

= First Presbyterian Church of Marcellus =

The Greek Revival First Presbyterian Church of Marcellus is located at the intersection of North Street ( New York State Route 174 ) and East Main Street ( also NY 174 ) in the village of Marcellus , New York , and is the oldest of four churches in the village . Marcellus village was founded in 1794 . Local residents with differing religious denominations met in a tavern , until October 1801 when Reverend Caleb Alexander , a missionary active in the central New York area , helped organize the 18 @-@ member Church of Christ . A wooden meeting house was constructed two years later .

By 1819 , the community had built three churches in the environs of Marcellus : the original First Church in Marcellus , its offshoot the Second Church in Skaneateles , New York , and the Third Church on State Road ( now U.S. Route 20 ) . In 1851 , the present church in Greek Revival style was erected and dedicated . The church would undergo substantial alterations over the next century . In 1948 , it was remodelled and dedicated in April 1952 . Commentators have found the structure one of the finest examples of Greek Revival church architecture in Onondaga County ; however , they have expressed some regret in the loss of several original features . The church celebrated its bicentenary in 2001 .

= = Original church ( 1803 ? 1851 ) = =

The village of Marcellus was founded 1794 with Presbyterians , Congregationalists , Baptists and villagers of other denominations meeting in a tavern for worship services . Tavern proprietor Deacon Rice was permitted to read sermons , not write them , and Reverend Seth Williston , a missionary active in the area as early as 1800 may have provided spiritual guidance . On October 13 , 1801 , the village 's first worship society , the 18 @-@ member Church of Christ , was organized through the efforts of Rev Caleb Alexander , another missionary active in central New York . In May the following year , the society was incorporated as the Eastern Religious Society of Marcellus . The church was later described as " Presbyterian in its ecclesiastical relations , and at the same time Congregational in its internal policy and arrangement . "

On August 12 , 1802 , the society voted to build a church , and a trustee donated an acre of land at the intersection of Main Street and North Street in the present @-@ day village of Marcellus . In 1803 , construction of the fifty @-@ five by forty @-@ eight feet wooden meeting house was completed with a floor , a board pulpit , and slab seats but without a steeple , a bell , stoves , and ceilings . Congregants warmed themselves with foot stoves , squirrel fur , and the " power of the spirit " .

Itinerant missionaries served the meeting house for its first few years . The church gained its first pastor in 1807 , when Rev Levi Parsons was ordained and installed . That same year , the congregation adopted fifteen articles of faith and a covenant , which remained membership prerequisites for one hundred years . In the same year the church affiliated with the Presbyterian Synod of Albany , three years later becoming a charter member of the Presbytery of Cayuga , which , in 1811 , became part of the newly formed Synod of Geneva . Mr Parsons served until 1833 when he accepted posts in Tully , New York and Otisco , New York . He returned to Marcellus in 1835 , where he remained until 1841 when Rev John Tompkins was appointed .

In 1814 , a steeple was built , an extension to the church added , and the interior painted at a cost of \$ 4 @, @ 500 ( \$ 50 @. @ 8 thousand today ) . The same year , The Female Charitable Society of Marcellus donated \$ 133 @. @ 34 to the Genessee Missionary Society . By 1819 , the church had grown considerably . The Second Church was erected in what is now Skaneateles , New York , and the Third Presbyterian Church of Marcellus was built on State Road ( now U.S. Route 20 ) , which , after twenty prosperous years , experienced declining membership following deaths and migrations . In 1830 , a shed for horses and vehicles was constructed at the First Church . On April 23 , 1833 , the name of the society was changed to the Marcellus First Religious Society , and in 1846 , a house and lot for a parsonage were secured . In 1849 , church land was graded and new horse sheds built .

