

# Boehm's Chapel Society

SPRING-SUMMER 2022

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## Inside

A pastor, teacher and author passes



Charles Yriogen Jr. was a former Chapel Society board member and major figure

in UMC conference. Page 3

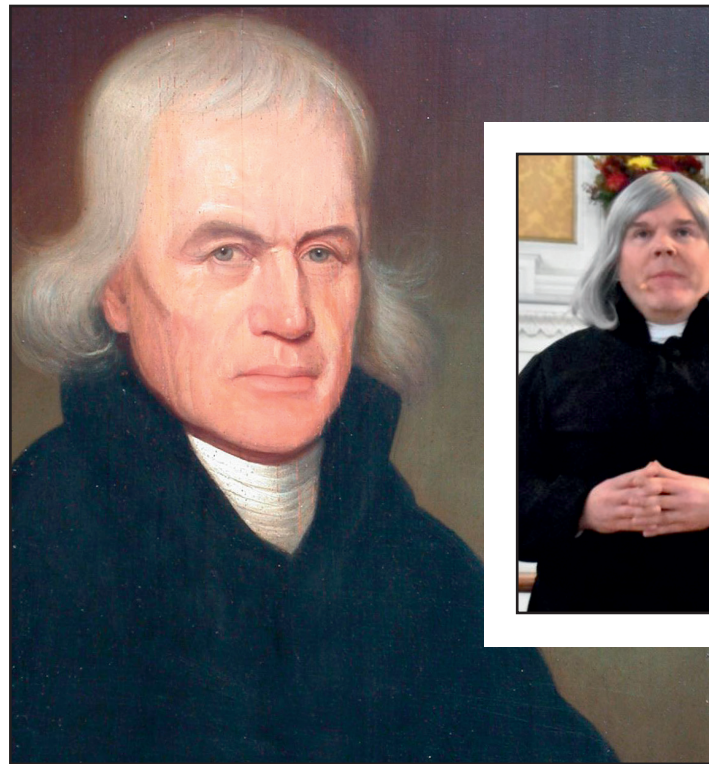
Descendant pitches in to fix gravestones



William Charles noticed in a Chapel newsletter photo that two of his ancestors' stones were broken. He did something about it. Page 4.

## A RETURN TO THE CHAPEL

*Heritage Sunday will be held June 26. An actor will portray Bishop Francis Asbury, who was a friend of Martin Boehm and spread the Word on horseback with Martin's son, Henry.*



At left, a portrait of Francis Asbury.



In the inset, Peyton Dixon is shown as he will portray the father of American Methodism.

See Pages 2-3 for details on Heritage Sunday and articles on Asbury and actor Dixon.

## Confirming their youthful faith

Members of the confirmation class at Lititz United Methodist Church peer from the balcony on a visit to the Chapel to learn about the roots of local Methodism. See Page 8 for photos of more visitors.



# Asbury preached Martin's funeral

*Boehm's son Henry rode with the bishop as a circuit rider for five years.*

*Excerpts taken from the anniversary book by Dolores Myers.*

Martin Boehm was a friend of Bishop Francis Asbury, with whom Martin's son Henry served as traveling companion for nearly five years.

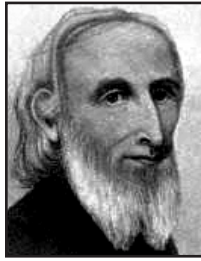
He was a frequent visitor to the Boehm farm, which still sits below the Chapel and is owned and operated by board members Jeff and Sue Frey.

In his book "Reminiscences," Henry related details of his father's funeral, held in Boehm's Chapel, on April 5, 1812. Bishop Asbury was called upon to preach the funeral sermon. His text was, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." He preached:

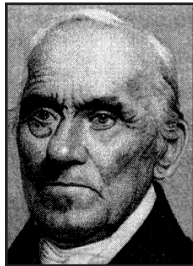
"Martin Boehm was plain in dress and manners. When age had stamped its impress of reverence upon him he filled the mind with the noble idea of a patriarch. As the head of a family, a father, a neighbor, a friend, a companion, the prominent feature of his character was goodness; you felt that he was good. His mind was strong, and well stored with the learning necessary for one whose aim is to preach Christ with apostolic zeal and simplicity.

