



EXHORTATION!

NEWS BULLETIN OF THE STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE

The Strawbridge Shrine  New Windsor, MD
The First Home of American Methodism

October 1, 2020

2650 Strawbridge Lane, New Windsor, MD 21776

Vol. XXV, No. 2

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This may be the most unusual New Bulletin ever published in the eighty-three-year history of the Strawbridge Shrine Association. Now that “eighty-three years” maybe confusing, so let’s review some dates.

- 1761 – Robert Strawbridge begins a Wesleyan Class Meeting at the home he and Elizabeth rent in Sam’s Creek.
- 1844 to 1916 – The property is documented and confirmed as the original site.
- 1937 – The Strawbridge Shrine Association is formed.
- 1940 – The house is designated as a Shrine by the General Conference of the newly merged Methodist Church.
- 1944 – The Association is incorporated.

So I could have said the “two-hundred and fifty-nine year history,” or the “eighty year history.” But I went with the date the organization was formed. And in all that time, this is the first news bulletin we’ve published for which the site has been closed for the entire time since our last update. So how do you report on the activities of a closed campus?

It turns out, our news is based on the same thing it has always been based on: people. While the Shrine Association takes on the stewardship of these wonderful heritage landmark buildings, it remains true – even in the midst of a pandemic – that our focus is on people and the amazing things they do.

So in this issue you will read about important preservation and restoration work that continues to happen. You’ll read, in the Curator’s letter, how the story is still being told, and how visitors are still making their pilgrimages. On the next page, you’ll see how people are still supporting the work through their gifts and remembrances. And in an article by Rev. Lou Piel, you’ll read about the amazing volunteers who have never stopped doing the work which keeps this site, and this organization, alive and healthy.

This may be an unusual news bulletin in an usual season in an unusual year. But what is “usual” is that for that last eighty-three years... or one-hundred and four years... or two-hundred and fifty-nine years... this place continues to witness, to inspire, and to get the work done.

ANNUAL MEETING 2020

The annual meeting of the Strawbridge Shrine Association, as required by our by-laws, will take place Saturday, October 24 from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM. We are asking all board members to plan to attend and also inviting all members of the Shrine Association. Due to the coronavirus we have not met since spring and this meeting will be our only one until the new year. Please arrange your schedule that you can attend. So that we may ensure social distancing, call our Curator Helen Kemp at 410-635-2600 and let her know you are coming.



We are grateful to our host church, Westminster United Methodist (165 East Main St., Westminster, MD 21157) and its pastor, Rev. Dr. Malcolm Stranathan. There is parking on both sides of the church. You will need to enter by the front (Main Street) entrance, wear a mask and have your temperature checked, fill in the usual health form, and provide contact information. There is also handicapped parking available so please call.

Although we will open with a short worship service, our gathering will primarily spend time on important issues facing the Shrine and business as required by our by-laws. Because of the unusual circumstances this year, we will not have a guest speaker nor will we have a luncheon. If you need more information or have items to be put on the agenda please call Lou Piel, 410-751-9049. Let’s have a good turnout!

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April 15, 2020 - September 30, 2020

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OTHER

John Strawbridge, Newsletter costs

ADVENT CANDLELIGHT SERVICE CANCELED (RELUCTANTLY)

Our very popular annual Candlelight Advent Service in the Log Meeting house originally scheduled for Sunday afternoon, December 13, has been canceled for this year. Ronda Robinson, volunteer chairperson of the Program Committee said, "We hate to do this since it is so popular. In cold weather it is fun to be all together in the building for worship, fellowship and to keep warm. But all of that works against us with the coronavirus. At this time we plan to have it again next year."

In order to keep the tradition of Advent worship alive at the site, we are considering holding a private reservation-only Advent "class meeting" for ten or fewer people practicing social distancing and other best health practices. For more information call 410-751-9049.



CURATOR'S CORNER

Helen Kemp, Curator

Who could have known how different our world could become in such a short time. Yet the mission and legacy of Robert and Elizabeth Strawbridge continue to live on and be evident.

Before the new year 2020 could begin, The Shrine had already scheduled eleven tours. But due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak we were only able to complete three tours. The Shrine had planned to again be a station in the "Passport To History" project in conjunction with the Carroll County Library System had it not been canceled. I had planned to represent The Shrine at Annual Conference and had obtained permission to appear at the Northeastern Jurisdictional meeting, but both were canceled as in-person events. It was unfortunate that we were not able to have Colonial Day in June though the vendors and our plans were in place.

But much more important, is the work we *have* been able to do.

