

**Lynnhurst Congregational  
United Church of Christ**

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
1910-2010**



**HONORING 100 YEARS  
OF FAITH, COMMUNITY  
AND SERVICE**

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Grace and peace to you!

The document you are about to read is a history of the first 100 years of life at Lynnhurst Congregational United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As with any such history, it cannot possibly hope to cover every detail of life spread over an entire century. Still, I think that you will find that this document gives you a great sense of our church community, with its particular warp and woof.

Several people deserve thanks for making this centennial anniversary history happen. First, I would like to thank all those people who have come before our current generation at Lynnhurst. As you will see on these pages, Lynnhurst was built by people of courage and faith over many generations. Though much of the document deals with the various clergy who have served our congregation, this history attests to the fact that we are first and foremost a church fashioned of the people, for the people, and by the people. I would like to particularly thank all those folks who put together the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary history, on which this document is based.

Second, I would like to thank several people in this generation. My thanks go to Mary Lynum, Mary Kay Willert, and Lisa Macklem (our church secretary) who helped put this current edition of the church's history together. I added some of my own thoughts to the document, but they have really taken leadership on this project. I also want to thank all the good people who have volunteered time, talent, and energy to make our centennial anniversary so special. In addition to those listed above, I would also like to thank Tristen Lindemann, Dianne Mills, Lori Nicol, Tom Shaw, Becky Kruse, Ann Makredes, Lance Brockman, Analee Strandskov, Elinor Strandskov, Paul Olson, Peggy Swalm, Lynn Dixon, and Henrik Strandskov. With their support and guidance, these festivities have become exactly what they should be – the Party of the Century!

Whatever our second century holds, my prayer for Lynnhurst is that we will keep striving, with each passing year, to more fully live out the love and grace exemplified by Jesus. We have shown a deep commitment to God's concern for all people in our first century. May the Spirit guide us on into a future of ever-deepening prayer, community, justice and joy!

In Christ's peace,

Rev. David B. Lindsey, Senior Minister



**LYNNHURST CENTENNIAL**  
**WORSHIP SERVICE**  
*OCTOBER 24, 2010, 10:00 A.M.*  
**THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Prelude:**

*Intrada*, Jan Bender; Susan Rose, French Horn

*Prelude to Te Deum*, Marc Charpentier;  
Christopher Anderson, Trumpet

**Welcome and Announcements:**

Rev. David Lindsey

**Choral Call to Worship:** *Glory Be to God*,  
Handel/Liebergen

**Call to Worship:** Rev. John Slothower

One: Today, we celebrate God's steadfast ways!

**All: The Lord has blessed us for a hundred years!**

One: Praise God, whose wondrous grace has brought us here!

**All: Across the generations, God is faithful!**

One: We praise the living God! Our hearts are joyful!

**All: Sing out! Rejoice! The Lord is with us always!**

**Opening Hymn #400**

*Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation* NCH

**Invocation:** Elizabeth Mahan

**All: Loving God, we praise your wondrous name. Your Holy Spirit has dwelt among us over the years, inspiring generations to love you and to love one another. Help us to keep living out the teachings of Christ, that we might embody your love for the world in the coming generations. AMEN.**

**K-2 Children's Choir:** *We Are the Church*  
Avery/March

**Children's Time**

**Lord's Prayer** (debts / debtors)

**Youth Choir :** *Change Will Come*  
Composed by the Youth Choir

**Welcoming New Members and Baptism**

**Anthem:** *From the Past We Hear Your Voices*  
Strandskov/Dixon

**Our Life Together** (Joys and Concerns)

**Pastoral Prayer:**

Rev. David Lindsey

**Offertory:** *Hodie* Donnelly/Strid  
Women's Quartet (Debbi Christensen, Lynn Dixon,  
Debi March and Mary Kay Willert)

**Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Scripture**

Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7

Rev. David Lindsey

**Hymn** (insert) *From the Past We Hear Your Voices*  
Strandskov/Dixon

**Scripture**

Luke 22:35-38

Rev. David Lindsey

**Sermon**

*What Time Is It?*

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers

**Closing Hymn #37**

*God, You Have Set Us* NCH

**Benediction and Response ("Amen")**

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers

**Postlude:** *Crown Imperial*

William Walton/Arr. Jay Bruns

**We warmly welcome** all who are visiting with us today. Lynnhurst is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.

**NCH-** New Century Hymnal (black cover)

**PH-** Pilgrim Hymnal (red cover)

**Lynnhurst Church Vision Statement**

*We worship, study, and recognize Christ's spirit in each person.*

*We strive to be a spiritually thriving, diverse Christian fellowship.*

*We lovingly act **to build community, develop faith, and to put our faith into action**, based on our belief that God is still speaking.*



# THE STORY OF LYNNHURST CHURCH: HOW WE BEGAN

Lynnhurst Church began with a Sunday school on the afternoon of August 9, 1903 at 4328 Lyndale Avenue South, with teachers brought from Lyndale Congregational Church under the leadership of its pastor, Dr. Charles E. Burton. After brief residences at other places in the neighborhood, including a tent, it found refuge in a little chapel on Bryant Avenue at 45<sup>th</sup> Street, which the Minneapolis Congregational Union built. The chapel was dedicated on February 5, 1905. From that date forward, church services were held there, first through the courtesy of interested city pastors, then from 1907 to 1909



under the leadership of Reverend H.B. Beard. A Ladies Aid Society was formed in March, 1905. Thus, two core foundations of Lynnhurst Church were instituted: an emphasis on the religious education of children and the valued contributions of the women of the church.

The cornerstone of the present church sanctuary on Colfax Avenue at 45<sup>th</sup> Street was laid on July 11, 1909. The original chapel now forms the rear part of the sanctuary. The builder, Victor Fridlund, and his wife were charter and lifelong members of the church. The first service was held in the basement of the new building on February 27, 1910.

