

This *special edition* of the UPC Newsletter is devoted to sharing historical information of UPC's 195<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## 195<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition- July 10, 2020

### UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PLAINFIELD

Where God is Exalted, Everyone Matters, and You belong!

525 East Front Street, Plainfield NJ 07060/908-756-2666/www.upcplainfield.org

#### Do You Know These 4 Facts?

- *July 10, 2020 marks the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield*
- United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield was created by the merger of two Plainfield Churches
- First Presbyterian Church and Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church merged in 1971 to form United Presbyterian Church
- United Presbyterian Church has been the sponsor for Boy Scout Troop 5 for 108 years



United's beginning dates back to **1825** when the First Presbyterian Church was formed in Plainfield.



The picture to the right is how First Presbyterian appeared in 1825! →

To give some perspective as to how far back 195 years is, consider-

In **1825** the following was **TRUE**:

- 24 states made up the United States of America
- Cars did not exist. A horse and wagon was the transportation of the day and travel was on dirt roads
- TV and computers did not exist. Thomas Edison was not credited with inventing the light bulb until 54 years later in 1879. Electricity wasn't readily available until 1882 and TV's weren't common in households until 125 years later in the 1950's
- Radios did not exist. Radios weren't common in households until 95 years later in the 1920's
- Phones did not exist. Alexander Graham Bell was not credited with inventing the phone until 51 years later in 1876
- Bicycles, similar to those of today, did not exist until 60 years later in 1885
- The city of Plainfield did not officially exist as the city was not incorporated until 35 years later in 1860
- Schools existed but were nothing like how we know them today. In 1825 few people were trained to be teachers. Schools that did exist were 1 room with 1 teacher and few individuals attended. Those that did attend had to pay. The first free school in New Jersey was begun by Clara Barton in 1852. Children weren't required by law to complete elementary school until 1918.

**Now, that is a lot of numbers!!**

But remember this--- In 1825 NONE of these existed:

