



31. Baptist Church Enfield Center

CHAPTER 10 - Religion

First Baptist Church Of Enfield Center - Jean Owens

Written for and by the Church - 175th Anniversary 9/13/1992

As Enfield was part of the town of Ulysses until March 16, 1821, for a few years the church was called the First Ulysses Church. On April 5, 1817, a meeting of Baptist brethren was held at the home of Judah Baker. Elder John Lewis was chosen moderator and Chester Colburn, clerk. Other meetings were held May 3, 1817 and May 17, 1817. A council met July 2, 1817, at the home of Elder John Lewis. It voted into membership the following people:

Elder John Lewis, Isaac Beach, Chester Colburn, Jonathan Rolfe, John Hanford, Obadiah Baker, Stephen Mead, Israel Mead, Foster Updike, William Boughton, Susannah Lovell, Jerusha Burgess, Poly Hanford, Eliza Colburn, Nancy Updike, Hila Cuykendall, Olly Burgess, Rachael Osburn, Sally Burgess, Sally Putman, Mary Cuykendall, Ada Sage, Lucinda Lewis, Betsy Beach, Anna Boughton, Sarah Lyon. The church held its first covenant meeting July 5, 1817, and voted to adopt the 12th Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans as its church covenant. Chester Colburn was elected clerk and John Lewis was invited to become the first Pastor.

It was voted that if any member failed to attend the covenant he should be dealt with as a transgressor. A meeting was held August 6, 1817, at the home of Jonathan Rolfe, when Isaac Beach and Chester Colburn were elected Deacons.

The church united with the Cayuga Association in 1817. It united with the Seneca Association in 1824. The name of the church was changed May 5, 1830, to the First Baptist Church of Enfield.

In 1842 a comfortable house of worship was completed in Enfield Center at a cost of \$1,300.00. The first church bell in the town of Enfield was hung in the belfry in April 1870. The parsonage was built in 1877 at an expense of about \$1,500.00. In 1881, the church was moved across the road and rebuilt where it now stands.

At a covenant meeting held on April 9, 1887, the Reverend L.M. Gates was invited to become Pastor. The salary was to be \$35.00 per month, the use of the parsonage, a sociable for his benefit, and all the

butter he needed for his family use.

At the regular covenant meeting on January 11, 1902, there were just 11 present. "The meeting was one of unusual interest and spirituality, and throughout there was a strong feeling of unity, although there were but eleven present." After the covenant meeting there was held the annual business meeting. Deacon Whipple was elected chairman and Edgar Brewer clerk. The treasurer reported taking in \$13.55 from a special entertainment (moving pictures). Later in the meeting, "After due deliberation it was unanimously voted for the clerk to inform Brother Woodbury that it was the opinion and the vote of the church that the present Pastorate cease at the close of the year—May 20, 1902, and that this action was taken not from any unfriendliness of the church toward him but for the good of the cause. And that the action was taken thus early so as to give him ample time to secure another field of labor."

During the monthly covenant meeting held August 8, 1914, the Ladies Missionary Society was organized. In 1917, the church entertained the Seneca Baptist Association to commemorate its one hundredth anniversary. At the first annual meeting, January 17, 1917, the following were elected to office:
Trustees - Leon Tucker, Dana Tubbs, Frank Stevenson
Treasurer - Frank Stevenson; **Clerk** - Charles F. Smith
Organist - Mrs. Fred D. Rumsey; **Chorister** - Merrill Curry
Deacons - E.C. Curry, Leon Tucker, Harvey Stevenson
Deaconesses - Mrs. Charles F. Smith, Mrs. Fred D. Rumsey

A significant measure that was adopted at this meeting was that of an associate membership of the church. The church voted to accept a member from another denomination into associate membership. There were 59 members of the church in 1917.

In 1927, when Reverend Dutton S. Peterson was Pastor at Enfield, the Enfield Baptist and Methodist churches began holding joint services, meeting six months of the year in each church. These united services were held until 1960. Since then separate services have been held, each church having its own Pastor.

In 1928, during July and August, we cooperated with some neighboring churches in putting on a series of vesper meetings at the Enfield Falls State Park (Robert H. Treman State Park). The attendance averaged over 100 per Sunday. The first Sunday, after the close of the services, the attendance both Methodist and Baptist was over 100.

