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A Church, A Mural, A Minister and 140 Years

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

Celebration is the word for the Grace United Church of Christ in Conesville, Iowa. The fete will occur on Sunday, September 30, 2012. There will be a 9:30 A.M. worship service followed by a short program and a meal.

Just what are they celebrating? Lots of things. First of all, their minister, Rick Crooks, has now been with them for twenty years. This is a great reason to celebrate. Then, too, they are dedicating a newly painted mural in their overflow room. A young man from West Liberty named Jesus Ruvalcaba painted this mural. It beautifully portrays "The Lord's Supper." Lastly, they are praising God for the 140 years of their church's existence. One hundred forty years is something of pride.

Just when did the church begin? It started in 1865 by Rev. J.H. Buser. He held worship services at the Oakland School two miles southwest of Conesville. Then in 1872, the first church building, named German Reform Church, was built in Conesville at a cost of \$3,000. The people of the town and vicinity did the work. Rev. Buser served the church for about 20 years. The land for the

church building was donated by the H. Ricketts family, and was to revert back to the heirs if ever given up for church purposes. The church was open to all denominations. In 1883 it burned after a Christmas Eve gathering. Rev. Buser then again preached in the same little brown schoolhouse, which was now owned by the Methodists.

The present building was built in 1891. Shakespeare McKee donated 40 acres of wheat, which amounted to half of the funds needed for the project. In 1925, the name was changed to the Reformed Church and later to the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The church's denomination joined with the Christian Churches in 1957, and thus became the Grace United Church of Christ.

The church building has gone through many changes over the years. The sanctuary has been remodeled, new siding, new carpeting, geo thermal heating system installed, three new stained glass windows (along with the two original ones), and the Fellowship Hall added, along with a modern kitchen. The most recent addition is the mural, which is to be dedicated that day of celebration. There have been many challenges with the floods in the fellowship hall,



but everything is back to normal.

It is the congregation that makes the church what it is today along with several outstanding ministers over the years. A time of fellowship is enjoyed after Sunday services, bringing the congregation closer as a family of God.

The oldest member, Isabelle Buser, is 101 years old. Her husband is a descendant of Rev. J.H. Buser. She has attended the church for 96

years and is a regular every Sunday, thanks to her daughters. There are several young families in the congregation and the members know these young people will continue to carry the torch for many more years to come.

Share the joy: join the members of the Grace United Church of Christ on September 30th as they celebrate a church, a minister, a mural, and 140

counts; Self Directed IRA, Roth, Simple and SEPs; Coverdell Education Savings Accounts; SERPS; Profit Sharing Plans; 401(k); Iowa Advisor 529.

"Adding 'trust' to our name seemed a natural evolution," says Slight. "While our name is new, our Trust Department has the same experienced staff and wide range of services that have been in place for many years, but have recently seen increased demand. We look forward to continuing to grow this service area."

Community Bank and Trust is a full-service bank with offices in Columbus Junction, Muscatine, Wapello and Wilton.

Community Bank changes name

Community Bank has changed its name to Community Bank and Trust to reflect the growth of its Retirement, Investment and Trust Services Department, which now manages over \$100 million in assets. "We've seen a dramatic increase in the amount of interest in our Trust Services Department over the past few years," says Gary Slight, president, Community Bank and Trust. "We believe it benefits our customers as well as the community to continue to spread the word that a range of services are offered through our Trust

Department."

According to Slight, there is a growing number of customers seeking guidance on Trusts and Retirement accounts, which can create important tax advantages that help preserve the assets that they've worked hard to build. "Our experienced staff offers sound, personal, conservative advice," says Slight. "We are committed to helping each customer better manage their financial resources to enhance their life and prepare for the future."

Slight points out that many people

hear the word "trust" and think their Trust Services Department only handles estate management. "We do much more than that," he explains. At all branches, Community Bank and Trust's Trust Services Department provides a full spectrum of services.

These include: Executor Services; Living Trusts; Testamentary Trusts; Conservatorship; Cemetery Trusts; Agency Services; Unfunded Life Insurance Trusts; Irrevocable Insurance Trust; Health Savings Ac-

The Story of Lawrence Herrick: Chapter 10

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

Diary Entry of Mary Wilson, May 8, 2012, Reugny, France, evening: *It is as if my whole life was moving to this day and to this journey; only I did not know it. It is as if this town, these people, and this bed and breakfast where I sleep are in a different cosmos, and the elements of life have been pulling me in this direction. Whatever the forces, it has been a grand day, "une jour cette est tres grande."* It has been a proud day; pride of Major Lawrence Herrick and what he did for these people; pride for my brother, Richard Herrick, who so well represented our family, and pride for my late mother who endured all this, yet never much talked about it.

