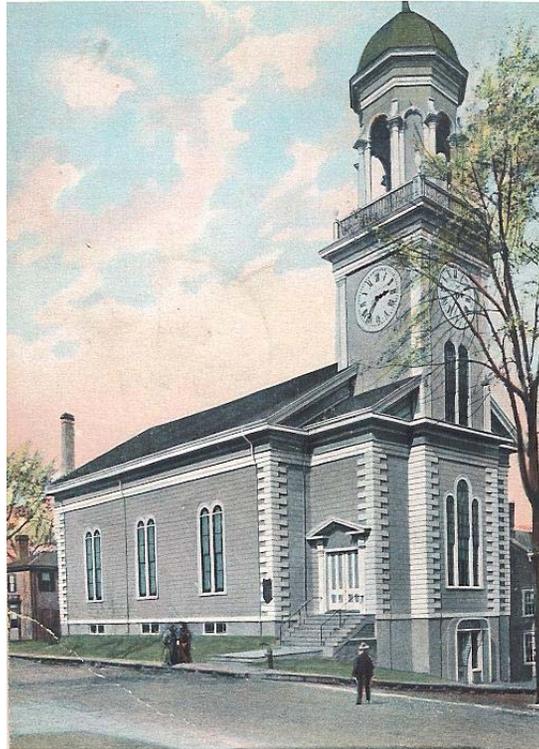


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
BATH, MAINE
1810—2003



History of First Baptist of Bath

time. A union of the two churches was first attempted in 1911 and in May of 1913 the members of the North St. Society voted to unite with our church. The union of the churches was completed on Nov. 13, 1913 when the 27 members of the North St. Church suggested that the combined churches purchase a pipe organ as a gesture of unity.



Rev C. Raymond Chappel
1910-1918

The church experienced spiritual growth as is evidenced by 1911 being marked by many achievements. There was much activity among the men as a men's Sunday School class started a Baptist brotherhood with 27 members. The morning and evening service was "well sustained" and the pastor started five-minute children's talks during



North Street Free Baptist
Church
April 16, 1842 —Nov. 13, 1913

the morning service. He also started a Bible study “designed for the Sunday school teachers and others interested in gaining a more intelligent knowledge of the Biblical books. “In an endeavor to arouse greater interest in missions, missionary concerts were held. This emphasis placed on missions worked as the “succeeded in raising an apportionment for missions.” Under the leadership of Rev. Chappell and the cooperation of the people, the church had been strengthened in all areas and the seed sown for future harvests.

In September 1919 Rev. E.M. Holman became pastor, during which time the Hook & Hastings pipe organ was purchased for \$4,025.00. It was installed and dedicated (Oct. 31, 1920). The church committee decided to keep the old organ case “as it was veneered mahogany and very valuable.” The church moved the case to the middle of the church. It had been in the north east corner of the church for over thirty years. Before that it was in a gallery at the south end of the church. The pipe organ case that graces the sanctuary today is a reminder of the unity in seeing God’s work continue. On Sept. 16, 1923 “at the morning service Rev. G.F. Rouillard who exchanged services with our pastor read the resig-



Rev. Ernest M. Holman
1919-1923

church and community and is evidenced by the church records which show their participation in morning, evening, and nursing home services.



Rev. Stanley R. Welch 1969-1982

Rev. Welch lived what he preached and was known as a “loving, caring man of God.” His ministry stressed how important the love of Jesus Christ is in the life of a Christian. Rev. Welch had the gift of being a good listener and counselor, who really cared for the sheep of his flock. He resigned in April 1982. His son, William Welch, active in the church during his youth at First Baptist, accepted the call to become a pastor in the 1990’s.

Rev. James E. Fisher (1982-1992) was given a unanimous call and accepted in September of 1982. The foundation of love that was laid during the Welch ministry was built upon and flourished during the Pastorship of Rev. Fisher. He was a fine Biblical preacher with an evangelistic heart. Many ministries were introduced including a bus ministry, singles ministry, a marriage enrichment ministry, and small cluster groups, to name a few. The Bath Bible Institute was started but lasted less than a year.

Two men accepted a higher calling into the pastorate due in part to the ministry of Rev. Fisher. Norman LaBonte became music minister at the Bangor Church of the Nazarene and Ernest Freeberg became pastor at Five Islands Baptist Church in 1994.



Rev. James E. Fisher 1982-1992

“Pastor Jim” as he was affectionately called by the congregation, had a ministry that led many people to accept Christ and also equipped them in an open, personal, intimate relationship with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His ministry challenged the congregation to take what was taught during services and apply it to their everyday lives. The freedom of worship that followed attracted many, including several with charismatic leanings. Attendance at the height of his pastorate was around 175. Several “mainline” Baptist members, used to a more traditional service, became disenchanted and left the fellowship. Rev. Fisher surprised the church by announcing his resignation in December 1991 and leaving the church in January, 1992.

First Baptist Church History Book Dedication

This Book is dedicated to the Work of "The One" who built His church. Jesus Christ used "lively stones" on which all believers are to build a place where "kingdom seekers" could gather together to worship Him and to serve Him in Spirit and in Truth.

God has used many people throughout the ages to build and to grow His church throughout this great land. May He continue to bless the work of our hands as by His grace we are added to the pages of history lived in this church in Bath, Maine.

Pastor Frank Rolfe

May 3, 2003

A special thank you to Brian Hallowell and to Barbara Pecci for working so hard to capture the history contained in this book, that others might see the hand of God at work.

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From 1789 there was occasional Baptist preaching in Bath by elders from other places. There were several members from the New Meadows side of the town in the Baptist Religious Society of Brunswick, Harpswell and Bath, incorporated in 1794. On October 30, 1810, a council of the Brunswick and Topsham churches at the home of Elijah Low voted to recognize the Bath Church, which at the time held its meetings in the schoolhouse on School Street. The original membership consisted of seven women and three men.

Under the leadership of Elder Silas Stearns, who became our first pastor on December 2, 1810, the church grew as his preaching inspired many to become followers of Christ. During the long and faithful ministry of Elder Stearns the church prospered and grew from a small hand of 10 to 171 reported to the Cumberland Association in 1840. Yet it was a period of trials as well as advances.

The early church showed many signs of spiritual growth as records show there were several days of fasting and prayer. Revival was sweeping the church as 1816 recorded eighty-two baptisms, and saw the society erect a brick church, 60 by 40 feet, facing Washington St. on the same lot as it presently occupies. This building, complete with spire, was completed in 1817. From 1816-1825 the ingathering contin-

ued at a healthy rate and saw many more accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior. By 1829 the church had 210 members in a community, at that time, of 3,773. Every church experiences periods of growth and decline and the same is true of First Baptist.



