

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
By Elsie Strandberg

Surely there is no other Lutheran congregation in the whole country with the unusual history of Community Lutheran Church, Enfield. As Nellie Pierce wrote in her 1952 anniversary chronicle "100 Years for God and Man", "The background and history of this Community Church, like Joseph's coat of many colors, presents a design of absorbing interest and intricacy of pattern, the making of which goes back even to the early settlement of the town."

Quoting Mrs. Pierce further, "Although Enfield was first chartered July 4th, 1761 by Proprietors, most of whom were from Windham county, Conn., they did not succeed in carrying out the conditions of its granting in the first five years as required and, in 1766 this charter was forfeited and a second one was granted under the name of 'Relham' to about 90 new Proprietors, most of whom resided in or near Portsmouth, N.H. Then began the 'War of the charters' with both parties claiming and attempting to occupy the same lands. Finally, through the efforts of Jesse Johnson, Esq., one of the town's early Land Surveyors, Proprietors' clerk, Magistrate and first Representative, the claims under the Relham charter were disposed of either by exchange, purchase or compromise. This dispute had kept the town disquieted for a period of over 11 years and to a certain extent retarded its growth. It is not until 1787 that there is any mention of religious activity, which is strange, because churches and schools were usually among the first things to be planned for. Even this record simply states that 'building a meetinghouse had to be postponed to some future day.'

"In 1793 it was voted in Town Meeting to build a meetinghouse and a Committee appointed to see where it should 'set'. It was decided that this should be at the top of the hill beyond the Lockhaven cemetery, neat the intersection of the Jones Hill road and the highway leading over to 'Shaker Hill'. The timber was cut in the spring of 1796 and the raising took place in October of that year but it was not completed for at least another year and a half (the summer of 1798) and the first record of any meeting held in it is of the Town meeting in the spring of 1799. The raising was a great occasion, with men from Canaan, Grafton, Lebanon, and Hanover coming to help; women and children as interested spectators, and generous rations of barbecued beef, bread, and, as was the custom in those days, a barrel of good old New England rum. It was of large massive frame, some 30 feet high and built with a gallery inside; shingled, clapboarded and painted white inside and out. One item of materials used was 28,500 nails costing \$52.50 all manufactured in Enfield and furnished by Jesse Johnson. Canaan had built its meetinghouse on the Street in the year before and Grafton also had a new one. Enfield was a more prosperous town than either and determined to have a larger and grander house in all respects. A plan of the house was made before it was built and pews sold in order to get the funds for building.

"The town fathers then busied themselves to find a minister and finally after some months trial voted to call Rev. Edward Evans. At that time the law required that in order to qualify for the first settled minister's rights, he must be a Congregationalist or orthodox. Records seem to show that Mr. Evans was not an orthodox Congregationalist but very definitely had 'Methodist' leanings. However, he had the privilege of choosing his ordaining ministers and after some difficulty found several Congregationalists of liberal sentiments who installed him in December 1799 when according to various people 'the wind blew and the snow flew'. Many of the townspeople refused to pay the tax for his support and town meeting reports for the next few years are filled with disputes on this matter until finally in 1805 he was dismissed. He remained in town until 1822, preaching more or

less but mainly turning his attention to civil and political matters and finally became judge of Probate. No record has been found that the Proprietors ever called another preacher but the church was used regularly for town meetings and for occasional preaching by ministers of various denominations. The building was sold in 1848 to parties in Concord and rebuilt on the Main Street there. The Proprietors received one dollar apiece each for their pews."

It would appear that the site chosen for this original meetinghouse resulted from the land having become available rather than other considerations. People both from the East Enfield area and Enfield Center seemingly found the travel to that location too far to cope with regularly. Thus it was that in 1828 a new church building was erected in the growing center of East Enfield. (see Appendix II) Religious activity did not flourish in this location either and the building came to be used more for secular activities with the name being changed to Union Hall.

Quoting further from Mrs. Pierce: "In 1825 a Congregational mission was established in Springfield and the report of the State Missionary Society for 1826 has the following item: 'How we rejoice to tell you that our Lord has smiled on the first year of the Rev. Joab Cushman's ministry. In one neighborhood in the south part of Enfield, where by contract he preaches one Sabbath every month, there has been quite a revival and a little church organized on May 23, 1826 with 14 members of the Benj. Choate family into the first real Congregational Church in the town.' From 1827 to 1838, 21 members were added.

With the coming of the railroad in 1847, the larger part of the activity and growth of the town shifted from Enfield Center to North "Enfield ... In 1858 the Congregational Church in North Enfield was reorganized and held its meetings in the schoolhouse in this village and also in the church at Lockehaven (East Enfield).

About 1860 its members began holding services in the hall over the old store that stood where the Chester Lower home now is (just west of Enfield Village School ed.). Up until the coming of the railroad, this part of North Enfield was the only really settled portion of the village. There were no buildings whatsoever in what is now the business part of town, no South Main Street, no covered bridge, no Shaker Bridge. The first Post Office was established about 1838 and was located in Blake's tavern that stood (at the bend in Rt. 4 ed.) where the Congregational church is now (1952). (razed in 1996) In 1859 this tavern was taken apart, moved across the road and made into two two-tenement houses.

