



Christmas Memories—A Look Back

December, 2008

Linworth Historical Society Newsletter

Linworth United
Methodist Church
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Construction on the white frame church was completed in 1889. For the next 68 years the residents of Elmwood/Linworth celebrated the Birth of Jesus by gathering together in the church on Christmas Eve.

The following dated memories are the recollections of Jim Thompson, his conversations with long time friends and members of Linworth UM Church, and from minutes of church records.

September 23, 1941: Several adults met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rich Walton. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the first Young Adult Sunday School Class, elect officers and recruit new members. Within three months the membership was 32; by 1946, it was 58.

January 26, 1943: During a monthly meeting at the home of Mary Jane Feather with Pearl Deardorf assisting as hostess, Rev. Orr, grandfather of Linworth's Bell Choir Director, suggested that the class work on ways to help the church financially and continue to provide help for the needy.

The class would also be responsible for decorating the church at Christmas, making sure the church was warm by tending to the pot-bellied stove, and at the close of the Christmas Eve Service, bring Santa Claus into the Sunday School room through the back door.

December 23, 1947: The following are excerpts from the minutes of the Young Adult Sunday School meeting: "In keeping with the season, the December meeting of the Young Adult S.S. Class was opened by singing "Silent Night, Holy Night".

Since there being no new business at this time, the "basket committee" was asked that all food and toys for the baskets being prepared be at Rev. Lung's home the following day at noon. The Committee was planning to deliver these Christmas baskets in the afternoon of the 24th. Tom Taylor, teacher of the Young Adult S.S. Class, graciously donated a chicken for each basket.
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Some 70 years ago during the holiday season, church carolers took the piano from the SS room and placed it on a cattle truck owned and driven by Stan or Ralph Wilcox. The carolers, accompanied by the church organist, then ventured into the cold, bitter winds to bring Christmas cheer to the beautiful snow covered village of Linworth.

Hearing this story, our present organist, Tom Cook proclaimed with "ancestral pride"—"next year get me a cattle truck, a BIG ONE.." Thanks, Tom, for sharing your gift of music with us for 17 years and serving with four ministers.

Merry Christmas and Peace on Earth

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Members were told how the work on the church basement was progressing. Of how Dan Eger was nearly through laying block, and that the furnace was being installed, and the floor was to be poured at the end of the week after Christmas.

Outside, the air crisp and sharp, the mercury on a downward trend, most of the members donned caps, boots, even long twenty inch wooly stockings, extra sweaters, and furry gloves, braving the snow and cold to journey out and lighten the hearts of the sick by singing Christmas Carols.

Upon their return, President McGurer proceeded with the meeting. Rev. Archie Lung, pinch-hitting for Curley Mitchell in devotions, read from Luke the Christmas Story, and told how old and staunch was the message of "Peace on earth, Good will toward men" and that if the world would keep this thought above all, there would be less blood shed.

The Food Committee—Masons, McGurers, and the Mitchells served chicken sandwiches, cranberry salad, olives and nut cups, and coffee to the following: Marguerite Buck, Helen Campbell, Catherine Custer, the Grahams, Herrings, Howlands, Paul Livingstone, Rev. and Mrs. Lung, the Masons, McGurers, the Mitchells, the Reedys, the Shusters, the Thompsons, the Taylors, the Wilcox's, and Tommy Lung.

Our special guest, Tommy Lung, home for the holidays, closed our meeting with a nice prayer."