This day, this ceremony, and these people have been a moment in my life that has taken my breath away. "Il est tres bien!" Sometimes it is hard to describe feelings, and this has been one of those days. I could feel the joy and appreciation that these people felt toward us, and it was heartfelt. I returned these emotions to them to the best of my ability. I was totally overwhelmed by this ceremony and shocked that it occurred.

September 12th, 2012. Let me now tell you the events that led to this ceremony. On Monday, May 7th, the day of our arrival in France, we were met at the Paris airport by a lady who escorted us through all security and passport areas without waiting in line. I felt like royalty! We then rented a car and three hours later, as we pulled off the freeway exit ramp to enter Reugny, a car with a large American flag was waiting for us just off the ramp. This was organized by Daniel Sellier and his friend Edmund of Reugny who welcomed us and then led us into town.

We were taken to a Bed and Breakfast, and the city paid our first night there. Next we were guided to the city hall for a reception with the mayor and council people. This is

when, to our amazement, we were shown the plane parts from Lawrence's crashed airplane. Later we were served a dinner on an outside terrace at a beautiful home in a setting that can only be described as breathtaking. I began to realize that this was no ordinary trip!

We knew on Tuesday morning we would attend a ceremony in the town square, a ceremony that was a traditional celebration held every year, for Victory in Europe Day. It is much like our Memorial Day service. However, we did not know there would be a plaque dedicated to Lawrence Herrick during this ceremony and permanently placed in the town square. There also was a band that played the "Star Spangled Banner" for us and there was a parade. A group of second graders presented us flowers and pictures they had drawn on "Major Lawrence Herrick, our hero." There was a man dressed in military uniform exactly as Lawrence would have been. There were other people dressed in World War II garb, gas masks, etc. There was a speech about Lawrence given by the Mayor of Reugny, and then there were TV cameras and interviews with my brother, Richard Herrick because he was Lawrence's son.

Following the ceremony there was an outdoor wine reception with people of the village. Then a book by **Forced Landing** on Lawrence Herrick was presented to my brother and then we were led to a hall for the luncheon. There were several guests here, speeches were made, and this is where we met the living witnesses to the crash. We talked to as many as we could, but always a translator had to be the go-between, and this took a lot of time. The dessert made me cry. It was a large cake with a replica of Lawrence's plane and his awards, plus an American and French flag.

It was finally sinking in to me that these people really KNEW Lawrence Herrick. They knew all about his death and the days following; whereas, I knew almost nothing. We were surrounded with information coming so fast and in different languages that I just stepped back for a

couple of minutes unable to absorb it all at once, especially as mentioned before, some of the versions varied, and this added to the confusion.

I found myself beginning to concentrate while the French people spoke French. Once in a while I could understand them, but not much. Most of all I watched their faces, their moving hands, and the sound of their voices. It was obvious that there was still some anger here—anger felt toward the Germans. Some were reluctant to talk; some talked very rapidly; some talked about it for the first time in their lives.

You see, some people of the village in the beginning of the war had been on the "side" of the Germans, letting them into the village. On the other hand, some people were part of the resistance group and had aided the Allies. How did one side know who was on which side, who was in what group and whom to trust? Perhaps people thought it was best just not to talk about it, and silence was kept for many years. This ceremony was bringing together a lot of emotions for them and for us.

The next day we were driven around to various locations: the crash site, the farmhouse where the body was taken, and the site of the locomotive and where it exploded. We saw the sanitarium where the lady doctor was and the trail she took to run through the timber to the crash site. We also were taken to a nearby town where there was a large railroad bridge, a huge arched stone viaduct. Each stop was like being part of a movie, a movie that happened a long time ago, but was now being revealed to us. For me one of the most touching moments was the time we visited the classroom of the second graders who had presented us flowers and drawn the pictures. They had studied Lawrence Herrick, and they appeared to be



Briefly -

Benefit for Cody Boyd

A benefit will be held for Cody Boyd (the 20-year-old son of Deb and Dave Boyd of rural Conesville, who was injured in a canning accident on July 29th) on Saturday, September 29 at the Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds. The Silent Auction will be from 1-4 p.m. Food will be served from 5-8 p.m. A \$10 donation will be taken at the door. Throughout the day a bake sale, live auction, raffle and 50/50 drawing will take place. For more information or to donate, contact Becky Johns at 319-725-6612 or Dan Wehmeyer at 319-750-9053.

City Council to meet

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a bid opening, public hearing and regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, September 26, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at the New Civic Center/City Hall.

