

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Remembering Luther Tucker



Luther Tucker, 1997

Reverend Luther Tucker was described as a visionary and religious innovator. He was the Episcopal rector at the Indian Hill Church and the co-Presbyterian pastor for nearly 25 years, and then became pastor emeritus.

Luther was born in 1909. He and three siblings were raised on Park Avenue in New York City. The Tucker family spent summers on the New Jersey shore or cruising on Narragansett Bay in the family yacht. At age 14, he went to St. Paul's, a prestigious boarding school in New Hampshire. He next entered Yale University, where his extracurricular activities centered on Dwight Hall, the Yale Christian Association. Luther was inspired by the idea of a social gospel, and also by the work of the World Student Christian Federation, an international student movement. He remained involved in the

WSCF for his entire life.

After his marriage to Josephine "Jo" Pullman in 1934, the newlywed Tuckers moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Luther attended Episcopal Theological School. They started a family. Following divinity school, Luther and Jo went to Japan, where he served as an emissary of the WSCF. In 1939 he was jailed for distributing information of casualties caused by that country's invasion of China. Upon receiving a suspended sentence, he returned to the U. S. in 1941 and took a position at the familiar Yale Christian Association in New Haven, Connecticut, where he worked for 7 years.

In 1949 Luther Tucker was offered the position of rector of the newly formed Indian Hill Church, a federated church uniting Episcopalians and Presbyterians in a cooperative endeavor. Tucker had never had a parish ministry, but accepted the exciting and challenging job. After moving to Cincinnati, Tucker and church leaders spearheaded a building fund campaign, raising money for the construction of a new building on 6 acres at 6000 Drake Road. In June 1951 ground was broken, and the consecration of the church occurred on Thanksgiving Day 1952. The experimental dual denominational church now had its own place of worship. Tucker was elected to the Presbytery, enabling him to serve as pastor, but with a growing congregation, the need for another clergyman became apparent. In 1957 an ordained Presbyterian minister was added to the staff.

The Indian Hill Church became known for its joint governance, team clergy, and shared facilities. With Luther and the Presbyterian pastor at the helm, the church developed a vigorous outreach program, an educational platform, opportunities for faith cooperation, a youth initiative and fellowship opportunities. All this was done purposely - to live actively with a Christian spirit. Involving participation in three weekly worship services (8:00, 9:30, and 10:30), counseling, visitations, weddings, burials, and many meetings, the minister's schedule was busy. Luther became known for his intellect, inclusiveness and involvement in the lives of his parishioners and the life of the larger Cincinnati community. He was hospitable, generous and active in many local and national organizations. A great communicator, "the Rev" was known for his mellifluous voice, numerous letters, notes and comments, and his hearty laugh. In liturgical services, his phrasing and elocution were notable; he infused worship with reverence and conviction. He retired in 1973, but remained active as pastor emeritus.

Luther and Jo Tucker were devoted to their family. They resided on south Drake Road, a few miles from the church. Here they raised 3 daughters and a son. Their summer home in Essex, Connecticut was the site of many family reunions and lots of visits from friends. They were married for 66 years and had 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

In July 2000 while swimming in Long Island Sound, Luther Tucker unexpectedly died of a heart attack at age 91. His funeral service was a tribute to the man who truly believed he had "gone to glory". Reverend Tucker's long and productive ministry provided the impetus for the success of the Indian Hill Church, with its dynamic and unique ecumenical vision.

