



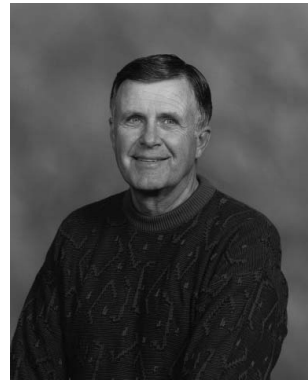
Sharon Howell  
Senior Pastor



David Livingston  
Associate Pastor



Barb Clinger  
Pastor of Senior Adult Ministries



Virgil Brady  
Pastor Emeritus



Sara Wentz  
Dir. of Discipleship Ministries



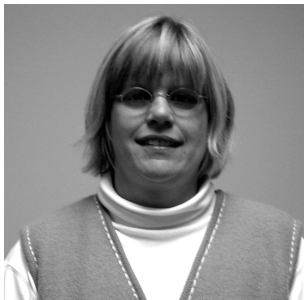
Rowena Pine  
Diaconal Minister Emerita



O. Wayne Turner  
Pastor of Children's Ministries



Sean Atchley  
Dir. of Youth Ministries



Pam Pechal  
Director of Childcare Ministries



Jill Ice  
Parish Nurse



Dan Abrahamson  
Organist



John Paul Johnson  
Director of Music Ministries

## First Church Staff (page 1) - 2004



Marie Clyatt  
Children's Music Associate



Candice Ranney  
Communications Assistant



Rachel Wegener  
Administrative Assistant



Susan Martin  
Office Assistant



Tracy Kihm  
Business Administrator



Bob Greenwood  
Financial Assistant



Roger Bain  
Facilities Coordinator



Darrell Vann  
Maint. & Custodial Coord.

## First Church Staff (page two) - 2004

## Conclusion – A Beginning

In September 2001 First Church completed an agreement with the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City for the purchase from them of 67 acres of prairie at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and K-10 bypass about 3 miles north of Clinton Lake west of Lawrence. The purchase price of \$1,700,000 was funded in part by a gift of \$750,000 from the Kansas East Conference of the United Methodist Church. This purchase culminated more than a decade of thinking, planning, and praying about the concept of one church– two campuses. Our connectional church, the Kansas East Conference, not only provided a large part of the down payment, but also helped fund a Pastor of Congregational Development, Rev. Lee Johnson. Writing in the NEXUS, Sharon Howell said, “I’ve known and worked with Lee since 1984. He is an elder, full member of the Kansas East Conference, and has been on the staff at Valley View UMC in Overland Park for 13 years. His current position [there] is Associate Pastor.” Lee began his pastorate with First Church on July 1, 2000.

On Sunday, November 11, 2001 at 3:00 p.m. over 200 of First Church faithful gathered under a large temporary tent on the new property to dedicate the land.



The Kansas Brass Quintet played prelude music followed by Songs of Celebration led by the Mid-Morning Worship Team. The service included a ‘Litany of Creation for the Blessing of the Land and Its People.’ Dr. Rob Reid led the choir accompanied by Dan Abrahamson on electronic keyboard. The choir and congregation sang, “Upon This Rock” by John Ness Beck. Bishop Fritz Mutti, Resident Bishop of the United Methodist Church, State of Kansas, delivered a dedication sermon. The service concluded with remarks by Rev. Sharon Howell, Senior Pastor of First Church. It was a beautiful day and an uplifting service! The future for First Church is indeed a bright one.

Chancel Cross  
By Sharon Howell

"Beneath the cross of Jesus  
I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock  
within a weary land;  
a home within the wilderness,  
a rest upon the way,  
from the burning of the noontide heat,  
and the burden of the day."

from the hymn "Beneath the Cross of Jesus", verse 1.

It was Dan Abrahamson's idea. He suggested that the chancel needed a cross suspended above the altar so that on the occasions when the altar was moved there would always be the visual reminder that this is the "house of the Lord."

Psalm 122:1

I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

The idea was presented to the Sesquicentennial Committee for consideration. There were a variety of opinions to be prayerfully considered. The decision was to move forward by sending a prospectus of the project to eight local artists and inviting each to submit a proposal for a chancel cross to be suspended above the altar. Three Lawrence artists responded and submitted a drawing and a small model of their cross. The artist selected for the project was Walt Hull.

Funding the project was easy. Russell Finch and Clifford Howe were members of First Church until their deaths. Cliff died November 12, 2001 at the age of 97. Russell died January 9, 2002 at the age of 94. They met when they both moved into the same retirement facility. They began to attend worship together and could be found every Sunday at the 8:30 am service in the same pew. Russell and Cliff were men of faith, who loved to worship their creator God and live their faith every day. Their families were asked about combining their memorial funds for the chancel cross project. They readily agreed and added to the total so that the project was fully funded.

