

When the Leishman family moved from Barnesboro to Ebensburg in December of 1957, Jane was 9, Ruth was 7, and Martha was 4 years old.

The church was the center of our social life: covered dish suppers, Bible School, Sunday School, Youth Group and, of course, worship each Sunday.

Martha remembers sitting in church as a young child, looking at the faces of the choir and our father in the pulpit. She remembers being fascinated with the beautiful music that came from the organ when all she could see was the back of Fremont McKenrick's bald head as he sat on the organ bench.

She remembers our father, Ken, preferred short sermons which she thought were pretty good, but his prayers could get long!

Ruth took voice lessons from Dorothy McCracken. Once she sang The French National Anthem (in French) at a covered dish dinner accompanied by Jane on the piano.

In 1961, Ruth sang "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" on Christmas Eve. According to one of our father's journal entries: "Had a lovely service this morning. Ruth sang her first solo and I was so proud of her."

We had fun each summer attending Bible School every day for two weeks. One year Martha memorized all the Bible verses and won a prize. She used the money to go to the movies and buy treats for Ruth and Jane.

We spent long summer days outside riding our bikes, playing in the alley by our house, or walking back and forth from our house

to the Ebensburg pool. One Sunday afternoon after church, Ruth and Martha wanted to go out on their bikes. “Don’t go any further than the park,” our mother said. Of course, they headed straight to one of the steepest streets on the other side of town. Martha started downhill first, lost control of her bike, flew over the handlebars, and landed on the pavement. Neighbors rushed outside when they heard Ruth’s desperate cries for help. Some Good Samaritans called Dr. Magley and took Martha to his office. He stitched her up and wrapped her head in a big bandage. “Now you look like Pocohontas,” he said. In a few days Martha was as good as new and back out on her bike. (Ruth survived, too.)

Of course, growing up in Ebensburg meant long winters. We loved playing in the snow and the weather didn’t seem to stop us too much. On January 27, 1963, our father wrote: “The coldest day of the year so far – minus 26 degrees. A lot of frost-bitten faces and ears and hands. But our girls made it to school and back without any trouble.”

After our father died in 1975 our mother decided to move back to Ebensburg. “Everyone was my friend,” she remembered.

She re-joined the church. Sara brought deviled eggs to covered dish dinners, served on committees, volunteered for the Women’s Association activities, and attended worship each Sunday. The annual Ground Hog Day covered dish dinner and celebration was one of her winter highlights. Ebensburg became Sara’s home for the second time. She loved it here.

When she died in July 2008, Carole Vaughn wrote this remembrance of our mother: “The picture of Sara I have in my mind today is: Sara all bundled up, long coat, boots, hat that covered her whole head while she trudged through the snow toward our church parking lot one blustery frigid Sunday morning. When she reached me she said: ‘Look at the day the Lord has made’ with a big smile on her face.”

Ruth, Martha, and I are grateful for so many memories of this church and community. We join with you in celebrating 175 years of ministry in Ebensburg.

Jane Kenyon Leishman Black - Carlisle, PA

Ruth Virginia Leishman McDonnell - East Aurora, NY

Martha Frances Leishman - Washington, DC