

## Turning back the clock as modern Methodist church in Danvers turns 50

By Ethan Forman  
Staff writer

DANVERS — There's at least one time capsule buried on the grounds of the Holy Trinity United Methodist Church, which is celebrating the building's 50th anniversary this weekend.

"Some people believe there is a second time capsule on the property at the time the cornerstone was laid (in 1957)," the Rev. Susan Morrison said.

Tomorrow, as the modern-looking church with 38-foot-tall stained glass windows and wooden arches marks its 50th, a time capsule from 1983 will be unearthed, one from 50 years ago will be sought, and a new time capsule will be buried.

Two people, Morrison and longtime member Dorothy Pickett, shared stories from those times.

The Rev. Susan Morrison: 25 years ago

"This church birthed my ministry," said Morrison, who remembers the burial of the time capsule in 1983, about the time when she began studying to become a minister. She eventually became the assistant pastor, and after working in Andover and Lexington churches since 1988, she returned to lead the Sylvan Street church in 2005.

"I remember lots of different groups in the church contributed items to the time capsule," Morrison said. "There were the Sunday schoolchildren who all drew pictures. I think the youth group put something in. The trustees put in their report, and the annual report of the church went in. A 25-year history went in. And my husband, who dabbles in poetry, actually wrote a poem on the occasion of the 25th anniversary, and that's in there."

She said a pastoral directory in the capsule should contain the names of members whose children now bring their children to the church.

Dorothy Pickett: 50 years ago

Dorothy Pickett, 72, has been attending the church since 1955, when it was on Holten Street, and has helped compile a history of the church. She said it was a "leap of faith" for those 50 years ago to build the new church.

Pickett, a former Sunday school and Danvers elementary school teacher, was not at the church dedication in 1958, but she remembers attending a groundbreaking ceremony.

"I do remember that Mabel King, who had written a history of the church in 1938, and her mother, Mrs. Bailey, ... were two of the participants who turned one of the shovels,

you know how they do at a groundbreaking. And I know that Rev. (Donald) Paige also had a shovel," and so did Don McIlvin, chairman of the building committee.

Pickett recalls the land as "a big, empty plot of land" before the church was built.

The cornerstone was laid on Sept. 29, with help from the Masonic Lodge, and the trowel used that day is preserved at the church in a case shaped like the church, Pickett said.

She recalls seeing a church with no walls as she drove down Sylvan Street when it was being built.

"Those arch supports were placed where they now stand, and they looked like hands in prayer. ... You could see the church was really becoming a reality. It was so beautiful, I pulled the car over and just stopped and looked, it really was so beautiful."

#### Holy Trinity time line

**1930s-1954:** First Methodist church falls into disrepair, and there's discussion of uniting with First Congregational Church.

**1954:** Parishioners vote to build new church on Sylvan Street.

**1956:** Church buys 58,000 square feet of land from Danvers for \$12,000.

**1956:** First Methodist Church renamed Holy Trinity Methodist Church.

**March 23, 1958:** Final church service held at old church building, adjacent to McKinnon's Market on Holten Street.

**March 30, 1958:** Members march from old church to new one carrying church possessions; 1,200 people attend two services.

**1959:** Mural by Richard Ellery is approved.

**1983:** Time capsule buried on 25th anniversary.

**1987:** A new education wing is built.

**2007:** Bell tower repaired and rededicated with the Rev. Donald Paige, the pastor when the church was built, taking part in the ceremony.

#### Upcoming 50th anniversary celebrations

r **Tomorrow**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Time capsule and tree dedication.

r **Tomorrow**, 6:30 to 11 p.m.: Anniversary gala at Angelica's restaurant, Middleton.

r **Sunday**, 9:30 a.m.: Worship and high tea with Bishop Peter Weaver of the New England Conference. Former pastors the Revs. Donald Paige, Robert Hannum and Richard Higgins to attend.