

KIRKIN OF THE TARTAN. Sunday, July 20.

The custom of wearing tartan costume to church is relatively recent, blending highland pageantry and conviviality with the caution observed by clans who by turns were sometimes friends and sometimes rivals. Our event is opportunity for people from all over Vermont to wear their regalia in a magnificent country setting, with Scottish piping before and after the service. The service is conducted much as the Reformed Presbyterian Church would have done, although our once a year congregation is not able to generate the haunting a cappella four part harmonies which our better trained ancestors could achieve in the traditional Scottish psalter melodies.



Following the service, we spread a fine pot luck picnic on the lawns. Bring your own folding chairs, umbrellas, eating utensils, and one dish (salad, main course, side dish, dessert) to serve 6. Punch or water will be available.

Mosquitoville is on the town lines of Barnet and Ryegate, on the historic Bayley Hazen Military Road. Here are 3 approaches. Park in Ted Faris's hayfield opposite the church.

Directions:

1) From the north via Rte 2 or from Rte 15. At Danville Green, take Peacham/Groton Rd. south through Peacham village. At South Peacham, turn east (left) toward Harvey's Lake. At Harvey's lake, turn south (right) to follow shore line. Take the second right hand road, a kind of wye turn, up the hill. Church is in about 1 1/2 miles.



2) From Barre/ Montpelier area, take 302 to Groton Village. At the east edge of the village, take an extremely steep turn to north, signed for Peacham. Follow paved road about 6 miles to Mosquitoville Rd on right, just before the last steep pitch on Groton/Peacham highway. Follow Mosquitoville Rd. east for 3 miles, turn left at cemetery to church. If coming north on I-91 to Wells River exit, the steep turn for Peacham Road is on your right just as you enter Groton village.

3) From I-91, it is much easier to use the Barnet exit and follow West Barnet Rd. to West Barnet village, just past Presbyterian Church (about 4 1/2 miles). After village at shore of Harvey's lake, pick up directions from # 1 above.

Service begins at 11:00 AM sharp; potluck luncheon will be afterward. Rain or Shine.

Contact: Richard Downer (802) 985 3464

Rev. James Paul Wilson

Rev. James Paul Wilson joyfully departed to the side of his beloved wife Margaret in the arms of his Savior in the early hours of Friday, Dec. 19, 2008, from the Reformed Presbyterian Home in Pittsburgh, Pa. The former pastor of the Barnet, Vt., Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church was 186 days shy of his 100th birthday.

Paul Wilson was born June 23, 1909, and raised in Beaver Falls, Pa., the son of J. Walker Wilson, a construction business-owner and church elder, and Mary (Patterson) Wilson. He attended Beaver Falls High School and Geneva College. A gifted athlete, he focused on track and cross-country after injury prevented him from continuing football. He set several Geneva College records, one of which, in the half-mile, held for more than 40 years.

After graduating from Geneva in 1934, Paul studied at Pittsburgh's Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary and was called to the pastorate of the R.P. Church. But before accepting his first congregation, he married his college sweetheart, Margaret (Park), in June 1937. He served as pastor in Barnet for a total of 22 years and in Youngstown, Ohio, for 10 years. Together Paul and Peg raised four children, Phyllis and James (born in Vermont), Lauren (Gibson) and John (born in Youngstown). After the children left home, the couple moved to Nicosia, Cyprus, where for three years Paul pastored the R.P. Church on the idyllic Mediterranean island and Peg continued her career teaching high school.

Upon their return to the U.S., Paul and Peg lived in several homes in the Pittsburgh area. For a number of years in the 1980s and 1990s, they summered – and hosted family reunions and guests – at a Barnet retirement property that they purchased with two of their children. In 2006, after almost 69 years of marriage, Peg predeceased Paul. His siblings, Donald, Margaret (Anderson), Robert and John, also predeceased him.

Paul's grandchildren, Kimberly Gibson Northcutt and Kurt Gibson, Nicole Wilson Rubin and Damon Wilson, Caedmon and Maya Ricker-Wilson, and his great-grandchildren, Joshua, Jacob and Luke Northcutt, and Naomi and Benjamin Rubin, share in his loss.

Memorial service to be held at the Reformed Presbyterian Home, 2344 Perrysville Ave., Pittsburgh, on Jan. 24 at 10:30 a.m. Internment at Walter Harvey Cemetery, Barnet, at a date to be decided.

Why is our Kirkin' held at a Covenanter Church?

Among the incorporators of the Inchinnan Company of Scotland was John Witherspoon, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Paisley two miles away, who subsequently came to America to head up Princeton College. The Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland had been engaged for nearly 100 years before the Ryegate settlement in fierce controversy between political and religious leaders who insisted that Scotland should be governed by the Church of England, and those who believed that Scotland should be allowed freely to choose its own clergy and form of government. The latter, during the English Civil Wars in 1640's, concluded with King Charles I a "Solemn League and Covenant" in which he promised (in return for Scotland's military support against the English Parliament) the complete freedom of conscience. The Covenant was very strong in Ayr and Refrew shires from which most Vermont Scots of the original migration came.

Mosquitoville was organized because Reygate Center & Barnet Center were far apart. But long after the larger and more affluent congregations had ceased to function, the tiny little volunteer congregation at Mosquitoville continued, with Rev. Paul Wilson the last active pastor retiring in about 1968. The Covenanter worship is a very contemplative form of service stressing direct meditation upon the gifts of God. No musical instruments were ever to be used in Covenanter worship, but Covenanters cultivated very sophisticated four-part harmony in their congregational singing.