

The Baptist Church of Northville, NY *"We Preach Christ"*

History of the Baptist Church of Northville, NY

From the 1982 edition:

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Revised and greatly expanded for the 2002 Bicentennial,

using church records and personal interviews,

by Rev. Richard C. Klueg and members of the Bi-centennial Committee

Special recognition is be extended to **Mrs. Gale Poole**, for producing nearly 400 pages of typed minutes from the difficult-to-read early records of the church. These minutes were invaluable obtaining much of the information contained in this revision.

Note: Old-fashioned/phonetic spellings have been retained when the original records are quoted.

Northampton July 11th 1802

At a meeting at Eli's house at the close thereof
 Discourse passed concerning our scattered situation
 upon which it was motioned that we should
 Appoint a general conference for all the baptist
 People in the place to see if we could find out
 Each others minds and where abouts we lived
 or if there was any Reason in our keeping at such
 a Distance from Each other - The motion was
 agreed to the meeting appointed - the 7th of August on
 Saturday at 10 o'clock at the house of Aaron Cane
 The time commenced the people assembled the meeting
 was opened by prayer then proceeded to Business
 Chose brother Aaron Seaman Junr. Moderator of the
 Meeting an enquiry pass'd concerning our faith
 upon which we found a good deal of Tradition for
 We had about as many Different creeds of faith
 Externally as there were Churches to which we belong'd
 upon which we found it necessary to fix some
 Senter creed that we might all be agreed in upon
 Which the following was presented and agreed to

1. That we cannot Receive any to Baptism Except
 We first get an Evidence of them that they are
 Born again into the Liberty of the Gospel of
 Jesus Christ and that we cannot Receive any
 Except they are Baptized by Immersion into our
 fellowship
2. That we keep an open Door for Laying on of hands
 and that not as any bar in Communion But to be
 Administered as a ministerial Right
3. That the Communion of Saints in commemoration
 of the Death of Jesus Christ be attended to as an
 ordinance of the Gospel

HISTORY of the BAPTIST CHURCH OF NORTHVILLE, NY

Founding

At a meeting held on July 11, 1802, in the town of Northampton in the home of Eli Stone* (overlooking the plain on which the village of Northville now stands), a small band of believers – 12 men and 4 women – joined together to form the “Brotherly Conference,” desiring to secure the fellowship of the Baptist denomination. At that meeting, a motion was made that a general conference be held “for all the Baptist people in the place to see if we could find out each others’ mind and whereabouts we stood, or if there was any reason in our keeping at such a distance from each other.” Three conferences took place, the first two being unsuccessful. On August 7, 1802, the third general conference of the “Brotherly Conference” convened and out of the representatives of many Baptist churches, a creed was drawn up and agreed upon, and a church was formed.

At the August 7 meeting (the first “conference”), those gathered were faced with the difficulty of differing backgrounds and convictions, requiring some decision as to a doctrinal standard of the new church. These believers then proceeded to list a number of doctrines deemed essential to the church, which included:

- Baptism by immersion, and only of those who could give evidence of the new birth through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The observance of communion as a church.
- Separation from the world in the worship of God.
- A belief in the resurrection of the dead and the coming day of judgment
- The conviction that “we have no other written rule for our discipline than the Bible as it stands recorded,” but going on to admit that some issues not addressed by the Bible would be determined by requiring a church vote, seeking the wisdom, strength and righteousness of God.

The second “Conference” on September 4, 1802 continued with some organizational issues. The third “Conference” was held on October 2, at which 12 men and 4 women set their names to form the “Brotherly Conference” and agreed to hold monthly “Conference” meetings.

As these monthly meetings proceeded, new members were added, and soon the group sought to become officially recognized as a Baptist Church. Communication was held with churches in Cheshire, Galway, Providence and Mayfield to this end. On February 25, 1803, **Brother Aaron Seamans, Jr.** was ordained by the neighboring churches for the work of the ministry in Northville, but some procedural difficulties prevented the immediate recognition of the group as a church. The first baptism took place on February 27, 1803, of two men and one woman.

The group continued to pursue official recognition as a church, but a problem arose. The other churches refused to accept the Northville group unless they would commit their statement of faith in writing. The group, however, “declined the use of articles supposing the bible to be the safest guide for us to go by so our meeting broke up and disperst.”

Finally, in a meeting on May 31, 1804, 67 representatives gathered from churches in Milton, Galway, Mayfield & Broadalbin, and Cheshire. After examining the situation of the Northville group, they unanimously accepted them as a Church of Jesus Christ.

* Descendents of Eli Stone are part of the church today: Gail Cramer, Bill Crannell, and Gerald Buyce and their families.

Early Growth

The records of the church show a rapid growth of membership in the early years. Along with this, of course, came the “growing pains.” First, there were individuals whose original commitment proved unreliable. “Sister Manzey” was confronted with “inadvertently communing with our Methodist brethren which was contrary to the rules of our conference” (August 13, 1803). Sister Manzey confessed and repented, and was immediately forgiven and given her place in the fellowship. However when the leadership dealt with “Sister Grimes,” they reported that “we find her mind still inclining towards the Methodist Brethren” (September 10, 1803). In the next monthly meeting, they reported that Sister Grimes “has warped off from us, and has joined with the Methodist Brethren,” and so the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from her ... the first recorded removal of a member from the church.

Second, there were issues of belief and order which arose and became matters of dispute. The first recorded dispute arose regarding membership in the Masonic Lodge. Some in the church felt that this was compatible with church membership, but “others was quite opposed to the idea of receiving any person or persons that hold a seat in the Lodg or belong to the Masonickal order” (September 10, 1803).

On June 22, 1805, it was voted to build a meeting house. Land for this purpose was given by Abraham Van Arnam, who lived on the adjacent lot of what was part of the original Van Patten Purchase. These lots were on the main road through the village, now Main Street.

A wooden structure measuring 32 feet by 40 feet, “to have a porch and dore on the front side” was erected on the northwest corner of the lot. This was the first church in the town of Northampton. It was dedicated in 1806 and became a union church in which Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians held services. The building was never completed. The windows, having only a few boards over them, were unable to keep out the winter snow. During the summer, the birds became co-worshippers. No heat in cold weather must have brought out only the bravest of souls.

In this early period of the church, there was a strong sense of responsibility for the conduct of the members. The minutes of the monthly covenant meeting give details of dealing with members who were observed to be failing spiritually or morally. Those who neglected church attendance or acted in some way contrary to the church’s standards were visited by a committee and challenged to amend their walk with the Lord and the church. Two examples will demonstrate a seriousness of purpose and responsibility that we may find unusual today. Before we conclude that our forefathers were “overly strict,” we should consider if perhaps our approach to Christian responsibility is overly lax.

Example #1: Neglect of attendance.

In the November 23, 1805 covenant meeting, a final decision is rendered regarding “our once covenant sister Abigail Presson.” The church had been dealing with Abigail for months, beginning as early as August of that year. Having no success and reminding her of “the solemn covenant that you and we entered into,” the church found it necessary “to withdraw the hand of fellowship from you as a disorderly walker.” The official action against Abigail Presson gave four reasons for her dismissal:

- 1) Neglecting church attendance. Hebrews 10:25 is cited as proof of this charge.
- 2) Refusing to work with the church members who personally came to her regarding her situation. Matthew 18:15 is cited for this point.
- 3) Refusing to respond to the church’s admonition regarding her walk as required by Matthew 18:17.
- 4) Claiming the guidance of the Holy Spirit for her actions. The church pointed out in response that the Spirit does not guide contrary to what the Bible commands.

The declaration of exclusion ends with a prayer for Abigail's restoration: "We pray the Lord will give you a heart to return and repent and fill your place in the house of God." Evidently this prayer was answered, for Abigail is found to be a member again in future records of the church.

Example #2: Unchristian conduct

Three men of the church bring a complaint to the church regarding brother Eli Sprague at the October 3, 1807 covenant meeting. Three charges are specified:

1) Lying. Specific examples are given since Mr. Sprague at first denied the charge.

2) The appearance of cheating.

3) "Passionate conduct & unsavory language." Again, specific examples are given. One man heard Sprague call his wife "a devilish hypocret." Another told of Eli once blurting out "that he did not care if all the devils in hell" came to a court being held at his home.

The church determined to challenge brother Sprague to improve his conduct and renew his walk with the church. Sprague asked for "a long forbearance of the Church," which was granted him. By the December 1807 meeting, Sprague made a confession to the church but was required to make this confession as public as his conduct had been.

The problems with Eli Sprague did not end here. Even though he made the public confession, some said he appeared to be drunk at the time though others thought this was not true. The subject of his conduct and attitude continue to be a concern to the church for years to come, as evidenced by the records of the monthly covenant meeting.