Cars

TV

Computers

Radios

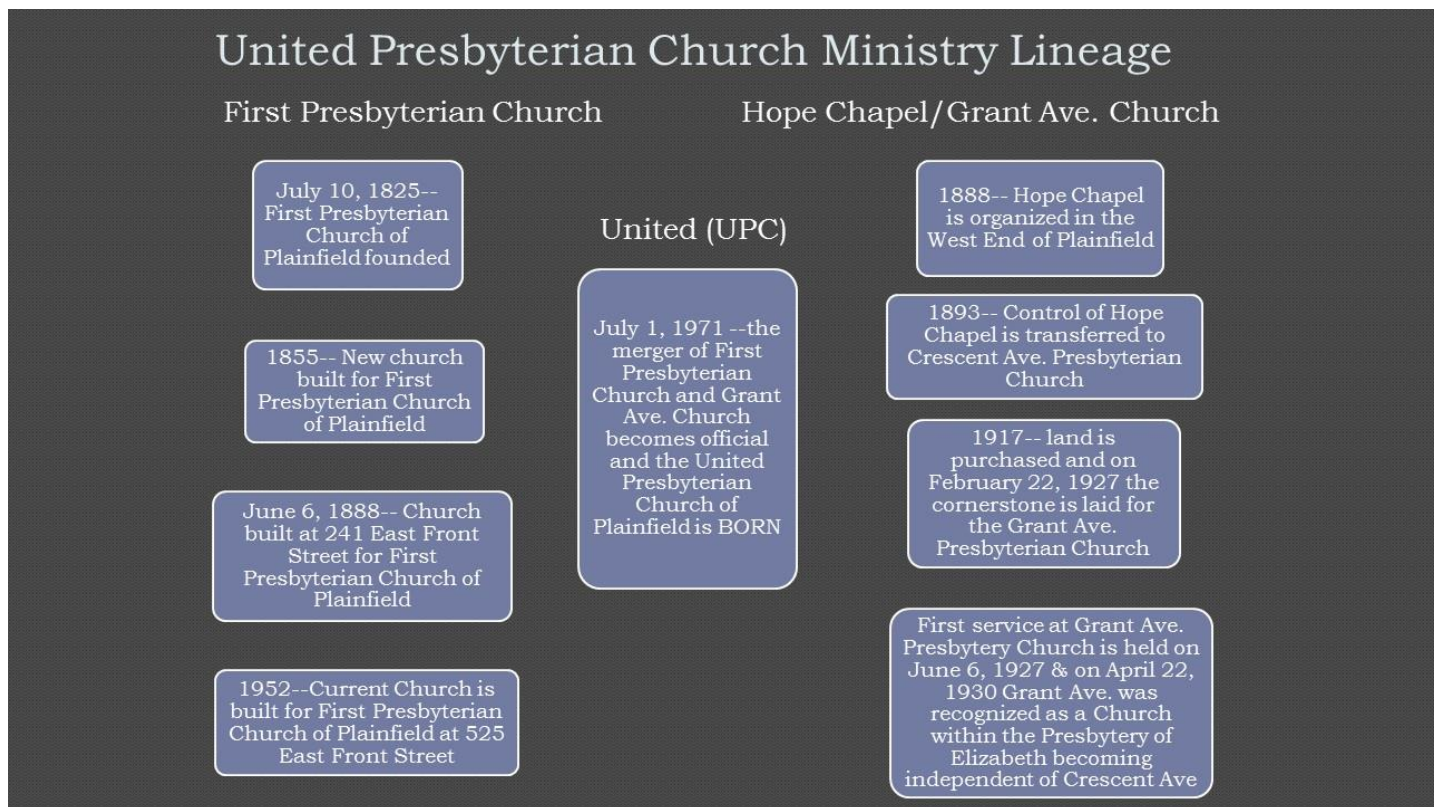
Bikes as we know them today

Schools as we know them today

The City of Plainfield

## **BUT UNITED'S MINISTRY DID!!!**

Here is the timeline of events for the history of United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield



Remember, United was created by the merger (1971) of First Presbyterian and Grant Avenue.

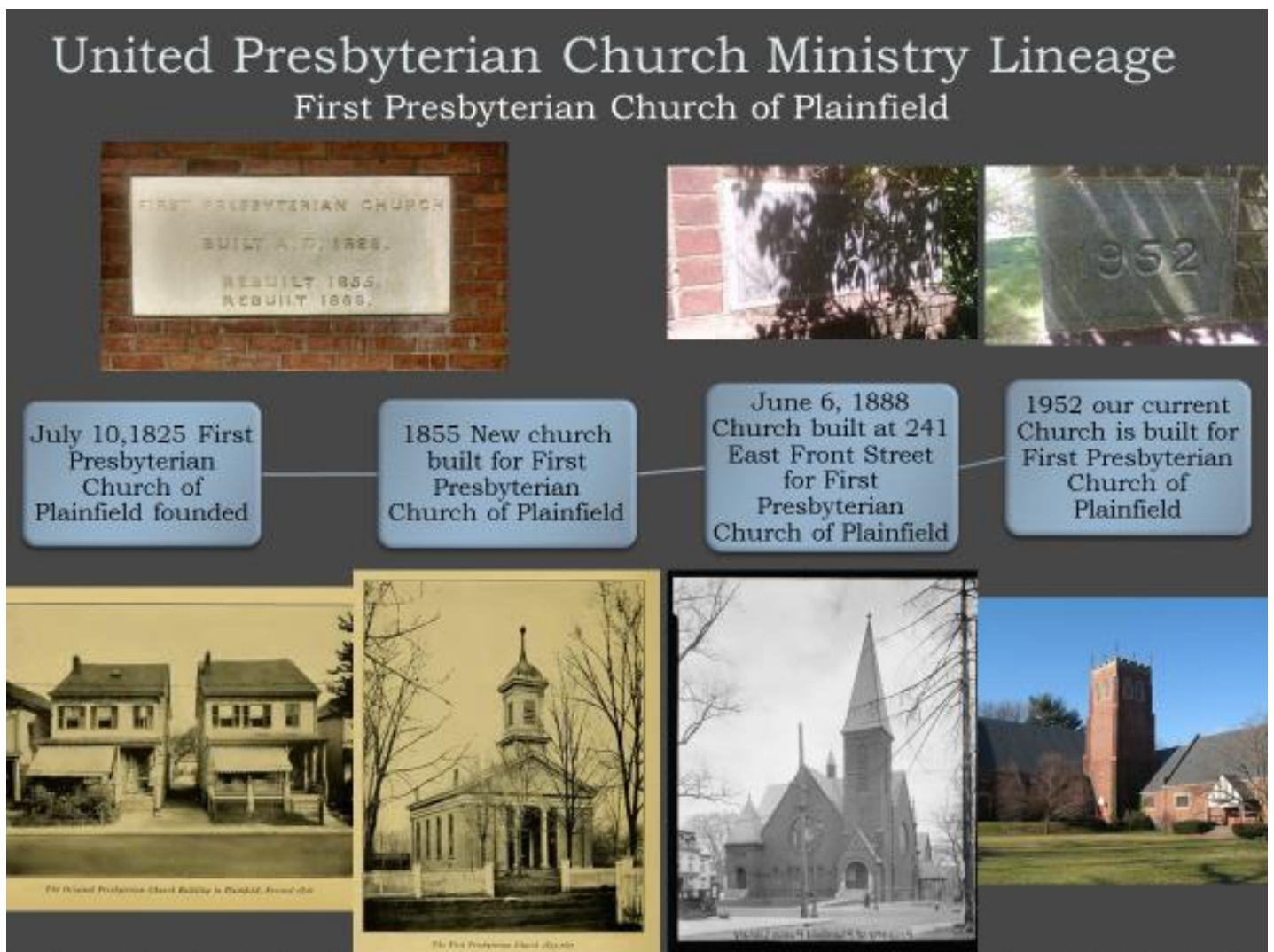
United shares the histories of both First Presbyterian and Grant Avenue so let us explore!