"In 1840 a 'Farmer's and Mechanic's Store' had been built about where the Lower home now stands, the Post Office moved into it, and the upper story was made into a small public meeting place called Mascoma Hall. It was this hall, which the Congregationalists fitted up as a church auditorium in 1860. In 1863 they again had a regular pastor in Rev. Frank Haley, who was ordained in this place of worship on October 7th, 1863 and remained until 1866. He was succeeded by Rev. W.J. Hartshorn and when the hotel-burned in 1868, he and his congregation worked unceasingly to purchase that site and the building in which they had worshipped for about 15 years. The building was moved to its present location (1952) and about \$4000 spent for its purchase and renovation that included a tastefully decorated auditorium on the upper floor and an attractive parsonage below. This building was dedicated on May 20, 1875. In 1876 a small pipe organ was obtained from the West Lebanon Congregational Church, which was then installing a new and larger one.

"In 1879 Mrs. Mary Blake of Canaan, a member of the church for many years, donated \$300 with which to purchase a bell for the tower. This was the inspiration for the forming of a 'Town Clock Association'. Within a year funds were raised for this

project, and using the gift bell as the sounding apparatus, the clock was purchased and placed in working order in 1880. In 1887 it is recorded in the Lebanon Free Press that the Precinct voted to 'assume control and keep in repair the clock in the tower of the Congregational Church, provided the Clock Association will transfer same to the Precinct' and a later issue stated that this had been done.

"To turn back once more to the 1840s, although there was at that time no organized Universalist Church in Enfield, there was already quite a group of persons who had moved to Enfield in 1836 and made a permanent home at the 'head' of the lake. Rev. Smith had originally entered the ministry of the Baptist church, but being very liberal in his views, had gradually concluded that the doctrine of everlasting punishment was untenable and came to believe and preach the final restoration of the whole human family. He gave his voice and influence to all the reforms of his day and 'labored to place his people on a higher plane in morals, religion, and general intelligence'. In 1839 he gave the first temperance address and organized the first temperance society in Enfield. Some of the early families who were influenced by his preaching were Dustins, Conants, Butnhams, Huses, Curriers, etc. A little later Elder Jonathan Phelps moved into town and preached a portion of the time and along the same line of thought. This, combined with occasional calls by Universalists from adjacent societies, constituted most of the religious activity of this organization until the coming of the railroad, where again the preponderance of the believers came to reside in North Enfield.

"About 1849 or 1850 the group at North Enfield was sufficiently organized to call Rev. Eli Garfield as their minister. He preached in the hall that was over the present First National Store (1952), then Conant and Jackman's (located beside the Copeland Block ed.) Through his efforts and influence the people were encouraged to make plans for building their own church edifice. In 1850 the women of the church took the initiative and formed a society called 'The Universalist Ladies Sewing Circle. During the first few years the Ladies met at the homes of members and in the same Mascoma Hall later used by the Congregationalists.

"In February 1852 the following resolution was adopted: 'Whereas this Society was formed for the purpose of advancing the Cause of Universal Holiness and Purity; and Whereas--in order to enable us to labor more effectively for the promotion of the above named cause, we deem it of great importance that a Church or Meeting House should be erected in our village where we may, with others, of like precious faith, assemble ourselves for sacred and public devotion; and Whereas we have the sum of \$200 (or nearly that) which we wish to appropriate towards the building of such Church or Meeting House, provided a sufficient amount be raised by those of our friends who sympathize with us; therefore--Resolved--that a Committee of three be appointed whose duty it shall be to ascertain forthwith what sum they can raise towards the building of our church...' This Committee consisted of Benjamin Choate, William Huse, Alpheus Conant and John Currier and so active and successful were they that in a very short time land had been purchased of David Burnham adjacent to the Cemetery and pews sold in advance to provide funds for building. By late summer it was being erected by Benjamin F. Burnham and was probably first used for worship in December 1852, one source stating that the first service held was for a funeral. Records speak of a Fair to be held in November for the purpose of 'raising money to furnish the new church which will soon be completed' and every meeting thereafter was devoted to the making of aprons, patchwork quilts, 'tidies' beaded purses, sofa pillows, toilet cushions, needlebooks, etc.

"The building was about its present size but with a smaller chancel and was heated by two stoves at the rear with pipes running high along the walls on each side up to the chancel. Probably there were no lights in the church until about 1875 when a

center candelier costing \$55 and composed of four lamps with etched glass globes in a heavy iron frame, together with four bracket lamps, two in the chancel and two near the entrance doors were installed. There were two front entrances, one on either side, rather than a center door, and crossing the narrow entry hall one entered the auditorium by two broad side aisles which gave access to either the block of double pews, or 'slips' in the center of the church or the single line of pews along the outside wall. The choir loft was over the entrance hall, being reached by a narrow staircase going up from the hall. There are no records as to the cost of the church but since at least thirty pews were sold at an average price of \$30 each and the Ladies contributed \$200, it was probably close to \$1500.

