

Church Dedication Ceremony

David Bumbaugh, Beverly Bumbaugh, Vanessa Southern, Carol Haag, Edward Young, William Sinkford

[The Unitarian Church in Summit](#)

October 27, 2002

Invocation

Revs. David and Beverly Bumbaugh

We have been called together this afternoon to dedicate this place to the uses, the practice, the vision of liberal religion and the free faith. In a very real sense, this is a task beyond our competence. For nearly a century now, this has been a place where free people have practiced their faith, have explored its imperatives and found strength and courage for living their faith into the world.

In truth, this place has already been dedicated and consecrated and made sacred by the living of unnumbered lives -- by the hopes and dreams, the laughter and tears, the accomplishments and defeats of women and men whose names we may not know but whose lives are built into this place.

Listen, if you will, and perhaps, beneath and behind all that is said here today, you will hear the voices of those who have dedicated this place by the living of their lives, the words of their mouths, the deeds of their years. Perhaps you will hear the echo of preachers calling the congregation to faithfulness and the world to mercy and justice. Perhaps you will hear the words of laywomen and men, amplifying all that is said here by the living of their lives and by the strength and courage they give to others. Perhaps you will hear the laughter of children. Perhaps a voice lifted in song or the sweeping gift of great music. Perhaps you will hear the weeping of those who have seen a love die, a hope vanish, a dream dashed. Perhaps you will hear voices raised in behalf of the voiceless, the despised, the outcasts. Listen! The voices are speaking. The undertones of history sound through this place and it is this, the living and the dying, the laughing and the weeping, the faithfulness of unnumbered men and women that dedicates this place.

It is left to us to rededicate not this place, but ourselves to the vision that those generations have sought to incarnate here -- the vision of a world of mercy and peace -- a world of justice and hope for all Earth's creatures. Here, in this place, let us renew our faith in that which called us into being, that which sustains us in being, that which transforms us as we cannot transform ourselves, that which receives us back unto itself when life has used us up. And in that faith, let us renew our commitment to a world transformed, a world made whole and all her children one.

* * * * *

Building the Unitarian Church in Summit **Edward Young**

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests: Eighty-nine years and six days ago, the congregation of this church, with representatives of the Unitarian and Universalist faiths, and other churches in Summit, gathered in this same room to dedicate a new church building, as we do today. There were hymns sung, prayers said, and sermons given, and the congregation sat, I am sure as we do, with no small pride in what they had accomplished. There was also, no doubt, just like today, a sense of relief that the building project was finally over. Today I would like to give you a brief history of how that congregation came to be sitting in this place, on that day.

Our heritage began in January 1908, when a small group of individuals came together to organize a liberal church in Summit. For five years this dedicated band led a makeshift existence, meeting in the local Masonic hall and then the Women's Institute. As the congregation grew, so did the dream of having their own church building. The church bulletin for December 1911 stated: "We must not forget that we are constantly looking forward to building a little church of our own. It is the one great necessity if we are to feel that we have permanently established ourselves in the community." For some this must have seemed an impossible dream: The congregation was small, fewer than 50 people; the Unitarian faith was not exactly "mainstream," and Summit was already filled with churches of most other denominations.

Rev. Howard Ives, who became minister of the church in March 1911, was an enthusiastic supporter of the dream and encouraged the congregation to get started. In April, the congregation organized the production of a popular play at a local hotel, and gave a second performance the following month. These two performances raised \$300, and this sum was the start of the building fund. That summer a member of the congregation gave \$1,500 toward the purchase of a lot in Summit. The Women's Alliance pledged \$1,000 to the building fund, which they raised over the next two years through a series of music concerts and an Easter bazaar, our first "garage sale." This bazaar ran for two days and included, among other events, a Japanese tearoom and a Scottish sword dance. Over the next three years, the congregation raised half the required sum through its own efforts, and received grants from the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Convention of New Jersey.

At the annual meeting in January 1912, the 45 members of the congregation present formally voted to proceed with building a church. A building committee was formed, and shortly thereafter the congregation purchased a house and lot on the corner of Waldron and Springfield avenues. The house was moved to make way for the church building, and became the parish house and later Community House. The congregation engaged Joy Wheeler Dow, a local architect and congregation member, to design a church building. With the project now a reality, a stirring message went into the March church bulletin:

There is little doubt that the year will see a church building if not entirely completed, at least underway. And that means not only the satisfaction of having a place of our own in which to worship and meet together socially, but it means much more -- that we shall be in a position to enlarge our effectiveness and powers of usefulness ... We should actively engage in everything that stands for the betterment of social conditions ... In order that the plans for the building may be triumphantly carried to completion we must all work together with enthusiastic faith. We shall succeed. Let never a doubt or fear hamper our activities or dampen our courage. It is God's work, let us do it with triumphant joy.