In 1942, the sheds for protection of horses and carriages, which stood across the road and also north of the church, were removed. This was the church's 125th anniversary. The officers were as follows: Clerk - Pearl Rolfe; Treasurer - Harvey Stevenson; Financial Secretary - Thomas Brown; Missionary Treasurer - Irene Brown; Trustees - Frank Stevenson, A.G. Boberg, Walter Griffen, John Hansen, S.H. Stevenson; Deacons - Ward Spencer, Frank Stevenson; Deaconesses - Cora Rumsey, Susie Hansen; Finance Committee - Mazzare Spencer, Harvey Stevenson, Gladys Carpenter, Roger Brown, Tom Brown, Warena Ramsey; The Reverend Crippen was Pastor.

The parsonage was sold in 1947 for \$4,000.00 The total net profit from the sale after expenses were taken out was \$3,762.94.

In 1954, some of the money from the sale of the parsonage was used to modernize the church. A new ceiling, hardwood floor, electricity and oil furnace improved the appearance and made the church more comfortable.

On October 2, 1960, the Enfield Methodist Church sent a letter to the Baptist Church announcing that they were once again becoming independent. The letter was signed by Frances Knapp, Harold Laue, and Jake Smithers, a committee elected by the Methodist congregation.

On October 16, 1960, the Baptists called their first meeting since the breakup. It was decided that Mrs. Michener would see to the purchase of 25 hymnals and that she and Mrs. Lovelace would launch the Sunday School. It was decided that, although the church worship and Sunday School were going on

their own, the young people should feel free to attend a joint youth group with the Methodists and they should alternate churches. The youth counselors were Mr. and Mrs. Krayniak from the Baptist Church and Mr. and Mrs. Knapp from the Methodist Church. The meeting was closed with Pearl Rolfe reading a prayer and all joining in with the Lord's Prayer.

In 1967 the church celebrated its 150th anniversary, the sesqui-centennial. The church Service was led by the Reverend Eddie Husted. He served as Pastor from 1966-1971 and again in 1972-1973.

The celebration was well attended with a full church of members and friends. During the service, those with special memories of the church shared them. After the service a dish-to-share was enjoyed at the nearby Grange Hall. Everyone interested came dressed in 1817 costume.

At the quarterly business meeting of July 12, 1970, Gilbert Lee reported that the bulletin board in the church yard had once again had the glass knocked out of it. He said he'd heard that Corning Glass was now making a clear glass that unbreakable. Reverend Husted said he would check into it.

In 1972 the church pews were dipped and stripped at a business owned by John Jackson located next to the church. For several weeks afterward the congregation held worship services at Sarah Jane Michener's home while the pews were painted and varnished by church members at the church building.

A special congregational meeting held June 10, 1973, proposed that the James "Chip" Willis memorial funds be used to renovate the upstairs of the church, creating two rooms, as well as making the upstairs safer (the flooring was in danger of coming down under too much weight). The work was done and two Sunday School classes could use the upstairs at the same time.

At the July 31, 1977 meeting, it was decided to put up a sign on the church itself out of funds from the Irene Brown memorial fund instead of repairing the bulletin board way-sign yet again.

In 1985, the emergency food distribution held at the church had grown to the point of serving 80 families regularly. Pastor Cynthia Ikuta moved here from Ithaca home to one on Bostwick Road. Many church members furnished trucks and labor to help her move. We all shared in a dish-to-pass on their new front lawn after the move was complete.

The food distribution moved out of the church to the nearby Enfield Community Building (the former Firehouse) in 1990 when the number of families being served rose to the level that 10,000 lbs of food was distributed to nearly 60 people per month.

In 1992, the church has a lay minister appointed from our own congregation. Sue Siegard is Pastoring the church, including working with the teenagers in our congregation, in Sunday School and youth activities. She also leads a Bible Study Group every Wednesday evening. She and her husband Jim, have two children Gary and Tracy.

