

## **Churches within the Township**

When the first settlers arrived, they came with their Bibles. In Warren Township, the Christian faith was also established in early years of the settlement as a community focus of Warren Township. Missionaries had visited the Coburn Settlement as early as 1806-1807 and soon thereafter the diverse cultural and religious beliefs began develop into various congregations uniting into their common beliefs.

### **First Presbyterian Church of Warren**

*Written by Sylvia Race with help from others, including Russell Dewing*

In the Coburn Settlement, several of the settlers had established a "reading-meeting," as it was called. These meetings were held in the various homesteads, and this expression of religion continued for years before there was a man among them who could pray in public.

The Presbyterian Church, in Warrenham, was build after it became difficult for early settlers to continue meeting for services in their homes. On 15 September 1815 a small group met in the home of Preserved Buffington, where Rev. John Bascom and Rev, Solomon King led in the adoption of articles of faith and a covenant. By 1816, the Presbyterian Church was organized in Warren Township with 14 members, 8 being from Warren, and the rest from Orwell. An 1822 revival in Warren added 43 members to their number and by 1828 the congregation had grown large enough so that the Presbytery at Kingston allowed the Warren and Orwell congregations to divide. By 1832 the Warren congregation was building a sanctuary. The location of which was on the west side of Coburn Hill Road, about one quarter mile north of the intersection with Reagan Hill Road, and a parsonage was maintained on the northeast corner of this intersection.

The Warren congregation thrived until the end of the nineteenth century. Then it became difficult to keep a resident pastor. Services continued until the mid 1920's. During the early 1930s the Federal Government purchased many farms in the Warrenham, Aurora and North Warren area. The people moved away and the beautiful homes and farm building were sold to be torn down. The church building deteriorated and the pews were given to the Cadis Baptist Church. The communion set and collection baskets from the Warrenham church are on display at the Bradford County Historical Society Museum along with one of the pews built in 1832.

A final note contributed by Russell A. Dewing, Sr. (August 13, 2004) indicates that in 1956 the Presbytery allowed the last two living members, Gladys S. Dewing and Gertrude Bowen, to decide what to do with the building. It was given to Gladys' son, Russel A. Dewing, Sr., to dismantle. The lumber and roofing has since been used by Russell to build a small barn on his property on the Warren Center – Little Meadows Road. The barn is called "The Teaching Barn" and is being used for weekly non-denominational Bible studies.

### **The History of Warren Center Methodist Church**

*(Grateful acknowledgement is made to Joyce M. Tyce, for permission to reprint information provided in the History of The Warren Center Methodist Church)*

Tradition has it that Methodism began its work at Warren Center about 1825. The class was organized in 1848, Rev. G.H. Blakeslee being the preacher in charge, and Rev. D.F. Olmstead, junior preacher. They were on the Pike Circuit that year. Services were held in the Whalen Schoolhouse prior to the building of the church in 1874.

The church was dedicated on Wednesday, January 20, 1875. On July 7, 1908, the Methodist Church of Warren Center, known as the Whalen Church, was struck by lightning. As the church had to be repaired, the question of moving it to Warren Center was raised. By July 26 the required money had been raised and the work of moving the church began. On August 11, a lot for the new church site was measured, a part taken from the land of Walter Bowen and part taken from the land of Dudley Kinney and Mrs. M.A. Sleeper as described by the deed made the same day by J.C. Tripp, Justice of the Peace. The church was moved to its new location in a very short time without removing even the hanging lamps. Services were held in the church wherever it happened to stand, once in the pasture field and once near the creamery.

On July 22, 1919, the Warren Center Church was again struck by lightning at 5:30 in the morning. The steeple was set on fire but as it burned very slowly, it was possible to extinguish the flames.

Gasoline lamps were purchased in 1931 for \$29.95 and at a special meeting on September 8, 1936 a committee estimated it would cost around \$350.00 to build a balcony and partition the church. Money was raised by circulating a paper and by holding an entertainment and a box social. The Ladies Aid and the Careful Gleaners Class furnished some of the money. Work was completed in the fall of 1936. The next spring a new floor was laid and the church was wired including fixtures. Carpet and rugs were also purchased.

In 1944, new pews, a Pulpit and Communion Table were ordered. Due to the war and the scarcity of materials, pews could not be obtained at this time.

