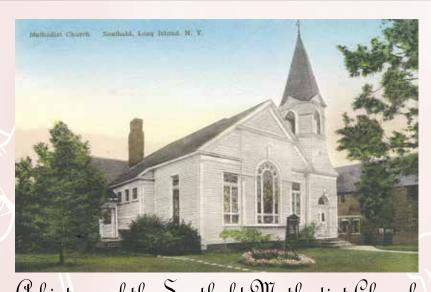
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A history of the Southold Methodist Church



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A sunny boat ride from Fisher's Island, probably after a meeting. (circa 1962) Returning politicians are, left to right, Howard Terry, Gus Garello and Lester Albertson (Southold Town Supervisor). Photo courtesy of Edna Terry.





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The Southold Methodist Church

by Danny McCarthy

With the announcement of the purchase of the Southold Opera House by the Community Action Southold Town, Inc. (CAST) the building's long history as the Southold Methodist Church should once again be reviewed. Dan McCarthy provides this, with the names, dates and facts that all illuminate the life of one of Southold's most treasured buildings. We wish CAST the best of luck at their new location.



Alice B. Wells

The 175th Anniversary of the Southold United Methodist Church was marked in 1971. Alice B. Wells compiled an item regarding Lesser-Known Facts and Bits of Human Interest in the History of Southold Methodist Church in October 1971. She remarked that "our local church began ten years after the organizing of the Methodist Church in America in 1784." A stranger had come to Southold in 1794 to the home of Mrs. Abigail Ledyard Moore. Mrs. Moore had kept an inn at the east end of Main Road and she welcomed the stranger named Wilson Lee. He had come from New London and was a Wesley Methodist Faith minister. According to the Alice B. Wells composed item, Wilson Lee preached from a text of the Acts 17: 6 ~ "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." And "thus the seed of Methodism was planted in Southold."

The homes of Mrs. Moore, Peter Vail and Mrs. Peters had served as locations for meetings where classes were held. Mrs. Peters in 1794 lived in the historic Rev. John Youngs house. Homes were the location of services until 1818. A revival made a church building necessary. The site back then was a lot that was purchased in 1819 and the church then was located on Main Road and Boisseau Avenue and was known as "the church on the hill." The original walls formed a part of Walt Adamson's Wayside Market at the corner of Boisseau and Main Roads.

In 1823, Rebecca Peters started a Sunday School. The church had outgrown the building located on Main Road and Boisseau Avenue in 1850. Joseph B. Goldsmith purchased a lot 50 x 100 ft. for \$135 in 1850. Lawyer Goldsmith donated \$35. A 35 x



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45 ft. church building was erected with "a very plain steeple" and the dedication took place in 1851. The cost for that building was \$2,500 ("all of which was raised at that time, except \$200").

The oldest first church property was sold to William H. Wells for \$180 and was moved nearer the street. The building became the grocery store of the Cochran brothers. The Cochran brothers "were sons of Evelina Case Cochran and J. Henry Cochran, builder of Belmont Hall and grandsons of William Dorrance Cochran, builder of the First Academy and of the First Universalist Church" {according to the Southold Historical Society Guide to Historic Markers}.

In 1850, a brickyard was started on the southeast part of the B. B. Tuthill farm. James and Thomas Bolles started that brickyard in that year. "The first bricks made at the new yard were used in the building of the M.E. Church in 1850. Many of these were a second time used in the new church which was completed in 1900."

There was interest shown in the property where the second church building was erected between it and Mechanic Street in 1853. Sara Ann Terry had built what had become a parsonage that year. Thomas Stephenson was its first resident preacher in the year 1856 and he ministered to 87 persons.

A Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1863 by the pastor's wife, Mrs. E. D. Nickerson. The ladies would furnish and maintain the parsonage and later on as years past, they would make gifts to the church. Suppers were served by the Ladies to provide money for the gifts.



Sunday School class at the Methodist Church in 1895 for Ella B. Hallock. Shown left to right: Maggie Goldsmith, Mabel Prince, Grace Horton, Grace Payne, Mabel Boisseau. Photo courtesy of the Southold Free Library Whitaker Historical Collection.