Silas Sterns 1810-1840

In 1827 the first real trial was experienced. On Feb. 9th, Deacon J.B. Swanton and

twenty-five other members requested to be dismissed to form another church 'of the same faith and order.'

After various communications between the disaffected members and the church it was finally voted to exclude the 26 members. They formed what was known as the second church in Bath. There was friction between the two groups but the difficulty grew less and less and a good part of the excluded ones were gradually restored to the church.

In his thirty years of service, the longest pastorate

in the history of the church, Elder Stearns missed only one Sunday's services on account of illness. He died August 1, 1840.

The church's second pastor, Handel G. Nott (1840-1847), also inspired the congregation and community. His ministry was marked by revival as membership swelled to 250 in 1842, just his second year as pastor. He resigned in 1847 and later accepted a call to Kennebunkport, declining calls to Waterville and elsewhere, because he said it seemed the most needy and the hardest field and the other churches could more easily secure a pastor. Such was the caliber of the second pastor of the church.

The years 1847-1852 were a period when the church remained static, beginning under the leadership of Rev. E.H. Gray (1847-1850). In September 1850, Rev. Hewey Hawes took up the pastorate, remaining only eleven months. On November 9, 1851 Rev. Edwin Dibell became pastor. His last day was March 27th, 1852, the Sunday the Brick church was sold, as the church building became outgrown. The church building was removed to make way for the present church, which was dedicated in February 1853. The town clock, purchased by the town for \$540, was placed in the steeple in 1855 and has been tolling the hours ever since.

The church was without a pastor from March 27, 1852 until Feb. 1, 1853 when Rev. David N. Shel-

don, D. D. (1853-1856), became the pastor. At the time of his call to Bath he had retired from the presidency of Waterville (now Colby) College, because of dissent on the part of denominational leaders from his expressed doctrines. He was regarded as a most scholarly and able preacher, but it wasn't long before a division occurred over differences in doctrinal beliefs. Signs of this can be noted in the church records of 1855 and 1856. We find that one Wm. P. Smith absented himself from the church on "...the ground that infidelity was being preached in the church." Opposition to Dr. Sheldon continued to grow. At a church meeting on July 14, 1856 resolutions were passed declaring that the doctrines taught by Dr. Sheldon were "not in accord with the doctrine held by the Baptist denomination." It was voted to exclude him by a vote of 40-14. The church requested the parish to ask him to resign, but no action was taken. The church then voted to suspend the members who supported Dr. Sheldon. A council of sister churches met in Bath on Aug. 19, 1856 and approved the action of the church in excluding Dr. Sheldon. The council voted no longer to regard him in the denomination as a Christian minister. At an adjourned meeting of the council in Yarmouth, Aug. 27 resolutions were passed encouraging the Bath church to continue public worship. It appears that for a time the parish refused to allow the church to use the building for worship.. finally the legislature settled the dispute and in late 1856 Dr. Sheldon and several parishioners split from First Baptist Church and joined the First Unitarian

Church where he became pastor.

The church lost its steeple when it was blown down in a winter gale on December 11, 1856. The belfry was refurbished with a flat roof. The steeple was rebuilt in later years.

Rev. S. W. Taylor was supply pastor from the split in late 1856 until June 1857 when he became pastor. He remained for a little over three years during which time his pastorate was notable for a rapid increase in the church membership. In 1858 Rev. Taylor baptized 68 people. At this time a baptistery was built in the church. Rev. Taylor finished his work in the church in August 1860. In that year 223 were reported to the association.

Most of the early pastors of First Baptist were very active in the local schools as teachers or committee/board members. This was also the case for Rev. G. P. Mathews (1860-1865) who was on a committee that was instrumental in having Bath earn the distinction of being the first school in Maine and one of the first in the nation to have free books for its students.

Rev. L.D. Hill became pastor in July 1866 and during his pastorate of over three years 48 people were baptized. He resigned in Nov. 1869. There was no preaching from Dec. 1869, to May 1870, but Sunday school and prayer meetings continued despite not having the services of a pastor.

Rev. E.M. Bartlett began the pastorate on Jan. 1, 1871 for a period of 21 months during which time the church lists were revised. They showed a decrease in members to 150 for the year 1872. He resigned in Sept. 1872.

Rev. S.A. Kingsbury, DD was called as pastor in Jan. 1873. During his pastorate he baptized 20 persons. When he resigned in Sept. 1876, there were 195 members.

After Rev. Kingsbury's resignation Rev. S.D. Moxley was called in June 1877. In December he resigned on account of ill health. He preached for the next four Sundays and resumed the pastorate on the fifth Sunday. In March of 1878 he resigned again, planning to go to Europe for health reasons.

Rev. S.L.B. Chase supplied the pulpit several times and in August 1878 accepted the call. A series of meetings were held in the early part of 1879 and 32 went through the waters of baptism. He ended his pastorate in late December 1879.

In April 1880, Rev. S.F. Pendelton became pastor and in Jan. 1882 much to the surprise and regret of the congregation read his resignation. He was urged to reconsider, but he declined due to health problems.

A unanimous call was extended to Rev. T.F. White on April 22, 1883 and he began his long pastorate. During the 11 years he was in Bath Rev. White

baptized 142 persons!
Rev. White was forced to take three months off due to eye problems and offered his resignation on Feb. 23, 1893, but later reconsidered it. He remained pastor until July 1, 1894.



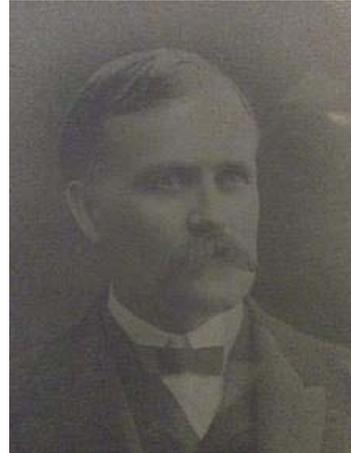
Rev T. F. White 1883-1894

First Baptist Church was instrumental in helping the winds of revival as a sweeping revival did occur in Bath about 1894 when Rev. W. O'Brien, "a young Irish evangelist, gifted with eloquence, an engaging personality and great sincerity," came to Bath for a three week revival conducted at First Baptist. From Bath he went to New York City for more revival services and was offered a church there. Three Bath women prayed for his return and he came back and entered upon a work unparalleled in modern times in the Bath area. Rev. O'Brien started a church; the People's Baptist Church, and within three years hundreds of conversions resulted, men being taken from the gutters and transformed into worthy citizens. This revival was evident at First Baptist as many youth, touched by the ministry, decided to follow Christ.

On Jan. 20, 1895, a call was extended and accepted by Rev. W. A. Atchley. He started on March 1, 1895. In 1895, a total of 252 members

were reported to the association. During his pastorate, on May 24, 1890, the first ordination took place when Fred E. Taylor accepted the call into the ministry. Rev. Atchley resigned in June 1900.

