

Churches

From Otsego County's beginning, the impact of religion was felt. As a Missionary effort the Congregationalists, in 1874, established their work. Through the years other churches have come, with the Lutheran, Wisconsin Synod being the latest, in December, 1974.

The Spirit of Community that is so evident in projects entered into, and successfully carried out, is largely due to the influence of the Churches in the lives of those involved.

In order, by date of origin, follows the account of Otsego County's Churches:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The First Congregational Church was the first to be established in Otsego County. In 1874, it was begun as a missionary church. Services were held in a small building in the West part of Gaylord with Rev. James McKay its first pastor.

In 1878, Rev. Abraham VanAuken came to lead the Church, and the site at West Second and South Otsego was chosen. The first Church building was begun then and dedicated in 1889. It is part of the building remaining today. Rev. VanAuken also preached in Vanderbilt and Johannesburg, traveling on foot and snowshoe. His salary was \$600.00 a year, subsidized by the American Home Missionary Society.

In the more than 100 years of its existence in Gaylord this Church has had 28 pastors. Rev. Charles Hastie is serving at present.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

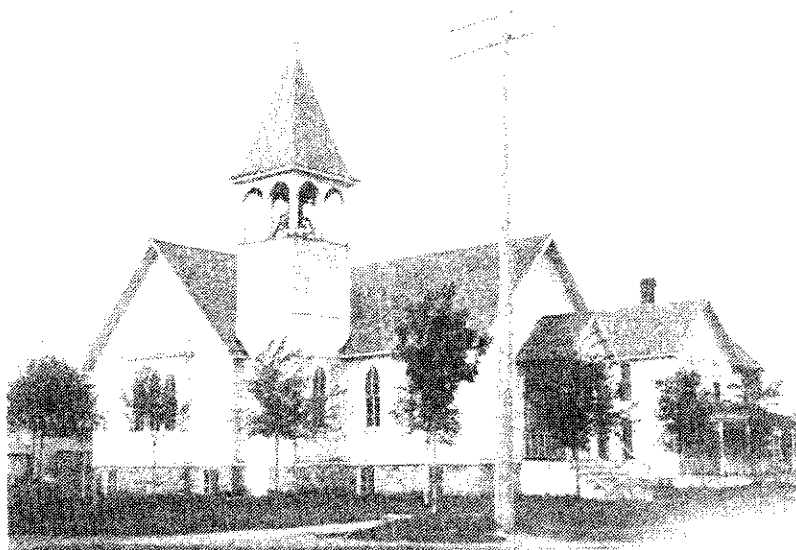
This Church was initiated by Missionary, Mr. T. M. McBride in 1879. Meetings were held in a schoolhouse on the West side of Gaylord. By 1882, plans were made for a Church building on Main Street at the corner of South Oak. The spot was low and wet, so in 1898, a new Church was built at South Court and Second Street. The old building was sold to the Village school board and used for primary school.

"Glidden Hall", a parsonage, was built beside the church on South Court and used until the parsonage on Second Street was built in 1954, and then was used for Sunday School.

In 1962, the Church became inadequate, so a building fund was started. In August, 1966, having commenced services in the old Church, the congregation, led by Pastor Rev. Lewis Compton, proceeded to the new building on South Center at Second to complete the service.

In 1968, the Methodist Episcopal Church and United Brethren denominations united and the Church then became known as the First United Methodist Church.

The building committee was reactivated in 1975 and plans are progressing for a Fellowship Hall and Sunday School. Rev. Dwayne Summers is the pastor at present.



First Congregational Church and Parsonage, Gaylord, as they looked in 1905. The Church is still in use today.