

## ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FINAL REPORT FOR FIRST UNITED CHURCH, WATERFORD, NY

Administrative Commission Members – Rev. Carole Miller, Baptist; Rev. Bruce Johnson, Baptist; Elder Susan Laz, Third, Troy; Rev. Amanda Wagner, First United, Troy; Rev. David Moore, Rensselaer; Rev. Kathi Jones, Valatie, Chair

The commission met two times as a commission, once with the board of First United Church and once with the congregation on the day of the vote.

The Presbyterian Church began by meeting in the Reformed Dutch Church building and incorporated in 1804. In 1826, they built the first church building on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Division Streets at a cost of \$4,00.00, and was open for divine worship in September of that year. The first pastor was Rev. Samuel Blatchford, D.D., who was elected moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church during his time at the church. (according to their history related in the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program).

In 1913 there was a flood which undermined the building, causing it to be condemned. A new building was erected at a cost of \$40,000. and remains today.

On October 19, 1967, the Presbytery approved the Federation of the Baptist and Presbyterian congregations. They became The First United Church on February 1, 1981 according to Presbytery records.

The congregation knew that they were needing to take action several years ago after their last installed pastor Rev. Cheri Peaslee, retired and left the area. Though they knew it intellectually, they were having a difficult time emotionally. Moderator Rev. Kathi Jones followed Cheri until they contracted with Supply Pastor, Rev. Mark Chaffin, a Baptist. Conversations took place about the future. They had no vision or plan. It was in this past year that they realized they could not continue and during COVID-19, they made the decision when they could no longer have in person worship that it was time to close.

The commission, established by the Presbytery at the May 30, 2020 meeting, met on August 5, 2020, to meet each other and determine the task at hand.

After that meeting, a meeting with the board was held on August 17, to hear their concerns and hopes for help. They were of a single mind that closing was what needed to happen. They had exhausted their financial resources and could not maintain their buildings. The attendance at worship had decreased to under 10 before they had to close due to COVID. There had not been a Christmas Eve service in 2019.

A meeting of the congregation was called for Sunday August 30, to vote on the recommendation of the board to dissolve the congregation effective August 30, 2020.

The congregation was notified by letter from the board. Over 20 people attended the meeting; 17 were voting members. After a presentation by a board member recalling the church's history, some discussion, and a time of questions, the vote was taken by ballot and the motion was approved by a large majority. The vote was followed by a brief service and communion.

The commission met that night to discuss any other business that needed to be attended to and determined that they had accomplished the commission's mandate.

All matters still outstanding pertain to property and have been turned over to the Trustees of the Presbytery. Minutes of the board have been removed from the premises and are secure (in possession of the commission's chair) until they can be turned over to the Stated Clerk for deposit with the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Any records that were Baptist in nature have been turned over to the American Baptist Churches of New York State through Rev. Jerrod Huguenot, (equivalent to an Executive Presbyter).

Having fulfilled its commission, the Administrative Commission respectfully requests it be dismissed.