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The Birmingham Eccentric CHURCH PAGE

PAGE 6 NOVEMBER 13, 1958

Choir to Present Part of 'Messiah'

The senior choir and soloists of St. James Episcopal church will present the Advent portion of Handel's oratorio "The Messiah" Nov. 16 at the 11 a.m. service.

This service of music during the regularly scheduled hour of worship, continues a long standing annual tradition at St. James where a Sunday service just prior to the Advent season is devoted to one of the major oratorios concerned with the Advent and Christmas seasons.

The choir will be under the direction of Kent McDonald, organist and choirmaster at St. James church.

THE SOLOISTS for the performance will be Nioma Sherman, soprano; Alice Dutcher, contralto;

Neil Soper, tenor, and George Mullin, baritone.

"The Messiah was composed in 1741 in only 24 days. It was first performed in Dublin in 1742 with Handel conducting, at a concert given for charitable purposes.

Thereafter Handel conducted annual performances of the Messiah in London, and since Handel's time "The Messiah" has probably had more performances than any masterpiece in the history of music.

BIRMINGHAM MEMBERS of the choir participating in this performance are Natalie McKaig, Elsie Moon, Nellie Hartberg, Anna Steinbauer, Joan Ryan, Margaret Keesley, Jean Blauvelt, Ann Geiger, Elizabeth Graham, Mary Dolan, Dorothy Young, Leonies Kidd, Harold Walker, Philip Kidd, Robert Kent, Edmund Lavenworth, Oliver Green, John Hartberg, Rufus Jones and Kerry Keesley.

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Rev. Dr. Alfred D. Grey, interim minister at the Congregational church of Birmingham, likes to stay active. He has retired several times, but keeps returning to work when minister is needed. He came here last August to replace the Rev. Robert D. Dewey, who resigned early last summer to accept a post as minister at Garden City, N. Y., Community Congregational church.

Dr. Grey Can't Stay Away from His Work

"I get very restless when I'm retired," said Rev. Dr. Alfred D. Grey, interim minister at the Congregational church of Birmingham.

Dr. Grey, a minister for over 44 years, has been retired four times since 1950. He said he would like to keep working as an interim minister as long as he is able because he doesn't like to sit around.

BORN in Stratford, Ont., in 1890, he attended Wheaton college, Ill., and the theological seminary at the University of Chicago.

His father was a minister, and his brother Rev. Dr. Ira N. Grey, a retired Presbyterian minister, lives in Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Grey is also a native of Stratford, and she and Mr. Grey were high school sweethearts.

"We were married Aug. 4, 1914, the day World War I was declared," Dr. Grey said. And he jokingly added: "The wife and I just never had an armistice."

They have two married daughters and eight grandchildren.

DR. GREY has served as a minister in many states, including 13 years in Toledo, O., and five years at a women's prison in Telachopi, Calif.

He described his work as chaplain at the prison as being one of the most rewarding experiences he ever had. "I loved the work there," he said.

Counseling was his main task at the prison, but he also taught bible classes and conducted services.

He retired the first time in 1950.

Librarian to Speak At Auxiliary Meeting

Mrs. Carey Palmer, head librarian at the Royal Oak library, will talk on "The Best is Yet to Come" at the St. James Episcopal church Woman's auxiliary meeting Nov. 19.

Mrs. Palmer's talk will follow a 12:30 luncheon. A regular board meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m.

Notices of church group meetings and special services must be submitted in writing by 3 p.m. on Thursday before publication date.

HE WAS CALLED to serve as interim minister at a church in Canada for a short time, and in 1953 he was called again to serve as interim minister at Plymouth Congregational church, Lansing.

In 1956 he retired again, but in August of 1957 he answered a call to serve as interim minister of the First Congregational church of Port Huron.

He stayed there until after Easter of 1958, retired for a short time, and then came to Birmingham in August.

After 44 years as a minister, Dr. Grey has many memories of the way things used to be, along with a few comments on the widespread opinion that ministers are underpaid.

MINISTERS don't have financial problems like we used to in the old days," Dr. Grey said. "Why I remember having to walk five miles to the hospital when our first baby was born because I didn't have enough car fare."

He said there were often times when ministers didn't have enough to live on because the churches neglected to pay them regularly.

He also disagreed with the opinion that there was a shortage of ministers in the country.

"I don't think there is a shortage of ministers," he said. "I think there is a shortage of good ministers. Men who are well trained and devoted to their work."

AN ARDENT sports fan, Dr. Grey attends Birmingham high school football games whenever he has the opportunity, and recently went to Fort Huachuca to watch the school play.

He played sports in college and has played golf for 40 years. "I got worse every year, but like it more," he said.

This reporter asked him if he won any letters while playing sports in college, and was quickly informed that they didn't give out letters in "those days."

What is he planning to do when he finishes his interim work in Birmingham?

"I hope to find some place where my wife and I can be comfortable, and where I can keep working," he said.

One thing for certain. No matter where Dr. Grey goes, he will probably be the most active retired man in the community.

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