In your program, you will find a description Chris Kellogg has written of the church that Joy Wheeler Dow designed and built. I think what is noteworthy is where the congregation disagreed with his conception. Dow wanted to fit the sanctuary with pews, which he saw as offering an invitation to meditation and religious feeling. The congregation opted instead for a more open space with plain reed chairs that would allow a variety of uses. The congregation added a fireplace, just to my left, and a kitchen in the basement, to accommodate a fuller range of church activities. Clearly the congregation was looking outward as well as inward.

Dow's plans for the church building were accepted in the autumn of 1912. The estimated cost of construction was \$11,000, and although the congregation had not raised all the funds required, work started on the church in the fall. Raising the necessary funds was just as demanding a task then as it is now. In April 1913, the church bulletin put in the following call for donations, which may have resonance for those of you who worked on the Capital Campaign:

We have every reason to feel proud of our new church building so rapidly approaching completion ... But with this pride in achievement, and happiness in the hope for the future, let us not forget the duties and responsibilities of the present. The number of contributors towards the building fund does not include, by any means, all of the families who are members and attendants at our church. How can we feel proud over that which we have not helped to accomplish? ... Do not let us feel that large contributions are necessary, but do let us each make some sacrifice towards the new building ... Give what you can, but give something and give it promptly.

Construction was completed in September 1913, and on October 21, the new church building was formally dedicated. Shortly thereafter, the congregation started a new fund to equip the church with an organ. These people never stopped dreaming. The rest, as they say, is history.

This church is a testament to faith and commitment. And in this testament there are parallels with our congregation and a legacy for us to continue. A group of individuals came together and made a commitment to building a community based on the tenets of a liberal religion, sustained by fellowship. We continue that tradition. That congregation had, as we do, faith in its ability to achieve ambitious goals through its own efforts, hard as the task was then and was for us in completing our own building project. They, like us, wanted a church that was both a sanctuary for their own worship and a focal point for

bringing their faith and their service to the larger community. They built this church, and we have built on their foundation.

When we consider what has taken place within these walls over these past 89 years, we often think of the high points of our history as a congregation. Vanessa spoke this morning about our rich traditions: the board of trustees' support for Rev. Frank Doan's principled stand against America's entry into the First World War; the inspirational ministers who have graced this pulpit, many of whom achieved recognition well beyond this church; our concern with social issues, with drawing the circle ever larger; our commitment to religious education for our children, and the joy we have taken in music. But beyond all the history, the role this church, this sanctuary, plays in the rhythm of our lives continues as a beacon for us. Rev. Howard Ives expressed this in his dedication of this church, on a Tuesday evening in October 1913. Ives said:

Here may words of truth and comfort be spoken, here may the incense of prayers ascend, here may the old see visions and the young dream dreams, here may the little ones be consecrated, the youths and maidens say their marriage vows, and those who weep over new-made graves learn that love can never lose its own.

* * * * *

Responsive Reading
Rev. Carol S. Haag,
Minister of Religious Education

*Out of wood and stone,
out of dreams and sacrifice,
the People build a home.
Out of the work of their hands
and hearts and minds,
the People fashion a symbol and a reality.*

May this house be truly a place of Meeting --
meeting one with another
in the warmth and joy and openness,
meeting with one another
in courage and love and trust.

*May all who enter here
trust one another so surely
that they dare to share the deep fires
that burst into anger as much as
the sweet spring water
that swells into laughter,
the slow erosion of wounded tears
as much as the soaring song.*

May these walls know silence
as a hundred hearts search inward,
each for its own small spark of hope
that might otherwise be snubbed out in the noise.

*May these rafters hear the voice of the child
as surely as that of the orator
and the sound of the lute,
the clack of the typewriter,
the swish of the broom
and know that all are as holy
as the shout of a million stars.*

May the rain fall lightly on the house,
the sun shine warmly,
the winds blow softly
and bless it
as a place of joy
and peace.