Once again the church found itself without the services of a pastor, this time, for a year and a half. Rev G.F. Rouillard answered the call. During his pastorate of seven and a half years 26 were baptized but sadly membership went from 243 to 165 in that time frame. He resigned in May 1909.



Rev. W.A. Atchley 1895-1901

First Baptist saw its next growth occur during the ministry of C. Raymond Chappel (1910-1918) when the North St. Free Baptist Church, in November of 1913, joined with First Baptist. The present day parsonage at 138 North St. was acquired at this



Rev. G. F. Rouillard 1902-1909

nation of our Pastor Rev. Ernest M. Holman to become effective October 14th.” In his letter of resignation Rev. Holman states that “We have endeavored to build up and establish the work of this church; often times under most difficult and depressing circumstances. God has never failed us, and we feel grateful for His sustaining power.”

His successor was Rev. J.A. Swetman who was extended the call on Nov. 29, 1923. He remained pastor a little less than two years. During April of 1924 the church observed Holy Week by having services every evening closing on Good Friday. The church asked for his resignation on April 17, 1925 citing “Whereas it appears that there is a lack of harmony and co-operation and it is impossible for the present pastor to bring about harmony or accomplish any further good works.” Rev. Swetman hinted that he would not leave the city but would take his supporters and establish another church in Bath. The parish voted 38-37 to keep Rev. Swetman but the pastor said he would resign. The church people expected him to resign the next Sunday but failed to do so. When he was visited at the parsonage by two deacons and asked about it “ he informed them that he would not resign



Rev John E. Swetman
1923-1925

until he got ready.” He finally offered his resignation on Oct. 22, to be effective November 9, 1925. This turmoil took its toll as a long time deacon, H.W. Moulton and the church clerk and treasurer of twenty-nine years, W.H. White, resigned due to the unrest. Mr. Moulton later returned and held many key positions in the church.

Next Rev. H.L. Skillin served over two years and then resigned to take another Church in Maine. Rev. Skillin was followed by Rev. K.E. Morse who remained as pastor for a little over one year, resigning to resume studies and preaching in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The past 12 years of the church had been unstable with four pastors in that time frame resulting in a stagnation of the congregation. This was all about to change as Rev. Charles R. Sims accepted the call to First Baptist on June 7, 1931. At the business meeting held Feb. 4, 1932 Miss Mary H. Sims was granted a license to preach the gospel. At the March business meeting former Deacon H.W. Moulton was voted in to serve as deacon. The church received 49 new members the first year of Rev. Sims’ pastorate. Twenty-one people were baptized on Easter Sunday. Many more were to follow through the waters of baptism in the years to come as his ministry inspired many to follow Christ.

Church records show many signs of church growth as dismissals were low and baptisms high. There

is also further evidence in the introduction of programs and classes for youth. Vacation Bible School, Sunday school, a men's group and a ladies group that was constantly helping the church showed evidence of their priority in the life of the church. The church sponsored many evangelistic and missionary meetings during the pastorate of Rev. Sims. First Baptist seemed to be a well-rounded church that offered many opportunities for the congregation to experience fellowship and spiritual growth.



Rev. Charles R. Simms
1931-1959

The church acquired Winnegance Baptist Church, which was pastored by Miss Helen Sims, the pastor's daughter, from 1933-1935. It also acquired the building next door, the Greenleaf house, during this time frame. Rev. Sims a carpenter by trade built the front choir and baptistry lofts and moved the baptistry to the west side of the church.



Rev Mary Helen Sims, Th. B.

Rev. Charles R. Sims ended his duties as pastor on January 31, 1959. His pastorate, the second longest in church history, lasted almost 28 years! He would continue as Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church.

A special meeting was called by the Trustees on February 9, 1959 for the purpose of tearing down the "Greenleaf House" and building a new parsonage on that land. The request was voted down but they "were voted permission to do anything they wish with the property except sell it." This building has been used as a Christian Education facility for many years.

On April 9, 1959 Rev. Truman L. Bray took over the duties of pastor at First Baptist Church. His first Sunday morning service was attended by 185 parishioners. His ministry was marked more by spiritual growth rather than numerical growth. On Jan. 11, 1960 it was reported in the clerks record that First Baptist Church was now incorporated. On October 26, 1960 the church voted to join the Bath Council of



Rev. Truman L. Bray 1959-1962

Churches. In March of 1961 the church had a special dedication of the newly renovated and redeco-
rated sanctuary which was done not only as up-
keep but in celebration of the 150th anniversary of
the church.

Youth and Mission work were of special interest in
the Bray ministry, and it was evident in the life of
the church as records show that there were many
missionary speakers. And the churches' mission-
ary group "created more interest...and making it
possible to do more work to help those on both the
foreign and home fields." The church set a goal of
\$1,600.00 for mission work out of a budget of
\$14,173.00. In March 1961 the church was in-
volved in several weeks of joint evangelistic ser-
vices held at Corliss St. Baptist Church. In June,
1961 the church had a "Youth for Christ" rally
with Jack Wyrzten as guest speaker. It was at-
tended by 370 people!

Rev. Bray came with the understanding if he had a
call to minister to Native Americans in the Mid-
west, he would have to leave. This happened in
the summer of 1962 and he and his family left to
minister to the Hopi Indians in Arizona. On July
1, 1962, his last day as pastor, his ministry left the
church with a heightened awareness of the impor-
tance that missions and youth work should have in
the life of the local church.

Rev. Walter B. Wakeman (1962-1968) took over
the duties of pastor of the church in October of

1962. Youth work and evangelism were cornerstones of the Wakeman pastorate and is evidenced by the involvement of the youth in the life of the church. Blind evangelist Rev. Al Crocker held services at the church and several accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Many of the laymen who were active during the ministries of Bray and Sims became lay preachers in the churches in the outlying communities. They also continued their ministries in the nursing homes in the area. Several of the men went on to become pastors and all continued to actively spread the gospel for decades to come. Rev. Wakeman offered his resignation in January of 1968.



