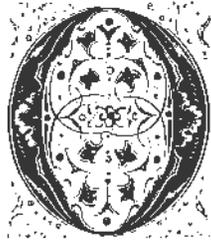


STONES OF REMEMBRANCE



A
History of
Central Presbyterian
Church
1844 - 1994



n the tenth day of the first month

the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal

on the eastern border of Jericho.

And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones

they had taken out of the Jordan.

He said to the Israelites,

“In the future when your descendants ask their fathers,

‘What do these stones mean?’

tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’

For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you crossed over.

The Lord your God did to the Jordan

just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us

until we had crossed over.

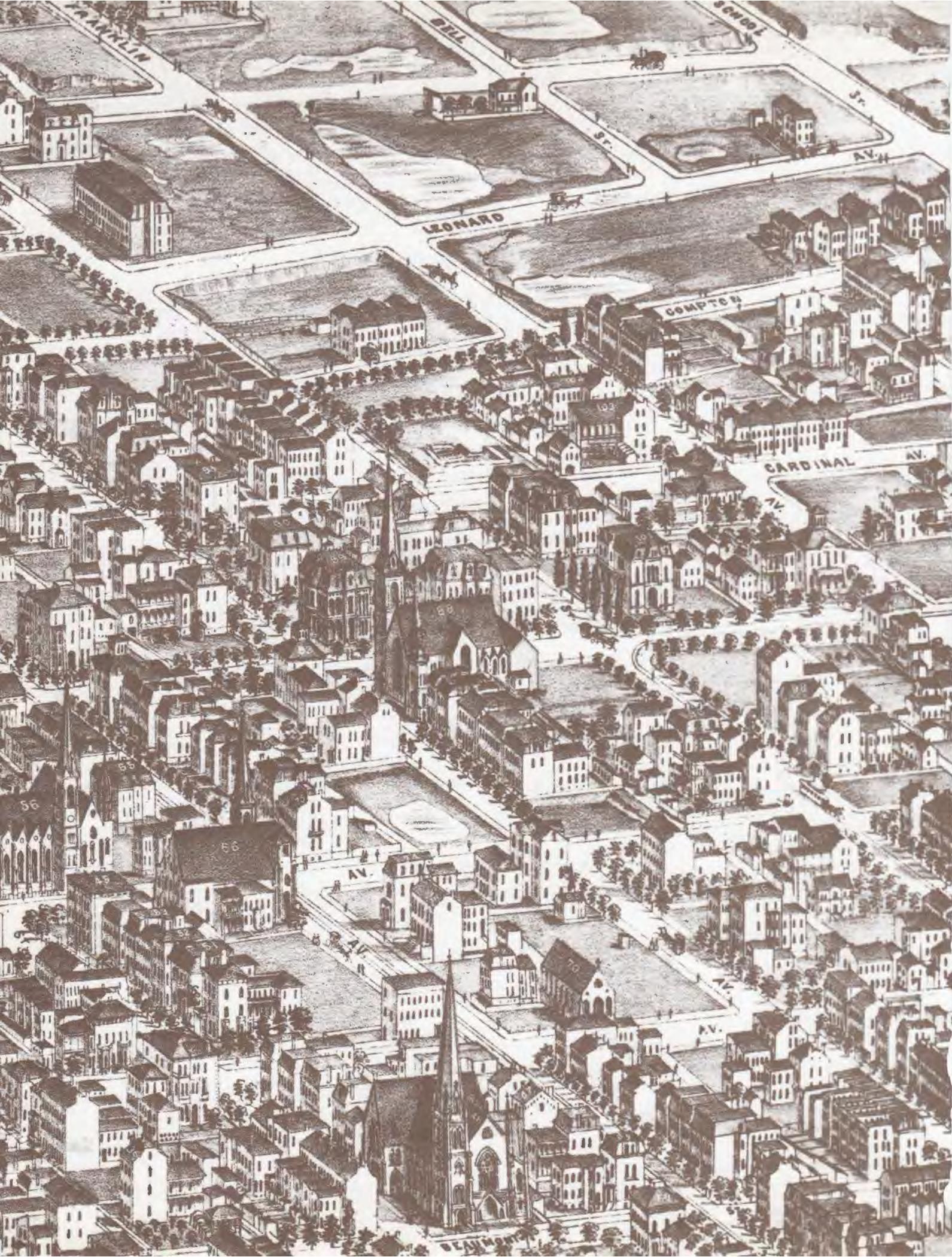
He did this so that all the peoples of the earth

might know that the hand of the Lord

is powerful and so you might always fear

the Lord your God.”

Joshua 4:19-24



“History,”

wrote John F. Kennedy, “is the memory of a nation. Just as memory enables the individual to learn, to choose goals, to avoid making the same mistake twice - in short to grow - so history is the means by which a nation establishes its sense of identity and purpose.” The same can be said of a church. The more we know of who we were, the better we can understand who we are and where we should be going.

This is a chronicle of the first 150 years of Central Presbyterian Church. The narrative is divided by pastorates simply because they provide natural breaks in the story. The Civil War years warrant a section of their own; the actions taken by the church during that time determined Central’s future for 100 years.

Over the years, literally thousands of people have been associated with Central. Each views the church through his or her own unique perspective. Yet a church is more than the sum of its members. It has an identity of its own. Dr. Brewer tells the story of a farmer and his 110 year old ax. When questioned about its true age, the farmer replied, “The handle has been replaced a few times, as well as the head, but it’s still the same old ax.” It is that larger identity of the church that I have sought to describe in this narrative.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites erected “stones of remembrance” so that future generations would have a record of God’s past mercies. Central has its own stones in the documents and scrapbooks, artifacts and buildings, and in the “living stones” of its members. As we celebrate the past, we celebrate God’s mercies, not our own accomplishments. Perhaps we should ponder, as well, God’s graciousness in allowing us to serve Him for a century and a half.

M.M.