* * * * *

Sermon: Walls
Rev. William G. Sinkford,
President, Unitarian Universalist Association

Thank you for inviting me to share this day of celebration with you. It's a great pleasure to be able to share worship with you, and a real opportunity for us to reaffirm the relationship that you have with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Let me first bring you greetings from the larger family of faith of which this congregation is a part. Unitarian Universalism is nothing more than the coming together of now 1,050 free liberal religious congregations for three common purposes: to serve one another, to start new congregations, and to promote our liberal religious values. And I'm very pleased to tell you that the state of the association today is strong and vibrant. Unitarian Universalism has grown in numbers in each of the last 20 years. But far more important than that growth in numbers is our growing maturity: the growing ability of Unitarian Universalism to claim our good news at the center of the conversation instead of on the margins, and to live out a ministry in this world, in these times, which can help to heal our hurting world. I also want to thank you for your ongoing support of the association, even as you have strained to find the resources to build this building and to create new possibilities for serving the needs of your congregation and your community.

Today I'm here to help you celebrate your beautiful new building. This day has been a long time coming. You've worked hard. You've given generously. Though pride is a tricky emotion, today is a day to be proud of what you have accomplished. Value your

commitment to this community. Imagine deepening your ministry here in Summit. Honor the labors of so many of you. Celebrate the possibilities this new place offers -- possibilities for more growth, possibilities for greater service, possibilities for deeper connection. I know that this is a great day of celebration for you, but I have to tell you -- and I think you already understand -- that this needs to be more than just a party. This building represents your commitment to one another, a covenant for your ministry together in this community.

I know that this worshipping community has been wandering in the wilderness for a while, making do with church in a box while the old came down and the new went up. And now you have come to the promised land.

The promised land story, as you know, comes from the Hebrew scripture. As the story goes, the people who would become the Israelites, when they decided to flee from slavery in Egypt, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Now, why it took them 40 years to travel 150 miles across the Sinai Peninsula is a sermon for another day. But what we do know from the scriptures is that when they got to the Jordan River and looked across to the land of milk and honey that their God had promised would be theirs, they found a land of milk and honey -- but they also found a large, walled, armed city called Jericho. And Joshua, the leader of the Israelites at that time, did what Hebrew leaders always do in the scriptures: He went up the mountain to pray, to try to figure out what to do. And in point of fact, the God of the Israelites delivered up a plan. It wasn't a plan, as I sometimes say to the children, that involved Uzis -- no mortars or missiles were needed. Here was the plan: The Israelites were to cross the river and were to march around the city of Jericho for six days, singing and blowing their horns, their shofars. And on the seventh day, they were to walk around the city seven times and blow the shofars and sing out, and then their God promised that the walls of Jericho would come tumbling down.

Now, contemporary biblical archeology indicates that there was actually a disaster at Jericho at about the time that the Israelites entered the promised land. We don't know whether it was an act of God -- a storm or an earthquake -- or whether it was the actions of the hands of men and women, but we do know that the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

The interesting thing is that those walls were heavy, earthen and stone walls. And the people of Jericho had built their homes and their shops up against the walls. They huddled up against the walls for security. And it was the walls of Jericho themselves, when they came tumbling down, that killed the people of Jericho. The question to you is: What walls are we building, what walls have we built, in an attempt to find safety and security, that put us at risk?

You see, if we invest so much energy in building walls for safety, and build them stronger and higher and higher, it actually becomes difficult for us even to look out over them, difficult to project our voice out beyond the walls, difficult to hear what someone outside might be trying to tell us. What walls have we built in an attempt to make ourselves safe that put us at risk?

Last fall's attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon shattered our illusion that building larger, stronger walls can make us safe. At some fundamental level, the events of last September 11th changed everything. Yet still we yearn for safety and security, a space where evil cannot penetrate. There is a real impulse for many of us to retreat to where we think we can find safety: to retreat to the comfort of homogeneous communities, to retreat to the comfort of the nuclear family, to retreat from extending ourselves towards real engagement with others. What walls have we built that put us at risk?

Are there walls we can build that will not put us at risk? Our calling as people of faith, UU minister Rebecca Parker said recently, "is to witness to a deeper wisdom regarding how security can be created." Rabbi Arthur Waskow, a leader in the Jewish Renewal Movement and director of the Shalom Center, with whom our association has done some interfaith work, spoke to this in an article about the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, written the day after last year's September 11th attacks.

