

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

BICENTENNIAL 1965

South Congregational society which built the original South Church, was formed May 16, 1835 when 'south-enders' considered "the interest of religion" would best be served by another church.

Sixty-seven members of First Congregational Church subscribed enough money together with a loan from a town treasury fund which came to the town by division of surplus revenues of the United States Government. \$1,200 bought the land on the southwest corner of Main and Pleasant Streets. \$8,800 paid for a wooden two story edifice.

The second floor contained the two church parlors and the sanctuary. New Englanders are a thrifty lot and the church fathers were no exception. To increase income, the granite basement contained two stores and a chapel. Modern business ventures of the churches are bigger and more diversified.

Early 1837 was propitious for the dedication. Later financial disaster struck both country and church. The two stores and the chapel went into private ownership. After paying rent for seven years, the Society finally repurchased the chapel for \$500.

On Sunday, June 12, 1859 South Church was destroyed by fire which started in a tenement shed, leveled the barn of Dr. Simpson and then the church.

Earlier that same evening, a guest minister had preached against tobacco.

On November 27, 1860 at 27 Pleasant Street the present brick church was constructed at a cost of \$24,545. (The house and gardens at this site belonged to Col. William Kent. The house was moved to 24 South Spring Street and is now occupied by the Robert Beyer family.) Since that time a chapel, auditorium and parlor have been added. More recently a parking lot on the east side of the church has been added.

From a membership of 259 under the first pastorate, South Congregational Church now has a membership of 830 under its new minister, The Reverend Stephen C. Greene and the Associate Minister, The Reverend Wesley E. Burwell.

Margaret Jackman Gesen
Church Historian