Warren Center had long felt the need of a resident pastor. They were finally able to fulfill this need in 1949, when they left the Apalachin charge and became an independent appointment. Rev. Sydney Boys, a retired minister, was secured to serve this charge. As there was no parsonage in the community, an apartment over the Bowen Store was rented. Rev. and Mrs. Boys moved there in June of that year.

On February 18, 1951, Sunday school and Church services were held in the church at the usual hour with a large crowd attending. About an hour after the worshipers had left, the church was discovered to be on fire. When first discovered, the whole interior of the structure was ablaze. The entire building with all of its contents was consumed in a very short time. The origin of the fire was unknown. The first Sunday after the fire, the congregation met and held services with the West Warren people in their church. The Methodists united with the Baptists in their church and held three evening services during the Lenten period. After that time services were held regularly in the Grange Hall and the W.S.C.S. Hall.

Plans were immediately started for erecting a new building where the old one had stood. A strip of land was secured from Mrs. Earl Anderson to enlarge the church property. The contractor, Mr. Walter Chaffee, started work in July 1952. The corner stone was laid at a service held July 20, 1952.

Aid came from many sources. The Fairdale Methodist Church was donated with all of its furnishings, with the stipulation that the windows be used with the names left on them. These were used in the dining room of the new building. This church was dismantled by the Warren Center people and trucked to Warren Center where much of the material was used in the new building. Other donations included pews from a boys' school in Cooperstown, the altar rail by the Central Methodist Church of Endicott, some light fixtures from the Church of Christ in Sayre, the bell was taken from the Baptist Church in Camptown and donated by Mr. Mitten, and the piano by Mrs. Kenneth Thomson, a member of the Boulevard Methodist Church of Binghamton. Many hours were spent in refinishing the old pews and preparing for the formal opening which took place on May 3, 1953, when several hundred people came to help consecrate the new building.

In January 1953, the church officials purchased the house and lot joining the church property from Mrs. Earl Anderson to be used as a parsonage. This property included the old creamery.

On November 9, 1962, a special Quarterly Conference was held to consider building an educational annex and on Sunday, April 26, 1964, at 10:30 A.M., groundbreaking ceremonies were held. A service was held on January 3, 1965 to dedicate the church and to consecrate the new eleven room educational annex.

### **Cadis Baptist Church**

*Written by Mrs. Harold Race*

In a tattered little notebook we find an account of the first mention of a "Baptist" meeting and what was to become the Cadis Baptist Church. On August 16, 1834 – "Elder Edward E. Dodge met a few brethren and sisters of Windham in covenant meeting at Br H. Dunham's. The first elected officers were: bro. Henry Dunham, Deacon and Amasa Moulton, Church Clerk. The congregation subsequently formed was called the First Free Will Baptist Church of Windham, and covenant meetings were held regularly on the Saturday preceding the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Memories passed down thru the generations tell us that church services were held in the schoolhouses at Finch's Corner (the south-western end of the Cadis Valley) and at Prince Hollow, now Cadis. There is almost no record of any business enacted, no weddings recorded or other activities associated with the church.

The community name of Prince Hollow was changed sometime prior to 1885 to Mecca, and by 1895 was changed again to Cadis. The name of the church followed, to Mecca and finally to the Cadis Baptist Church. An entry for October 8, 1881 tells, "The first bee on the church was this

date. The following persons were present to lend a helping hand. Thompson Abell was the first man on the job. Then came M.B. Moulton with team, Myron Prince, A. Nichols, Edward Chilson, Silas Darling, John Sherman, A. Edwards and Selim Ward.”

The original stone wall still supports the building and the steeple is still topped with the arrow weathervane placed there by loving hands in 1881. Originally there was a large wooden porch with no roof but a lantern post on the corner. Ladies could step directly from their buggies to the porch.

A four stall horse shed was in the back. The outdoor privy is still in use. The inside of the building was originally plastered by Ezra Ward. Before the time of electricity, a chandelier oil lamp hung over the pulpit. It was lowered for filling and lighting then raised back into place by chains on a pulley. At each of the side windows was a bracket which held a kerosene lamp. A small wood burning stove stood on each side. The stovepipe from each stove went up toward the ceiling, along the side, across the back to meet and go out to the chimney. Instead of pews, there were rows of wooden chairs. This helped create an informal atmosphere which has prevailed. The chairs could be gathered close to the stoves on cold days or moved to a home for a meeting.