"February 9th, 1853 ten men, Henry, James, Thomas, John S. and Denison Currier, Harry and William Huse, Alpheus Conant, S. C. Wood, and D. L. Davis formed a group called the North Enfield Universalist Meeting House Association. They drew up a simple set of Rules and Regulations that were published in the Granite State Whig at Lebanon. The Association's main function was to take charge of the new church property and keep it in repair. Only five meetings are recorded; one in 1853, two in 1873, one in 1874 and the last in 1881 when presumably this Association ceased to function. Proceedings of the meetings included election of officers, authorizing the President, Vice President and Secretary as a Committee to issue deeds conveying the pews to those who had paid for the same; and in 1873 instructing the 'Committee on Cair to attend to raising the pews so as to lay the carpet in full breadths ... (and) to examine the roof and if thought best, to shingal.'

"In the spring of 1854 Rev. Garfield departed to Wisconsin and soon after Rev. Franklin Bliss 'of blessed memory' was settled as Pastor. He remained only three years and suffered ill health for much of the time." As is the case in many congregations, periods of zeal and activity seem to go in cycles and this Universalist church was no exception. Several pastors served the congregation on a full or part-time basis from 1858 to 1898 when Rev. Thomas Roscoe came from Somerville, Mass. and spent four years with this church. Again quoting from Mrs. Pierce: "Rev. Roscoe was an energetic and influential citizen and an excellent speaker. His work was largely concerned with the repair and improvement of the church building. He was personally responsible for the raising of most of the funds secured to do this, with the exception of a very generous gift from one church member, George E. Whitney, then agent of the American Woolen Company in Enfield. He secured the advice and help of W. C. Hough, a New York architect, through his wife who had been a former Enfield girl. About \$3000 was spent on the alterations which included 'a new porch in front of the building, a basement and basement heat in the rear, the interior being all renewed, the Choir Loft being changed to the front of the building, a new carpet and new pews, electric lights installed, and two Memorial windows, one for Mrs. Louisa Packard and one for Miss Celeste Chandler who had each left the church a trust fund"

Following the departure of Rev. Roscoe, Various clergymen from neighboring towns served the Universalist Church, usually with afternoon services, until 1912 when Miss Elizabeth Holt Coldthwaite arrived, as pastor. She was the only woman pastor named in the records of the church and the last one before the federation with the Congregationalists in 1917. Miss Goldthwaite left to go into social work.

Thus it was that in 1917 both Universalist and Congregational churches were without pastors. At the suggestion of one Ernest R. Groves who had been a student supply pastor for the Congregationalists it was agreed to try a Federation of the two congregations. A committee from each church was chosen, Articles of Federation were drawn up and 'it was voted to try the experiment for one year. The two Ladies Societies soon followed suit and a harmonious relationship developed and was maintained during the year. The Rev. John Hardwick was the first minister and was

greatly liked by the congregation. However, financial support was insufficient to keep him after the first year.

Again quoting from Mrs. Pierce: "A single man, Rev. Everett Lyon, supplied the pulpit from June 1919 to December 1920 and he then was called to a larger church. Meanwhile there had been added to the group a number of Episcopalians and some from other Protestant denominations. Since in the Federation they were excluded from voting and active membership, they expressed the wish that our purpose might be broadened and a Community church considered. A meeting to which all the people in town interested in such a church were invited was held in Whitney Hall dining room on December 5th, 1921 and the Rev. John Barker addressed the group on the needs of the community and urged that a sufficient salary be raised to permit a good man to come and, work in the church. Over \$1500 was pledged that evening, a board of trustees was chosen and instructed to procure a pastor.

"In March 1922 the Rev. Lewis W. Sanford of Walpole, N.H. was settled in the Congregationalist parsonage; a new Constitution, By-Laws and a Covenant were adopted in April and officers elected. Quite a number of new members were added to the church and 20 children were baptized in 1923. Mr. Sanford was an Episcopalian and the first minister to wear the clerical robe in this pulpit. "Rev. Bernard Chase came to Enfield from Island Pond, Vt. in 1925 and remained here for four Years. The church finances were evidently at low ebb that year as both the church and the Ladies society lost money in the failure of the People's Trust Company in Lebanon. The Ladies, however, rose to the occasion, worked a little harder and took over a large part of the regular expenses such as heat, lights, etc., as well as paying for candidates and finally moving and settling the new minister. In 1924 the exterior of the church was painted and in 1927, the interior redecorated by the Universalist society.

"Student supplies from Dartmouth filled the interim between June 1929 and April 1930 when Carroll A. Durfee, a lay preacher, brought his wife and little son and daughter from Uxbridge, MA and began a pastorate of 6 years. It was during Mr. Durfee's pastorate that the Universalist Society once more carried out major renovations on the interior of the church. The high choir loft was removed and the chancel platform lowered to its present level with steps going up on either side from the auditorium floor. A fine hardwood floor of seasoned oak was laid throughout the church and the walls and ceiling redecorated. Many hours were spent planning and constructing the curved front of the chancel platform.

"Rev. Ralph Burhoe supplied for the summer months of 1936 and in November, Fritz Dahir, a student from Andover Newton Theological Seminary, accepted the pastorate as his first effort in the Christian ministry. Mr. Dahir was most successful working with young people and impressed everyone with his sincerity and friendliness. The beautifully carved board on which are listed the hymns and responsive reading in church each Sunday was his gift to the church. Rev. George Bushee was called as an interim preacher from November 1937 to May 1938.