Rev. Walter B. Wakeman
1962-1968

Under the leadership of Rev. Stanley R. Welch (1969-1982) the church experienced the love of God personified. The church grew in the early years and youth groups and Sunday school flourished. In one year the Sunday school had 150 students in attendance. This was a number that hadn't been attained in many years. The Jr. and Sr. Youth Groups were very active in the life of the

Rev. Orris Orr was interim pastor from March, 1992 until November, 1992 when Rev. Gregory L. Foster accepted the call of pastor on November 15, 1992. His ministry lasted only 18 months and was marked by a split in the church over doctrinal differences when the pastor and approximately 15-20 of the congregation became involved in the “holy laughter” movement that was sweeping the country. This involvement along with his alignment to doctrinal beliefs contrary to Baptist doctrine caused the church to shrink to about sixty people. Of those sixty in the congregation, approximately 40-45 aligned themselves with more traditional Baptist doctrines as well as placing their emphasis on the ‘fruit’ of the Spirit instead of the pastors emphasis on the ‘gifts’ of the Spirit. Rev. Foster was unwilling to work with the boards of the church as well as being insensitive to the needs of the 40-45 who did not share his beliefs. Because of these differences and the pastors “unwillingness to shepherd the whole flock” a letter asking for his resignation was read by Alan Frasier during the morning service of May 29, 1994. He stated that he would not resign and continued the service. At the end of the service he announced that he would resign effective that date.



Rev. Gregory L. Foster
1992-1994

The church, hurting spiritually and financially, was without the services of a pastor from May 29, 1994 -November 20, 1994. During this period the pulpit was filled by members of the Diaconate Board, lay people in the church, as well as supply pastors including Pastor Ardenne Haines and Rev. Floyd Carter, both who accepted the call to preach the work of God while attending First Baptist years earlier. The church was also fortunate to have the services of, on several occasions, one of our former pastors, Rev Stanley Welch who expressed that he had “a burden for that church and would be willing to do anything he could to help.”

On November 20, 1994, Rev. H. Kenneth Dutille was asked to fill the pulpit as interim pastor. Rev. Dutille provided the church with stability and it was evident in the Ushers records which show that attendance remained steady with an average attendance of 45. Rev. Dutille committed himself to impartial leadership that first sought to heal, then nurture, equip, and encourage the congregation toward striving to make First Baptist Church the church that God intended it to be when it was first established 185 years ago!

December 15, 1996 Pastor Frank Rolfe began as Pastor of First Baptist of Bath. During Pastor Frank’s tenure at First Baptist of Bath the Bath Soup Kitchen started serving meals in the Church Vestry. The first meal was served on June 1, 1999. The Kitchen was remodeled and a handicap ramp

was built. A computer web site has begun under Pastor Frank's guidance which is reaching out to people all over the world. One



member wrote the following of Pastor Frank:
Pastor Frank Rolfe, his wife Sheila and son Jonathan. 2002

“Though I have only known Pastor Frank Rolfe for a short time I can tell you he is one of the most compassionate, caring and religiously devoted persons I have ever met. Pastor Frank and his wife Sheila have 5 children and 7 grandchildren. Pastor Frank enjoys spending time with his family, reading, golfing and fishing (when time allows). He and Sheila are the spiritual and physical glue that has held our church together for the past 5 years. First Baptist of Bath is truly blessed to have them both.”

As the congregation of First Baptist Church looks to the future let us also look to the past, to the

words of Rev. C. Raymond Chapell. In his Centennial message to the church on Oct. 31, 1910 he so eloquently said “Thus through a chequered life...this church we love has passed. Fierce storms have been weathered, times that tried men’s souls have come and yet, ‘the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.’ This survey of the past ought to strengthen our faith. We have our difficulties, our peculiar problems. But the same God which piloted His people through the fiery trials of other days is our God, Shall he not do so for us? Let us trust as never before in God, that His arm is not shortened that it cannot save.”...let us to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Amen.”

**Compiled by Deacon Brian Hallowell from
church records January-April 1996**

LIST OF PASTORS

Silas Stearns.....	1810-1840
H. G. Nott.....	1840-1847
E. H. Gray.....	1847-1850
A. Hawes.....	1850-1851
E. Dibell.....	1850-1852
D. N. Sheldon.....	1853-1856
J. W. Taylor.....	1857-1860
G. P. Matthews.....	1860-1866
L. D. Hill.....	1866-1870
E. M. Bartlett.....	1871-1872
S. A. Kingsbury.....	1873-1876
S. D. Moxley.....	1877-1878
S. L. B. Chase.....	1878-1879
S. P. Pendleton.....	1880-1883
T. F. White.....	1883-1884
W. A. Atchley.....	1895-1901
G. F. Rouillard.....	1902-1909
C. R. Chappell.....	1910-1919
E. M. Holman.....	1919-1923
J. A. Swetman.....	1923-1925
H. L. Skillin.....	1926-1928
K. E. Morse.....	1929-1930
Charles R. Sims.....	1931-1959
T. L. Bray.....	1959-1962
W. B. Wakeman.....	1962-1968
S. R. Welch.....	1969-1982
J. E. Fisher.....	1982-1992
G. L. Foster.....	1992-1994
H. K. Dutille.....	1994-1996
Frank Rolfe.....	1996-



Deacon John Larrabee 1833-1871



Deacon Hosea Hildreth 1846-1880

First Baptist Church of Bath Sanctuary 2003



Many Souls saved, Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals have taken place in this Sanctuary. May many, many more years of service be held here in time to come.

Greenleaf House purchased from the Gertrude C. Greenleaf estate for \$2,000 on June 9, 1941.



Photo taken March 22, 2003.

Sunday School Classes and Youth Group meetings are held in the Greenleaf House. The Church library is also located in this building. The Pastor's Office will be in this building as of this year.

**A photograph of First Baptist Church of Bath's
Bell March 2003**



City of Bath Selectman's Meeting March 10, 1825

Agreed with Ebert Macumber to ring one of the bells three times a day on week days and both on Sunday for meetings and one on Sunday evening for one year he to receive for the same Seventy Four Dollars. Also authorized Mr. Macumber to act as town Sexton and to take care of the Burrying Grounds, Hearse. He to charge the town nothing for his services except when employed as sexton by the overseers of the poor. April 1 Agreed with John Martins to take care of the Town clock for one year from this date. He to receive for his services, Ten Dollars.

Attest, Ara Palmer

**Article taken from a newspaper article dated
October 29, 1910**

REACHES CENTURY MARK

**Bath's First Baptist Church Celebrates the Event
Sunday and Monday**

**History of the Society Whose Faith Was First Taught
Here in 1783 and Which Has Passed Safely Through
Troublous Times.**

Tomorrow and Monday the first Baptist Society of Bath will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of their church. While the history of the society dates back to 1810 the preaching of their faith and an interest in it can be traced to 1783 when James Potter, then a Baptist layman and later ordained wrote in his diary "I visited Bath and enjoyed sensible tokens of the divine presence."

