

ABSECON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BAPTISMAL FONT

by Gary Morfitt

The next time you are at a baptism in the sanctuary of our church, please notice the baptismal font in front by the altar rail. This marble pedestal was presented to the church on October 30, 1949, in memory of Charlotte Babcock Hammell.

Who was Charlotte Babcock Hammell?



Mrs. Ambrose L. Hammell (Charlotte Babcock Hammell) was for many years a teacher in the primary department of the Sunday School, the first Superintendent of Cradle Roll (for 25 years) and Home Department Superintendent (also for 25 years).

The following is an excerpt of the speech given by Mrs. Howard Hogan at the dedication of the baptismal font on October 30, 1949, for the Women's Society of Christian Service, who sponsored the memorial:

“To have been asked to present to this church a memorial to our beloved friend, Mrs. Ambrose L. Hammell, is one of the highest honors I have ever been given.

So kindly, yet simply and devotedly she served in our midst that the organizations and personal friends wished to make a permanent expression of their appreciation of her life and example in this baptismal font.

From the time Charlotte Babcock Hammell accepted Christ at this altar as a child, her life has been a beautiful expression of faith and devotion to her Master.

I would like to say that I have never known so many talents possessed by one woman. Mrs. Hammell used her ability in her church. Many were the programs of the Sunday school given under her guidance for special occasions.

In her early life, she was Sunday school teacher, church organist and choir director and for many years a choir member.

It was her ambition to have the church obtain a pipe organ. For years she took orders for home made cakes and that fund became the nucleus of the fund for our pipe organ, which was installed in 1916.

Mrs. Hammell organized the first Queen Esther Circle for young girls to study and aid Home missions. Beside their study, the Camden Deaconess Home was their special project, the group visiting the home each year, and completely furnished a bedroom there.

Knowing that the church should reach young and old alike, Mrs. Hammell organized the Cradle Roll and Home Department of our Sunday school, serving as superintendent of both for twenty-five years. Funds from these two organizations strengthened the Sunday school. From the time an infant was baptized in this church, Mrs. Hammell kept in touch with its parents and sent a birthday card each year, till at four years old, they enrolled in the Sunday school.

She taught the Beginners Department for years and her loving manner won the children to her, the love of Christ shining through her.

When Methodism united and the Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) made the organization for woman's work in the church, Mrs. Hammell served as its first president for two years. It was her conscientious devotion, her humble, prayerful interest that gave this group an excellent start and its members a beautiful example of spiritual living. One of her earnest efforts was to start a group of women to be a part of their society, who not being able to attend the day meetings, could be an Evening Circle. That group is now an active useful part of the Women's Society of Christian Service.

Those who knew Mrs. Hammell will quite agree with me when I say they were always impressed with her quiet, kindly, friendliness toward everyone. It was her love for her Savior that was shown in her love of people and made her the quiet leader of both older and younger alike.

Thinking of the many loving attributes of Mrs. Hammell, it is my privilege to present to the Absecon Methodist Church this marble baptismal font from her friends. When through the years people kneel at this altar to commemorate the Lord's Supper and see inscribed here, "In memory of Charlotte Babcock Hammell," it will be a reminder of a devoted Christian character who loved and labored with God here. Knowing Mrs. Hammell personally, it has given me deep pleasure to participate in this presentation."

Francis Schlesinger, another long-time member of our church, said she had a birthday card that Mrs. Hammel sent to her when she was three years old. It said, "Francis, you are now old enough to come to Sunday school. We are expecting you on this Sunday." and she signed her name.

Regarding memorial pledges, the minutes of WSCS at this time announced that \$25 had been pledged from the Sunday school (more if necessary), \$25 from the Willing Workers Bible Class, \$25 from the Business and Professional Group and it was voted that the WSCS group contribute \$50. It turned out the memorial fund was oversubscribed and the remaining funds were used toward sending girls to summer Bible schools, adding to a living memorial.

The baptismal font is a reminder of a devoted Christian character who loved and labored with God here at the United Methodist Church at Absecon.