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Thursday, June 20, 1996

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

Long-time minister leaving church, city with fond memories

After approximately 1,200 sermons, more than 750 funerals, and nearly 700 weddings, the Rev. Wheeler T. Harden is leaving the pulpit.

Harden - "W.T.," as he is called - will preach his last sermon at Hoopeston's First Christian Church on Aug. 11, ending 23 years of ministering to the 570-member congregation.

This will be the second time Harden and his wife, Annette, have said good-bye to Hoopeston. Harden, who became a minister in 1956, first came to Hoopeston in 1963 and spent five years at the church.

He left in 1968, to minister in Ohio, but returned in August 1978. "We've liked the community," he said. "Obviously, because we've come back and stayed around."

Harden plans to spend the first several months of retirement catching up on family activities, visiting his children and having them visit him. He and his wife also plan to travel. "After 40 years, I'm ready to take an extended vacation - even if it's only for three months," he said.

However, Harden plans to continue ministry work, albeit on a smaller scale. "I'd like to be a minister of visitation" to hospitals and nursing homes, he said. Another option is to be in the supply ministry, filling in for vacationing pastors or serving as an interim pastor at different churches.

The idea to enter the ministry came after Harden served in the Korean Conflict. A bombardier/navigator during the war, "I thought rather than drop bombs on people, it would be better to help them," he said.

Harden considered becoming a teacher, but ended up a preacher instead. "Maybe my preaching has been teaching," he said.

Through 23 years of ministering in Hoopeston, Harden has developed lasting relationships spanning four generations. "The people I married in the 1960s,

I'm now marrying their children in the 80s and 90s," he said. "It's a different kind of ministry than if you're only there five years."

It is not only at the church that Harden has gotten involved with the community. He has belonged to the Migrant Council, Hoopeston Masonic Lodge, Grant Township United Way and Hoopeston Rotary. "I had a hard time saying no," he said, laughing.

He is also a member of the Hoopeston Ministerial Association, serving four two-year terms as president.

Approximately two years ago, Harden's activity in Hoopeston was honored with a place in the "Hoopeston Hall of Fame." He has also been voted "most-influential person in Hoopeston."

The activities have kept Harden busy, attending meetings five or six nights each week. "That's one thing I will look forward to: being at home," he said.

Through his 40 years of service, Harden has combined a desire to do God's work with a sense of humor. Contemplating the number of funerals he has performed, he said "I've buried a good-sized town."

People have been the center of Harden's work. "I enjoy doing the work of the ministry, visiting and preaching and sharing with people in their need. I've enjoyed dealing with people whether it's (in the church), on the street or in the coffee shop."

There are several things Harden and Annette will miss when he leaves. "We'll miss the children," he said. "We don't have any grandchildren yet so it's been a real joy to be with the children here."

He will also miss the planning that goes into making a church run smoothly.

But mostly, it will be members of the congregation that he will miss. "I go away with some very, very pleasant memories of Hoopeston," he said.

Thursday's Cut Flower Feature

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Court dispositions



May 30: Sharon McCarty, Hoopeston, owes \$275, failed to appear, rule to show cause issued.

Nicole Matthews, Hoopeston, owes \$45 fine and costs, failed to appear, rule to show cause issued.

David Watson, Hoopeston, owes \$100 fine and costs; paid \$40, continued to June 20.

Allen Shumate, Hoopeston, owes \$45 fine and costs, \$37.79 restitution; failed to appear, rule to show cause issued.

Jackie Winchester, Hoopeston, to complete 47 hours public service work and \$20 restitution; failed to appear, rule to show cause issued.

Steve Huckleby, Hoopeston, owes \$45, \$83.74 restitution, failed to appear, warrant issued.

Brenda S. Martin, Hoopeston, rule to show cause hearing, failed to appear, warrant issued.

Heather Snyder, Rankin, owes \$45 fine, costs and \$180.28 restitution, bond applied.

Jackie Trautvetter, sentencing, failed to appear,

Police News



Wayne Conrad of 511 S. Market St., reported Wednesday that someone took CDs, videos, antique toys and old baseball cards from his home. The thief entered the home through a window.

Obituaries

HORNBECK - Henry A. Hornbeck Jr., 58, of rural Milford, died at 12:21 p.m. Tuesday, June 18, 1996, at Iroquois Memorial Hospital in Watseka. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Friday at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Dwight. Burial will be in Oak Lawn Cemetery in Dwight. Visitation will 4-8 p.m. Thursday at the Knapp Funeral Home in Milford. Memorial contributions are suggested to the Shriners.

HURLIMAN - Marian L. Hurliman, 71, of Cissna Park, died at 10:08 p.m. Monday, June 17, 1996, at Iroquois Memorial Hospital in Watseka. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at Trinity Lutheran Church, Cissna Park. Burial will be in the church cemetery.

Visitation was held Wednesday night and will be held one hour before services Thursday at the church. Memorial contributions are suggested to Iroquois Memorial Hospital, Prairie Lutheran home or an organization of the donor's choice.

STUMP - Janice E. Stump, 83, of Rossville, died at 9:25 a.m. Tuesday, June 18, 1996, at United Samaritans Medical Center, Logan campus, Danville. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Friday at the Wolfe Funeral Home, Rossville. Burial will be in Mann's Chapel Cemetery. Visitation will be 5-8 p.m. Thursday and one hour before services Friday at the funeral home. Memorial contributions are suggested to the Diabetes

Thursday Trivia

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Today's question: **What is Wavy Gravy famous for?**

Last week's winner: **Angie Burton**
Last week's answer: **Fog "comes on little cat feet."**

In the hospital



**Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital
June 18, 1996**

Admitted: Doris McCalla and Glenn Siville, Hoopeston.

Discharged: Bennie Blankenship, Hoopeston; Catherine Ryan, Rankin.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High near 90. Tonight, fair. Low in the mid 60s. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High near 91, low near 66.

Hoopeston Monument

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**Just the Facts
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