From 1789 to 1810 there was occasional Baptist preaching in Bath by Rev. Isaac Case, Rev. John Haines, Rev. Silas Stearns and a Rev. Harriman. On October 30, 1810, just 100 years ago, the church was organized with ten members and the following month Rev. Silas Stearns became its pastor. For several years the membership continued small but active and in 1816 there was an extensive revival in the congregation, 79 new members being added by baptism. The meetings up to this time had been held in school houses and public halls and following that revival it was decided that the society must have a permanent home so with the aid of men of influence, outside the society, they were able to erect a suitable building. James McLellan, Joseph F. Wingate, David Stinson and Samuel Noble, on the part of the citizens and Oakman Sprague,, Elijah P. Lowe and T. Lemont in behalf of the church were appointed a committee to receive subscriptions, William King being one of those not belonging to the denomination who was a generous contributor. The lot selected was at the corner of Washington and Elm Streets and the building was

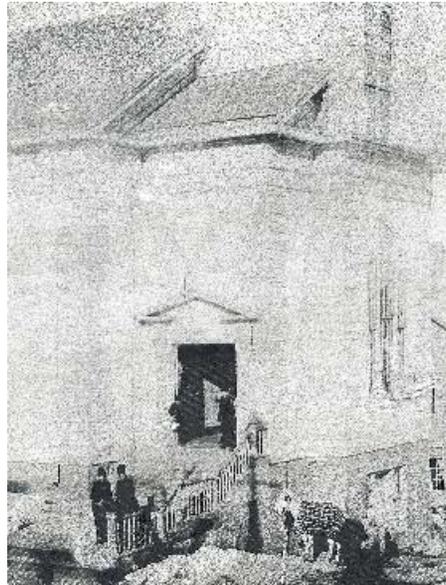
built of brick, two stories, with a basement vestery. In December of that year the house was dedicated, Rev. Silas Stearns preaching the dedicatory sermon.

At the close of 1820 the membership was 175 and in 1825 Mr. Stearns conducted a revival when 58 more were baptised and joined the church. Two years later differences, largely doctrinal in character, arose and these led to the withdrawal of 26 members who formed a new church. It

held its meeting for some time in a school house on North street and in accord with its professedly stronger Calvinism secured Rev. Henry Kendall, a Calvinist of Calvinists, for a pulpit supply. The new church had but little growth however and soon ceased to exist, several of the members returning to their previous church relations.

In 1829 the list of members was still further diminished by the dismissal of 22 members to join a Baptist church about to be founded in Brunswick village. In 1834 Mr. Stearns held another very successful revival when he added 51 new members to the society.

Mr. Stearns, who was an able pastor and organizer, continued in the pulpit, until his death on August 1, 1840 and during his 30 years pastorate there were but three in which there were no baptisms. In all he baptised 375 and there was but one Sunday in the whole 30 years that he was kept away from the service on account of ill health.



The same month that Mr. Stearns died a call was extended Rev. H. G. Nott of the Federal Street church, now the Clarendon street church, Boston, to become pastor. The call was promptly accepted and Mr. Nott came here to begin his pastoral duties. In the early part of 1842 a revival began which lasted through the first half of the year and during which 70 persons joined the church. Mr. Nott closed his pastorate on July 4, 1847. Mr. Nott was succeeded by Rev. E. H. Gray who filled the pulpit until the summer of 1850, making an excellent pastor and a strong preacher. He was born in Vermont in 1815 and was converted at the age of 12 years. He graduated from Colby College in 1838 and was ordained in 1839 and after holding pastorates in Maine and Massachusetts he was called to the charge of the E Street Baptist church in Washington, D. C., in 1862. For four years he was chaplain of the United States senate and assisted at the funeral of Abraham Lincoln. At the funeral of Thadeus Stevens he pronounced a eulogy over the remains in the rotunda of the Capitol. After leaving



Washington he went to California to continue his labors. Rev. Hervey Howes was the next pastor here but he remained less than a year and was followed by Rev. Edwin Dibeld who remained about the same length of time. He preached the last sermon in the old brick church which was torn down in 1852 to make room for the present structure.

In 1853 the new church building was dedicated in February and that year Rev. D. W. Sheldon, ex-president of Waterville college, became the pastor. The congregation was large and embraced some of the first families of the city but after a

promising beginning Dr. Sheldon developed in his preaching Doctrines that were claimed not to be in harmony with the Baptist faith. It led to heated discussion and finally to a division of the church and congregation. After a prolonged contest over the possession of the church building, which was finally settled by the legislature, Dr. Sheldon, with those in sympathy with him, retired to the Unitarian church on Summer Street and the Baptist society proper resumed worship in its own sanctuary. In 1857 Rev. S. W. Taylor became pastor and the next winter followed a revival which swept over the whole country and Mr. Taylor's church was increased in membership by an even 100. He concluded his duties in August, 1860 and was succeeded by Rev. G. Pl. Matthews who remained until April, 1866. Doing quiet and effective work. His pastorate covered the entire of the great Civil War which was of course not favorable to church growth. However despite the troublous times there were 47 members added to the society during Mr. Matthews pastorate. The next pastor was Rev. L. D. Hill who came in 1866 and remained three years and four months, adding 61 new members to the church roll.

Rev. E. M. Bartlett came next to assume the pastorate and in his two years 15 new names were added to the membership list. He was followed by Rev. S. A. Kingsbury who remained three years and added 42 new converts to the faith.

It was in October, 1877 that Rev. S. D. Moxley came to the church as its pastor and he remained until the month of July, 1878 when he gave place to Rev. S. L. B. Chase who although he remained less than two years added 54 to the church membership.

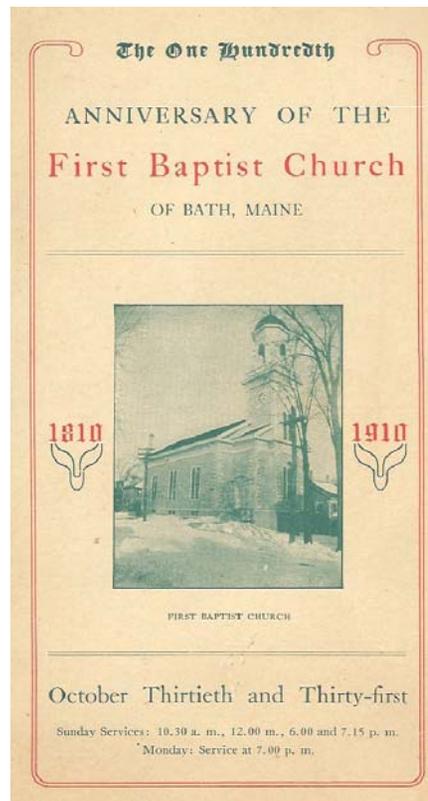
Rev. S. P. Pendleton's pastorate lasted from May 1, 1880 to January, 1883 during which time 15 new members were added to the church.

Rev. T. F. White came to the pulpit here in May, 1883 and remained until 1894, a pastorate of 11 years during which time he did very effective work and won the love and good will of citizens generally as well as of his people. He was followed by Rev. W. A. Atchley who remained from 1895 to 1901. He was a good worker in the church and greatly interested in the temperance cause. As a member of the Civic League he made it warm for the saloon keepers on many occasions and always

attended the caucuses of his party and believed that the greatest good in politics could be attained through attendance at the caucuses, nominating clean men and making a clean platform.