Sukkot, or the feast of booths, follows immediately after the Jewish High Holidays in the fall. It is a day of thanksgiving for the fall harvest, during which every Jewish family is supposed to build a wooden "dwelling" or booth in its back yard -- a *sukkah* in Hebrew -- with a roof of branches and greens from which fruits and vegetables are hung. Families are supposed to eat their meals in the sukkah and, at night, see the moon and stars through the roof. The sukkah, which is supposed to remind Jews of their lives as they wandered through the wilderness for 40 years, is not to be constructed with strong walls, but must be built so that it will fall to the ground in a stiff wind. In evening prayers, Jews pray to God: "Spread over all of us your sukkah of shalom."

Why, Waskow asks, "does the prayer plead to God for a 'sukkah of shalom' rather than God's 'tent' or 'house' or 'palace' of peace?"

Precisely because the sukkah is so vulnerable.

Americans have felt invulnerable. The oceans, our wealth, our military power have made up what seemed an invulnerable shield ... Yet last fall the ancient truth came home: We all live in a sukkah.

There are only wispy walls and leaky roofs between us. The planet is in fact one interwoven web of life. The command to love my neighbor as I do myself is not an admonition to be nice: It is a statement of truth like the law of gravity. For my neighbor and myself are interwoven. If I pour contempt upon my neighbor, hatred will recoil upon me.

What is the lesson, when we learn that we -- all of us -- live in a sukkah? How do we make such a vulnerable house into a place of shalom, of peace and security and harmony and wholeness?

The lesson is: Only a world where we all recognize our vulnerability can become a world where all communities feel responsible to all other communities. And only such a world can prevent such acts of rage and murder. As Waskow says:

If I treat my neighbor's pain and grief as foreign, I will end up suffering when my neighbor's pain and grief curdle into rage.
But if I realize that in simple fact the walls between us are full of holes, I can reach through them in compassion and connection.

A church needs walls, needs to be a place: a place where you can come together, a place where you can celebrate and mourn, a place where you can count on both support and challenge to be present for you each week. May these beautiful new walls you have built both nurture the persons inside and be a beacon of hope to those outside. May these beautiful new walls you have built be full of holes, through which you can reach in compassion and connection. May these beautiful new walls you have built give you a strong base from which to reach out, to engage with one another and to embrace the ministry to which you are called in this community.

One of our ministers, Kathleen McTigue, reminded those gathered at an interfaith service last June of the Christian writer C.S. Lewis' vision of hell as "a place where people continually move away from each other because of their fear and mistrust, their inability to touch and join into community." She finished that sermon by telling of a Christian church in northern Israel in which an inscription over the door, written in both Arabic and Hebrew, reads: "God is the creator of all human beings, with their differences, their colors, their races, their religions. Be attentive: Every time you draw nearer to your neighbor, you draw nearer to God. Be attentive: Every time you go further from your neighbor, you go further from God."

You have chosen to build a church large enough for you: large enough for who you were when you began the building process, and large enough to accommodate who you will be. With new space will come new neighbors: families, singles, elders, couples, youth -- all in need of a religious home, in need of sheltering walls when they feel fearful in these troubled times. Your growth has made possible this achievement, and more growth is ahead. Try to remember, as you try to remember new names and new faces, that the reason you raised this new roof was not only for your comfort, but to offer ministry to this community.

May these beautiful new walls be full of holes, through which you can reach in compassion and connection. May you find here sustenance enough, nurturance enough, and support enough to offer your good news, our good news, to the many -- so many -- who in these troubled and troubling times need it so badly.

* * * * *

Dedication prayer
Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern

In this space, hallowed by our togetherness,
blessed by the generations of men and women who preceded us here;
in this space, infused by the spirit that moves through us each
and finds its rest in a place of mystery and awe;
for this day perched at a symbolic threshold,
during a time of renewal, before a new beginning
graced by nostalgic looks back,

we gather in worship and in prayer.
Though what sustains us each in our lives
we may know and call by different names,
let that spirit be with us this hour.

Not seeking to dedicate this building to any *one* thing for all times,
still we gather to renew our dedication to what will find life within it.
In dedicating this building, therefore, let us more truly rededicate ourselves.

