

#10 Hospitality in Sommerville Hall

In September, we gathered in Sommerville Hall to hear Idaho Historian, Steve Branting, tell stories of the people who built and sustained our parish down through the years. Parishioner Marsha Creason pronounced Steven Branting's illustrated and well researched presentation, a great evening well spent at the church. We agree with Marsha about Steve's stories of Missionary Michael Facker, Tuttle's church, Sommerville Home, the Vollmers and Kettenbachs and the McConkeys—as well as the research into maps of our peripatetic church coming up the hill by steam and horses in 1920. Then we enjoyed loaves of bread, hunks of cheese and fruit, thanks to our Hospitality Chair Maxine Hubbel.

Our church archives tell of the official naming of Sommerville Hall—the site of much of our hospitality and celebration over the years. You will recognize and many remember Rev. Dr. Larry E. Harrelson whose photo hangs in our hallway. He was pastor on April 26, 1989 when our parish hall was officially named Sommerville Hall for the Rev. David and Dora Somerville.

Father Larry Harrelson came to Lewiston from Wallace, Idaho in 1984 to fill the position left open by the resignation of the Rev. Charles May. Rev. Charles Fox had served as interim rector until October 1983. Rev. Harrelson, a native of Illinois, was a chaplain in the U.S. Army and pastored churches in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri before coming to Idaho. Mary Lou Gregory remembers Father Harrelson telling of his army reserve units, “trouble” they had with God, their family problems, and the losses with which the troops had to deal. In 1991, he became a counselor for the State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare.

Those of you who were here in the 1990's will remember the singing of the Mass by Father John “Jack” Dempsey. He brought a special gift to Nativity-- his wife Rose Dempsey, a professional organist. Both Father Jack and Rose were musicians. Rose had a talent for doing computer programs with her songs. Longtime choir member, Mary Lou Gregory, recalls that “One time I heard a popular song that sounded like an old tune, ‘Cielgon’, which Rose played on her French horn. She checked the chords and told me ‘Cielgon’ was the same tune as Melissa Manchester’s ‘Higher Ground’”. It is not surprising that a new organ was installed during the Dempsey's years at Nativity. And you might check out Father Dempsey's doctoral dissertation *Original Anglican Missions in the Inland Northwest*—a copy exists in the church library.

In the 1990's, the Normal Hill Apartments were built as retirement apartments on 8th Street and the columbarium with vaults for urns and an outdoor altar was constructed near the bell tower. In a Tribune article on the columbarium, Father Dempsey was quoted as saying, “People are dying to get there. “

Mary Lou tells of Father Mark Butler starting Compline services on Saturday evenings. “The group met in the choir pews and sang old hymns, praise music, songs from camp and retreats, and even Christian hard rock accompanied by guitar as well as piano. We ended each session praying for a peaceful night...” You see, this was in 2003 when the space ship Columbia was destroyed with all its astronauts.

Today's Father Bill Caradine, now retired, but not retiring, served as interim during the search for our current priest. Father Bill continues to grace our parish and occasionally brings us the Sunday sermon. He served in parish ministry in Alabama for over 20 years, after which he was the Executive of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief of the Episcopal Church at the Episcopal Church Center, New York, New York. He and Fran participate regularly in parish life and celebrations. Yes, we are in the middle of a big one—the 150th year finale. We hear there is a commemorative song in the cradle—that is, a Christmas song being written by the congregation with the guidance of Sara and Anna Marie. So we look forward to continuing the year of celebration. Happy Birthday Nativity—born under a tree on Christmas in 1864.

There are no footnotes this month. All materials can be found in Nativity archives.

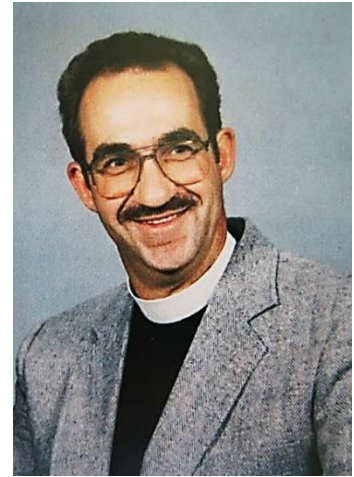
---Deloris Jungert Davisson and Margaret Cole 2015



History poster 9 29 15



Sommerville Hall



Rev. Larry Harrelson



Church history in a nail...story may follow sometime.



9/29/15 150th Celebration
History Lecture
by Steve Branting
Pictured, Michael Fackler 1874.