Sixteen years after the second church building was erected and 10 years after the resident minister arrived in 1866, there was an offering of \$3,500 applied to the improvement of the church building by C. S. Williams. "Its convenient vestibule cannot be extended streetward, because of the Law-



yer Goldsmith restrictions in the deed for the site." The building was lengthened 15 feet and a portico was added. A steeple replaced the old one, and new chairs, carpets, and lamps were added.

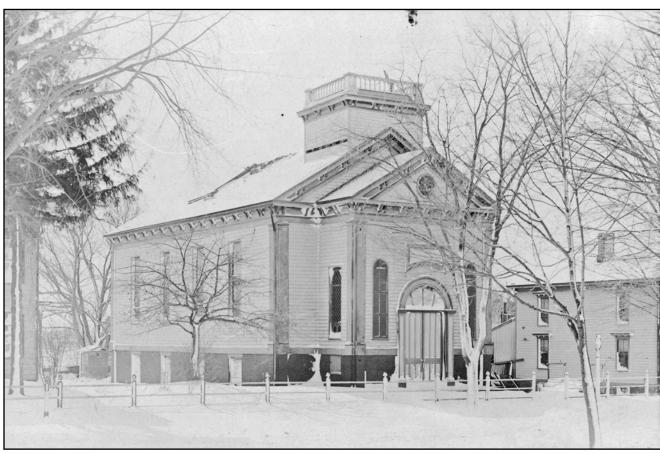
There were added improvements and conveniences enjoyed by the members but the members "did not forget or neglect others." In 1878, a of \$50 was taken for yellow sufferers in the South in the M. E. Church. Stained glass were installed in 1890. In 1891, there was money secured for a pipe organ and another pipe organ was installed in the pastorate of D. W. Howell that same year. Also in 1891, the Southold Savings Bank was erected {which is now the home of the Southold Free Library!}.

During the blizzard of 1898, the steeple of the Methodist Church was blown off. Services ended up being held in the home of H. G. Howell's Hall. The building was moved back and turned parallel with the street, and a new sanctuary was added, at an estimated cost of approximately \$7,000.

"In 1900 the cornerstone which had been donated by F. H. Hill Brothers of Riverhead was put in place by H. F. Van Wyck. Appropriate services were conducted at that time."

June 10, 1900 is the date the present church building was dedicated. Reverend H. E. Hiler was in the pastorate at the time. The church had been dedicated of . \$2,600 was raised on Dedication Sunday for the purchase of a parsonage. The Sunday School was very helpful too, contributing \$180 toward the new church.

Bishop John H. Hurst preached the dedicatory sermon and stated that he had never known of a case where a new church and its furnishings were



The Blizzard of 1898 took the steeple off the church and crushed the horse sheds from the weight of the snow. Photo courtesy of the Southold Free Library Whitaker Historical Collection.

all paid for before the Dedication Sunday. Some of the fine gifts included: the pews; stained glass indicated as memorials; plates by Mrs. W. I. Hagerman; and the bell by Mrs. Ada Albertson as a memorial to her husband William C. Albertson.

"Through the succeeding years, many fine pastors and their families have served this parish and inspired the membership. Deep and abiding friendships have resulted."

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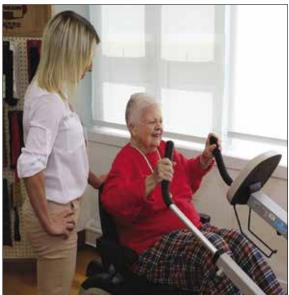


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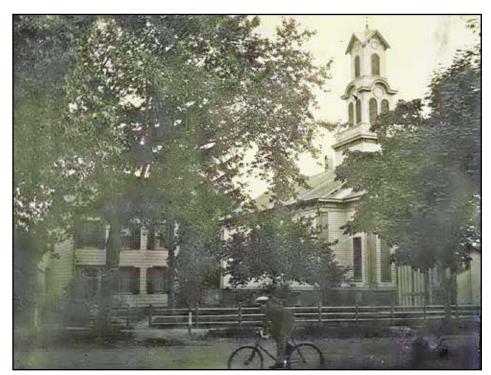
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This late 1800s photograph is of the Southold Methodist Church and Parsonage located on the Main Road in Southold. This Southold Methodist Church was built in 1850 after the congregation outgrew its original church located on the corner of the Main Road and Boisseau Avenue in Southold. The church in the photograph was later remodeled following the Blizzard of 1898 after the steeple was blown off in the storm. Photo courtesy of the Southold Free Library Whitaker Historical Collection.