Some other moral issues addressed in the records:

- "Fiddling and dancing in his house"
- Using "unsavory language"
- Drinking to excess or sale of intoxicating liquors
- Lying
- Stealing
- Complaining publicly against the church
- Men who "had contended together & used words not becoming in publick"
- Picking blackberries on the Sabbath
- Profanity

One is struck with the seriousness with which the church dealt with individual conduct. It is also striking to see the patience and grace shown to offenders. The pattern shows that individuals were normally dealt with personally and patiently over a period of many months. Those who asked for time to amend their ways were regularly granted that time, and offenders who returned with a promise to change were immediately forgiven and restored.

Continued Growth, Conflict, and Resolution

The church grew rapidly. In 1809-1811, licentiate **Bartlett Dake** served to assist Pastor Seamans, preaching part of the time and receiving compensation for his ministry. In 1817, there were 191 members in good standing. By 1830 the number had declined to 124 due to deaths and removals. In 1834, a revival resulted in 74 additions, bringing the membership to a total of 198.

In 1837 Elder Seamans asked for and received a letter of dismissal and a recommendation to join with the church at Milton. **Elder Timothy Day** was called and labored faithfully for 2 years. In 1839 Elder Seamans returned as pastor. At this time, a problem developed between another church (Broadalbin Baptist) and a member who had united with the Baptist Church in Northville, resulting in the formation of two separate church organizations. One was under the ministry of Elder Seamans,

and the other was under the ministry of **Rev. E.W. Allen**. These parties continued to meet separately for 4 years. The difficulty was eventually settled in 1844 by a union of the two parties under a mutual pledge that “the old wounds should remain forever unopened,” restoring peace and harmony. The details of this episode stand as a continuing challenge to “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

The Church Split of 1840

In 1839, the records tell of the growing conflict in the church, centering on an Elder William Groome. Groome was a member who had come to our church from the Baptist Church in Broadalbin. Members of the Broadalbin Church reported that Elder Groome was preaching and serving communion to members of their church who had been excluded by discipline. It was agreed to investigate the situation, and Broadalbin was asked to give satisfaction that the members had been “justly excluded.” Elders from other churches were asked to join in the deliberations.

In the formal meeting on this issue, Elder Groome asked to dismiss the proceedings as improper, which was moved by Pastor Seamans and passed over the objections of those representing the Broadalbin Church. Groome confessed to serving communion as charged but not that the people had been justly excluded. At this, the committee passed a motion declaring that Groome had been wrong in doing so.

All of this was having its effect on the church, and in the April 1840 church covenant meeting, “a general complaint of trials with a heartfelt sense of the deplorable condition of the Chh [Church] seemed to be the sense of the meeting.” Some members said that they could no longer be a part of the church.

The church called for a council of Baptist churches from throughout the Saratoga Association to deal with the conflict. The precise decision of this council is not found in our records, but it was clearly unfavorable to Elder Groome’s position. Although the church voted against accepting the decision of this council, two lists are given with names of those who agreed or disagreed with the council. Each list has exactly 24 names in it. Elder Timothy Day heads the list of those who were willing to agree with the council. Pastor Seamans and William Groome are in the list of those who do not agree with the council. The church was split right down the middle.

Sometime in 1840 there are two distinct bodies each claiming to be the Baptist Church of Northville. The church record book evidently remained in the hands of the minority (pro-council) group. These show that on April 17, resolutions were made by this group to 1) Send Groome a letter of admonition directing him to confess his faults to the Broadalbin Church; 2) Admonish Pastor Seamans for hurting the church by his conduct in the affair, and 3) Admonish every member who took sides against the council. The names which appear in these minutes are from the “pro-council” group. **Elder E. W. Allen** served as pastor of this group until 1843, when he moved to the Church in Galway.

There is a separate ream of minutes, written in a different color ink and a different hand and including names from the “anti-council” group – the minutes kept by this group concurrent with the other minutes. These records speak of “a minor part of the Chh dissented from the Chh in consequence of the Chh’s not abiding the decision of council & have set up a separate meeting calling themselves the Chh.” This group voted unanimously “that we sustain Elder Seamans in his declaration that Elder Groome was not to be given up into the hands of the council for disposition.” After further deliberations it was moved that “we be satisfied with Elder Groome’s defense & that he has exonerated himself from the charges preferred against him.”

The strained relations with the Broadalbin Church also continued. In April of 1841 “a letter was presented from the aggrieved brethren (so-called) of the Broadalbin Chh” requesting a council together. The festering resentment is seen in that the fellow Baptists in the Broadalbin church are termed “so-called” brethren. Even the Methodist “brethren” were not qualified as “so-called!” No notice can be found of the results of this council, if it in fact ever took place.

Finally, on January 20, 1844, the Lord brought this sad affair to a glorious conclusion. The following resolution was offered by the majority group:

Whereas the unhappy division that has taken place in the Baptist Chh in Northampton appears to be disastrous to the cause of Christ and detrimental to the peace and progress of those who profess to love and serve Christ and a stumbling block in the way of the lame; Therefore, these are to propose some things whereby the opposing parts of the Chh may become reconciled to each other and peace, union and fellowship be reestablished.

And 1st All who have made use of any unsavory language that would militate to the disparagement or slander of any member or Church's character shall publicly take it back and confess their wrong.

Item 2nd That we all agree that the difference of opinion on the result of council shall no longer amount to a breach of fellowship among us.

Item 3rd That upon our conceding to the two above items we all forgive one another and that each part take back the act of their excluding their brethren and make it null and void.

Further items dealt with the mechanics of membership and officers in the re-combined church. On January 25, both groups voted unanimously to accept these terms. In 1843, Elder Groome had been given a letter of recommendation and pastoral dismissal to join another church. Both sides agreed that the entire dispute centered on him, and the minority group insisted that his position as a member be ended for the church to reunite. More information about this event was lost due to the understandable agreement "that the papers of both parts be destroyed."

Elder Seamans closed his pastorate of 39 years in 1844 "to end his days in the west." His memory was long cherished by the church family. The 1869 Biography of N. B. Lobdell (b. 1791, moved to Northville 1794 and resided here thereafter) gives the following sketch of Pastor Seamans:

The Rev. Elder Aaron Seamans was the first preacher or minister of the Gospel that I recollect of seeing and was the first and only settled Baptist minister in this town about forty years he gathered together and was the builder up of the now Baptist Church of Northampton. He was an exemplary man and worthy minister of the Gospel.

The early records show his unceasing labors for the gospel over his four decades as our first pastor.

The Second Half of the 1800's

The church was then supplied for one year by **Brother Hiram A. Negus**, a licentiate from the Providence Church. In 1846 Bro. **Bradley K. Barber** was ordained as pastor. In 1849 Pastor Barber ended ministry here: "He had done good sowing for another's reaping." He began serving as pastor in 1844, having been ordained by the church.

In 1849, **Bro. Oscar A. F. Spinning** (nephew of Pastor Barber) was ordained, and "before the close of the year, by a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there were added to the church 50 by baptism, some by letter and still others by restoration and experience. The records indicated an increasing congregation and population."

It was at this time that the church first began its Sunday school. On May 12, 1850, the church convened and organized the "**Northampton Baptist Sabbath School and Bible Class Society**," with the stated goal "to promote the study of the sacred scriptures within the bounds of the Northampton Baptist Church by the means of Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes." Pastor Spinning presented a constitution and by-laws, and 29 men and women were elected to compose the board.

Baptist Church of Northville Sunday School membership certificate from 1860



Rev. N. O. Combs came in 1852 from the Baptist Church in Jamesville. At this time the number of “present total available members” was listed as 114.

Under **Rev. George Fisher** (1853-1857) “much good was done for the cause of Christ. During this pastorate the membership increased from 127 to 187.” Pastor Fisher eventually resigned because he “declined to continue the practice of giving the right hand of fellowship.” There had been some controversy among the members regarding this practice. A few years earlier one “Sister Vaughn” had asked that the church “discontinue the practice or sustain it by scripture” insisting that otherwise she would not remain a member. The church did not accommodate her, nor Pastor Fisher, in this issue. The Fishers left Northville to unite with the church in Galway, though the parting seems to have been cordial. Sister Vaughn stayed away from church for two years, and when approached in 1858 she demanded a trial before the entire membership of the church “to substantiate the unscriptural practice.” When told that the church had already settled the issue by a vote in 1854, “She then left the House,” and so the church withdrew her membership.