In October 1938 Rev. J. Albert Hammond began serving the church and from that time until March 1941 the relationship between Pastor and Congregation was most harmonious and a general improvement in all phases of church work was noticeable. During this period the church was painted on the outside, new rugs were purchased, several cooperative affairs were held with the Methodist Church, summer services were held in Enfield Center with attendance often over 100 and for the first time

we published a Church Yearbook.

"In the summer of 1941 the Congregational Christian Conference was instrumental in providing Bradley T. Morse, a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary as a pastor, with the understanding that he spend two years getting his degree at Dartmouth College and preach and do as much pastoral work as possible in Enfield during that time. On Sunday, February 7th, 1943, the ordination of Rev. Bradley Morse took place in this church. In June 1943 Rev. Morse resigned his pastorate to enter the army as Chaplain.

"The Church was closed through June and July of 1943 but in August Rev. Walter Brunn, Pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Brooklyn, NY, who had for many years spent his summers here, very generously offered to preach during the Sundays of his vacation in August. He showed a great interest in the church situation and its many problems and discussed the matter with Rev. Louis Henze, Executive Secretary of Missions for the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Early in 1944 an arrangement was made whereby Rev. Martin Haendshke, Lutheran Student Pastor for the New England colleges, and Rev. Herbert Kern, who had been appointed to do a survey as to the opportunities for church expansion in New England, would jointly be responsible for Sunday services and a day or two each week for pastoral calling. Rev. Haendshke was only here for a short time, but Rev. Kern stayed throughout the summer with the exception of the month of August when Rev. Brunn took care of the services."

In September of 1944 the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod extended a call to Rev. Harold Johnson of Schenectady, N.Y., to serve the Community Church in Enfield, N.H. Inasmuch as the Congregationalists' parsonage was rented at that time, a house in Enfield Center was finally located where the Johnson family could live until the spring of 1945 when the parsonage would become available. The Johnson family arrived on October 31. Before the end of November, Pastor Johnson was holding services not only in Enfield but also in Enfield Center. Under his leadership, the congregation grew and prospered and many physical improvements were made to the church property such as: the new Parish Room and kitchen with running water, lavatory, electric stove, tables and folding chairs, redecorating of the worship center, rebuilding of the porch, walk and steps, a new electronic organ, etc. It was with sadness that the congregation bid good-bye to the Johnson family when Rev. Johnson accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church of Roxbury, Mass. in the spring of 1950. On his last Sunday an altar cross was dedicated as a testimonial to the congregation's affection for Rev. Johnson and appreciation for his accomplishments.

Thanks again to the Lutheran offices in New York, the end of July 1950 saw the Rev. Darrell Helmers and his wife settled into the parsonage vacated by the Johnsons and which had been entirely renovated in the interim. Rev. Helmers entered upon his duties with enthusiasm, caring for the well-being of his parishioners and encouraging their participation in further improvements at the church. A new altar was built by Herbert Hedstrom, the outside painted and the roof resingled together with the installation of lighting on the steeple and a hot water heater was installed for the kitchen and the front of the chancel was rebuilt to provide center stairs from the floor rather than the two side stairs.

In 1952 a grand celebration of the 100th anniversary of the erection of the church edifice was planned. The event commenced with a dinner in the parish room on Friday evening, July 25th. On Saturday the Ladies Society conducted their annual summer Sale and buffet supper on the lawn which was followed, first by a half-hour organ concert and then the production of the play "Old Peabody Pew" by Kate Douglas

Wiggtn. A festival worship service took place on Sunday morning with the Rev. Harold Johnson having returned to take part, along with other local and distant clergy who had had ties with the congregation. Mrs. Nellie Pierce read an abbreviated version of her church history which was followed by a presentation of the deed to the church building and property by the Universalist Society to the newly incorporated Enfield Community Church. A sizeable choir sang appropriate selections and two caged canaries sang their merry accompaniment to it all. It was truly a great milestone in the long and unusual history of this congregation.

Rev. Helmers continued his work in Enfield and Enfield Center until September 1955 when he accepted a call to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Fortunately, the Lutheran leaders in New York had seen fit to locate a pastor in the person of Rev. David Krampitz in Hanover to serve the Dartmouth students, so he became available to fill in at Enfield until such time as a permanent pastor could be found. In due time the Rev. Elwood Mather, Jr. accepted the call to Enfield and arrived about July 1, 1956. He remained only until early 1958, and then followed another time when Rev. Krampitz served the congregation from his base in Hanover.

Even being without a full-time pastor did not seem to dampen the spirits of church members. The decision was made to have two worship services each Sunday during the summer to better serve the summer residents of Enfield, and various clergy were invited to fill the pulpit as needed. The congregational parsonage was sold to the Masonic Lodge and a committee was chosen immediately to try to find a suitable piece of property that could be purchased for a parsonage. The December 1958 parish newsletter indicates: "the Church auditorium, vestibule and Pastor's anteroom have been completely redecorated during the past two weeks. We acknowledge with special thanks a contribution of \$300 towards the expenses of this project from the Universalist Society."