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

In the book, **“The History of the First Presbyterian Church of Plainfield, NJ”** authored by Allen E. Beals, the first service on July 10, 1825 was referred to as **“The Lords Supper under the Green Brook Trees”** and was described in the following manner:

**“But then it (Green Brook river) broadened out into a pond that served to store up water power for a grist mill now between Watchung Avenue and Somerset Street. This site was surrounded almost entirely by a grove of stately chestnut, oak and elm trees, save for a mossy place where the farmers of the countryside brought their grain to be ground into flour. On Sunday, July 10, 1825, this was the spot where the Presbyterian church in Plainfield first saw the light of day.”**

The following graphic illustrates the progression of the buildings which housed the First Presbyterian Church. Also shown are the cornerstones of three of the buildings that are currently located on the property of United.



# GRANT AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN

Hope Chapel, formed in 1888, became Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church as outlined in the graphic below. Notice that the 1927 cornerstone of Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church now lies on the property of United

## United Presbyterian Church Ministry Lineage

Hope Chapel/Grant Ave. Presbyterian Church of Plainfield



1888-- Hope Chapel is organized in the West End of Plainfield



1917-- land is purchased and on February 22, 1927 the cornerstone is laid for the Grant Ave. Presbyterian Church

Grant Avenue Presbyterian



First service at Grant Ave. Presbytery Church is held on June 6, 1927 & on April 22, 1930 Grant Ave. was recognized as a Church within the Presbytery of Elizabeth becoming independent of Crescent Ave

# UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Forty-nine years ago, July 1, 1971, the First Presbyterian Church and Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church merged to form the United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield. This merger was cited in the Plainfield Courier News on numerous occasions.

Here are three such occasions:

1. June 24, 1971- Plainfield Courier News

**“Members of both congregations voted overwhelmingly for the consolidation last Sunday and the Elizabeth Presbytery confirmed the vote unanimously Tuesday. Then, in an unusual and infrequent gesture, the Presbytery also commended the congregations on their efficient and well thought out plan of merger”**

2. July 1, 1971- Plainfield Courier News

**“Congregations of Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church and the First Presbyterian church, both in Plainfield, are now one. They’ve combined as the United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield—a move making history with the first consolidation of churches in the Elizabeth Presbytery. The church members involved are to be commended for rising above limited interests and deserve success in their venture.”**

**“When United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield members gather for the first time on Sunday it will be as a new congregation, unafraid and willing to undergo change in order to better carry out their mission. Such willingness deserves admiration”**

3. June 22, 1972- Plainfield Courier News

**“ Edward W. Beglin, clerk of session of the United Presbyterian Church, said, “The two congregations quickly realized that they were not just trying to bail themselves out of a financial situation. Finances became a secondary consideration and the merger was accomplished, I am proud to say, because both congregations honestly felt they could do more for the local community together than they had been doing separately.”**

*There you have it!!*

*195* years of ministry to the Plainfield community and to thousands of congregants dating back to *1825* as First Presbyterian Church and 1888 as Hope Chapel/Grant Avenue Presbyterian and, for the past 49 years, as the *United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield*.

You are urged to visit United’s website ([www.upcplainfield.org](http://www.upcplainfield.org)) and click on the **“UPC Anniversary Page”** tab.

There you will be able to view the video presentations from United’s 192<sup>nd</sup> anniversary celebration that include historic pictures, newspaper articles and interviews from First Presbyterian, Grant Avenue and United congregants as well as information about United’s sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 5.

**These video presentations give deeper insight to the history of United as well as the people who are United.**

*You don’t want to miss it!!*

Contents of this newsletter were provided through personal account,  
Church historical sources and newspaper articles.

Fold here to mail



**United Presbyterian Church**  
525 East Front Street  
Plainfield, NJ 07060

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