"Martin Boehm had frequent and severe conflicts in his mind, produced by the necessity he felt himself under of offending his Mennonist brethren by the zeal and doctrines of his ministry. ... His reward was souls and glory.

"The virtue of hospitably was practiced by his family as a matter of course, and in following the impulses of their own generous natures the members of his household obeyed the oft-repeated charge of their head to



Above, a drawing of Martin Boehm. Below, his son Martin.



open his doors to the homeless, that the weary might be solaced and the hungry fed. "We are willing to hope that the children of Martin Boehm, and his children's children to the third, fourth and last generations, will have cause to thank God that his house for 50 years has been a house for the welcome reception of Gospel ministers, and one in which the worship of God has been uninterruptedly preserved and practiced. O ye children and grandchildren! O rising generation, who have so often heard the prayers of this man of God in the houses of your fathers! O ye Germans to whom he has long preached the word of truth! Martin Boehm being dead yet speaketh. O hear his voice from the grace exhorting you to repent, to believe, to obey!"

The Boehm homestead was a stopping point for Methodist circuit riders as Henry Boehm writes in "Reminiscences."

"Years before the erection of this building (chapel), as early as 1775, the year I was born, a class was formed at my father's house. My mother was one of the first who joined, and therefore belonged to the first race of Methodists in America. Until the chapel was built, my grandfather's house was used as the preaching place, except on great occasions, when it was too small; then they used the barn."

"Itinerant preachers or circuit riders were assigned to minister to the needs of the Methodist class meeting at the ... homestead. Bishop Francis Asbury, the renowned circuit rider among the Methodists, recorded an interesting entry in his journal dated Aug. 2, 1783, at the time of his first visit to the Böhm homestead.

"This is a barren land to religion, yet fruitful in everything else." Seventeen years later, in August 1800, Asbury's journal entry read: "Our Dutch, German Methodists are as kind and more lively than many of the American ones."

# Actor brings Asbury back to the Chapel

For the first time in two years because of the COVID pandemic, the Boehm's Chapel Society will hold its Heritage Sunday.

The event will begin with a business meeting at 3:30 p.m., followed by a worship service at 4 p.m. A highlight will be the portrayal of Bishop Francis Asbury, who drove the explosive growth of Methodism in early America. Asbury was a visitor to the farm of Martin Boehm and preached his funeral sermon in the Chapel.

Asbury will be portrayed by Peyton Dixon. Mr. Dixon has been a part of American Historical Theatre since 2001. He has portrayed historic figures for the Republican National Convention, Independence National Historical Park and the National Archives, and has appeared in documentaries on A&E and PBS.

His goal is to "bring to light the accomplishments, as well as the imperfections of famous figures." Besides Asbury, he has portrayed John Adams and Theodore Roosevelt

An offering will be taken.

In the business meeting, the following have been nominated for one-year terms on the Society board:

Marv Adams, Rev. Helen Adams, Don Dale, Rev. Joe DiPaolo, JoAnne Foss, Pamela Martin, Elizabeth Mills and the Rev. William Spiegelhalter.

Nominated for two-year terms are: Jeff Frey, Sue Frey, Donald Hess, Lynn McCord, Dale Mylin, Larry Ewer and Michael Rhineer.

Nominated for one-year terms as officers are: president, Marv Adams; vice president, Helen Adams; and recording secretary, JoAnne Foss. The board is seeking a treasurer to succeed Doris Moore, who has served faithfully in that position for years, but who is leaving the board.

Normally, terms for board members and officers are two years. Because of the pandemic, terms were frozen, and board members added as needed.

Veteran board members and officers will serve one-year terms this time around, while newer or new members to the board will serve two years. This will put the Society back in line with its bylaws.



Famed painting shows the meeting at Lovely Lane where American Methodists named two bishops, including Francis Asbury.

## Asbury drove Methodism growth

Francis Asbury, born in England in 1745, was sent to the American colonies by John Wesley as a Methodist preacher.

He became the leading bishop of American Methodism as it transformed from renewal movement to church. Through example and sheer dogged-determination, he established the shape of American Methodism for its first 100 years.

In 1784, John Wesley dispatched Thomas Coke from England to oversee the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Coke met Francis Asbury at Barratt's Chapel in November. Plans were quickly made to gather all Methodist preachers together for the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane in Baltimore, Md.