In the same newsletter we find the following with reference to a new pulpit: "The Pulpit is beautiful and a perfect addition to our chancel. All our thanks to the Pulpit committee, to the contributors to the fund and to our own Herbert Hedstrom who not only did a master craftsman's work but also contributed generously of his labor to the project. It seems to us it is a matter of great pride both to Mr. Hedstrom and the Church to have had him fashion all our chancel furnishings . . . . But best of all was the opportunity to have Pastor Helmers preach to us on this occasion and to visit with us at the dinner and social hour afterwards. Bill's sincerity and his interpretation of the relationship of a pastor and his people touched the hearts of each and everyone of us and gave us the courage and the desire to carry on the work of our church to the very best of our ability and to aid our interim Pastor Ktampitz in whatever way we can until we are blessed with a Pastor of our own."

The first paragraph of the March/April 1959 newsletter is headed: COMMUNITY CHURCH PURCHASES NEW PARSONAGE with the following explanation: "At last a dream of many years has been fulfilled and we now own the Evans property adjoining our Church which will make us a fine parsonage. Much credit is due our trustees for the time and effort spent on this project. The property was bought for \$9,000 with the understanding that Mr. Evans paper and paint the remaining downstairs rooms. The Universalist Society and Congregationalist Society have each given \$750 toward the down payment of the parsonage, the Ladies Society has given \$250 and \$250 has been taken out of the Church Treasury. These figures add up to \$2000, leaving a balance of \$7000 to be borrowed from the Mascoma Savings Bank." Indications are that there was lots of volunteer labor by young and old getting the new property ready for

occupancy.

The patience of the congregation was sorely tried in waiting for a new pastor. Yet, having come to appreciate the Lutheran pastors' preaching and teaching, they were hesitant to look elsewhere, possibly back to the Congregational or Universalist backgrounds of most of the members. The feeling was apparently mutual, for the head of the Lutherans' Atlantic District wrote to one pastoral candidate: "We have the complete confidence of this genuinely 'Yankee' group, a people of hearty stock with whom it is a pleasure to associate and to work." Finally, after more than a half dozen calls had been extended and declined, the Rev. Thorvald Alger accepted. He had recently married his deceased brother's widow with two children and the family arrived to occupy the new parsonage in August of 1960. He remained in Enfield only until the early fall of 1963 when he left to answer a call to a church in Albany, N. Y. In late February of 1964 Rev. Bernhard Filbert accepted the call to serve the Community Church in Enfield and arrived on the scene shortly thereafter. His pastorate was short-lived also and he moved to another charge in the New York area in early summer of 1965.

It is difficult to fathom from the records exactly what was happening in this church. The Mission Board of the Lutheran Missouri Synod's Atlantic District had supplied pastors for 20 years. Presumably the Board considered the Enfield area somewhat like a new mission field. Yet the situation was different in that they were dealing with an already organized congregation with no ties to any specific denomination. It is only natural to assume that the Board hoped that with the preaching and teaching according to Lutheran theology, the congregation would ultimately become officially Lutheran. However, the choice was left up to the congregation. It appears, nevertheless, that Pastors Alger and Filbert sought to hasten the process and thereby created tensions within the membership. In fact, setting standards for membership apparently was a point of contention. Over the years the work in Hanover had progressed to the point of having an organized congregation and some members of the Enfield church transferred there. Others discontinued their attendance at worship and participation in other activities some joining other established churches in the area. It is only fair to also state that there were among the membership of the Community Church those who felt strongly that some affiliation with a national church body would be beneficial. Presumably as a compromise, it was voted in June of 1967 to be known as the Community Church, Lutheran Affiliated.

Rev. Richard Kapfer who had replaced Rev. Krampitz in Hanover was able to serve as vacancy pastor and served nobly in that capacity. Meanwhile, a new Lutheran congregation had been established in Claremont that was given the name Prince of Peace. Rev. Donald Myers had been called to serve there and he also proved helpful to the Enfield church until a new pastor could be found. In spite of some differences of opinion among the membership, it was agreed that another Lutheran pastor would be requested to serve Enfield.

Finally the Atlantic District Mission Board extended a call to Russell Shopland a young man soon to complete his studies at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis. He accepted, was ordained upon completion of his seminary training, and arrived in Enfield with his wife and children in early June 1968. The family was warmly received and what was to become-a 12-year-long relationship got off to a fine start. Some of the men even purchased a non-resident fishing license for Pastor Shopland so he could immediately enjoy a hobby in which he so delighted.

The festering question of denominational affiliation with its related problems of name, a new constitution, procedures for determining voting membership, etc. plagued both pastor and people for more than a year. By September of 1969 many of the details had been ironed out and at a voters meeting at that time it was agreed to present to the January 11, 1970 annual meeting for ratification changes in the constitution which would make the congregation's name Community Lutheran Church. An affirmative vote did take place along with the decision to request membership in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. The decision was not quite unanimous and a few long-time members of the Community Church withdrew. No one seems to know exactly what their reasoning was, but it seems clear that there was no antagonism against Pastor Shopland and he continued to try to minister to them.