The church was legally incorporated at a meeting of charter members on September 15, 1910, in the social hall. The officers included J. Bryan Bushnell, the first superintendent of the Sunday school, and Frank J. Seidl, who served as tenor soloist in the choir. Lynnhurst Church's extraordinary tradition of voluntary participation by members contributing their time and talent to religious education and music was established at its very inception.

On **October 26, 1910**, an ecclesiastical council was convened in the lecture room. According to the record, the council formally recognized the Lynnhurst Congregational Church and launched the society into the fellowship of Congregational Churches. It is this date that we celebrate as Lynnhurst's "birthday".

Pastors and lay people from 17 churches were present, including:

Rev. Harry P. Dewey, Plymouth Church	Rev. E. C. Lyons, Minnehaha Church
Rev. W. N. Medlar, Linden Hills Church	Rev. C. J. Swain, Excelsior Church
Rev. H. K. Painter, Como Avenue Church	Rev. Matt Evans, Anoka Church
Rev. S. M. Humby, Forest Heights Church	Richard Chute, Lowry Hill Church
Rev. J. W. Davis, Oak Park Church	Mrs. D. F. Moody, Fremont Ave. Church
Rev. A. W. Ross, 38th Street Church	S. T. Johnson, Park Avenue Church
Rev. W. L. Meinzer, Bethany Church	

Among the delegates present were:

P. Stacy	S. W. Pond
Lowell E. Jepson,	Mr. And Mrs. C. M. Way
H. B. Beard	Rev. R. P. Herrick
J. M. McBride	Rev. G. R. Merrill

(Among those designated but unable to attend were several notable local citizens of the era: Dr. Cyrus Northrup, H. A. Scriver, David C. Bell, Charles M. Loring, W. A. Eggleston, George H. Elwell and Charles A. Bovey.)

The names of some of these delegates connect the history of Lynnhurst Church with one of the earliest missionary efforts in Minnesota. In 1835, approximately 75 years before Lynnhurst was recognized as a Congregational Church, the two Pond brothers, Samuel and Gideon, came to Minneapolis from the First Congregational Church of Washington, Connecticut. They built a house and mission post on Lake Harriet, where the pavilion later stood, to worship with the Sioux and teach them to read and write the Dakota language. The first marriage of non-Native Americans in what was later Minnesota is said to have been that of Samuel Pond to Cordelia Eggleston. In 1839 they moved to Bloomington and many of their descendants are still in the area.

The Lynnhurst Church sanctuary was completed in the spring of 1911 and the church was dedicated in a series of services in May and June, beginning with an organ recital on May 19, 1911. The program of dedication services stated:

*"The building as it stands today with organ and equipment is valued at \$14,000 and is the child of the Congregational Union of this city, to whom it owes its life and present prosperity. Mr. D. D. Webster, the president of the Union, with Mr. John B. Bushnell, whom the members delight to call the father of the church, have given their time, money and prayers to the completion of the building and the organization of the church, which today has 175 adult members, a Sunday school primary department with 85 little tots and whose senior department has an average attendance of 90 girls and boys."*

The services consecrated the church to the worship of God and to the causes of patriotism, education, children and brotherhood and fellowship. These cornerstones provided strength in confronting the various challenges and societal changes of the times to come. 100 years later, these values still endure.



# 100 YEARS AGO: A SNAPSHOT

In 1910, William Howard Taft was President of the United States, A. D. Eberhart was Governor of Minnesota, and James C. Hayes was Mayor of Minneapolis. The flour mills were flourishing, producing over 15 million barrels annually and Minneapolis was a thriving city of 325,282. Dayton's Department Store and the Radisson Hotel were in the midst of construction. The massive stone courthouse on 5<sup>th</sup> Street had been completed shortly before, after 19 years under construction. The court house clock was larger than any tower clock in the world, including Big Ben! The logging industry in Northern Minnesota had been depleted, and Charles A. Bovey had sawed his last log above St. Anthony Falls and was dismantling the huge Bovey DeLaitre Lumber Company. The Twin Cities were the railway transportation center of the states to the West.



100 years ago there were no sidewalks on Colfax Avenue or 45<sup>th</sup> Street, and only one house stood between the church and 46<sup>th</sup> Street. There was no other church south of 38<sup>th</sup> Street between Harriet Avenue and Lake Harriet. There was no Clara Barton School on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and the Bryant Avenue streetcar went only as far as 46<sup>th</sup> Street. Clinton Morrison had plotted his Lynnhurst Addition and given its name to the community in 1903, the same year the Lynnhurst Sunday School started operations. The Lynnhurst neighborhood was evolving to be a suburb of Minneapolis, that burgeoned during and after the World War I years.

Beyond Minneapolis and the Lynnhurst Church neighborhood, Haley's Comet made a rare appearance in the sky, causing excitement and some anxiety. Edward VII, Tolstoy and Mark Twain died, ragtime music was in style and Stravinsky's "Firebird" was considered modern classical music.

## “BACK IN THE DAY”... A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

As a community of individuals and families, Lynnhurst activities have always gone beyond worship and mission. Since the earliest days of the past 100 years, Lynnhurst folks have been part of the larger Minneapolis neighborhood, finding unique ways to share and to have fun! As was typical in the society at large, as well as other churches, many of the social activities were divided by gender and “appropriate” roles.

LYNNHURST MEN'S CLUB GETS INTO SHAPE



—Times Staff Photographer  
With a bit of table tennis exercise to get them in good condition, members of the Lynnhurst Congregational Church Men's club met at the church Wednesday night to prepare plans for the organization's twenty-fifth anniversary, which will be observed October 6 to 9. Taking active part in arrangements, left to right, Judge Levi M. Halmerman, Harry Burgum, Albert Thompson, Sel Flehr and Donald Knowles, president.