A ladies aid society was recorded in the church in early days. A 1913 newspaper clipping records the reorganization of this society at the home of Mrs. Grace Prince. At that time the society was named the “Busy Bees”. The monthly dinners were a social highlight of the area for church members and non-members alike. The whole family attended. Oyster dinners were popular and in the spring there were dandelion greens with boiled eggs. The money collected (probably \$3.00) was given to supplement the pastor’s salary. The salary was whatever the Sunday morning offering was, \$1.50 to \$6.00 normally. Entertainment was usually a ball game by the men, called the “Bumble Bees”.

On August 26, 1934, a centennial day was held with a morning service, a picnic lunch on the church grounds, an afternoon service and an evening service. The names of ninety-nine people were recorded as attending that day.

The church was closed for a while during World War II. Since then most of the pastors have been students or recent graduates of Practical Bible College of Johnson City, NY or of Baptist Bible College of Clarks Summit, PA.

In the early 1950’s pews were brought to Cadis from the abandoned Presbyterian Church in Warrenham. Electric lights were installed. In the 1970’s the wood stoves were replaced with electric heat. New carpeting and new pews were bought. An addition was built on the back of the building for classes and fellowship.

A Sesquicentennial celebration was held on August 19, 1984. Nearly two hundred people attended. After the morning worship service old acquaintances were renewed as the people gathered under a tent on the church lawn to enjoy a buffet lunch served by the church

members. An afternoon service was held at which time many of the former pastors shared their memories.

In March 2003, due to dwindling attendance and lack of pastors with fundamental beliefs who were willing to service such a small congregation, services were suspended

### **Regular Baptist Church of Warren**

*Written by Sylvia Race (from information recorded by E.O. Green)*

During the early years of the Coburn Settlement, there were very few Baptist Ministers in the local area and most of those did not have the formal education that we expect of a minister today. Because of the foresight of a faithful member of this church, E.O. Green, we have some written records which give us a glimpse into this early church.

Mr. Green in his notes informs us that "In 1841 there was a minister by the name of Fox living in Nichols, N.Y. where there was a small Baptist Church. He was induced by the people of Bowen Hollow who persuaded him to come and preach to them in their homes. The congregation continued to grow and on 17 April 1844, Elder P.B. Peck was moderator as representatives of Baptist Churches of Nichols, Owego and Tioga, NY and Windham, PA met to extend the right hand of fellowship to the newly organized Regular Baptist Church of Bowen Hollow (later Warren Center). The people of Warren moved their membership from Nichols to this new church.

The Regular Baptist Church of Warren continued to prosper and traveled to Prince Hollow, West Warren and Potterville schoolhouses for meetings. Some of these meetings were also held at the Union Schoolhouse which at the time was on James Road at the corner of Green Road. On 9 June 1849 the congregation voted to build a meeting house and on February 6, 1852 a second vote was ratified to purchase the land of Henry Allyn. The parcel was just north of the Wappasening Creek on the West side of Main Street in Bowen Hollow and the subsequent building, 32 feet by 48 feet was topped with a cupola. The dedication service was held 30 November 1853

On 3 February 1857 several churches sent delegates who formed a council to question Henry W. Barnes about his beliefs. They proceeded to set Mr. Barnes apart as a minister of the gospel. Rev. Barnes stayed as pastor of the church until 10 March 1861. Then on 14 February 1865 William F. Nixon succeeded Rev. Barnes as pastor.

September 7, 1867 the church purchased a house and lot for a parsonage from Robert Cooper for \$600.00. The meeting house required extensive repairs in 1878 and a rededication service was held 2 January 1879. By the summer of 1882 the old parsonage had been sold and a new one finished. Two years later a barn was built on the parsonage lot. A baptistery was built on the church in 1892.

At a meeting on 15 March 1913 a committee was formed to facilitate a merger with the Free Will Baptist Church on Coburn Hill Road. The new congregation (The Warren Center Baptist Church) used the building on Coburn Hill Road.

### **Warren Center Baptist Church**

*Written by Silvia Race with the help of others, including Jeannette Pendleton*

Also in 1841, another group of Baptist residents in and around the township, having an equal religious conviction organized into the Free Will Baptist Church. Their meeting house was located on Coburn Hill Road, one quarter mile north of the intersection with Main and East Streets in Bowen Hollow (now Warren Center). The church building is noted on a map from 1850. One quarter acre of land with meeting house was deeded to the church trustees 29 October 1855, by William and Sara Chaffee.

