

Barratt's Chapel News

Spring 2021

Recent Achievements

By Russ McCabe,

President Commission on Archives & History



On so many levels, the past year-plus, with much of society quarantined with Covid-19 restrictions, has offered shorter “to do” lists. For us – no Summer Services to plan, no Christmas Concert or Christmas Eve with the Bishop, fewer visitors to welcome, fewer wonderful weddings. While our shorter list might have resulted in a shorter “to done” list as well, I am happy to report that despite the many challenges with which we have been presented, this has been a noteworthy period of achievement at historic Barratt’s.

Recovery from the flooding of the Museum and Library was completed after much hard work. The library and research room items were put back in place. A small room off the hall was made into a scanning room with three scanners for digitization. Efforts to digitize valuable historical resources were expanded. Aside from its use as a means to preserve sometimes unique and fragile materials, this process will provide near-limitless access far into the future. Good stuff!

Of particular note during the past year has been the completion of several significant and much-needed capital improvements that will help to ensure the long-term preservation of the treasure that is Barratt’s Chapel. The work was literally top-to-bottom. Thanks to the support of Bishop Johnson and the Conference Commission on Finance and Administration, we were able to undertake a variety of critical measures to restore and protect the building’s exterior envelope. The old and rapidly deteriorating roof with its countless leaky holes was replaced with a roof of new (and beautiful) cedar shingles with traditional copper flashing.

In dire need of attention due to the effects of age and weather, the Chapel’s exterior brick walls were repointed. The mortar around each individual brick was dug out and historically correct mortar put in. Windows, doors, and other wood surfaces were restored and refinished. In addition, the dirt crawlspace below the structure was encapsulated, and dehumidification equipment installed.

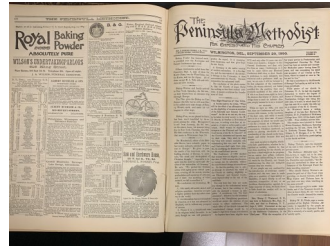
The roof of the Vestry was also replaced, and new exterior lighting was installed with the support of a bequest by a kind donor. If you have driven by Barratt’s recently then you know how good it looks. When illuminated at night by the new lighting it is truly spectacular.



Journals and Newspapers Added to Website

Because of the COVID pandemic the facilities at Barratt's Chapel & the Museum of Methodism have been largely closed to the public for the past year. Visitors continue to come regularly to the website for research and general information. The volunteer staff at Barratt's has been busy adding research materials to the site.

Conference journals are the single most requested kind of material for researchers visiting the Museum. We are pleased to announce that now the Museum's entire collection of journals is available on line. The present Peninsula-Delaware Conference includes churches which came from five different annual conferences in three separate denominations. The online collection represents most of this diverse history. There are complete sets of the Philadelphia Conference (1843-1869), the Wilmington Conference (1869-1939), and the Peninsula-Delaware Conference (1940-present). There are also large, although not complete, collections of Delaware Conference journals of various years from 1864 to 1965, and of the Maryland Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church from 1868 to 1939. Finally there are smaller



collections of journals from the Baltimore and Virginia Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, covering some years from 1873 to 1939.

The latest addition to the website is the *Peninsula Methodist*, a weekly newspaper printed in

Wilmington from 1875 to 1908. Although not an official publication of the conference, it was dedicated to news of the Wilmington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and includes many articles about activities of the conference and the local congregations. Barratt's Chapel has a partial collection beginning in 1884. Because the newspapers are in fragile condition they have not been easily available to researchers. A volunteer is working on scanning them and adding them to the site.

All of these materials can be found at <http://barrattschapel.org/archives—library.html>.



Photo taken 2019 prior to repointing of Chapel



Photo taken 2020 following completion of repointing



Phil Lawton and Barb Duffin inspecting the roof and brickwork!



Workers from RES Builders which did the repointing and woodwork and workers from Spicer Brothers Roofing.

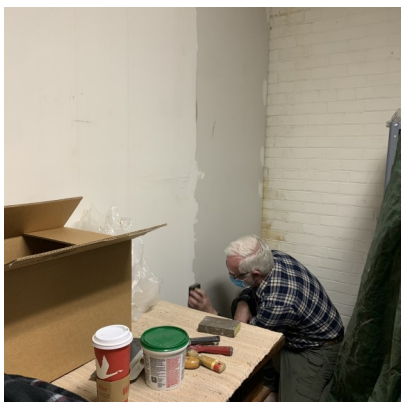
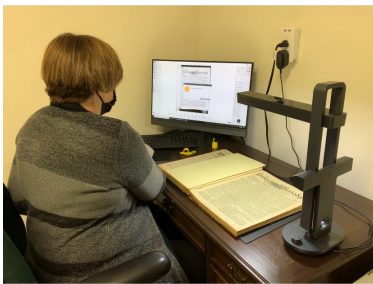


Post-Covid 19 Opening!

After being closed to the public due to Covid-19 we are pleased to announce we are now open for visitors and researchers. Our new hours will be Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To make an appointment for another time please contact the office at 302-335-5544 or barratts@aol.com.

We are asking that people continue to wear masks indoors. Although we will not be having summer services this year we would like to encourage you to schedule a group tour or a special event with your congregation. We will also be scheduling weddings and other special events.

Behind the Scenes: Volunteers and Staff Keeping History Alive



Volunteers at Barratt's Chapel and the Museum of Methodism perform a variety of activities such as filing, digitizing records, transcribing materials, maintenance work, research, giving tours, greeting attendees at services and events, etc.

If you would like to become a volunteer please contact Barb Duffin, Curator at 302-335-5544 or barratts@aol.com