On March 7th my husband Tim and I appeared in Colonial attire at the Carroll County "Celebrating America & National History Day Expo" in Westminster. This event occurred just two weeks before Maryland went into quarantine mode. I had discovered and explored this event possibility. In February I attended a planning meeting with the committee. Since that event, the Shrine has become a partner with this group that represents all aspects of Carroll County history (and which also interfaces with the school system), benefiting from advertising, and the media. We are meeting monthly through November on Zoom; currently working on networking and having agreed to direct visitors to one another's historic sites.

In April Rev. Sarah Dorrence arranged to bring her prayer group to pray at The Shrine. They were establishing a new prayer room ministry in Frederick.

I have cleaned up The Shrine files in our visitor center, and I am currently working on an artifact inventory record. My husband and I have installed two brochure boxes on The Shrine property to assist visitors. Though being unable to conduct tours, on average we are still seeing many visitors who come by vehicle, walking, biking, or jogging - an average of 40 visits over a month's time. These are happening almost on a daily basis. People still care, people still find us, The Shrine still has a viable and promising future.

Uncertain times rattle us but they were not unknown to Robert Strawbridge, who couldn't have been feeling so at ease in the tumultuous world he served. But we can

rely on the same faith he knew from God who never changes. To reach people today the "same old" methods of outreach may need to be creatively changed. But the message is still the same. People need the Lord!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rev. William Louis Piel, Interim President

"The most important thing the Shrine Board did was to establish the Preservation Fund. The second was to get the Board, the members and the friends of the Shrine to financially support it." Those words came from a member of the Shrine Property Committee. No truer words were ever spoken.

As we approach winter there are numerous projects in progress or in planning. Our goal for this time of the year was set at \$5,000. To date we have fallen short - raising \$4,025.

We will share some of the projects that are essential to keeping our historic buildings in good shape but first let us make a serious request. Why not sit down right now and write a check to the Strawbridge Shrine and designate it to "the Preservation Fund?" Our hope is that you have already brought your yearly membership up to date so this would be a good second step.



Keith and Pam hard at work

Keith Palmer heads our Property Committee and there are a number of work projects that he is coordinating. We had hoped to get all maintenance

and repairs which are needed on the Strawbridge House done and then have it painted. We have serious porch repairs to do, window sills to be replaced, plaster work in the original kitchen and related items.

We have just about completed the needed repairs on the Evans House and have a contract to have it painted. Our concern for both the Strawbridge and Evans House is whether the weather will hold this fall for the painting to be effective.

At the same time we are moving toward completion of work on the Summer Kitchen, Spring House and other out buildings.

With this list you can easily see why our Preservation Fund is so important for you to financially support.



STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE ASSOCIATION

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Rev. Dr. Wm. Louis Piel – Interim President

Rev. Sue Bowen – Treasurer

Bonnie Graham – Assist. Treasurer

Marian Goettee – Tour Coordinator

Helen Kemp – Curator

Self-nominations for Board Members and
Officers now being accepted

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

A MUCH NEEDED NEW ROOF FOR THE LOG MEETING HOUSE

As we go to press we are about to begin a critical replacement of the roof on the replica of the Log Meeting House.

In the worship bulletin for the “Dedication of the Log Meeting House” on October 9, 1982 were these words; “At his home Robert Strawbridge started the first Methodist Class Meeting. When the class became too large for his small home it moved to the Evans House on Marston Road. In 1764 he erected a Log Meeting House, the first Methodist Meeting House in America. It was 24 x 24 feet with a dirt floor. The seats were hewn logs without backs. By 1808 the original structure had fallen in disuse with the logs being used for a barn. Only a few pieces of the original logs were saved.

In her book “The Strawbridge Shrine: Its Role in Methodist History” M. Elizabeth Sansbury writes, “How long it was used is not known, but a reminiscence copied into a letter book at the Lovely Lane Museum around 1860 implies that it had to be abandoned during the Revolution because it was on the land of Solomon Miller, a Quaker, who refused to sign the Oath of Allegiance and pay his taxes.”



The new roof for the Log Meeting House will look much like this one, seen here as it was installed on the Evans House last year - being made of wood shingles and laid as it would have been in 1764.

The Shrine deeply appreciates the support of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, which gave us a grant to completely pay for a new historic roof. The Conference has been very supportive not only of the Strawbridge Shine and its historic buildings but also the history and heritage in the bounds of the Conference. The lay ministry of Robert & Elizabeth Strawbridge is critically important to the role of the church in our society today.



The Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc.

FALL FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR DONATION

In this challenging year, I want to support the work of the Shrine Association by: (please select all that apply)

- Renew my Membership \$40.00 or \$ _____
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