Rev. Clement Havens, “a man of great wisdom,” served as pastor from 1857-1859, “laboring with faithfulness. He was permitted to see the fruit of his labors and the increase of membership to 253.” According to the contemporary records, “Our hearts were still encouraged by the evidence of souls having passed from death unto life” (1859). Not everyone was pleased with the minister, however, as

the records show two women being excluded from the church after refusing to pay their “average” (a “tax” which each member was expected to give for the support of the ministry). They both complained of “ill usage” by the pastor, and “did not regard him as a Christian minister.” Pastor Havens had come from Boonville, and resigned to pastor a church there after his time in Northville.

Rev. C.D. Lewis (1859 – 1862) came to Northville from Corning.

Rev. E.W. Brownell and his wife Sarah came from the Baptist Church in the Town of Knox, and he served as pastor from 1862 to 1868. The advance of the gospel continued. In 1863 “the church held a meeting for religious conversation and inquiry. There were a goodly number present, among whom were inquiring souls, also some who gave evidence of having passed from death unto life which we hope & trust was in answer to prayers of God’s children and the result of a series of meetings.” This evangelistic effort was still underway a week later, when the notes report that “Meetings still continue giving encouragement to the church by the evidence of the conversion of souls.” The number of members in 1863 is listed as 224.



Rev. Joshua Day served as pastor for five years, from 1868 to 1872. Pastor Day was a licentiate of the Johnstown Church, first called to supply the pulpit and then ordained here in 1868. He was charged to investigate the possibility of a major facility improvement, since “our House of Worship was not sufficient to accommodate the wants of the church and society.” The decision was made “to build a house for our God, our former building being somewhat dilapidated and contracted for room.” Day then led the church in the construction of the improved building which was later destroyed by fire in 1902. “He stepped from the circle of business into the pulpit, this being his first pastorate. He came clothed with mighty power from High, and with the sword of the Spirit richly divided the Word so that each received their portion in due season. The Marvelous Power of the Spirit was shown and felt all through his pastorate, one hundred being baptized into the fellowship of the church by him.” The church at this time had 200 members

Following the resignation of Pastor Day, there was again a succession of short pastorates. It had been said that “all through this time the church had maintained its position as a church of Christ in a remarkable degree. One thing, it was said, was noticeable – it had always endeavored to keep itself unspotted from the world, exercising a constant and earnest interest in the welfare of its members.”

From the beginning, the Baptist Church of Northville had been blessed with strong men of God to serve in leadership positions. Brothers **Waite Palmer** and **Ebenezer Fuller** were elected deacons about the time the church was organized, and others soon followed. Notable among early deacons was **Deacon Nathaniel Mead, Jr.** who died at age 76 in October 1872 in his home, “an event that cast a shadow over the church.” “[H]e had been a member of the church for a little more than fifty years. In less than one year after he united with the church he was chosen Deacon and served in that capacity faithfully, never shirking from the performance of any duty, however irksome it might be, until the end of time with him. He was a man of strict integrity and possessed many of those sterling qualities that go to make a Man. He was just and unostentatious in his life at home and among men. In his business relations, strictly honest and upright in every particular, and so exemplified his Profession, by his daily life, that wherever known was looked upon with the highest esteem. In the church his counsel was often sought by his pastor and other brethren, and listened to and heeded.” At this time, and until the 1890s, deacons were chosen for life and ordained to the position, not elected for a term of years. Nathaniel’s father Nathaniel, Sr. was a Revolutionary War veteran, who had joined the church in 1813. A number of Nathaniel, Sr.’s descendents are part of our church family today: Peggy Trzaskos, Leland Robinson, (and their children) and of course his great-great-great-grandson Daniel Mead. At his funeral service in

the church, the pastor preached on Psalm 37:37 – “Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is peace.*” Nathaniel’s brother Alexander was also active in the Lord’s work, and became a Baptist pastor.



Rev. J.G. Shrive (1875 – 1877) was called from the First Baptist Church of Newburgh, for a salary of \$750 per year, a donation, and use of parsonage. Under Pastor Shrive the church faced the issue of an indebtedness of over \$2,000. In June of 1876 a “centennial meeting” was held “for the purpose of liquidating all claims against the church.” Sermons by visiting pastors challenged the people to rise to the occasion “which was liberally responded to by the congregation.” Also at this time, in 1876, the church was re-incorporated under the Centennial Incorporation Law as the “Baptist Church of Northville,” which remains its official name today. Financial struggles in the church continued, however, and when Pastor Shrive left there was a considerable amount of back compensation owed to him.

In 1878 the membership of the church numbered 209 under **Pastor M.W. Dillingham** (1877 – 1879). It was found that many whose names were on the roll had either moved away or were not walking with the church. After investigation, membership was withdrawn from

41 members. In the annual report to the Saratoga Baptist Association the church said that this was “like removing the dead branches from the tree, which leave the main stock in a more healthy state for bringing forth fruit.” This same report, dated 1879, gives the final membership as 170.

Of Rev. Dillingham it was said “his labors have been crowned with rich blessings in leading some souls to rejoice in Christ as their Savior.” Pastor Dillingham also was called upon to serve with some of his salary in arrears, leaving him, in his own words, “in great need of money” such that “it has been at times very hard to live.” In a touching resignation letter in 1878 (which he withdrew at the church’s request) Pastor Dillingham reveals the heart of a godly pastor:

I do ask to believe that nothing but stern necessity would lead me for a moment to think of severing the bonds which bind our hearts together. I have found in the church a home, the officers & members have been generous, kind and loving, and you have all twined yourselves about my heart. It seems to me that I shall never find a band who seem so much like Brothers and Sisters and I have loved and do love you as a church and People and as individuals.

If I have sometimes spoken harshly or preached so as to touch your consciences it has all been prompted by love, and my father in heaven knows that it has been my undivided aim to make this church & people better and consequently happier, however much I have failed in this, it has not been for want of will, but of ability.

Pastor S. C. Moore served as pastor from January 1880 through March 1881. “He was an earnest and faithful worker in the Master’s Vinyard.” Rev. Moore came to us from the Baptist Church in Sloansville, NY, and left from here to the First Baptist Church of Saratoga Springs.

Pastor E.D. Hammond (1882 – 1884) came from Hamilton, NY, and was ordained by this church in 1882.

Rev. E. P. Smallidge served as pastor from 1884 to 1886, coming from Horricon, NY. The membership of the church was 163. One comment recorded is that under Smallidge. “The church was then said to be united, harmonious, and hopeful.” Records indicate that under Pastor Smallidge attendance became “larger and more regular” along with similar growth in the Sabbath School. It is sad to learn, however, that our adversary managed to gain a foothold to spoil this hope. Financial struggles continued for the church. The pressure on the trustees is evident from the resignation of individual trustees and finally the entire board in 1886. Along with this, Sunday services

had to be cancelled for 2½ months due to the sickness of Pastor Smallidge. Membership by 1886 was down to 143. The November 13, 1886 minutes of the church contain Rev. Smallidge's resignation letter:

Dear Brethren.

Feeling that there can be no successful work done for the Mastor amidst dissension and discord and that there is no present hope of a change for the better: yet trusting that the Great Shepherd will in due time send among you a servant who will lead you in green pastures and by the side of still waters, I hereby present my resignation as your pastor to take effect Nov. 15th, 1886.

Respectfully submitted,

E.P. Smallidge

The resignation was accepted and later notes to Saratoga Baptist association report that "Bro. Smallidge closed his pastorate with us in November last, and he left us so deeply in debt that we have not had any preaching since."

A great depression gripped the church for nearly a year from November 1886, during which time there was no pastor. "The love of many waxed cold and the clouds were dark, yet some were steadfast and earnest in their pleadings at the throne of grace."

Such discouraging realities must be balanced with the gracious work of God which continued to prosper in spite of whatever difficulties beset the church. Consider this letter sent in 1885 to the church from a member named Ellen Dodds, who had moved to Washington County:

Wherever my lot is cast, I shall ever feel an interest in the Baptist Church at Northville, for there I know my sins were forgiven through the blood of Jesus. [Underlining hers]

Another letter arrived in the same year from a member named Anna Hayden who had moved to an area in which she could not find a suitable church to join:

I have not forgot my home with the church at Northville, where I have enjoyed so much comfort and consolation, and where I have had my spiritual strength renewed, and oh how I would like to meet with you all again to renew my covenant with you, but I never expect to meet with you again upon the shores of time ... I feel that I have been too unthankful for the many mercies bestowed, for the Lord called me when I was but a child to serve Him, and He has ever been with me through all the trying scenes I have had to pass through, and I still trust Him for He is a present help in every time of need. I find my Jesus the same wherever I go. I call upon Him daily and He hears and answers my prayer. I have not heard but three sermons since I came here. ...

Anna goes on to state that she had been a member of our church for over 65 years and desired to remain a member. Her request was granted.

