

## FACE OF FILLMORE

By Sherry Shepard



With the passing of another holiday season here in the Face of Fillmore, we pause to feel thankful for the enjoyment it has brought to us. A great many experiences have brought fond memories of Christmas 2022. One of those being the way it connects us to friends and relatives we seldom hear from at other times of the year. This week I would like to share a connection of that kind and the way it has made comparisons to our local history.

As a fourth grader, I met a new friend from Pennsylvania who moved to Price where I grew up. Kathy and I became close very quickly and enjoyed a great many activities together. She lived only a few blocks from me and we made the trek in between countless times.

Kathy's mother played the organ at the Methodist Church and had one in her home. She introduced me to some basic organ information and I was off on that part of my life. As a youth, I attended church in my own ward and at Kathy's church for many youth activities, accompanying singing groups and enjoying parties. Kathy and I often visited the rectory where the minister and his wife lived. Mrs. Corlett was one of our favorite people.

High school came around and so did another move for Kathy - back to Pennsylvania. We were both devastated. How were we going to do high school without each other?

We kept in close contact for quite a while, then high school activities, college, husbands, little children, and jobs took up our time and we lost contact for a while.

Several years later I read an article in Price's Sun Advocate about the Corlett's who were living in Walla Walla, Washington, and contacted Mrs. Corlett. She had Kathy's mother's address and from that I got Kathy's. Now living in New England, Kathy and I once again began writing to each other and still do to this day.

When COVID hit, Kathy wrote me about how their church contact was limited (sound familiar?) and how families and individuals were decorating the windows of their church.

Here in Fillmore we are excited to find a building over 150 years old. It turns out the church Kathy was helping decorate that Christmas was much older than that.

Old South Church, a Congregational Church and part of the United Church of Christ, was formed in September of 1768. The original wood frame church building burned and was replaced by the current building in 1798. It is an impressive building designed by a prominent New England architect, Asher Benjamin. While it has undergone several renovations, it is the oldest church in continuous use as a church in Vermont. (In 2018, the congregation celebrated its 250th Anniversary.)

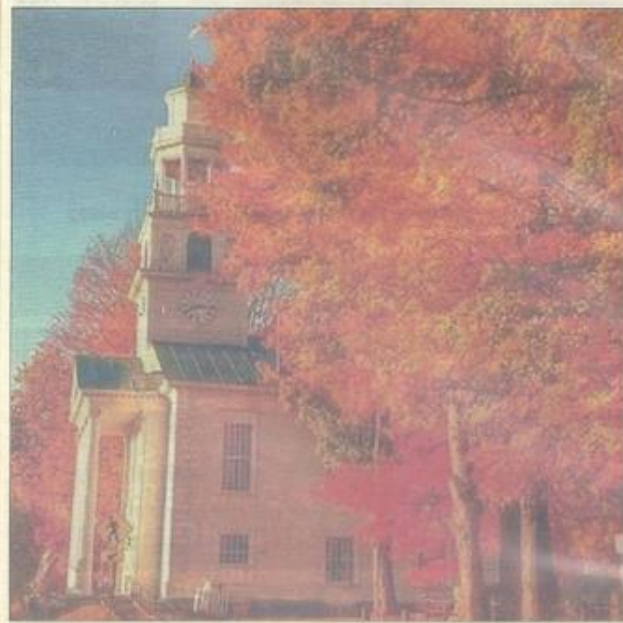
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The current minister of Old South Church, Dr. Ezra Chapola, is the 33rd called minister to serve the church. There are about 100 members. The church occupies a prominent place on Main Street in the center of town. It has importance to the community as a meeting place and because of its outreach in the town.

Interestingly, there are three other Protestant churches along with a Catholic Church in this little community. Also, the Joseph Smith Memorial in Sharon, Vermont is about 30 miles north of Windsor. It is the birthplace of Joseph Smith, the first President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is known in the area for its lovely Christmas light display.

Windsor is a small town in Vermont, located on the banks of the Connecticut River in an area called the Upper Valley which includes towns in Vermont and New Hampshire. It is located at one end of an historical covered bridge that is said to be the longest east of the Mississippi. It is one of a handful of bridges that connect Vermont and New Hampshire. The population is 3500 (a little larger than Fillmore). Like Fillmore, the town has a rich historical background. It was chartered in 1761 and is called the "Birthplace of Vermont", because in 1777 the Vermont Constitution was signed there creating the Republic of Vermont, a sovereign state until 1791 when it became the 14th state in the United States.

In comparison to Utah, Vermont is much smaller in size. From Kathy's location in Windsor, she told me she can drive to any point in the state in about two hours. A science teacher from Utah who taught with Kathy at the high school said the state gave her claustrophobia because everything is so small and because of the terrain. You often cannot see very far in the distance. Kathy lives at the base of Mount Ascutney and her western friends say, "You call that a mountain?"



Additionally, Windsor is home to the American Precision Museum that chronicles the manufacturing history of the area. Its location on the river, as well as the train line that runs along it, brought manufacturing to Vermont in its early days. There is also a state museum, The Constitution House, that displays the history of the state that began in Windsor. We have a community hospital that is affiliated with Dartmouth Medical Center in Hanover, New Hampshire. Hanover is also the home of Dartmouth College.

There is one school in town, K-12, located in the center of town. There are two ponds, one for swimming and one in a wooded park with walking trails. These two areas along with a town recreation area provide many outdoor activities. There is a small ski area in nearby West Windsor called Ascutney Outdoors that also provides walking and

biking trails.

While the similarities and differences between Fillmore and Windsor go on and on, the important part to me is the mail that goes back and forth and keeps two great friends connected during this holiday season and at other times of the year.