With these troubling matters out of the way, pastor and people could now settle down to living out the church's mission, worshiping God and serving-the community. Finances are always a matter of concern and the congregation still-needed the support of the larger church body in the form of an annual subsidy. With the increase in membership, however, the congregation proceeded quite well until the mid-1970s. At that time the national church body was developing problems that reverberated throughout the country. An ultra-conservative leadership had evolved at the church's headquarters in St. Louis, the site of their chief seminary. A more moderate, evangelical stance prevailed among most of Concordia S4minary's professors. They objected to the officials' legalistic attitude and in early 1974 walked out, followed by a large majority of the students, forming what came to be called "Semin-Ex" (Seminary in Exile).

One Dr. J. A. O. Preus had been elected in 1969 as president of the national church body. He had managed to attract a sufficient number of like-minded members to vote for binding resolutions making the national church a hierarchical body rather than the advisory one it always had been. Legalistic restrictions were placed upon clergy and local congregations relating to fellowship with other Christians, even other Lutheran groups, membership in lodges, administration of Holy Communion, etc. Such restrictions were unacceptable to both Pastor Shopland and the congregation. As a result, it was voted in 1976 to sever relationship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In order to safeguard the church property, legal advice was sought and it was voted on May 23, 1976 to form the Enfield Community Church Corporation which would hold title to all real property which it would in turn rent to the Community Lutheran Church for \$1 annually. Pastor Shopland wrote: "Finally, we believe that this plan resurrects what is good and noble from our past without sacrificing our present strengths or identity. We would be affirming our ties with the past and with those who in 1922 envisioned an on-going Christian ministry for the community. In addition, we would also be maintaining our ecclesiastical identity as Lutherans, and in so doing we would be taking the Community Church plan of 1922 one step further, which we believe to be for the better. This new arrangement would enable us to continue to honor the intention of The Universalist Society, when in 1952 it deeded all property to The Community Church which at that time was both an ecclesiastical body as well as the title-holding body."

Needless to say, the time and energy involved in committee and full-membership meetings over these years had diverted attention from the teal mission of the church, and progress slowed. The congregation remained independent for about a year and then after consultations with officials of the two other large national Lutheran church bodies (The Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church.), it was voted to request membership in the latter. This was accomplished by a vote of the church members on June 5, 1977.

Even while contending with organizational problems, the congregation realized in 1973 that the church was in need of refurbishing and a complete redecorating job was accomplished, painting the interior a soft off-white, installing recessed lighting in the ceiling, colonial-type wood shutters at the windows in lieu of the old drapes, yet preserving the beautiful central chandelier and the companion wall-bracket light fixtures on the side and back walls. The entire floor was also carpeted, the pews were refinished; wood paneling was installed on the walls of the staircase to the parish room, and lighting was installed outside the window above the chancel. Prior to this overall redecoration project, storm windows were installed.

Among other accomplishments during Pastor Shopland's pastorate, property across the street from the church was purchased from St. Helena's church in 1970 for \$500. The following year the old building on the property was razed and the lot improved to make additional parking space. Also in 1971 the parsonage office was remodeled and carpeted and the south side of the church roof was resingled.

, Innovations in congregational life include the beginning of Coffee Fellowship Hours following the morning 9 A.M. worship service from mid-June to early September in 1971. The custom of having a pot-luck supper on the first Wednesday evening in Advent followed by the making of an Advent Evergreen Wreath for each family was another 1971 first-time event. In August of 1973 Pastor Shopland was awarded his Master of Sacred Theology degree. 1973 was also the beginning of the Ecumenical Evangelism Effort known as Key 73. All the churches in Enfield and Canaan cooperated in planning and in October every home in the area was visited and a copy of a paper-back little book containing Acts and the Gospel of Luke was given. At the same time a survey was made as to the religious affiliation of all the residents, with each church given information on people who expressed such preference or affiliation. An Ecumenical Committee continued to meet for several years thereafter, arranging for joint worship services on special occasions, study seminars in which the various clergy took part, and combined social ministry efforts were undertaken such as distribution of Thanksgiving Dinners and Christmas Cheer.

In late 1974 Pastor Shopland commenced what he called Family Services on the second Sunday each month. These were informal worship services at the regular hour in which children were invited to take part and less formal hymns and other songs were sung, these being duplicated and compiled into what became known as the Hymn Supplement folders. These services continued until Pastor Shopland's departure-in 1980 and were very popular so that attendance increased to the point of near church capacity.

In January of 1978 a constitutional change was voted which allowed women to hold office in the congregation. This had not been allowed while the church had been affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In August of 1979 the congregation took a leap of faith and even though small in numbers (perhaps about 100 adults), it voted to sponsor a Laotian refugee family. Father, mother and two children arrived on a cold and windy October 1 evening and were greeted with great excitement at W. Lebanon airport. The family was settled into a little apartment off Main Street that had been donated rent-free for three months and furnished by the church members. Getting the family settled, meeting their daily needs for a short time, finding employment, teaching the

language and orienting them to our culture, all proved to be a wonderfully unifying and gratifying experience for all. In December two sisters of the family came to the United States also and the congregation voted to also sponsor these two girls who for a time came and lived with the family. They all soon became self-supporting and have since moved to other parts of the country - a true success story for all concerned.

