

LITCHFIELD
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
1811-1961



We meet today to celebrate the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the birthday of the Congregational Church of Litchfield. It is our hope that the following brief history will prove interesting and informative.

The church was organized by ecclesiastical council June 6, 1811. Records show that the first church building was then either in process of erection or repair. It stood on the east side of the road, a few rods north of the present site of the church. Becoming too small for the congregation, it was sold to Bowdoin as a schoolhouse. The second building, dedicated August 11, 1824, stood on the west side of the road, where the Academy now stands. It was large, having a gallery all around three sides, and two rows of windows. In 1845 it was moved across the street to where the church now stands, and was remodelled, being raised and made into two stories, the upper being fitted up for a schoolroom and used by the Academy, the lower for the church. About 1862, it was torn down. In August, 1861 it being much out of repair, a subscription was started for a new building. Kennebec conference, held here June 6, of that year, promised aid, and from them and other churches came about \$1000. That new meetinghouse is the one now used, and was "solemnly dedicated to Jehovah, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost" on February 12, 1863. The sermon was preached by the "acting pastor," David Thurston, D.D. and the dedicatory prayer was offered by Benj. Tappan, D.D., of Augusta.

The first bell was given by Deacon Thomas Smith, Jr., and was raised on September 12, 1846, a tower having been raised to receive it. In 1892, the bell cracked and a new one of the same weight was put up July 23, 1892, the old one paying half the expense. In 1837, the first parsonage was bought. It was located about one-third mile north from the church. Later one-half the house, about one-half mile south from the church, was secured from the wife of the Rev. Benj. Smith and used as a parsonage. Again they changed to the house a short distance northwest on the Lewiston road.

The pastors have been as follows: Samuel Sewall, 1809-1812; Daniel Lovejoy, 1812-1819 and again 1823-1828; Daniel Kendrick, 1819-1820; James Weston, 1821-1822; David Starrett, 1828-1835; Thomas N. Lord, 1836-1837; Timothy Davis, 1837-1852; Benj. Smith, 1853-1858; David Thurston, D.D., 1859-1865; Josiah Taylor Hawes, 1865-1891; James Richmond, 1892-1898; Sarkis A. Apraham, 1899-1901; Edwin A. Harlow, 1901-1907; Jehiel S. Richards, 1907-1913.

Hephzibeth Smith, afterwards Mrs. Aver, was the first superintendent of an organized Sunday School.

In the summer of 1913, Christian H. Vontobel came from Gordan College to take up his college training at Bates. He was with us three years. In July, 1916, having contracted tuberculosis, he passed away at the Hebron Sanitarium. A special memorial service was held in his memory.

Mr. Edward Williston, from Bangor Seminary, was our pastor the following year. He resigned to enter government service.

Mr. N. A. Buncamper came to supply for the summer of 1917, but remained until the fall of 1918 when he resigned to enter Bowdoin College.

We had supply pastors until January 1921. Rev. Albert Hague, of Gorham, serving most of the time.

At this time the possibility of securing a resident pastor for all three local churches was being discussed. At the annual meeting January 31, 1920, a committee composed of F. W. Libby, Henry Taylor and Mrs. Susan Kendrick, was appointed to meet with the committees from the other churches. A meeting of the above committees was held and a set of by-laws was drawn up with a vote that the agreement be given a two year trial. Rev. Charles Watkins, a Baptist minister, was elected as the first pastor and began his service in January, 1921. He remained with us until December 30, 1927.

In 1928-1929 John Alexander taught across the way at the Academy and served as pastor.

Mr. Verdoja was acting pastor during the year of 1930.

Rev. Miles Moxon, a graduate of the Dudley Bible School, now a part of the Providence Barrington Bible School, came in January, 1931, and was still pastor when he suddenly passed away April 1st, 1933. He had planned to serve as a missionary.

Following his graduation from Bangor Seminary in 1933, Herman J. Olsen became our pastor for three years. He was ordained here in 1935. He married Miss Elizabeth Campbell, of Litchfield, remaining with us until the summer of 1936.

Mr. H. J. Holcomb was our next pastor for one year. Supply pastors served us until April, 1938, when the Rev. Harry Bowman came to us. He was the first pastor to occupy the parsonage, which had been left to us by a former resident of our town. He remained until August, 1942.

Mr. Carl Small, then of South Gardiner, served as pastor for nearly two years.

In July, 1944, Mr. Clarion Olsen came to us from Minnesota for one year, leaving in July, 1945.

On learning that our pastor was leaving, the Rev. Mr. Bowman wrote that he was interested in serving again at Litchfield. Accordingly, he was recalled in July, 1945, and remained until August, 1948.

In 1948 the Rev. Newell W. Hall came to us, remaining until 1953.

In September, 1951, the Plains Baptist church withdrew from the federation. It was a coincidence that the Rev. Charles Watkins preached the first and last sermons of the three federated churches.