= = Present church ( 1851 ? present ) = =

By 1850 , the First Church was in need of repair and sold for \$ 500 ( \$ 4 @. @ 5 thousand today ) which , in the agreement , was applied to the construction of a new church on the same site at a cost of \$ 3 @, @ 800 . The new church , designed in the then popular Greek Revival style , was dedicated October 13 , 1851 , the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation . Two years after the 1851 construction and dedication of the new church , a bell was fitted to the steeple . The church 's first pastor , Reverend Levi Parsons had been succeeded by Rev John Tompkins . In 1866 , Mr Tompkins died on the eve of his 25th anniversary with the church . Reverends W. S. Franklin and Dwight Scovel were appointed as interim ministers , and , during their tenures , a new pulpit and new furniture were acquired . A change in boundaries , by act of the General Assembly in 1869 , brought the Marcellus Church within the Syracuse Presbytery which was merged with the Cayuga Presbytery . In 1877 , the Women 's Missionary Society was formed . In 1880 , Rev George Smith was appointed , but , in 1882 , accepted a position at Canandaigua Academy . Before Smith left , he celebrated the church 's 80th anniversary on October 13 , 1881 by writing the church 's history .

On Smith 's departure Rev Alex McA . Thornburn was appointed and served five years . Under his leadership , the church perfected its organization as a Presbyterian Church and several ruling elders were elected . However , the corporate name , Eastern Religious Society , remained in effect until November 19 , 1951 , when it was officially changed to the First Presbyterian Church of Marcellus . On November 16 . 1887 , Rev Thornburn was succeeded by Rev A. H. Cameron , who served ten years with the church . In 1893 and 1894 , the church was remodeled once again with new kitchens , a church parlor , and new stained glass windows . The original stoves were replaced with a new heating system . The church began conducting Sunday school classes for those unable to attend services , at Marcellus Falls ( north of town ) and nearby hamlet Shepard Settlement .

Rev Cameron was succeeded in 1897 , by Rev A. K. McNaughton , who served ten years and celebrated the church 's centenary on October 13 , 1901 . McNaughton left in 1907 , and was replaced by Rev F. J. Sauber who served until 1914 when Rev C. C. Frost was appointed . In 1921 , Rev David S. MacGinn was appointed , who served until 1928 . During MacGinn 's years of service , new horse and carriage sheds were constructed for the church , replacing earlier ones built in 1849 . In 1961 , the sheds ( which had been rented @- @ out as car garages ) were torn down to make way for an extension of the church . A severe windstorm destroyed the spire in 1924 ; it was replaced shortly thereafter at a cost of \$ 3 @, @ 500 ( \$ 31 thousand today ) .

Rev Robert Lloyd Roberts served the Marcellus church during the Great Depression and war years from 1931 to 1944 . His successor Dr. Albert Dutton Stearns , called in 1944 , continued as pastor until 1948 . From 1948 to 1956 , Rev Ralph Miller served the congregation . Under his aegis the body of the building was raised , the sanctuary redone and refurbished , and a basement constructed with the additions of a kitchen , a dining room , a lounge and several classrooms at a cost of \$ 65 @, @ 000 ( \$ 579 thousand today ) . The church was dedicated after completion of construction in April 1952 . On November 19 , 1951 , the church officially became the First Presbyterian Church of Marcellus . On December 9 , 1956 , Rev Miller was succeeded by Syracuse University graduate Rev Keith Shinaman ; Miss Helen Austin was ordained as the first woman elder one year later . Women make up one @- @ half of the present session of eighteen elders .

Reverend Shinaman remained with the church for over fifty years , but was succeeded by Reverend Bill Grossman , who presently serves the congregation w . In 2001 , the church celebrated its 200th anniversary . Reverend Shinaman died October 10 , 2010 at the age of 88 .

= = Architectural critique = =

Of the church structure itself , it was noted in Architecture Worth Saving in Onondaga County ( 1964 ) that " This is certainly one of the most architecturally distinguished churches in Onondaga County , and a particularly fine example of Greek Revival architecture [ ... ] The interior was unfortunately ' improved ' with new arrangement of pews , and organ , new windows , carpets and chandeliers in 1896 [ ... ] In recent years the steeple was blown down , falling into the nave .

Although rebuilt to approximately the original proportions , the transitional detail between the square belfry and the conical spire was unfortunately eliminated . Also regrettable [ ... ] is the recent replacement of the original wood @-@ paneled entrance doors [ ... ] The future of our finest Greek Revival church is uncertain [ ... ] Destruction would be a loss to the entire community . "

= = List of pastors by their ordainment = =