By early 1980 it became apparent that Pastor Shopland needed space apart from the proximity of his home and family in order to better care for his congregational responsibilities and make for counseling confidentiality. As a temporary solution, it was voted in July to purchase a used mobile home that could serve for additional Pastor's and secretary's office space and also give some added space for Sunday School use, The mobile unit was placed behind the church building. It was also voted at that time to activate a building committee.

After having received and declined calls from other congregations, Pastor Shopland finally accepted a call from a congregation in Paramus, N. J. and left Enfield in September of 1980, completing a fruitful pastorate of over 12 years.

In October of 1980 the congregation received Pastor Robert Rigg as interim pastor. During his brief term of service, a new white dorsal curtain was received as a gift from Mrs. Lillian Lehto. Also at Pastor's Rigg's suggestion, the altar was moved forward from the chancel wall to a central position in accordance with more present-day custom. In the spring of 1981 a ramp for the handicapped was constructed along the Oak Grove St. wall of the church, with entrance to the porch north side.

After interviewing a number of pastors, it was voted early in 1981 to extend a call to Craig Endicott, a theological student at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. Upon completion of his studies, Mr. Endicott was ordained into the Lutheran Ministry at First Lutheran Church, in Portland, Me. and arrived in Enfield with his wife in late June 1981.

The following winter an earthquake shook the old church to the point where large cracks appeared in the plastered ceiling. Pastor Endicott was quoted as saying, perhaps not just jokingly, that if the church were not repaired, he would have to issue hard hats on Sunday mornings. Thus the congregation decided to go ahead with a complete, overhaul of the church interior. All old plaster was removed from both ceiling and walls, exposing to view for a few days the original hand-cut laths. Included in the renovation was the reopening of the choir loft at the rear that had been closed since around 1900. The whole interior was then covered with dry wall and repainted. During some of the renovation time, Sunday services were held at the Mary Keane Chapel at the LaSalette property. Although funds were not and never are plentiful, the congregation and friends responded marvelously and the job was accomplished without going into debt.

Other accomplishments during Pastor Endicott's time in Enfield include the carpeting of the stairway and choir loft, installation of hand rails beside the chancel steps at the insistence of insurance carriers, coat hangers and mail boxes were hand-crafted of wood and installed in the narthex by Ken Benward. The

parsonage upstairs bathroom was renovated and the parsonage was reroofed.

Another improvement was the repainting of the church parish room, and the congregation voted to sponsor a nursery school that would use the parish room facilities. In order to make the parish room more pleasant both for Sunday School and the nursery school, new fluorescent lighting was installed. In 1993 the upper floor in the parsonage barn was remodeled to provide a sizeable room for Sunday School and other uses. Also a copy machine was purchased for the church office, a most useful addition.

In 1985 Pastor Endicott received a call from Community Lutheran Church in Sterling, Va. and left Enfield in September. The American Lutheran Church headquarters offered the services of Rev. Z. L. Nagy and he and Mrs. Nagy arrived in October of 1985. Pastor Nagy served until the end of November 1986 when it was agreed that he would terminate his term as interim pastor. The Rev. Nicholas May, who had recently retired and moved into the area, agreed to serve as interim and commenced his duties in December 1986.

Early in 1987 the congregation extended a call to Pastor John H. Crilley and he and Mrs. Crilley arrived in March. After more than a year without a permanent pastor, the Crilley's were welcomed with great joy and a new spirit of optimism began to develop. Later that year two new Sunday School rooms were built in the parsonage barn which meant that the mobile unit behind the church could be removed. In 1988 two new rest rooms were constructed behind the church kitchen and the kitchen completely revamped. Also in 1988 insulation material and vinyl siding was installed over the church exterior, and the church was connected to the new Town sewer system. A protective covering was installed over the two stained glass windows at the front of the building in 1989.

After several years of planning by representatives of the American Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church in America and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (the latter made up of congregations which had left the Missouri Synod), a new church entity was born in January 1988 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was chosen for its name. This then is the national church of which Community Lutheran in Enfield is now a member.

At the request of some members who find the 9 a.m. Sunday worship hour inconvenient if not impossible, Pastor Crilley agreed to conduct a brief and simple devotional service each Sunday at 11:30 a.m. This additional worship opportunity commenced in 1989. Although the attendance at this service remains small, the consensus is that it definitely serves-a need.

In 1990 a TV and VCR was purchased with memorial funds, a useful tool for Sunday School and other events.

1991 saw the following improvements. The parsonage living room and front hall were redecorated and vinyl siding was installed on the outside, and the first floor bathroom was remodeled. The handicapped accessible ramp at the church was reconstructed.

In 1992 new blue paraments were purchased for the chancel appointments and new myrtle wood offering plates, all procured with memorial funds. Mrs. Clara Goodwin died at 103 and was duly commemorated. She had retained her membership at this church although she had moved to Norwich, Vt. with her daughter.

Also in 1992 the church steeple ball, spire and upper roof were covered with protective aluminum and the bell room was sided. New lights were also installed on the steeple. In 1993 the church roof was repaired, the water line relocated at greater depth to prevent freezing and then new parking space provided along the Oak Grove St. side of the church. New green paraments were purchased from memorial funds.