The church was without a pastor from November 1886 until September 1887. At that time, **Brother J. S. Gould** began as a supply preacher. He had been a member of the Northville Methodist Church and local preacher, "but desiring to cut loose from the bands of said Church and to step out into the light and liberty of the gospel and church usages as held by the Baptist faith" Mr. Gould joined the Baptist Church of Northville. He was licensed to preach in January of 1888, ordained by the church in March, and called to the pastorate in May. The church membership for this year is given as 164. Rev. Gould continued as pastor until 1891, when he resigned due to health problems. "His pastorate was a successful one, many souls being born into the Kingdom and large additions to the church being made." Pastor Gould did not continue in full-time pastoral work, but remained to serve the Lord in the Northville Baptist Church.



July 1891, Bro **Maurice B. Russell**, a licensed lay preacher, was called to the pastorate. During this time, "In the autumn of 1894 a special work of Grace was experienced, not only in this church, but by the other churches in the place, from a series of special meetings conducted by the Rev. W. E. Geil, a union evangelist, supported in his work by the pastors and members of the several churches. Many of the members were quickened in their love and zeal for the Master and the Cause, and many precious souls were gathered within the fold." Born in Maine in 1866, Rev. Russell held his first pastorate in Kinderhook, Michigan after graduating from Rochester Theological Seminary. He came to Northville as a supply pastor in July 1891 and was ordained in the church in December of that year. While ministering here he also attended Colgate University. In 1892 he married church organist Carrie

Cole of this village and had one son, Walter. His pastorate at Northville continued until July 1895, after which he served pastorates in Brooklyn and Troy. Rev. Russell died in Northville in October 1901 at the age of 35 after an unsuccessful surgery for stomach cancer. His widow and son continued as active members of the Northville church for many years. According to his obituary, "Rev. Dr. Estes, instructor in New Testament Interpretation at Colgate, said that he never knew a student who got so much out of his studies and was so able in applying the truths practically in his sermons as Mr. Russell. ... He was successful and had pulpit qualities that were rare indeed." A resolution from the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in Troy, his last pastorate, speaks of "his unbounded enthusiasm in Bible study, by never failing to fearlessly present the truth as God revealed it to him."



In July 1895 Brother **Fred H. King**, licensed lay preacher, was called as pastor, and was ordained in December. He continued until August 1898. King was a graduate of Colgate University. In April 1898, a petition was circulated to call for the dismissal of Rev. King, which was voted on and passed 41 to 35. The pastor read his resignation the next month, and preached his farewell sermon in August.



Sunday school picnic, c. 1896, taken on what is now Skiff Road The village would be to the left back of the photo, Seven Hills Road is now near the line of trees in the center-right background. Names of individuals may be found in Appendix 1

Rev. J.P. Howland served as pastor from December 4, 1898 to June 29, 1902.

Doctrinal & Social Issues

The records give a glimpse into some of the doctrinal issues faced by our early forefathers. Reference has already been made to the difference with “our **Methodist** brethren.” Although a clear distinction was recognized the designation as “brethren” indicates the Methodists were considered fellow believers in Christ. In fact in 1810 the Baptist Church in Galway asked our church for advice on a related issue: Should they accept as a member a person who had been baptized by immersion, but by a “Methodist Administrator.” Our church advised that the baptism be accepted as valid “altho the Administrator be an imposter.”

In 1807 we are told that there was some discussion with the church in Galway regarding the doctrine of general and particular atonement (the Arminian and Calvinist positions, respectively). We are not told what the discussion was about but evidently the two churches sensed a disagreement with one another on this issue. After discussion, however, they agreed that there was “no material difference between

the two churches in sentiments." In 1882 our church published the "Articles of Faith and Covenant of the First Baptist Church" which reveals that the **New Hampshire Confession** of 1833 was our doctrinal statement at that time. This widely-used Baptist confession is thoroughly biblical and distinctly Calvinistic.

The church also had to deal with the influence of radical, fringe religious movements. One sister was excluded from the church in 1814 because "she has joined the Shakenquakers (so called)." **The Shakers** were a communistic celibate religious movement arising out of the Quakers in England. The center of their American missionary enterprise was in New Lebanon, NY, from where it spread during the early 1800's. This group claimed that God was both male and female, Jesus being the male incarnation. Ann Lee, the English founder of the movement, was the female principle of Christ, and in her the Second Coming was fulfilled. The name of the group came from their practice of ecstatic shaking in worship. When a member of the Baptist Church of Northville fell into this belief and practice, it was obvious that this was incompatible with the biblical standards of the church. It is significant that, unlike the Methodists, the Shakers are not called "brethren."

The **economic difficulties** of life in a frontier town evidently left some individuals in severe financial distress. To answer this pressing social problem the church voted in 1808 to assess the membership according to their financial ability, in order to raise "Eight Dollars for the present help of the poor in the Church." We read in 1809 that the church "Voted that a Committee of 3 Brethren Tim Gifford Ira Brundage & Win. Davis receive the money of the Church for the poor and pay out the same where they shall think most needed." This continued to be a part of the church's ministry and is still carried out today in our "Deacon's Fund."

Family life in the 1800's was not the perfect situation one might imagine. The church was often called to do the work of counseling and correcting. For instance in 1817 the church found it necessary to address a problem of child abuse in one home, and had to exclude (i.e., remove from membership by discipline) the non-repentant couple.

In another case, this one in 1816, a committee of the church traveled to Hadley to handle a domestic dispute. Those who have attempted to mediate such disputes are familiar with the difficulty of sorting out the emotional charges and counter charges that are exchanged in these situations. It is not surprising that the delegation found cause for blame in both the husband and the wife. They held a husband to public blame because he "struck his wife," and at the same time held the wife accountable for her part in the problems, concluding that she "has not subjected herself to the government of her husband but has used imprudent and unchristian-like language to him for which we think [she] ought to repent, confess and reform." The husband was sent an official letter of admonition and required to come before the church and make confession, which he did to the church's satisfaction. His change of heart was less than permanent, however, for a few years later another letter of admonition was sent to both the husband and wife because of "their misconduct towards each other." This was followed by a series of letters and personal visits to the couple. Sadly, the couple did not respond positively and the "Church voted to exclude [the man] and his wife from our fellowship after a lengthy labour." About a year later the husband "wanted to take his place again without repentance or making any confession to the Church." His request was flatly refused.

The church was also called upon to deal with issues that would today end up in a **small-claims court**. One time two women had a dispute regarding the amount of cloth used for a certain weaving project. The church required one of the women to make up for material she had wrongly kept from the other (1817). Another time two men disputed over the return of a borrowed threshing flail. The church heard testimony and determined that one of the men had been caught in a lie in the matter.

In 1853 the church adopted as part of its covenant a commitment to abstinence from alcohol. The **temperance** crusade goes back to colonial times, supported by such figures as Dr. Benjamin Rush (noted physician, educator, and signer of the Declaration of Independence) and well-known

preacher Rev. Lyman Beecher. The American Temperance Union held its first national convention in 1836. Our church adopted the following resolution in 1853:

Believing that the use of intoxicating liquor is not only needless, but hurtful, to the social, civil and religious interests of men. That it tends to form intemperate appetites and habits and that while it is continued, the evils of intemperance can never be done away. We do therefore agree that we will not use it as a beverage or traffic in it; that we will not provide it as an article of entertainment or for persons in our employment and that in all suitable ways, we will discountenance the use of it throughout the community.

The early records indicate that the church took this commitment seriously, dealing with members who fell into this particular vice. This same conviction and commitment continues as a part of our testimony and discipline. In the current church covenant every member of our church publicly promises to “abstain from the sale of, and use of, destructive drugs or intoxicating drinks as a beverage.”

The Church Building

The **first church**, built in **1806** and never completed was by the mid-1800's in poor condition. It was rebuilt on the same site in 1847 and used until May 1869 It was then torn down and a new house of worship built under the direction of Pastor Joshua Day, as noted above. This new wooden structure, designed and constructed by Albert Moore, was centered in the middle of the original lot and occupied what is now the Village Green, on the northwest corner of Bridge & Main. This church was much larger than the first, measuring 72 x 38 feet, with a bell tower 75 feet high. A seating capacity of 500 included the choir gallery. A lecture room added to the rear of the church held 175 more. At this time there were 200 members. The cornerstone was laid on June 24, 1869. Architect & Builder was Albert Moore. The Building Committee consisted of J.A. Collins, Orin Benton, S.B. Benton and G.C. VanDyke (Deacons), James A. Cole (Treasurer) and W.A. Smith (Secretary).



At the dedication service of the **new church** on March 29, **1870**, sermons were preached by Rev. John Peddie and Rev. Thomas Cull. Others from the area who took part in the service were Rev. George Cooper and Rev. W.F. Benedict. The building and furnishings, costing \$8,000, were dedicated free of debt.