Rev. G. F. Rouillard came to Bath in 1901 and remained until last year, proving himself an active worker and a man much liked throughout the city.

The present pastor is Rev. C. R. Chappell who commenced upon his pastorate early in the year and who has charge of the centenary exercises which will be held tomorrow and Monday and for which the program is as follows:



Sunday, October 30, 1910.

Morning---10:30

Organ Prelude
Doxology
Lord's Prayer
Anthem
Responsive Reading
Hymn 516
Scripture
Gloria
Prayer---Response
Offertory
Hymn 153
Sermon---Rev. M. Joseph Twomey
Hymn 600
Prayer and Benediction

12:00

Rally Day Exercises in the Sunday
School, John L. Purington, Supt.

Evening---6:00

Christian Endeavor Service
Leader, Miss Jennie Goodman
Topic, "Our Church at Work for Missions"
Evening---7:15

Organ Prelude
Hymn 517
Scripture
Anthem
Prayer
Hymn 521
Historical Address
Rev. C. Raymond Chappell
Hymn 151
Prayer and Benediction

Monday, October 31, 1910.

Evening---6:30

The Family Reunion
Judge Arthur J. Dunton, chairman
Supper in the Vestry
Roll Call and Reading of Letters
8:00

Addresses---
Rev. A. G. Stanton
Rev. C. R. Chappell

History Taken from a Church Yearbook published in 1931

Brief Historical Sketch and List of Pastors

First Baptist Church (corner of Washington and Elm)

BEFORE the First Baptist Society was founded, several Elders from surrounding towns conducted services in the city of Bath.

At a council of the Brunswick and Harpswell Churches, held October 30, 1810, at the home of Elijah Low, it was voted to recognize the Bath Church. The original members numbered ten, three men and seven women.

On November 4, 1810, Elder Stearns was received into membership by letter from the Freeport Church. On November 25, Stephen Morse was elected the first deacon. Then Elder Stearns was elected pastor December 2, and on that day the Lord's Supper was celebrated for the first time.

At first the meetings were held in dwelling houses, schoolhouses or in a hired hall. This continued until a brick church was built in 1817. Little is known about this first building, except that it was 60 feet long, 40 feet wide and faced Washington Street. (Early parish records were burned.)

During the first pastorate, the membership grew from 10 to 171. In his thirty years of service, Elder Stearns missed only one Sunday's services on account of illness. He died August 1, 1840.

In September, 1840, Rev. Handel G. Nott, of the Federal Street Church in Boston, began his duties

as pastor. He was an able preacher and won a high place in the denomination. He resigned in 1847. The next pastor, Rev. E. H. Gray, came in August, 1847, and remained until 1850.

In September, 1850, Rev. Hewey Hawes took up the pastorate, remaining only eleven months.

On November 9, 1851, Re. Edwin Dibell came as pastor. By this time the brick church was far too small. So on March 27, 1852, it was sold to Nathan Coombs for \$310.00.

While the new church was under construction, worship was held in the Winter Street Congregational Church, at their kind invitation.

The church was pastorless until February 1, 1853, when David N. Sheldon, D.D., be-



came pastor. He resigned in 1856.

Rev. S. W. Taylor supplied and became the pastor 1857. The church increased rapidly under his leadership. In 1858, he baptized 68 persons. He finished his work in Bath in August, 1860.

The next pastor was Rev. Geo. P. Matthews, of Gardiner. He remained six years, and 47 were added to the membership.

Re. L. D. Hill, from Dover, N.H., was pastor over three years. He resigned in 1869. From December, 1869, to January 1, 1871, there was no regular pastor.

Rev. E. M. Bartlett came next and served two

years. Rev. S. A. Kingsbury, D.D., came in January, 1873, and remained about four years.

After Dr. Kingsbury resigned, Rev. S. D. Moxley, of Portland, became the pastor in June, 1877. The following March he resigned on account of his health.

Rev. S. L. B. Chase was elected pastor August, 1878. He remained until December, 1879.

Rev. S. F. Pendleton commenced his duties May, 1880. On account of ill health he resigned in January, 1882. His departure was regretted by all.

On April 22, 1883, a unanimous call was given Rev. Theodore F. White, of Ellsworth, Maine. He began his pastorate May 6 and stayed eleven years, the second longest in the church's history. He was beloved by all his people as few pastors are.

On January 20, 1895, Rev. Wm. A. Atchley, of Farmington, became the pastor. He was well liked and successful. (Is still preaching in one of the Southern states.)

On May 24, 1990, one of the members, Fred E. Taylor, was set apart for the gospel ministry, his being the first ordination ever held in the church. The same year Mrs. G. E. Dunton presented the church with a communion service, in memory of her husband, Mr. James E. Dunton.

After this the pulpit was vacant until Rev. George F. Rouillard, from Kennebunk, accepted the pastorate in January, 1902. He was successful, remained over seven years and is now preaching in Massachusetts.

On February 6, 1910, C. Raymond Chappell be-

came pastor. He came from Newton Theological Institute and was ordained March 30 the same year. Mr. Chappell was well liked and very successful in his work here. He remained until May, 1919. During Mr. Chappell's pastorate, in November, 1913, the few remaining members of the North Street Free Baptist Church decided to unite with our society and deeded their property to

our "parish." This included the Brooks Parsonage, which our pastors have occupied ever since.

September, 1919, Rev. E. M. Holman became pastor, remaining until October, 1923. His successor was Rev. G. A. Swet-

man, from St. John, N.B. He remained a little less than two years. Next Rev. H. L. Skillin served over two years, resigning to take another church in Maine. Then Rev. K.E. Morse, of New York, remained as pastor a little over one year, resigning to resume studies and preaching in Brooklyn, N.Y. Our present pastor, Rev. Charles R. Sims, came from South Boston, Mass., June 1, 1931, and has already made a place for himself among our people.



Brooks's Parsonage acquired from North Street Free Baptist Church in 1913.

Local newspaper article written November 10, 1900

HISTORY

Of the North Street Free Baptist Church of This City.

The North Street Free Baptist church was organized April 16, 1842. It grew out of revival work conducted by the Revs. Samuel Hathorn and Gardner Douglass during the winter of 1841-42.



The church began its career with twelve members under the care of Almon Libby as pastor. From the time of its organization till the first church was built divine worship was held in the City Hall.

The first building erected was destroyed by a fierce gale of wind in 1869. The present building was erected the following year.