Let us dedicate *ourselves* to the unflagging determination
to love one another and the world,
as fiercely and compassionately as our bodies and spirits will allow.
Let us dedicate *ourselves* anew to seeking truth with eyes open,
undeterred by past revelation, so that no falsehood may endure
and in so enduring injure the quality of lives premised upon it.
Let us dedicate ourselves to healing the whole, demanding justice,
adamantly pursuing right relation between and among people,
and from institutions that serve and shape them.
Let us promise that what happens
within these walls while *we walk these corridors*
will speak clearly to our determination to protect and nurture
the unbounded religious journey,
that it foster a love of diversity that embraces all range
of opinion and lifestyle and heritage
and that our time on this Earth not tip the fragile balance of creation
away from life, but toward it.

We dedicate ourselves this day anew, not so much to this building
but to what finds life and shelter within its walls and under its eaves.

May this beautiful home, grand as it feels to us this day,
be considered a humble place
compared to what finds root in it and takes flight from it.
And may the world be richly blessed by our having come together,
would that the name of this community and the sight of this facade
be comfort and inspiration to all who know of its work,
of eras past, yes, and more certainly of eras yet to be born.
May our work, our lives within these hallowed walls make it so.

We dedicate this space in the name of all that has been spoken this hour,
and in the name and spirit of all that has gone before,
and all that was silently hoped and prayed for in this hour
of celebration and consecration.

So may it be. Amen.

* * * * *

**About the Original Building:
Joy Wheeler Dow's "New Meeting House"
Christon Steele Kellogg**

At the beginning of the 20th century, Joy Wheeler Dow designed an idiosyncratic building in a wooded New Jersey suburb. The Unitarian Church in Summit departed both stylistically and functionally from the prevailing taste. Completed in 1913, it not only broke with the religious style of its time, but also reflected a growing change in the way churches in America used their buildings. Its eccentric architect, its liberal congregation, and national trends in religious ideology all shaped the beautiful building we enjoy today.

Dow's architectural practice was largely residential. In his writings, however, he spoke about a philosophy of architecture that he applied to many building types. The Unitarian Church design shows us, both in its process and its product, that Dow was a man with one foot in the present and one in the past. In his polemical book *American Renaissance* (1904), he dubbed the late 19th century's eclecticism "The Reign of Terror." Dow seems quite modern in this rejection of arbitrary styles unrelated to their functions. Yet his solution was a return to an architecture founded on our colonial past. Why invent a new style, Dow would argue, when we have a mature and well-established one right at our doorstep? In his view, the Colonial integrated style, function and materials into a cohesive architectural expression.

Dow believed architectural styles evolve slowly and develop their character in response to local conditions. Seen in this way, style is a deeper and more integrated idea. Dow championed the Colonial style's latent power, its American roots, simplicity and its response to local context and materials. His call for integrity in architecture was a call for reform, one modernists would later echo. Beneath Dow's reformist streak was a conservative and nostalgic polemic, which makes him a fascinating and conflicted character in American architecture.

In his view, Colonial architecture expressed the "authentic memoirs of the American people." This golden age ended in 1829 with the election of Andrew Jackson, after which "rabid democracy" conferred the "inalienable right of the American citizen to build whatever he pleases."

His professed respect for the Colonial sounds at times like ancestor worship. According to him, in colonial America, the upper class held the money and the knowledge necessary

for "Good Renaissance," which "is like good breeding, pretty much the same the world over." The social restrictions that society imposed might, Dow admitted, bear "rather roughly, perhaps, upon the individual; but it was the very salvation of architecture" and "regulated architecture almost as absolutely as it did the private affairs of every family in the land."

Even when Dow described the Unitarians to whom he belonged, he expressed nostalgia for the colonial upper class. "Don't think the Unitarians are Radicals or Socialists? -- they are blue-blooded Brahmins, and this sort of thing [Dow's design for the meeting house] simply expresses the history of their faith."

The forms and surfaces of Dow's buildings clearly express his vision for a clean and simple architecture based on colonial precedents. His vision becomes less clear, however, when he forces the internal functions of 20th-century buildings into these Colonial garments. We can infer some of what he intended for the church interior from his writings on architecture and from the furnishings he hoped to install. In his 1913 description of the church design, he called it the "New Meeting House."