New Baptist Church Notes

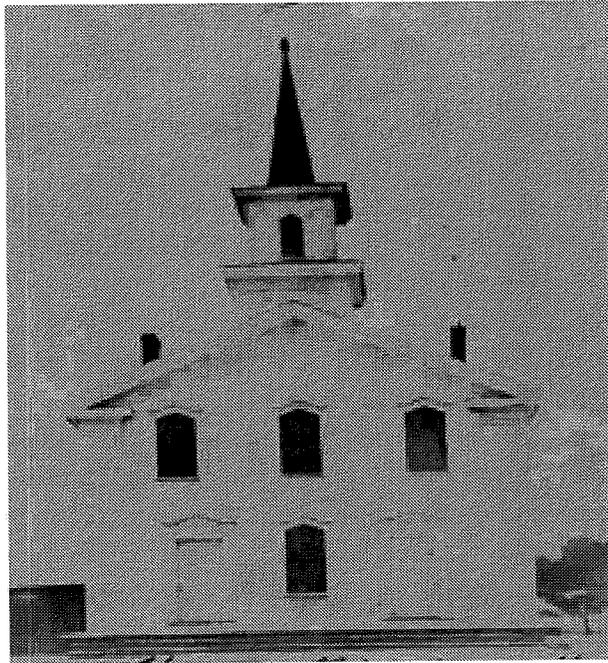
The church has experienced an exciting revival in the past few years. Attendance during morning worship service has climbed to average near 100 on Sundays with it not unusual to have over 200 in attendance on special days.

To meet our growing needs, church member Helen Willis Jackson donated land nearby. Construction on the T. Roger Brown Fellowship Hall started in Summer 2001.

1996 Pastor - Steve Messner is our present pastor. He, his wife Susanna, and two sons live on a working goat farm where they produce goat cheese for sale. Steve is also a civil engineer. Largest attendance at the church building itself was around 400 people. Since the re-opening of the Baptismal in 1994 - 26 people have been baptized at church services.

Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church of Enfield was organized at Bostwick Corners on February 14, 1832 by Reverend William Page. Its relation was changed several times first to Presbyterian, of Geneva, then



32. Enfield Christian Church

to Tioga, and last to Ithaca. The permanent church was built in 1835-36 at Enfield Center. Jervis Langdon^{14,15} Mark Twain's [Samuel Langhorne Clemens] father-in-law, according to deed (Liber EE) June 12, 1836, was a Trustee of the First Presbyterian Society in the Town of Enfield. Jervis was born in Vernon, New York, Oneida County. At the age of 16 years he started work in a country store in Vernon, New York, owned by Mr. Stevens. From there Jervis moved to Ithaca to work and at the age of 18 years (1827) he was sent to Enfield to open a branch store. Jervis and Olivia Lewis, his wife, owned sold land in Enfield Center in 1836 (Liber II, pg. 230). Jervis remained in Enfield for a period of time and then moved on to Salina, back to Enfield, Ithaca, and then to Millport where he lived from 1838 to 1843. In 1845 Jervis with Olivia¹⁶ and daughter Susan moved to Elmira in 1845. Another daughter was added to the family, Olivia Louise, and son Charles Jervis. In 1867 Olivia met Samuel Clemens. February 1870 Olivia and Samuel were married in Elmira, New York.

Also according to the Deed of 1836, Wm. E. Lewis, Nathaniel Newman, and Thomas Way were also Trustees of the Church. The Church was used as a public Hall in 1837. The former Presbyterian Church at Enfield Center was converted into Wortman Hall by John G. Wortman, Undertaker. Located on State Route 327 in Enfield Center is the "Presbyterian Cemetery" - south of Wortman Hall (Newhart's Store). The oldest recorded¹ headstone there is of Bethiah Newman, wife of James Newman March 30, 1828.

Christian Church

Elder Ezra Chase was the first resident Minister in Enfield in 1813. He organized the Christian Church of Enfield. He preached all over in Enfield, the one main place where he held his Church Services was the log Barn Judah Baker had built in 1806.

The Christian Church of Enfield was constituted in 1821 with 5 members. Elder Ezra Chase was the first Pastor. History of the church activities was located in the Herald of Gospel Liberty: June 18, 1885. J.H. Theall, Church Clerk reported The First Christian Church of Enfield, New York, was repaired, remodeled at a cost of over \$1,200. It was be re-dedicated June 25, 1885. Rev. Warren Hathaway, of Washingtonville, New York, delivered the dedicatory sermon.



