

THE CHRONICLE

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of the
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editor

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XXVIII of *The Chronicle*. For over 25 years, the society has produced an annual volume designed to be a mix of scholarly, entertaining, informative and inspiring stories of United Methodism – all united by a common theme. In this issue we present a series of articles on the theme **Transitions: Passing the Torch** – stories of how the faith, the call to the ministry, or a particular vision was handed down from one generation to another within families, a congregation or a community.

The articles in this issue appear in pairs. The two lead articles tell of Methodist women who lived out and passed on their faith in two very different ways. The first article, this issue's cover story, introduces two remarkable yet little-known women of Wilkes-Barre's First Methodist Episcopal Church, Priscilla Lee Bennett and Kate Pettebone Dickson, who used their considerable wealth to further the cause of Christ both locally and nationally. The second article reveals how Blanche Kingery Carroll, a lady with no significant financial resources, served her Master and handed down to her daughter and granddaughter the faith she received from her mother.

Two articles relate to passing the torch during a pastoral change – one successful passing, and one not-so-successful. John H. Powell of the United Brethren Church successfully received the ministerial torch that was passed to him from a United Evangelical charge. Methodist clergyman Joseph Sproule, on the other hand, refused to pass on his torch when called to do so by his superiors.

Two articles from northeastern Pennsylvania relate to the transition from a predecessor United Methodist denomination to a newly created ecclesiastical body – one involving an Evangelical charge, and another in which the congregations came from the Methodist Protestant denomination. The Evangelical charge transitioned from the Evangelical Association to the United Evangelical Church to the Evangelical Church to the Evangelical United Brethren Church before finally becoming United Methodist in 1968 – and each transition brought with it a different set of challenges. The Methodist Protestant charge had continuing interaction with its overlapping Methodist Episcopal counterpart, as well as an interesting transition within a divided and then re-united Methodist Protestant denomination, until those ecclesiastical bodies united in 1939 to form the Methodist Church.

The two articles on generational transitions include one story of passing the faith within the home of an active lay family in Catasauqua that produced a remarkable but little known evangelist and another story of a clergy-oriented family that starts with Francis Asbury and Berwick and continues across the continent for several generations to the present year.

The congregational transitions involve one story of a Luzerne County Methodist transition from seven small congregations into one larger and stronger body, and one story of the York City transition from a single United Brethren mother congregation into a family of daughter churches.

As always, it is the hope of *The Chronicle* that these stories and this year's theme will help to inspire and empower each of us to live out our faith in such a way that those who passed to us the torch of Christianity will be pleased that the flame of faith has been taken up by others.



Bennett Hall of Wood Junior College, Mathiston MS.
See the cover story beginning on page 4 on "Two Philanthropic Ladies" of Wilkes-Barre's First Methodist Episcopal Church.