It is evident that this building did not contain a baptistery since the church records continually indicate that after a morning service the congregation would go to the riverside where the pastor would administer baptism.

The Fire of 1902

Two weeks after Pastor Rowland left the darkest period in the history of the church began. During a severe storm on Monday evening, July 14, 1902, almost 100 years to the day of its founding, a bolt of lightning struck the bell tower, setting the church afire. The church was so badly burned that any further use of the structure was impossible. “When the huge church bell became free from its accustomed place, it fell and crashed through the floor into the cellar. It landed with such force and such a ringing

sound that along with other exciting incidents of the disaster, the falling of the bell was long to be remembered.”

Rather than rebuild this structure the property was sold to the village. In August 1902 the site for a new church was purchased from A. Laten VanArnam for \$1,050. This site, with a 140-foot frontage on North First Street, extended through to Second Street.

An excerpt from 1902 village minutes reads:

At a special meeting of the Northville Village Board in August 1902, it was voted to purchase the lot occupied by the Baptist Church building at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets at the price of \$2,600 for the lot and \$36 for the building.

During the three weeks after the fire, the church met for services in the lecture hall and then used the James A. Cole Hall, now the Masonic Rooms. On August 24, 1902, a call was extended to **Rev. John Treve Barber**, who was also an architect. He accepted and came immediately to Northville at an annual salary of \$600 and began work on the plans for the new church. Pastor Barber was born in Bristol, England in 1835. He attended Park College, and was ordained June 7, 1881 in Manitowaning, Canada. He held pastorates in Ontario, Canada; Falls Church, VA; Walton, NY; Suffern, NY; and finally Northville, NY (1902-1912). He was the architect of this building and of Emmanuel Baptist in Gloversville. His wife Sarah, of London, England, died of pneumonia on January 14, 1906 in their Northville home at the age of 70. She is buried in the S. Main Street cemetery. In Feb. 1907 Rev. Barber married Miss Alamariah Van Arnam of Northville. The couple retired to Florida.



On September 29, 1902 ground was broken for the foundation of the building. On March 24, 1903 work began for the construction of the new church building under the supervision of the pastor and J.S. Barker, chairman of the Building Committee. The Master Builder was Henry Foote. The Building Committee consisted of John S. Barker (chairman), James A. Cole, Joseph N. Mead, and the pastor, Rev. John Treve Barber.

Many interesting records and documents concerning the different organizations and the funds earned and raised to be used for the new church were placed in the cornerstone. A list of these may be found in Appendix 2.

The rough lumber for the church was supplied by Brownell Bros. of Hope Falls. Construction was done by contractor Henry Foote and his force of competent workmen. In April 1903 it was voted to put in electric lighting, so the building was wired as it was built. As the work progressed and was finally completed the general note and tone of everyone was one of great admiration and satisfaction.

The building was 60 x 76 feet with a tower rising nearly 65 feet from the ground. The spacious auditorium was 40 x 48 feet and was lighted from east and west with beautiful stained glass windows given by various church organizations and as memorials. The choir loft was an extension on the north (behind the pulpit) 15 x 18 feet. The floors were oak and the pews were finished in red oak, costing between \$600 - \$700. The floors were covered with green ingrain carpet, the color harmonizing with the pew cushions and other upholstery. The total cost of the church was \$8,900.

The new church was dedicated on a beautiful Tuesday, September 29, 1903. The ceremonies began with the ringing of the re-cast bell. (The old bell had been re-cast in Troy, N.Y. by Meneely & Company). The inscription on the bell now reads:

*“When aged forty-six they tell,
Baptized in fire, to earth I fell;
July fourteen, in nineteen hundred two.
“Next year, renewed, my voice I found
And call’d on all God’s praise to sound,
And honor Him, with worship pure and true,”*



There was an afternoon service with the dedication sermon by Rev. A.W. Brown, D.D. of Gloversville, followed by the dedication prayer by Rev. J.M. Hutchinson of Amsterdam. Rev. C.H. Merrill of Johnstown made an earnest and successful appeal for funds. The same form of service was carried out in the evening with many notable speakers participating. Rev. G. Whittemore was the main speaker of the evening. He also led in the effort that accomplished the extinction of all church indebtedness. The church was filled to capacity at both services.



The third & present building
Notice the absence of the present
south wing.

The continuing “evolution” of our church facilities

In 1928 the church sold to William Cole the two lots behind the church with frontage on Second Street. In the 1990’s the lot directly to the west of our parking lot was purchased back by the church. By then it had an abandoned mill on it, which was torn down to make room for the present extension of our parking lot.

In 1931 the old church shed was torn down and the space made into a parking lot “to accommodate the automobiles that has replaced the sorrels, the blacks and the old grey mares of the horse and buggy days of long, long ago.”

Through the efforts of the Ladies Aid Society of the church the badly-worn carpeting was removed and made into attractive runners which served the church until 1949, when the Philathea Class purchased new runners for \$630.

In 1935 the choir loft was moved from behind the pulpit to its present location in the northeast corner of the sanctuary. Remodeling of the sanctuary was done by contractor Raymond H. Buyce, who with his wife was an active, life-long member of the church. His son, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren remain an important part of our church.

A Moller pipe organ was purchased in 1936, which was designed by Stanley E. Saxton, then head of the Music Department of Skidmore College. Mr. Saxton performed the dedication recital on March 23, 1937. He returned to give another recital on August 19, 1973 as part of the festivities for the Northville centennial celebration. The space that had been the choir loft was advantageously used for the new organ chamber and the organ console was placed in the new choir location. The Organ Committee was Rev. Alfred Dence, William Kested, Raymond Buyce, Mrs. William R. Smith and Fred Fenn. The cost of the organ, valued at \$60,000 in 1982, was \$2,750. It is a testimony to our all-providing God, and the commitment of His people, that this improvement was obtained in the midst of the Great Depression. One member, Mr. Franklin Wood, had made a pledge toward the organ and found that he was not able to keep it. Being a man of his word and of commitment to Christ and his church, he sold one of his milking cows to quietly and simply keep his promise. His four children, including present member Edith Schmid, were unaware of their father's sacrifice until it was mentioned by Pastor Collins at his funeral service. Another member, Miss EmmaJean Murphy (now Johnson), engaged in her own private business of making and selling fudge and popcorn balls in order to give toward the organ.

In May 1950 contractor Raymond H. Buyce and his son Gerald were given the task of excavating and constructing a church basement. This resulted in new Sunday School rooms, a new modern kitchen, restroom facilities and a large fellowship hall. The old kitchen and large room on the second floor were partitioned into classrooms. In May 1951 the first church fellowship supper was held in the new basement with approximately 100 in attendance.

In 1952 a new pulpit was made and donated by the Buyce family (built by Raymond and Gerald) and dedicated to the Lord. In May 1953 new pulpit chairs were dedicated. Just over a half century later Gerald Buyce was to take the same skills and pulpit design to France where he built the pulpit for the Baptist church of our missionary Don Marshall in the city of L'Epine.



Chimes were added to the organ in 1955, a gift from Maude Bacon Curtis in memory of her son Warren Bacon Curtis. In 1956 new asphalt flooring was laid in the prayer room. Sometime earlier cork flooring had been laid in the sanctuary. The stairway from the "prayer room" (present church library area) to the second floor was added in April 1959, by recommendation of the fire department. Before this the only access to the second floor had been the spiral stairway in the front entranceway.

On February 25, 1960 a new parsonage on the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Van Arnam Avenue was purchased from the builder Daniel Weaver for the exchange price of \$10,000 plus the old parsonage (which had been purchased in 1926) located on the northeast corner of 4th and Division Streets. Dan Weaver served our church faithfully for many years as an exemplary and well-loved man of God, and was an active deacon at the time of his death in 1999.

In 1966 a new furnace and hot water system were installed to replace the old hot air furnace at the cost of \$5,400.

The LaRowe property next to the church was purchased in April 1968. The house was left standing and was used for Vacation Bible School for about 2 years. It was then torn down and the property is now used as the church parking lot. The lot was blacktopped in 1971.

New carpet and pews were installed in the sanctuary in 1970. These were given by William Kested as a memorial to his wife, Margaret, and himself.

In September 1975 a 2-story structure (24 x 32 feet) was added to the south side of the church containing 7 Sunday School rooms, a restroom, and a new nursery. A portico added at that time has proven to be very convenient, especially in inclement weather. This addition was completed in 1976. The builder was Brian Person.

A bus was purchased by the church in 1977 for use in our young people's work. In 1980 a van was purchased to be used for church functions. This has been followed by a number of other vehicles. At the present, the church is well-served by a 15-passenger van purchased in 2001.