While the men of Lynnhurst Church held many important positions in the church, Lynnhurst women began to serve in leadership capacities early on in the church's history. The men were instrumental in seeing to the upkeep of the building's facilities and opened the gym to the Boys' Club of Minneapolis and the Boy Scouts; they organized basketball and other sport tournaments for youth in the gym. In fact, Lynnhurst Church was once advertised as the

“Gym with the church on top”! Annual Sports Night dinners were a great tradition, with prominent sports figures of the day in attendance. The men held minstrel shows in the 1920's, but they were discontinued when such performances were looked down upon. At that point, variety shows and theatrical productions were produced, featuring the children of the church.

The women of Lynnhurst were the backbone of the congregation, particularly active in fund raising and mission work. A Women's Federation was formed during the 1910s with four or five Circles. Each Circle had its own focus and money-making projects.



Some of the activities that the women of Lynnhurst Church led over the years included:



- Funding the building of the parsonage.
- Holding “Hat Shows” and luncheons in the gym.
- Selling mincemeat pies and roasted peanuts to raise funds.
- Held rummage and antique sales in the 1930s, which were held in downtown Minneapolis until the 1950s, when the sales were moved to the Lynnhurst gym.
- Making the annual Men’s Group Sports Night dinners possible by preparing and serving the meal.
- Cooking and serving the annual turkey dinners for the Masonic Lodge on Bryant Avenue (23 turkeys were roasted for each dinner).
- Serving Thursday evening family dinners during Lent.
- Sponsoring ongoing bridge tournaments and parties with luncheons.
- Formation of a young mother’s club in the 1940s.
- Establishing the tradition of coffee hour after the service. (Thanks to the energy and drive of Betty Martin, a small kitchen was built on the first floor by the Fellowship Hall to facilitate the coffee hours.)

In addition, Big Band dances with live music were held in the gym. It was at one of these dances in the 1930's that a young woman met a trumpet player and they later married. Thus began the long involvement of the Jean and Bob Cutler family in Lynnhurst Church. Carnivals were held early on, which featured games and a “Kangaroo Court” (there were no shortages of justices as 6 prominent judges were members of Lynnhurst at the time). Movies were shown in the gym for a 5¢ admission charge. Betty Martin remembers seeing “Tarzan of the Apes”, which was extremely exciting to the children of the time. During World War II, people of Lynnhurst prepared and sent a newsletter, The Beam, to their soldiers overseas, keeping them abreast of the news of the church and its people.



# LYNNHURST CHURCH'S MINISTERS: LEGACIES OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

*James Winifred Cool, 1910-1914*

The church historian of Mr. Cool's time wrote: "*James Winifred Cool was as big of heart as he was of stature—a man's man.*" His training, in the law and for the pulpit, provided a unique ability to lay the foundation of a religious institution. Every day he practiced the principles written into the lines of Sam Walter Foss's "The House on the Side of the Road", which he quoted frequently.

"... Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
Where the race of men go by-  
The men who are good and the men who are bad,  
As good and as bad as I.  
I would not sit in the scorner's seat  
Nor hurl the cynic's ban-  
Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man."

Perhaps the most notable example of this was the occasion when he opened the church to the homeless and unemployed men during an unusually cold winter. He dealt with the criticism which followed from those whose Christianity was of a less practical sort, and stamped Lynnhurst as a "friend to man." The years of Dr. Cool's pastorate were colorful – marked by a fast growing membership and strong differences of opinion, as frequently result when people of various faiths join together to create a new community.

Mr. Cool had the distinction of being called as the first minister of the church at a meeting presided over by Gratia Countryman, a scholar revered by generations of parents, teachers and children as the head of the Minneapolis Public Library. Mr. Cool presided at the weddings of J. Bryan Bushnell, the church superintendent, to Betty MacPhail, and Clarence R. Chaney, another charter member, to Bessie Bobb, a Sunday School teacher and charter member of Lynnhurst Church. Clarence and Bess were long active as officers and members of the boards of the church, and Clarence was part of the Minnesota Council and National Council of Congregational Christian Churches.

*W. Walter Blair, 1914-1919*

Mr. Blair was a man of deep spiritual convictions and a thorough student of the Bible. After the unrest of the formative years, the Lynnhurst Church stabilized under his preaching to a period of progress and growth. The United States' entry into World War I, however, soon brought many distractions, and a pastor of less constancy of purpose might have lost his heart. Not Mr. Blair; he threw himself into the outside tasks which presented themselves daily, but never for a moment relinquished his leadership of Lynnhurst's many activities.

*Charles Leon Mears, 1919-1924*

Mr. Mears was said to resemble the famous attorney William Jennings Bryan in appearance and in his strong personality. He was much appreciated by the youth of Lynnhurst and their activities thrived under his genial smile. In fact, the number of young people and families rapidly grew to the point where more space and a community center were needed, and plans for a new building were discussed. With the decision to build the parish house, these plans ripened into a financial campaign and soon the work was underway. The parish house, a thoroughly modern structure of steel and stone, was underway when Mr. Mears presented his resignation on July 19, 1924. However, he continued in the pulpit until the laying of the cornerstone, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 1924.

A parsonage was also built during the pastorate of Mr. Mears. The cost of this building was fully paid through the efforts of the Lynnhurst Women's Federation, which also assumed the responsibility of maintaining it over the years.



*William Harris Pankhurst, 1924-1930*

Mr. Pankhurst was an Englishman who was called from a church in Canada, after an interim of several months in which the pulpit was filled by Dr. Albert Parker Fitch of Carleton College. Mr. Pankhurst was admired as a brilliant sermonizer and, as the annual reports of his pastorate indicate, a competent and assertive administrator. During this period a large part of the debt incurred for the parish house was paid. But the remainder, due to the onset of the Depression years, was long deferred. The church attained perhaps its largest membership during these years and the church school had an average attendance of over 400. The children pledged \$2,000 toward the construction of the parish house, through an organization known as "The Busy Builders", so called because each member constructed their own building from paper stones, at a cost of 5¢ cents per stone.

