



Our History



The United Church of Christ in Penacook, legally incorporated under New Hampshire laws, was formed June 16, 1953. The membership is composed of the members of the former First Baptist Church of Penacook and the Congregational Church of Penacook, two independent churches which served this community for over 100 years.

A brief history of the Baptist Church from 1845 to 1945 is recorded in the souvenir program of its Centennial observance. Likewise the history of the first century of the Congregational church is printed in the program of its One Hundredth anniversary.

Our pastor thinks that one or two of the former ministers in both churches sensed a prospective union, but, if so, the people did not realize it. In 1949 an unsuccessful attempt was made to bring the churches together, but negotiations were later renewed and in September 1951 both churches agreed to federate. By-Laws were adopted and Rev. Oliver C. Northcott became pastor of the Federated church, March 1, 1952.

In September of that year the question was raised—"Is federation an end in itself?"—and after discussion the church voted to move toward a merger. A committee drew up a proposed Constitution and By-Laws, which were approved by both churches and they decided to form a united church.

With approval of their denominational leaders and Judge Elwyn L. Page as legal advisor, the members of each church met and voted the dissolution of their church bodies; then came together and were accepted by the Incorporators of the United Church of Christ into the new body, with Mr. Northcott as its earthly head.

The new church is undenominational, but adheres to the tenets and accepts the responsibilities and privileges of affiliation with both the Congregationalists and the Baptists.

The founding of the new church was celebrated with an original pageant reflecting real and imaginary scenes of years gone by, and by formal services in which denominational leaders and ministers of neighboring churches participated, October 24-25, 1953.

Both church buildings were used on occasions until 1954 when, in the September meeting, it was voted to use the Merrimack Street church. The former Congregational church was later sold to Horace Chase Lodge, F. and A. M., and has been converted into a Masonic Temple. The Baptist parsonage was also sold.

The former Baptist church required extensive repairs and the Sunday School needed more room for the present membership and future growth. Choir space was considered too limited and as architectural plans for renovations were presented, numerous suggestions were made for improvements and modernizing the edifice, and a considerable number of them were adopted. As the result we now have this enlarged and beautiful church home to be used for the glory of God and the service of mankind.

GRACE C. ALLEN
Historian, 1957