33. Agape Church

In July 23, 1885, the following ministers attended the rededication: Hathaway, Wade, Tyler, Rumsey, D. I. Putnam and N. Putnam, of the Christian; Noble and Gates of the Baptist, and Hall and George of the M.E. Church. Sermon and dedicatory services were delivered by Bro. W. Hathaway, of Blooming Grove, New York. The building committee reported a deficiency of about \$430. By request of the Pastor, N. Putnam, Bro. E.R. Wade took a collection of nearly \$350. In the evening, after a sermon by Bro. Wade over \$50 more were subscribed.

The church eventually disbanded and the church building was torn down in 1938. The Christian Cemetery was located at the rear of the church (located on Enfield Main Road – State Route 327). The oldest recorded headstone is that of the son of David and Rebecca Beach, who died September 7, 1827.

Agape Church

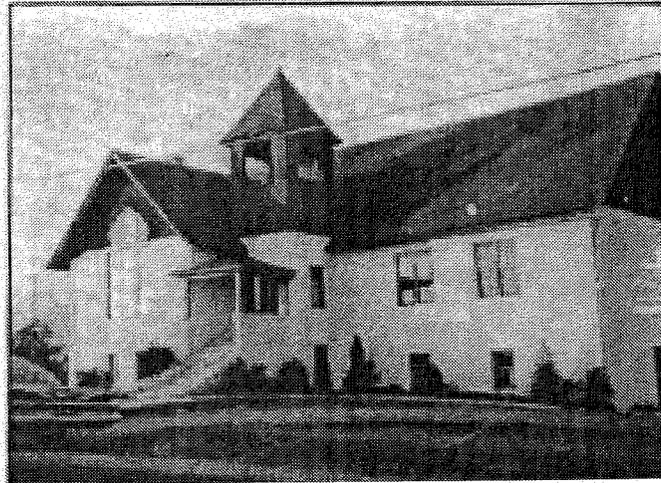
Reverend Kenneth Hoover in the summer of 1980 held Evangelist meetings in the town of Ithaca. Through the next two years the group grew. They met in places such as the Hillendale Golf Course Club House on Applegate Road, and Enfield Falls Community Building on Gray Road. In the fall of 1982 John and Helen Smith donated land on South Applegate Road to the now called “Agape Church” organization. The congregation moved into the new church building July 1983. As the congregation is growing rapidly changes in the physical facility are added every year. The church currently has an attendance of over 100 persons and runs many community oriented help projects.

Bible Baptist Church

The Bible Baptist Church is located between Black Oak Road and Connecticut Hill Road.

Methodist Episcopal Church – Enfield Center

The Methodist Episcopal Church with its first, Pastor Reverend Joseph Pearsall, held their meetings in barns at Bostwick Corners in January of 1835. The church had been associated with the Trumbulls Corners church. A church building was built in June of 1835. By March of 1876, the church voted to remove the church building to Enfield Center. The parsonage was built just to the south of the Enfield Center Corner on the east side of the road some time before 1866. On December 21, 1877 at 4 p.m. the cornerstone for the present church building was laid. The lot was purchased from Stephen Bristol for



34. (Right) Methodist Church Kennedy's Corners (KCC)

Left - Approx. 1935-36. Weekend retreat youth from KCC, Enfield Methodist Church, Mecklenburg Methodist Church and Perry City. Front Row Left to Right - Jack Sharrow, Freida Cortright, Catherine Teeter (Kellogg), Richard Michener. Second Row - Otis Drew, Jr., leaning on railing, Carolyn Wixom, Ester Hoffmire, Not Known. Third Row - James Teeter, Ernest Laue, Not Known, Bob Hines, Not Known on end. Fourth Row - Not Known, Betty Sharrow, Betty Tyler, Not Known.

\$200. Church services were held at the Christian Church on State Route 327 during building of the foundation and relocation. On June 20, 1878 re-dedication of the new church building on West Enfield Center Road was held.

