

**UNITED CHURCH OF PHELPS
FROM 1974–PRESENT**

1970

1974 Merging of the United Methodist congregation and the Presbyterian congregation: UNITED CHURCH OF PHELPS

- Presbyterian minutes: “The recommendation of the Merger Committee that the United Church form with ties to both denominations be the one proposed was approved on motion.”
- Presbyterian minutes: The swell organ needed extensive repairs.
- Presbyterian pastor, Rev. K. Glen Fleming, retires
- Presbyterian congregation voted on the adoption of the Agreement to Merge. 110 votes cast; 92 in favor, 16 against, 2 voided. Motion carried.

1975 United Church of Phelps

- First annual congregational meeting was held. Membership: Presbyterian Church–340; Methodist Church–372. Budget for 1975: \$56,720
- First meeting of the church council. Decided the church council meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month: “Meetings will begin at 7:30 and will end as near 10:00 p.m. as business permits.”
- Dial-a-Prayer begun by Eddie Gardner
- “Do” family arrived in Phelps from Asia
- Refreshments were served at church council meetings by Margaret Rector
- Worship included occasional use of the Ritual of Friendship, the Sacred Service Dance Group.
- Junior and Angel choir robe material was ordered.
- Organ repair costing \$1600.
- The Echo organ was moved from the Methodist church to the United church.
- There was a search for an associate pastor. Rev. James F. Bender was called as co-minister.
- There was conversation about sponsoring a family from Vietnam.
- NEW ORGANIST hired, Steven Kane
- 50 new Methodist hymnals were purchased.

MINISTERS

1974-1978

Rev. Leonard
Hackney
(Methodist)

1975-1977

Rev. Jim Bender
(Presbyterian)

LOCAL
EVENTS

Phelps and
Clifton
Springs
schools merger



- STATISTICAL INFORMATION: 18 baptisms; 16 funerals; 11 weddings; 27 new members; 12 deaths; 1 transfer of membership out; 1 removal from membership by request

1976

- Received a bequest from Mrs. Alva Bailey (\$10,000); invested with the interest to go to the Bailey Music Library Fund.
- Fire alarm system installed in the service building.
- No VBS because the community wasn't interested.
- Decided only members of the United Church of Phelps can help serve communion.
- Worship 10-11 a.m.; coffee break 11:00-11:15 a.m.; 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. church school. Later returned to original worship time.
- A church library was established.
- A new piano was purchased and placed in the parlor.
- Christian Education projects included: service project at Clifton Springs Hospital, a scrub-for-grub, swimming, adult fellowship/ swimming, family night picnic, and New Jersey Shore youth trip.
- Mother-Daughter Banquet
- Associate pastor James P. Bender expresses concerns about too few people doing too much, no enlargement of the base of really active and committed people, new ministries are slow to be developed to meet the needs of people around the congregation and among the congregation.
- Pastor Leonard P. Hackney expresses concern around co-pastors serving the church.
- Statistical information: 13 baptisms; 16 weddings; and 31 funerals.

1977

- The year started with a projected deficit of \$6,300 and ended with a surplus.
- Associate Pastor James Bender resigns.
- Women's Association fundraisers include Rotary luncheons, the Pie Booth at the Sauerkraut Festival, the annual bazaar.
- Mother-Daughter Dessert
- Storm windows were ordered for the Service Building. Outside of the Christian Education building was painted. The secretary's office was painted. An automatic fire alarm system installed.

New American Legion built on Rt. 96 just outside Village of Phelps



- Rev. Leonard Hackney announced his intended retirement on July 1, 1978.
- A search was begun for a Presbyterian pastor.
- HIRED a part-time Religious Education Coordinator, Mrs. Edith Johnson.
- Held a Senior Citizens Party for information on senior citizen programs was attended by senior citizens from the surrounding area.
- The congregation voted in December to purchase a pipe organ at a cost of \$60,000.
- Statistical information: 11 baptisms; 9 weddings; 20 funerals; 3 new members; 9 transfers out; 10 deaths.

1978

- Sale of the manse
- The trustees upgrade the original plans for a pipe organ to include additional pipes and parts for a cost of \$72,593 and a value of \$90,000 (by using parts from the old organs at both buildings). This was due to the generosity of a member.
- Iron railing and concrete steps at the front entrance to the Service Building repaired.
- 10 young people participate in confirmation class and join the church.
- Ecumenical VBS held at St. Francis Catholic Church one week in June and held at UCP one week in August.
- 12th graders participated in a summer youth program at Clifton Springs Hospital and with extended care patients
- Share-a-Saturday, social organization for adults in the church
- “Imaginary” Bazaar
- Membership on 12/31/78 was 690—adjusted to 345.