In Baltimore, a dozen preachers were ordained in the independent Methodist Church in America. Thomas Coke was accepted as bishop, and Asbury was elected and consecrated to the same office.

Asbury is believed to have preached more than 16,000 sermons and traveled over a quarter of a million miles as a circuit-riding evangelist.

When Asbury arrived in the American colonies, the Methodist movement was less than a decade old. It had started among Irish immigrants in two parts of the country, New York City and Maryland, in the early 1760s. From New York it expanded onto Long Island and into New Jersey down to Philadelphia. In

Maryland it expanded around Baltimore and then moved south into Virginia. Asbury's impact was in three key areas: itinerancy, the conference and the episcopacy.

At Asbury's death in 1816 the Methodist Episcopal Church had gone through one of its most significant expansions. Between 1800 and 1810 its membership increased by 168 percent.

Many pastors joined the ministry only to leave because of illness or other difficulties. But for every pastor that left another stepped forward.

So there had been more than 700 pastors associated with the church during Asbury's 32 years of episcopal leadership. There were nine annual conferences which covered all the states and much of the territories.

The Methodists were taking the leadership in the camp meeting movement which would become the vehicle for church growth for most of the 19th century.

Asbury's commitment to itinerancy, a traveling ministry with circuit riders, saw the church expanded to the frontier and to growing communities in every state.

Asbury is buried at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore.

*Information for this article comes from Archives and History of the United Methodist Church.*

## OBITUARY

### Charles Yrigoyen Jr., 1937-2022

Charles Yrigoyen Jr., a former member of the board of Boehm's Chapel Society and a great friend to so many of us involved with the Chapel, died May 9.

He lived at Willow Valley Communities with his wife of 62 years, Jeanette (Jean) Alice Brittingham.



Charles Yriogen

During his career, "Chuck" as he was known to all, was a pastor, educator and author.

A preacher's kid, born to the Rev. Charles Yrigoyen and Erma Mae (Suters) in 1937. Chuck served Methodist churches in Gap, Lancaster (Lancaster Avenue),

and Philadelphia (Falls) before becoming Methodist campus minister in downtown Philadelphia (Arch Street); professor of religion and chaplain at Albright College; and general secretary of United Methodism's General Commission on Archives and History.

He also taught at Drew University, Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.), Moravian Theological Seminary, and Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary. He served terms as director of United Methodist Studies at Evangelical Theological Seminary, Myerstown, and Lancaster Theological Seminary.

He is survived by two children, Debra Y. Floriani, of Downingtown.; and Charles III Yrigoyen, of Bradenton, Fla.; two grandsons; and a brother Robert Paul, of Palm Springs, Calif.

Chuck was the author or editor of 11 books on John and Charles Wesley, Methodist history and theology, and the Mercersburg Theology. He penned articles in 44 historical and theological encyclopedias, journals, and other publications. For 24 years, he edited Methodist History, the denomination's historical journal.

He attended First United Methodist Church, Lancaster, where a celebration of his life was held May 14. The family asked that those who desire contribute to the mission project NarSarah Clinic and Children's Village in Sierra Leone through First United Methodist Church, 29 E. Walnut Street, Lancaster, Pa., 17602.

## Stones of Charles ancestors repaired



From a photo in a recent Boehm's Chapel newsletter, Society member William Charles noticed that the stones for two of his ancestors were broken. (See photo at top.)

William, who lives in Huntersville, N.C., contacted the Chapel Society and offered to pay to have the stones repaired.

As you face the front of the Chapel, the Charles family plot sits to the left of the Chapel. The Society received the Boehm's UMC trustees permission to proceed and contacted a local firm, Roth Cemetery Services.

William approved the estimate and the work was done when the weather broke.

The two stones mark the graves of Samuel Charles Jr. and his mother Frances (Fanny) Stettler Charles.

They were the grandson and daughter-in-law of Joseph Charles, who came from France with Lafayette to fight on the American side in the Revolutionary War. His wife was Elizabeth Fisher Charles.

In the top photo, the grave of Joseph is the small stone at far left, with the flag.

Samuel, whose repaired stone is on left in the photo just above, lived 1829-1889.

Samuel's father, also Samuel, owned the Charles Ore Banks and Pequea Valley Inn. The inn still stands.

