

A Cookbook from our Past

A remarkable package arrived in the mail at Covenant a few days ago. It was sent by Kathleen Kelleher of Kalamazoo, Michigan, as a follow-up to an e-mail she sent to the pastor April 20th. 2010, which read:

“I found a wonderful old cookbook from the Covenant Presbyterian Church that was my grandmother’s. She passed away in 1967, and some of her recipes are written in the back. The cover shows a proposed ‘New Church,’ and I believe it’s the building on your website.

“My father had kept this book (from 1950) and I inherited it when he passed away in 1995. I love it because of its historical significance and because all the recipes are handwritten. I would be happy to mail this to you if you would like to have it. Have a great day!”

Rev. Van der Werff sent a return e-mail, saying: “We would love to have it, but are you sure you want to part with it? Many blessings from the East Coast. Peace, Jan Willem.”

Shortly afterward, the book arrived. Its spiral binder and blue cover enclose 225 pages, plus blank pages in the back for owners to add their own recipes. As Kathleen wrote, the entire book is written and lettered by hand. A three-page church history is in the front, illustrated with photos of old Third, Fifth and Mount Carmel Presbyterian churches, which merged to form Covenant.

The heart of the volume, the recipes, are multitudinous and mouth-watering. They are grouped by categories: soups, meats and casseroles, poultry, fish dishes, vegetables, salads and dressings, puddings and desserts, bread, cakes and cookies, pies, preserve closet, cheese dishes, chefs’ specials, candy and miscellaneous. Many of them are embellished with sketches, little photographs, cartoons and other informal artwork, and an occasional poem such as this one: “Oh better no doubt is a dinner of herbs / when seasoned by love which no anger disturbs, / and sweetened by all that is sweetest in life / than the finest of delicacies eaten in strife.”

Each recipe is signed by its contributor, and their names are a trip down memory lane for Covenant old-timers. So are the names of the Cook Book

Committee, which are listed on a full page of acknowledgements: Mrs. Ingram Drake, Miss Adella Rogers, Mrs. Hazel Caminade, Mrs. Charlotte Marjarum, Mrs. George Minschwaner, Mrs. Frank Bamford, Mrs. M.E. Anderson, Mrs. Richard Darling, Mrs. Earl Middagh. Thanks are extended to Mrs. B. Frank Stratton and Miss Dorothy Kay Cadwallader for the church history, to Mrs. Earl Van Horn for the artwork, to Oscar Riegel of the Riegel Printing Company on Carroll Street for printing the book, and to Mrs. F. Timko, Mrs. H. Glenn and Mrs. Lee Wiley for soliciting advertisements from local merchants and well-wishers. Among those advertisers were Jimmy's Doggy Stand ("Try Our Hamburgers What Am!"), Gould's Market in Morrisville, Pagano's Pharmacy at Pennington Road and Homecrest Avenue, Vernam's Dairy in Ewing, Brindley Delicatessen and the Trenton Saving Fund Society.

In an enclosed note to the pastor, Kathleen Kelleher wrote:

"I think it's appropriate I'm sending this to you around Mother's Day. This little book has survived many moves and downsizings and is precious to me because I have many wonderful, fond memories of my grandmother, Delia Loretta (Kelley) Salmon, who lived with her husband, Thomas Eugene Salmon, and only child, Thomas Gordon Salmon [Kathleen's father], in Trenton in the 20s and 30s, I believe. I don't know much about their time there, so maybe someone in your church will recognize the name? ...

"I do know that my father was class president at Trenton High School around 1928 and was the star baseball pitcher when the school won the state championship. I happened to find an old clipping about it; he never talked a lot about the past, so I wish I knew more. He went on to the University of Notre Dame and graduated in 1932. ... I do remember Nana and my father talking fondly about Trenton and the wonderful friends they had there.

"I'm so glad this book found its way home. It's been a blessing in my life, and I know many others will find it fascinating."

If you'd like to examine the book, stop in the church office and Rae will be glad to show it off!