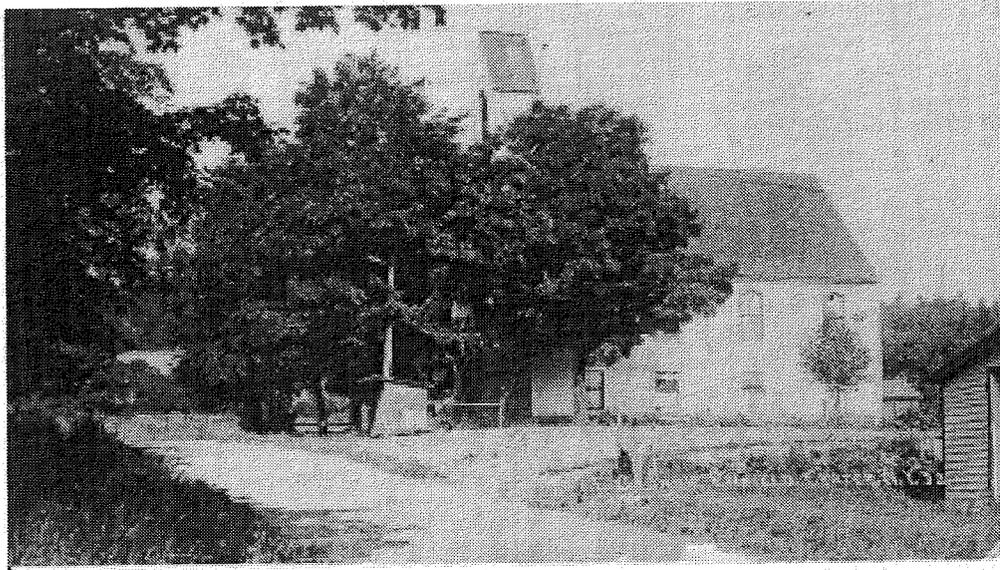
During the 1920's and 30's the church was affiliated with the Kennedy's Methodist Episcopal Church. The first Vacation Bible School in the Elmira District was held at the church in 1924. In 1931 new pews were installed in the church building.

A parish formed of Enfield, Kennedy's, Mecklenburg and Cayutaville was formed in 1967. In 1970 Enfield withdrew from the combined parish.

During the 1970's the Building Program enabled the church to experience many changes. The drilling of a well so that the church could have running water, the addition of a bathroom and kitchen, refinishing the walls and floors on the lower level. In the Sanctuary new paneling, remodeling of the altar area, recovering of pew cushions and pulpit chairs, carpeting the full length of the area and the crowning glory of the whole program: a Mural by Marion Mack. Dedication of the mural was in 1975. The parsonage was again used by the pastor in 1977. In 1978 a centennial celebration of the church was held on June 11.² The church and its building is still in existence today.

Methodist Episcopal Church – Kennedy's Corners

The Methodist Episcopal Church at Kennedy's Corners (area of Sheffield and Mecklenburg Roads) was organized in 1844. Elias Lanning was the first Pastor in 1844. Elias Lanning was the first leader and they held church "classes" at the "north school house". The Church was under the Jacksonville Church in 1844 but in 1879 went under the Enfield Center Church. A few years later an addition was built onto the main building. Fire started in the sheds next to the church and all the buildings were burned on October 16, 1917. One year later on December 29, 1918 the new church was dedicated at a special



35. Enfield Methodist Church, Enfield Center

service.

At the time of its centennial (1948) it was part of the Mecklenburg-Enfield parish. 1968-69 the church became part of the four rural church parishes where four churches - MECK - Mecklenburg, Enfield, Cayutaville and Kennedy's Corners attempted to take steps to enable each to remain open and yet manage on the low income with which most of them found hard to deal. The church was eventually disbanded and was bought in 1984 to be used as a private home.

On June 6, 1983³: it was voted by the Official Board of the church to close Kennedy's Corners Methodist Church due to lack of interest in the area. It being so close to Ithaca where the children attended school and had their friends and activities, it was difficult to hold the interest of the families. However, earlier, the church sponsored a very active Boy Scout Troop #64 with several boys becoming Eagle Scouts under the excellent leadership of some dedicated Scout Masters and Ministers.

Kennedy's Corners always had an active choir and when joining in with Mecklenburg, Enfield and Cayutaville put on some very professional choir shows under the direction of Alice Bartlett from Mecklenburg.