Almon Libby	N. Brooks, 1853-63
P.M. Hobson	A.H. Morrell, 1864-67
A. Deering	E.W. Porter, 1868-75
J.L.K. Staples	E. Manson, 1876-78
J. Stevens	H.J. White, 1879-84
H. Skillings	J..M. Remick, 1885-88
N. Purinton	H.F. Wood 1889-94
C. Phinney	A.I. Davis, 1895

Local Newspaper Article:

**BATH SEES FIRST ORDINATION
OF A WOMAN PASTOR**

**Miss Sims First Clergyman
Ever
Ordained at Winnegance
Church**



**REV. MARY HELEN SIMS,
Th. B.**

In a service of ordination to the Christian Ministry that closely followed that of her father, both as to the program of the service, and the printed programs themselves, Miss Mary Helen Sims, Th. B., was ordained to the Christian Ministry on Friday evening at the first such service held in Winnegance Baptist Church. Miss Sims has served there as pastor for two years. Her father, Rev. Charles R. Sims, pastor of First Baptist church, who was ordained in Bath, August 4, 1933, took part in the program, delivering the prayer of ordination, during which the candidate kneeled, the other pastors present laying their hands upon her head.

Preaching the sermon of ordination was Rev. Louis W. West, pastor of the South Baptist church in Boston, who also preached the sermon of ordination for Mr. Sims. Among those witnessing the impressive service were the candidate's mother and grandfather, Robert A. Sims of South Easton, Mass., whom Mr. West knew when both lived in Nova Scotia and who is now a deacon in Mr. West's church. The church was filled for the

occasion many of Miss Sims' former schoolmates at Gordon College of Theology and Missions, Boston, from which she was graduated in 1933; members of Bowdoinham United Baptist association, and other out of town friends coming for the occasion, together with friends from Winnegance, Bath, Brunswick, Boothbay, Woolwich, and other communities nearby.

Miss Sims was dressed in white for the service, which was deeply impressive from beginning to end. So far as is known, she is the first young woman to become pastor in Bath.

The service was held in the auditorium, which has recently been entirely renovated and repaired.

Walls and ceiling have been tinted azure blue, and woodwork and pews painted old ivory, Dahlias in all colors decorated the church, and Mr. West, in delivering his sermon, commented upon the fact that the service was conducted in the auditorium. At the time he was preaching in Winnegance, the services were conducted in the vestry, the auditorium being closed.

Prof. Frederick Elmer Chapman was organist for the evening, and his selections, all composed by Handel, were beautifully rendered. His prelude was "Largo."

Rev. Walter Shoepfer of Georgetown, a classmate of Miss Sims at Gordon, gave the call to worship and the prayer of invocation. A hymn followed, and then Rev. C. D. Nutter, pastor of the Berean Baptist church in Brunswick, gave the recommendation of the Council.

Rev. Charles H. Berry, pastor of Corliss Street church, gave the Scripture Lesson and Prayer. Mr. West then preached the sermon of ordination, from

Ezra, 9:10. At its close, the father of the candidate offered the prayer of ordination, and Rev. J.S. Pendleton of Waterville, executive secretary of the Maine Baptist convention, delivered the charge to the candidate. The prayer response was “Andante.”

The charge to the church was given by Rev. H.H. Bishop of Cumberland Center, district secretary of the Maine Baptist convention. Rev. L.L. Dunn of Gardiner, whom Miss Sims has known long in evangelistic work, welcomed her to the ministry.

A duet by Mr. and Mrs. Walter B. Schoepfer followed. At its close, Rev. Mary Helen Sims spoke the benediction. The organ postlude was “Halleluhah.”

Miss Sims, who has endeared herself to a wide circle of friends since coming to Bath, has been untiring in her church work in Bath and in Winnegance, and much admiration for her has been expressed for her ef-



Winnegance Baptist Church
51 High Street, Bath, ME

forts toward reopening the Winnegance church after it had been closed for nearly 30 years. Miss Sims was graduated from the High School of Practical Arts in Roxbury, Mass., class of 1927, before entering Gordon College.

Newspaper Article Dated 9/24/54

TO RESUME SERVICES AT WINNEGANCE
CHURCH

Founded 90 years ago to Serve Needs of Those
Living in That Community

Sessions of the Winnegance Baptist Church Sunday School will be resumed Sunday afternoon at 2:30.

Ninety years ago this church was founded as a place of worship for the community and reports from persons familiar with former activities connected with this church would make one wonder how such happy occasions could be discontinued. Eventually the church was closed for several years and was being considered for use as a place of undesirable amusements when its custody was given over to a committee of trustees appointed by the Elm Street First Baptist Church. Sunday School services were introduced four years ago and now another year of worship and study will begin on Sunday afternoon with the intent of making this a family affair with classes planned for all age groups.

The opening service Sunday afternoon will be devoted to organizing and deciding on plans for the Fall and Winter activities. As a special feature for this service. Mrs Iva Kenney will present one of

her flannelgraph lectures for which she has a wide reputation.

The welcome call is again extended to all to attend and assist in making this another successful year of operation of the Sunday School and another enjoyable year of worship in the long history of this church for all the people in the Winnegance community.

Newspaper article dated 8/29/60

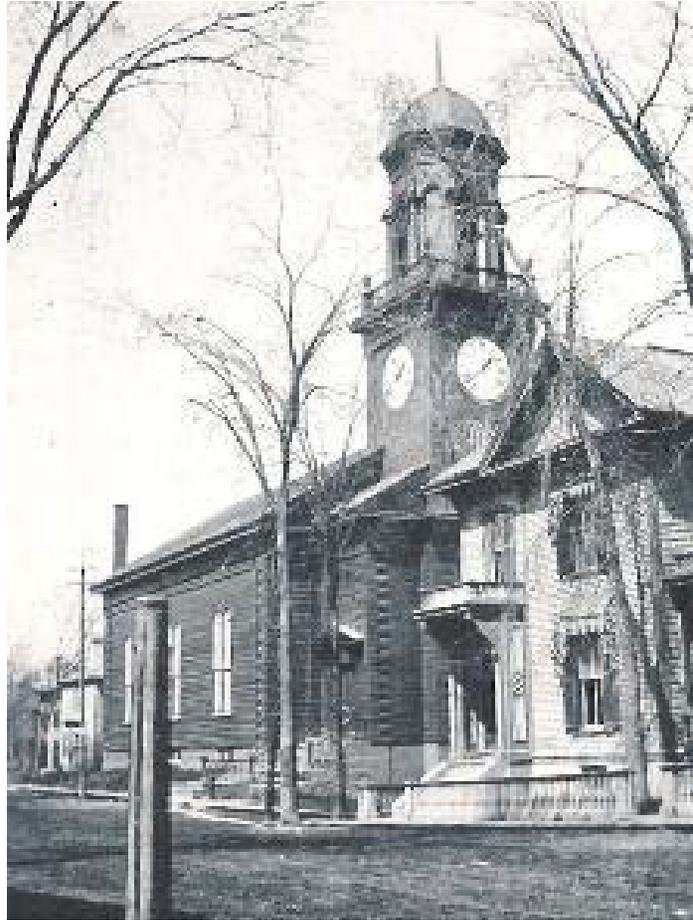
Rev. And Mrs. Sims Are Honored In Freeport

The Rev. Charles R. Sims of West Bath, who is this week completing a six-month interim pastorate at the First Baptist church, Freeport, has been elected by the church as honorary pastor for life. Mrs. Sims has also been elected as an honorary life member of the church.