"A return to normalcy", a phrase introduced by President Harding, pervaded the church as it did the nation after World War I. The surrounding neighborhood grew to maturity in the 1920s. Surrounded by lakes and parks with many houses of great charm and solid construction, it attracted successive generations as one of the finest neighborhoods in the metropolitan area for living and for raising children. An interesting fact of this era is that Lynnhurst began to be known as the church home of a great many judges and their families, among them: Paul Guilford; Arthur Selover; Levi Hall; W. W. Bardwell; P. L. Lamoreaux; Elmer Anderson; and the long-time federal judge Gunnar Nordbye.

*Rodney L. McQuary, 1930-1948*

The pastorate of Dr. McQuary spanned the aftermath of the 1929 Stock Market crash and the Great Depression, the bitter Minneapolis labor disputes and political upheavals of the 1930s, World War II and the advent of the nuclear age. A harder time to minister to the needs of a church and a community beset with these uncertainties and fears is difficult to imagine. But he is remembered with affection as an able preacher and a thoughtful counselor. Dr. McQuary was at heart an artist, and a skilled one. He made and carved all of Lynnhurst's chancel furniture, which is still in use and treasured – the communion table, the pulpit, the lectern, the baptismal font, the kneeling bench and the chancel chairs; he also painted the "faux stained glass" designs on the windows in the sanctuary. also started the tradition of pausing to take stock of progress, with the celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1935. Spurred, no doubt, by this event, the board

of trustees took leadership in the restoration of the basement of the sanctuary, which was officially dedicated as a social hall in the autumn of 1934.



### *L. Churchill Austin, 1948-1956*

When Mr. Austin was called to Lynnhurst Church, after the long war years, the church enthusiastically responded to leadership marked by youth, vitality, awareness of the possibilities of service and a willingness to tackle the financial problems that had to be solved before those possibilities could be realized. His energetic leadership was aided by his wife, Jean and their children; by the efforts and skills of those recently returned from war service; by the continued faithful service of older members; and by the addition of the many new and active members attracted by his forward looking programs. Within four years all money borrowed for the parish house had been repaid. Pledges for war victims and reconstruction, for the national building fund and for other missions were generously made and fulfilled. Mr. Austin's unique contribution was, by a philosophy that combined optimism and realism, to instill a standard of stewardship and service during and after the first surge of post-war inflation.

Mr. Churchill's pastorate was interrupted from 1950-1952 by his recall to the Army for service as a chaplain in Korea. However, the momentum he had inspired continued through the interim service of the Rev. Theodore Stoercher. The evidence of the continued spirit of stewardship and progress was the completion of many needed restorations and improvements, including remodeling and equipping the church kitchen and the acquisition of a new electric organ.

Churchill Austin resigned at the end of 1956 to pursue a career in business with a corporation based in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Lynnhurst proudly supported him in his new ventures and occasionally prevailed upon his generosity in the ensuing years.

It was during this period that a proposal to merge the Congregational Christian Churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the new United Church of Christ, a union of autonomous local churches subscribing to a constitution, was introduced. This new constitution established a general synod and national boards to carry out common purposes, to the extent permitted by contributions of funds by the churches through state conferences. In 1956, Lynnhurst Church held a meeting in which a resolution declining to join the United Church was defeated by a substantial majority. Although a small number of members choose to withdraw from Lynnhurst as a result of the vote's outcome, overall it was settled without acrimony or detriment to the welfare of the church.



### *E. Paul Sylvester, 1957-1967*

Dr. Paul Sylvester came to Lynnhurst with a long and distinguished background of service in large churches, and as an involved and influential member of the national boards of the Congregational Christian Churches. He was a man of energy and vision. These qualities were invaluable to Lynnhurst as the church continued to learn the state and national operations of the new United Church of Christ and manage the stewardship of the church's resources.



The 1950s were a time in which Lynnhurst Church suffered a significant loss of members through death or relocation, and the previous affiliations of new neighborhood residents changed considerably. The church's remaining base of support had to be strengthened and widened both in finances and in

terms of personal service. Dr. Sylvester put personal service first.

The response to his leadership was inspiring. Many members assumed and filled unaccustomed responsibilities in positions established and defined by a revision of the new UCC church by-laws. The church school-related youth activities were broadened with more volunteer help, and achieved the record levels of regular attendance. Elizabeth Sylvester contributed greatly by assembling and directing the children's choirs.

Dr. Sylvester's view was *where your heart is, so goes your money*; which proved to be true. The financial position of the church improved in these years, not by repurposing programs to meet deficits, but by renewed and increased giving to meet the current budget and the continuing need for restoring and improving church properties. All borrowing was repaid except for occasional need to borrow from reserve funds established in the same years. Lynnhurst's participation in the worldwide ministry of the church reached the highest level of the church's history.

In 1960 Lynnhurst celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, honoring the path that had been set forth by the founding ministers and congregations, and setting forward into the future.

In 1962, Lynnhurst welcomed a group from the 38<sup>th</sup> Street Open Door Church. Among those who became part of the Lynnhurst family were Harry Bergquist, Roy & Flora Rosendale, Mr. & Mrs. Carl B. Hanson, Sylvia Dokken, Marion Stewart, Esther Gallagher, Gene Terres, Minnie Terres, Mrs. H. L. Alden, Mrs. Petra Danielson, Mildred Huesman, Mr. & Mrs. D. L. Mackenzie, Mr. & Mrs O. A. Ness, Mr. & Mrs. Claude Olson, Mrs. E. E. Bullis, Mrs. M. R. Cook, Patricia Huesman, Mrs. Hilda Luethi, Mrs. Neve Mercer, Mrs. Carl Olstad, Mrs. E. W. Parker, Mrs. Marguerite Ponto, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Strauel, Mrs. Greta Tharp and Mrs. Mildred Kennedy.