In 1979 the parsonage was extended at the back, adding an extra seven feet to the dining room and master bedroom, a second bathroom, and a back entrance with a patio.

On April 30, 1981 the church voted to enlarge the church sanctuary with a 27 x 62 foot addition extending to the west. Ground was broken June 4, 1981. Included in the plans were a balcony, an access ramp, a new pastor's study (the old one is now being used as a church office), a new Sunday School room upstairs, and a basement expansion. Also downstairs, the restroom facilities were completely renovated and reconstructed. The ceiling of the sanctuary was totally torn down, insulated, and a new ceiling installed. The walls of the original sanctuary were also redone. During construction a new sound system was installed. Wainscoting, which blended so beautifully with that which was already there, was donated from the building of the Fulton County National Bank in Northville. The cost of the addition was \$125,000, bringing the value of the church to \$325,000. For this project, the Architectural Planner was Mr. William Conover; and the builder was Brian Person. The Building Committee consisted of John English, Chairman, Rev. E. Craig Adams, Frank Eddy, Sr., William Conover, Enos Murphy, George Darling, and Daniel Weaver.

From January 3rd to April 18th, while the church sanctuary was being renovated, services were held in the basement fellowship hall, where the pulpit furniture and pews were attractively arranged in a very comfortable manner, providing a satisfactory atmosphere in which to worship. Many of our church families, including the young people as well as Pastor Adams and his family, worked long and faithfully with a real spirit of unity to complete the addition. Dedication for the new addition was held on Sunday, May 30, 1982 with Pastors Dence, Hunt and Collins participating.

A second parsonage on Fifth Street was obtained in 1986. The first to live there was Youth Pastor Kevin Schwamb and his family, followed by the Krodels and Blakes. This building is presently being used as a "Youth House" for our young people's ministry.

In January of 2002 another major renovation project on our main facilities began. This project focused on three goals: Enlarging the pulpit area in the front of the sanctuary, increasing and improving sanctuary seating, and obtaining a medium-sized meeting room – all without the great expense of enlarging the present building structure! This was achieved by extending the present pulpit area to the sides and front, adding a second balcony above the foyer, and re-arranging the present balcony to accommodate a good-sized room behind pews raised higher for an improved view. Along with these improvements was the removal of the sound board from it's high-traffic area to a more secure location next to the new balcony, and the recarpeting of the church.

Through the 20th Century

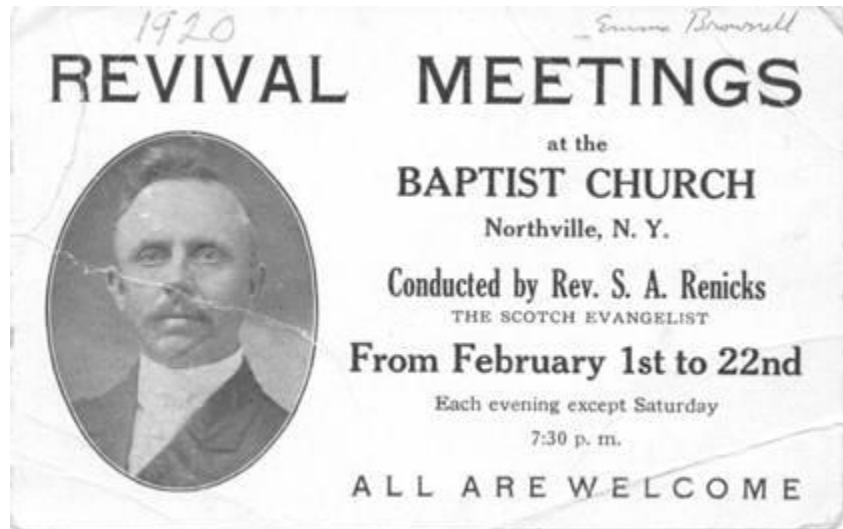
Rev. A.S. Lowrie



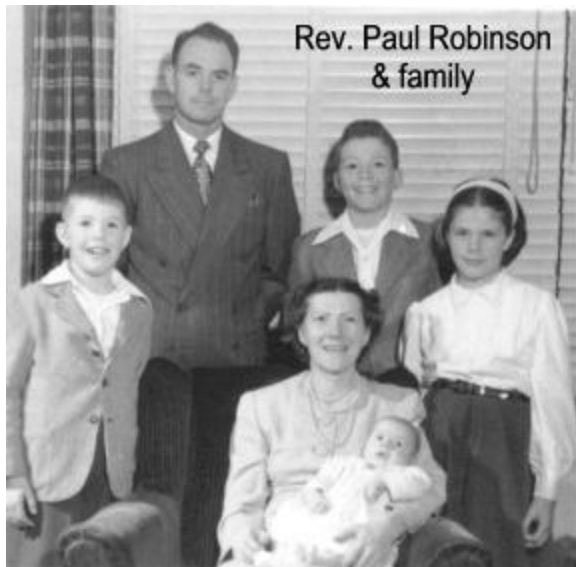
Pastors **Bergen, Lowrie, Renicks, and Swingle** followed Rev. Barber and took the church into the 1920's. The church continued to reach out with the gospel through special meetings such as the series in 1920 with Rev. Renicks, who was billed as "the Scotch Evangelist." Evangelistic meetings in 1923 with Rev. J. D. Field added 15 members to the church. **Rev. B.B. Williams** came to pastor here in 1924 and stayed here until he went to Emmanuel Baptist in Gloversville in 1927. After him came **Dr. A. W. Claxon** who stayed until 1929.

Rev. Alfred Dence was called as pastor in 1929 and served until 1938. Born in Berkshire, Fulton County, Rev. Dence spent a large part of his boyhood there, later moving to Gloversville. He graduated from Practical Bible School in Binghamton, New York and began his ministry in 1924. Wishing to further his studies he moved to Illinois and graduated from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in

Chicago. Desiring to be closer to his family Rev. Dence returned to New York to pastor this church in 1929. Early in his pastorate, there was "a very successful three weeks campaign of evangelistic meetings." Pastor Dence was known as a "down to earth" preacher who got his messages across effectively. The Baptist Young People's Union was also active at this time, as seen in the accompanying photo of a BYPU gospel team from our church. Pastor Dence is on the far right, and current church member Hilda Fuller on the far left. He continued attending the church during the summer months in his retirement until he went to be with the Lord.



Rev. Al Dence & Family



Rev. Paul Robinson was called to be the pastor in December 1938 and began his ministry early in 1939. During his 3 years here he initiated, with Rev. Lyle Anderson, the work, which later became the American Mission for Opening Closed Churches. His formal education included



Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, Louisiana State University and Moody Bible Institute. He was ordained and began his ministry in 1937. Pastor Robinson began aviation studies in 1941 and spent the next 30 years as founder and director of the Department of Missionary Aviation at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, from which he retired in 1975. Mrs. Robinson served as our church organist during their time here. Rev. Robinson's daughter Annette is a part of our church's missionary family, presently serving in Venezuela with her husband James Carmean. Pastor Robinson's heart for God's truth can be seen in the advice he gave upon his resignation. He "suggested a pulpit committee be selected and that the church instruct said committee not to consider any candidate or supply who was not absolutely known to be scripturally sound in doctrine of our faith." This was sound and important advice in the light of the doctrinal apostasy which by this time had highly infected the Northern Baptist Convention, of which the church was still a part. Pastor Robinson resigned in January 1942 after a fruitful ministry.

Rev. Byrd Springer followed and became the pastor in July 1942. Pastor Springer, born in 1904 in Indiana, studied for two years at Moody Bible Institute and then graduated in 1929 as president of his class in Providence Bible Institute. Before coming to Northville he had pastored three churches in the state of Maine. During his time at our church missionary giving increased ten times and Sunday school membership increased from 35 to 100. He also served as the president of Sacandaga Bible Conference, and as a board member of the American Mission for Opening Closed Churches. Rev. Springer resigned in 1951 to pastor the First Baptist Church of Danville, PA, and his resignation was accepted with deep regret.

During Pastor Springer's ministry a decision was made by the church which would prove to be very significant for its future direction. It was in 1948 that the church reviewed its position as a member of the **Northern Baptist Convention** and voted to withdraw for doctrinal reasons. The following recommendation signed by deacons Donald Abbey,



Joseph Helderline, F.B. Stone, and Ray Buyce, was presented to the church:

Having become aware of the inroads of apostasy within the Northern Baptist Convention and many of its affiliated agencies, and having become convinced that it is committed to the "Inclusive Policy" which sanctions belief and unbelief alike, thus violating New Testament and historic Baptist tenets, and

Having found it impossible to endorse and cooperate in the total program of the Northern Baptist Convention and its affiliated agencies without the violation of the doctrines and principles to which our church has committed itself the board of deacons recommends that the Baptist Church of Northville withdraw from all association or connection with the Northern Baptist Convention and the modernist organizations affiliated with it.