The Presbyterian, Universalist, Shiloh Baptist, and Methodist churches have participated in Lenten services together as well as the union Thanksgiving services. On July 18, 1965, the Southold Methodist Church cooperated by giving a Methodist Day of History during the occasion of the 325th anniversary celebration of the founding of Southold Town. The Methodist Youth Fellowship which consisted of young people from Southold and Cutchogue churches in 1964 sponsored an Exchanged Student from Germany named Dorothea Trost. A Mission Study since 1964 has supported an Indian boy in the St. George's School and Orphanage in Madras, India. A truly beautiful custom was introduced that was begun

in 1966 by the church school staff. Each pupil would bring an unwrapped gift to the Christmas party for a child his/her own age. The gifts would be placed in front of the altar rail and would later be brought for to the South Third Street Methodist Church in Brooklyn.

In 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Hendrickson gave a gift to the church of a steeple cross hich was installed by Jack Clark on November 1, 1958. A bulletin board as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Hyatt was installed in 1959 to replace the one that was there and the new one is "so designed that it is easily read by day or night." On the pews in the sanctuary that same year, useful racks for cards and pencils were installed and the racks were designed by Lyle Shanks. John James Kramer gave iron candleholders for use during candlelight services. Also in 1959, "Further excavation of the basement was done and an extra exit to comply with fire laws was created."

There is also "The Bykotas" group or circle. The members are the younger women of the church. Each letter in the group's name is "an initial of the Bible admonition: 'Be ye kind one to another.'" The church basement has been divided by this group and the members contribute toward music for the choir plus working on the church paper titled The Messenger. The Men's Brotherhood shows good will too for the church. (Fine classrooms became in use after their taking care of excavating the basement in 1967.) Major change was made in the sanctuary in 1961 through the installation of indirect lighting as well as freshly painted walls, new carpeting and cushion covers for the pews plus reupholstering of the pulpit furniture. The Bykotas improved the nursery and kindergarten equipment in 1962.

A Lay Witness Mission was held from November 14th to the 16th in 1969 where Morristown, Pennsylvania layman James Reid together with 18 other laymen were among the church folk. Nine of the Pennsylvania laymen were youths. "Through this type of leadership, members were encouraged to share their faith and all felt greatly enriched."

Among some of the later ministers at the Methodist Church of Southold included John Francis Horesco who was appointed by Bishop W. Ralph Ward. Mr. Horesco assumed his duties in 1979. He was joined by his wife Jean and four small sons. According to the July 12, 1979 Long Island Traveler, there was cleaning, painting, and refurbishing of the parsonage in