In the latter part of Dr. Sylvester's service at Lynnhurst, the church moved forward with remodeling the sanctuary. Plans for extensive remodeling were approved on May 22, 1966. The planning committee included Tom Roden as chairman, Joe Harvey, Bert Marconett, Lorraine Whitney and Mrs. H. L. Alden; and ex-officio members Arthur Whitney, moderator, and Bill Templeton, chairman of the board of trustees. The architects were Miller, Whitehead and Dinwiddie and the general contractor was Carlson-LaVine, Inc. The chancel was redesigned and the choir area was moved down to be visible on the left, and the organ and the minister on the right. New pews with cushions were installed. Rather dramatic changes were made in lighting and in carpeting, red being thought more optimistic than the prevailing blue. Pledges were received for the entire cost, which was paid without long-term borrowing. The work was completed during the summer, and an open house was held on December 4, 1966.

Paul and Elizabeth Sylvester retired in 1967 to Duluth, near members of their family.

### *Thomas R. Breckenridge, 1968-1978*

Tom Breckenridge received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota, where his father had a distinguished career of many years as a professor and head of the Museum of Natural History. Rev. Breckenridge attended the Hartford Seminary Foundation and received his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees at United Theological Seminary. He was ordained and became pastor of First Congregational Church of Brattleboro, Vermont in 1964. He was called as pastor of Lynnhurst in February, 1968.

Rev. Breckenridge's sermons reflected his strong academic background and his commitment to making the Bible and Bible studies meaningful and useful in a changing society. His pastorate was during a time of the greatest change in social attitudes,

perceptions and traditions, particularly of the youth in the world at large. It was a time of disillusionment with the government and the "Establishment", with the Viet Nam War, student draft protests, the civil rights movement, changing sexual attitudes, the burgeoning Women's and Gay Liberation movements, the prevalence of drug use and the Watergate scandal. Rev. Breckenridge (or Tom; it was during this era that holding to the formality of pastoral titles fell away and the relationship with the pastors became more familiar) was a generation ahead of these upheavals, but young enough to bring understanding to them by dealing with them within the framework of Christian principles. He was called upon to respond to new and confusing challenges, counseling young people and their parents, who were struggling to navigate through this period of division and change. Tom was a source of encouragement and understanding through his thoughtful sermons and non-judgmental listening. His devotion to his own young family was inspiring and his wife Marilyn contributed enormously to the choir and to other work of the church. His children, John, Sarah and Mary, each participated according to their talents in the field of Christian Education.



Tom was fascinated by the organization and administration of churches; particularly of the congregational tradition, where the members have the right and responsibility of making collective decisions about accumulating and using the money and property needed to carry on programs. He combined his experience with Lynnhurst and with his studies at United Theological Seminary to write a thesis that could serve as a manual for this kind of parliamentary government. The church members are accountable to themselves, to each other and to God for their decisions. It was of particular value to new members, who increasingly began to take over the responsibilities of administration in Tom's later years. While the natural loss of church members continued and financial resources were needed, the energy and ability of those who came at this time gave Lynnhurst great hopes for the future.

In 1970 Tom and three other pastors organized an association of churches of all persuasions in the South Minneapolis area, known by the acronym of TRUST (Toward Renewing Unity in Service Together). The neighborhoods served had recently been impacted by the construction of the 35W freeway. The purpose of the organization was to enlist the churches and their members to contribute ideas, personal services and/or

money in order to identify and help supply practical support not otherwise provided to those in need by government or other institutions. Meals On Wheels, a home chore service, counseling and chaplaincy at local nursing homes are some examples of what TRUST offered, and continues to provide. Members of Lynnhurst actively participated in these programs and have been aided by them, and at the beginning provided space for TRUST headquarters. It has become a successful and highly thought of ecumenical effort in South Minneapolis.

In 1968 Tom resigned from his pastorate and secured a position in personnel and training with a prominent Minneapolis brokerage firm. Marilyn completed seminary studies and served as an associate minister in a neighboring church. We are grateful for the love and strength they brought to Lynnhurst.

*John K. Rohde (Interim), Spring 1978 to Autumn 1979*

John Rohde came to Minneapolis from Olivet UCC in Olivet, Michigan, while his wife, Nancy, attended United Theological Seminary. He served Lynnhurst with great devotion and ability for 16 months, during which, with the assistance of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ officers, Lynnhurst Church was able to review and be reviewed by numerous candidates for a call to ministry. John next served Mizpah UCC in Hopkins as interim associate minister from the Fall of 1979 to the Spring of 1980.

*Robert W. Griggs, 1979-2005*

Rev. Dr. Robert Griggs, Lynnhurst's longest serving pastor, began his ministry on September 16, 1979. A native of Richmond, Virginia, Bob was a graduate of Yale University, the Harvard Divinity School, the University of Minnesota and Andover Newton Theological Degree, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Ministry. He came to Lynnhurst from the First Congregational Church in Manchester, New Hampshire.

In the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary history, Arthur Whitney wrote about Bob *"As befits a Christian leader, he has a strong ascetic side also. He is a marathon runner. In his line of business it detracts nothing to say that he is less than world class. Like the apostle Paul, he need only have run the race."*



Over the years of his ministry, Bob's wife Susan, a critical care nurse, helped many parishioners understand their medical concerns. Their two sons, Tom and David, grew up at Lynnhurst and for years were regulars on Boundary Waters canoe trips and at all youth events.

During the early years of Bob's pastorate, Lynnhurst faced challenges of financial deficits, deferred maintenance and empty pews. With his leadership and the commitment of both long-term and new members, Lynnhurst gradually found sure footing and continued to move forward.

Even before Lynnhurst's financial position was stable, the church took the risk of hiring first a youth director and then a youth choir director. Robin Nelson, the first youth director, proved to be a great blessing to the youth of the church. During Bob's pastorate, John Slothower became our associate pastor. John's position was and continues to be non-stipendiary, generously sharing his time and talent for free. In addition to John, Lynnhurst also entered into covenant relationships with The Rev. Kathy Gibson Christensen, The Rev. Joe Amico, and The Rev. Liz Mahan.