1994 saw the following improvements. The church roof was redone and the brick chimney repainted, the handicap ramp was repainted, the parsonage porch repaired and painted. A beautiful new church sign was constructed and installed. New white paraments were purchased from memorial funds and dedicated in time for Christmas.

The lack of adequate facilities for Christian education and gathering purposes had persisted for many a year. Thus, on June 2, 1994 a Building Committee was established and before year's end preliminary designs were available. At the 1995 Annual Meeting in January the Building Committee report was accepted and authority given to proceed with further plans for construction. A pictorial directory of church members was also authorized and pictures were taken in May with the directory arriving in due time. 1995 also saw the replacement of the burner for the parsonage heating plant.

1996 and 1997 have proved to be a time of ultimate excitement. Talk of needing better facilities commenced more than 50 years ago. Finally the time was right and on June 9, 1996 a groundbreaking ceremony took place with young and old taking part; even the children with tiny white shovels got in on the act. Actual construction was delayed until August, but since then the work has gone forward with full speed and the building was closed in before 1996 snowfall. No final completion date can be determined at this writing, but as mentioned elsewhere, the Sunday School commenced using their four new rooms in mid-September 1997.

Who knows what the future has in store for the little white church with the lighted spire on South Main Street? But at this point in time, it appears that its people will continue to worship the Lord and serve the community well into the next century.

This is the end of Elsie Strandberg's historical summary

Pastor Crilley took a call to Ohio in 2003 and Pastor Patricia Harris was installed as Pastor in 2005 after an interim with Rev Robert Geohrig as interim pastor and Patricia Harris as Vicar.

Since Pastor Pat arrived CLC the parsonage has become a rental home as Pastor Pat has a home of her own nearby. CLC has established activities in the New London/Sunapee area which includes bible studies in homes and social events. New services have been introduced with the purpose of reaching people that can not attend Sunday services due to work or other commitments.

List of Pastors

Universalist Society

1850-54	Eli Garfield
1854-58	Franklin Bliss
1858-60	Thompson Barron
No regular services during and after the Civil War	
1870-76	S.C. Hayford
1876-78	L.F. Fortney
1881-97	Walter Dole
1898-02	Thomas Roscoe
1910-12	Clifford Miller, lay preacher
1912-17	Elizabeth Goldthwaite

Congregational Church

1863-66	Frank Haley
1866----	V.J. Hartshorn
1875-81	Frances Parker
1889-00	Edward T. Farrell, interim
Early 1900's student supply preachers from various seminaries, including:	
1903-04	Howard J. Chidley, Dartmouth College
1906	William C.H. Moe, ordained in 1906
1907-12	Albert Hill
1912-17	Albert S. Kilbourne

Federated Church

1917-18	John Hardwick
1919-20	Everett S. Lyons

Serving Enfield Community Church

1922 – 1925	Rev. Lewis Sanford, Episcopalian
1925 – 1929	Rev. Bernard Chase
June 1929 - 1930	Students from Dartmouth
1913 – 1936	Carroll A. Durfee, Lay preacher
Summer 1936	Rev. Ralph Burhoe
Nov. 1936 - Nov. 1937	Fritz Dahir, Andover-Newton Seminary Student
Nov. 1937 - May 1938	Rev. George Bushee - Interim
Summer of 1938	Rev. Gordon Kennison
Oct. 1938 - Mar. 1941	Rev. J. Albert Hammond
Summer 1941 - June 1943	Bradley T. Morse, Ordained Feb. 7, 1943
Church closed June and July of 1943	
Aug. 1943 & 1944	Rev. Walter Brunn, Lutheran summer resident
1944 except August	Rev. Martin Haendshke & Rev. Herbert Kern

### Lutherans

Nov. 1944 - June 1950	Rev. Harold C. Johnson, Lutheran
July 1950 - Sept. 1955	Rev. Darrell Helmers, Lutheran
Sept. 1955 - July 1956	Rev. David Krampitz, Hanover - Interim, Lutheran
July 1956 - Early 1958	Rev. Elwood Mather, Jr., Lutheran
1958 - Aug. 1960	Rev. David Krampitz, Interim
Aug. 1960 - Fall 1963	Rev. Thorvald Alger, Lutheran
1963 - Feb. 1964	Rev. Richard Kapfer, Hanover, Interim, Lutheran
Feb. 1964 - Summer 1965	Rev. Bernhard Filbert, Lutheran
1965 - June 1968	Rev. Donald Meyers, Claremont, Lutheran, Interim
June 1968 - Sept. 1980	Rev. Russell Shopland, Lutheran
Jan. 1970 the congregation voted to change name to:	

### Community Lutheran Church

Oct. 1980 - June 1981	Rev. Robert Rigg, Interim
July 1981 - Sept. 1985	Rev. Craig Endicott
Oct. 1985 - Nov. 1986	Rev. E. L. Nagy, Interim
Dec. 1986 - Mar. 1987	Rev. Nicholas May, Interim
Mar. 1987 – Oct. 2003	Rev. John H. Crilley
Dec 2003 – June 2005	Rev. Robert Goehrig, Interim
Sept. 2005 to present	Rev. Patricia Harris