His mother, Fanny, was born in 1810 and



died in 1878. On top of her stone is a cross wrapped in ivy. The same decoration is at the top of her husband's stone. Its meaning: Ivy is a symbol of attachment, friendship, and undying affection. Its three-pointed leaves are a symbol of the Trinity. The empty Latin cross represents the death and resurrection of Christ.

A poem is inscribed on Fanny's stone:  
*Our Mother Here lies underground  
The dearest friend we ever found  
But through the Lord's unbounded love  
We'll meet again in realms above*

There is a poem on Samuel's stone, but time has worn it away.

The Society thanks William Charles for taking care of his ancestors' stones.

## Give with a big smile

Want to support Boehm's Chapel Society at no cost to you?

AmazonSmile is a simple way to support the Society every time you shop online.



When you use "Smile," Amazon donates .05 percent of the purchase price

to the Society.

Society board member Pamela Martin recently wrote to the Society:

"This is such a great way to give to your top charity. I hope all of the Boehm's Chapel descendants and supporters know about it."

Pam reported that so far her purchases have raised \$22.75. For the Society as a whole, users have helped donate \$95.71 since we announced the program.

It is a drop in the bucket, but imagine if more Society members used it?

Search AmazonSmile to sign up. There is a link on our website:

[boehmschapel.org](http://boehmschapel.org)



New flags again were placed on the graves of veterans in the Boehm's Cemetery by Dennis and Dolores Myers. Dennis served in Vietnam. Dolores is the retired executive director of the Society.

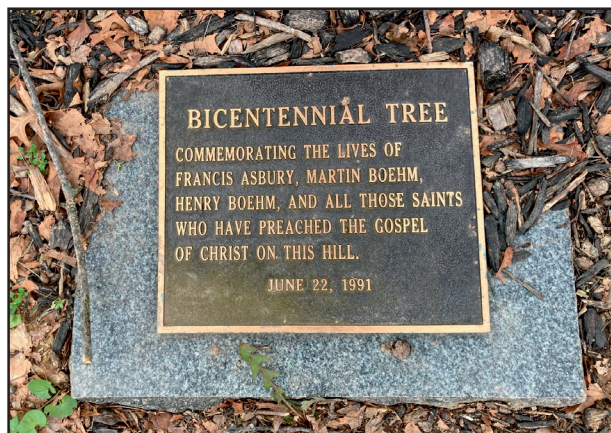


## Cemetery sentinels

In the photo above, workers trim the two large oak trees that stand on the pathway to the Chapel and between the old and new cemeteries.

Cost of the work was split between the trustees of Boehm's United Methodist Church and the Chapel Society.

A plaque at the the oak closest to the parking lot proclaims that the tree was planted when the Chapel was rededicated on June 22, 1991 on the 200th anniversary of the building after the reconstruction of the landmark.



It reads:

"Commemorating the lives of Francis Asbury, Martin Boehm, Henry Boehm, and all those saints who have preached the Gospel of Christ on this hill."

However, the tree that towers above the cemetery today is not the same one planted in 1991. That one died and was replaced.

## Chapel repairs ongoing

As spring turns into summer, a number of repair projects are slated at the Chapel.

The biggest project will be repairs to the wood-shake roof. During recent storms, pieces of the roof have blown off and need to be replaced. The estimate for this work is nearly \$6,000.

A second project includes waterproofing the exterior of the Chapel. Depending on the direction of rainstorms, leaks have been found.

A contractor will apply a sealant to the exterior and replace any mortar that might be missing. The cost is estimated at nearly \$3,000.

Last year, we replaced all the shutters on the Chapel and repainted the hardware at a cost of roughly \$12,000.

Those bright white shutters were beautifully made and installed. However, the new shutters also point out the need to repaint the outside wood around windows and other places. We are awaiting an estimate for the painting.

Also, one of the outside window sills has shown rot and will be repaired.

Your donations help the board keep this revered landmark in good repair.

The Chapel has stood since 1791 and is the fourth oldest Methodist house of worship still standing in the nation.

## Memories of 2016 and 225th anniversary

*The following article appeared in May 22 edition of LNP and is reprinted with the permission of LNP. The author is a Society member.*

**By Doug Nutt**

I want to share with you a very joyful experience that my mother and I had June 26, 2016. We went to Boehm's Chapel, of the United Methodist Church, just south of Willow Street. It was the 225th anniversary of the 1791 Boehm's Chapel building, and the entire weekend was filled with activities. We were blessed to be there all day that Sunday.

