

# **R-097**

## **History of the Baptist Church of Campbellsport**

Entered on computer by Melanie Gildemeister, October, 2006

### **History of the Campbellsport Baptist Church**

In February 1846, Ludin Crouch located a water power site at what is now East Main Street in Campbellsport, where he built a log dam and erected a saw mill. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1846 this settlement was formally named Crouchville. The post office, however, was called Auburn until 1856 when the settlement and post office was officially changed to New Cassel. This was the setting for the birth place of the First Baptist Church of Campbellsport.

The first religious service was held in the home of Henry Barnett in 1846 by Rev. H.A. Sears of Byron. Henry Barnett was the father of Betsy Hendricks. The first school was taught by Miss C. Colvin of Byron in the home of J.L. Perry. The first marriage was that of Eleazier Cisco and Miss Fanny Pryon. The first death was that of Mrs. Electa Pryon. The first birth was Cyrus D. Helmer on February 6, 1847.

On February 28, 1852 a small company of Baptist men and women met by previous appointment in the school house of District #1, Auburn, now known as Five Corners District, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Church. Names of those present and who were enrolled as constituent members were: Joseph Vinning and wife, Eleazer Cisco, Martin Dyer and wife, William Tuttle and Theodore Brown and wife.

Meeting was opened by reading of Scripture and prayer by Rev. H.A. Sears. Rev. Sears lived at Butler's Corner in Byron on what is known now as Highway 41. After reading the Articles of Faith and Covenant, H.A. Sears was chosen Moderator and Joseph Vinning as Clerk.

At the first meeting on February 28, 1852, the Articles of Faith and Covenant of the Baptist Church in Rochester, New York was adopted, as some of those present were members of that church.

March 27, 1852: At a meeting of the members it was voted that on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of April a meeting would be held for the purpose of being recognized as a church. Also that a Council be called from several churches from Newark, Byron, Cascade.

April 26, 1852: A council meeting was held in the school house of District #1, Auburn, for the purpose of being recognized as a Baptist Church. It was voted to call the church "The First Baptist Church of Auburn and Ashford." Rev. Sears was called in

May, 1852 as a regular pastor, coming afoot and alone through the woods from his home in Byron.

Up to 1860, service had been held in the school house and homes of the members, but at this time the Orin Helmer Hall was secured as a meeting place. During the Civil War years this hall remained their place of worship.

In 1866, a meeting was held in the home of Lorenzo Bump. Henry Barnett, Jonas E. Helmer, F.W. Tanner, Wm. Scheid and E. Yancy were appointed as a building committee and under their supervision the present Edifice was erected at a cost of \$2,200.00. Mr. E. Yancy donated the site, and timber was taken from Wm. Scheid and the Henry Barnett farms.

In May, 1866, Rev. Fosdick was called as pastor, remaining five years. During this time the church building was under construction, the members and pastor doing the work.

One of the notable events in the history of this town was the tornado of July 4, 1873, which laid waste to the forest, crops, buildings, fences, and other property in large amounts. The church was filled at this time with people ready to go to the nearby picnic grounds, located near the former Ed Spoerl home. Mr. Jonas E. Helmer was on the grounds putting up tables and seats. When the storm was over, Mr. Helmer and his horses were found unhurt amid the fallen trees, but his helper, a young man, was found killed by fallen trees.

In 1892, under the leadership of Rev. A.T. Miller, the addition of our Primary Sunday School Room was built.

In 1897, Rev. A.T. Miller resigned and we obtained the services of Rev. W. D. Wells. The parsonage was built during his pastorate. Rev. Wells did much of the finishing work. The large maple tree in the front yard of the parsonage was planted by him and stands as a living monument to his thoughtfulness.

The name of the Church was changed in February, 1902 to the First Baptist Church of Campbellsport to conform with the name of the village.

Throughout the years different improvements and additions have been made to the church, the excavation for the basement was completed in 1945, allowing for more room for Sunday School and also a meeting place for the members. The Baptistry was installed in 1955. Before this we used the one at the Baptist Church in Fond du Lac.

The members are now celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church. On May 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a special service in the morning with guest speakers. Invitations have been sent to former pastors and members to be at that morning service and to enjoy the fellowship dinner following the services.