Again quoting from Arthur Whitney, *"The parsonage was rented before the Griggs family arrived and has subsequently been sold ... A major improvement is the installation of a new digital electronic organ, and the remodeling of the south side of the chancel to permit the choir to face forward with a clear view of the organist and choir director."*

Other changes and improvements during these years included: the first phase of making Lynnhurst handicap accessible by building a ramp from Colfax Avenue, leading to a lift to the hallway outside the sanctuary. The bathroom off this hallway was also made handicap accessible. In addition, a ramp was installed in the lounge to make it accessible, and noise abatement work was done to the lounge ceiling. Members John Barbour, Tony Mills, Diane Mills, and Ed Picard were all instrumental in these projects.



In the 1980s and early 1990s, Lynnhurst became involved in refugee resettlement, first with Chamrean and Bona Tan from Cambodia, and then with the large Souvannasane family from Laos. Sharon Decker, Ann Geiger, Nancy Erstad and Sue Griggs did much of the work in ensuring that these families would thrive in their new homes. For years Souvannasane egg roll sales were a fixture of Lynnhurst life.

This same period saw the beginning of the Lynnhurst Home Companion, a congregation talent show and the Fall Festival, a fun family and neighborhood event and Lynnhurst's primary fundraiser. In addition, art shows in the lounge became a much appreciated addition to church life. Jay Bruns, Lynnhurst's organist and choir director from 1979-1989, worked with the Music and Arts Board to establish the initial art shows.

Also in the early 1990's, Joe Amico, our choir director from 1989-1999, helped Lynnhurst as the church went through the process of becoming an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. At a congregational meeting, the congregation approved the Open and Affirming Statement that all people - regardless of race, gender, economic status, disability, and sexual orientation – were welcomed into full participation in the life of Lynnhurst.

For many years during this period, a Sunday morning Breakfast Club was part of the ministry to older youth. Begun by Debi Good March, youth would gather at a local restaurant or coffee house for Sunday morning breakfast and conversation. After Debi, her daughter Marnee served as the breakfast club convener. For several years in the latter years of Bob's ministry, Tom Ewald, a candidate for ordination in-care of Lynnhurst, was the next breakfast club convener. (A practicing attorney, Tom devoted much of his free time to our youth as he finished his requirements for ordination. Later, along with Kathy Gibson Christensen, Tom also served as a pastoral leader of Lynnhurst until Suzan Ireland became our interim following Bob Griggs' departure.

The 1990s and the early years of the new century were marked by an exciting Lynnhurst youth music program with Linda Madson and Kelly Newell working with the youth choirs and youth group. A tradition of youth adventure and mission trips was also established during this period.



The Lynnhurst family was grateful to have Bob and each other after the horrific and terrifying attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. The community gathered to pray together, comfort each other and to begin to figure out how to respond to a world that had suddenly changed. As is Lynnhurst's custom, the church also took action to help, contributing to organizations set up to provide support to those most affected by the events of that unforgettable day.

After almost 26 years of service to Lynnhurst, Bob Griggs resigned as pastor in 2005. Bob was quite open that the reason for his departure was clinical depression, which resulted in hospitalization and treatment. Since then, he has become an advocate for people living with depression and provides encouragement and example that, with treatment and medication, people can recover from depression and lead fulfilling and active lives. Rev. Dick Scheerer of the Minnesota Conference of the UCC joined Lynnhurst in conducting a special Service of Separation that allowed Bob, his family and the Lynnhurst congregation to honor his years of service and bid a loving farewell. After a period of recovery, Bob has gone to serve a number of churches in Minnesota as an interim pastor.

### *Lynnhurst Interim Pastors*

#### **Phil Ramstad**

With the announcement about Rev. Griggs' illness, the energy of the church was concentrated on giving him time and space to heal. As the congregation learned that this would be a long-term recovery, the Church Council, with tremendous assistance from the UCC Conference, called the Rev. Phil J. Ramstad as Minister Pro Tem at Lynnhurst. Rev. Ramstad came to Lynnhurst with both the ability to support the congregation in the pulpit as well to help individually as we grieved the unexpected departure of Rev. Griggs and prepared for the changes ahead.

#### **Suzan Ireland**

Because of Rev. Ramstad's other obligations and commitment, it was immediately evident that he would be only a short-term solution. In late summer of 2005, Lynnhurst launched a search for an Interim Minister— for the first time in 26 years. With UCC Conference support, referrals were sent to a committee comprised of Nancy Erstad, Debbie Christensen, Rev. John Slothower, Lance Brockman and student representative, Luke McKee. The committee screened candidates and after a series of interviews, selected Rev. Suzan Ireland. Rev. Ireland was just completing a call as interim at Peace Presbyterian in St. Louis Park, MN and she immediately "hit the ground running."

Rev. Ireland was ordained at the McCormick Theological Seminary of Chicago and much of her pastoral care had been with Presbyterian churches. She was instrumental in providing the necessary transition at Lynnhurst preparing our congregation for a new settled minister. At her recommendation, Lynnhurst entered into a time a reflection known as a (Re)Vision process, that refocused and refined our expectations as a

congregation while supporting the UCC theme that, "God is Still Speaking." The resulting small groups and intense examination of Lynnhurst members' perceptions, values and ambitions based on common beliefs gave the church the impetus to move forward to an exciting future and a new settled minister. Rev. Ireland was with Lynnhurst for almost two years and from Lynnhurst she went to serve First Congregational Church of Winona.

*David B. Lindsey, 2007- present*

On September 30th, 2007, Lynnhurst voted at a congregational meeting to call Rev. David Brandon Lindsey to be its new Senior Minister. David had previously served as the Associate Minister of the Manhattan Beach Community Church (UCC) in southern California. In addition to earning his Master's in Divinity at the Claremont School of Theology, David had graduated from Centre College in Kentucky with a B.A. in Theater. Given his background in both religion and the arts, David seemed like a natural fit for Lynnhurst's artistic spirit. David began making his way east (and north!) during Thanksgiving Week 2007.



