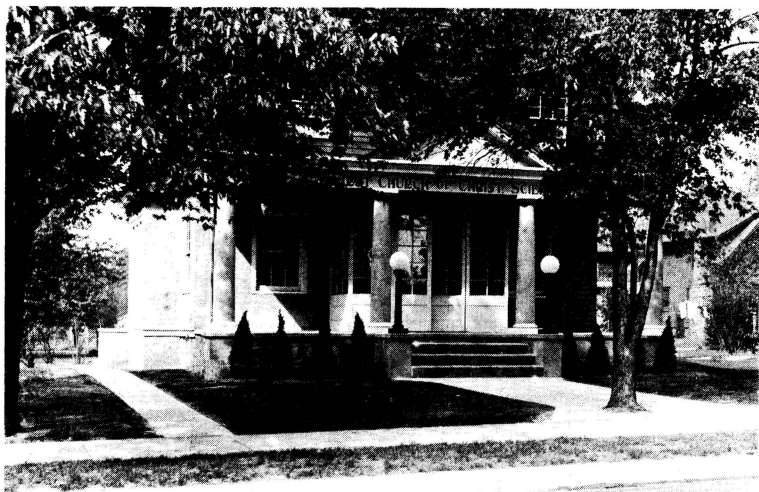


FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, RIVERTON 1911

The twentieth century was only eleven years old when the first meeting of the founders of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, occurred. The first church meetings were held in a home located at 613 Main Street in Riverton. Services continued in the homes of the membership until 1914, at which time the first building campaign was undertaken.

This program generated sufficient funds to permit them to purchase a lot on which a residence was already standing. This piece of property, situated at 703 Thomas Avenue, Riverton, required considerable alteration to make it suitable but, with the expenditure of another \$1,000 the changes were made and the congregation was able to worship in this house by December of 1914. By 1919 it was free of debt, and the complete ownership was in the hands of the church.



"Church of Christ, Scientist, Thomas Avenue, Riverton, in 1914."

This building continued to serve the members until 1958. By this time, however, it was becoming far too cramped and crowded to house the members in a suitable way and so another building fund drive was begun.

The building program for the present edifice encountered its share of problems — there was the matter of location, design, cost, mortgage arrangements and financing — all of the practical, troublesome details which go along with any major construction undertaking. However, through prayer and selfless devotion on the part of the constituency, all these things were overcome.

The land chosen for the site of the church is at 10th and Main Street in Riverton. The architectural and construction job was given to Mr. Walter Croft, who is also a member of First Church of Christ, Scientist. The church began to rise, and each step forward towards completion was a cause for rejoicing. It was completed and ready for occupancy on December 11, 1960, at a cost of \$65,000.

The building, beautifully designed and perfectly placed in a splendidly landscaped setting, is a visual delight to all who pass by. Upon entering the doors it is even more a pleasure to see, as well as feel, the calmness and the soothing quietness within the sanctuary.

The Sunday School Department is currently under the superintendency of Mrs. Ruth Godshall, who has functioned in this capacity since January of 1976. It is well attended and the youngsters are able to study and fellowship together in well planned comfortable rooms.

These same Sunday School rooms were the victim of a tragedy in the fall of 1969. During a torrential rain storm Jacks Creek, which runs through the church grounds, over-

flowed its banks. Heavy debris, being carried along by the raging waters of the overburdened stream, burst through the Sunday School windows. When the storm was over there were six feet of water covering the entire lower level of the building. Everything in the Sunday School was floating — chairs, tables, books, the Superintendent's desk, piano, and mixed in with it all, logs, debris, and pieces of discarded junk, carried in by the surging overflow of water.

Even before the storm had completely passed the Riverton Volunteer Fire Company was on the scene. So, too, were many members of the church, and the tremendous job of cleaning up began. The fire company brought heavy equipment to pump out the water, and the congregation and the firemen set to work. It was hours and hours of hard, back-breaking work and the task seemed endless. One of the members of the church told of spending the entire night sweeping out water. In a comparatively short time the awful mess was cleaned up and the task of replacing and restoring was underway. This too was soon finished and order was restored.

The problem of Jacks Run flooding was solved by an outstanding example of neighborly cooperation by the Borough of Riverton and the Cinnaminson Township officials enlisting the aid of the State and Federal authorities to redesign the drainage run-off during heavy rains.

The Sunday School now has wall-to-wall carpeting and all new furniture is on order and will be delivered soon. The congregation of First Church of Christ, Scientist, speak with great thankfulness for the gift of having overcome this adversity.