The weather was dry and breezy, which was great for having breakfast, lunch and dinner under a large canopy. We attended all the events in the reconstructed (1991), air-conditioned chapel. The morning worship was very meaningful, and Boehm's pastor, the Rev. Chris Eden, preached the sermon. In the afternoon, we all sat in front of the main church building's cornerstone. Some of the church members opened the 1899 time capsule in the cornerstone, as well as a 25-year time capsule from 1991, in a thermos bottle.

We all saw some of the artifacts, newspapers, currency and coins from the time capsule.

My mother and I had also attended the 200th anniversary vespers service in 1991. The 1991 thermos also had letters that children from Boehm's United Methodist Church had written about their hopes for the church during the next 25 years. They wrote about the latest fashions, such as Crocs to wear in place of shoes.

Following this, we proceeded to the annual meeting of the Boehm's Chapel Society. Then, the annual vespers service began. During the service, the Ephrata Cloister Chorus sang. A



**In photo above, the moon shines over the Chapel during the ExtraGive day. Below, Society secretary JoAnne Foss talks with a visitor in the Chapel.**



soloist sang, "We are Standing on Holy Ground," and the Son Boehms Trio sang, "Find Us Faithful."

The bishop of the Eastern Pennsylvania conference of the United Methodist Church, Peggy Johnson, gave the message, "Eve's Story." Eve was Martin Boehm's wife.

The bishop dressed in 1791 attire and wore an auburn wig to portray the young Eve Boehm.

Following the service, we exited the chapel, which was filled to the 170-guest capacity. A preacher on a horse was symbolically "commissioned" by Bishop Johnson. She proclaimed, "Go and spread the Gospel of Christ." Then the circuit rider rode away.

We proceeded to the graveside of Martin and Eve Boehm. At this point, the most goose-bump-inducing part of the day came when the three bishops of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference each made remarks.

For the first time in the Chapel's 225 years, Bishops Robert Brody, Lloyd Hoover and Stephen Weaver spoke on the way the Mennonites had cast out Martin Boehm from being a part of the Mennonite denomination..

The bishops issued a formal apology and signed a document. Boehm was reinstated as a bishop emeritus in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. (His gravestone is now inscribed with that change.)

Then, Bishop Johnson accepted the proclamation and said,

## Society gets boost from ExtraGive

Boehm's Chapel got a financial boost from the Extraordinary Give program of Lancaster County last November.

ExtraGive, as it is commonly known, is a day in which nonprofits join together to raise money in a 24-hour window.

This was the Society's third year of participation and its best showing by far.

The total raised was \$6,341 that day. Donors used their computers to contribute \$4,073.51 through ExtraGive, while others donors decided to simply donate directly to the Society (\$2,270 by mail.)

To mark the day, The Society opened the Chapel and its auxiliary building, The Tying Shed, for tours and to tell the story of Martin Boehm and those who followed in his footsteps.

Donors could designate their gifts to help support programs at the Chapel or to make repairs. Many contributed to the shutter replacements.

"You are forgiven!"

The day was a true blessing and again restored my faith in knowing that wherever you are together with your brothers and sisters in Christ, you are connected as one in the Holy Spirit. When we get to heaven, it won't matter where we worship God or where our church membership had been. We will all be one in Jesus Christ.

The Heritage Sunday service will be held in the Chapel at 3:30 p.m., Sunday, June 26.

The speaker at the 4 p.m. worship service will portray Bishop Francis Asbury, one of the first bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and who preached Martin Boehm's funeral sermon. (Please see Page 2.)

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## Visits from classes and descendants

The Chapel Society has opened the Chapel for small weddings, confirmation classes and visits by groups. Above, students from Linville Hill School hear the story of Martin Boehm from former Chapel board member and head of the school, Matt Buckwalter. In photo above right, Carolyn Hicks and Frank Marotta sit in the amen corner during their visit. She is a Boehm descendant (her mother is Annette Boehms of Tennessee) and Carolyn now lives in Northhampton, Mass. At lower right, Judy Babish, a descendant, visited the Chapel with her granddaughter, Capri, and daughter, Jillian. Judy, who lives near Pittsburgh, is the daughter of Lorraine and Thomas Beahm, and grew up in the Shenandoah Valley at Edinburg, Va.

