

1850-1890: The Early Years

On January 4, 1852 the church received a New Year's present from our sister church in New Britain, Connecticut. The gift consisted of a pewter communion set, six lamps and pulpit furniture.

January 4, 1852 (page 26, Record Book 1)

"...The interest of the services of this day was increased by the reception of a New Year's present from the First Congregational Church in New Britain, Connecticut of a handsome communion service, six lamps and furniture for the pulpit. May the kindness of these benefactors be rewarded in abundant spiritual blessings."

- Charles W. Camp

The early church faced many obstacles. First there was the Socialist Settlement that was founded about the same time as the church at Spring Lake. Then, there was the fad of Spiritualism in the 1850's. Many thought religion and churches would go out of fashion. During its first 50 years, the church would weather the gold rush, the anti-slavery excitement and the Civil War. In 1865 there was even some talk about disbanding the church. The church prevailed!

In 1864 a parsonage was purchased (used) for \$200. It had been the home of B. A. Jenkins, the man who donated the land for the church.

From the "Anniversary Book," pages 40 – 41, we read the following in Rev. Kilbourn's own handwriting: *"In the summer of 1883, extensive repairs upon this house of worship were undertaken and completed at the expense of about \$850. These repairs include the building of the porch in front of the church, the removal of the old gallery that extended across the north end of the audience room, 12 feet at the south end of the church to form the prayer meeting room and kitchen below, with the supper room above. ... A cellar was dug, a chimney was built up from the ground and apparatus put in for heating the audience room from below. ... On the 9th of December, '83, the house, as renovated, was dedicated to its uses as a place of worship."*