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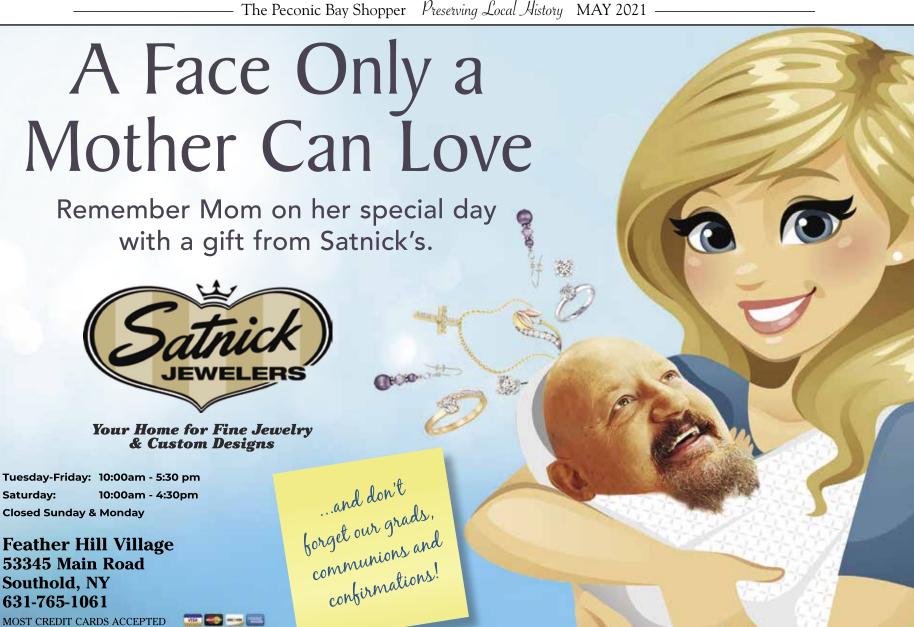
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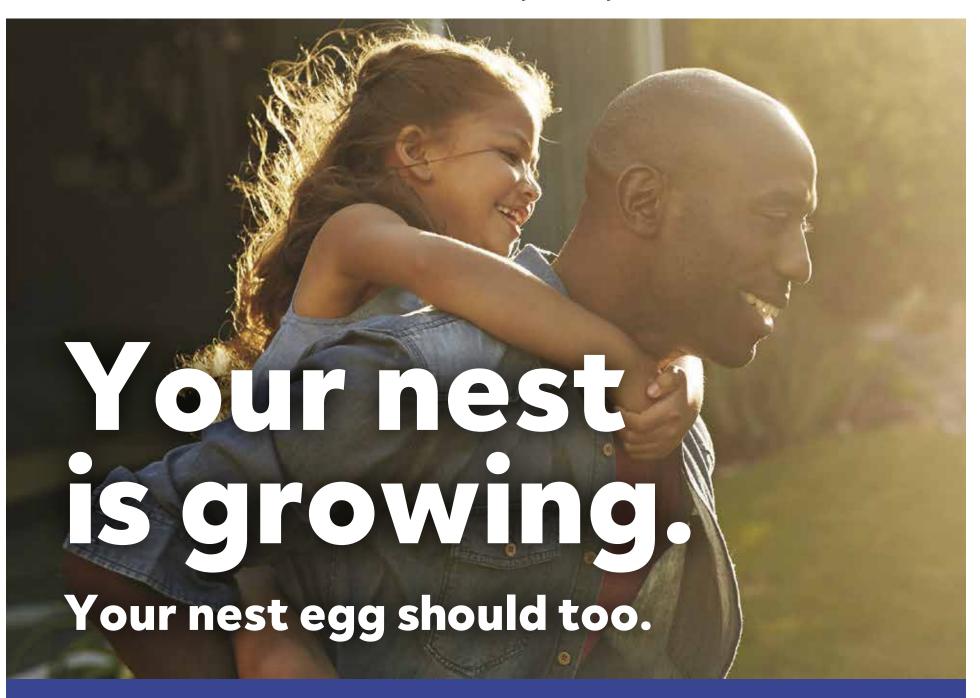




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The interior of the sanctuary of the Southold Methodist Church between 1900-1930. It shows the interior of the church after it was remodeled following the Blizzard of 1898. Following the storm, the church was pushed back on the lot and turned parallel. The congregation then decided to add a new sanctuary to the building and in 1900 the new church building was dedicated. Photo courtesy of the Southold Free Library Whitaker Historical Collection.

Southold by more than 30 members of the parish. "Mr. William Mosher, Miss Betty Hagerman and Mrs. Ruth Hyatt provided leadership in this program of parsonage renovation, with others assisting." The Rev. Ralph E. Spoor and his wife Ruth were welcomed to the United Methodist Church of Southold on July 5, 1984. The Rev. Frank Herbert arrived at the United Methodist Church of Southold in September 1987. The Rev. Herbert worked as an accountant for New York City theater companies and then for Grumman. He led congregations in Smithtown and Connecticut before moving to Staten Island and then arriving in Southold. I got a real kick out of the sign that was photographed by Judy Ahrens for the February 6, 1986 Suffolk Times. It was the Southold Methodist Churchfront lawn sign: "CH??CH WHAT IS MISSING?"



Rev. Daniel W. Howell, pastor of the Southold Methodist Church in 1897 Photo courtesy of the Southold Free Library Whitaker Historical Collection.

Anne-Julia Audray {a professional opera singer} and her husband, Olivier Chazareix, purchased the Southold Methodist Church in July 2015 to restructure it as The Southold Opera Company. The altar was repurposed as a stage with seating for the audience in rearranged pews. The original stained glass windows, beautiful memorials for the Southold Methodist Church, were retained.

The Covid Pandemic wasn't kind to many locations for social gathering, so as one door closes another opens and life goes on. We wish CAST the very best.