During the summer of 2003, Dr. Norman Yetman, member of First Church and professor American Studies and Sociology at the University of Kansas, called senior pastor Sharon Howell, to see if the church would be interested in hosting the Rust College A Cappella Choir from Holly Springs, Mississippi on Sunday, March 14, 2004 when they were in Lawrence to kick-off "The Legacies and Unfinished Business of Brown v. Board of Education" fiftieth anniversary event at KU with a concert, "Our Nation's Diverse Musical Heritage." They would stay with members of First Church and then sing at the 11:00am worship service. (Notes: Dr. Yetman was serving on the Planning Committee for "The

Legacies....event". Rust College is the oldest of the eleven historically Black Colleges and Universities related to the United Methodist Church, the second oldest private college in Mississippi, the oldest historically Black College in the State, and one of the remaining five historically Black Colleges in America founded before 1867.) The response was an immediate "Yes!"

It was then decided to invite the Rev. Joyce Harris Scott to preach at the 11:00am service. Rev. Scott is currently the pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Kansas and founding director of Shalom U-PLAN (Urban People Living Abundantly Now). Rev. Scott is the longest tenured African-American clergywoman in the Kansas East

Conference of the United Methodist Church and was the inaugural recipient of the Bishop Leontine T. Kelly Justice Award by the National Organization of African American United Methodist clergywomen. Rev. Scott is married to Charles Scott who is the grandson and son of two of the attorneys who filed the Brown v. Board of Education lawsuit. Charles is an attorney in the Kansas City area. He was invited to speak at the Sunday Night Live! Program on the evening of March 14, 2004.

The Finch and Howe families chose March 14, 2004 as the day of dedication of the Chancel Cross. Members of the families came from all across the United States and filled three rows of pews. They provided a reception for the congregation after the conclusion of the worship

service. Rev. Scott's sermon was "The Gift of the Cross" and her scripture text was Luke 2:32-43. The Rust College A Cappella Choir under the direction of Zebbedee Reynolds Jones touched every heart and sang with passion and spirit. The cross was dedicated and the lives of Clifford Howe and Russell Finch were remembered with thanksgiving and gratitude. Jerry Niebaum read the following in the dedication liturgy,

"We dedicate this chancel cross in their memory. May it always be a symbol of God's unconditional love for each of us."

Lori Heasty, member of the Board of Trustees, responded

"We graciously accept this memorial gift from the families and friends of Russell Finch and Clifford Howe."

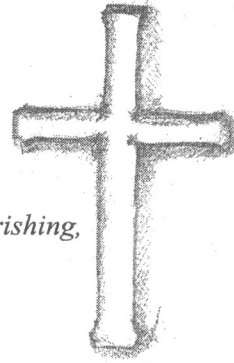
The cross hangs in the center of the chancel above the altar because it is the centerpiece of our faith in Jesus Christ. The cross is empty because Jesus was buried and raised from the dead. We are people of resurrection faith." It was a day of remembrance and celebration. The chancel cross dedication was a day when history and future met and God declared that is was good.

**Chancel Cross Dedication  
in memory of  
Russell Finch and Clifford Howe**

March 14, 2004

*"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,  
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

I Corinthians 1:18



Happy Friends Adult Fellowship  
by Millie Peters and Carol Abrahamson

In the early sixties, Millie Peters was a member of the WSCS and served as the chairperson for Christian Social Concerns. One of the books at the School of Mission in Baldwin that year was "Persons of Special Needs." Millie went to Baldwin and studied that book. She decided to make the church-wide study that year, "Persons of Special Needs." At that time, the church was holding the churchwide studies in the evening with a covered dish supper. Millie planned a panel discussion for the program and asked several of the local "helping" organizations to be on the panel.

Previous to this study, an article appeared in the Lawrence Daily Journal World about a new facility being opened for the developmentally disabled. The facility was being started by mothers of disabled children. One of the mothers was Bess Stone, a member of First United Methodist Church. One day when Bess was driving around Lawrence on behalf of this facility, she was killed in an automobile accident. When the center opened it became known as the Bess Stone Activity Center in her memory. (This center later became Cottonwood Inc. when a new expanded facility was built.)

Knowing this, Millie added Bess Stone Activity Center to the panel for the mission study and was so impressed with that project that she became a volunteer there. (Virginia Pearson, long time member of FUMC and UMW also volunteered for a while.)

Bonnie Miller was Director of Christian Education at FUMC at that time. She had formed a committee that started several new missions for the church. One of those things was an ecumenical Sunday School class for developmentally disabled people. The first class was held at the First Christian Church with about five members. Among them were Ricky Rice from Baldwin, Sammy Branson from Trinity Episcopal, Phylis Brockman from our church, and later, Gracie Preyer from the community. That class lasted until Cherry McCabria retired. Nancy Hardman, member of our church, helped with the class for a while. Then there was a lapse of time when Bonnie Miller left the church for Oklahoma, and Bert Potts became our Director of Christian Education. The class had not been meeting.