During a fierce wind storm on 15 March 1913 several buildings in Warren Center were severely damaged, the worst of which was the Free Will Baptist Church. Subsequently, the Regular Baptist Church on Main Street near the Wappasening Creek merged with the Regular Baptist Church of Warren (as indicated above) resulting in the formation of the Warren Center Baptist Church.

At the union of the two churches some equipment from the lower church was transferred to the upper church, including the woodwork around the pulpit and the inside front doors. Electricity was added in 1938. Other improvements were made such as new floors and in 1953 new porches and walkways.

On 16 August 1953, the church celebrated its 112 years of God's faithfulness. The pastor was Dorothy O. Gardinor, with Howard Hayes and Kenneth Gosney taking charge of the services. A dinner was served at the Grange Hall after the morning service. An afternoon and an evening service were held. Speakers were Rev. Charles Morrison, Rev. Fred Drew, Rev. John Slocum and Rev. Elmer B. Pitcher, Jr.

December 31, 1958, as the congregation gathered at the pastor's home for fellowship prior to the New Year's Eve Watch Night Service, smoke was seen coming from the church building. Preparations had been underway to put a basement under the church and install a new furnace. It was too late, however, as the fire was blamed on the malfunction of the old oil burner. Before the night was over not only was the church consumed but also the Merton Allyn barn which was north of the church. The valiant effort of the firemen saved the Allyn home.

A new church building was constructed on the site of the one destroyed. A basement provides space for Sunday school rooms and fellowship hall. Services were held at the Grange Hall for about a year during the construction. The Warren Center Baptist Church continues to be an active part of the spiritual community in Warren Township.

## **The first Congregational Church of West Warren**

*1888 – 2004 (Author Unknown)*

In 1879 Rev. E.J. Morris started coming from Potterville on Sunday afternoons to preach the gospel, first at the old school house and than later at Jillson Hall. Several years later a Sunday school was formed. When Rev. Morris resigned to go to New York, the members of the Sunday school decided to organize themselves as a church. On September 1, 1884 the church was recognized by the Council of Congregational Churches and in the fall of 1885, Rev. J.D. Jones came to Neath and West Warren as Pastor. It was not long before he began to talk and plan for the building of a church. The present structure was erected, starting in the summer of 1888 and was completed; by late Fall of the same year. On December 7, 1888 the Charter was signed and the First Congregational Church of West Warren came into being.

In 1937 the West Warren Church joined the churches of LeRaysville, Potterville, and Neath, to form the “Dille Co-operative Parish”, named after Rev. & Mrs. Carl Dille, who went to Africa as missionaries in 1939 after serving a little over one year as Pastor.

In 1963 the membership of West Warren, LeRaysville, and Potterville voted to join the United Church of Christ. At this time the members of the Neath Church did not wish to join and since, have not been a part of the Dille Co-Op Parish.

When the “Dille Co-op Parish was first formed, church services were held every Sunday in each church. As the years passed services were then held in two churches per week and the churches alternated weeks, then it went to one church service held weekly and it rotates between the three churches. In 1990 the West Warren members voted to withdraw from the Dille Co-op Parish and later the U.C.C. The church was once again called The First Congregational Church of West Warren and in 1992 joined the Forcee’s Conference, (Conservative Congregational Christian Conference).

Over the years several modifications have been made to the church, which include the lowering of the ceiling in the Sanctuary and dinning room, paneling of the Sanctuary walls, carpet installed, addition of dinning room space, kitchen and bathroom and a new water system. Ground breaking ceremony for the new addition of six Sunday school rooms was held on Oct. 1, 2000. The church bell that was purchased and raised to the belfry in June of 1921 still rings every Sunday.

## **South Warren Community Church**

*Written by Sylvia race with the help of Ellicott Lee, Jr.*

Finally, South Warren had a Methodist Episcopal Church. It is first listed on the Beers Atlas map in 1869. The early history is unknown, but by 1931 the structure was in disrepair and being used to store hay. The church was reorganized as the South Warren Community Church and kept going through supply pastors from Practical Bible School. In 1949, Rev. George Jatko started serving as full-time pastor and under his leadership the congregation flourished.

From the above information, it can be clearly seen that the tapestry of life which has become Warren Township over the years, could not have been created without the diverse and deep beliefs of many religious congregations. These threads continue to bind us together today and into the future.