From September, 1953, to June, 1954, we had the services of Mr. John Baxter, who was also principal of the Central school.

Mr. Arthur Freeman, principal of the Academy, supplied for us during the summer.

In October, 1954, we hired Mr. Richard Viekman as pastor. He was serving in West Cardiner and remained for another year until he finished his pastorate there, moving then to Litchfield. He remained until resigning in October, 1957, to complete his training course at Providence, R. I.

During the winter we had candidates and supplies. After several meetings with State officials we started an every member canvas to determine if we could raise enough money to have a full time pastor. In April, this seemed a possibility. Mr. Howard Roberts, then serving in Vermont, was recommended to us as a candidate. A committee went to Vermont to interview Mr. Roberts. He agreed to come to Litchfield the following Sunday as a candidate. The Federation committee met with Mr. Roberts, Sunday afternoon and he accepted the call, coming to us May 12, 1958. We are fortunate to have him still with us. On January 5, 1960, Mr. Roberts was ordained by the Baptist association. We were greatly saddened by the untimely death of Mrs. Roberts on March 4, 1960.

In the summer of 1958, outside workers had charge of the Vacation Bible School which Mr. Roberts revived. In 1959, Mr. & Mrs. Roberts had charge of the school which was most successful. In 1960, Mr. Roberts again had charge of the Bible School.

The Missionary Society continued active for several years, but has no active group at present.

The Ladies' Home Circle, although small in number, is still active, contributing to the support of the church, pastor's salary and missionary offering, such as the Friendly Service.

Our Sunday school is held in the Academy with an average attendance of about fifty. Mrs. Estella Brown serving as superintendent.

Under the leadership of Mr. Roberts, we now have senior and junior Youth Fellowship groups. Mr. Drake, a teacher in the school across the way, having charge of the junior group.

ANNIVERSARY WORSHIP SERVICE

LITCHFIELD FEDERATED CHURCHES

REV. H. A. ROBERTS, Pastor

JUNE 11, 1961

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE MRS. BLACK

CALL TO WORSHIP PSALMS 34:1-8

INVOCATION

HYMN OF WORSHIP NO. 244
"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION"

RESPONSIVE READING NO. 91
"OUR LIVING HOPE"

CHOIR SELECTION

SILENT PRAYER
LORD'S PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER
RESPONSE

HYMN NO. 37
"A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD"

SCRIPTURE LESSON

ANNOUNCEMENTS OFFERING
PRAYER OF DEDICATION DOXOLOGY

HYMN NO. 81
"BREAK THOU THE BREAD OF LIFE"

MESSAGE DR. CORNELIUS CLARK

HYMN NO. 110
"BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS"

BENEDICTION

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE
2:30 P.M.

EVENING ANNIVERSARY SERVICE
7:00 P.M.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP PSALMS 34:1-2

INVOCATION

HYMN NO. 203
"A CHARGE TO KEEP HAVE I"

WELCOME

GREETINGS TO THE CHURCH FROM THE
DENOMINATION

SPECIAL MUSIC

GREETINGS FROM THE CHURCHES OF
LITCHFIELD

HYMN NO. 223
"COME THOU FOUNT"

GREETINGS FROM THE TOWN

GREETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS
FROM FORMER PASTORS

SPECIAL MUSIC

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

HYMN NO. 193
"O JESUS I HAVE PROMISED"

BENEDICTION

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP PSALMS 92:1-2
KAREN DANFORTH

INVOCATION
RUTH BLACK

HYMN NO. 236 "ROCK OF AGES"
CARROLL FULLER

RESPONSIVE READING 18
"GOD OUR DWELLING PLACE"
ANDREA HARVEY

EVENING PRAYER
MARTHA REICHEL

HYMN NO. 260
"JESUS SHALL REIGN"

SOLO MR. EARLE FLANNERS

ANNIVERSARY SERMON
REV. ORVILLE LOZIER

HYMN NO. 217
"BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS"

BENEDICTION

THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT HAVE LED
THE WORSHIP SERVICE THIS EVENING
ARE MEMBERS OF THE TWO YOUTH FELLOW
SHIP GROUPS.

IN APPRECIATION

THE LITCHFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH EXPRESSES ITS AP-
PRECIATION TO ITS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS FOR ALL THAT HAS
BEEN DONE TO MAKE THIS ANNIVERSARY A JOYOUS OCCASSION.
SPECIAL THANKS IS GIVEN TO OUR SPECIAL GUEST THAT
HAVE TAKEN TIME IN THEIR BUSY SCHEDULES TO BE HERE; TO
THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES THAT HAVE WORKED TO THIS END;
AND TO THOSE THAT HAVE HELPED IN SO MANY WAYS WITH
THE REDECORATION OF THE CHURCH. MAY ALL THAT HAS
BEEN DONE, BE DONE TO HIS HONOR AND GLORY.