Class of 1982 plans Reunion

Attention Columbus Community Class of 1982 (and parents): Some of us have been making plans for our 30th year class reunion. We still need some addresses; if you can help—that would be great! We want to find as many classmates as possible. Our plans are: Columbus Day Weekend—Friday, October 12th at 7 p.m. meet and greet at Rumors and Excuses; Saturday, October 13th watch parade at Rumors and Excuses, 5-8 p.m. dinner at the Thirsty Camel, then go to an exclusive location for a night of fun. Any questions or addresses please call Deb (Sands) Halstead at 319-750-2636.

Jack Cecil Memorial Car Show

The 2nd Annual Jack Cecil Columbus Day Car Show will be held on Saturday, October 13th from 8-noon. Registration ends at 10 with awards at 11:15. Bring your hot rod, custom, muscle or classic car or truck, even motorcycle to join in raising money for a local family impacted by cancer. This is held in conjunction with the Columbus Day Celebration. Come join the festivities, join in the parade after and have fun with the crowd. We are asking a \$20 entry donation to help raise funds. Top 25 awards, Best of Show, special awards also. Door prizes are being sought. For more information contact Curt Larkin 641-990-4436 or curt.larkin@johnston.k12.ia.us. Special invite to the class of '82 to bring out your special rides and relive some of the "high school" spirit during your reunion!

Conesville Church celebrates 140th

The Conesville Church of Christ will have a celebration on September 30, 2012 for their 140th anniversary. There will be a 9:30 A.M. worship service, followed by a short program, and then a meal. More details next week.

CWO Prince and Princess to be in float

ATTENTION: all past CWO Prince and Princess of Hearts - You are invited to ride on our float in the Columbus Day parade, October 13th. Please contact Twyla Peters at 319-728-3104 and leave your name and number if interested. Please respond by October 6th 2012.

Grandview Women's Club trip

The Grandview Women's Club will have a Fall Day Trip on Thursday, October 11th. Please be at the Grandview School Complex at 8 a.m. Contact Judy Heuer regarding your participation.

Habitat Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to help build the 12th Habitat home in Louisa County. The home is located at 2607 Burlington Street, Columbus City. Weather permitting, work is scheduled for Wednesday and Friday mornings, 8-12, and Saturday 8:00-2:00. If you can lend a hand with the work or with refreshments, please call 319-728-2775 or 319-728-2346 or show up at the work site on a scheduled workday.

Public Health meeting scheduled

The Louisa County Public Health Emergency Planning multidisciplinary planning meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Wapello Ambulance Barn on Highway 61 in Wapello. The focus of the meeting will be implementing a countywide coalition to coordinate emergency response activities related to public health and safety. Kathy Vance will once again moderate the meeting.

Littleton Brothers Program

The Washington County Genealogical Society is sponsoring a program given by Tom Woodruff and Ed Bayne entitled "Six Littleton Brothers from Louisa County, Iowa: All Casualties of the Civil War." The program will take place on Tuesday, October 2nd at 7 p.m. in the Nicola-Stouffer Room of the Washington Public Library. The public is encouraged to attend.

5K Fun/Walk in Morning Sun

The Morning Sun PTO is sponsoring a Haunted 5K Fun Run/Walk. This will be held on Saturday, October 20th with registration beginning at 5:00 p.m. and the race to start at 6:00 p.m. The fee is \$20 per person and if you pre-register before October 5th you will be guaranteed a free shirt. We will also be giving each runner a glowstick as it will be dusk when we start. Ages groups will be as follows: 12 and under, 13-19, 20-29, 31-39, 40-49, 50 and over. There will be medals awarded to the top male and female in each age group. There will also be a costume contest. The top 3 runners with the best costumes will win a prize. The run will start at the Morning Sun school and end at the school. The run will be held rain or shine with no refunds. For more information please call Jill Townsley at 563-260-5335 or email jbcattle@louisacommm.net.

Music Students meeting

A meeting is planned for parents/guardians of CCHS music students today, Wednesday, September 26 at 6:30 pm in the CCHS music room. We will be discussing the Spring 2014 music trip and have information about the first fundraising opportunity for students. Please plan on attending!

School Board to meet

The Board of Education for the Columbus Community School District will hold a special public meeting on Friday, September 28, 2012, at 1 p.m. at the Columbus Administrative Office.

U of IA Mobile Clinic in C.J.

The University of Iowa's Mobile Clinic program will be holding upcoming clinics in Columbus Junction to provide physicals, health screenings, health education and other services. The clinics will be on Saturday, October 20th and Saturday, November 17th from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Wilma Sime Roundy Elementary School.

