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# The Spotlight is on . . . our Churches!



CONFERENCE  
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## Millville, New Jersey

It was on October 1, 1972, in a small chapel in the basement on the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Headley, that the "Holiness Church of Millville" began with 21 people in attendance. Most of those people had attended the Pilgrim Holiness Church on 3rd Street, which had recently merged with the Wesleyan Church. Rev. Thelma Parker was elected as the pastor, along with her co-worker, Miss Velma Stover. This was truly the beginning of a venture of faith and total dependence on God for direction.

In January 1973, the group voted to purchase the property on the corner of Snyder and Broad Streets, a total of 11 acres which had been a cornfield. The church was incorporated on January 25, 1973.

On April 4, 1973, the group voted to affiliate with the Pilgrim Holiness Church of NY, and on April 28 Conference President Rev. Andrew Whitney and his wife met with the group; twelve members and

two preparatory members were received into membership. The ground-breaking for the new church took place shortly thereafter.

On June 5 excavating began. A full basement was constructed upon which a modular home was placed. It was truly an exciting time! Those who were present at the time loved to recount how everyone worked together, including the women, who helped to mix the cement or whatever needed to be done. They had walked over the whole property praying for protection and



blessing. During Labor Day weekend, friends and ministers of the Conference, including Rev. Whitney, Rev. Joseph Hunting and the Hallenbecks, came to help with the construction of the church which adjoined the parsonage. With much hard work, as well as a lot of good fellowship, the work continued until it was finally ready for the first service on December 2, 1973, with 75 people in attendance. How thankful they were for the evidence of their labors — a beautiful church, complete with a steeple and electronic bells. A dedication service was held on December 16 with Rev. Whitney in charge and Rev. Hunting as soloist.

Growth continued. A large parking lot was laid, landscaping done — all adding to the beauty of this memorial to the hand of God on this people. The church was received into the membership of the Pilgrim Holiness Church of New York in July 1975.

After several years of sacrificial giving, the debt was paid, and a mortgage burning was held in the spring of 1986. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Parker and Miss Stover retired after giving 25 years of service to the churches in Millville. In July of that year Rev. Gary Mills, wife Karen and four young children — Yvonne, Stephen, David, and Timothy — came from NY to assume the pastorate. Now, after completing almost 21 years, they have been here long enough to fully appreciate how much God has done for this church, as well as to see the passing of all of the original older members. (The remaining original



members have since moved away.) We will not forget their valuable contributions of time and money that have made the ongoing ministry of this church possible. And, in spite of the many changes in the congregation, our doors are still open, thank the Lord!

Several years ago, two acres of our property were sold and new central air and heating units were installed in the church and parsonage. The parsonage was also remodeled and carpeted. A new roof was put on, a handicap ramp was built, a bus was purchased, and the sanctuary was re-papered and painted. Then, in 2005, new carpeting for the church was donated in honor of Abigail Zimmerman, and installed without charge by a friend of the church with the help of several volunteers. What a blessing and improvement! The bathrooms were remodeled; new linoleum was placed in the foyer; new front steps and a sidewalk were laid; the platform wall was replaced and painted, and the lettering on the wall was re-surfaced; the hallway walls and ceiling were re-done. All of this was done with Lester Bump helping the pastor. New curtains

were donated; the altar kneeling pads and platform chairs were re-upholstered with memorial gifts for Martha Jones; and a good, used carpet was donated for the basement auditorium and hallway. We were very much in need of a new sign, and with memorial gifts given by the family of Florence (Bolton) Green, along with memorial gifts for her husband, Raymond Green, a lovely lighted sign was installed. A stone planter in memory of Martha Jones completed the project. Since that time, new linoleum and carpeting were installed in the parsonage basement, as well as a new bathroom.

It can be said that we have faced our challenges, and especially now with our original members gone. But we look to the future by faith. We keenly feel their absence, but we also feel the responsibility to keep their vision alive by going on ourselves so their legacy is not in vain. We have several who are in Christian service as a direct result of this church. We are also seeing some of the extended family of the original members attending the services along with other new people. We know that the same God who has helped us to come this far is still able to see us through whatever is in the future. As the songwriter so aptly said, "Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful!" We intend to do that by God's grace and help.

—Submitted by Sr. Karen Mills