The ordained Pastor of the church is **The Bible** (King James Version) and **Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures** authored by Mary Baker Eddy. A weekly sermon is read from these two books each Sunday by church members who are elected to serve for three years as "Readers." The church was founded by twenty-three members, according to the rolls of 1914. Descendants of some of these original twenty-three are still active in the church today. For instance, at this time there is a second generation family of Mr. and Mrs. George Becton. Mr. Becton, who is a former Mayor of the Borough of Riverton, is the son of Mrs. Elby Ray Becton who was one of the charter members.

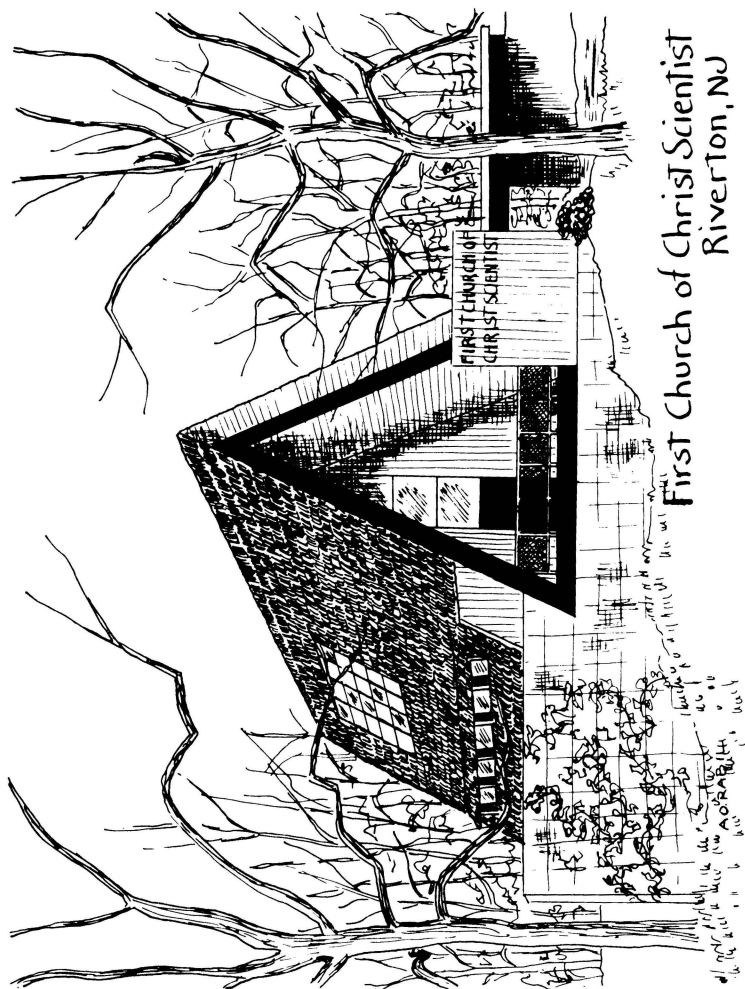
Mr. George Rhoades was also a charter member of the church. He had two daughters, Mrs. O'Neil and Mrs. Hamilton, both of whom are currently active in the congregation. Mrs. O'Neil's daughter, Mrs. Marilyn Collozi, is also an active member and her three children are receiving their Christian education in the Sunday School. And so we have, generation to generation, those who have been rooted in the faith in the past, supporting and supported within the fellowship in the present and readying still another generation who will carry into the future the knowledge and commitment that is so much a part of the life of the believer.

The members have been extremely active in community affairs and have given unstintingly of their time, talents and energy in the effort to serve their neighbors in whatever way they could. Names from the rolls can be found in so many public service programs — The Riverton Planning Board, the School Board, Park Commission, Borough Council, Free Library Board (the current President of the Board of Riverton Library is the same Mr. Walter Croft, whose firm supplied the architect and construction work to build the church), Bicentennial Commission, Historical Society, American Field Services, Y.M.C.A., Girl Scouts, Porch Club Board, Cinnaminson Home Board, and still others. This is a record of community concern and personal dedication to the improvement of the daily life of their fellowman that has earned so many of the members of the church the true gratitude and admiration of those who have benefited from their work.

For the benefit of the public, the Reading Room of the congregation, located at 606 Main Street, is open daily. It provides a quiet, convenient atmosphere for individuals who wish to pray, study, or meditate. It is wonderfully well-stocked with all sorts of material. There are Bibles, dictionaries, historical works, Authorized Literature of Christian Science. These books, pamphlets and papers can be studied, borrowed for home reading, and many of them can be bought to add to one's own home library.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, strives continually and with great vigor to help any and all people to grow spiritually. Many of the members of the church express their gratitude and thankfulness for evidence they have experienced through physical healings of many illnesses and afflictions entirely through prayer as taught in Christian Science.

The future will hold many challenges and opportunities for growth for this congregation as it does for all congregations. As they have turned to the Bible and the books of instruction in the past, so too will they approach the future.



First Church of Christ Scientist
Riverton, NJ