At the Sunday morning service, the Rev. Mr. Sims was presented with a Thompson's Chain Reference Bible and a purse of money from the church, in addition to a gift from the Youth Fellowship group and many expressions of appreciation for his six months' ministry.

The Rev. Mr. Sims, former pastor of the First Baptist church of Bath, resigned from the local church in 1959 after serving the pulpit here since 1931, a period of 28 years.

The Rev. John Dunn of the Second Baptist Church of Waterville will assume the pastorate of the Freeport Church on Sept. 1.



In 1816 the Baptist Religious Society built a 60' X40' brick church with spire on the corner of Elm and Washington Streets. By 1852 the church was too small for its membership. The building was sold and moved to make way for the present church which was dedicated in 1853. In 1855 a new town clock was placed in the steeple, replacing the clock that was lost when the South Church was burned.

City of Bath records dated 1855:

CITY CLOCK-BAPTIST CHURCH ON ELM STREET

Installed June 8, 1855—voted to put clock in by City—City to pay installation, etc.

June 6, 1855

Mr. Hayden presented the following order. Ordered: that the committee on bells and clocks be directed to procure a City clock and placed the same in the tower of the Elm Street Church; provided the consent of the proprietors of said building is first obtained leaving the City Government free to remove the same when they may deem proper; and provided further that the whole expense shall not exceed five hundred dollars.

Read and passed and sent up for concurrence.



Clock 2002



Mechanics of the Church
Clock 2003

September 12, 1855:

Mr. Hayden presented the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Bells and Clocks accompanied by the following order: Ordered that the City Treasurer be directed to pay the bill of expenses on account of the purchase and fitting up the City Clock, amounting to the sum of \$540.81 and that the sum of \$40.81 of the same be charged to City expenses—that the sum of \$500 be the appropriation for the City Clock.

From a Book of records: Oct. 31, 1920:

“This morning we dedicated the new Church Organ. I will put on record a few facts concerning the old and new Organs. The old Organ was built by Hook & Company in 1832. Our Church bought it second hand many years ago. In November 1913 the North Street Free Baptist Church united with us. They brought with them for property, the Parsonage on North Street, the North Street Church as well as other property. We sold the Church for \$3,900. It was the desire of the North Street Free Baptist that we purchase a new Organ for the United Church. At the Annual Parish Meeting in January 1919 it was voted to purchase a new Organ and the following persons were elected to the committee: A.J. Dunton: William H. White: Esther J. White: Lena B. Ring and Alice Varney. They purchased a new Organ of Hook & Hastings the builders of the old Organ, for the sum of \$4,025.00. The committee decided to keep the old organ case as it was veneered mahogany and very valuable. The Company furnished the electric blower and installed it with the new Organ. The Church built on an addition on the North end of the Church and moved the case to the middle of the north wall. For more than 30 years the Organ was in the North East Corner. Before that it was in a Gallery at the South End of the Church. The wall had to be decorated, the blower connected to the Organ and wired for power. The cost to the Church besides the price of the organ was about \$865.00.



Newspaper article dated 1934

Ladies' Circle and Unity Guild Clear \$166 by Their Joint Efforts.

The annual Christmas sale and supper of the Ladies' circle and Unity guild of the First Baptist church Tuesday afternoon and evening was one of the most successful in their history of combined effort and resulted in a net profit of \$166. There was a splendid array of fancy and useful articles, cooked foods and candies for sale by the two organizations and a splendid chicken pie supper was patronized beyond expectation.

April 7, 1911

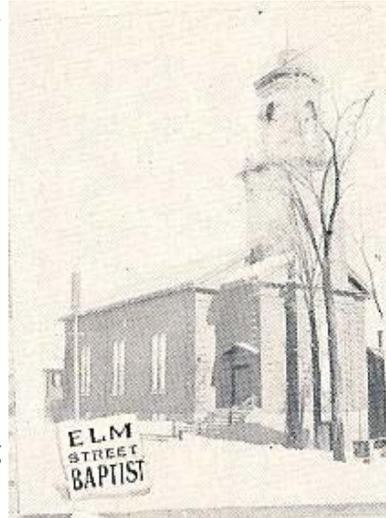
BAPTISTS HAVE FUN.

Bright Entertainment Given in the Vestry Last Evening.

There was a large attendance at the vestry of the First Baptist Church last evening when an entertainment was given under the auspices of the Unity Guild. The principal thing on the program was "An Old Maids' Convention" and it was very funny. In addition there was a piano duet by Louise Robinson and Margaret Miller, a topical song by William H. Small which was full of fun and hits, selections by the Deering quartet who appeared in funny costumes and William White had an old maids' transformer which created much amusement.

Professional Talent of Unity Guild.

“Our Church Fair,” a laughable play, was given last evening in the vestry of the Elm Street Baptist Church and witnessed by a good sized audience. The piece was a clever take off on the church fairs of the present day and the spectators were kept in a gale of laughter from start to finish. The cast had been wisely chosen and the various characters were portrayed in a manner which reflected great credit on the participants. The lines were exceedingly witty and the Guild ladies entered into their parts with a keen understanding of the situations involved and



showed that dramatic talent among the members of the society is by no means lacking. Those who attended the performance last evening are in hopes that the production is but a beginning of a series of amateur entertainments. The different hits introduced were unusually bright and taken in good fun. A good sum was realized, although the admission fee was only fifteen cents.

October 27, 1910

Pleasant Occasion

Reception Tendered Rev. and Mrs. Chappell Last Evening.

The reception tendered last evening at the First Baptist Church to the pastor, Rev. C. Raymond Chappell, and his bride, was in every way a delightful affair. The vestry of the church was made extremely attractive, rugs and draperies giving the room a home like effect. The decorations were very tasty. A large bank of evergreen with border of autumn leaves made a pleasing background and evergreen with white streamers formed a pretty tower in which the receiving party stood. Deacon W. H. White and Mrs. White assisted in receiving.

The music was furnished by the Rullman trio and was greatly enjoyed.

The ushers were Judge Arthur J. Dunton, Deacon John L. Purington, and Arthur Luce.

One of the pleasing features of the evening was the presence of so many of the brother pastors of the city.