Meeting houses of the colonial period served secular as well as religious purposes. This multi-purpose building was important in the architectural ensemble of many colonial settlements, and maybe that is why it appealed to Dow as an appropriate model for a Unitarian church. Yet, in contradiction to that spirit, he pictured the interior with a liturgically conservative arrangement of fixed pews and a raised pulpit with canopy. Noting the absence of saints in "old-time meeting houses," with characteristic eccentricity, he recommended "if we had any to ensconce in the Summit Meeting House, their companionship would aid materially in the ever present struggle of the faith to be merciful and charitable to all men."

It is highly unlikely that the Summit Unitarians would have entertained the saints. They also disagreed with the fixed pews and prevailed on him to leave the main floor open, preferring instead individual rush-seated ladder-back chairs. The congregation did, however, allow Dow to install the raised pulpit, yet discarded even this a few years later in favor of a smaller, movable lectern. Clearly they had a more flexible notion of how to use the main sanctuary than did their architect.

There are two probably reasons for this. Unitarian services since at least the days of Emerson have centered on the sermon and not the rituals of the liturgy. While pews and pulpits do not necessarily compromise the presentation of the sermon, they do suggest a more controlled choreography of the service; and flexible seating allows for a variety of arrangements and therefore an atmosphere of openness and dialogue.

In addition, there was a concurrent movement in other American churches for greater flexibility in their buildings. During this period, according to Burchard and Bush-Brown, the "social organization of the church had become as important as the religious purpose; it was a center bureau for charities, diffusion of knowledge, social assembly." This new emphasis on community-based activities within churches directly opposed the

"medievalism oriented towards handicraft and a worship occurring in the chancel at the high altar."

Typically, two distinct styles addressed these different functions, the Medieval and the Colonial. The single-minded Dow would have nothing to do with the Medievalists, whom times favored. One of the leading practitioners of that style and a contemporary of Dow was Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942). He actively carried the mantle of the Gothic Revivalist, John Ruskin (1819-1900), whom Dow described as an "old fogey with ideas of no practical value to communicate to the world, but, like Browning and Emerson, full of words, rhymes and sentences."

A High Church Anglican, Cram personally preferred a liturgical emphasis with the Holy Communion center stage. For him the Gothic sheltered this liturgy most appropriately. In churches where the liturgy was less important, he, like Dow, used the Colonial and designed a Georgian meeting house in Boston for the Unitarians.

Located on Summit's principal street, Springfield Avenue, and the corner of Waldron Avenue, Dow conceived The Unitarian Church in Summit as a simple rectangle with a portico facing Springfield and the main entry at the opposite end with the steeple directly above. This arrangement closely follows the 1766 St. Paul's Chapel in New York City, which Dow mentioned as one of his models. The portico on Springfield is, as Dow intended, an urban gesture. "It is distinctly the meeting house of the town, the city and the principal street ... and we must remember that Summit is no longer a country village; but is now, a very promising city." He placed the church parallel to the side street. Because the side street meets the main street at a slight angle, Dow took advantage of the resulting, subtle rotation of the portico to strengthen the church's urban presence as we look down the street from the city's center. You see the building more as a three-dimensional object than a facade.

Dow's choice of exterior color shows him again opposed to the views of his day. Just as we do today, in 1913, most Americans saw white when they thought of the Colonial. To Dow, it was actually "a modern color scheme which has become positively vulgar from overwork." He chose mocha brown for the entire exterior, pointing out that in colonial times, people used brown and colors other than white, which he argued was impractical in an urban environment.

Dow created a highly refined and elegantly proportioned space. Quite small, it retains a remarkable openness and lightness. The large, heavily mullioned, double hung windows provide light and air at the main level as well as the two balconies. The overhanging balconies create side aisles on the main level. Corinthian columns delineate the aisles and support both the balconies and the roof above. The ceilings above the aisles are groined vaults and the main ceiling bows, following the precedent of many Colonial churches. The unornamented ceilings are rendered in smooth plaster. The woodwork throughout is very well detailed, culminating in a magnificent, large Palladian window at the head of the church.

Today, nearly a century after construction, does Dow's "New Meeting House" still satisfy the original intentions of the 1913 congregation and their architect? I think so. Even without its brown color scheme, the building is still a standout in the Summit landscape. Its flexible seating still allows for a variety of programs in the main space, unlike most other churches. And its refined Colonial style still sounds a counterpoint to our own "Reign of Terror" as McMansions and other prosaic structures burden our landscape. Despite and because of Dow's eccentricities, and because of the vision of its founding congregation, this elegant and uplifting architectural space continues to work its magic on its members.