Kennedy's Corners always had a very large and active Ladies Aid Society and WCTU. Unfortunately the records have been misplaced or lost. It was not a part of the Enfield Unit, and Mrs. Lena Teeter was President for many years of the WCTU. It would be safe to state that the WCTU unit and Ladies Aid Society was organized after the New church was built in December 1918, and was officially closed June 1984 by the Conference of the Methodist Church. There are some members of both organizations still living who can confirm these facts.

Some of the life time members are listed as follows: Leva Teeter; Vera Drew; Mary Bennett; Edith Teeter; Mrytle Fish; Jennie Leonard; Pearl Caley; Hazel Baker; Christine Crissey; Gussie Michener; Alice Baker; Jessie Baker; Jessie Teeter; Catherine Kellogg; Marie VanNederynen; Elsie Baker⁴

It should also be noted that Kennedy's Corners had an active Sunday School during the years from 1892 to 1983.

Pastors of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Kennedy's Corners - October 1890 William Orren Shepherd. Others who served in chronological order were - J.H. Britton, F.S. Ritter, S. Lute, L.L.

Wilcox and Leon Lacy who arrive in 1902 and left three years later.

Enfield Center Baptists and Methodist Churches and Kennedy's Corners Methodist Church Ministers⁵

1876 Rev. W.J. Mills	1879 Rev. John W. Day
1883 Rev. E.D. Thurston	1866 Rev. J.K. Underhill
1888 Rev. J.W. Steele	1890 Rev. G.W. Smith
1891 Rev. W.O. Shepherd	1891 Rev. J.W. Britton
1893-95 Rev. Frank Ritter	1895 Rev. M.S. Leete
1901 Rev. L.L. Wilcox	1902 Rev. L.S. Lacey
1906 Rev. T.W. Haven	1907 Rev. Winkworth
1911 Rev. L.A. Lumb	1914 Rev. Alfred Shelley
1915 Rev. Holland	1917 Rev. Robert Kelly
1918 Rev. C.C. Wilbur (6 mo)	1918 Rev. Owen Barrett
1921 Rev. Schuyler Henry	1922 Rev. A.S. Anderson
1923 Rev. C.F. Booth	1924 Rev. C.W. Ellison
1926 W.H. Moore	1927-35 Rev. Dutton Peterson
1935 Rev. J. Foster Hamilton	1937 Rev. Luman T. Cockerill
1940 Rev. Ellis Pierce	1941 Rev. W.J. Darling
1942 Chas. Tryon	1944 Rev. Ford Crippen
1948 Rev. Charles Ackley	1951 Rev. Hoy Rogers
1953 Rev. Rolland Campbell	1956 Rev. Ford Crippen
1957 Rev. H. Lewis Hewitt	1960 Rev. Paul Heckert
1960-62 Rev. James Skaine	1962 Rev. Howard McFarland
1963 Rev. James Bellamy	1964 Rev. Philip Fried
1968 Rev. Gordon Pearsall	1970 Rev. Clarence Mitchell
1977 Rev. Mary Brown	1981 Rev. Mary Olson
1985 Rev. Judy White	1987 Rev. Wiley White
1988 Rev. Shelton Stephenson	1989 Rev. Nancy Rehkugler
1990 Rev. Earl Andrews	

Cemeteries

Jonathan Rolfe started a cemetery (Rolfe Cemetery) near his home (Applegate Road) for the town. On June 10, 1876 a number of townspeople met and elected nine trustees; and a society was organized and incorporated as Rolfe Cemetery Association. The oldest recorded headstone is Ephraim Rolfe - May 27, 1818.

Teeter Cemetery is located on Gray Road, oldest recorded headstone is Sarah Cook 1829 (officially in the Town of Ithaca).

Rumsey Cemetery is located Trumbulls Corner Road, oldest recorded headstone is Eliza. E. Fortner June 30, 1816.

Summertown Family Cemetery - Hines Road, oldest recorded headstone is John Summertown 1803-1891.

Woodard Cemetery - Woodard Road - Enfield Falls, overgrown - few stones - oldest recorded headstone is Polly Ogden October 13, 1826.

Taber Cemetery - Enfield Center Road - near Sheffield Road.

Located in the vicinity of Enfield Falls on Gray Road is the Budd Cemetery where the oldest recorded headstone is of Gilbert L. Rightmire son of Daniel and Tamar, February 26, 1834.