One Sunday Phylis Brockman, who had been coming to church with Millie, went to Bert Potts and said, "I want my Sunday School Class back." Bert came to Millie to ask her about teaching the class, and we began what became the Happy Friends Class. Millie taught the class for many years with help from other volunteers. Carol Abrahamson was among those who came to help, and she shortly began teaching the lesson while Millie designed the craft activity. Carol's daughter Emily started helping when she was graduated from high school. Emily and Carol have taught the class up to this day (summer of 2003). Millie retired in the late 1980's. Patty Hart joined the teaching staff in the late 1990's. Most recent volunteers included Jane Campbell and KU student Jessica Brown. Others have helped for short periods of time: Jackie Maninger, Jeannie Miller, and others who have been lost to our memory.

Happy Friends Class grew from its original five students to an average attendance of 20-25. Cottonwood Inc. always viewed the class as a wonderful opportunity to get its clients into normal community activities; so they have been consistent in providing transportation for the sheltered homes they run. Having this guaranteed transportation and having teaching continuity has helped to keep the class a stable and ongoing activity. During the 1990's the class underwent a name change to Happy Friends Adult Fellowship. The reason for the change was to make it obvious to church members and to the community that the class was indeed an adult activity; this name would seem less patronizing.

Over the years the class has become thoroughly integrated into church services. Members sit with their friends and have learned the traditions. For a time, we were annual acolytes for the 11 o'clock service until the middle service made it too difficult for us to practice. One activity that the church seems to really appreciate is having the class sing during the 11 o'clock service, about twice a year. We share songs related to our studies and even have class members who can read introduce some songs. Recently, a class member helped read scripture in church. When Emily's children were small, we used to have an end of the year picnic in South Park. Now there is an occasional party at the church. We love participating in the annual Thanksgiving Dinner and have helped the committee by making favors when we are asked. In recent years, the youth group has invited Happy Friends Adult Fellowship to join them for a Christmas party.

In more recent years we began to ask the congregation to collect their pennies for us to designate to some area of mission. We have donated in this way to Rebecca at the Well (the Haiti well project), Heifer Project International, and Mountain Top (the youth mission trip to Appalachia). We ask resource people to come to our class to help us understand what the mission does.

Our class is currently meeting on the third floor. One year when there were many other adult classes meeting there, we invited them to come visit us and supplied cookies and punch to greet them. In the spring of 2003, members of the church staff came to our class to do a lesson on marriage, funerals, baptism, communion, and confirmation. It is important to us to have those other adults and staff feel that they know who we are so they can be our friends and understand us better. We try to wear nametags so that folks will know our names, but they do tend to get lost by the end of the year.

The teachers at the present time are Carol Abrahamson, who acts as lead teacher and leads the singing and prayer time; Emily Cates, who acts as secretary, makes notes to go home, and puts notes in the newsletter when necessary; Patty Hart, who acts as liaison with Cottonwood, Inc.; and Jessica Brown who is a conversation friend. The teachers take turns planning and delivering the lesson. The lesson usually includes some kind of ~~the~~ activity (hands-on) at the end of the session. Among other Christian themes, the class has studied famous people of the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Parables of Jesus, and opposites in the Bible--a vocabulary development series. We have also had series of lessons about hygiene and we always remind members frequently about behavior in church and around children. We do not meet in the summer. We have decided that the break is

what helps the teachers come back year after year.

The structure of our class has remained fairly consistent over the years. We always begin with sharing and singing simple repetitive songs from our extensive repertoire. During our prayer time, class members offer prayers of thanksgiving or concern followed by the Lord's Prayer. Then follows the lesson and usually the table activity related to it.

Sometimes we do a page on the Sunday's theme for a booklet that we assemble at the end of the series of lessons.

Friendship is the theme for our class. We love each other. Occasionally there will be problems between class members but not often. Some members will stop coming for a while, just like adults in the church at large. Some are very dependable. Occasionally, some of the more "able" members will move into apartments and stop coming. Either transportation is more of a problem then, or they have grown away from us in developmental level. We have frequent couples. Several couples over the years have married. Robert and Connie Cropper are our current married couple. Some have come from FUMC families. Theresa Brown, daughter of Richard and Justyn Brown used to come before Alzheimers caught up with her. Currently, Jennifer Spoon, daughter of Marylou and Robert Vaughan is a member. Laura Bell, daughter of Peggy Bell, moved away a few years ago.

Other younger developmentally disabled children have been included in Sunday School and Youth Group. That is handled independent of us. For a number of years there was a hand-chime choir led by Shannon Bowles, who used working with the class as her KU internship project. She was paid for a while and then moved on. No volunteer was found to keep up with Happy Chimers after it was taken out of the budget. Carole Peters, daughter of Millie Peters who was the first teacher, is convening a UMWCircle called Phyllis Circle, in honor of Phyllis Brockman. The name honors the first Happy Friend, whose comment started the class. Several class members and a few others from Cottonwood participate in the Circle. They have fundraisers to raise mission funds and take retreat trips from time to time.

We hope that Happy Friends Adult Fellowship and activities for the developmentally delayed continue for many years to come.