

She's Old and Gay

Mrs. Witty Attends Birthday Party For Church She Helped Found

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Want to know a secret? The flowery, straw-brimmed hat that Mrs. Winnie Witty wears when she walks into church on a ray of sunshine is not really new.

It's a year old. She bought it when she was 90, and she's going to keep it awhile.

"I've had a lot of experience picking out hats," she said.

A picture of her late husband, the Rev. Laude F. Witty, who died in 1952, was still on the wall of the office of the Central Church of Christ, Puritan and Ferguson, where she sat talking of the past.

She remembered that 50 years ago she and her husband started the Central Church in a paint store at Fourteenth and Warren.

Sunday, she was a special guest of the Central Church as it marked its 50th anniversary.

The Rev. Doyle F. Earwood, the Central pastor, and many other pastors and former Sunday schoolers, keep life bristling for this remarkable old lady who lives at the Church of Christ's old folks' home in Romeo.

"They come from all over the city to see me, and nearly every Sunday somebody comes to take me to church someplace. My, do they love me!"

FOR YEARS, Mrs. Witty taught a Sunday School class.

She remembers some of her problem boys. (One, she says, is now a Detroit city official.) "One boy always wanted to sit in the back seat. Junior, I told him, 'come up here and sit in my chair. Junior!' And I went after him and don't you think he didn't come, and I put him in my chair and he stayed."

The Wittys, who had no children of their own, once adopted two boys off of the street. They kept them 3½ years, then the mother took



Mrs. Witty: Springtime at 91

them back, "and it broke our hearts." Mrs. Witty still hears from one of them.

"The Lord has been good to me? Oh, yes, there's nothing in this world I want that I don't seem to get. But I do get scolded once in a while in the home in Romeo."

The Wittys, married in 1900, came from Kansas to the old Plum Street Church. Then they started the Central Church with 13 members in 1915. It now has 150 members. When the church's building at Kirby and Grand River was moved for the Edsel Ford Expressway, the

congregation bought the old St. James Methodist Church.

"I WRITE a poem when I get lonely," said Mrs. Witty. "I write a Christmas poem every year and a poem to my husband."

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