The first year of David's ministry was full of excitement and possibility, as he and the congregation came to know one another. The congregation got to know David through Friendship Suppers, pastoral house calls, campfires, and church meetings. After a conversation with the worship committee, David preached a sermon series during Lent of 2008 about the topic of prayer. Perhaps most memorable for the congregation during this first year were a series of skits David performed during the Lynnhurst Home Companion that winter, in which the new minister goofed off along with the rest of the congregation.

During this first year, two issues in the congregation began to be addressed behind the scenes. First, the Trustees had laid out a vision to make the sanctuary more fully accessible. Second, the church was to be celebrating its centennial anniversary in October of 2010. The Trustees had set themselves a deadline of finishing the sanctuary renovation before the centennial anniversary. This would have been a challenge under any circumstances. But in 2008, the American economy caved in on itself, and the Great Recession began.

The Great Recession had a major impact on the families of Lynnhurst, as it did on so many Americans. Several folks lost jobs and couldn't find employment for nearly a year. Others had to take jobs with serious overseas commitments, commuting on occasion to Asia and Europe, or moving overseas entirely. Almost all of the members have felt the impact of the recession on their equity, salaries and pensions, and net worth. At this writing, it's hard to say what long-term impact the worst economic times since the Great Depression will have on the church community. However, Lynnhurst has withstood many difficult times in the past 100 years, and the strength of its history and the community of the church stands as a source of courage and hope.

Still, in the midst of the recession, Lynnhurst decided at the January 2009 congregational meeting to proceed with the sanctuary renovation. The decision was hotly debated, in true Lynnhurst fashion, and differing opinions were voiced and acknowledged; but ultimately the Trustees acted on faith and began a capital campaign in the spring of 2009. To the astonishment of many (including Rev. Lindsey), the congregation was able to raise enough in pledges so that the church did not have to take out a loan for the six-figure project. With pledges and help from the Annette Scroggins Memorial Fund, Lynnhurst began renovating its sanctuary in the summer of 2009. From May until August, worship was held in the lounge adjacent to the nursery. The space was cramped at times, but the congregation soldiered on with good cheer.

The sanctuary renovation was completed at the start of September, just in time for two weddings over the Labor Day weekend for longtime members. On Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the congregation gathered on Rally Day in a newly renovated space – with a ramp in the back, new lighting (both lamps and windows), an improved sound system, and the restored original vaulted ceiling in the narthex! Even in tough times, Lynnhurst had dedicated itself to being an ever-more welcoming and inclusive community.



On that very same Rally Day in September 2009, Rev. Lindsey began shifting the congregation's focus to its next major milestone: its centennial anniversary. From that Sunday through December, David preached once a month about stories from Lynnhurst's past. Then, starting in January of 2010, the Centennial Preacher Series began. Featuring a many from Lynnhurst's past, these guest preachers helped the congregation walk the journey to its centennial anniversary. The speakers included:

- Rev. Don Portwood, Minister, Lyndale Congregational UCC, Minneapolis (in 1903, Lyndale founded the church school that became Lynnhurst)
- Rev. Al Thompson, Senior Minister, First Congregational UCC, Mankato (in 1970, Al became the first person ever ordained at Lynnhurst)
- Rev. Tom Breckenridge, Senior Minister, Lynnhurst, 1968-1978
- Rev. Dr. Bob Griggs, Senior Minister, Lynnhurst, 1979-2005
- Rev. Tom Ewald, Associate Minister, Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul
- Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference of the UCC, 2006-present

These guest preachers helped Lynnhurst remember its history, yet every one of them reiterated a common theme: don't linger in the past, but look to your future!

Along the way to celebrating the centennial, Lynnhurst took on a completely new experience: the Winter Sabbath. As part of the Minnesota Conference's Vitality Initiative, Lynnhurst cancelled its committee meetings for forty days in January and February of 2010. Instead of doing the "work" of the church, the congregation took time simply to "be" the church. In doing so, the church reflected on Martha Grace Reece's book *Unbinding the Gospel*. The book set up a program whereby church members met in small groups, prayed together, and reflected on ways to reach new folks outside of the congregation. The tone and content of the book were challenging for many people to embrace, but most found that making the commitment to set aside time each day to read and pray enriched their lives. The process touched a profound need at Lynnhurst – the need to share with the church community individual stories of faith, personal history and how to listen for God's still-speaking voice.

In September of 2010, the church council approved a second Winter Sabbath for January of 2011. Hopefully, the church will once again be renewed through the work of the Holy Spirit in its midst.

These major events of the congregation's life since 2007 don't tell the whole story of the church during that time; because the people of Lynnhurst are the living story of the congregation. In the past few years, friends and family members have passed on and church members have moved away. But hope arises yet again, thanks in large part to the folks who have become part of the church's story in the past three years. The church membership grew by more than 10% from March of 2009 until June of 2010, and Lynnhurst will be receiving yet more members on its Centennial Celebration Sunday (October 24th, 2010).

The congregational story is always growing and evolving, as the Holy Spirit continues to shape Lynnhurst as a community. The story of the church's people, as much as the story of its building and programs, reveals the character of the congregation throughout its first hundred years.

# THE VIEW FROM 2010

As Lynnhurst members, friends, and neighbors gather to celebrate 100 years of service, worship, fellowship, education and fun, it is exciting to see that Lynnhurst is still creating new memories and traditions. Here are a few examples:

**Outdoor Ministries.** For many years, Lynnhurst has been dedicated to ministry in the outdoors. Each summer now features a car camping trip and a trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Some of our



families have also been very active in Pilgrim Point Camp, the Minnesota Conference's outdoor ministries facility just north of Alexandria. Every summer, Lynnhurst also has an outdoor worship service at the Lake Harriet Bandshell as part of an ecumenical partnership with other neighborhood churches.