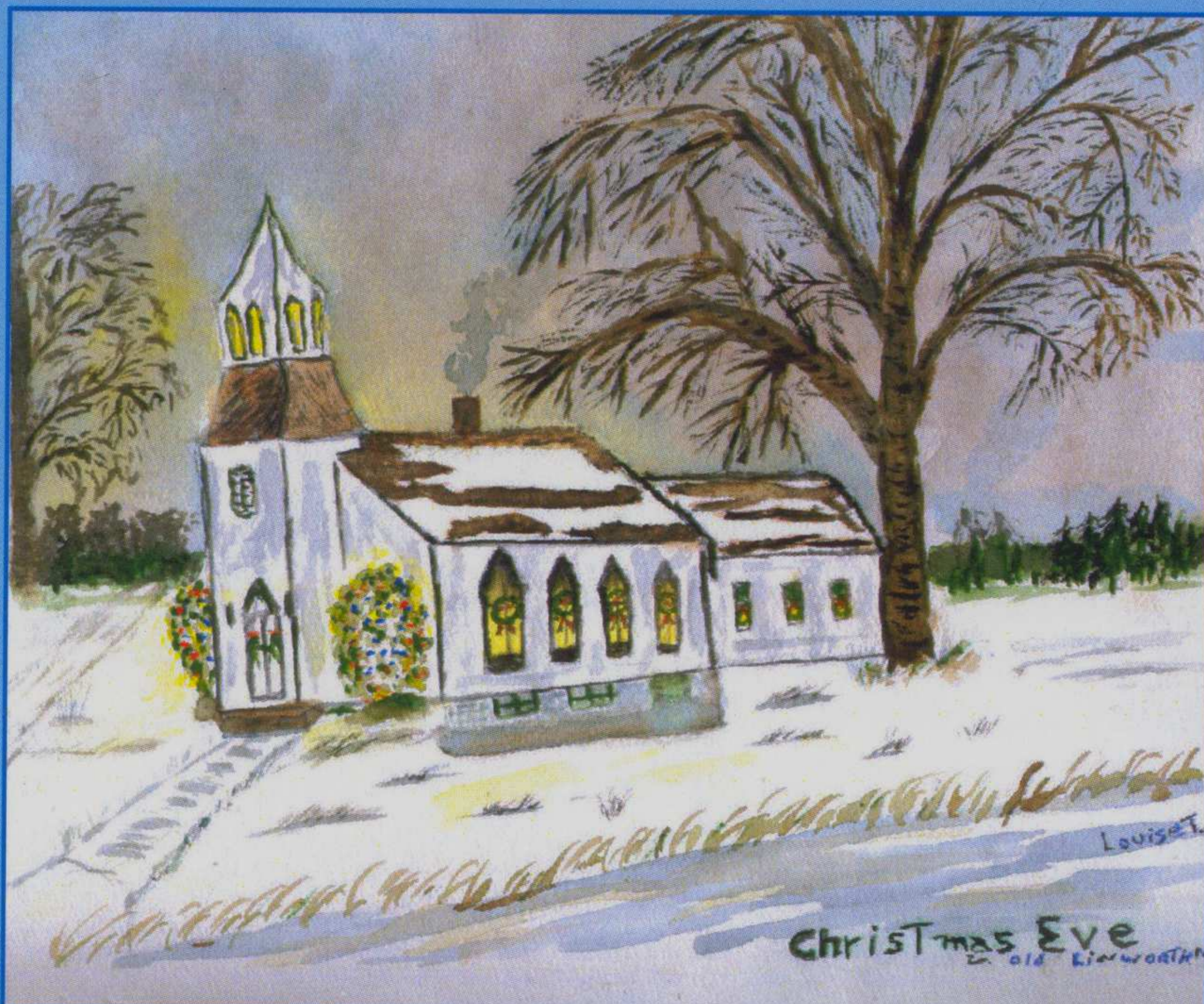
The above excerpt was signed by Beryl Mitchell, Secretary, December 23, 1947.

December 24, 1947 (7:00 a.m.): Arriving at the church early, Jim Thompson, Sr. knew from experience that his first job was building a fire in the pot-bellied stove. Wife, Louise, and other class members would arrive soon after to place pine boughs and candles in the windowsills, dust the pews, and give the church one final check before the evening service.

December 24, 1947 (noon): Eighty-one year old Ida Mae Smith, one of the founding members of LUMC, wandered over from her home across the street to check on her favorite pew, the one next to the coal stove. If any dust was detected, and it usually was, she motioned with a wave of her finger at seven year old Jimmy Lee Thompson. He knew what to do. Sliding up and down the pew, the seat of his pants and back of his shirt did the trick, and all was well with Ida Mae.

November 25, 2008: Jimmy Lee Thompson, now 68, called on Mary Jane Feather, one of the original members of the Young Adult S.S. Class. Reminiscing about those long ago Christmas Eve services, she recalled, "Oh, yes, I remember how pretty the church was with the candles and greenery on the window ledges and the Christmas tree all decorated. We sang hymns and listened to a wonderful Christmas message. It was followed by a children's pageant, and at the very end, Santa Claus came in from the Sunday School room. The children jumped and squealed; they were so thrilled when he handed out little bags of candy. Those are wonderful memories."

This coming February Mary Jane will be 96 years of age.



Christmas Eve 1940's by Louise Thompson as she remembered



2424 W. Dublin Granville Road

This Historical Site is now home to the Village Book Store.

2008

The mission of Linworth United Methodist Church is to make Disciples for Jesus Christ by:
Creating Community, Growing in Christ, Serving the World.