At a special meeting on February 12, 1948, this recommendation was presented with a reading of 2 Peter 2 and explanations by Pastor Springer. "A unanimous vote by acclamation was [the] result." We became, at that time, an independent Baptist church. Later on the church voted to affiliate with the **Conservative Baptist Association**, of which it remains an active member.



Rev. Earl Hunt and family

Rev. Earl B. Hunt began his duties as pastor in October 1951. A native of Maine, he graduated from Providence Bible Institute followed by several years of correspondence work with Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, plus a number of Bible courses with Moody Bible Institute. His first pastorate was in the Ridge Baptist Church of Lubec, Maine which is the eastern-most point of land in the United States. Pastor Hunt's heart for the gospel is seen in the testimony given by our present deacon and Sunday school Superintendent, Harold Person. In the 1950's Harold and his wife Betty sent their son to our Sunday school but did not attend church themselves. One Sunday when they came to pick up their son Pastor Hunt came out of the church and spoke to Harold through the car window: "It's time to take the bull by the horns and do something about your salvation!" He insisted on setting up an appointment with the couple, to which Harold agreed when he "ran out of excuses." Harold and Betty both trusted Christ as Lord and Savior at that appointment. Rev. Hunt resigned, effective January 11, 1960, after having served the church and community

with dedication for 9 years.

In 1959 the Lord sent to our church **Miss Verna Osterhout**. "Miss O" taught music at Northville Central School and has been used greatly of the Lord to develop the music program and ministry of the Baptist Church of Northville. She began directing the church choir in 1960, a position she held for 36½ years until her retirement from that position in 1997. In 1968 Verna added to the choir responsibility her ministry as church organist, a service she continues to perform today. Through the years she has also directed pageants, programs, instrumental groups, and musical specials of every kind, using both adults and children. Her Christmas programs, especially, became eagerly anticipated by both the church and the entire community. Even after her "retirement" she has continued active in the musical ministry of the church.



Miss Verna Osterhout



Rev. Conrad Collins, a graduate of Barrington College, Taylor University and the University of Connecticut, was extended a call March 9, 1960 and preached his first sermon Sunday, May 1st. The Collins' were the first family to live in the new parsonage. The dedication and open house were held in May 1960. Evangelistic services with Joe Talley were held in May 1963 and in September a Missionary Conference was held with Dr. Eric Frickenburg, Dr. Brinley Evans, Howard Wyant and Nora Hollearn. Many re-dedicated their lives to the Lord at this time. In 1964 special services were held with Dr. Larry McGill. Rev. Collins himself was appreciated as a

pastor who led the church on a good, straight course. He concluded a fruitful ministry in March 1966.

Rev. David Mikell followed in June 1966. He was a native of Florida and was newly graduated from Wheaton College, having also studied at Tennessee Temple, Florida State University (where he studied music) and Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. He had been Director of Music in 3 churches, had pastored a Baptist church in Glenville, Georgia, and had also served as Assistant to the Professor of Theology at Wheaton Graduate School. Rev. Mikell served the church until May 1968, when he resigned and returned to Florida.



Rev. E. Craig Adams accepted the call as our pastor in October 1968, serving faithfully and effectively for 18 years, during which time the church grew under his leadership. Pastor Adams received his training for ministry at Philadelphia College of Bible and Eastern Baptist Seminary. He had served as pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Pennsauken, New Jersey for 6 years and had been ordained by that church. The growth of our church under Pastor Adams made it necessary to hold two Sunday morning services for a period of time until the expansion of the sanctuary was completed. After completing his ministry here Pastor Adams served the Baptist Church in Patchogue, NY until his retirement to Florida where he continues to serve the Lord. Rev. Adams' eldest son, Craig, Jr. ("Skip") was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Baptist Church of Northville and serves today as the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Warwick, NY.

The church was blessed to have retired pastor **Rev. Carter Johnson** serve as interim pastor after the departure of Pastor Adams. Pastor Johnson's wife was a Northville native, EmmaJean Murphy, who had grown up in our church. They had served the Lord together for many years in pastorates throughout the northeast, and came to Northville to retire. Pastor Johnson's spiritual maturity and wisdom proved to be a great help to the church, as does his widow's continued presence as an active member. As a young preacher, Rev. Johnson had also filled our pulpit a number of Sundays in 1942, during the interim between pastors Robinson and Springer.

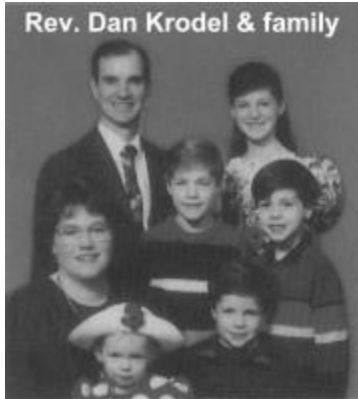


In 1987 **Rev. Richard C. Klueg** was called and presently serves as pastor of the Baptist Church of Northville. Pastor Klueg studied at Albany State University, Baptist Bible College of Pennsylvania, and Biblical School of Theology. He pastored churches previously in West Pittston, PA and Painted Post, NY.

In addition to these pastors, the church has benefited in recent years from the ministry of second staff pastors. **Rev.**

Kevin Schwamb served as youth pastor from 1984 to 1987, and is remembered for his effective work not only with our own youth but also for his outreach to others in the community. Rev. Schwamb is presently the pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Canaan, NH.





Rev. Daniel Krodel came to us in 1988 and served as Assistant Pastor through 1995. Pastor Dan's previous experience with Youth for Christ and as a pastor gave him a unique blend of gifts which bore fruit in his youth work and general ministry. The Krodel's now serve in Pennsylvania, where Dan is the pastor of the Bethlehem-Stelz Reformed Church.

Mr. Paul Blake served as Assistant Pastor from 1995 to 1998. Paul, a graduate of Practical Bible College, was licensed by this church during his time here. Besides his work with our young people, Paul is also remembered for his remarkable gifts as a musician. Paul left Northville to continue his musical training, and is presently serving as music director of the First Baptist Church of Sidney, NY where he is also a deacon.



Missions



Our church was from the beginning missionary-minded and carried out the Great Commission – that fundamental Baptist principle in Matthew 28:19-20. Although it was not until about 1814 that the Baptist churches of the United States were stirred to the importance of foreign missions work, for several years the Baptist Church of Northampton had contributed to the support of missions in other lands. As early as 1807 the church “voted that we contribute something to the support of the Missionaries,” and in 1808 “agreed to have a contrabusion towards the help of the missionary society.” On August 26, 1815 the church “Voted to send 4 Brethren Seamans, Corey, Washburn & Manning to attend the Convention of foreign missions.” Incidental remarks regarding missions appear throughout the minutes, such as a mention of a contribution toward “our mission in Sweden” in 1859.

Of course missions commitment and interest needs to be maintained. In the early 1900's Pastor Barber noted that "the missionary interest which has so early characterized the church has declined somewhat in recent years" but rejoiced that "there is now manifest a renewal of interest in this work." Missions interest and support declined again later on and the issue became a large part of the reason that our church left the Northern Baptist Convention (now the American Baptist Convention). The need to support missions was a concern of Pastor Paul Robinson, and in his 1941 report he noted satisfaction at "how we had progressed, especially of our advance in missionary work." His conviction in this regard is seen in a statement he often made from the pulpit: "The light that shines furthest out is the light that shines the brightest at home!" Donald and Fran Abbey joined the church at that time and became involved in this issue. In a personal interview in August of 2001, Fran recollected that in the early 1940's the church's missions giving was still not strong. Byrd Springer and others were unhappy with the fact that the church was required to give \$200 a year to the NBC for "questionable programs." The theologically liberal drift of the convention by this time is well-documented, and there were many NBC "missionaries" who denied essential doctrines of the Christian faith. In our church a group called the Ladies Aid took responsibility for raising the \$200 assessment through bake sales and rummage sales, a practice to which Pastor Springer objected. His desire was to replace the Ladies Aid with **the Philatheas**, a women's Sunday school class which had a strong spiritual aspect not at this time found in the Ladies Aid. This was accomplished, though with some hard feelings, around 1945. The teacher of the Philatheas was Mrs. Lula Johnson (Ruth Gifford's mother). Later on there was a division of the women's class by age: Philatheas being the eldest, next the Amity Class and then the Berean Class. The Bereans are still an active, serving group in the church, and continue the tradition of a strong interest in missions.