**Art Gallery.** Lynnhurst's first-floor lounge has served as home to a series of rotating art exhibits since the 1980s. It has been a platform for artists in the Lynnhurst community, as well as shows from artists throughout the Twin Cities. The Lynnhurst Gallery became even more notable under the curating leadership of Henry Taly and the Music and Arts Board, starting in 2006, hosting art openings and investing



in works of art that had meaning and impact. One show – which was expanded into an evening fundraising event -- featured portraits of the homeless in Minneapolis, done by artist Kristi Bretzke. Lynnhurst purchased the original piece that inspired the rest of the show, and Bretzke donated the money to a local homeless shelter.

**Mission Work.** The Mission Board of the church has created significant opportunities for Lynnhurst folks to make a difference in the world. For several years now, 20% of every donation to the church has gone to the Mission Board, which sends those funds along to ministries beyond Lynnhurst's doors. Mission moments are standing features in worship, highlighting the good work that Lynnhurst does in the community. The Annual Soup Supper, held in March, is another opportunity to learn more about ministries of charity and justice in the wider community.



**Youth and Children's Ministry.** Lynnhurst has a significant commitment to youth that extends beyond the scope of churches of similar size. Even during the Great Recession, the congregation continued to have a Youth Director and a Youth Choir Director as paid staff positions. Youth ministry activities

include confirmation, mission trips, and a variety of meaningful experiences to help young people connect to the church and the world. The youth choirs perform regularly in worship, and they have two special performances: a Christmas Pageant in Advent and a spring talent show known as the Kids' Home Companion.

This past year, the youth selected languages for a Peace Pole which was installed in May of 2010. The youth of the church also performed music at a fundraiser in March, and the children of the church blessed the Pole with a laying on of hands during the Children's Sermon on the day the Pole was installed.



**Outreach.** In recent years, Lynnhurst has become more proactively engaged in trying to reach folks in the Twin Cities community who are looking for a church home. The church's website has become a primary means of outreach, and Lynnhurst is currently redesigning and upgrading its website to make it more usable and relevant to people who want to learn about what Lynnhurst has to offer, as well as Lynnhurst members. Additional forms of outreach have come in many forms, from mailers announcing seasonal services and events sent to targeted neighborhoods, to the now-annual Blessing of the Animals service in October for the neighborhood and wider community.



## WHAT LIES AHEAD

The many facets, events and changes throughout the first century of Lynnhurst's congregational life would be difficult to summarize; however, turning to the Bible, Lynnhurst seeks to live out Isaiah 56:7, where God suggests through the prophet that *"my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."* Lynnhurst has lived out that passage from its very beginnings, welcoming the homeless during a bitter winter in the 1910s. That spirit of faithful hospitality extended to refugee resettlement, commitment to physical accessibility, the decision to become Open and Affirming to gay, lesbian, bisexual persons and transgender, as well as a general spirit of acceptance for different points of view. This welcoming attitude has helped Lynnhurst to grow in membership and attendance from the late 1970s until today, within a landscape where mainline Protestant churches of all denominations have been struggling and, in many cases, closing.

May this spirit of faithful and open-hearted hospitality carry Lynnhurst into its second century, with prayers that God will continue to help church embody the extravagant welcome seen in the good news of Jesus Christ.

## LYNNHURST'S CENTENNIAL HYMN

As the story of Lynnhurst Church continues to unfold, music and art continue as significant components of how the church expresses praise and worship. In anticipation of Lynnhurst Church's centennial and inspired by Peggy Swalm (Lynnhurst's Choir Director), Henrik Strandskov and Lynn Dixon were commissioned to create a special



hymn in honor of the occasion. Two gifted long-time Lynnhurst members and friends, Henrik crafted the text and Lynn composed the tune. As they collaborated, they agreed that the hymn's mood was to be that of fondness for those who have gone before and those to come in the years ahead. Based on the church's Mission Statement and Micah 6:8, the hymn celebrates Lynnhurst's long tradition of community, participation and social justice. The words and music of the Centennial hymn, *"From the Past We Hear Your Voices"*, can be found on the following pages.

# From the Past We Hear Your Voices

Text: Henrik C. Strandkov, 2010

Tune: LYNNHURST

Sources: Lynnhurst UCC Mission statement; Micah 6:8

Lynn M. Dixon, 2010

From the past we hear your voice - es, As we stand where you once  
 Now we have a hap - py dut - y To re - new what you once  
 Once a seek - er asked a ques - tion: "What does God re - quire of

stood; Sing - ing, laugh - ing, preach - ing, pray - ing: Here you sought the true and  
 dreamed: In our child ren's child - ren's child - ren Will your prom - ise be re -  
 me?" And the an swer still can guide us As we build com - mun - i -

good. With your strength and by your lov - ing, These good walls were set in  
 deemed. For the voice of God that led you Is still speak - ing to us  
 ty: "Work for jus tice, cher - ish kind - ness, Walk with God in all you

place; By God's hands, your hands were guid - ed You were  
 here; And will speak to those who fol - low For a  
 do; Work for jus - tice, cher - ish kind - ness, Walk with

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car - pen - ters of Grace. You were build - ers, but you left us More than  
 hun - dred hun - dred years. You were seek - ers, we seek al - so For a  
 God in all you do." You were dream - ers, you were doubt - ers, But you

glass and wood and stone: Some - thing of your souls you gave us - We will  
 fel - low - ship of Grace, Where we see the Spir - it's glor - y Shine with  
 walked the ho - ly way; With your Car - pen - ter be - side us, We can

nev - er stand a - lone.  
 joy from ev'ry face.  
 walk your path to - day. With our Car - pen - ter be -

1.2. 3.

side us, We will walk your path to - day.

*This hymn was commissioned to the glory of God and in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Lynnhurst Congregational United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in October of 2010.*