1979

- Installation of the new organ, redecorating the sanctuary, repair to the sanctuary roof and steeple.
- Pastor’s office repainted, new carpeting, shelving brought down from the West Church and 2 files added to the offices.
- Wooden signs made by Ken Clark to direct people to the church offices.
- A business sized typewriter purchased for the church office.

1979-1986

Rev. David R.
Wright

(Presbyterian)

- Ontario Telephone Company donated a used address-o-graph machine.
- Policy made: use of the building by non-profit organizations charge of \$15 for half a day and \$30 for a full day.
- Energy policy adopted: groups or committees will meet in private homes when possible, the Sanctuary will not be used on Sundays when the temperature is 10 degrees or below, the rear doors to the sanctuary will not be used except for exit and emergencies during the coldest winter days, and a curtain was placed at the bottom of the balcony stairs to hold heat in the sanctuary-balcony area.
- Cellulose wood fiber insulation added in the sanctuary attic area, the service building attic area and annex buildings sidewalls and attic area.
- HIRED Barbara Schafer as part-time secretary.
- WE CARE II—sponsored a Laotian refugee family of 8 as a community project. The family lived with Bob and Sandy Chapa until a home was ready for them.
- VBS held in June
- Summer youth program
- Strawberry coffee hour in June
- Christmas tea for patients of the extended care unit at the Clifton Springs Hospital
- Health and Service committee paint parts of houses for members and friends of members who needed assistance
- Cassettes of Sunday services distributed to shut-ins
- Mother's Morning Out program
- Statistical information: 3 adult baptisms; 9 children's baptisms; 66 new members; 11 deaths of members; 5 transferred to another church; 4 removed from membership. Total membership: 736

1980 (TO BE CONTINUED—SEARCHING FOR MINUTES BOOKS)



8 year war in Iran

MINISTERS



8 year war in Iran

1980

- At the annual meeting on January 24, Rev. David Wright “stated that the past year has been his most fulfilling year. He expressed appreciation for his church staff of efficient secretarial help, a well-cared for building, and music which has won wide acclaim. Christian Education had an especially good program. Major challenges will be for all of us to better stewards and evangelists.”
- At this meeting, a revised constitution was distributed for the congregation’s review.
- A committee was formed to improve the appearance of the church school rooms.
- The February minutes note in the report from Presbytery meeting that “all council members of united churches are considered Elders. Presbytery noted that handicapped persons need better access to buildings.”
- Special congregational meeting on March 2 to deal with a revised constitution notes: “...the prime objective of the committee [working on the revision] was to make crystal clear the duties of the Staff, Council Members and Trustees. Major changes made and recommended for approval are as follows: Term of office for members of committees reduced from three (3) years to two (2) years; Mission and Outreach Committee combined with Evangelism Committee to make up one committee known as Mission and Evangelism Committee; Pastor Parish Committee changed to Personnel Committee being responsible for conducting performance reviews of all staff members of the Church and the recommendations of hiring, continued service or dismissal of staff members through consultation with the committee working in conjunction with the staff member and the Pastor; Vice Chairman to be elected annually for Council; members of the Council to be elected on an odd-even basis.” The committees (Mission and Evangelism) were voted to continue as separate entities. The revised constitution and bylaws were approved.
- The Evangelism Committee brought up the need for the church to be handicapped accessible and the need to reach out to the needs of unmarried adults.
- Senior Citizens Advocacy Group was established, Pat Hemminger, President.
- In February, Stewardship and Finance reported a need to raise additional income. A new fund was created: “Camp and Conference Scholarships”.
- Membership Committee’s name changed to “Committee on Care of Members.”