Evangelical missionaries came to be supported through the church's "Benevolence Committee," which was organized in November 1939 under Pastor Robinson. This served as a church missions committee, facilitating gifts to missions and contact with workers on the mission field. In 1946, for example, a total of \$335 was distributed as follows:

Sacandaga Bible Conference	\$35
Youths' Bible Conference	20
China Inland Mission	50
Latin America Mission	50
New York Evangelistic Society	15
Africa Inland Mission	50
Cha. E. Fuller, Old Fashioned Revival Hour	25
Sudan Interior Mission	10
European Christian Mission	10
Fulton Co. S. S. Ass. (Spurr's work)	25
American Mission to Lepers	10
Russian Gospel Assn. (For Franz)	20
Assn. Of Baptists for World Evangelism, Inc.	15

There was a significant revival of missions support under Pastor Earl Hunt when he came in 1951. Pastor Hunt scheduled week-long missions conferences, challenged folks to personally support missionaries, and encouraged a personal relationship with them. Support of missions in the church budget was also increased. This spirit of church and personal commitment to missions has continued to today.

Frank & Eleanor Marshall were first supported by our church in 1952. They are still part of our missions program, along with their now-adult sons Don (France) and Rich (Mali).



Through the years the church has remained faithful to its calling and we, as a church, praise God for the faithful and strong leadership He has sent us, and for His goodness to us as a congregation. We pray that God will use us today to faithfully share His Gospel, that Jesus Christ died and rose again to

save sinners, and that this message will always be proclaimed to this area from this place. We would appreciate your prayers for this so that, together, we might obey the Great Commission.

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I love Thy kingdom, Lord, The House of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved With His own precious blood.
I love Thy Church, O God! Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye, And graven on Thy hand.
For her my tears shall fall; For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n, Till toils and cares shall end.
Beyond my highest joy I prize her heav'nly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows, Her hymns of love and praise.
Sure as Thy truth shall last, To Zion shall be giv'n
The brightest glories earth can yield, And brighter bliss of heav'n.

-- Timothy Dwight

Appendix 1

Key to Photo

Sunday school picnic, c. 1896, Chas. Brown Farm, Fish House Road (now Skiff Road)

Back row: Elmira Wilson, Ollie Barber (?), Charlotte Smith, _____, Anna Palmer, _____, Mrs. Ellsworth, Elmira Wilson, Mrs. Dunham, Nettie Craig, Mrs. Blowers (Cyrus' mother), Electa Mead, Mrs. Valentine, Eliza Lobdell, Margaret (Maggie) Schuyler, Eva Valentine (Mrs. W. W. Werner), Mrs. Beltzer, Minnie Van Dyke, Mrs. King, Rev. King

Next to back row: _____, Lizzie Willard, on lap of Mrs. Sam Willard, Seymour Craig, on lap of Mrs. Chas. Brown, Mrs. Adrea Palmer (Mary), Grant in front of his grandmother, Mrs. Hagadorn, Uncle Samuel Benton, Aunt Matilda Benton (Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Benton), Delia Miner, Viddie Green, Samantha Burgess

Front row: Victor Hagadorn, May Werner, Edna Hagadorn, Stella Cheguer, Abbey Palmateer, Lottie Cole & Elmer

Appendix 2

Contents of the time capsule

- Mementos from the cornerstone of the old church: A letter from Jacob B. VanArnam containing a \$5 confederate bank note, a Sandy Hill Corp. note of 10 cents, two traders checks issued by N.B. Lobdell, one for 10 cents and one for 26 cents; and a 3-cent government shinplaster. A copy of minutes from the Methodist Church. A biography of Nathan B. Lobdell (one of the earliest settlers) and history of Northville and Northville Baptist Church. A copy of "Albany Morning Express" dated June 22, 1869. A copy of the "Fulton County Democrat" dated June 22, 1869. A business card of Benton & James Hardware dealers. On the back was a record of sealing the box by A.G. Palmer and C.H. Benton in the employ of Benton & James. Letter from Presbyterian Church containing a brief history of Hon. Darius Moore. One blank Farmers National Bank of Amsterdam check with a 5-cent, 3-cent, and 2-cent revenue stamp. An envelope containing a poem by Addie Mason, age 12.

An envelope containing an abstract of the history of Northampton Baptist Church for the first 40 years of its existence, written and published by George Fisher and deposited by Deacon Samuel S. Benton. A letter from Pastor Joshua Day continuing the history of the church to date (1869) and containing a list of church officers and building committee members. A report of the village school by R.P. Anibal, Principle, dated June 24, 1869. A map of the United States drawn by hand. · A history of the Presbyterian Church from 1869 to March 1903 by Rev. George Frasier. ·A copy of “The Sacandaga Press” containing the history of the Methodist Church and Sunday School until 1897.·Obituary of Rev. Joseph Zeifel, late pastor of the Methodist Church.·A copy of “The Sacandaga Press” dated March 26, 1903 and an official directory of the Town of Northampton.·A history of the Northville Bank from its organization to March 21, 1903.·History and official list of the village of Northville.·One U.S. copper penny dated 1802.·History of Northville Union Free School by Prof. John M. Wise.·Baptist Sunday School – a printed register of the school March 21, 1903.·Class #2 of the Sunday School put in a book containing a list of names of persons contributing 5 cents or more to the window fund.·Miss Almariah Van Arnam gave a list of the pupils in her School District #12, Town of Mayfield and Northampton.·Presented by John M. Mead – a history of the church from June 21, 1869 (when cornerstone of the second church was laid) to March 21, 1903.·A list of church members.·A list of Trustees from September 9, 1876 (the church’s re-incorporation date) to March 21, 1903.·One copy of “The Examiner” dated March 19, 1903.·One copy of “The Fulton County Democrat” dated March 18, 1903.·Copies of our Sunday School papers.·One copy of minutes of Saratoga Baptist Association for year 1902.·Business card of Lyons Hotel.

Appendix 3

PASTORS of the BAPTIST CHURCH of NORTHVILLE

Brotherly Conference and the Baptist Church of Northampton

1803 – 1844	Elder Aaron Seamans, Ordained 1803
1809 – 1811	Bartlett Dake, Licentiate
1837 – 1839	Elder Timothy Day (Elder Seamans left the pastorate for 2 years)
1844 – 1849	Brother B.K. Barber, Ordained in the church
1850	Incorporated as the “BAPTIST CHURCH of NORTHAMPTON”
1849 – 1852	Brother O.F. Spinning, Ordained in the church
1852 – 1853	Elder N.O. Combs
1853 – 1857	Rev. George Fisher, First sermon 6/6/53
1857 – 1859	Rev. Clement Havens, “A man of great wisdom”. Membership – 253
1859 – 1862	Rev. C.D. Lewis
1862 – 1868	Rev. E.W. Brownell
1868 – 1872	Rev. Joshua Day, Ordained in the church April 19, 1868.
1873 – 1875	Rev. C.F. Hull
1876	Incorporated under Centennial Incorporation Law as “The Baptist Church Of Northville”
1875 – 1877	Rev. J.G. Shrive

1877 – 1879	Rev. M.W. Dillingham	
1879 – 1880	Supplies	
1880 – 1881	Rev. S.C. Moore	
1881 – 1882	Supplies	
1882 – 1884	Rev. E.D. Hammond	
1884 – 1886	Rev. E.P. Smallidge	
1886 – 1887	No Pastor	
1888 – 1891	Rev. J.S. Gould – supply, then ordained in church March 15, 1888	
1891 – 1895	Brother Maurice B. Russell – Began supply as licentiate 7/1/91; ordained in the church 12/91, married Carrie Cole in 1892 in the church.	
1895 – 1898	Rev. Fred H. King, ordained in the church	
1898	Supplies from August to September	
1898 – 1902	Rev. J.P. Howland	
1902	Main Street church destroyed by fire July 14	
1902 – 1912	Rev. John Treve Barber, Architect of present First Street structure.	
1912 – 1914	Rev. Berger	
1914 – 1919	Rev. A. S. Lowrie	
1919 – 1920	Rev. Renicks	
1920 – 1924	Rev. Swingle	
1924 – 1927	Rev. B.B. Williams	
1927 – 1929	Rev. Claxon	
1929 – 1938	Rev. Alfred Dence	
1939 – 1942	Rev. Paul Robinson	
1942 – 1951	Rev. Byrd Springer, Ordained in the church	
1951 – 1960	Rev. Earl B. Hunt	
1960 – 1966	Rev. Conrad Collins	
1966 – 1968	Rev. David Mikell	
1968 - 1987	Rev. E. Craig Adams	1984-87 Rev. Kevin Schwamb
1987 -	Rev. Richard C. Klueg	1988-95 Rev. Daniel Krodel
		1995-98 Mr. Paul Blake