the child receiving the box, you can do so by filling out the attached form.

Thank you in advance for this precious gift of Love.



Mark Conlin Golf Memorial
Rondout Golf Course
Saturday, Oct. 5, 2013

8am for breakfast; Tee Time 9:00am
\$95.00 per player includes: breakfast, 18 holes of golf with cart, beer & soda during play. Includes full dinner. Cash bar at dinner.

Contact Terry Conlin by Sept. 20.
To benefit Mark's children's education

Our shoeboxes will be placed on the Altar, November 10th. If you would like to place a shoebox in memory or in honor of a special child in your life or in honor of the child receiving the box, you can do so by filling out the attached form.



In memory
of: _____

In honor
of: _____

Given
by: _____

Please return this form and your shoebox or donation to:

Sandie Gregory
P.O. Box 195
Hurley, N.Y. 12443

Prior to November 3rd, 2013

CLEAN UP DAY

Saturday, October 12, 2013

**8:45 Coffee, Juice & Sweets
9:00 Work Assignments & Q&A**

**General Clean Up
Painting
Raking**

For more information see
Jim Pirro, Dennis Croswell or Dave Giles

Stone House Day 2013

This year's Stone House Day was a wonderful success. Despite a light rain on and off all day, we had a really good day and a good turnout. We sold 576 tickets, which is the same as last year, but thanks to an increase in ticket and cafeteria prices, our gross income was \$10,802.00. We had expenses, of course, like publicity and food etc., so our net income was approximately \$7,000. We gave out a \$2 coupon with every adult ticket, which resulted in issuing 480 coupons of which 274 were redeemed. The coupons that were not redeemed, 204, resulted in a pure profit. The cafeteria sales were \$2,623 versus \$2,140 in 2012. A very big thank you to all the people who worked so diligently all day Friday and all day Saturday. You did a wonderful job.

We had nine stone houses open this year, and two mini busses that took our visitors to the Paul's house on Hurley Mountain Road, and the Stone House Bed and Breakfast and Houghtaling House on Old Rt. 209. We are blessed with a lot of community support on this day, and we thank the homeowners and the volunteers for all their work. It is not just a great day for the Hurley Reformed Church, but for the community of Hurley in general.

Besides the open houses, we had a lot of other activities; "our" Sojourner Truth performed two different plays along with Hal Houck; Alma Strickland was Rachel in the "Rachel Dumont" story; Nancy Anderson played her violin for one hour at the Bevier House Porch; and Christine Wade, a local author, who read from her book, "7 Locks". You should all read it! (Amazon.com.) It is historical fiction and takes place right in this area in the 1770's and beyond, and gives a wonderful picture of what

Saugerties, Kingston and Hurley might have been back then. Lonnie Kulick played the organ in the Sanctuary and brought along a group of Seniors who also performed. We also had the Militia and a blacksmith, which adds an air of local colonial flavor, along with Children's Colonial Crafts, where we had about 60 children dipping candles and making "metal" candle holders and corn husk dolls. A new addition this year was an Art Show on the Parsonage lawn. And of course, last but not least, our Country Fair in the basement of the church, with "antiques" and jewelry, and the Bake Sale on the stage in Schadewald Hall, which made about \$700 in all. We also had some food donations from Stewart's, Hanaford's and Adams, and thank them very much for giving us a helping hand.

Again, thank you to all our volunteers. We'll see you on Stone House Day 2014.

Ellen Richards, Chairperson



Stone House Day Visitors Came From Where????

The Spy House asks many Stone House Day guests to sign its book if they have time. This year 261 (of 521 visitors counted) signed, giving their town and state or their country.

Venezuela (1), Ireland (3), England (1), and Japan (2) were represented. We also had sightseers from Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut, California, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Colorado, and Florida, and, of course, New York.

More New York visitors from out of the area signed than from nearby towns (but Saugerties was well represented locally).

The Albany area had plurality of NYS signers because Debbie Decker took a call from the Times Union and

passed the reporter to one of the owners. The paper's good article drew a lot of attention judging from the attendance.

Stone House Day offers something unique, interesting, and education. So thanks to so many who work hours, days, and weeks, it is really appreciated by attendees.

Annual HRC Golf Tournament

Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013



Alapaha Golf Links
All levels of golf are
welcome.

Contact Sonnie Howe

HURLEY REFORMED
CHURCH

PO Box 328
11 Main Street
Hurley NY 12443

Phone: 845-331-4121
Fax: 845-331-4153

E-mail: admin@HurleyReformedChurch.org

The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW
Pastor

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

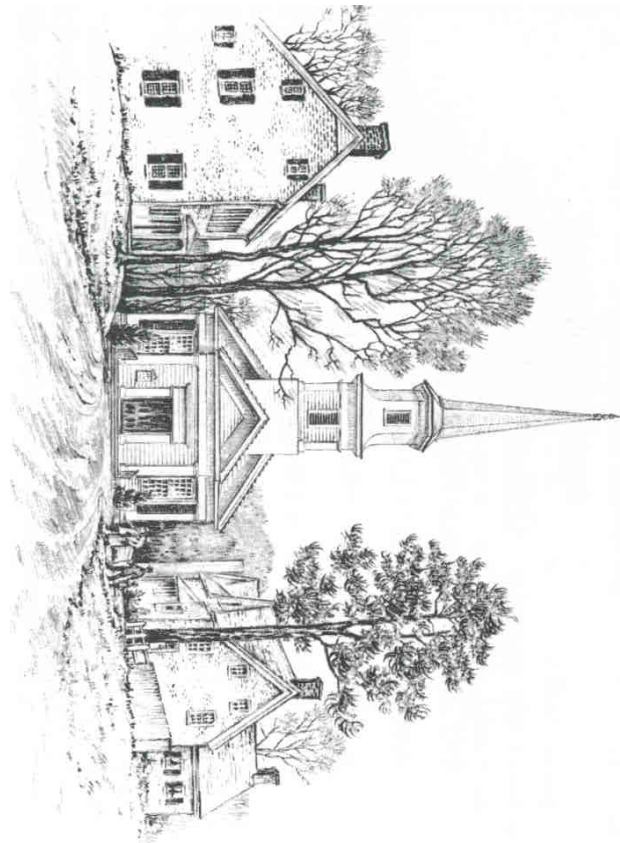
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Pastor

THE SPIRE
SEPTEMBER 2013