- In April, Rev. Wright led a discussion on “Proposal of the Draft,” in particular those who consider himself a conscientious Objector.
- Presbytery begins talking about issues regarding Lesbians and Gays concerns.
- Refugee family was an unskilled, illiterate mountain family from Thailand. Family picked up at the airport on September 4. House owned by Ted and Jane Mullen was not ready for use, so the family of 8 stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Chapman.
- The church played a role in increasing funding for FLACRA by Ontario County.
- Raising money for 35 new choir robes.
- Job descriptions worked on for committees.
- Casino gambling—Council affirmed their opposition to Casino gambling and opposed any legislation that would provide for it.
- Methodists discuss uniting the Central New York Conference and the Northern New York Conference.
- The Council submitted John Britting to serve on the Task Force to the study the future of merged churches.
- Health and Service Committee reported on a federally funded program WIC (Women, Infants & Children).
- In October, the Evangelism Committee “favored making church more accessible to handicapped and directed Reverend Wright to obtain an estimate from a contractor on costs of a ramp to the rear entrance and alterations to washrooms, with the estimate to go to the Trustees.”
- Boiler was installed.
- Laotian family arrived October 16, with 5 in the family. Housed by the Ralph Barbalace family until the Mullen House was ready.
- The position of Lay Member to Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church was added to the voting membership of the Council.
- Christian Education committee met with Rev. Gay Hakes of Seneca Falls about a seminar and course on “Christians and the Meaning of Sexuality” for students aged 15 and older; provided by the Methodist Conference.
- Organist, Steven Kane resignation received, effective the first of 1981.
- Stewardship and Finance reported (December meeting of Council) an anticipated deficit for 1981 budget of \$5,518.
- Various community groups requested use of the church buildings

“but with the charge of \$15.00 for “energy” fee and \$10.00 for custodian, find it financially impossible to meet the charge for the use of the building. Should the church as part of its “local mission” make exceptions for certain groups and waive the charge?”

1981

- In January, the Christian Education Committee reported gifts were purchased for the refugee family.
- Seng Sengrath and his wife Phinh moved to an apartment on Park Place. Phinh’s brother and sisters living with the Ralph Barbalace family.
- Membership list near 600 “who can be expected to support the church with their time, talent and gifts.”
- \$15 “energy fee” and \$10 custodian fee for outside groups using the church should stay flexible.
- Purchase of an overhead projector for the Christian Education committee taken out of the memorial money donated in memory of Miriam Howard.
- Missions Committee recommended to Council the adoption of Resolution in Opposition to Casino Gambling in New York State and the Resolution against Capital Punishment—both approved, although not unanimously.
- New lights installed in the kitchen and on the stage.
- Trustees decide, regarding the Methodist church and property, to maintain the grounds, demolish the building but save the stained glass windows.
- In April the Council met with Presbyterians for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, the first church in the Presbytery to study their material and hear the group presentation.
- In May, the Evangelism Committee made the following recommendations to the Trustees regarding accessibility of the building: construction of ramps leading to the rear service entrance and to one of the front entrances; blacktopping an area by the rear entrance to reserve two hard surfaced car spaces for handicapped persons; alteration of the two restrooms on the rear corridor of the service building to provide on restroom with wheelchair turning space, with doors, stalls, and fixtures altered to accommodate people using wheelchairs; widening the door frame holding the swinging door west of the choir loft to permit easy passage of persons in wheelchairs
- Summer hours for secretaries: Monday-Friday, 9-noon..



President Ronald wounded by a gunman in 1981.

- Methodists decide not to merge the Northern New York Conference with the Central New York Conference.
- Both denominations discuss hunger issues and peace issues.
- Pew folders are created.
- Trustees decide to build a ramp at the first side entrance, southwest side of the building.
- Hosted a workshop “NUCLEAR FREEZE”
- Adopted the following resolution: “Be it resolved that the United Church of Phelps welcome into membership all person of professed Christian faith, regardless of lifestyle, racial or ethnic background, level of education, income, or other human condition. We affirm that all human beings are made in God’s image and that all human beings are members of the body of Christ. We futher believe that in meeting each other in Christian love, God’s Spirit frees us all to give and to grow.”
- Adopted the following resolution: “Resolved that we urge continued study of policy statements relating to homosexuality that may be issued by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church and the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church.”
- Adopted the following resolution in response to a report from the October 1981 Methodist Reporter regarding US intervention in El Salvador: “Whereas, the Council of the United Church of Phelps believes that the ruling Junta in El Salvador is guilty of gross violations of human rights: these violations include the murders of Archbishop Oscar Romero, four American church women, and thousands of Salvadoran citizens, reportedly committed by the Junta’s armed forces, and

Whereas, US Military aid to the Salvadoran Junta seems only to encourage further such oppression,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Council of the United Church of Phelps request our congressman, Gary A. Lee, to support and vote for a bill introduced in the House of Representatives that would prohibit arms aid to El Salvador as long as human rights violations continue and that a copy of this resolution be sent to Congressman Lee with a letter form the Council secretary asking for his commitment to the resolution.”
- Received letters from Anne Higgins, Director of Correspondence, the White House, and from Gary A. Lee, member of Congress regarding their receipt of copies of the Council’s Resolution on El Salvador
- Carpeting in hall installed

MINISTERS